

**City of Seaside**  
**GENDER INCLUSION AND PRONOUN POLICY**  
**JULY 2024**

**A. PURPOSE**

The purpose of this policy is to promote a professionally inclusive and respectful environment, free from gender discrimination and stereotyping, by setting forth professional guidelines and standards both in the workplace and when serving the public, regardless of gender identity or gender expression. This Policy demonstrates a citywide commitment that is impactful and welcomes all transgender persons, gender-nonconforming, gender-nonbinary, and gender-transitioning employees, applicants, contractors, and the public.

**B. POLICY**

The City of Seaside prohibits discrimination based upon an individual's legally protected characteristics, including on the basis of gender, gender identity and gender expression, and no person shall be discriminated against based on this basis, in any aspect of employment including but not limited to recruitment, selection, hiring, wages, hours, benefits, assignment or promotion. All employees, applicants, contractors, and the public must be treated with dignity and respect as defined in this Policy.

Gender identity refers to a person's internal, deeply felt sense of being male, female, or something other or in-between, regardless of the sex they were assigned at birth. Gender expression refers to an individual's characteristics and behaviors (such as appearance, dress, mannerisms, speech patterns, and social interactions) that may be perceived as masculine, feminine or other. An inclusive environment of unity is accomplished when the correct use of someone's personal pronoun is used when speaking about another person without an implication of the person's gender, as these references are not always correct or helpful.

The City will not tolerate disrespectful language or behavior from its employees in violation of these protections, and every person shall be addressed in a manner that is consistent with each person's expressed gender identity and expression preference. This includes the use of a person's preferred pronoun or lack of pronoun, as well as preferred name, even if it is different from the person's legal name. The refusal of managers, supervisors, co-workers, and other employees to address individuals in a manner consistent with their expressed preference will not be tolerated.

**1. Employment**

It is unlawful to refuse to hire, promote, or fire a person because of a person's actual or perceived gender, including being or being perceived to be transgender, non-binary, or gender non-conforming. It is also unlawful to set different compensation or terms and conditions of employment because of an employee's gender. Examples of terms and conditions of employment include work assignments, employee benefits, and keeping the workplace free from harassment.

## **2. Gender Specific Facilities**

The City of Seaside prohibits discrimination on the basis of gender identity and gender expression, and regardless of assumptions about the gender of another person, based on the person's appearance or name, or one's stated preference, everyone shall have equal access to all City facilities.

Restrooms, locker rooms, and other facilities are open to City employees, applicants, and contractors, regardless of their gender identities. The City encourages departments to use all-gender restrooms, although transgender and gender-nonconforming employees are not required to use these restrooms. City employees cannot harass or question individuals about their facility choices.

## **3. Gender-Specific Workplace Assignments and Duties**

Transgender and gender-nonconforming employees will be assigned in a manner consistent with their gender identity and/or gender expression for gender-specific job assignments (including sleeping arrangements).

Employees are entitled to use facilities and shared spaces that correspond to their gender identity and/or gender expression. Managers and supervisors must make reasonable efforts to provide access to facilities in a way that allows employees to keep their transgender or gender-nonconforming status confidential.

## **4. Public Access:**

It is unlawful for providers of public programs and services, their employees, or their agents to deny any person, or communicate intent to deny, the services, facilities, or privileges of a public access directly or indirectly because of their actual or perceived gender, including being or being perceived to be transgender, non-binary, or gender non-conforming. Refusing to allow people to utilize single-gender facilities and programs most closely aligned with their gender, will not be tolerated. Simply put, it is unlawful to deny any person full and equal enjoyment of a public programs and services because of gender.

## **C. APPLICATION**

The City does not tolerate sexual or other harassment of employees, volunteers, interns, contractors, vendors, or visitors at the workplace or in any work-related situation by anyone. If this policy causes concern due to a sincerely held religious belief, medical condition, or any other legally protected area, please contact the Human Resources Department to discuss appropriate options for accommodation.

## **D. DEFINITIONS AND CORE CONCEPTS**

Definitions can explain and de-mystify gender differences and provide guidance, as well as protect an individual's rights and responsibilities. Individuals may or may not use the same terms in reference to gender to describe themselves and there are many other terms related to gender, gender identity, and gender expression with which a person may

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identify, including but not limited to, androgynous, gender diverse, gender expansive, gender fluid, agender, bigender, genderqueer, pangender, MTF (male to female), and FTM (female to male). More importantly, bear in mind that language evolves, and common terms may change.. Thus, the best practice is to refer to people with the term(s) they use to self-identify.

### **1. Confidentiality and Privacy**

City employees, applicants, and contractors have the right to discuss their gender identity or gender expression openly or may choose to keep that information private. The medical, personal, or intimate details about someone's gender identity, transgender status, or transition are personal business. They decide when, with whom, and how much of their privileged information to share.

This information is confidential under state privacy laws which prohibits the City from asking employees about their sexual orientation, gender identity, or anything else related to their sexuality. Spreading rumors or gossiping about anyone's gender identity or gender expression is inappropriate and in violation of this Policy. Managers and supervisors must also be sensitive to transgender or gender-nonconforming employees' special concerns, such as safety, privacy, transitioning, etc.

### **2. Transitioning**

Many employees continue to work while they transition. Some employees seek medical treatment as part of their gender transition, while others may not. Together management and human resources staff must foster a respectful work environment that promotes professional respect for transitioning individuals in the workplace.

A transitioning employee's colleagues and other City employees may only be given the employee's new name and pronoun(s). All other personal information about the employee remains confidential and must not be discussed, as noted in the confidentiality section of this policy.

### **3. Use of Names and Pronouns**

A pronoun is a word that is used instead of a noun or noun phrase. There are many pronouns available. The most common pronouns are "he," "she," and "they." Some people do not use any pronouns and are addressed only by their name. Employees, applicants, and contractors must be addressed by the names and pronouns they choose. An employee may request a chosen name on the identification badge issued by the Human Resources Department. Employees may also request that their email addresses reflect their chosen names.

All people, including employees, interns and volunteers, and public participants in programs and services, have the right to use and have others use their name and pronouns regardless of whether they have identification in that name or have obtained a court-ordered name change, except in very limited circumstances where certain federal, state, or local laws require otherwise (e.g., for purposes of employment eligibility verification with the federal government). Asking someone in good faith for their name and gender pronouns is not a violation of the law.

Using someone's correct personal pronoun is a respectful way to create an inclusive environment, just as is the same as using a person's name. Replacing a pronoun or person's name with an unacceptable nickname and then calling them that nickname against their will, can be just as disrespectful and offensive as referring to them using the incorrect pronoun or not in accordance with how that person wants to be known. Or worse, actively choosing to ignore the pronouns someone has stated they go by could imply that the oppressive notion that gender nonconforming people, do not or should not exist and can be highly offensive.

All employees must use their legal names for certain purposes, such as payroll, retirement accounts, the human resources system (Tyler), and some departmental badges. Only a few employees are legally allowed to see official employment records. In other words, although an individual's legal name is in the system, it is confidential.

**i. Why do pronouns matter to people?**

- As City employees, it shows that we value creating safe, inclusive spaces for people of any gender and that gender cannot be assumed based on appearance, voice, or name. This recognition creates a safe environment for transgender and non-binary<sup>1</sup> folks.
- As a cisgender<sup>2</sup> person (or "cis" for short), sharing your pronouns normalizes the practice and is often more impactful than a transgender person doing so.
- Pronouns are a useful, natural part of our language that conveys gender identity<sup>3</sup>.
- Regardless of gender, it is disrespectful to use incorrect pronouns for someone.
- For some transgender<sup>4</sup> and gender non-binary people, pronouns are an important part of expressing their identity. Consistently using the wrong pronouns, especially after being corrected, is invalidating.

<sup>1</sup> *Gender non-binary people: People whose gender is neither male nor female.*

<sup>2</sup> *The word "cisgender" was coined as a more respectful way of saying someone is "not transgender." From Latin, "cis" is a prefix that means "on the same side of" while "trans" is a prefix that means "transcend or across".*

<sup>3</sup> *Gender identity: A person's internal, deeply felt sense of being male, female, both, neither, or other gender(s).*

<sup>4</sup> *Transgender people: People whose gender does not match their sex assigned at birth.*

**ii. Why should I put my pronouns in my email signature?**

As stated previously, it is optional for all employees to choose whether they wish to use pronouns. Any person using pronouns does so when they name the pronouns that they want to be referred to by in the singular third person (when referring to yourself) or second person (when referring to a person when talking to that same person) do not vary. For reference, however, the following are examples of singular first-person and second-person pronouns, as well as third-person pronouns.

For example, continue to use singular **first-person pronouns**: "I am a writer and wrote that book **myself**. Those ideas are **mine**. Do you like both **me** and **my**

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ideas?" For singular ***second-person pronouns***, continue to use "You are a writer and wrote that book **yourself**. Those ideas are **yours**. I like both **you** and **your** ideas."

In the case of singular ***third-person pronouns***, use pronoun as appropriate, based upon the pronouns the person being referred to goes by as indicated by how they wish to be referred to. For example, the **they/them** pronoun set is acceptable to use when you do not yet know if a person goes by another set or sets of pronouns.

Please remember just because a person goes by a certain set or sets of pronouns is not indicative of that person's gender. A person could be transgender or not and might share the pronouns they go by. Another person could be a man or a woman or both or neither, and share any number of these sets of pronouns as the correct ones to use for them, but in any case, the set they choose to go by is not necessarily indicative of gender. For example, in **She/Her**: "She is a writer and wrote that book **herself**. Those ideas are **hers**. I like both **her** and **her** ideas." In the case of **He/Him**: "He is a writer and wrote that book **himself**. Those ideas are **his**. I like both **him** and **his** ideas."

When using **They/Them**: "They are a writer and wrote that book **themselves**. Those ideas are **theirs**. I like both **them** and **their** ideas." Please note that although "they" pronouns here are singular and refer to an individual, the verbs are conjugated the same as with the plural "they" (e.g., "they are"). Also note that in this singular pronoun set many use "themselves" rather than "themselves," although both are typically acceptable.

For **Ze/Zir**: "Ze is a writer and wrote that book **hirsself**. Those ideas are **hirs**. I like both **hir** and **hir** ideas." Please note that "ze" is usually pronounced with a long "e" and that "hir" and its forms are usually pronounced like the English word "here." Some people instead go by "ze/zir" pronouns because of the more consistent pronunciation and spelling.

When using ***no pronouns*** simply use the person's name. For example, in the use of the name Lan. **Lan** is a writer and wrote that book. Those ideas are **Lan's**. I like both **Lan** and **Lan's** ideas." If the reflexive component were important to communicate a message, you could use alternative language such as "**Lan** wrote that book unassisted" or "**Lan** was the sole author of that book." Some might simply say "**Lan** wrote the book **Lan's** self." It is important to be aware of the existence of other pronouns used by some people (e.g., ze/zir, per/pers, ey/em, xe/xem, etc.). When seeing the use of multiple sets of pronouns this typically means that it is okay to use any of the sets they go by (e.g., "they/them/their").

Use non-binary, gender-neutral titles (e.g., "Mx." usually pronounced like "mix" instead of Mr. or Mrs." and non-binary "folks" or "everyone" instead of "ladies and gentlemen"). To find out more about pronoun sets go to <http://mypronouns.org>.

More importantly, if you are not sure, you are encouraged to ask the person who goes by those pronouns to determine the proper ways to utilize them in the same manner you would inquire about the use of a person's name by simply asking for more information or examples so that you can be supportive and respectful.

**iii. What do I say if someone asks why I have pronouns in my email signature?**

A great way to create and normalize space for people to share their pronouns is first to share your own when writing an email. You can do this by saying, for example, "Hi, my name is Farida and I go by the pronoun "she" or "I'm Yoshi and I'm referred to by 'he/him' pronouns," and yet another way is to include pronouns in your email signature line (e.g. Jamaal Johnson My Pronouns: he/him/himself OR Jamaal Johnson Pronoun: he).

The incorporation of pronouns is an optional part of the City's signature block that helps create a more inclusive space for people (e.g., Ms./Mrs./Mx.), and supports the City's policies against discrimination on the basis of gender identity and gender expression.

**iv. Examples of Violations of this Policy**

- a. Intentional or repeated refusal to use a person's name, pronouns, or title. For example, repeatedly calling a transgender woman "him" or "Mr." after she has made clear that she uses she/her and Ms.
- b. Refusal to use a person's name, pronouns, or title because they do not conform to gender stereotypes. For example, insisting on calling a non-binary person "Mr." after they have requested to be called "Mx."
- c. Conditioning a person's use of their name on obtaining a court-ordered name change or providing identification in that name. For example, a covered entity may not refuse to call a transgender man who introduces himself as Manuel by that name because his identification lists his name as Maribel.
- d. Requiring a person to provide information about their medical history or proof of having undergone medical procedures in order to use their preferred name, pronouns, or title.
- e. Prohibiting a person from using a particular program or facility because they do not conform to gender stereotypes. For example, a women's class or program targeting women may not turn away a transgender woman because she looks too masculine. Similarly, a men's program cannot deny service to a transgender man because he does not look masculine enough.
- f. Prohibiting a transgender person from using the single-gender program or facility most closely aligned with their gender identity. For example, a public facility cannot prohibit a transgender man from using the men's restroom.
- g. Requiring a gender non-conforming person to provide identification or proof of their gender to access the appropriate single-gender program or facility.
- h. Barring a non-binary student from a single-gender after-school program out of concern that they will make other participants uncomfortable.

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- i. Forcing a transgender person, non-binary, gender non-conforming, or intersex person to use a single-occupancy restroom instead of a shared restroom.
- j. Making unwelcome jokes about a person's sexuality based on their non-conformity with gender norms.
- k. Overlooking a female employee for a promotion because her behavior does not conform to the employer's notion of how a woman should behave at work.
- l. Enforcing a policy in which men may not wear jewelry or make-up at work.

#### **D. Appearance and Attire**

Transgender and gender non-conforming employees have the right to dress in a way that corresponds with their gender identity and/or gender expression. Attire for all employees must align with dress code expectations to maintain a neat and professional appearance, and all employees are expected to support and maintaining an environment free from gender discrimination and stereotyping. Employees are permitted to dress consistent with their gender identity or gender expression; however, grooming or appearance standards should not vary nor impose different requirements for people based on gender, and only serves to reinforce a culture of norms and stereotypes based on gender. Please refer to the City's ***Employee Personal Appearance and Grooming Standards Policy*** for further guidance.

#### **E. Reporting Discrimination, Harassment, or Retaliation**

In accordance with the City's ***Policy Against Harassment, Discrimination, and Retaliation*** we encourage reporting of all actual or perceived incidents of discrimination, harassment, and/or retaliation in accordance with the procedure defined therein. City policy prohibits retaliation against anyone who reports or files a complaint or helps in the investigation of a complaint.

If, after a prompt and thorough investigation, an employee, volunteer, intern, or contractor has been determined to have engaged in discrimination, harassment, and/or retaliation, corrective action will be taken including possible disciplinary action or other corrective measures such as termination of the relationship.

**RECEIPT OF THE CITY OF SEASIDE'S  
GENDER INCLUSION AND PRONOUN POLICY**

*Please read the policy carefully to ensure that you understand the policy before signing this document.*

I certify that I have received a copy of the City of Seaside's Gender Inclusion and Pronoun Policy. I understand that it is my responsibility to read and comprehend this policy. I have read and understand the content, requirements, and expectations of the Policy and agree to abide by the policy guidelines. I understand that if at any time I have questions regarding the Policy, I will consult with my immediate supervisor or the Human Resources Office.

I agree to observe and follow the Gender Inclusion and Pronoun Policy and understand that if I violate this Policy it will result in corrective action and may result in disciplinary action.

\_\_\_\_\_  
Employee Name (Signature)

\_\_\_\_\_  
Employee Name (Please Print)

\_\_\_\_\_  
Department

\_\_\_\_\_  
Date

**Cc: Official Personnel File**

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