

LGBTQIA+ Equity and Inclusion 2025



Office of Equity
Office of Governor
JB Pritzker

LGBTQIA+ Equity and Inclusion 2025 Annual State Employee Training

Welcome Message from the Governor

Hover over the image and Press the play button to view the video

Key Terms

This training supports state employees and appointees advancing LGBTQIA+ equity and inclusion in State of Illinois workplaces and services. Let's start by defining key terms:

LGBTQIA+: An acronym for Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, Transgender, Queer, Intersex, and Asexual. We will cover these terms in more depth later in the training.

Equity: State of being just, impartial, and fair.

Inclusion: Empowered sense of belonging within a group or organization.

Training Objectives

In this training, you will:

- Learn about your responsibilities for LGBTQIA+ equity and inclusion in the State
 - Develop awareness for working with LGBTQIA+ clients and colleagues
 - Examine discrimination and oppression that affect the LGBTQIA+ community
 - Gain strategies to advance LGBTQIA+ equity and inclusion
 - Explore resources for continued learning and action
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Making the Most of this Training

A few training features are designed to optimize learning and relevance to your work.

- **Learning scenario quiz slides** at the end of each section offer opportunities to apply what you have learned to workplace examples.
 - These quizzes can have more than one correct answer.
 - Most answers provide multiple examples of good practice and application of concepts.
 - Some answers illustrate common misunderstandings in applying DEIA concepts.
- The [Training Companion Guide linked here](#) offers next steps in learning and action, as well as resources for continued learning.

We encourage you to engage with these features to make the most of this training.

SECTION 1: RESPONSIBILITIES WITH THE STATE

- As a State employee or appointee, you must abide by laws and policies that protect LGBTQIA+ people from discrimination and harassment.
 - Moreover, you have a responsibility as a public servant to build equitable and inclusive workplaces and services for LGBTQIA+ colleagues and clients.
 - **In this section, we will:**
 - Walk through federal and state laws and policies
 - Discuss your responsibilities as a public servant
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Federal and State Laws

- Federal and state laws prohibit discrimination and harassment on the basis of actual or perceived gender identity and sexual orientation.

- These laws include:
 1. **Title VII of the 1964 U.S. Civil Rights Act**
 2. **Illinois Human Rights Act**
 3. **Illinois Civil Rights Act of 2003**
 4. **Illinois State Officials and Employees Ethics Act**
- Protections apply to both state workers and the Illinois public.
- It is your responsibility to become familiar with and abide by these laws.

See the [Harassment and Discrimination Prevention Training](#) and the [Ethics Training](#) for a full overview of unlawful discrimination, harassment, and sexual harassment.

State and Agency Policies

- Illinois is committed to creating equitable and inclusive state services and programs.
- The Illinois Department of Central Management Services' Model Employee Handbook includes a **Gender Identity Policy**.
 - This policy aims to ensure an inclusive, respectful, safe, and productive workplace for all, including transgender, nonbinary and gender nonconforming employees, applicants, and contractors.
- Individual state agencies may also have policies against unlawful discrimination and harassment on the basis of sexual orientation and gender identity.
- It is your responsibility to become familiar with and abide by state and agency policies.

See the [Training Companion Guide linked here](#) to review the complete Gender Identity Policy.

Your Responsibility as a Public Servant

- You have a **responsibility and opportunity** to create equitable and inclusive state workplaces, services, and programs.
 - State employees are public servants working on behalf of the people of Illinois.
 - Each State employee has a responsibility to the people of Illinois to act with integrity and to treat all members of the public, clients, colleagues and other parties with dignity and respect.
 - LGBTQIA+ people live and work in every agency and community in the State of Illinois. You have a responsibility to serve LGBTQIA+ members of the public, clients, and colleagues in ways that promote equity and empowered belonging.

The remainder of the training will provide knowledge, strategies, and resources to fulfill your responsibilities as a State employee and public servant in Illinois.

SECTION 1: LEARNING SCENARIO

The Illinois Department of Central Management Services' Model Employee Handbook includes a **Gender Identity Policy** to ensure an inclusive, respectful, safe, and productive workplace for all. Who is protected under this policy?

- **A. Employees**
 - **Could do Better.** The Gender Identity Policy protects all employees, applicants, and contractors. As a state employee, you are responsible for creating inclusive, respectful, and safe workplaces and services for all. Please try again.
- **B. Applicants**
 - **Could do Better.** The Gender Identity Policy protects all employees, applicants, and contractors. As a state employee, you are responsible for creating inclusive, respectful, and safe workplaces and services for all. Please try again.
- **C. Contractors**
 - **Could do Better.** The Gender Identity Policy protects all employees, applicants, and contractors. As a state employee, you are responsible for creating inclusive, respectful, and safe workplaces and services for all. Please try again.
- **D. All the above**
 - **Correct!** The Gender Identity Policy protects all employees, applicants, and contractors. As a state employee, you are responsible for creating inclusive, respectful, and safe workplaces and services for all.

SECTION 2: LGBTQIA+ IDENTITIES & COMMUNITIES

- Learning about diverse LGBTQIA+ experiences is a foundational step to creating more equitable and inclusive state workplaces and services.
- LGBTQIA+ people have unique and evolving identities and communities that intersect with race, ethnicity, class, nationality, and disability, among other categories.
- **In this section, we will:**
 - Review gender and sexual orientation
 - Explore the LGBTQIA+ umbrella
 - Discuss the importance of inclusive language
 - Consider how other identities shape LGBTQIA+ experiences
 - Learn about LGBTQIA+ Pride

Gender Explained

We all have a gender identity, a gender expression, and use gender pronouns:

- **Gender identity** is our deepest concept of self as a woman, man, a blend, or neither. It is about how we think of ourselves. It is not based on how someone looks or is perceived by others.
- **Gender expression or presentation** describes the external display of one's gender identity through dress, hairstyle, demeanor, grooming, voice, and social behavior. Gender expression is not the same as gender identity and can differ.
- **Gender or personal pronouns** are words that refer to people in conversation (e.g., they left their pen on the desk). Pronouns are a tool for people to communicate their gender to others. Some examples of pronouns are she/her/hers, he/him/his, or gender-neutral they/them/theirs.

Unpacking Gender

Gender and sex or assigned sex at birth are often conflated but are not the same.

- **Assigned sex** is a label (male or female) assigned by a doctor at birth based on physical characteristics and chromosomes.
- **Gender identity and expression** is personal and social-it is who you are and how you present yourself to the world.
- Gender identity can be, however, described in relation to assigned sex:
 - **Cisgender:** a person whose gender identity corresponds with the sex assigned for them at birth.
 - **Transgender:** a person whose gender identity or gender expression does not correspond with their sex assigned at birth. Being transgender is not dependent on appearance, body parts, or medical procedures.

Sexual Orientation Explained

In addition to gender, we also all have a sexual orientation or sexuality.

- **Sexual orientation** describes who you are attracted to (i.e. physically, emotionally) and who you have relationships with based on that attraction. People's understanding of their own sexuality can change over a lifetime.

The LGBTQIA+ Umbrella

Language helps express who we are and provides an opportunity to better understand the experiences of others. 'LGBTQIA+' is an acronym and umbrella encompassing a range of marginalized gender and sexual identities.

Term	Definition
Lesbian	A woman who is primarily attracted to other women.
Gay	A man who is primarily attracted to other men. Sometimes a broad term for individuals primarily attracted to the same gender. Used as an adjective (e.g., gay man, gay woman)
Bisexual	A person attracted to people of their own and other genders.
Transgender	A person whose gender identity or expression differs from their assigned sex at birth. Transgender is often considered an umbrella term for people who may identify as nonbinary, genderqueer, or gender nonconforming.

The LGBTQIA+ Umbrella, Continued

Term	Definition
Queer	A reclaimed term inclusive of many identities and variations that make up the LGBTQIA+ community. Given its history and continued use as a slur, 'queer' is not embraced by all LGBTQIA+ people. The "Q" in LGBTQ can also mean 'questioning.'
Intersex	An individual whose sexual anatomy or chromosomes do not fit with the traditional markers of 'female' and 'male' sex labels assigned at birth.
Asexual	A person who has little to no sexual attraction to others and/or a lack of interest in sexual relationships or behavior.

The LGBTQIA+ Umbrella, Continued

The **+ sign** in LGBTQIA+ means that there are many other gender and sexuality related identities that are represented within LGBTQIA+ communities. These terms are often shaped by experiences of race, Indigenous status, nationality, language, generation, and disability.

Not all LGBTQIA+ people share the same definitions of these terms. And that is okay! Each person gets to decide when and how to express their identity and experience.

To meet your responsibilities as a public servant, it is important to respect how people refer to themselves and engage in continued learning as language evolves.

We invite you to read the [Training Companion Guide linked here](#) to learn more about identity terms and definitions within the broader LGBTQIA+ community.

Diversity Within the LGBTQIA+ Community

- Just as we all have a gender identity and sexual orientation, we all have multiple identities.
- The LGBTQIA+ community is racially, culturally, and linguistically diverse.
- It includes people of all races and ethnicities, of all nationalities, from all class backgrounds, from Indigenous communities, and people with disabilities.

Intersections of Identity and Oppression

- We experience varying degrees of marginalization or privilege based on intersections of race, class, gender, sexuality, disability, nationality, and age.
- Many LGBTQIA+ people have multiple identities that are marginalized by structures of oppression.
- These different ways of discriminating against people overlap and make it harder for people to be treated fairly.
 - Black transgender women experience intersecting racism, transphobia, and sexism that lead to high levels of workplace discrimination, violence, fatal violence, and experiences of homelessness.

Equity at the Intersections

- As we advance LGBTQIA+ equity and inclusion, it is important to address the ways being at the intersection of multiple, overlapping structures of oppression can shape experiences of inequity and exclusion.
- This requires centering the experiences of the most marginalized within the LGBTQIA+ community. **Equity for the most marginalized means equity for all.**
- In the next sections, we will learn more about how these intersecting structures of oppression affect LGBTQIA+ people and explore strategies to create equitable workplaces, services, and programs.

LGBTQIA+ Pride

- LGBTQIA+ Pride emerged through Civil Rights activism in the 20th Century. The notion of 'Pride' resists long-held silence and stigma around LGBTQIA+ identities and fights for equality.
- LGBTQIA+ Pride and Pride Month in June began after the Stonewall Uprising and LGBTQIA+ rights protests in 1969. Black and Latine trans activists like Marsha P. Johnson and Silvia Rivera are credited with leading early protests in New York. The first Pride event in Illinois was a LGBTQIA+ rights march in Chicago in 1970.
- The Pride movement has spread across the United States and around the world. Pride marches and celebrations are now held in most cities in the U.S., with more than 10 Pride events in Illinois each June.

Please turn to the [Training Companion Guide linked here](#) for resources to learn more about Stonewall and LGBTQIA+ history.

Evolution of LGBTQIA+ Pride Flags

Just as language evolves in the LGBTQIA+ community, symbols of Pride, equity, and inclusion have evolved.

- The now-iconic **Rainbow or Pride Flag** debuted in 1978 at the Gay Freedom Day Parade in San Francisco. It has become a symbol of LGBTQIA+ identity and inclusion. Many identity-specific Pride flags have been created since. These include a trans pride flag, a lesbian pride flag, and a bisexual pride flag.



Evolution of LGBTQIA+ Pride Flags, Continued

- The **Progress Pride Flag** is now commonly used to better represent diversity within the LGBTQIA+ community and center Black, brown, and transgender people.



We invite you to read the [Training Companion Guide linked here](#) to learn more about these and other Pride flags.

SECTION 2: LEARNING SCENARIO

A coworker consistently misgenders a transgender colleague, despite the colleague repeatedly sharing their correct pronouns. The coworker claims they "aren't used to it" and "don't mean any harm". the transgender colleague feels disrespected and uncomfortable. What is the best response by the colleague in this situation?

- **A. Ask the transgender colleague to be more patient with the coworker, as it takes time to adjust to new pronouns.**
 - **Could do Better!** Doesn't create a inclusive environment for all.
 - **B. Ignore the situation because the coworker didn't mean to offend, and it's not a serious issue.**
 - **Could do Better.** Not saying anything puts the burden of correction and education ;does not foster respect in the workplace.
 - **C. Suggest that the transgender colleague avoid the coworker until the coworker feels more comfortable with the pronouns.**
 - **Could do Better.** Avoidance creates a non inclusive environment for the colleague.
 - **D. Address the coworker, to explain the impact of misgendering, and the importance of using correct pronouns moving forward.**
 - **Correct!** Address the coworker, explain the impact of misgendering, and the importance of using the correct pronouns moving forward.
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SECTION 3: ANTI-LGBTQIA+ PREJUDICE , DISCRIMINATION & OPPRESSION

- Anti-LGBTQIA+ and anti-trans prejudice, discrimination, and oppression continues to exist at multiple levels.
 - Understanding forms of discrimination and oppression faced by LGBTQIA+ people allows us to take informed steps toward equity and inclusion.
 - **In this section, we will:**
 - Review prejudice, discrimination, and oppression and how they connect
 - Learn about anti-LGBTQIA+ prejudice, discrimination, and oppression
 - Look at specific examples relevant to state agencies
 - Consider how intersections of oppression shape experiences
 - Discuss what it means to have the courage to intervene in harmful cycles of prejudice and discrimination
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Prejudice, Discrimination, & Oppression

Marginalization of social groups such as LGBTQIA+ people is created and perpetuated through prejudice, discrimination, and oppression:

- **Prejudice** or bias is a negative attitude toward a group or individual based on stereotypes and unsupported generalizations. Prejudice or bias against LGBTQIA+ people can be implicit (unconscious) or explicit (conscious).
 - **Discrimination** is the unequal treatment of individuals based on their membership in a protected class. Discrimination is often based on prejudice, whether conscious or unconscious.
 - **Oppression** is the systemic subjugation and exploitation of groups of people and individuals based on their membership in marginalized groups that has generational impacts. Oppression can be perpetuated at multiple, connected levels. These include **individual, interpersonal, and institutional.**
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Anti-LGBTQIA+ Prejudice

Prejudice against LGBTQIA+ people is based on the premise that being LGBTQIA+ is abnormal, shameful, wrong, and/or a choice. For some, anti-LGBTQIA+ prejudice can include fear of queer and/or trans people.

Examples of anti-LGBTQIA+ prejudice include:

- Transgender people do not exist or are not 'real'
- LGBTQIA+ people are amoral
- LGBTQIA+ couples are bad parents
- LGBTQIA+ people are dangerous and criminal
- Being LGBTQIA+ is a mental illness
- Being LGBTQIA+ is a trend

Prejudice shapes our actions and interactions with others. It is important to unlearn harmful prejudice and interrupt it when you see it show up in the actions of others.

Anti-LGBTQIA+ Discrimination

Discrimination against LGBTQIA+ people on the basis of sexual orientation and gender identity is unlawful. Unlawful discrimination can be fueled by prejudice and includes unequal treatment that isolates, excludes, and dehumanizes people.

Examples of discrimination may include:

- Prohibiting a transgender client or colleague from using the restroom of their choice
- Repeatedly using the wrong name and pronouns for a transgender colleague who has expressed who they are and how they want to be addressed
- Denying a promotion to LGBTQIA+ people because of prejudice against them

- Using slurs and derogatory language to describe or speak to LGBTQIA+ colleagues or clients
- Refusing to include and equitably serve LGBTQIA+ families in state services and programs
- Not inviting LGBTQIA+ colleagues to networking and social functions because of their sexual orientation or gender identity
- Harassing LGBTQIA+ colleagues at work with inappropriate comments, jokes, and questions

Anti-LGBTQIA+ Oppression

Oppression of LGBTQIA+ people negatively shapes group and individual experiences, opportunities, and outcomes at multiple levels.

Here, we will review interpersonal and institutional levels.

- **Interpersonal oppression** of LGBTQIA+ people happens when members of one group disrespect and mistreat LGBTQIA+ individuals.
- **Institutional oppression** of LGBTQIA+ people is the systematic mistreatment of LGBTQIA+ people, supported and enforced by the society and its institutions, based on the person's sexual orientation and/or gender identity.

Interpersonal Oppression

Interpersonal oppression of LGBTQIA+ people often plays out through microaggressions.

Microaggressions are everyday verbal, behavioral, and environmental insults that communicate negative messages based on marginalized group membership. They are often comments or actions that may be unintentionally offensive or harmful. Microaggressions can also invalidate the experience of an LGBTQIA+ person.

Microaggressions against LGBTQIA+ people may also rise to the level of overt unlawful discrimination and harassment.

Examples of Microaggressions

Some examples of microaggressions LGBTQIA+ people experience include:

- Telling a client they don't 'look like' their identity
- Saying 'you are so beautiful for a trans woman'
- Implying a trans colleague is not a 'real' woman, man, or nonbinary person
- Saying 'that's so gay' as a joke
- Making assumptions about a colleague's sexual orientation
- Saying that transphobia is no longer a problem in Illinois
- Asking intrusive questions about a person's body or dating life
- Assuming that all trans people have the same experience

Institutional Oppression

LGBTQIA+ rights activists have been fighting for equal and equitable treatment for decades:

- Same-sex marriage or Marriage Equality was not recognized by the U.S. Supreme Court until 2015.
- Gays and lesbians were not able to serve openly in the U.S. Military until 2010, with the repeal of "Don't Ask, Don't Tell."
- Being gay, or homosexuality, was defined by the American Psychiatric Association as a mental illness until 1973.

Despite these gains, anti-LGBTQIA+ institutional oppression continues to show up in many measurable ways. These include inequities in employment, income, and justice involvement. Let's look at some examples.

Examples of Institutional Oppression

- **Employment & Income:** LGBTQIA+ people tend to fare worse economically. In part, that is because they are more likely to be underemployed, unemployed, and earn less on average when employed. This inequity is compounded for those who are women, Indigenous, people of color, and have disabilities. Transgender people often fare the worst economically.
- **Justice Involvement:** LGBTQIA+ people and youth are overrepresented in the criminal justice system. LGBTQIA+ people are much more likely to be arrested, incarcerated, and be on parole or probation. This is especially true for lesbian and bisexual women, transgender people, and LGBTQIA+ people of color. Within the justice system, LGBTQIA+ people tend to have worse experiences.

Intersecting Oppressions

Prejudice, discrimination, and oppression experienced by LGBTQIA+ people is compounded by race, class, gender, nationality, and disability.

Here is an example from a recent study:

- **Forty-five percent** of LGBTQIA+ people of color and **47 percent** of LGBTQIA+ people with disabilities reported experiencing discrimination in 2021-2022, compared with **36 percent** of all LGBTQIA people.
- LGBTQIA+ people of color and LGBTQIA+ people with disabilities reported higher levels of discrimination in public spaces, their workplace, school, housing, interacting with law enforcement, and **seeking government funded or provided services**.

Source:

<https://www.americanprogress.org/article/discrimination-and-barriers-to-well-being-the-state-of-the-lgbtqi-community-in-2022/>

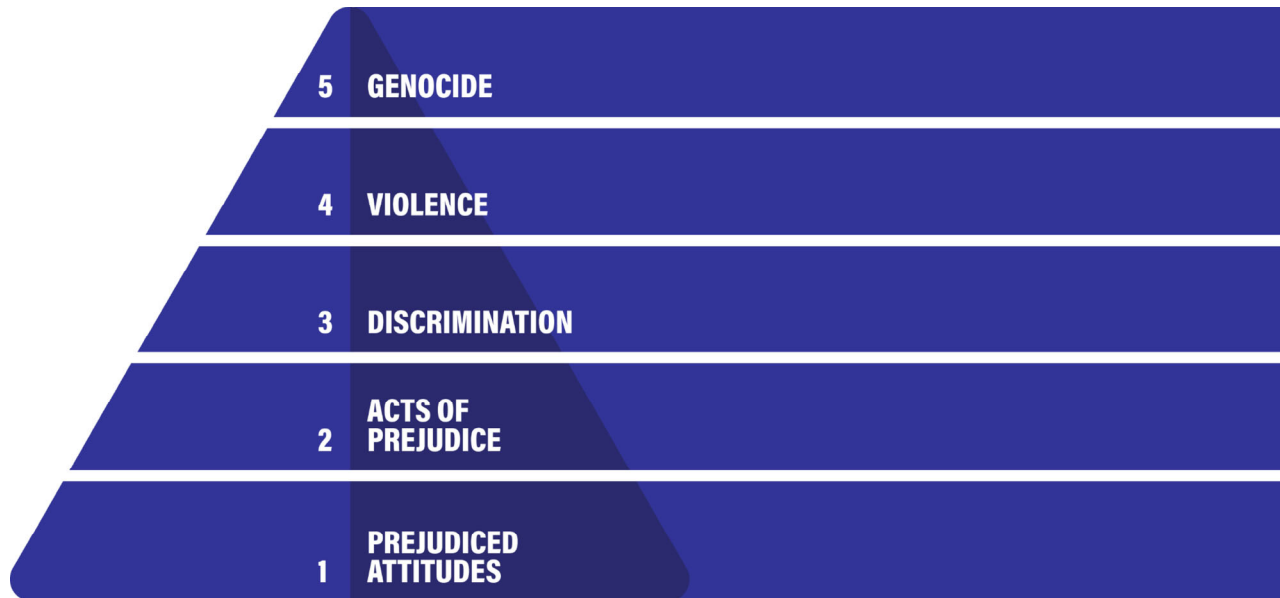
Disrupting Prejudice, Discrimination, & Oppression

To challenge discrimination and oppression, it is important to disrupt prejudice. Creating equitable and inclusive workplaces, services, and programs is not complete without understanding how attitudes shape actions and institutions.

The Pyramid of Hate is a visual tool that describes how prejudices can grow more negative over time when they are not confronted or addressed.

There are multiple levels of exclusion in societies. Unchecked prejudice can become "normalized" and contribute to a pattern of accepting discrimination, violence and injustice in society.

Pyramid of Hate



Pyramid of Hate, Continued

5 Genocide: The deliberate, systematic extermination of an entire people.

4 Violence: Against Property: Arson, Desecration. Against People: Threats, Assault, Terrorism, Murder.

3 Discrimination: Employment/Housing/ Educational Discrimination Harassment (hostile acts based on a person's race, religion, nationality, sexual orientation, or gender).

2 Acts of Prejudice: Name-calling, ridicule, social avoidance, social exclusion, and telling belittling jokes.

1 Prejudiced Attitudes: Accepting Stereotypes, not challenging belittling jokes, scapegoating (assigning blame to people because of their group identity).

Disrupting Oppression at Every Level

Not every biased attitude or act leads to physical violence. Yet, abuse takes place within a system of oppression when prejudiced attitudes and discriminatory actions continue to be accepted and witnessed or seen as "normal."

When we challenge prejudice and discriminatory behaviors in ourselves, others, and institutions, we can interrupt escalation and create environments that are inclusive and equitable.

Individual reflection and action must be paired with institutional commitments to change.

SECTION 3: LEARNING SCENARIO

During a work event, an employee overhears a group of colleagues making jokes about LGBTQIA+ stereotypes, laughing about "gay panic". One person in the group is openly LGBTQIA+ and is visibly uncomfortable but remains silent. What is the best course of action?

- **A. Intervene**, explaining that such language is harmful and unacceptable, follow up by reporting to supervisor and checking in with the affected individual.
 - **Correct!** This ensures a respectful and inclusive environment and provides support to the person who may feel marginalized by the comments.
- **B. Ignore** the jokes since no one seems to be complaining openly and assume that it's just casual banter.

- **Could do Better!** Does not assist with creating a respectful and inclusive environment.
- **C.** Wait for the affected person to address the jokes themselves if they are truly bothered.
 - **Could do Better!** Does not assist with creating a inclusive environment.
- **D.** Join in with the jokes to lighten the mood and fit in with the group.
 - **Could do Better!** Does not assist with creating a respectful and inclusive environment.

SECTION 4: STRATEGIES TO ADVANCE LGBTQIA+ EQUITY AND INCLUSION

- Creating an equitable and inclusive Illinois begins with disrupting prejudice, discrimination, and oppression wherever they occur.
- Individuals and agencies can also strive to create a workplace and public services where LGBTQIA+ colleagues and clients feel empowered belonging.
- This section introduces some strategies toward LGBTQIA+ equity and inclusion. We encourage individuals and agencies to engage in continued learning.
- **In this section, we will:**
 - Consider personal steps for reflection, action, and continued learning
 - Discuss interpersonal strategies to disrupt prejudice and foster belonging
 - Introduce key institutional strategies for LGBTQIA+ equity and inclusion
 - Outline some resources for continued learning

Personal Steps: Ongoing Reflection

- Changing systems often begins with and requires personal reflection on questions such as:
 - How do my racial, ethnic, gender, and sexual identities, among others, shape my life experience and opportunities?
 - What benefits or privileges do I receive based on these identities?
 - What stereotypes or negative attitudes about LGBTQIA+ groups or individuals do I hold?
 - How have my actions at work contributed to an agency culture of LGBTQIA+ equity and inclusion, if at all?
 - What do I still need to learn about the LGBTQIA+ community to effectively advance equity and inclusion?
 - What action steps would support my continued learning, advocacy, and allyship?

Personal Steps: Disrupting Our Own Biases

- We all have biases that come from societal messages and images.
- To begin advancing equity and inclusion, take action to disrupt and unlearn these forms of prejudice.
- **Three useful strategies are:**
 - **Slow down:** Pay attention to your reactions and pause to ask yourself: Why am I reacting this way? Would my reaction differ if the person was of a different race, gender, sexuality, etc.?
 - **Perspective taking:** Put yourself in the shoes of the LGBTQIA+ person or people you feel prejudice against. Ask yourself how they might feel about the assumptions you are making about them. How might it impact their experience with you?
 - **Countering stereotypes:** Consider how stereotypes you hold of LGBTQIA+ people are not true for everyone you interact with from the LGBTQIA+ community. Call to mind people who do not fit into these stereotypes.

Personal Steps: LGBTQIA+ Inclusion

- Our personal actions can contribute to shifting agency culture over time. Signaling that LGBTQIA+ people belong in state workplaces, programs, and services can go a long way.
- **Best practices at the personal level include:**
 - Include gender pronouns in meeting introductions, email signatures, and name tags to normalize asking about and respecting people's pronouns.
 - Use inclusive, gender-neutral language in your writing and speech.
 - Identify areas for LGBTQIA+ advocacy in your agency.
 - Don't make assumptions about gender identity or sexual orientation.
 - Educate yourself rather than expect or ask LGBTQIA+ people to educate you.

Interpersonal Steps: Intervening in Bias

- As we've discussed, prejudice or bias can lead to harmful actions, discrimination, and oppression at multiple levels.
- Bias intervention strategies aim to prevent harm and advance inclusion by interrupting bias that shows up in the words and actions of those around us.
- The State of Illinois DEIA training and participant guide features a range of bias intervention strategies.
- Intervening in bias takes courage and may feel uncomfortable.

- In advancing a more equitable and inclusive workplace and services for LGBTQIA+ people, there may be times to 'call out' and times to 'call in' words and actions.

Interpersonal Steps: Calling Out

In times we observe immediate harm happening, or when prejudiced action or speech is escalating, it may be necessary to 'call out' words or actions.

- **Calling Out:**
 - When we need to let someone know that their words or actions are unacceptable and will not be tolerated
 - When we need to interrupt in order to prevent further harm
 - Will likely feel hard and uncomfortable, but necessary
 - Allows us to hit the "pause" button and break the momentum
- Examples of calling out:
 - "Wow. Nope. Ouch. I need to stop you right there"
 - "It sounded like you just said . Is that really what you meant?"
 - "Okay, I am having a strong reaction to that and I need to let you know why."

Interpersonal Steps: Calling In

In times we identify a need for further reflection and learning, we can also 'call in' words or actions.

- **Calling In:**
 - When there is an opportunity to explore deeper, make meaning together, and find a mutual sense of understanding across difference
 - When we are seeking to understand or learn more
 - When we want to help imagine different perspectives, possibilities, or outcomes
 - Provides for multiple perspectives and encourages paradigm shifts
 - Focused on reflection, not reaction
- Examples of calling in:
 - "How might someone else see this differently? Is it possible that someone might misinterpret your words/actions?"
 - "I'm curious. What was your intention when you said that?"

Interpersonal Steps: LGBTQIA+ Inclusion

- Interventions in bias must be paired with interpersonal actions fostering LGBTQIA+ belonging in your agency.
- Treat LGBTQIA+ colleagues and clients with respect and create an affirming, safe space in state workplaces, services, and programs.
- **Here are some places to start:**
 - Respectfully ask for and use individuals' chosen names and gender pronouns.
 - Respect individuals' privacy and choices about when and how to disclose their sexual orientation and gender identity.
 - Use inclusive language in speaking with clients and colleagues.
 - Demonstrate your commitment to providing an affirming space for LGBTQIA+ colleagues and clients by using ally symbols, pictured.

Institutional Steps: Conduct Policy Reviews

- One of the first and most important steps for institutional change is to review and revise agency policies. Policies inform day-to-day work and big-picture priorities.
- Organizational policies, procedures, or written practices should be inclusive of gender identity and sexual orientation.
- Moreover, having LGBTQIA+-specific policies can set professional expectations and guidelines, sending a clear signal for LGBTQIA+ inclusion.
- When conducting policy reviews, include LGBTQIA+ stakeholders in the process.
- All agencies are encouraged to review and update policies addressing **Equal Employment and Commitment to Diversity** in alignment with the Model Employee Handbook, which includes a Gender Identity Policy.

Institutional Steps: Create Inclusive Facilities

- Institutional commitments to LGBTQIA+ equity and inclusion should include inclusive, accessible facilities.
- All people should have access to the restroom, locker, and changing facilities that are in line with their gender identity. The determination as to which facility is the most appropriate and safest for that individual belongs only to them.
 - Agency employees may not harass or question individuals about their facility choices.
- A best practice to ensure that transgender and nonbinary people have access to a restroom that is appropriate and safe for them is to provide **all-gender bathrooms**.

Institutional Steps: Collect and Protect LGBTQIA+ Data

- Data can be an important tool to track and address inequities in the State workforce and services.
 - Adding optional questions about sexual orientation and gender identity (SOGI) data to forms and surveys can help understand LGBTQIA+ experiences and inequities.
- Agencies should review or develop data privacy and security protocols when collecting a wider range of information.
- Agencies should also provide LGBTQIA+-affirming training on how to respectfully ask clients about gender and sexual orientation during in-take processes.

Please turn to the [Training Companion Guide linked here](#) to reference resources on SOGI data best practices.

Institutional Steps: Review Services & Programs

- Conducting a review of public services and programs administered by your agency can identify areas for better serving LGBTQIA+ Illinoisans.
- The review should lead to programmatic actions to improve equitable service provision, such as:
 - Create a strategy to expand meaningful access to affirming services and supports for the LGBTQIA+ public.
 - Increase the number of programs that include tailoring to help serve LGBTQIA+ people.
 - Increase the funding for programs that serve LGBTQIA+ people to expand service area or scope.
 - Create and administer agency-specific training to make existing services more inclusive and equitable for LGBTQIA+ people.

Institutional Steps: Mark LGBTQIA+ Events

- Marking LGBTQIA+ community events can create an empowered sense of belonging for LGBTQIA+ people.
- These open-to-all events can also increase awareness for peers and allies.
- Agencies might consider LGBTQIA+ community events in designing public services and programs, as well as agency learning opportunities and events.

Institutional Steps: Mark LGBTQIA+ Events, Continued

- Some key LGBTQIA+ events include:
 - **Transgender Day of Visibility (March 31)** celebrates the lives and contributions of transgender people and raises awareness of discrimination faced by the trans community.
 - **Pride Month (June)** celebrates the lives, contributions, and activism of the LGBTQIA+ community. Pride commemorates the 1969 Stonewall Uprising, a tipping point of the Gay Liberation Movement.
 - **LGBTQIA+ History Month (October)** celebrates the rich and long history of LGBTQIA+ people all over our state and country whose contributions and stories are often left out of mainstream education.
 - **Transgender Day of Remembrance (November 20th)** commemorates transgender people whose lives have been lost to anti-transgender violence.

Institutional Steps: Use Inclusive Language

- Inclusive language and use of pronouns in writing and speech are important at personal, interpersonal, and institutional levels.
- At the institutional level, inclusive language should be used in internal and public-facing policies, forms, presentations, and speech.
- Section 2 covers inclusive ways to speak about LGBTQIA+ identities and communities.
- Additionally, aim to use gender-inclusive language, such as:

Use

Esteemed guests, team, colleagues, everyone

Singular "they"

Parental leave

Partner, spouse

First names and gender-inclusive honorifics Mx. (non-binary), Ms., Mrs., Mr.

Instead Of

Ladies and gentleman, guys

"He or she"

Maternity and paternity leave

Husband, wife, boyfriend, girlfriend

Honorifics Mr., Ms., Mrs.

SECTION 4: LEARNING SCENARIO

Maurice, a biracial straight cisgender man, has been taking steps toward LGBTQIA+ equity and inclusion by reflecting on his biases, reading further on LGBTQIA+-inclusive language, and using gender pronouns in his meeting introductions and email signature. He cares about fulfilling his responsibilities to create an equitable and inclusive workplace and wants to be an LGBTQIA+ ally. What are some additional steps Maurice can take next?

- **A. Identify the need for the agency to review how it asks about race, ethnicity, sexual orientation, and gender identity on intake forms.**
- **Could do Better!** Identifying areas for LGBTQIA+ advocacy in your agency is a personal step to advance LGBTQIA+ equity and inclusion in your agency. Agency leaders can then take institutional steps such as reviewing policies, programs, and forms.

- **B.** Call in and educate his colleagues when he overhears them accidentally using the wrong pronouns for colleagues.
- **Could do Better!** All people can create an equitable and inclusive workplace by intervening in bias and educating colleagues on inclusive practices. Maurice might say, for instance, "Hey, I've been hearing you use she/her pronouns for Morgan and Alexis, and I want us to remember that they both use they/them pronouns. Can I share a resource with you that might help?" If a colleague repeatedly and intentionally uses the wrong pronouns, that requires a different response, which may include calling out the harm and reporting discrimination on the basis of gender identity.
- **C.** Ask his colleague Miguel, a Latino gay cisgender man, about his coming out story.
- **Could do Better.** Coming out stories can be very personal, and it's important to respect individuals' privacy and choices about how to disclose information about their identity and experiences. Maurice can treat Miguel like any other colleague and ask about his life and interests outside of work in a workplace-appropriate way.
- **D.** Use inclusive language in the way he greets and speaks with colleagues and clients.
- **Could do Better!** Using inclusive, gender-neutral language (e.g., colleagues, everyone) in writing, speech, and interactions is an important practice to foster LGBTQIA+ equity and inclusion. Gendered phrases like "ladies and gentleman" or "he/she" can exclude non-binary colleagues.
- **E.** Answers A, B, and D.
- **Correct!** Click on each answer to learn more about additional steps for LGBTQIA+ equity and inclusion.

Continued Learning

- The LGBTQIA+ equity and inclusion training introduced key concepts and strategies to support state employees and appointees in fulfilling their professional responsibilities with the State of Illinois.
- The content and strategies are foundational but not comprehensive.
- We invite you to engage in continued learning to identify additional knowledge and skills you need, or steps to take, to advance LGBTQIA+ equity and inclusion.
- The LGBTQIA+ equity and inclusion companion guide aims to introduce a range of resources for continued learning.

Resources for Continued Learning

We also invite you to learn about and from leading LGBTQIA+ organizations:

National

Gay & Lesbian Alliance Against Defamation (GLAAD)
Human Rights Campaign (HRC)
Movement Advancement Project (MAP)
National Black Justice Coalition
National Center for Transgender Equality

National LGBTQ Task Force
National Queer Asian Pacific Islander Alliance
Out & Equal Workforce Advocates
PFLAG
SAGE
Unid@s

Resources for Continued Learning

We also invite you to learn about and from leading LGBTQIA+ organizations:

Illinois

Affinity Community Services
Brave Space Alliance
Center on Halsted
Coalition of Rainbow Alliances (CORAL)

Equality Illinois
Howard Brown Health
Illinois Safe Schools Alliance
The Phoenix Center
Prairie Pride Coalition
Transformative Justice Law Project
Trikone Chicago

Office of Equity in the Office of the Governor

The Office of Equity is building a statewide strategy for advancing diversity, equity, inclusion, and access (DEIA) in our services, systems, and operations. This is a collaborative effort between the Office of the Governor's Equity Office with other state agencies, commissions and boards and all other sectors and partners across our great state.

One of the essential roles of the Office of Equity is to provide vision, direction, guidance, and support to DEIA initiatives. We are striving to make Illinois a state free of social inequity with a healthy and thriving population who have access to high quality services delivered by diverse, inclusive, and equity-oriented state government, systems, and agencies.

Office of Equity | Office of the Governor Contact information

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Survey - Optional

Please [take the LGBTQIA+ Equity and Inclusion 2025 Training Survey](#) administered by the Office of Equity in the Office of the Governor to share your feedback on the training. If you take the survey, be sure to return to this training to Certify your participation.

Comments or questions about state policies or reports of potential violations should **NOT** be placed here.

Acknowledgement of Participation in 2025 LGBTQIA+ Equity and Inclusion Training for State Employees and Appointees

Thank you for completing your annual LGBTQIA+ Equity and Inclusion Training.

I certify that I have completed, the 2025 LGBTQIA+ Equity and Inclusion Training for State Employees and Appointees pursuant to Executive Order 2021-16. Furthermore, I certify that I understand my failure to comply with the laws, rules, policies, and procedures referred to within this training course may result in disciplinary action up to and including termination of State employment/appointment.

I certify and Acknowledge the above statement. (Please type your name and date in the fields below.)

Name:

Date: