



OFFICE OF
PERFORMANCE
IMPROVEMENT
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Demographics Data Collection: Sex and Gender Identity

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Background and Significance

Louisville Metro Government collects information from and about the community in order to assess its programs, policies, and outcomes, as well as to develop new strategies and initiatives. This guidance on collecting sex and gender identity information emerges from important feedback we have received from community members who are requesting more inclusivity in available responses on government forms and surveys.

Additionally, this guidance on collecting demographic information is responsive to emerging research and best practices nationally from reputable organizations and institutions.

Significant gaps in sex and gender identity data collection—which extend beyond a gender binary of male/female or man/woman—exist at the local, state, and federal level. More inclusive and accurate collection of sex and gender identity data can help to better shape policy and program needs, especially for community members who are transgender and/or gender non-conforming.¹

Benchmarking and Methods

Thousands of iterations of questions related to sex and gender identity data collection exist; a search for best practices in the United States consistently turned up references to two reports.

The Williams Institute at the UCLA School of Law released a report in 2014 detailing best practices for collecting data about sex and gender identity.² The Fenway Institute, an organization concerned with LGBT health, issued similar guidelines in 2014.³

Both institutions utilized field research of sex and gender identities to form their question language choice. Both agree that a two question approach for asking is the most effective way to gather clear information. Additionally, they recommend questions which ask for an individual's pronouns as well as legal and chosen names. Data collection should be revisited and kept up-to-date as gender identity may change over time.

Policy

Questions

When collecting sex and gender identity, this information should be provided by clients, not by observation. All employees should exercise the utmost respect and dignity when collecting this information. Based on our research, we recommend using the questions and practices set forth by the Williams Institute for any data, both internal and external.²

Any Louisville Metro Government agency or Metro affiliated agency who collects sex and gender identity data should use the 'Current Gender Identity' question below. We recommend all demographic surveys and/or forms be updated to include this question. For agencies with State and Federal reporting requirements that do not match 'Current Gender Identity' choices, we recommend they retain their current question but add 'Current Gender Identity' for Metro purposes.

Current Gender Identity

What is your current gender identity?
(Choose all that apply):

- Female
- Male
- Trans female/Trans woman
- Trans male/Trans man
- Genderqueer/Gender non-conforming
- Different identity (please state): _____

There may be some instances where a second, 'Sex Assigned at Birth' question is necessary for appropriate service. This could include when legal documentation is required or when medical services are being provided. In this instance, we recommend that forms include both 'Sex Assigned at Birth' and 'Current Gender Identity'. To provide culturally competent service, LMG employees may also want to ask a person's pronouns and chosen name.

Sex Assigned at Birth

What sex were you assigned at birth, on your original birth certificate?

- Female
- Male

*Some states are starting to add intersex as an option on birth certificates. If similar changes occur in Kentucky and across the country, the wording for the above questions will be reviewed.

Continued

Request For Proposals (RFPs) and Data systems

Any systems used to collect data should be updated to reflect this policy when possible. Furthermore, this policy should be taken into consideration and upheld with any future systems. Preference can be given to contracts that can meet these requirements but will not exclude those that cannot. Below are RFP line items for new data systems.

If the RFP includes collecting or storing sex/gender information, add the following to the RFP:

1. When collecting sex/gender information, are your forms customizable to allow 5 or more options, and a write-in option?
2. When storing sex/gender information, does your database allow 5 or more options, including a free-form text option?
3. When displaying sex/gender information collected by your system, can it display 5 or more options, including free-form text?
4. When exporting raw data around sex/gender from your system, can it export 5 or more options, including free-form text?

Review Timeline

This policy should be reviewed every year to progressively ensure inclusivity of the gender spectrum. The following Louisville Metro Government agencies should be in attendance when policy revisions take place: Human Resources, Public Health and Wellness, Department of Information Technology, and the Office of Performance Improvement and Innovation/Data Governance Committee.

References

¹ American Journal of Public Health. (2008). Sexual and Gender Minority Health: What We Know and What Needs to Be Done. Kenneth H. Mayer et al. Washington, DC: <https://ajph.aphapublications.org/doi/full/10.2105/AJPH.2007.127811>

² The GeniUSS Group. (2014). Best Practices for Asking Questions to Identify Transgender and Other Gender Minority Respondents on Population-Based Surveys. J.L. Herman (Ed.). Los Angeles, CA: The Williams Institute. https://williamsinstitute.law.ucla.edu/research/census-lgbt-demographics-studies/geniuss-report-sept-2014/?_sm_au_=iHVkDbJStSjO67fq

³ The Fenway Institute. (2015). Question Design Methodology: How to Ask SO/GI Questions. TheCenter for American Progress. Boston, MA: <http://do-askdotell.org/ehr/toolkit/howtoask/>