

The Cornell University

**TRANSGENDER GUIDE  
TO TRANSITIONING &  
GENDER  
AFFIRMATION  
IN THE WORKPLACE**



Cornell University  
Division of Human Resources

Department of Inclusion and Workforce Diversity

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## Introduction

Cornell University is committed to creating a safe and respectful campus for all members of our community including those of all gender identities and expressions. The following guide provides information about the ways in which the University is committed to supporting our transgender employees. This guide covers specific situations and questions for transgender employees, but is also useful to HR professionals, managers, hiring managers, and allies.

An inclusive workplace aligns with Cornell's institutional values and helps us attract, retain, and promote the best talent. The best talent comes from all backgrounds, experiences and identities and we are committed to supporting a diverse workforce. The goals of this guide are to:

- Provide steps transgender employees can take when coming out and transitioning at work.
- Provide knowledge to help transgender employees update their personal information in university systems.
- Offer information about on-campus and off-campus resources available to support transgender employees.

## Cornell University's Non-Discrimination Policy

Cornell University's official [non-discrimination](#) policy includes the protection of "sex, sexual orientation, gender identity and expression. This policy furthers the University's commitment to creating a learning, living, and working environment free of bias, discrimination, harassment, and sexual and related misconduct, and to meeting applicable legal requirements.

## Tips for Coming Out At Work

This process is very personal and there is no one way to tell your employer and colleagues that you are transgender. Whether, how or when you choose to share this information and who you choose to tell is entirely up to you. Below we provide some tips for your consideration:

- Coming out can be a stressful experience for some people. Remember, you make the decision about when you are comfortable coming out.
  - What does safety and comfort look like for you?
  - Are you comfortable with your own understanding of your identity?
- If and/or when you are ready to share with others, determine what you want to say to your supervisor and/or colleagues.
  - What is important for them to know about you?
  - What is not important for them to know?
- Start with one individual who you believe will be an ally to you and ask them to support you as you come out to others. This might be a close colleague, your supervisor, or someone in human resources.
- Consider developing a personal timeline for when you will tell various colleagues.
  - When do you want to start telling people?
  - Who will you tell first?
  - How will you do this? Email? In-person?
- Meet with your supervisor. Think of what support looks like for you and share this with them when you meet.
  - What do you need to make the workplace feel inclusive to you? This could be access to a bathroom that aligns with your gender identity and gender expression.
- The Department of Inclusion and Workforce Diversity can support by helping you plan your first steps. For more information, email Cornell F. Woodson ([cfw58@cornell.edu](mailto:cfw58@cornell.edu)).

## Tips for Transitioning at Work

Whether or not you plan to medically transition or just change your name and gender expression, Cornell is committed to supporting you. Here are a few items you might consider:

- Share this guide or its companion version, “A Guide to Supporting Transgender People in the Workplace”, with someone you trust to act as an ally to you during this process. This might be a colleague, your supervisor, or someone in human resources.
  
- Develop a personal timeline for your transition.
  - If you plan to medically transition, how long will you need to be away?
  - Do you have a timeframe for when this will take place?
  - Even if you don’t plan to medically transition, will you want time away? How long?
  
- Speak with your supervisor about your plans and what you might need in terms of support.
  - Do you want someone to accompany you to this meeting? Someone from Human Resources or the Department of Inclusion and Workforce Diversity is more than willing to attend with you.
  - What does support look like for you?
  - What do you need in order for the workplace to feel inclusive to you?
  - What bathroom will you need access to?
  
- Construct a timeline with your supervisor.
  - Would you like an announcement made about your transition? When should this be done?
  - Who should receive this announcement? The entire division, department, or just your colleagues? Who will share this and how?
  - When would you like to start using different gender pronouns?
  - Will you take on a new name?
  - When would you like to start using that name?
  - If you plan to use a different bathroom, when will that begin?
  
- Build your support system. Do you know of university, local, and national resources?

For more questions or items to consider, please view the “[Sample Workplace Transition Plan and Guiding Questions](#)” at the end of this guide.

## Updating Your Personal Information via Workday

As you begin transitioning, you may want to update your personal information in Workday. Here are some steps for doing so.

### Legal Name Change in Workday

Your legal name in Workday must match exactly how your name is listed on any official documentation, such as a social security card, birth certificate, permanent resident card, or employment authorization document. If, as part of your transition, you legally change your name and obtain a new copy of any of these documents---you can submit your legal name change by following these steps:

- Log into Workday and select *personal information*.
- On the next screen, select *legal name* from the *change* column.
- Make the changes you wish to make and select a date your name change should become effective.
- Click submit!

Once you submit the change via Workday, it will route to your local Human Resources Representative who will contact you for supporting documentation. You must submit a copy of your official documentation reflecting your new name to the local HR representative or bring them to Records at 337 Pine Tree Rd., East Hill Plaza.

### Preferred Name Change in Workday

Before your name is legally changed or if you are not planning to legally change your name, you may wish to still use a preferred name at work. To do this, follow these steps:

- Log into Workday and select *personal information*.
- On the next screen, select *preferred name* on the *change* column.
- On the next screen, uncheck the box at the top that says, “Use legal name as preferred name”.

- On the same page, make your desired changes to your name.
- Click submit!

Please note that your legal name should not be visible to others in the system. Employees will be able to search for you using your preferred name. However, some records such as payroll, health insurance and some benefits, require use of your legal name and; therefore, your legal rather than your preferred name will continue to appear on those records.

### Updating the Name Associated with Your Email

When you change your legal or preferred name, as described above, the name that appears when you send email will also be updated. It may take a few minutes before the change actually happens.

### Updating Your NetID

Your NetID can only be changed if you change your legal name and after you have submitted your legal name change request to Human Resources via Workday. Once this has been updated in Workday, email [computer\\_access@cornell.edu](mailto:computer_access@cornell.edu) to request a new NetID.

If you have not or do not plan to legally change your name, then your NetID will remain the same. However, you can choose an alias for your email address to reflect your preferred name. Let's say, for example, your preferred name is Pat Smith, but your legal name is John Smith and the NetID version of your email is [js1@cornell.edu](mailto:js1@cornell.edu). You can create and use an email alias that reads [pat.smith@cornell.edu](mailto:pat.smith@cornell.edu). To do this, you should:

- Go to [whoiam.cornell.edu](http://whoiam.cornell.edu).
- Click the *email* tab.
- Under *advanced options*, look for the section labeled *optional email alias*.
- Click *select your email alias*.
- Select the format you want to use. If you select *special request*, make sure your request meets the special format request guidelines and remember to fill in the *justification* field.

- Click submit!

Please note that if you have only changed your preferred name and then created an email alias, your original NetID will still exist and remain your official NetID for Cornell purposes. Anyone with that NetID will still be able to use it to reach you. However, you can also share your email alias as a way to contact you. Both email addresses reach the same inbox.

### Gender Identity and Sexual Orientation in Workday

While you cannot change your gender marker in Workday until it has been legally changed, you can indicate your gender identity. To do this, you should:

- Log into Workday.
- Select *personal information*.
- On the next screen, select *personal information* again in the change column.
- Scroll to the bottom and find *sexual orientation and gender identity box*.
- *To edit, click the pencil icon on the box*
- Make the changes you desire.
- Click submit!

### Employee Picture ID

The Office of the University Registrar is responsible for creating university picture ID cards for the Cornell community. To obtain a new employee ID to reflect your preferred name or legal name change and to take a new photo, you can visit the Registrar's Office located in Day Hall, B07. IDs are produced between 8 AM and 4:00 PM, Monday through Friday. No appointment is required and there will be no fee for obtaining a new picture ID.

### Transgender Inclusive Health Insurance Plan Options/Features

To learn more about your benefits, please make an appointment with someone in the HR Services & Transition Center. They are located in the East Hill Office Building, Suite 130 (395 Pine Tree Road). You can also contact them via phone at (607) 255 – 3936 or via email at [benefits@cornell.edu](mailto:benefits@cornell.edu).

## Gender Friendly Restrooms

A part of your transition may include needing access to a bathroom that aligns with your gender identity. In keeping with the University's policy of nondiscrimination and the commitment to inclusion, the University allows students, staff, faculty, and visitors to use the restroom or facility that corresponds to their gender identity. To view our Restroom/Facilities Use Guidelines, [click here](#). The University also maintains a number of [universal restrooms](#) across campus to address restroom facility access not necessarily related to gender identity, such as access for parents with children and for other attendants/caregivers. These facilities are all-gender, accessible spaces, which may include amenities for families such as baby changing stations.

## On-Campus Resources and Services

### Faculty and Staff Assistance Program (FSAP)

Located at 312 College Avenue, [FSAP](#) provides confidential counseling and consultation services to benefits eligible Cornell employees and their partners.

### Colleague Network Groups (CNGs)

The university sponsors a number of [CNGs](#). There is one for LGBT employees, among other identity groups. For more information, contact Cassandre Joseph at 607-255-3976.

### Department of Inclusion and Workforce Diversity (DIWD)

The [DIWD](#) is here to provide support as you navigate this process, if issues arise in your workplace, or if you need help finding resources. For more information, contact Cornell F. Woodson at 607-255-5740.

### Incident Reporting Form

Should you ever experience or witness an incident related to bias, discrimination, or harassment, you should feel free to submit a report through our [incident reporting form](#). We have dedicated staff members who provide support and follow up on reports.

## LGBT Resource Center

Faculty and Staff are involved with the LGBTQIA+ community in a variety of ways by attending one of the many events offered to the larger Cornell community, explore the many academic and social offerings, as well as collaborate with the Center to organize speakers, panels, and other events that help build an inclusive campus community.

## Off-Campus Resources and Services

The Ithaca community has a number of great resources for transgender health.

### Planned Parenthood of the Southern Finger Lakes

Located in downtown Ithaca (620 W Seneca St, Ithaca, NY 14850), Planned Parenthood of the Southern Finger Lakes has hormone therapy and preventive health services for transgender people. This is not a campus service, but a service provided in the local community. There is a fee for this service but if finances are a concern these can be discussed before one's first appointment. A person may become a new patient if they are seeking transgender related health care for the first time — or, if they are already being seen by a medical provider in their home community or their previous town that is providing transgender related health services to them, they may transfer their care and their records to this office so that they have a local provider here. You can reach them at (607) 273-1513 to request an appointment or request additional information.

*The Planned Parenthood website also includes an awesome new booklet that has information on every process for changing your name and information as a transgender person!*

[Planned Parenthood of the Southern Finger Lakes Transgender Overview](#)  
[Planned Parenthood of the Southern Finger Lakes Transgender Healthcare, Booklet, and Forms](#)

### Voice and Communication Modification Program

One of the only programs like it in the country, the Voice and Communication Modification Program at Ithaca College focuses on developing voice, articulation, non-verbal communication, language, voice-related quality of life, and self-perception. It's open to both male to female and female to male transgender people. Community members have to pay a nominal fee and must sign up in advance to be a part of this group. Information and brochure about the Voice and Communication Modification Program can be found [here](#).

### Transgender Support Group

The Ithaca Transgender Group is a confidential, peer-led support group. It meets every other Sunday from 5PM to 7PM. They also hold meetings where they welcome significant others, friends, family and allies. To learn more, visit [ithacatransgendergroup.com](http://ithacatransgendergroup.com) or email Natasha at [natasha@ithacatransgendergroup.com](mailto:natasha@ithacatransgendergroup.com).

### Tompkins County Human Rights Commission

Offers telephone or in-office consultation regarding questions of rights, disputes, alleged violation of anti-discrimination laws which provide protection in the areas of employment, housing, credit, public accommodation, and public, non-sectarian educational institutions. To learn more, visit their website [here](#).

## Sample Workplace Transition Plan and Guiding Questions

This sample Workplace Transition Plan addresses some of the processes that you might consider discussing with your supervisor. It can be customized to fit your needs and vision for your transition.

1. You could first choose to share the news of your upcoming transition with a trusted ally. This person could be a colleague, someone in HR, or a supervisor.
2. You could then contact someone in HR to discuss your plans for transitioning. This would be an opportunity to learn about all policies related to inclusion, coverage for medical transition, if you are comfortable telling your supervisor, etc.
3. A meeting could be planned between you and your supervisor, as well as anyone else you would like to be present.
4. You, the HR Rep, and your supervisor could consider discussing how the announcement will be made. Will it just be sent to your immediate colleagues? Will it be department wide? Division wide? All three? What format? Who should employees with questions contact?

*Note: Depending on how widely communication about your transition will be shared, management staff beyond your supervisor should be made aware early so they can be prepared to support once the announcement is made.*

5. Consider a timeline for your transition. However, you may not know what this looks like right away. These are some questions to consider as you are planning:

- A) When will you begin using a new name, if you choose to do so?
- B) When will you begin to use your affirming gender pronouns?
- C) If you choose to, when will you begin making changes to your gender expression?
- D) If you choose to, when will you begin transitioning medically?
- E) How long will you need to be away from work? What dates?
- F) When will colleagues be made aware of your transition?
  - i. Do you plan to tell certain colleagues one-on-one? What date?
  - ii. What date should the department announcement be made?
  - iii. What date should the division be made aware?
- G) By what date should your email address, employee ID, and name change go live?

*Note: This timeline can be changed, because it is YOUR process. Please remember that certain parts of your transition will take longer than others. Create a timeline that attempts to realistically and accurately predict how long each step might take.*

- 6) Consider what bathroom you will use and communicate your needs to your supervisor. Do you need a gender neutral bathroom?
- 7) **For Managers to consider:** Will any bathroom signs need to be changed?
- 8) **For Managers to consider:** If training will be implemented, when will this take place?
- 9) **For you to consider:** If training will be implemented, would you like to be present for it?

### Transition Plan for [ENTER NAME]

**Note:** The process of transitioning can change day to day for an individual. This means, the dates chosen for this plan can change too. These dates are meant to be guides for ensuring that the plan is clear and the involved individuals understand their roles and responsibilities. Lastly, it is possible that it may take a few meetings to complete this plan.

Estimate of date to begin using affirming name and pronouns: \_\_\_\_\_

- What name should be used at this time: \_\_\_\_\_

**Note:** It is completely fine if you do not know at this time.

- What affirming pronouns should be used at this time: \_\_\_\_\_

**Note:** It is completely fine if you do not know at this time.

Prior to the above date, is there another name that you would like used: \_\_\_\_\_

**Note:** Until you are ready to use your affirming name, you may not want to keep using the name given to you at birth. Some people choose a nickname.

Estimate of date for obtaining employee ID with new photo: \_\_\_\_\_

Estimate of date for announcement to team members, if applicable: \_\_\_\_\_

Estimate of date for making department or unit wide announcement, if applicable: \_\_\_\_\_

Estimate of date for use of a different bathroom: \_\_\_\_\_

If you plan to medically transition, what dates will you need to be away from work?

**Note:** It is completely fine if you do not know at this time.

- Start - \_\_\_\_\_ End - \_\_\_\_\_

If training is provided for your team, department, or unit ---- would you like to be there?

- Y or N (Circle one.)

Is there additional information/needs you would like to share at this time?

## Sample Employee Transition Announcement Email

**Sent:** Monday, July XX, XXXX 9:00 AM

**To:** XXXXXXXXXXX@cornell.edu

**Subject:** Staff change

Dear [INSERT NAME OF DEPARTMENT OR UNIT],

I am writing to notify you of a change regarding one of our staff members in [NAME OF DEPARTMENT OR UNIT].

On [ENTER MONTH] XX, [ENTER NAME OF EMPLOYEE] will have a new preferred name, thus moving forward would like to be addressed as [ENTER AFFIRMING NAME]. [ENTER AFFIRMING NAME] will be using [ENTER AFFIRMING PRONOUNS] as pronouns.

Leadership is working to support [ENTER AFFIRMING NAME] during [ENTER PRONOUN] transition period, as well as with the performance of [ENTER PRONOUN] job. You may address any questions or concerns to [ENTER NAME OF SUPERVISOR] at [ENTER EMAIL AND PHONE NUMBER] or to [ENTER NAME OF YOUR UNIT'S HR REPRESENTATIVE] at [ENTER EMAIL AND PHONE NUMBER].

If you are interested in learning more about the LGBTQIA+ community at Cornell, please visit the LGBT Resource Center for information, education opportunities, and ways to get involved: <http://lgbtrc.cornell.edu>. Cornell's Inclusive Excellence Academy is another great resource that offers programs and workshops designed for participants at all stages of their understanding of diversity, inclusion, and belonging: <https://diversity.cornell.edu/learning/inclusive-excellence-academy>. You may also contact Cornell's Workforce Diversity and Inclusion office at [owdi@cornell.edu](mailto:owdi@cornell.edu) or (255-7066).

Thank you for your understanding and consideration in keeping Cornell University and [ENTER NAME OF DEPARTMENT OR UNIT] a productive and safe working environment for everyone.

Sincerely,

[ENTER NAME OF PERSON SENDING EMAIL]