

Massachusetts Transgender Political Coalition
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Definitions

In the Boston ordinance and the proposed statewide legislation, “gender identity or expression” is defined as “a gender-related identity, appearance, expression, or behavior of an individual, regardless of the individual's assigned sex at birth.” This is consistent with Massachusetts Commission Against Discrimination’s (MCAD) past decisions and existing laws.

Gender Identity is how someone identifies their own gender – a person’s inner sense of what gender they “feel” like. Some people identify as men, some identify as women, and still others identify outside the traditional binary: they might identify as genderfluid, bigender, agender, genderqueer, neutrois, or with any number of other nonbinary identities. People whose gender identity aligns with the gender assigned to them at birth are cisgender, and people whose gender identity does not align with the gender assigned to them at birth often choose to identify themselves as transgender.

Gender Expression is how a person outwardly manifests their gender identity. This can include clothing, mannerisms, makeup, speech patterns, and more.

Transgender or **Trans** is often used as an umbrella term for people whose gender identity does not align with the gender assigned to them at birth. A person does not have to transition or exhibit any particular set of traits to be transgender; the only “qualification” is identifying outside of their assigned gender. Nonbinary people can identify as transgender, although some choose not to.

The Gender Binary is a social construct that situates “male” and “female” as synonymous with “man” and “woman” and dictates how people assigned to these categories should act. This limited system excludes and oppresses trans, nonbinary, intersex, and gender-nonconforming people.

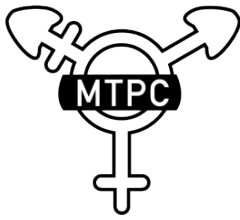
Frequently Asked Questions

Is being transgender the same as being gay, lesbian, bisexual, etc.?

No. Being trans is about gender identity and gender expression, whereas being gay, lesbian, bisexual, etc. is about romantic and/or sexual attraction. Trans people can identify with a wide variety of romantic and/or sexual attractions, just like cisgender people.

How can I tell if someone is transgender?

You can’t! Chances are you’ve already met a transgender person and not even realized it. Some trans folks “pass” as the gender they identify with and others don’t, but the only way to know for sure is if a person discloses to you that they are trans. You should never ask someone if they’re trans; it should be their choice whether to disclose or not.



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What is transition?

Transition is the process a person undertakes to live and present as the gender they identify with. This process can look different for everyone. People often change their name and pronouns and modify their outward gender presentation to better represent what they feel inside. Some trans folks pursue hormones and surgeries to change their bodies, although many cannot afford or choose not to do so.

Why do transgender people need legal protections?

Transgender people in Massachusetts face high levels of discrimination and violence due to widespread prejudice and the assumption that transgender people are outside the law's protections. MTPC is working to alter both non-discrimination laws and hate crime laws to explicitly and comprehensively state that transgender individuals are protected from discrimination under the law. A review of six studies conducted between 1996 and 2006, in cities and regions on both coasts and the Midwest, showed the following ranges for experiences of discrimination based on gender identity¹:

- 13% - 56% of transgender people had been unjustly fired
- 13% - 47% had been denied employment
- 22% - 31% had been harassed, either verbally or physically, in the workplace

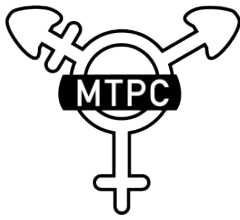
About MTPC

Founded in 2001, the Massachusetts Transgender Political Coalition is a non-profit organization working to end discrimination on the basis of gender identity and gender expression. MTPC follows in the footsteps of It's Time Massachusetts, a transgender political organization that ceased to exist upon the passing of its founder. MTPC has chapters located in Boston, Worcester County, North Shore, South Coast, and Western Mass; our chapters are made up of dedicated community members, activists, students, parents, lawyers, educators, and volunteers.

MTPC has a history of leading successful advocacy campaigns for city ordinances prohibiting discrimination on the basis of gender identity and gender expression. This includes Boston (2002) and Northampton (2005).

We are led by a Steering Committee comprised of youth and adults who identify as transgender, nonbinary, gender-nonconforming, and intersex, as well as cisgender family members, partners, friends, and allies.

¹ Badgett, M.V., Lau, Sears, and Ho. *Bias in the Workplace: Consistent Evidence of Sexual Orientation and Gender Identity*



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Mission and Values

MTPC is dedicated to ending discrimination on the basis of gender identity and gender expression. We envision a world where persons of all genders are treated with respect and are able to fully participate in all areas of society, free from fear of prohibition, harassment, or violence based on their gender identity and/or expression. To that end we educate the public, advocate with state, local, and federal government, engage in political activism, and encourage empowerment of community members through collective action.

Our Goals:

- Promoting social and economic justice and equality;
- Working against all forms of oppression;
- Building broad-based participation and community power;
- Developing leaders and building coalitions;
- Drawing strength from diverse experiences and identities;
- Learning from our history and elders;
- Growing through challenge and critique;
- Including and uplifting those who cannot be fully visible;
- Holding ourselves accountable to the communities for which we work.