



CHICAGO PARK DISTRICT

Gender Diversity Policy

Creating and Sustaining Safe, Supportive, and
Inclusive Environments

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Introduction & Purpose

The Chicago Park District supports the members of the transgender, nonbinary, and gender-nonconforming community and recognizes that the Park District plays an important role in creating and sustaining safe, supportive and inclusive environments for Youth, Patrons, and Employees.

This Gender Diversity Policy (the “Policy”) is intended to address the needs and concerns of transgender, non-binary, and gender nonconforming Employees while at work, and Patrons while they are participating in Park District activities, events, or programs. The Park District recognizes that this Policy will not anticipate every situation that Patrons and Employees may encounter, but the goal is to create an environment in which Patrons and Employees are able to identify and express their gender so they may have safe and welcoming experiences at the Park District.

In order to better support transgender, non-binary, and gender nonconforming Patrons and Employees, Park District Employees should ensure that this Policy is implemented at the workplace and at Park District activities, events, and programs.

Reporting Discrimination or Harassment

Each Employee shall ensure that all Patrons and other Employees, including those who are transgender, non-binary and gender nonconforming, have a safe and welcoming environment. This includes ensuring that any incident of discrimination, harassment, or violence is handled in accordance with Chapter 4 of the Chicago Park District Code by reaching out to the Park District's **Office of Prevention and Accountability (OPA)** by emailing **OPA@ChicagoParkDistrict.com** or by calling **312-472-5OPA (312-742-5672)**.

Any Park District supervisor or manager-level Employee who receives a report or reasonably suspects a violation of the Human Rights Ordinance, which includes discrimination or harassment based on gender identity, shall refer the matter in writing to the Office of Prevention and Accountability within five business days.

Scope

This policy covers activities and conduct involving Employees who are working at the Park District and Patrons who are participating in a Park District sponsored program, activity, or event; whether in-person or online.

Definitions

Affirmed Gender/Affirmed Name: The name and gender with which a person identifies. This is also referred to as “preferred name.”

Ally: A term used to describe someone who is not a member of an underrepresented group but takes action to support that group. In this policy, an ally is actively supportive of LGBTQ+ people. It encompasses straight and cisgender allies, as well as those within the LGBTQ+ community who support each other. Active allies use their credibility to create more inclusive spaces.

Cisgender: A term used to describe people whose gender identity corresponds with the sex they were assigned at birth.

Deadname / Deadnaming: A deadname is the name that a transgender, non-binary, and/or gender-expansive person was called before adopting a more self-affirming name later in life. This is a name an individual no longer uses or feels affirmed by. Deadnaming is when someone, intentionally or not, refers to a person who is transgender, non-binary, or gender nonconforming by the name they previously used. You may also hear it described as referring to someone by their “birth name” or their “given name.”

Employee: A person employed by the Park District, whether full-time, part-time, or seasonal.

Gender Expression: A person’s actual or perceived appearance, expression, identity, or behavior of being male, female, a blend of both or neither, whether or not that appearance, expression, identity or behavior is different from the person’s assigned sex at birth. This includes an individual’s characteristics and behaviors such as appearance, dress, mannerisms, speech patterns, and social interactions that are perceived as masculine or feminine.

Gender Identity: A person’s internal and individual experience of gender and a person’s sense of being male, female, a blend of both, something different, or neither, which may be the same or different from the sex assigned at birth. Everyone has a gender identity. Common examples may include “male/man/boy,” “female/woman/girl,” “non-binary,” “agender,” “trans/transgender,” “gender expansive,” “gender nonconforming,” any combination of these terms or something else.

Gender Nonconforming (also known as Gender Expansive, Gender Variant, or Gender Creative): A term that refers to individuals whose gender expression does not follow traditional or societal expectations or stereotypes based on their sex assigned at birth. Keep in mind that these expectations can vary across cultures and have changed over time. This may be used as an umbrella term when referring to young people still exploring the possibilities of their gender expression and/or gender identity.

Gender Pronouns: The set of pronouns that an individual would like others to use when referring to that individual. Common examples include, “she/her/hers,” “he/him/his,” “they/them/theirs,” and “ze/zir/zirs.” Transgender, non-binary and gender nonconforming Patrons may wish to use a different set of gender pronouns than the pronouns associated with their sex assigned at birth. These are sometimes called “affirmed gender pronouns” or “preferred gender pronouns.” Employees should always use the gender pronouns which affirm a Patron’s gender identity. Using the correct terms for someone is a sign of respect and recognition that you see them as they see themselves.

Harassment: Means unwelcome conduct, including verbal, nonverbal, visual, or physical conduct, that is based on an individual's actual or perceived membership in a Protected Category or their association with a person in a Protected Category when that offensive conduct is persistent, pervasive or severe and has the purpose or effect of creating an intimidating, hostile or offensive work or recreation environment or unreasonably interferes with, limits, or denies an individual's full and equal enjoyment of the Park District's programs, services, facilities, privileges, advantages, and accommodations or employment access, benefits, and opportunities.

Intersex: A general term for a person born with sex characteristics that do not fit the typical definitions of either male or female. People who are intersex are usually assigned male or female sexes at birth. Some, but by no means all, Patron who are intersex may identify their gender or express their gender in ways that are captured by this Policy's definitions of Transgender or Gender Nonconforming.

LGBTQ+: An acronym for "lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender and queer" with a "+" sign to recognize the limitless sexual orientations and gender identities.

Misgender: Misgendering occurs when a person intentionally or unintentionally refers to a person, relates to a person, or uses language to describe a person that doesn't align with their affirmed gender. This includes using gender pronouns that do not align with an individual's affirmed gender identity.

Non-binary: A term used to describe people whose gender identity is not exclusively male or female, including those who identify as a gender other than male or female, as more than one gender, or as no gender.

Outing: Exposing someone's sexual orientation or gender identity to others without their permission. Outing someone can have serious repercussions on employment, economic stability, personal safety or religious or family situations.

Patrons: Individuals of any age, including Youth, who are participating in Park District sponsored program, activities, or events either in-person, or online.

Protected Categories: Means an individual's actual or perceived race, color, religion, sex, gender identity, national origin, ancestry, age, marital status, disability, genetic information, unfavorable discharge from military service, sexual orientation, pregnancy, parental status, source of income, or any other basis protected by federal, state or local law, ordinance, or regulation.

Queer: A term people often use to express a spectrum of identities and orientations that are counter to the mainstream. Queer is often used as a catch-all to include many people, including those who do not identify as exclusively straight and/or folks who have non-binary or gender-expansive identities. This term was previously used as a slur, but has been reclaimed by many parts of the LGBTQ+ movement.

Questioning: Being unsure of and/or exploring your gender identity, your sexual orientation, or both. Many people go through stages of questioning as they learn new words that fit them better or as their feelings change over time.

Sex Assigned at Birth: A label a person is given at birth, often based on a medical professional's interpretation of the newborn's physical characteristics. Common examples may be "male," "female," or "intersex." This is typically the sex reflected on one's original birth certificate.

Sexual Orientation: A person's emotional and sexual attraction to other people based on the gender of the other person. Sexual orientation is not the same as gender identity.

Transgender: A term used to describe people whose gender identity is different from the sex they were assigned at birth. This is an umbrella term for a variety of gender identities.

Gender Affirmation (also known as "Transition"): The process for individuals to begin living as their affirmed gender identity. This may be social (changing gender expression, accessing facilities, using a different name/pronouns), medical (hormones and/or surgeries), and/or legal (changing name/gender marker on identity documents). Gender affirmation is different for every individual. It is increasingly common for gender affirmation to be fluid, meaning that gender expression may vary from day to day.

Youth: Children and teenagers who are participating in Park District sponsored program, activities, or events either in-person, or online.

Guidelines for All Park District Employees & Patrons

Privacy

All Patrons and Employees have a right to privacy. This includes the right to keep their transgender or non-binary identity or gender nonconforming presentation private while working at the Park District and while engaged in Park District activities.

Transgender, non-binary and gender nonconforming Patrons and Employees have the right to openly discuss and express their gender identity and expression at parks and during Park District activities and to decide when, with whom, and how to share private information. Park District Employees shall not disclose information that may reveal a gender identity to others without the Patron's or Employee's consent or unless authorized by the Office of Protection and Accountability or the Law Department.

Names/Pronouns

Patrons and Employees have the right to be addressed by a name and pronouns that correspond to the gender identity they consistently assert while at the Park District or engaged in Park District activities. Employees shall address Patrons and other Employees by their affirmed name and pronouns.

- Patrons and Employees are not required to obtain a court ordered name change and/or submit medical or psychological documentation as a prerequisite to being addressed by the name and pronouns that correspond to their gender identity.
- Parent(s)/guardian(s) consent is not required to address a Youth by their affirmed name and pronouns.

The intentional or persistent refusal by other Patrons or Employees to respect a Patron's or Employee's gender identity (for example, intentionally referring to the Patron or Employee by a name and/or gender pronouns that do not correspond to the Patron's or Employee's gender identity) is a violation of this Policy and [Chapter 4 of the Chicago Park District Code](#). Such violations will result in appropriate consequences for offending Employees and Patrons.

Restroom and Locker Room Accessibility

Patrons and Employee may use facilities in a manner that makes them feel support, safe, and affirmed in Park District activities.

All Patrons and Employees are allowed to use restrooms and locker rooms that correspond with their gender identity. An alternative request may be made by a Patron or Employee for privacy, safety, or other reasons. No Patron or Employee shall be forced to use a private facility because of their transgender identity, non-binary identity, or gender expression.

Supports and accommodations may also be provided to non-binary Patrons and Youth questioning their gender identity. These accommodations should be assessed on a case-by-case basis to

ensure that these Patrons feel supported, safe, and affirmed. Where possible, Employees will make the requested restrooms and locker rooms available immediately upon consultation with the Patron.

Any Patron or Employee who has a need or desire for increased privacy, regardless of the underlying reason, may be provided with reasonable alternative arrangements, where possible. Reasonable alternative arrangements may include the use of a private area, a separate changing schedule, or use of a single-stall restroom, if available. Any alternative arrangement shall be provided in a way that protects the Patron's privacy.

Additional Support for Patrons

Sports and Events

Transgender, non-binary and gender nonconforming Patrons shall be provided the same opportunities to participate in sports and other activities as all other Patrons.

Employees should avoid gender segregation when possible (e.g. lining up by boy and girl, etc.)

When gender segregation does occur (gender-segregated events, intramural sports, and non-competitive sports) transgender and gender nonconforming Patrons are allowed to participate in accordance with their gender identity, or in a manner that makes them feel safe and included.

The Park District recognizes that third party organizations that host events on Park District property may have separate policies and rules regarding transgender athletes for their competitive sporting events. The Park District will encourage those organizations to allow transgender, non-binary, and gender nonconforming Patrons to compete without discrimination, and in a way that respects their safety and dignity.

Overnight Trips

Transgender, non-binary and gender nonconforming Patrons shall be provided the same opportunities to participate in overnight Park District-sponsored activities as all other Patrons. In no case shall a Patron be denied the right to participate in an overnight field trip because of the Patron's gender identity or expression.

When planning overnight trips, Employees should ensure Patron's safety and comfort, and minimize stigmatization of the Patron. Employees shall communicate with their Area or Regional Manager regarding questions involving overnight Park District sponsored activities.

No Patron shall be forced to use a private overnight room because of their transgender identity, non-binary identity, or gender expression.