



Pride's Guide to
**The Job Search
& Employment**



Introduction

This guide will provide an overview of advice, suggestions, and questions to help you navigate the job search process and employment as LGBTQIA+ people. Content and quotes are sourced from our Pride at Work panel on March 18 2021 (Speakers: Patrice Palmer, Josef Canaria, Haley Barton) and our Pride at Work panel in March 2020, and the CSU Career Center.

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A FEW REMINDERS...

- 1. You have agency to make decisions that affirm who you are, protect your boundaries and privacy, and contribute to your sense of safety.**

The two options of simply being out or being closeted is a false narrative - we make decisions every day for how we navigate living as our authentic selves and our right to privacy based on context, cues, safety, and our energy. Sometimes we want the world to know we're proud to be queer/trans, and sometimes we don't want to have to explain ourselves to others. There is fluidity in your decisions and you have the queer agency to decide what you need - including in employment.

- 2. Beginning in 2020, Title XII of the Civil Rights Act has been determined to extend employment protections to members of the LGBTQ+ community.**

In other words, the federal government and Supreme Court have made it clear that you cannot be discriminated against, refused to be hired, or fired from employment based on your assigned sex, gender identity, gender expression, sexual orientation or trans status. Because of this, there are certain questions employers cannot ask you during the hiring process, such as how old you are, if you are pregnant, or what your gender is.

- 3. There is power in showing up as your authentic self - your queerness and transness is a gift!**

There are people who want to hire you for the wholeness of who you are. As an LGBTQ+ person you bring unique perspective, creativity, nuanced understanding of conflict, empathy, and even more skills that will serve you well in the job search.

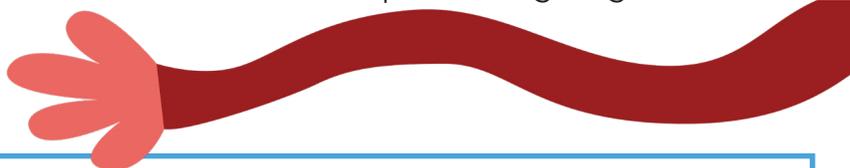
How do I navigate sharing identities, pronouns, names and outing myself?

First, you are not legally required to share pronouns, gender, assigned sex, relationship status, or orientations during interviews, on resumes, or in the hiring process. Organizations legally cannot ask you about your marital status, gender, sex, and orientations - in addition to other aspects like race, disability, veteran status, and age. You do not owe this information to anyone throughout your interviews and application.

Some folx choose to be upfront about their identities and pronouns and include them in their cover letters or interview answers. This brings your full authentic self to the forefront, and can help you in feeling out if the organization is affirming and welcoming to your identities. Alternatively, some folx choose to remain private about their identities until the moment feels right once they are in the position and can get a sense of community, allies, and resources. Even more so, some people may never choose to come out in a certain job, as their concerns for bias and not having financial security may take priority. All are valid and can have different impacts depending on your identities and needs.

Disclosure of Identities

There are a few times in which you may need to disclose your legal name or a legal gender marker throughout a hiring process. You are able to choose who knows this information. You could work directly with the supervisor, hiring committee, or directly with Human Resources (HR) to communicate your information. Here are some tips for navigating this:



Background Checks & Official Hiring

Many jobs require a background check to be completed once you have been identified as a finalist. You have the agency to decide at what time you want to disclose your legal name or other names that may need to be included on a background check or for official hiring.

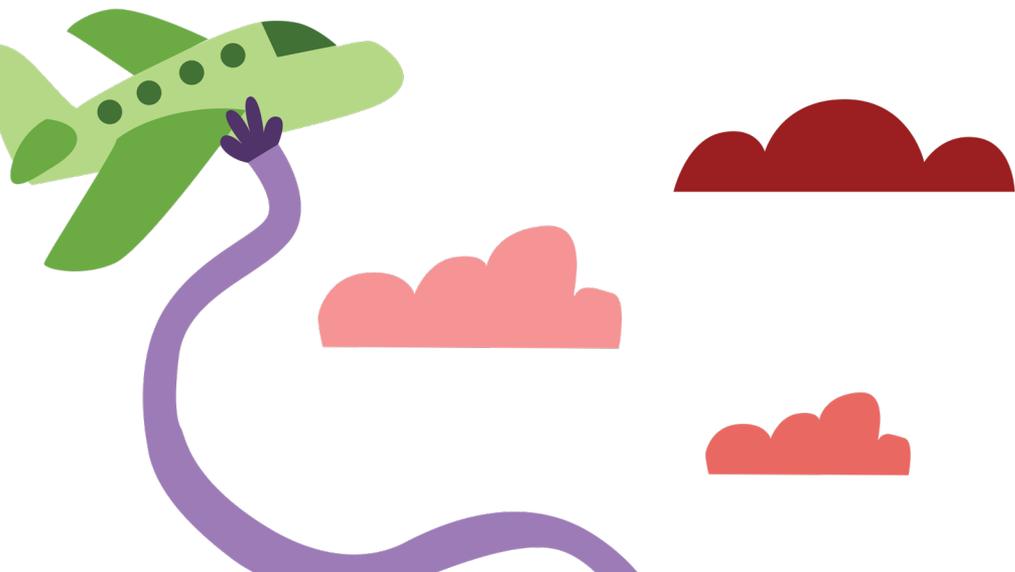
- Some people choose to share this information upfront on an application or resume. For example, listing “Preferred Name, Last Name” on the top of a resume, and underneath “Please use the name _____ for background checks and reference calls”.
- Alternatively, some folx choose to list their Legal or Dead name at the top of the resume, and their preferred name underneath.
- Alternatively, you can go through the entire job search and application process using your true/chosen name, and disclose a legal name upon being offered a position and/or your employer letting you know a background check needs to be performed. For example, “Thank you for offering me the position. When conducting my background check, use the name “_____”. For all other communication and purposes, please continue using “_____”.

Disclosure of Identities (cont.)

Booking Travel for Interviews

Some organizations may require you to fly or take a train to participate in an in-person interview. When booking air travel, the company will need to use the name on your legal documents and select a binary gender marker (M or F). This is even more complicated for those of us who may have a different name or gender marker on our ID and different information on our passport, etc. You can choose which documents you fly with, and therefore which information the company needs to know and use. Additionally, it can be helpful to know that since they cannot legally ask you your gender, organizations may select which gender marker they think you use based on your name, voice, appearance etc.

- *If invited to fly for an interview, be upfront with what information you would like listed when booking the flight: "When booking my travel, I need you to use the name "____" and the gender marker "____" as it currently reflects the information on my passport. For all other purposes, please use the name "____" and pronouns "____". Thank you."*



Navigating Reference Checks

Many jobs require you to list contact information for reference checks. Some of your references may have worked with you when you went by a different name or pronouns. You have the agency to decide how you want to communicate with the employer and/or your reference. In most cases, references will not be called until later on once you are identified as a top candidate for the position. We recommend reaching out to anyone you list as a reference to notify them and get their consent to list them, and then ask for what you need.

- Communicate your expectations to your references. “Hi _____. I’m reaching out to see if you can be a reference for me as I apply for a new job. The job is _____. I am currently using the name _____ and pronouns _____, so I would greatly appreciate you to use these when speaking about me to my potential employer. Please let me know if you have any questions to support my reference!”
- Communicate your expectations to your employer. “This reference supervised me while I was using a different name. You may need to say this is a reference call for _____. Please avoid using any gendered pronouns and use “this candidate” to refer to me. I appreciate your flexibility and support in this.

Verifying Degrees with a Different Name

Your name may be different from the name listed on your degrees. You can work with the HR department directly to communicate what names to use to verify your degrees if this is needed as a requirement for your employment.

Applying & Interviewing For Jobs

Preparing for the Interview

Take time to reflect on what your boundaries or needs are for the interview and for accepting a job. We all have different levels of comfort (depending on identities and the job) when it comes to being out, visible, and transparent in interviews. Some of us may choose to be upfront in saying their identities as part of their interview answers, others may choose to not share this information. Take some time to reflect on what cues you want to look for and what you feel comfortable sharing.

Preparing Questions to Ask

By the end of the interview, you'll likely be tired or anxious and ready to get out of there. Slow down, breathe, and try to be as relaxed as you can. This is your time to interview them back. What are non-negotiables for you to be happy and whole in this role? Check out our Questions to Ask In Your Interview section at the end of this book.

“If they don’t know the answers, it means they haven’t thought about it, and they may not be ready for me. If they do have answers, I can enter this space without the weight of having to do everything on my shoulders.” - Patrice Palmer, Pride at Work panel 2021

Seeking out the company's (true) values

- *“Look on their Instagram and social media. Have they posted during Pride Month or about issues important to you like Black Lives Matter? It’ll reveal a bit more about what the company actually cares about and supports.” - Josef Canaria, Pride at Work panel 2021*
- Check out their organizational chart. Are there people of diverse identities represented at all levels, from entry-level to board members? Can you see yourself growing and having a future at this company?
- Dig into how they spend money and what is discussed at board meetings. Many companies list meeting minutes or spending reports online. This information can reveal where their priorities lie.
- Review the company's non-discrimination or diversity statements. Do they include sexual orientation, sex, gender, gender identity, gender expression, etc? The wording may reveal how these identities are valued in the company.



Negotiate!

If you are given a job offer, they want to hire you. We recommend not accepting on the spot. Instead, thank them and ask for the offer in writing so you can make an informed decision. Negotiating is expected by employers, and allows you to ask for the boundaries, resources, and payment you need to thrive at this organization. Determine what you would need in order to accept the offer, and when you would have to turn it down. Negotiation is a mutual decision, so advocate for yourself honestly. Think beyond just salary increases to consider vacation time, start date, remote work, flexible schedules, professional development, a work laptop, etc. Practice the talking points with a friend before the conversation happens.



Talking about LGBTQ+ advocacy and previous employment.

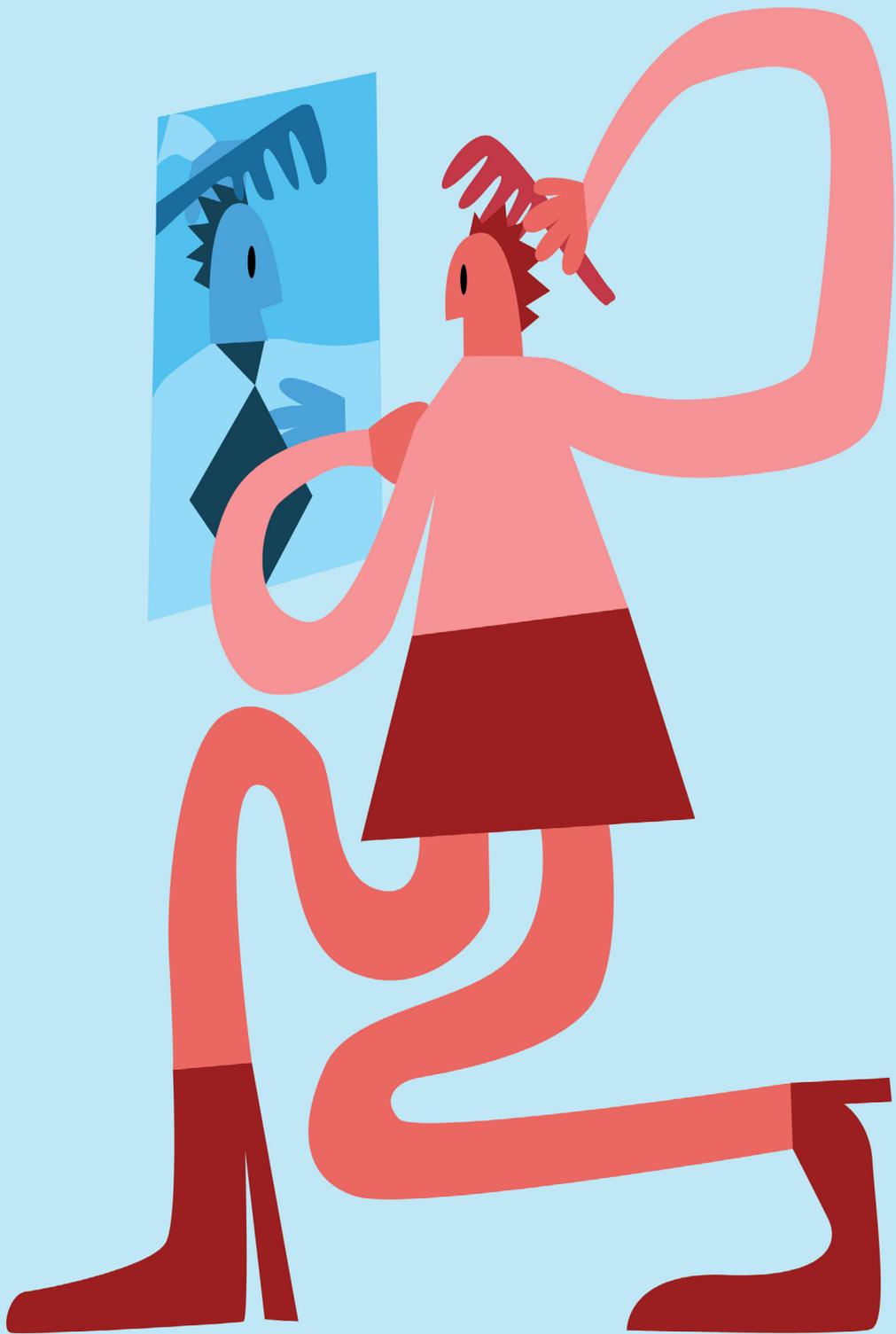
Some of us have experiences working or volunteering in LGBTQ+ organizations prior to applying for a new job, and we may not know how to talk about our work on resumes and in interviews. Consider how forthcoming you would like to be about your involvement. There are likely strategic ways you can talk about being the president of the LGBTQ & Allies club that have nothing to do with queerness. For example, you can still talk about leading club meetings, managing conflict in a group, organizing events. They often want to hear more about what you did and how you did it, and less about the actual topics and content.

“As a staff member in the Pride Resource Center, I sometimes find myself saying ‘I work in Student Diversity Programs at CSU’ or ‘I advise students, host events, and facilitate workshops for faculty/staff.’ Sometimes I don’t feel like having to worry about their reaction to being a full-time gay.” - Maggie Hendrickson, Pride at Work 2020

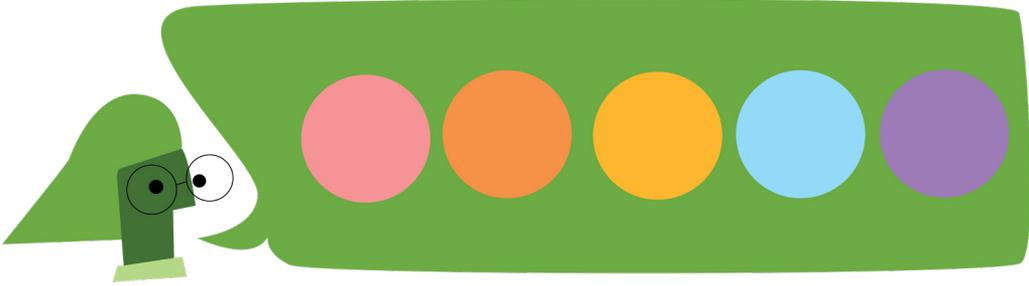
Dress & Attire

“A company should hire you based on your qualifications not on how they think you should look. You deserve a company that hires you for you.” - Pride At Work 2020

- Wear what you want to wear on a typical day for your interview and first day. It may give you a better feeling of what each day on the job as your authentic self will be like.
- Feeling confident and like your authentic self will only support you in doing well in an interview.
- Find a balance between comfort, confidence, and what is considered typical wear for your field.
- Do not feel limited to one section of clothing. Blend “men’s” and “women’s” clothes if that feels true to you. You could choose your top from one section, the bottom from another, and the shoes that make sense for being on your feet all day.
- Jewelry and shoes can do a lot to “dress up” an outfit. This can include tie bars, necklaces, collar necklaces/pins, earrings, rings, watches, bracelets, etc.



Coming Out to Colleagues



- We can often feel the pressure to tell everyone all the things at once. It's ok to start slow. Start with who you trust and the others will come easier. Build a sense of security around yourself and you'll have people in your corner who can support you in being out with others.
- Find allies who can stand beside you, not just in front of you. Proactive allies will check in with what you need and what feels best for you. You can advocate to your allies in how you need them to show up for you.
- You may choose to not come out to some of your colleagues. That's ok. You do not owe them this information. It is a gift you can choose to share with whomever deserves it.
- There are many small ways to share the fullness of your identities with others, it does not need to be a grand gesture. Briefly mentioning how you spend time, with whom you spend time, and the pronouns of others may clue people in with all they need to know.
- You may be outed to some of your colleagues beyond your choice and control. Seek out resources for support from HR, your supervisor, loved ones, and others to support you in this.

- You might be one of few or the only person with your identities at your company or in your unit. This is tiring and isolating, especially when you need to advocate for inclusion and equity. Find your people who can echo your opinion or provide feedback on your behalf. On another note, have your community outside of work who you can vent and brainstorm with.
- Some organizations have affinity or support groups available to their employees. This could be a first step to finding others who also identify in the community or who are allies.

Additional Resources

Human Rights Campaign Workplace Resources

Lambda Legal Workplace Resources

Colorado Name Change Project

Pride's Family & Parent Guide to Gender & Sexuality

Questions to Ask In Your Interview

We recommend coming with at least 2 questions prepared to ask at the end of your interviews. Consider some from this list to help get to know the company and how it fits your needs:

- 1.** What resources do you have to support employees' mental health and sense of belonging?
- 2.** Are there any LGBTQ employees I can speak to about their experience working here?
- 3.** How do you support LGBTQ folx at this organization?
- 4.** Is parental leave available to me if I'm not birthing my child?
- 5.** What health insurance is available? Does it cover LGBTQ-affirming healthcare?
- 6.** What benefits are available to non-married (or same-sex) partners?
- 7.** I have seen that diversity and inclusion are listed as values on your website. How do you all demonstrate that value in practice?

8. What type of inclusion and diversity training do your employees participate in?
 9. How has (insert policy or political event) impacted your company's priorities and values?
 10. Are there any organizations or issues that you support through volunteering or donations?
 11. I have a surgery coming up in 3 months. I would like to guarantee time off for this prior to accepting my position. Can you confirm this?*
- *You can ask during interview or upon job offer
12. What processes are in place to provide feedback with my colleagues and supervisor?
 13. What resources are available for finding housing and community in the local area?
 14. Is there air travel expected for this position?
 15. Is there a dress code expectation for this role, and how did you determine these expectations?



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