CITY OF COLORADO SPRINGS

GENDER TRANSITION GUIDELINES

INTRODUCTION:

The City of Colorado Springs ("the City") complies with Title VII of the Civil Rights Act of 1964, the Colorado Civil Rights Act, and all applicable state and local fair employment practices laws. The City is committed to providing equal employment opportunities to all individuals, regardless of their sex, sexual orientation, gender identity, and/or gender expression. All City employees, in conformance with professional expectations, may express their sexual orientation and gender identity without fear of consequences.

In support of the City's Equal Employment Opportunity policy, these Gender Transition Guidelines set forth the City's commitment to address the needs of transgender and gender non-conforming employees, including procedures for when an employee transitions their gender presentation at work.

It is not possible to anticipate every situation that might occur with respect to transgender or gender non-conforming employees. The needs of each transgender or gender non-conforming employee will be assessed on a case-by-case basis in an effort to maximize integration and provide a healthy and productive work environment for all employees.

If you need any assistance understanding something in this document or would like to have a conversation about sexual orientation, gender identity, and/or gender expression issues related to the workplace, please contact the City's Human Resources Transition Coordinator and/or your work group's City Human Resources Business Partner ("HRBP").

TERMINOLOGY:

The following terms are not intended to label employees but are supplied to provide a common language that may be helpful for understanding these guidelines. Employees may or may not use these terms to describe themselves.

Sex refers to the classification of a person as male or female. This label is assigned at birth, usually based on a doctor's visual assessment of a baby's external anatomy.

Gender refers to the behavioral, cultural, or psychological traits commonly associated with a sex.

Gender identity refers to a person's internal, deeply held, identification as male or female, or something other or in-between. Most people have a gender identity of man or woman, although for some people, their gender identity does not fit neatly into one of those two choices.

Gender expression refers to a person's characteristics and behaviors that may be perceived as masculine or feminine. These include a person's name, pronouns, appearance, dress, hairstyle, mannerisms, speech patterns, and social interactions.

Gender dysphoria refers to a diagnosis recognized by the American Psychiatric Association (APA). A person with this medical condition experiences severe distress caused by the conflict between their gender identity and the sex they were assigned at birth.

LGBTQIA+ is a common abbreviation that refers to the lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender, questioning/queer, intersex, ally/asexual, and + for anyone else who is not included community.

Sexual orientation refers to a person's physical, romantic, or emotional attachment to another person. Gender identity and sexual orientation are not the same, and transgender people, like non-transgender people, may be heterosexual, gay, lesbian, bisexual, or asexual.

Transgender is an umbrella term used to describe a person whose gender identity is different from their sex assigned at birth.

Transsexual. A less used term that usually refers to a person who has taken medical steps to change the body to conform to one's gender identity. This term is sometimes paired with abbreviations that indicate how the person's body changed: male-to-female (MTF) or female-to-male (FTM).

Gender non-conforming. A term used to describe some people whose gender expression is different from conventional expectations of masculinity and femininity. A gender non-conforming person may or may not identify as transgender. Some transgender people are gender non-conforming and others conform to the gender expression of the sex they identify with.

Genderqueer. A term used by some people who define their gender as falling somewhere on a continuum between, or outside of, the categories of man and woman. A genderqueer person may or may not also identify as transgender.

Cisgender refers to a person whose gender identity is consistent with the sex the person was assigned at birth**.**

Transition refers to the process of changing one's gender from the sex assigned at birth to one's gender identity. There are many ways to transition. For some people, it is a complex process that takes place over a long period of time. For others, it might be a one- or two-step process that happens quickly. Transitioning may include some or all of the following steps:

- "Coming out," or telling family, friends, and coworkers.
- Using a different name and new pronouns.
- Dressing differently, to correspond to the person's gender identity.
- Changing a person's name or sex designation on legal documents.
- Accessing medical treatment, such as hormones or surgery.

Not all transgender people want or are able to take all of the above steps. Some people who meet the criteria under the transgender umbrella term do not consider themselves transgender. Rather, they may simply identify as a man or woman or may use other words to describe themselves.

TRANSITIONING AT WORK:

Many people are comfortable with the sex they were assigned at birth, but a portion of the population experiences discomfort or disconnect between the physical manifestations of their assigned sex and the gender they fundamentally experience as their gender identity. Some percentage of this population takes steps to change their physical presentation or their gender expression. The process by which a transgender person publicly changes their gender presentation is usually known as "transitioning" or "gender-affirming treatment." The purpose of the treatment is to alter the body to match the gender identity the person already has.

There are many ways to transition. A transitioning individual often changes their name, pronouns, clothing, and appearance. Transitioning may also include hormone therapy, surgery to alter physical appearance, or surgical alterations to anatomy. Some transitioning steps are conducted under medical supervision based on a set of standards developed by medical professionals. Not all transgender individuals will take the same transition steps and many transgender individuals do not have surgical procedures.

ROLES AND RESPONSIBILITIES:

Each individual who transitions will have their own set of unique factors that will require a customized plan. If an employee notifies Human Resources of an intent to transition, the employee will be offered an employee-specific Gender Transition Plan that will be developed in coordination with the transitioning employee, City Human Resources, and the transitioning employee's support team. The transitioning employee's support team will be individuals chosen by the employee.

A diverse workplace means that employees must be able to work with all kinds of people. It is not required that they "believe in" an individual's right to be transgender. All City employees are entitled to their beliefs, but are required to treat coworkers and customers with respect regardless of whether their personal belief systems are in agreement with lawful coworker or customer choices. City employees are required to conduct themselves in a professional manner that models appropriate, nondiscriminatory workplace behaviors.

In order to maintain an inclusive, respectful, and functional workplace, the rights and responsibilities for all parties involved are described below:

- **Transitioning Employee:**

The City strives to ensure that all employees feel safe and comfortable expressing their individual gender identity in the workplace. Some employees going through a gender transition choose to keep that information private in the workplace, and the City respects their right to do so.

For employees who wish to make a gender transition in the workplace, as early as the employee feels comfortable disclosing their intention to transition, they are encouraged to inform key City personnel to assist. The first point of contact may be the transitioning employee's immediate supervisor, the City's Human Resources Transition Coordinator and/or the HRBP assigned to the transitioning employee's City work department.

If a transitioning employee requests a Gender Transition Plan to address workplace issues, Human Resources will be responsible for creating the plan with the transitioning employee. The transitioning employee will have the option to choose individuals to be part a support team to assist in the development of the Gender Transition Plan, which may include City employees, City department managers or supervisors, and/or friends or family.

- **Supervisors/Managers:**

If an employee tells a supervisor/manager of their intent to transition, or if an employee is currently transitioning, the supervisor/manager is required to be supportive in the workplace. The supervisor/manager should ask the employee for consent to contact the City's Human Resources Transition Coordinator and reiterate that the transitioning employee is covered by all of the City's existing policies, including the Equal Employment Opportunity Policy. The supervisor/manager is encouraged but not required to volunteer to be part of the transitioning employee's support team, and to educate themselves about transgender issues and the transition process or allow the transitioning employee to educate them. Transition-related time off requests should be treated the same as requests for time off for other employees.

- **Human Resources:**

The City's Human Resources Manager and/or the HRBP assigned to the employee's work group will coordinate implementation of the transitioning employee's Gender Transition Plan. Such may include assisting in making any necessary announcements about an employee's gender transition, as outlined in the Gender Transition Plan; being on site with the transitioning employee on any day on which a new step of the plan is being implemented to support the individual; supporting and facilitating respectful and inclusive treatment; coordinating the changes required to employee records and other items required by the Gender Transition Plan; assisting with any training; and serving as the point of contact for any employees who have concerns about the transition or any questions about transgender issues in the workplace.

- **Coworkers/Other Employees:**

All employees remain subject to the City's anti-discrimination and anti-harassment policies. As part of a Gender Transition Plan, coworkers and other employees may be asked to familiarize themselves with transgender issues and the City's procedures on gender transitioning at work.

Any complaints or concerns raised by coworkers about a transgender employee or an employee's gender transition will be handled consistent with the City's policies. Employees need to work cooperatively with each other, regardless of their gender identity or gender expression.

All employees should use the name and pronouns that a person prefers. Employees shall not intentionally refer to someone by the wrong name or pronoun after the individual has made their preferences clear. If an employee is not sure of the appropriate name or pronoun to use, the employee is expected to respectfully ask the person which name or pronoun the person prefers.

If, after reviewing these guidelines, an employee has any concern about a transgender coworker or transgender issues in the workplace, they should contact City Human Resources to discuss their concerns.

PRIVACY:

Transgender employees have the right to discuss their gender identity or expression openly, or to keep that information private. The transgender employee decides when, with whom, and how much to share private information. Similarly, transgender employees should remain aware that coworkers may object to hearing the details of their transition and should be mutually respectful of the desire of some coworkers not to learn of such details.

Information about an employee's transgender status (such as the sex they were assigned at birth) may be subject to privacy standards. Human Resources staff and other City employees should not disclose an employee's transgender status to others without the transgender employee's consent.

PERTINENT WORKPLACE PROCEDURES:

- **Pronoun Usage:**

A transgender employee has the right to be addressed by their chosen name and the pronouns corresponding to the employee's gender identity.

- **Name and Gender Changes:**

The City will change an employee's official records to reflect a change in name or gender upon request from the employee. Some records, such as those related to payroll, insurance coverage, and retirement accounts, may require proof that the employee has legally changed their name or sex designation. If the employee's legal name does not match their new name, the City will update all records that can be changed without a legal name change to match the employee's new name. Subject to applicable laws and regulations, these records may include:

- Email account name
- Address, phone, and email address directories
- Identification card
- Security access badge
- Office/cubicle name plate
- Business cards and letterhead
- City website pages that mention the transitioning employee

To change the name or sex designation reflected in any of these records, contact City Human Resources.

- **Dress Code and Grooming Standards:**

All City employees are permitted to dress consistent with their gender identity and are required to comply with the same dress code and grooming standards that apply to all other employees in their workgroup. An employee's dress and appearance will be evaluated against the appropriate guidelines for the person's gender identity, not the sex they were assigned at birth. Commenting on or criticizing another employee's dress and appearance is not acceptable if the employee is in compliance with the City's dress code and grooming policy.

- **Restroom Access:**

All City employees have a right to safe and appropriate restrooms and locker room facilities, including the right to use a restroom and locker room that corresponds to the employee's gender identity, regardless of the employee's sex assigned at birth. Transgender women will have access to the women's restroom and locker room, and transgender men will have access to the men's restroom and locker room. Employees with concerns about restroom or locker room usage may contact their HRBP or the Human Resources Transition Coordinator.

- **Leave Benefits:**

The City will treat requests for leave related to transition care the same as any other medical leave. All medical information, including any surgery plans, will be treated the same as other confidential medical information.

- **Care Coverage:**

Medical care and other benefits available to support gender transition are subject to the applicable Plan Documents. Employees should contact City Human Resources – Benefits and Wellness and/or specific benefit providers (contact information is available on the City's Intranet - Benefits and Wellness page) to explore specific coverages.