

City of Houston	Policy No.	Revision No.
Houston Health Department (HHD) Division:	Subject: GENDER IDENTITY AND SEX	

## 1.0 POLICY OVERVIEW:

- 1.1 To ensure all HHD employees contribute to an environment of inclusiveness and cultural humility that recognizes, values, and respects all persons, irrespective of sex, gender identity, or gender expression.
- 1.2 To ensure that information regarding gender identity and sex assigned at birth is collected completely, consistently, and accurately with the end of providing the highest quality and most relevant services to clients.
- 1.3 To ensure that information concerning gender identity and sex assigned at birth is collected completely, consistently, and accurately in order to facilitate the effective identification of and intervention in health disparities related thereto.

## 2.0 SCOPE:

- 2.1 This policy applies to all executive, civil service, and temporary employees as well as interns and volunteers at HHD.
- 2.2 The abovementioned parties are expected to apply relevant policies to co-workers as well as clients.

## 3.0 PURPOSE:

- 3.1 Guidelines around gender are integral to ensuring the safety and comfort for every employee at HHD.
- 3.2 Gender has enormous implications for an individual's health. Rates of access to care, quality of care, and long-term outcomes are all impacted by one's gender identity. In fact, we see enormous disparities in these and other indicators when we examine the differences among gender categories. Collecting information about and behaving in a way that humbly takes into account an individual's gender identity allows for more competent and effective intervention.

## 4.0 DEFINITIONS:

- 4.1 Gender Identity: an individual's self-concept as it relates to being a man, a woman, or a member or some other gender category (e.g. gender non-conforming, Thai *kathoey*, South Asian *hijra*, Samoan *fa'afafine*, Papuan *kwolu-aatmwol*, Dominican *guevedoces* etc.); this may or may not correspond to their gender expression and/or the sex they were assigned at birth
- 4.2 Gender Expression: the external representation of gender through appearance, behavior, dress, speech, or any number of other aspects; may or may not be congruent with an individual's gender identity or the sex that they were assigned at birth
- 4.3 Sex Assigned at Birth (SAAB): the category—male or female—asccribed to an infant immediately after delivery; this may or may not correspond to their gender expression and/or gender identity later in life

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- 4.4 Transgender: a broad category that describes individuals whose gender identity largely does not align with social expectations based upon their sex assigned at birth
- 4.5 Cisgender: a broad category that describes individuals whose gender identity largely aligns with social expectations based upon their sex assigned at birth

## **5.0 PROCEDURES (abbreviated):**

### **5.1 Data Collection:**

- 5.1.1 Information about sex and gender identity should be obtained from the individual in question.
- 5.1.2 Information about sex and gender should be asked separately according to the following guide:
  - 1. What is your gender?
    - a. Male
    - b. Female
    - c. Transgender Male
    - d. Transgender Female
    - e. Gender Non-Conforming/Non-Binary
    - f. Not Listed, Please Specify \_\_\_\_\_
  - 2. What was your sex assigned at birth?
    - a. Male
    - b. Female

5.2 Dress and Appearance: HHD's dress code shall be gender-neutral, with no prescriptions or prohibitions on the basis of gender identity. In the case that gender-specific attire such as uniforms are required, employees shall be afforded the right to wear the clothing of their choice.

5.3 Harassment/Discrimination: HHD aligns itself with the EEOC's protections against harassment and discrimination on the basis of sex assigned at birth or gender identity under Title VII of the Civil Rights Act of 1964.

5.4 Facilities/Accommodations: While on the premises of HHD facilities, individuals must be permitted to use the restroom that aligns with their gender identity, regardless of whether it aligns with their sex assigned at birth or gender expression. Single occupancy unisex bathrooms should be made available for individuals who would rather not use the multiple occupancy restrooms.

5.5 Confidentiality: Information about clients' and employees' sex or gender identity is not to be disclosed without explicit written consent.

## **6.0 DESCRIPTION OF AUTHORITY:**

6.1 [TBD]

## **7.0 MONITORING:**

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7.1 Data Collection: Forms used to collect demographic data are to be reviewed by the relevant authority before use to ensure they adhere to the guidelines prescribed in this document.

## 8.0 COMPLIANCE

8.1 This department-wide policy is effective starting [TBD].

## REFERENCES:

### REFERENCE LINKS:

1. United States Office of Personnel Management Guidance: <https://www.opm.gov/policy-data-oversight/diversity-and-inclusion/reference-materials/gender-identity-guidance/>
2. United States Department of Labor, OSHA sanitation standard: [https://www.osha.gov/pls/oshaweb/owadisp.show\\_document?p\\_table=INTERPRETATION&p\\_id=22932](https://www.osha.gov/pls/oshaweb/owadisp.show_document?p_table=INTERPRETATION&p_id=22932)
3. United States Equal Employment Opportunity Commission, Title VII of the Civil Rights Act of 1964: <https://www.eeoc.gov/laws/statutes/titlevii.cfm>
4. 5 U.S. Code § 552a - Records maintained on individuals: <https://www.law.cornell.edu/uscode/text/5/552a>

Director	Approval Date:	Effective on Approval
Houston Health Department		