



NEWS FROM
ULSTER COUNTY
County Executive Jen Metzger

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Ulster County Executive Announces Preferred Name and Pronoun Plan

KINGSTON, NY - Ulster County Executive Jen Metzger announced the newly adopted Preferred Name and Pronoun Plan, which applies to all Ulster County employees to ensure an inclusive work environment in which all employees' identities and pronouns are fully and appropriately reflected and used.

The Preferred Name and Pronoun Plan recognizes that people may use a name other than their legal name, or pronoun, that reflects personal gender identity. This plan encourages an environment for personal expression, within community standards, allowing employees to officially notify the County of their preferred first name that differs from their legal name for:

- Internal and external communications, including email
- Phone directory
- Onboarding materials, including employment applications
- Non-driver employee ID badges
- Personnel listing
- Webpage

This Plan is consistent with current policies protecting employees against discrimination based on gender identity and expression and is a best practice for supporting transgender and gender non-conforming members of our County workforce. The Plan is also intended to include anyone who uses a preferred first name on a daily basis other than their legal/primary first name.

"The County government is a large organization with over 1,400 employees, and every one of our employees deserves a work environment in which they are respected and treated with

dignity," **said Ulster County Executive Jen Metzger.** "Referring to our employees in name and pronoun as they wish to be identified is a meaningful step we can take to foster a culture of inclusion and help ensure that everyone feels respected and valued."

"I am very proud of the Ulster County Preferred Name and Pronoun Plan. Utilizing preferred names and pronouns allows each person to bring their whole self to the workplace and feel a sense of belonging and value. Ulster County's Preferred Name and Pronoun Plan creates equity for our LGBTQIA+ employees while fostering a culture of diversity and inclusion within our workforce, county jurisdiction and beyond," **said Ulster County Chief Diversity Officer Esi Lewis.**

"Discrimination on the basis of gender identity or expression is prohibited in all areas covered by the Human Rights Law, including employment, housing, places of public accommodation, non-religious schools, and more. The Ulster County Human Rights Department is excited to support this long-awaited inclusive step forward as we embrace all members of our community as equal," **said Joe McDonald, Director of the Ulster County Human Rights Department.**

"Implementing the Preferred Name and Pronoun Plan is vital for fostering an inclusive and respectful work environment. Calling someone by their preferred name and pronouns validates their identity, shows respect, promotes personal expression, and encourages a sense of belonging. This initiative enhances the overall experience for everyone, especially transgender and gender non-conforming individuals. Ulster County is committed to diversity, equity, and inclusion, ensuring all employees feel recognized and valued for who they are," **said Peter Criswell, Chair of the Ulster County Legislature.**

"Names are the essence of how we define ourselves. Not all cultures assume a person will have one name they did not choose for their whole lives. I am grateful to live in a place that values a more nuanced and sensitive approach that honors each person on their own terms," **said Ulster County Legislator Limina Grace Harmon.**

The preferred first name is used for internal communication and certain external communications (e.g. website pages, printed materials). Internal applications include, but may not be limited to: email, phone system, and business cards. ID Cards (employee identification cards) will display both legal and preferred first name. The County is obligated to use the legal first name for many official records and reports, including but not limited to certain employment and payroll records, employee benefits records, and time allocation reports.

Additionally, for new/prospective employees, the Ulster County Employee Application will be updated to provide a field for prospective employees to provide a preferred name. For existing County employees, a form can be submitted to the Personnel Department to update their records to reflect the preferred name.

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