

EDUCATIONAL RESOURCES FOR POLL WORKERS

Respectful Interactions with Gender-nonconforming, Nonbinary and Transgender Voters

Thank you for your service as a poll worker! As a front-line election worker, you help make sure everyone feels welcome as they practice their fundamental right to vote. Nebraska is fortunate to have such hard-working, fair-minded poll workers to protect our democracy and help all eligible Nebraskans vote. The following advice will guide respectful interactions with transgender, nonbinary and gender-nonconforming voters.

Quick tips for Poll Workers

1. Always use respectful language without assuming someone's gender. For example, "Pardon me" or "Would you be so kind as to step over here?" are appropriate phrases regardless of whom you're addressing. Simply avoid using "sir" or "ma'am."
2. Understand that someone's physical appearance may differ from their photo identification. In Nebraska, only first-time voters who registered by mail and did not earlier verify their eligibility are required to confirm their identity at the polling place with documentation. Refer to official guidance for voters' options in this scenario but note a photo ID is never required. If someone does present their identification card and their physical appearance does not match their card but all other legal requirements to vote have been met, that person is entitled to vote.
3. If you are uncertain of a person's gender identity or the name shown on their formal documentation does not appear to "match" the person's gender presentation, consider approaching the situation with clarifying questions like these: "What name are you registered under?" "Is that the name you would like me to use?" "What are your pronouns?"
4. If you make a mistake, apologize and move forward. This approach shows respect and can help a transgender or gender nonconforming voter feel more comfortable. For example, "I'm sorry I made an error. Thank you for sharing your name and pronouns."
5. Always respect a voter's gender identity and respect their privacy. Don't ask about a voter's private/personal/medical information or reveal their identity to others.

Terms you may hear

Transgender. Someone whose identity (their internal sense of being a man, woman, or something outside that binary) differs from the gender they were assigned to be at birth.

Gender nonconforming. Someone whose behavior or appearance does not conform to prevailing cultural and social expectations about what is appropriate to their gender.

Nonbinary or genderqueer. A gender identity other than male or female. Some non-binary people use "they" or another gender-neutral pronoun rather than "he" or "she."

Thank you.

Democracy works best when every eligible voter participates. Thank you again for your commitment to providing a welcoming environment for all voters! For questions, email Sara Rips at srips@aclunebraska.org.

