





SECTION

# 4

## SUPPORTING TRANSGENDER INDIVIDUALS TOWARDS EMPLOYMENT

This section provides tips and activities that case managers can utilize to help trans\* youth when searching for employment. This includes how to find transgender friendly employers, how to navigate name and gender pronouns with employers, and how to build transgender inclusive employment services.

# 4.1 HOW TO FIND TRANSGENDER-FRIENDLY EMPLOYERS

It is important for everyone to feel supported in the workplace. It is a particular comfort to trans\* youth job seekers to know which employers provide opportunities and anti-discrimination policies that protect and provide for the community in the workplace. Finding suitable employers is therefore essential for your clients.

## JOB SEARCH PREPARATION

As with any youth entering the workforce, building job-readiness skills and job-search techniques are important. When working with trans\* youth, there is the added component of assisting them in researching transgender-friendly employers. Although identifying transgender-inclusive environments can be difficult, there may be indications in an employers policies and procedures.

## TIPS

- Employers may have expressed policies around gender identity.
- Staff may be provided with diversity education programs around gender expression.
- There may be gender-neutral bathrooms available on site.
- Preferred names may be sought during the job application process.

## TOOLS

### ACTIVITY: HUMAN RIGHTS CAMPAIGN TRANSGENDER FRIENDLY SEARCH

The Human Rights Campaign's (HRC) Employer Database is a helpful resource for finding transgender-inclusive employers. The following activity will teach youth how to use the HRC database to research companies. This activity is meant to showcase companies that express open policies.

- Have the youth complete a job search online and pick 5 employers to research. (Job search possible employers from a recently visited mall would be a good place to start). The HRC is more likely to have large corporations and popular brands listed.
- Assist the client search the HRC database:
  - » Open the HRC: Employer Database webpage [www.hrc.org/apps/cei/](http://www.hrc.org/apps/cei/)
  - » Enter the name of the company in the employer name search field
  - » Find the link to the company
- Evaluate the results together and discuss whether the company seems like a suitable fit.

The following is an example of a company that provides various transgender-friendly policies and benefits.

If the results do not show favorable outcomes, it is important discuss what applying for a job at that particular company might be like. There is a possibility that local staff at that company are friendly to transgender needs (i.e. use of preferred gender pronouns and preferred names).

If the client does not find information about a company's policy, the following activity will help a client gain an idea of the company's openness to the transgender community.

### ACTIVITY: IDENTIFYING TRANSGENDER-FRIENDLY WORKPLACES ON JOB SEARCH

The purpose of this activity is to get the youth thinking about what makes a transgender-friendly employer. Many clients will assume that people will not accept them based on their transgender identities. You should remind clients that even though an employer may not be knowledgeable about the transgender community or matters such as preferred pronouns, this does not mean the employer is not willing to learn or welcome all people into the workplace. Some work environments may be more inclusive than they initially seem.

### INDICATORS OF TRANSGENDER-FRIENDLY WORKPLACES

- The employer is welcoming and friendly upon meeting the candidate.
- The company's application provides a space for preferred names.
- There are other transgender members of staff.
- The employer acknowledges preferred names and preferred gender pronouns during the application and interview process. This includes leaving phone voicemail for the candidate.
- The employer does not question the difference in legal name and preferred name on the job application and resume.
- Staff are allowed to wear name badges with their preferred names.

#### NON-DISCRIMINATION POLICIES ?

Policies (Year enacted)	Included
Sexual orientation included in non-discrimination policy available in employee handbook	✓
Gender identity included in non-discrimination policy available in employee handbook	✓

#### TRANSGENDER BENEFITS ?

Benefits	Insurance Available to Employees	Transgender Treatment Covered
Transgender Benefits (at least one)		
Short-term Leave After Surgical Procedure	✓	✓
Mental health counseling	✓	✓
Hormone therapy	✓	✓
Medical visits	✓	✓
Surgical procedures	✓	✓
Other (Transgender)	✓	-

#### DIVERSITY TRAINING & MANAGEMENT ?

Topics	Included	Required Attendees
Sexual Orientation	✓	All managers/supervisors required to attend
Gender identity diversity training OR transition guidelines		
Gender Identity/Expression	✓	
Has written guidelines or procedures concerning employees who transition on the job	✓	

# 4.2 NAVIGATING PREFERRED NAME AND GENDER PRONOUNS WITH EMPLOYERS

When trans\* youth decide to conduct a job search without completing a legal name and gender change, they are faced with a **complicated process**. Application documentation may require the use of their legal names. Potential employers may not have experience using preferred names and PGP when addressing youth. It is important that the youth understand how to navigate the job search process while keeping their right to privacy and helping the employer address some of the issues that may cause confusion.

## WHERE DO I START THE CONVERSATION?

Begin by informing the client that they have a right to privacy and can disclose to potential employers as much information about themselves as they feel comfortable with. Although clients may need to disclose their legal names on certain documents, clients can use some of the following techniques to protect their privacy and transgender identities.

## TIPS

### BUILDING A RESUME AND COVER LETTER

Resumes and cover letters are not legal documents. This allows clients to build each using their preferred names. There are several options for the youth when doing so:

- Complete the resume/cover letter with their preferred name:  
CRYSTAL JOHNSON  
1234 E. 7th Street  
Los Angeles, CA 90038
- Complete the resume/cover letter with their legal and preferred name:  
CRYSTAL JOHNSON (Anthony Smith)  
1234 E. 7th Street  
Los Angeles, CA 90038

### COMPLETING A JOB APPLICATION

**Transgender clients often find the job application process to be one of the most challenging tasks in seeking employment.**

The legalities of a job application usually call for disclosure of the client's legal name. (If their legal names have been changed recently, youth may need to provide their birth names). This is usually done for the purpose of background checks and preparation of hiring paperwork. Often completing paperwork can make clients feel as if they are outing themselves as transgender. There are some strategies to correcting any confusion with the potential employer without disclosing information about their change in gender expression.

- A simple approach is for clients to announce their preferred names just as any individual would do when dropping off their resume.

**Example:** "Good afternoon, my name is (preferred name), I was wondering if I could drop off my resume and application with you? If you have any questions regarding my qualifications and experience, please feel free to contact me."

- The client could also make reference to the difference during their initial meeting speech.

**Example:** “Good afternoon, my name is (preferred name), I was wondering if I could drop off my resume and application with you? All of my preferred information is listed on my resume. If you have any questions regarding my qualifications and experience please feel free to contact me.”

- Clients also have the option of attaching reference to their preferred name on the application document.

Examples include writing their preferred name into “Other information” portion of the application or attaching a business card with their preferred name to the application.

### HOW TO RESPOND WHEN GENDER IDENTITY IS QUESTIONED OR WHEN PGP ARE NOT USED

Employers may not know the legalities or proper ways to proceed when they are confused about an applicant’s preferred name or gender pronouns. Listed below are some ways a client may respond to questions about their gender identity and ways of addressing an employer who uses the wrong PGP or name.

- When the employer acknowledges discrepancies in names on job application paperwork, hiring paperwork or background information:

**Employer:** “I noticed there are two separate names on the application and resume, can you explain that to me?”

**Job Seeker:** “My application indicates my legal name for the purpose of background checks and possible hiring paperwork. My preferred name is \_\_\_\_\_.”

- If asked, client does not have to indicate to the employer that they are transgender.

**Employer:** “Are you transgender?” or “Were you born a Male/Female?”

**Job Seeker:** “That is not a question I am willing to answer at this time, but if you have any questions about my past experience or qualifications, I would be more than happy to answer them.”



## TOOLS

### ACTIVITY: JOB SEARCH ROLE PLAY

After discussing the application and interview processes, it can be helpful to allow the client the opportunity to practice how these conversations may be handled. This will be an important element towards building confidence around job searching. Use the conversation bullet points above to carry out role play activities. Show various levels of difficulty in the interactions with the client:

- How would an interaction with a transphobic employer play out?
- How would someone open to working with transgender individuals interact during the application and interview process?

Allow the client to debrief their feelings about these interactions and ways they could improve.

# 4.3 BUILDING TRANS\* INCLUSIVE EMPLOYMENT SERVICES

As an experienced case manager you have many skills and resources to help young people reach their employment goals. Many of these skills and resources work well with all youth, including those who may identify as lesbian, gay, bisexual and transgender (LGBT). **Trans\* youth can often benefit from being connected with services and other transgender people from the community from whom they may seek support and guidance.**

## INCLUDING TRANS\* YOUTH IN EMPLOYMENT ACTIVITIES

Simple additions to services that are already being provided can help trans\* youth feel supported towards their employment goals.

### TIPS

- If your agency provides its youth participants with career panels, ensure that the panel is diverse and includes a transgender panelist.
- If there are workshops on preparing resumes or filling out applications, it would be helpful to include information that relates trans\* youth.
- When facilitating groups, provide a space that allows the youth to express their preferred gender pronouns.
- Wherever clients need to record their names or genders, allow a written space for legal and preferred names. This would be useful in documents such as intake forms and sign-in sheets.

## CONNECTING YOUTH WITH MENTORS

Members of the transgender community, who have experience in overcoming the barriers that many face when seeking employment, can provide strong role-models and mentors for your client.

While you may be educated on the issues and have solutions to a client's challenges, the emotional connection to a transgender person can have an additional impact that may help motivate and inspire your client to be resilient and attain employment.

## CONNECTING YOUTH WITH SUPPORT GROUPS

An additional resource can be found in connecting clients with the transgender community by referring them to support groups or social groups that are transgender-specific. The ability for clients to build connections with other transgender individuals will help open conversations about additional solutions to specific transgender challenges.

In Section 5.2 of this toolkit, we have listed various agencies that offer support and social groups.