



CITY OF PROVIDENCE

2.7 SEXUAL ORIENTATION AND GENDER IDENTITY POLICY

Purpose

The City of Providence is committed to maintaining a professional, respectful, and inclusive workplace free from discrimination, harassment, and retaliation. This policy affirms the City's commitment to ensuring a respectful and inclusive workplace for all employees, applicants, interns, volunteers, contractors, and members of the public interacting with City employees, regardless of sexual orientation, gender identity, or gender expression.

Scope

This policy applies to all City employees, applicants, interns, volunteers, contractors, and third parties interacting on behalf of the City of Providence. It applies to conduct occurring in City workplaces, at City-sponsored events, during work-related travel, and in work-related communications.

Definitions

Sexual Orientation: Refers to an individual's emotional, romantic, or sexual attraction to others, which can be heterosexual, homosexual, bisexual, asexual, or another orientation.

Gender Identity: Refers to an individual's internal sense of their own gender, which may be different from the sex they were assigned at birth. Gender identities can include male, female, non-binary, genderqueer, or others.

Gender Expression: Refers to how individuals express their gender identity through clothing, behavior, appearance, voice, and/or mannerisms.

Nonbinary: A person whose gender identity does not fit exclusively within male or female categories.

Transitioning / Transition: The process through which a person begins living in accordance with their gender identity. Transitioning may include social, legal, and/or medical steps but is highly individualized.

Misgendering: Referring to a person using pronouns or gendered terms that do not align with their gender identity.

Deadnaming: Referring to an individual by a former name after they have communicated their affirmed name.

Policy

Discrimination, harassment, retaliation, or unequal treatment based on sexual orientation, gender identity, or gender expression is strictly prohibited. Protections apply regardless of whether an individual has taken legal or medical steps to affirm their gender identity.

1. Non-Discrimination

A. **Equal Employment Opportunity**

The City of Providence provides equal employment opportunities to all employees and applicants, regardless of sexual orientation or gender identity. Employment decisions will be based on individual merit and qualifications.

B. **Anti-Harassment and Malicious Treatment**

1. Harassment and mistreatment based on sexual orientation or gender identity is strictly prohibited. This includes, but is not limited to, offensive jokes, slurs, or any form of verbal, visual, physical, misgendering, deadnaming, or conduct of malicious intent.
2. All complaints of harassment will be investigated promptly and addressed according to City policies.

2. Respect for Sexual Orientation and Gender Identity

A. **Name and Pronouns**

Employees should be addressed by their chosen names and pronouns. The City of Providence will support the use of chosen names and pronouns in City records allowed by law and communications.

B. **Personnel and System Records**



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1. Upon written request to the Department of People and Culture (DPC), and the completion of an the Status Change Form, the City will update internal systems where operationally feasible, including:
 1. Email display name/signature
 2. Directories
 3. ID badge systems
 4. Organizational charts
 5. Internal communication systems
 6. Business cards
2. Legal names will continue to be used where required by law, including payroll, tax documentation, benefits, and background checks.
3. Employees are not required to complete a legal name change in order to update internal systems.

C. **Privacy**

The City will protect the privacy of employees' sexual orientation and gender identity. Information regarding an employee's sexual orientation or gender identity will only be disclosed with the employee's consent or as required by law.

3. **Workplace Facilities**

City locations may provide gender neutral restrooms to be utilized by employees, regardless of gender identity.

4. **Support and Resources**

A. **Employee Assistance**

1. The City of Providence will provide support to employees who require assistance related to sexual orientation or gender identity, including access to counseling services and support groups through the Employee Assistance Program (EAP).
2. The City welcome employees to participate and join affinity groups, programs, and resource sharing such as Employee Resource Group Opportunities (ERGO).
3. Time served during normal operating hours will require supervisor consent to ensure continuity of operations.

B. **Training and Education**

1. All Employees will receive training on Anti-discrimination and Anti-Harassment Policies during their employment with the City, including during the New Employee Orientation process.
2. All employees will receive training on diversity, inclusivity, and respect for sexual orientation and gender identity. This training aims to enhance understanding and create a supportive work environment.

5. **Reporting and Resolution**

A. **Reporting Mechanisms**

1. Employees who experience or witness discrimination or harassment related to sexual orientation or gender identity are encouraged to report the issue to their supervisor.
2. Supervisors and managers who observe or receive information about potential violations must promptly report the matter to the DPC, regardless of whether a formal complaint has been filed.
3. In addition, or in the absence of their supervisor, employees may report concerns to the DPC - EEO Officer. This may be done directly through the established compliant processes, and/or through the City's HR Hotline.

B. **Investigation and Action**

1. Reports of discrimination or harassment will be investigated promptly and discreetly. The City of Providence will take appropriate action to address and resolve any issues.



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2. This is considered a **zero-tolerance** policy, violations may result in corrective action up to and including immediate termination, consistent with applicable policies and collective bargaining agreements.

Related Policies:

Anti-Discrimination and Harassment Policy
Code of Conduct
ADA and Reasonable Accommodation Policy
Sexual Misconduct Policy
Discipline Policy
DEEO Policy

Other Related Information:

[Employee Status Change Form](#)