

Recommended Reading

1. *Arizona Employer's Guide to Transgender Workplace Issues*. . Southern Arizona Gender Alliance, 300 E. Sixth St., Tucson AZ, 85705 (520) 867-0083 (www.sagatucson.org)
2. *Transsexual Workers: An Employer's Guide*. Janis Walworth, MS (1998). Center for Gender Sanity, PO Box 451427, Westchester, CA 90045
3. *Transsexuals: Candid Answers to Private Questions*. Gerald Ramsey, Ph.D. (1996). The Crossing Press. PO Box 1048, Freedom, CA 95019. (800) 777-1048.

Southern Arizona Gender Alliance (SAGA)

SAGA offers support, social, and discussion groups that reflect the various aspects of gender and society. These include educational forums and trainings for businesses, service providers, and community members to learn more about the issues facing transgender people and how our allies can be supportive and inclusive. The SAGA Speakers Bureau provides speakers and panelists for your class, event, business, or training.

Other Publications Available from SAGA

- *Gender Identity 101: A Transgender Primer* (brochure, abbrev. version of the full booklet)
- *Gender Identity 101: A Transgender Primer* (Full version) Also available online at www.sagatucson.org
- *Trans In The Workplace: A Guide For Managers, Supervisors, and Human Resources Personnel* (brochure)
- *TransMedia: Resources for Journalists* (brochure)

To order copies of any of the above publications, please contact SAGA at the address on the front of this brochure.

Resources on Transgender Employment Issues

- **Arizona Transgender Workplace (ATWORK) Project:** Provides educational programs, workshops, mediation services and training opportunities for managers, supervisors and human resource personnel. Distributes the *Arizona Employer's Guide to Transgender Workplace Issues*. Southern Arizona Gender Alliance, 300 E. Sixth St., Tucson AZ, 85705. (520) 867-0083 (www.sagatucson.org)
- **City of Tucson Equal Opportunity Office:** If your employer does business in the City of Tucson, it's important they know that gender identity *IS* a protected class under Article II, Sec. 17-1 of the City of Tucson Human Relations Ordinance. If you believe you have been the victim of discrimination based on your gender identity or expression, contact the EOO at (520) 791-4866 for instructions on how to file a discrimination complaint. (www.ci.tucson.az.us/eoo)
- **Transgender at Work:** Provides resources for innovative employers who want to set their company employment policies to help their transgendered employees to be at their most productive. (www.tgender.net/taw)
- **The International Conference On Transgender Law And Employment Policy:** Deals with legal aspects of gender identity, generally on the national level. P.O. Drawer 1010, Cooperstown, NY 13326. (607) 547-4118. (www.abmall.com/ictlep)

Trans in the Workplace

A Guide for the Transgender, Transsexual or Gender-Variant Employee

Southern Arizona Gender Alliance



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For You— The Transgendered Employee

"Denial of an opportunity to make a living is the single most damaging and pervasive form of discrimination against transgendered people. Even more systematically than lesbians, gay men, and bisexual people, transgendered people are routinely targeted for work place discrimination and almost universally unprotected under existing laws."

**—ICTLEP, the International Conference on
Transgender Law and Employment Policy**

For transgender, transsexual and gender-variant people, gender expression is a major factor in our employability. Most of us possess, at some point in our lives, physical or behavioral characteristics that identify us as transgendered, making us vulnerable to loss of employment, denial of employment, or under-employment, with potentially devastating effect on our families and us.

(Note: While there are particular issues that transsexuals may face that other transgendered people do not, we will use the term transition as an umbrella term to encompass the continuum of behaviors, choices of clothing, physical characteristics, or mannerisms that differ from what is considered "appropriate" for a person born a particular gender.)

The decision to be openly "read" as transgendered, transsexual or gender-variant is one of the most important choices the transgendered employee will make and many factors must be considered and weighed before approaching one's current or potential employer. Regrettably, not all workplaces are safe for transgendered employees and sexual harassment and threats of violence are commonplace.

What Should I Do?

If you do choose to transition at your current job, it is important for you to bear in mind the following suggestions:

- **Be Ready.** Do not approach your employer until you are completely ready to begin the process. If you are still "thinking about transition", keep that process out of the workplace until you have made the final decision. Your credibility, both as an employee and as a transgendered person, would be sorely damaged if you decided to not go through with the process, especially if your employer has begun working on your behalf with the other staff and management. If you have completed, or are in the process of having, sexual reassignment surgery, have a letter from your doctor stating so. If you've changed your name or your gender designation, have all the legal documents that state that you have done so.
- **Do your research.** Is there an anti-discrimination policy in place at the company? Does it include sexual orientation and/or gender identity? (Probably not, but it's good to check it out beforehand.) Is there a GLBT employee group? Will your union support you? Is there a dress code to consider?
- **Get a copy of any recent performance evaluations.** This is critical. The time to transition on the job is not when you have been doing a less than stellar job. To put it bluntly, if there is any question of your value as an employee before your transition, your chances of getting support from management is slim. Your employer will be less than hesitant to deal with you if you are not an asset to their company. Simply put, if an employer does not want you to transition on the job, a bad performance record will give them just the out they need to get rid of you and not deal with the problem at all. Be a resource that your employer will want to keep, not a burden of which he or she can't wait to be rid.

- **Gather educational materials on transgenderism to help management understand the issues.** There are many good resources, both online and in print for both you and your employer. In Arizona, the Southern Arizona Gender Alliance's ATWORK Project provides information, education, and resources to employers in so that they can create safe and secure working environments for their transgendered applicants and employees. (See resources section).
- **Be willing to compromise when necessary.** When you finally approach your employer (most likely through the human resources department, employee assistance program, or your direct supervisor), know that **COMPROMISE IS THE KEY!** Again, to be blunt, your employer's primary concern is the health and well being of the company - not the fulfillment of your **dreams**. Your employer will want - no, will **NEED** - your transition to cause as little upheaval and interruption to the company as possible.
- **Know what your employer's limits are (real or imagined) and work with and within them** to expand those boundaries for the betterment of your life, as well as the health of the company. Be realistic as you work with your employer, your therapist, and your family and friends to insure that the process is as painless for your employer - and for you - as possible.