

# 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 add challenges during college admissions. If you are transgender and are early in the 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 essential to know the requirements. The college process also represents an excellent 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 learn more and view ratings).
- If possible, visit campuses (some schools offer travel scholarships) and speak with students who are not affiliated with the admissions office about the campus climate. Additionally, reach out to students through the campus LGBTQ center or a dean of multicultural affairs.
- During an in-person visit or by reviewing the website, determine if there are LGBTQ+ resources available on campus. Does the school have an employee dedicated to providing resources and services (e.g., an 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 the laws, the name and gender marker you should use on your college application, and the FAFSA/WASFA process.

## 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 their applicants, including the fact that they are LGBTQ+.

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

## 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. Need help figuring out what to do? Contact the Federal Student Aid Information Center by email, chat, or phone. See [studentaid.gov](https://studentaid.gov). Students can find out how to obtain a legal name change in their state and update their name and gender on state and federal IDs and records at the National Center for Transgender Equality ID Document Center for Washington State: [transequality.org/documents/state/washington](https://transequality.org/documents/state/washington).

## RESOURCES

Supporting Transgender Students: College Admissions & Financial Aid: [gearup.wa.gov/file/supporting-transgender-and-nonbinary-students-college-admissions-financial-aid-resource-guide](https://gearup.wa.gov/file/supporting-transgender-and-nonbinary-students-college-admissions-financial-aid-resource-guide)  
Campus Pride Index: [campusprideindex.org](https://campusprideindex.org)  
Campus Pride Trans Policy Clearinghouse: [campuspride.org/tpc](https://campuspride.org/tpc)

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