

Tips for Poll Workers: Respectful Interactions with Gender Non-Conforming (GNC), Non-Binary and Transgender People

Thank you for your service as a poll worker! As a frontline election worker, you can help make sure everyone feels welcome as they practice their fundamental right to vote. The following advice will help you interact respectfully with transgender and gender non-conforming voters.

DEFINITIONS

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

Gender Non-Conforming (GNC)- Someone whose behavior or appearance does not conform to prevailing cultural and social expectations about what is appropriate to their gender.

Nonbinary- A gender identity other than male or female. Some nonbinary people use “they” or another gender-neutral pronoun rather than “he” or “she.”

SIX TIPS FOR SUCCESS

1. Use respectful language without assuming someone’s gender. For example, “Pardon me” or “Would you be so kind as to step over here?” work regardless of whom you’re addressing. Avoid “sir” or “ma’am.”
2. Expect someone’s physical appearance may differ from their ID. 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.



SIX TIPS FOR SUCCESS (CONT.)

3. When you are not sure of a person's gender identity, or the name shown on their formal documentation does not appear to "match" the person's gender presentation, it is OK to ask. "What are your pronouns?" "What name would you like me to use?"

4. Acknowledge and apologize if you make a pronoun mistake, then move forward quickly. Being honest about your mistake shows respect but making a scene can make transgender/GNC people feel uncomfortable and unsafe.

5. Keep it private when you learn about an individual's transgender/GNC identity. It is privileged information. You should never "out" people by revealing their identity to others.

6. Validate how transgender and gender non-conforming people present themselves by treating them respectfully, just as you would everyone else.

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 srips@aclunabraska.org.

FOUR THINGS TO AVOID

1. Never assume someone's gender.
2. Never ask a transgender/GNC person what their "real name" is.
3. Never inquire about surgeries or any other intimate details. Just like anyone else, transgender/GNC people's personal medical information is private.
4. Never use words such as "it" or "whatever" when referring to someone who is transgender/GN. These words are hurtful and inappropriate.