

# Resumé FAQs\* for transgender and gender non-conforming people:

## What name should I use on my resume?

The short answer: **It depends.**

The long answer:

- You can use the name that you currently go by, whether or not it's the same as the name on your id.
- *Remember that your resume is usually the first image of you that an employer will have.* If you are early in your transition, are genderqueer, and/or don't "pass" as the gender that you identify with, using the name that goes with your current gender identity / expression can help *prime the employer to see you the way you want to be seen.*
- On the other hand, if you are *very* early in transition and *sure* that you won't pass, using your new name can "out" you. If you're not sure about the trans-friendliness of the employer, it might be safer to go with your old name. After you are offered the job, you can explain the situation.
- This is a complicated issue and people will make different decisions depending on their identity, transition status/plans, and other factors. If you're not sure what will work best in your case, your Employment Specialist can help you think through your options.

## Can I include jobs I held under a different name / before my transition?

The short answer: **Yes!**

The long answer:

- Many people are concerned that by including a job on their resume, they are giving employers permission to contact the former employer. *This is not true!* If your former employer is transphobic or simply knows you as a different name/gender, you can include that job on your resume without giving the new employer permission to contact them.
- It may raise a red flag for employers if you ask them not to contact a former employer without giving an explanation. If your new employer is trans-friendly, you can explain why you don't want them contacting the old employer. Or, you can provide contact info for someone other than your supervisor, such as a friendly coworker who knows about your transition and can confirm that you worked there.
- Transitioning doesn't have to mean "starting over" professionally. Even though you may feel like a new person, you still benefit from all the amazing skills and experiences you gained in previous jobs. Don't sell yourself short! Make sure that experience counts!

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\* Frequently Asked Questions

## What about jobs that out me (i.e. jobs in trans or gender-specific organizations)?

The short answer: **It depends.**

The long answer:

- If you have worked in a **trans-specific organization**, and now you want to be stealth, you may want to leave that position off your resume. Or, be prepared to explain why you worked there / what your connection is to the trans community, in a way that doesn't out you as trans.
- If you worked in a **GLBT organization**, it won't necessarily out you as trans. People may just assume you're gay or lesbian, or that you could be a straight ally. If you include these jobs, be prepared to explain why you worked there / what your connection is to the community, in a way that doesn't out you in a way you don't want.
- If you worked in a **gender-specific organization** (such as Girl Scouts or Boy Scouts), it does not necessarily out you. Many men work in women's organizations, and many women work in men's organizations.
- *If you choose to leave a position off your resume*, make sure that the skills and experience you acquired there are covered in some other way (through a similar position, or in your summary of qualification).
- *If your resume is chock full of trans- or queer-specific jobs*, make sure to highlight the aspects of these jobs that are general and transferable to other groups of people (such as "counseling skills," "managed a busy office," "at risk youth," etc.).
- In some cases you may be able to replace "LGBT" with "diversity." For example if you served on an LGBT committee that put on programs in your workplace, you can say you "provided diversity programming." *Be prepared to elaborate on your work* in a way that is truthful and highlights skills & accomplishments you gained.

## How do I account for time I was out of work because of transition?

The short answer: **The same way you would account for any other gap.**

The long answer:

- When you list the dates of jobs, *you do not need to include the month*. This gets you out of explaining any gaps of less than a year.
- Were you doing *anything* professionally relevant during your time out of work (such as volunteering, consulting, working part time, or taking classes)? If so, you're all set – there is no gap.
- You can use your cover letter to explain longer gaps. You don't need to go into depth – just mentioning it in passing should be fine. For example, "After being out of the workforce for 2 years due to personal obligations, I am ready and eager to return to work for a dynamic company like XYZ." You can use general language such as "medical leave" or "family obligations" that does not out you as trans.