

◀ **PROFESSIONAL RESOURCES**

All Children - All Families: Inclusive Agency Forms



HUMAN
RIGHTS
CAMPAIGN
FOUNDATION

all children all families

**Achieving Safety, Permanency and Well-Being by
Improving Practice with LGBTQ Youth and Families**



In many instances, completing an intake form, application, or other type of paperwork may be among a client's first contacts with an agency. For this reason, ensuring that all

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straight/heterosexual and cisgender (not transgender). Language rooted in these assumptions renders the LGBTQ+ community invisible. Instead, making minor changes to forms can ensure all youth and parents feel seen and welcomed as part of the community your agency serves.

At the very minimum forms should:

- Avoid using heterocentric language like the narrow options of “mother” and “father” when discussing families and relationship status. Instead, options such as “applicant 1” and “applicant 2” or “parent 1” and “parent 2,” create room for all types of families and relationships.
- Provide an opportunity for individuals to indicate if the name they go by is different than their legal name. For example, if legal name is needed, a form can ask for “Legal name” as well as “Preferred name.”
- Wherever gender demographic information is asked, include gender options other than the strict binary of “male” or “female.” One way to do this is by including three options:
 - • Male
 - • Female
 - • Other gender (_____)

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- If there are forms that need to be updated but that your agency does not have authorization to edit, you can:
 - • Request the changes be made by the appropriate institution
 - • Make sure agency staff members are prepared to acknowledge to clients that the language that is not inclusive, and re-affirm your agency's commitment to welcoming LGBTQ+ clients.

Inclusive language in agency forms required of clients reflects all potential applicants and contributes to an agency's welcoming environment for LGBTQ+ clients.

At the simplest level, applications and forms should not divide applicants into the categories of "mother" and "father." A best practice of inclusion in forms is to, instead, refer to "applicant 1" and "applicant 2" or "parent 1" and "parent 2." These considerations should be made for all forms, including: applications, sign-in sheets and homestudy paperwork.

Sample forms:

- **Adoption STAR, Amherst, NY, ["Adoptive Family Intake Form"](#)**
- **Amara, Seattle, WA, ["Application to Adopt"](#)**

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Conduct a thorough review of all agency-controlled forms and paperwork.

If necessary, agencies can first prioritize those documents that are completed by clients and then shift focus to internal-facing documents. The review should look for language rooted in “heterocentrism” or “cissexism” – the assumption that someone is straight/heterosexual and cisgender (not transgender). Language rooted in these assumptions renders the LGBTQ+ community invisible. Instead, making minor changes to forms can ensure all youth and parents feel seen and welcomed as part of the community your agency serves.

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forms related to youth as well.

- If needed changes are identified, HRC has model language for your agency to reference.
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Sample forms:

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