

LGBTQ+ JOB SEARCH

Many colleges and universities are more progressive in their attitudes, support, and policies regarding the LGBTQ+ community than the society at large. It is important for members of the LGBTQ+ community to be aware of the variation in attitudes that can and do exist with employers. The following resources are intended to help you consider your own needs in a work environment and find the right company for you.

Internship/Job Searching

Writing Your Resume

Should you come out, or not come out, on your resume? It's beneficial for students to list clubs and organizations that they belong to on their resume, but this can be a hard decision when it comes to affinity groups, such as The Alliance, which may lead employers to make assumptions, whether accurate or not, about you. Some people may choose to explicitly list these affiliations on their application materials as a way of potentially filtering out unfriendly employers. Others may prefer to leave this information off of their resumes and only disclose their identity once they are working at an organization, if at all.

Something you may want to ask yourself when making this decision is, "What relevance does this experience have to the job I'm applying for?" It may be that your involvement in a particular club or organization will allow you to showcase valuable leadership skills. Perhaps it is just one of several clubs that you have been a general member of throughout the years. Ultimately, what to put on your resume regarding your affiliations/identity is about what is most comfortable for you. Just remember that anything listed on your resume is fair game for an employer to ask about during an interview.

Using Your Preferred Name in the Job Search

For those who use a name other than their legal name, the issue of what name to use on your resume and

cover letter can be very complex. Resumes and cover letters are not legal documents, so it is acceptable to list your preferred name on them. The way that some people do this is by listing the first initial of their legal name, followed by their preferred name (e.g. M. Andrew Smith). Some may identify their preferred name in quotes or parentheses after their legal first name (e.g. Melanie "Andrew" Smith). Typically, you can also request to have your preferred name used for company email, phone directories, ID cards, etc.

Ultimately, what name you use and how you list it on your resume and cover letter can be a complex issue, especially depending on state and local anti-discrimination laws. If you are struggling with how to handle this sensitive issue in your job search, it may be helpful to consult trans knowledgeable legal resources, such as the Transgender Law Center.

Times When You Have to Use Your Legal Name

It is necessary to use your legal name on legal documents, such as the job application, tax forms, insurance forms, etc. While Human Resources staff will usually be the ones handling these forms, it is possible that your supervisor may have seen your application form during the interview process and be aware of your legal name, even if you didn't use it on your resume and cover letter. While this may not always be the case, it is good to be aware of this possibility.



Social Media

As with your resume, you will want to think about whether or not you want to be out on social media while job searching. It is very common for potential employers to search for you on social media sites, such as Facebook or LinkedIn. If you decide that you don't want to be out in your job search process, you may want to go through your profile on these sites and think about what information is on them that you are or are not comfortable with an employer seeing. This is particularly important with Facebook, regardless of your identity, and all students should double check their privacy settings.

Identifying LGBTQ+ Friendly Employers

Whenever you conduct a job or internship search, it is important to research organizations. If you are also a member of the LGBTQ+ community, there may be some particular things that you will want to look for as you conduct your research: What is the organization's culture around diversity? What type of benefits exist for employees who are transgender or in same-sex relationships? What is the company's anti-discrimination policy? You may not always find specific answers to these questions, but you shouldn't let that dissuade you from applying.

You can also check out the Human Rights Campaign's Corporate Equality Index to find LGBTQ+ friendly companies. You can find the report at hrc.org/campaigns/corporate-equality-index. Some noteworthy employers who had a top score of 100 in the 2015 index are:

- AbbVie
- Apple
- Biogen
- Boeing
- Boston Scientific
- Dell
- Eaton Corp.
- eBay
- FactSet Research Systems
- Genentech
- General Electric
- General Motors
- Google
- Hewlett-Packard
- Huron Consulting Group
- IBM
- JetBlue
- Lockheed Martin
- Medtronic PLC
- Microsoft
- Nissan North America
- NVIDIA
- Oracle
- PepsiCo
- Pfizer
- QUALCOMM
- Raytheon
- Rockwell Collins
- SAP America
- Sun Life Financial
- Tech Data
- Tesla Motors
- Toyota North America
- Turner Construction
- UBS AG
- Xerox
- Yahoo

Relocating

Job searching isn't just a matter of finding the right position in the right company, but also in the right location. You may find a position that excites you, but if it's located in a community that is very hostile to LGBTQ+ people, is it the right position for you? Similarly, you may find a job in a very LGBTQ+ friendly area, but the position or the company just isn't what you want. Overall, the decision to relocate to an area that is new to you should be carefully considered. Making a pros/cons list can be a very useful decision making tool. Some things that you will want to look into include:

- **Legal protections:** You can learn about the legal protections for the LGBTQ+ community in every state by visiting the HRC's Maps of State Laws & Policies at hrc.org/state_maps.
- **Check out the local newspapers:** Are there instances of anti-LGBTQ+ sentiment/actions in the area? Do the newspapers feature stories on LGBTQ+ news, people, organizations, events, etc.?
- **Google the area using key words such as "LGBTQ organizations" or "LGBTQ friendly":** Are there organizations in the area that could assist you in meeting new people, locating appropriate real estate agents, or answering your questions?
- **Research the schools:** If you have children, check out the local schools to see what kind of support structure and policies are in place for LGBTQ+ youth and the children of LGBTQ+ parents.
- **Spend some time there:** If possible, visit the area and go to good people watching places, such as the mall or shops and restaurants in a downtown area, to observe the people.

On the Job

Coming Out

As we know, coming out is a lifelong and deeply personal process. For some, it is of paramount importance to be out in all aspects of their life. Others may view their sexual orientation and/or gender identity as just one piece of the puzzle that makes them who they are and may not feel that it is necessary to be fully out in every context of their life.

There is no one-size-fits-all approach to coming out, or not, on the job. If it is very important to you to be out in the workplace, then you will want to target companies that have a demonstrated history of being LGBTQ+ friendly. If you are more selective about who you are out to and being able to comfortably be out on the job is not a top priority for you, then you may still want to consider searching for opportunities in LGBTQ+ friendly companies, but you may also be open to employers who still have some work to do in this regard. Remember, no matter what you decide in terms of coming out on the job, it is your decision to make, and you should do whatever is best for you.

Dealing with Homophobia and/or Transphobia on the Job

Whether or not you are out on the job, it is possible that you will experience anti-LGBTQ+ attitudes and sentiments in the workplace. Bias against LGBTQ+ people could stem from a coworker's religious beliefs or cultural background, or from general ignorance. Regardless of the reasons why someone in the workplace might be expressing bias, it is important that you protect and take care of yourself.

There is no one right way to respond to homophobia and/or transphobia, but some options that you may want to consider are:

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- reaching out to an external support network, such as family and/or friends
- addressing your concerns with your coworker directly
- addressing your concerns with your supervisor or other appropriate person within the company, such as an affirmative action officer, who can advise you on your rights and how the company will respond
- finding a support group within your company or in the local area
- if the issue persists, despite your attempts to address it with higher ups, getting in touch with an outside entity who can advise you of your rights, such as Lambda Legal
- seeking employment in a more supportive environment

Additional Resources

- Lambda Legal: lambdalegal.org
- Out Professionals: outprofessionals.org
- OUT for Work: outforwork.com
- Human Rights Campaign: hrc.org
- Out & Equal Workplace Advocates: outandequal.org
- Massachusetts Transgender Political Coalition: masstpc.org
- National Center for Transgender Equality: transequality.org
- National Organization of Gay and Lesbian Scientists and Technical Professionals: noglstp.org
- Gay and Lesbian Medical Association: glma.org
- Queer in STEM: queerstem.org
- InterEngineering: interengineeringlgbt.com
- Out in Science, Technology, Engineering, and Mathematics (oSTEM): ostem.org/about

Career Development Center

Project Center
508-831-5260 | cdc@wpi.edu
wpi.edu/+cdc

 facebook.com/cdcatwpi

 youtube.com/cdcatwpi

 linkd.in/wpicdc

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 wp.wpi.edu/cdc

 pinterest.com/cdcatwpi