

INFORMATION FOR LGBTQ+ STUDENTS

It is common for students who identify as lesbian, bisexual, gay, transgender or queer + to be nervous about applying to/choosing a school. For LGBTQ+ students, your sexual orientation or gender can bring added challenges during the college admissions process. If you are transgender and are early in process of transitioning, there may be many different reasons for wanting to use (or not use) your legal name. You should be aware that procedures and policies vary from institution to institution, so it is important to know the requirements. The college process also represents a good opportunity for you to find a campus that is friendly and welcoming of your identity.

COLLEGE EXPLORATION TIPS

- Assess the LGBTQ+ friendliness or climate of a campus and its housing options. (See the resources below to find out how and see ratings).
- If possible, visit campuses (some schools offer travel scholarships), talk to students who don't work for the admissions office about the campus climate, and reach out to students through the campus LGBTQ center or a dean of multicultural affairs.
- Either on an in-person visit or by investigating website, find out if there are LGBTQ+ resources on campus. Does the school have an employee to provide resources and services (e.g., LGBTQ+ center, student groups, and organizations) to LGBTQ+ students? Does the school offer health and counseling services designed for LGBTQ+ students?
- If applicable, learn about laws, what name and gender marker you should use on their college application, and FASFA/WASFA.

COLLEGE APPLICATION PROCESS

There is no fixed rule concerning being out during the application process. Ultimately, the choice to disclose an LGBTQ+ identity to schools depends on the individual. Many schools appreciate having the fullest possible sense of all of their applicants — including the fact that they are LGBTQ+.

It is possible to be out to admissions staff members but not your family. Not everyone comes out before leaving high school for a variety of reasons. If you are not currently out to your family, you may want to consider whether or not you want to come out in their written application materials. If you chose not to disclose information to admissions through the written application, you may call admissions officers at a school or come out during an interview with a staff member.

COMPLETING THE FAFSA OR WASFA

The FAFSA and the WASFA are official government forms. According to Federal Student Aid, applicants must enter their information as it appears on official government documents (e.g., birth certificate and social security card). If the student has not changed their legal name and gender marker on Identity Documents (e.g., birth certificate, license, passport, Social Security Card), they must use the original information.

If you do not use your legal name and official gender designation, your application will not be processed successfully and your financial aid may be in jeopardy. Unsure of what to do? Contact The Federal Student Aid Information Center by email, chat or phone. See: <https://studentaidhelp.ed.gov/app/home/site/studentaid>. Students can find out how to get a legal name change where they live and update their name/gender on state and federal IDs and records at the National Center for Transgender Equality ID Document Center for Washington State: www.transequality.org/documents/state/washington.

RESOURCES

Supporting Transgender Students: College Admissions & Financial Aid: <http://gearup.wa.gov/file/supporting-transgender-students-college-admissions-financial-aid-resource-guide-college-access>
Campus Pride Index: www.campusprideindex.org
Campus Pride Trans Policy Clearinghouse: www.campuspride.org/tpc



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