

JOB SEARCH TIPS FOR TRANS AND NON-BINARY STANDOUTS RESUME

The Career Education Office is committed to helping all students with their career planning and job search process. Everyone has a unique story which impacts their career narrative and should be honored and supported. This handout was created by a Career Mentor, Alex Steitz '22 and is not intended to be all-encompassing but to share important information that may help you make your own decisions.

SHOULD I DISCLOSE MY IDENTITY IN MY RESUME OR COVER LETTER?

Disclosing your identity (or outing yourself) at any stage of the job search process is a very personal decision — there is no “right” or “wrong” answer, only the answer that is right for you at this time.

First, consider your own comfort level and interest in sharing your sexuality or gender identity with others. It is important for many people to be out and visible. Others prefer to be more private. Is it important to you to be out at work? Second, research your audience. Is it likely the organization you're applying to will look favorably upon LGBTQIA-related experiences and activities? If you're concerned they will not, you can highlight the skills you developed without identifying the organization where you worked

HOW DO I INCLUDE SKILLS GAINED THROUGH WORK WITH LGBTQIA ORGANIZATIONS WITHOUT DISCLOSING?

If you decide you do not want to disclose your identity on your resume or cover letter, there are several options for you to convey the skills you have gained from LGBTQIA-related activities:

- You might choose to list the organization you were affiliated with by either an acronym or a general name such as “community organization” or “anti-discrimination organization.” However, be prepared to explain during an interview what the acronym stands for or what an “anti-discrimination organization” does.
- Another option is to use a functional resume that is organized around skill areas rather than the chronological timeline of specific jobs. This allows you to highlight your skills while de-emphasizing where you developed them.

IS IT ALRIGHT TO USE MY PREFERRED NAME ON MY RESUME?

A resume is not a legal document, so use your preferred name. Some individuals handle this by listing a first initial, followed by the preferred name; others by identifying the preferred name in quotes, e.g.: K. Micah Jones, or: Kelsey “Micah” Jones. If application forms specifically request legal name, this may be used for background checks, and your legal name should be listed. The issue is complex, depending on state and local antidiscrimination policies and it may be helpful to consult with a trans-knowledgeable lawyer.

WHEN DO I HAVE TO USE MY LEGAL NAME?

You will need to use your legal name for the purposes of background checks, so you may need to include on an application. Once employed, you'll also need to use your legal name on tax, insurance and banking forms. You may use your preferred name in an e-mail/phone directory, company identification, etc. Human Resources staff members are bound by confidentiality policies, but there is always some risk of disclosure. If you have taken steps to legally change your name on all documents, use your new legal name; many trans individuals do choose to make this legal name change.

SHOULD I OUT MYSELF IN AN INTERVIEW? CAN AN EMPLOYER ASK ABOUT MY SEXUALITY OR GENDER IDENTITY?

Once again, outing yourself at any stage of the job search process is personal and up to you.

- The decision to choose professional interview attire according to cisgender norms or wear clothes that allow you to express your gender identity may vary over time and from interview to interview, depending on your personal comfort level. Your knowledge of the employer or industry may inform your decision. Ideally you want to choose clothes that make you feel confident.
- Employers can and might ask about your sexuality or gender identity. In some states it is illegal to make a hiring decision based on your answer, if included in state/jurisdiction employment nondiscrimination laws. However, in other states, it remains legal to discriminate against people because of their LGBTQIA identity.
- It is your choice whether you answer the question directly or not — there are many ways to redirect the conversation or politely decline to answer the question as irrelevant to your employment.
- The best you can do is prepare for the questions you'd be most nervous about answering so that you go into the interview feeling confident and prepared.
- Mock interviews with a career adviser are a great way to prepare yourself for an interview whether you wish to out yourself or not. Schedule an appointment with the CEO.

WHAT ARE SPECIFIC ISSUES FACING TRANSGENDER AND NON-BINARY CANDIDATES?

- Be sure to communicate your name and pronouns with those you have asked to serve as references.
- In your research, look specifically for gender identity/expression language in discrimination policies, gender-neutral bathrooms, and support groups for trans employees.
- Additionally, preparing for all kinds of questions will allow you to clearly articulate yourself and, hopefully, be more confident in your interview. While no amount of preparation can overcome bias, you'll increase your chances of a successful job search if you feel confident and self-assured.

HOW DO I SEARCH FOR LGBTQIA-FRIENDLY EMPLOYERS?

These are several search engines designed specifically to help job seekers find LGBTQIA-friendly employers. Check-out the following sites: <http://outandequal.org/> and <https://lgbtconnect.com/>.

Also, review organization websites, talk to those you trust and get referrals for LGBTQIA-friendly organizations.

HOW WILL I KNOW HOW SAFE AND SUPPORTIVE A FUTURE EMPLOYER IS?

While it may be difficult to determine how truly supportive any organization is, exploring some key indicators can give you a sense of the espoused values of an institution:

- Non-discrimination policies that include sexual orientation and gender identity/expression
- Domestic partner benefits
- Trainings that include sensitivity to LGBTQIA issues
- In-house support or employee groups, either formal or informal
- Gender-neutral bathrooms
- Positive statements from people with experience

WHAT ABOUT FINDING AN LGBTQIA-FRIENDLY GEOGRAPHIC LOCATION?

Finding a LGBTQIA-friendly location is similar to finding a LGBTQIA-friendly employer. Read about some key factors that can help you get a sense of the local environment include:

- State non-discrimination laws and policies
- Hate crime statistics
- State adoption policies and laws
- Educational policies and laws

Two sites to check to learn more about states are: <https://lambdalegal.org/> and <https://www.lgbtmap.org/>

WHAT ARE GOOD RESOURCE ABOUT TRANSGENDER ISSUES IN THE WORKPLACE?

- GLAAD: www.glaad.org. A leading legal rights organization dedicated to ending discrimination based on sexual orientation, HIV status and gender identity and expression.
- Lambda Legal: <https://lambdalegal.org/>. National association committed to achieving full recognition of civil rights for lesbians, gay men, bisexuals, transgender people and everyone living with HIV through impact litigation, education and public policy work.
- Movement Advancement Project: <https://www.lgbtmap.org/>. Independent think tank that provides rigorous research, insight and communications that help speed equality and opportunity for all.
- National Center for Transgender Equality: <https://transequality.org/>. National organization devoted to ending discrimination and violence against transgender people through education and advocacy.
- Transgender Law Center: <https://transgenderlawcenter.org/>. Resources on transgender law.
- Transgender Law and Policy Institute: www.thetaskforce.org. The Transgender Civil Rights project is a leading source providing legislative, policy and strategy assistance.

Adapted from [University of Vermont, Career Center](#) and [Columbia University Center for Career Education](#)

For other tips & questions contact the CEO at 410-337-6191 or
visit the CEO website at www.goucher.edu/CEO