

EDUCATIONAL RESOURCES FOR POLL WORKERS

Respectful Interactions with Transgender, Gender-nonconforming, and Nonbinary 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, gender-nonconforming, and nonbinary 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. For the first time in Nebraska, voters are required to show a photo identification to vote. A transgender, gender-nonconforming, or nonbinary voter's photo ID may not reflect their current physical appearance, but that does not mean they are ineligible to vote or that their ID is not valid for the purposes of voting. As long as the voter presents an acceptable form of photo ID as outlined by the Nebraska Secretary of State's Office and the voter's name on the ID matches the name under which they are registered to vote, that person is entitled to vote. If you strongly believe the ID does not belong to the person, they are still entitled to a provisional ballot.
3. If 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?" or "Is that the name you would like me to use?"
4. If you make a mistake, apologize and move forward. This approach shows respect and can help a transgender, gender-nonconforming or nonbinary 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, such as length of hair, how they dress, or their mannerisms.

Nonbinary or genderqueer. A gender identity other than male or female. Some nonbinary 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 Grant Friedman at gfriedman@aclunebraska.org.

