

**USDA, Natural Resources Conservation Service
Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual and Transgender (LGBT)
Special Emphasis Program
Caribbean Area – Quarter #1 - October, 2011**

Hello NRC'S'ers !

Do you know that LGBTs are celebrating a Special Day this month? Yes, October 11th is the **National Coming- Out Day**.

With this in mind, we would like to share some information about this topic in order to **increase awareness, sensitivity, and understanding of this special emphasis group**.

Please, share with family members and friends that may be seeking this type of information, for themselves or to help create a better environment for all.



Working for Lesbian, Gay,
Bisexual and Transgender Equal Rights

Become a Member

The History of Coming Out

In the Beginning, There Was a March

On Oct. 11, 1987, half a million people participated in the March on Washington for Lesbian and Gay Rights. It was the second such demonstration in our nation's capital and resulted in the founding of a number of LGBT organizations, including the National Latino/a Gay & Lesbian Organization (LLEGÓ) and AT&T's LGBT employee group, LEAGUE. The momentum continued four months after this extraordinary march as more than 100 lesbian, gay, bisexual and transgender activists from around the country gathered in Manassas, Va., about 25 miles outside Washington, D.C. Recognizing that the LGBT community often reacted defensively to anti-gay actions, they came up with the idea of a national day to celebrate coming out and chose the anniversary of that second march on Washington to mark it. The originators of the idea were Rob Eichberg, a founder of the personal growth workshop, The Experience, and Jean O'Leary, then head of National Gay Rights Advocates. From this idea the National Coming Out Day was born.

To this day National Coming Out Day (NCOD) continues to promote a safe world for LGBT individuals to live truthfully and openly.

For more information, access to: <http://www.hrc.org/resources/entry/the-history-of-coming-out>

The Natural Resources Conservation Service provides leadership in a partnership effort to help people conserve, maintain, and improve our natural resources and environment.

An Equal Opportunity Provider and Employer



Coming Out at Work

Being open at work can be a daunting challenge. But it can also relieve the daily stress of hiding who you are. At the same time, however, no one wants to put their job security or opportunity for advancement in jeopardy. So here are some things to think about as you consider whether or not to come out at work:

Questions to Ask

- Does your employer have a written non-discrimination policy? Does it specifically cover sexual orientation and/or gender identity/expression? Does insurance cover domestic partner benefits? Does health coverage cover transitioning costs?
- Is there a lesbian, gay, bisexual and transgender employee resource group at your workplace?
- What's the overall climate in your workplace? Do people tend to make derogatory comments or jokes? Are any of your co-workers openly LGBT?
- What are your work relationships like? Do people discuss their personal lives? Are they asking questions about yours? Is the atmosphere friendly or guarded?
- Does your state or locality have a [non-discrimination law](#) including sexual orientation and gender identity/expression?
- Is your company ranked on the Human Rights Campaign [Corporate Equality Index](#)? If so, what rating has it earned?

Moving Forward

Once you've assessed your workplace atmosphere, here are some practical steps to take:

- Identify someone who is LGBT or LGBT-supportive, and talk to them first.
- Make a plan.
- Talk about LGBT-related news stories, movies, TV shows or other topics as a way to signal your views or start the conversation.
- Bring a partner or date to company functions, or have them meet you at work one day.
- Put an HRC sticker and/or a picture of your partner on your desk.
- Take a breath. People will often take their cues from you on how to talk and feel about LGBT issues. The more casual you are, the more likely they are to follow your lead.

Benefits of Being Open at Work

- Eliminates the need to hide or mislead.
- Makes deeper friendships possible.
- Breaks down barriers to understanding.
- Builds trusting working relationships.
- Lets us bring our "whole selves" to work.
- Being open can make you more productive, and can even benefit your career because your peers will see you in a new, perhaps even courageous, light.

For more information, access to: <http://www.hrc.org/resources/entry/coming-out-at-work>

Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, Transgender Emphasis Program in NRCS

The LGBT Program Manager is responsible for providing awareness and education to NRCS employees and partners while focusing on such issues as employment, retention, promotion, training, career development and advancement opportunities affecting LGBT applicants and employees at NRCS. The LGBT Special Emphasis Program is an integral part of the overall equal opportunity program (EEO) and is designed to:



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- Ensure that lesbians, gays, bisexuals and transgender people receive equal treatment in all aspects of employment;
- Increase the number of LGBT people employed in all professional, administrative, technical, and other categories, series and grade levels within NRCS;
- Provide opportunities to participate in trainings, career development and leadership programs;
- Encourage the participation of LGBT populations in all NRCS- sponsored programs and activities;
- Provide mentoring support to LGBT in the workforce;
- Educate all NRCS employees by raising the level of awareness of LGBT workplace issues and concerns.