


Procedure No. __06-1-31__

SUBJECT: Transgender/Intersex Clients	APPLICABLE TO: All Single Adults Eligible for Temporary Shelter, Shelter Providers, and DHS Staff	ISSUED: January 31, 2006
ADMINISTERED BY: Division of Adult Services		APPROVED BY:  Mark Hurwitz, Deputy Commissioner

Purpose

The purpose of this policy is to:

1. Inform single adult transgender and intersex individuals that shelter and related services are available to them.
2. Provide guidance to all intake, assessment and shelter staff to ensure that:
 - a. Transgender/intersex shelter clients are treated with understanding, dignity and respect; and
 - b. shelter and related services are provided to transgender/intersex clients.

Definitions

The term “transgender” is an umbrella term that includes anyone whose gender identity and/or gender expression does not match society’s expectation of how an individual who was assigned a particular sex at birth should behave or appear. The term includes, but is not limited to:

- Pre-operative, post-operative and non-operative transsexuals who may or may not use hormones;
- Persons exhibiting gender characteristics and identities that are perceived to be inconsistent with their sex assignment at birth;
- Persons perceived to be androgynous;
- Transvestites;
- Cross-dressers; or
- Drag queens or kings.¹

¹ Guidelines Regarding “Gender Identity” Discrimination, A Form of Gender Discrimination Prohibited by the New York City Human Rights Law (Title 8 of the Administrative Code of the City of New York), New York City Commission on Human Rights, available at www.nyc.gov/html/cchr/pdf/trans_guide.pdf.

The term “intersex” includes persons born with sex chromosomes, external genitalia, or an internal reproductive system that varies from what is considered “standard” for either females or males.

General Principles of Respect, Privacy, & Safety

DHS’ policy for transgender/intersex clients in shelter is based upon the following principles:

1. DHS is committed to a policy of respect for all shelter clients.
2. DHS does not discriminate on the basis of gender identity.
3. DHS is committed to protecting the safety and privacy of all shelter clients.
4. DHS will not tolerate harassment of any shelter client.

POLICY

Intake and Assessment

To the extent that DHS intake and assessment shelters (“Intake/Assessment Shelters”) are segregated by gender, a client’s gender is determined by his or her gender identity. Staff are not expected to ask every client how he or she identifies. When staff has questions about a client’s gender identity, the staff should ask the client how he or she identifies, irrespective of legal documents or physical appearance. Upon learning of the client’s gender identity, staff will assign the client to an appropriate Intake/Assessment Shelter based on this identity. Staff will address individuals with names, titles, pronouns, and other terms appropriate to their gender identity.

A client shall not switch his or her gender identity to obtain access to a particular facility and/or a particular service.

Placement

DHS will work with transgender/intersex clients to identify appropriate programmatic placements in program shelters (“Program Shelters”)² to meet their individual service needs and to assist them in moving toward independent living. To the extent practicable, individuals who identify as men are to be housed in men’s Shelters (or co-ed Shelters) and individuals who identify as women are to be housed in women’s Shelters (or co-ed Shelters). DHS does not guarantee any shelter client placement in a particular Intake/Assessment or Program Shelter.

² Intake/Assessment Shelters and Program Shelters are collectively referred to as “Shelter(s).”

Restrooms, Bathrooms and Showers

Restrooms, bathrooms and showers in a Shelter shall be made available to all residents of that Shelter. Any resident who is concerned about privacy should be directed to the restrooms, bathrooms, and showers in the facility that allow for more privacy.

Sleeping Arrangements

Consideration will be given to placing vulnerable individuals in the most appropriate area(s) of the Shelter for sleeping. Residents with increased safety needs may be offered a bed space closest to the night staff.

Dress Code

All Shelter residents are expected to comply with general standards of modesty when they are evaluated at Intake/Assessment Shelters and subsequently placed into a Program Shelter. Residents may dress in a manner consistent with their gender identity.

Phased Implementation

DHS will introduce the policy through phased implementation at various Shelters.

Training

Staff at Intake/Assessment Shelters will receive training on diversity, transgender, and intersex issues. In addition, DHS has selected three men's and three women's Program Shelters where the staff will receive training after which time the Shelters will accept transgender/intersex individuals.

Evaluation

Three months following the completion of training, DHS will evaluate this phased implementation to assess whether the needs of transgender/intersex individuals are being met in DHS' Shelters and will make revisions to this policy, as required, before implementing this policy system-wide.