

COLAGE

Post-Election FAQ

A Guide For People Who Have
LGBTQ+ Parents and Questions
About the Next Four Years

A Note from Jordan

November 2024

This document shouldn't have to exist and I'm sorry that it does.

Being in denial won't make it any easier to face. We have a lot of work to do to protect ourselves and our families, and we're going to need your help. The queer and queerspawn elders have laid the blueprint for us to follow, and now it is up to us to carry the torch. The next four years, and the whole world, are what we choose to make of it.

While the past few weeks have been frustrating and terrifying in equal measure, it has been beautiful to see members of our community and other marginalized communities coming together so loudly and so forcefully. **The reality is that we are here and we aren't going anywhere – nothing is going to change that.** Now more than ever, we must lean on the communities we create for strength and resilience. We have always taken care of each other and we will continue to do so now.

While working on this resource, I decided that I wanted to make a mixtape for the community. I started collecting some of the songs that keep coming back to me as I process the election results. Some of them satiated my anger, some of them my sadness, and for a few of them, even my joy. So, after you've finished reading and as you're planning your own next steps for action, take a listen to the mixtape I made for us. You can find it on [Apple Music](#), [Spotify](#), or on [YouTube](#). I hope you enjoy it and that it helps. It certainly helped me to make it.

With love and in solidarity,

Jordan Wilson

Executive Director

Note to Parents: This guide (and definitely the mixtape) will be most accessible for people in middle school or older. If your child is younger, we encourage you to read through the guide and provide the information to your child in age-appropriate ways or read the content together so that you can help with any questions. The [Queerspawn Resource Project](#) has many additional resources for COLAGERS of all ages.

What does this mean for my family legally?

Hopefully, nothing. While it is true that the president-elect has threatened to take rights away from members of our community, there are things that you and your family can do right now to protect yourselves. The most important thing you can do right now is to ask your parent(s) if they have gone through the process of legally establishing their parentage rights. Parentage is the legal relationship between a parent and their child, and it can be established by a court. [You can learn more about the paths to parentage here.](#) Unfortunately, the laws in many states are full of holes that make this process harder for LGBTQ+ parents and families.

The path to parentage looks different depending on how your family was formed. If you were adopted, your parentage judgement was issued as a part of the adoption process. If your parent(s) are genetically related to you, it is likely that their parentage was recognized automatically when you were born, but it doesn't hurt to ask them! If you have a parent who is not genetically related to you, *your family must secure a parentage judgment for your non-biological parent.*

Along with our friends at [GLAD Law](#), [Family Equality](#), [NCLR](#), and [MAP](#), [COLAGE helped write a resource for LGBTQ+ families looking to legally protect themselves.](#) You can find answers to important questions, recommendations for how and where to file for a parentage judgment, and much more at those links.

If my parents are married, will it go away?

No, we don't think so. There are a lot of different conversations happening right now amongst the same lawyers and advocates that helped secure marriage rights for LGBTQ+ people in the first place. The court case that legalized it nationwide, *Obergefell*, is backed up by another case, *Windsor*, that requires the federal government to treat all marriages equally. Further, because of the "Respect for Marriage Act," a federal law passed in 2022, all states are required to respect the benefits of marriage for anyone whose marriage was "valid when performed."

In other words, if your parents are married now, they will stay married, even if something happens to *Obergefell* and *Windsor* in the future.

Will I have to hide who I am or who my parents are?

It is always up to you to decide when to come out about your family. Just like now, you get to choose who you tell and who you don't tell. That is not going to change, no matter what. Some of us will find it important to be as loud and proud about our families as we can in order to help others feel less afraid. Some of us won't find it safe to be as open and might need to keep our family private.

You should talk to your family about how you are feeling and make a plan that everyone feels comfortable with together. If you need some tips on how to talk to others about your family, [we think our back-to-school video has a lot of relevant information](#) that would apply here, too. The important thing to know is that you are not alone, and COLAGE is here to provide a community of people that have experienced all of the same ups and downs as you. Whatever comes next, we will go through it together.

What can I expect if I have a trans parent?

Your family is loved and COLAGE has your back. As you know, trans people and their families have endured an extraordinary and escalating amount of hatefulness in recent years. There is no way around it – the next four years are going to be hard on the trans community. The trans community has always been resilient and we are ready to support you. [One immediate step your family should consider is updating names on legal documents](#) and making sure that, if necessary, you have a parentage judgment as outlined in the first question.

To paraphrase Annastasia from our People with Trans Parents Care Team, “we must follow the path of our trans elders who have always survived through community.” Much like the other advice elsewhere in our guide, we think the most important thing you and your family can do is find or build a community that will work together to keep everyone safe. If you don't know where to start, [read our PTP Guide](#) for more helpful information on navigating life as PTP, [ask to join our Private PTP Facebook](#), or [find your closest LGBTQ+ Center](#).

To that end, COLAGE is actively seeking more resources so that we can expand our People with Trans Parents programming to provide additional virtual and in-person opportunities for community building.

What can we do as the COLAGE community?

Mourn today, organize tomorrow. As an organization, we will be doing what we have always done: create spaces by and for COLAGers to come together, and fight for our families. We are currently working on our next Strategic Plan to lead our work for the coming years and are actively seeking more resources so that we can hire more staff and host more in-person programming.

One big thing you can do starting next year is join us as we return to COLAGE Chapters. We will be returning to and restructuring the chapter model to better provide year-round in-person activities in your local community. If you're interested in learning more, please sign up for our COLAGE Chapter interest meeting happening in January.

In the meantime, [check out our upcoming events page](#) or [consider filling out our COLAGE Connect form](#) if you're looking for someone to talk to.

If you'd like to work on issues related to [The Queerspawn Agenda](#) in the coming months, [please ask to join the QUIP listserv](#) to get notified about upcoming meetings and actions. We are also in the process of hiring a Policy & Advocacy Manager who will help us center and uplift the COLAGEr perspective in the legal battles that are to come.

There are many things you can get involved with outside of COLAGE as well! If we want to see a better world, we need to build it together. Does your community struggle with food insecurity? Do you want to make sure that we do everything we can to preserve the environment? What kinds of decisions are being made on your district's school board? We're not going to be able to control much of anything that happens in Washington D.C., [but there's plenty to do right now](#), especially on the local level.

We're with you, whatever comes next!

In community,
COLAGE Staff, Youth Action Board, and National Board