

# Supporting Transitioning Employees

## A Guide for Managers

### Understanding the basics:

Transitioning is a process of making changes related to one's gender identity and/or gender expression. A person who is transitioning may make physical and social changes to reflect their gender identity. For example, they may choose a new name, go by different pronouns, and/or wear different styles of clothing. However, transitioning looks different for each individual, and these steps are not required. Respecting all transgender people is vital regardless of what their transition process looks like.

### When an employee is transitioning at work:

- They need your support!
- Other employees may come to you with questions.
- As a manager, you can help create a positive workplace environment for transgender and cisgender employees alike.
- Support is always available to you, as well. You can speak to an HR representative, your direct supervisor, or the Office of LGBT Affairs.

### How can I support transitioning employees?

### What are my responsibilities as a manager?

#### DO:

- Make it clear to transitioning employees that your actions will be dictated by their needs. The employee needs to know that their choices matter and decisions will not be made for them.
- Politely ask which name and pronouns the transitioning individual would like to use at work, and refer to the individual this way consistently. This sets an example for other staff to follow.
- Emphasize to all employees that the City's non-discrimination policy includes gender identity, and the City has a commitment to fostering a diverse and respectful work environment. Remind staff of their responsibility to respect trans colleagues. Bullying or harassment perpetrated because a person is transitioning in the workplace is not acceptable and violates Philadelphia's Fair Practices Ordinance.



## DO NOT:

- Disclose the person's trans identity to anyone else without their consent.
- Ask to see proof of an employee's legal name or gender change.  
Employees have the right to be addressed by the name and pronouns of their choice in the workplace regardless of legal documentation.
- Ask the individual personal questions about their transition, such as whether they plan to get surgery or take hormones. These topics are not relevant to the person's work performance and it is inappropriate to ask out of curiosity.

## How do I respond if someone uses inappropriate language in relation to a transgender employee?

The City of Philadelphia is committed to fostering a diverse and respectful work environment. It is never acceptable for anyone to use discriminatory or abusive language toward another person in the workplace.

Tell the individual that their language is disrespectful and unacceptable. Emphasize that the City of Philadelphia has a non-discrimination policy that covers gender identity. Everyone working with or receiving services from the City must respect the staff.

## Do I have access to professional training workshops about transgender identity? Can I request a training for my department?

Yes! The Mayor's Office of LGBT Affairs can provide training workshops to City departments upon request.

### Contact the Office of LGBT Affairs:

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