



United States Department of Agriculture

Creating a Welcoming Workplace in Idaho

**Presented by Meghan Walter
NRCS National LGBT Program Manager**

**July 6, 2015
Idaho Leadership Team and Civil Rights Committee**

USDA is an equal opportunity employer and provider



Goals

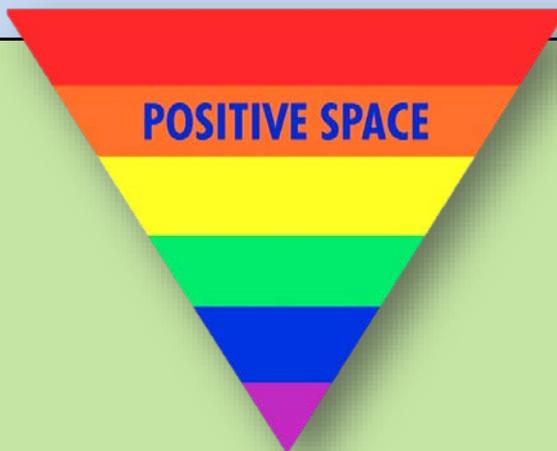
- Understand the purpose of Special Emphasis Programs
- Define LGBT terminology
- Identify particular hurdles and challenges faced by LGBT employees
- Learn simple steps you can take to remove barriers
- Recognize that everyone has a sexual orientation and a gender identity
- Answer questions

Ground rules

Assume best intentions for everyone

Ask questions

We are here to learn



Intent of training

Inform and educate

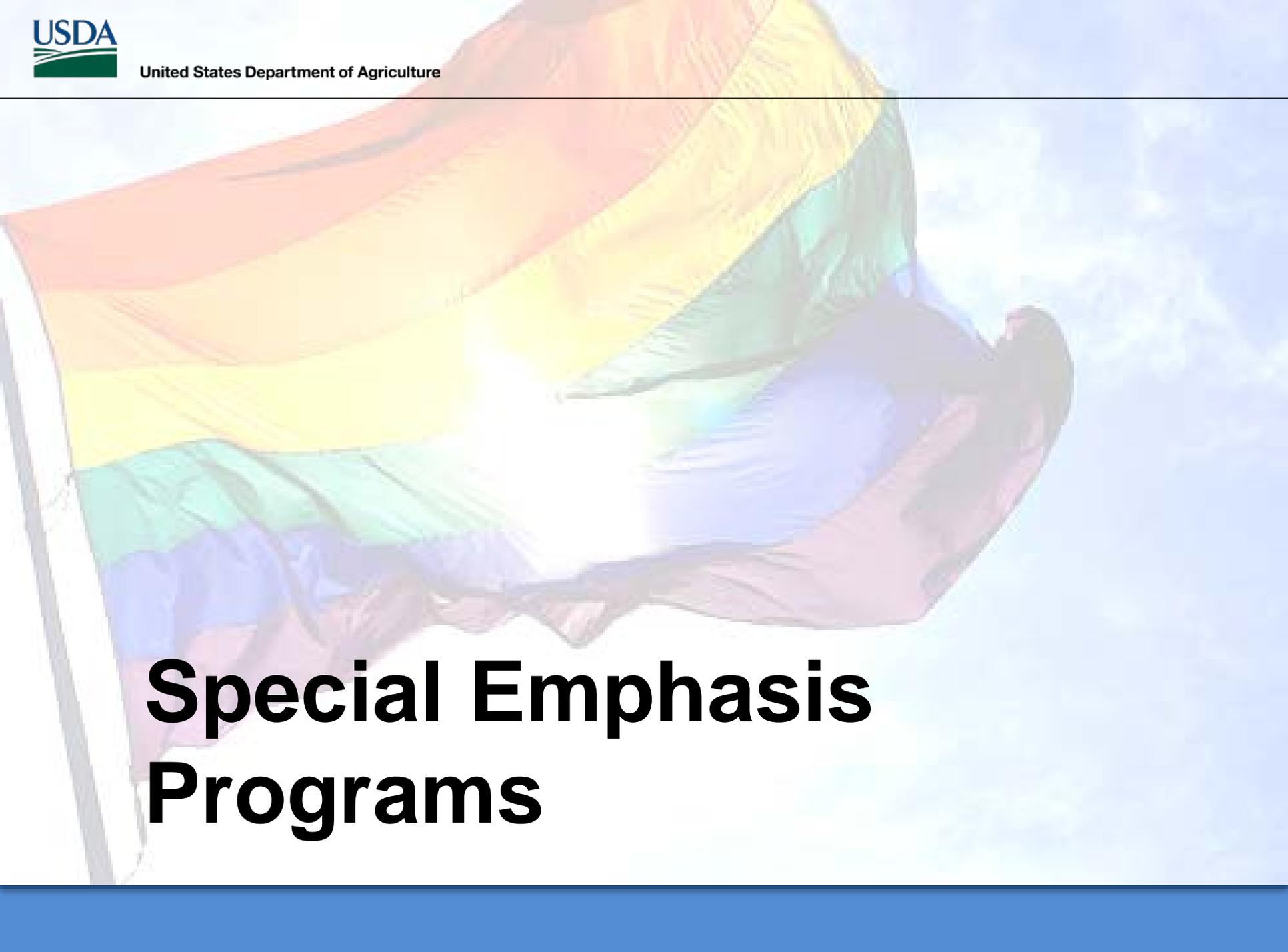
Foster a safe, secure and productive workplace
for all employees

NOT to dissuade anyone's personal opinions or
religious beliefs





United States Department of Agriculture

A large, vibrant rainbow flag is shown waving in the wind against a bright blue sky with scattered white clouds. The flag's colors are clearly visible, and the overall scene conveys a sense of pride and inclusivity.

Special Emphasis Programs



Special Emphasis Programs

Programs that focus attention on specific groups as a result of a particular law, regulation, or Executive Order

Established to address employment-related concerns of a group where a need for special emphasis has been demonstrated.



Special Emphasis Programs

American Indian/Alaska Native

Asian/Pacific Islander

Black Emphasis Program

Disability

Federal Women's

Hispanic

Veterans

LGBT

We are not asking for *special* treatment

We are asking for equal treatment



WE WANT
EQUALITY



United States Department of Agriculture

A large, vibrant rainbow flag is shown waving in the wind against a bright blue sky with light, wispy clouds. The flag's colors are clearly visible, and it occupies most of the frame.

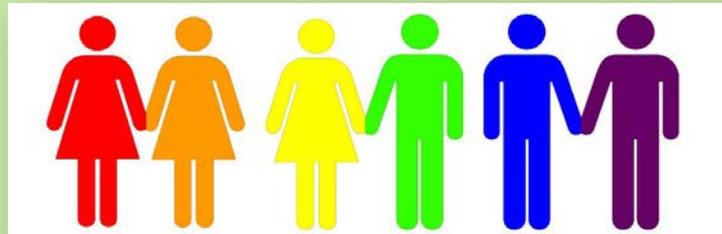
Defining Terms

- **Lesbian** – women attracted to women
- **Gay** – men attracted to men
- **Bisexual** – attraction to both men and women
- **Heterosexual** – attraction to people of the opposite gender



Sexual Orientation

- A person's attraction to another person
- Ranges from exclusive heterosexuality to exclusive homosexuality
- More than just an individual characteristic
- Related to love, attachment, and intimacy
- Essential component of personal identity



- **Gender Identity** – A person's internal sense of being male, female, or somewhere in between.

Research shows gender identity begins to solidify between the ages of 3-6.

- **Gender Expression** – the way in which a person outwardly expresses their gender, through appearance, dress, mannerisms, and behavior.

Our gender expression can change from day to day

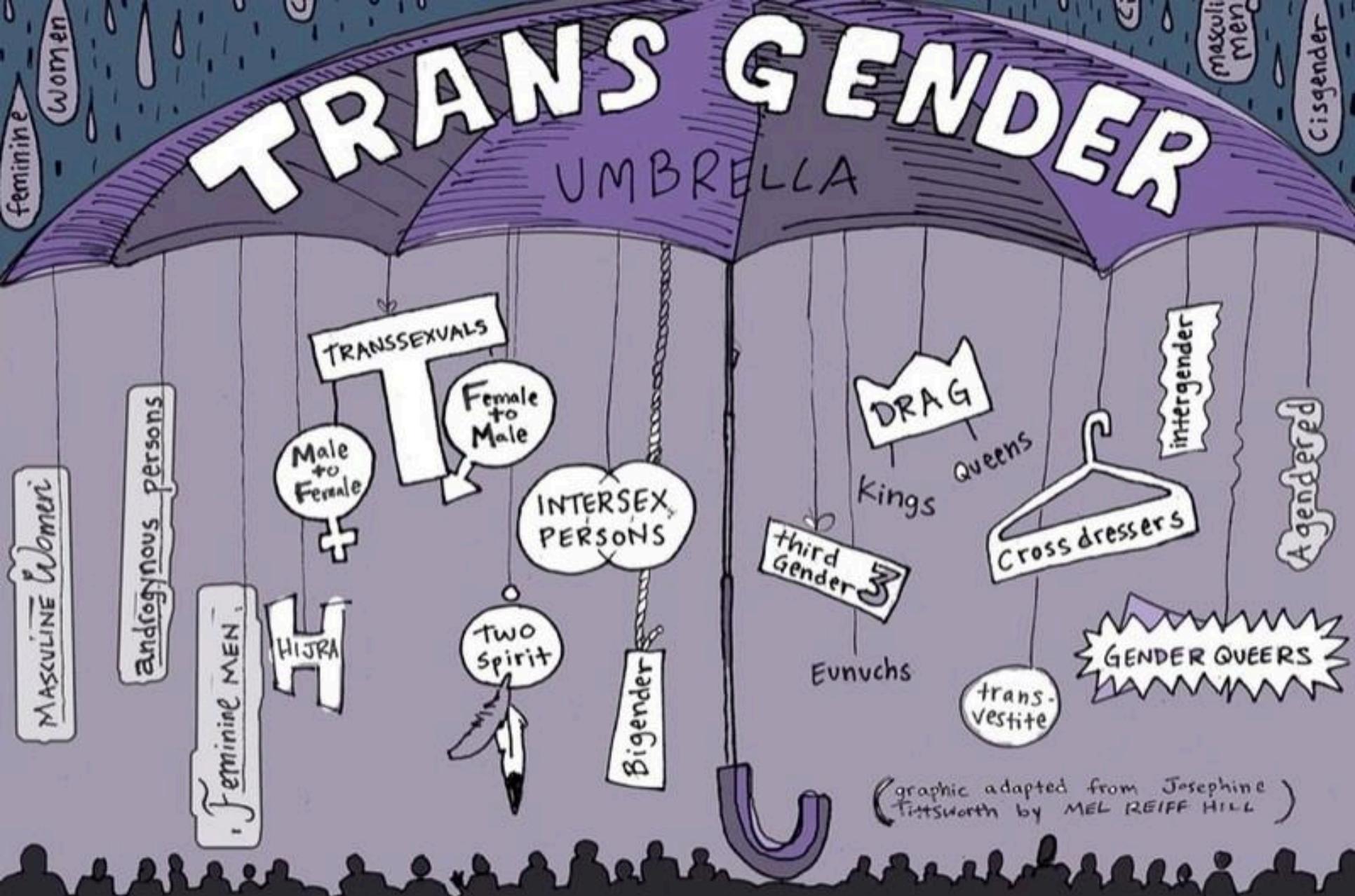


The difference between **gender identity** & **sexual orientation** is the difference between **who you are** & **whom you love.**

Transgender - someone who feels that the gender assigned to them at birth is not correct or does not match how they view themselves.

Transgender is an umbrella term that encompasses many identities.



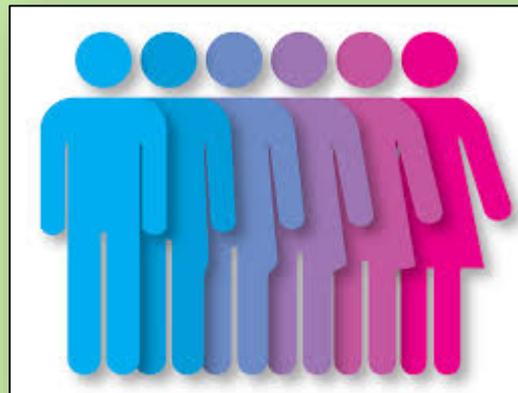


(graphic adapted from Josephine Tinsworth by MEL REIFF HILL)

Encompasses any individual who crosses over or challenges their society's traditional gender roles and/or expressions.

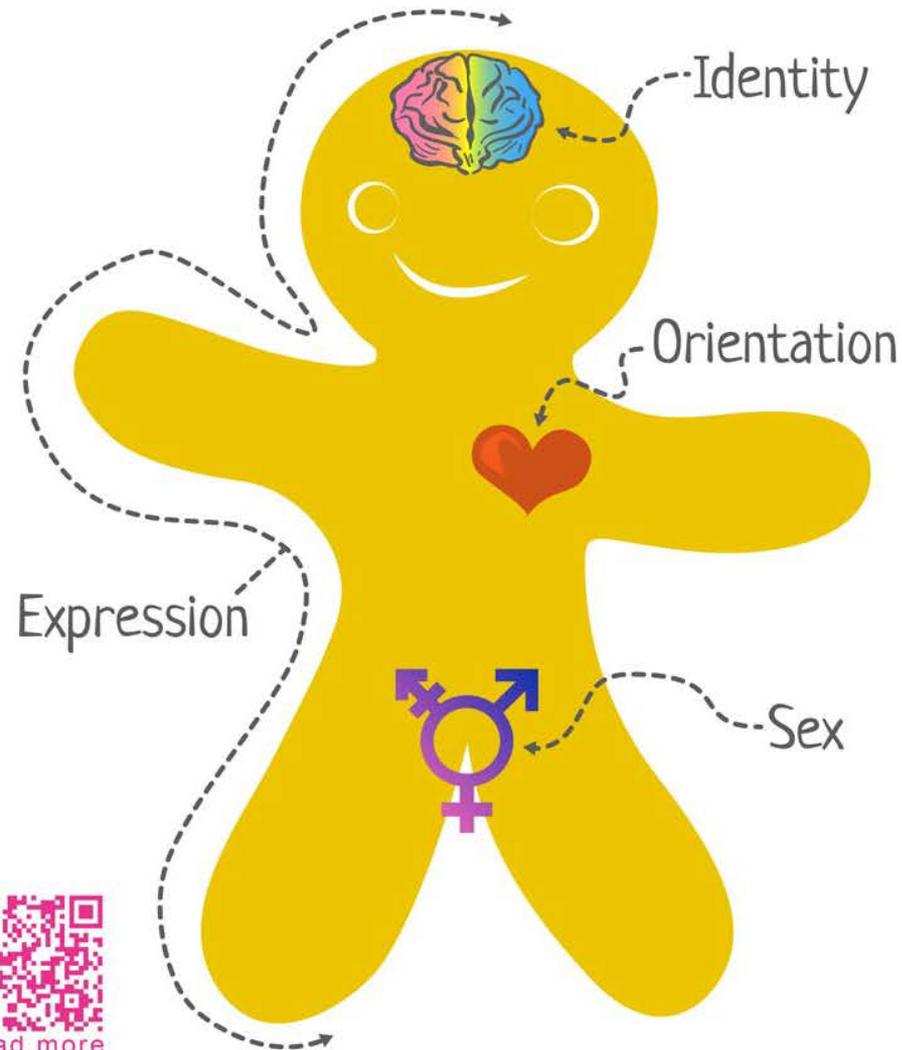
Sex and Gender

- Sex is a *biological classification* that refers to hormones, chromosomes, and genital and reproductive anatomy.
- Gender is a *socially constructed system of classification* that refers to concepts of femininity and masculinity.
- These **may not be the same** for any particular individual.



The Genderbread Person

by www.ItsPronouncedMetrosexual.com



Gender identity is how you, in your head, think about yourself. It's the chemistry that composes you (e.g., hormonal levels) and how you interpret what that means.



Gender expression is how you demonstrate your gender (based on traditional gender roles) through the ways you act, dress, behave, and interact.



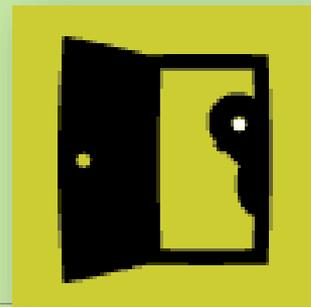
Biological sex refers to the objectively measurable organs, hormones, and chromosomes. Female = vagina, ovaries, XX chromosomes; male = penis, testes, XY chromosomes; intersex = a combination of the two.



Sexual orientation is who you are physically, spiritually, and emotionally attracted to, based on their sex/gender in relation to your own.



Coming Out



Common reference used to self identify as lesbian, gay, bisexual, or transgender.

Everyone comes out

Why are sexual orientation and gender identity workplace issues?

NRCS is a Welcoming Workplace



We Support our LGBT Community

USDA is an equal opportunity provider and employer.

Within USDA

Why do we talk about sexual orientation and gender identity at USDA?

- USDA **employees** and **customers** have a diversity of sexual orientations and gender identities.
- USDA is located in almost every county in the U.S.
- LGBT people live in 99.3% of US counties

It's just good customer service!





Addressing Historical Discrimination

The Lavender Scare

- A period from the 1950s to the 1960s during which LGBT employees were systematically purged from the Federal Government.
- Initiated through Executive Order 10450, signed by President Eisenhower outlawing the employment of LGBT individuals in the government.
- Enforced most notably by Senator Joseph McCarthy.
- The Lavender Scare lasted longer and destroyed more lives than the better known Red Scare.
- Dr. Frank Kameny played an instrumental role in establishing protections for LGBT employees, after he was fired from the USGS for his sexual orientation.



Progression of Federal Law

- 1964 - Civil Rights Act prohibits discrimination “on the basis of...sex”
- 1978 – Civil Service Reform Act of 1978
- **1993 – USDA adds sexual orientation as protected to Civil Rights Policy Statement**
- 1998 – EO 13087: Prohibits discrimination based on sexual orientation
- 2009 – USDA establishes LGBT Special Emphasis Program
- **2011 – USDA adds gender identity as protected to Civil Rights Policy Statement**
- 2014
 - 7 C.F.R. Part 15d (USDA) – gender identity/expression protections for customers
 - Amendment to EO 11478
 - Amendment to EO 11246



United States Department of Agriculture

“There exists no reason to discriminate based on race, color, religion, national origin, age, sex (including gender identity and expression), sexual orientation, disability, marital or familial status, political beliefs, parental status, receipt of public service, or protected genetic information.”



United States Department of Agriculture

Office of the Secretary
Washington, D.C. 20250

Civil Rights Policy Statement

As Secretary of Agriculture, I fully support the U.S. Department of Agriculture's (USDA) civil rights, equal employment opportunity, and diversity policies and programs. Improving civil rights throughout USDA is one of my top priorities, and by pursuing this goal together in a transparent and ethical manner we can lead the way in making USDA a model organization. We can turn our challenges into opportunities to strengthen our service.

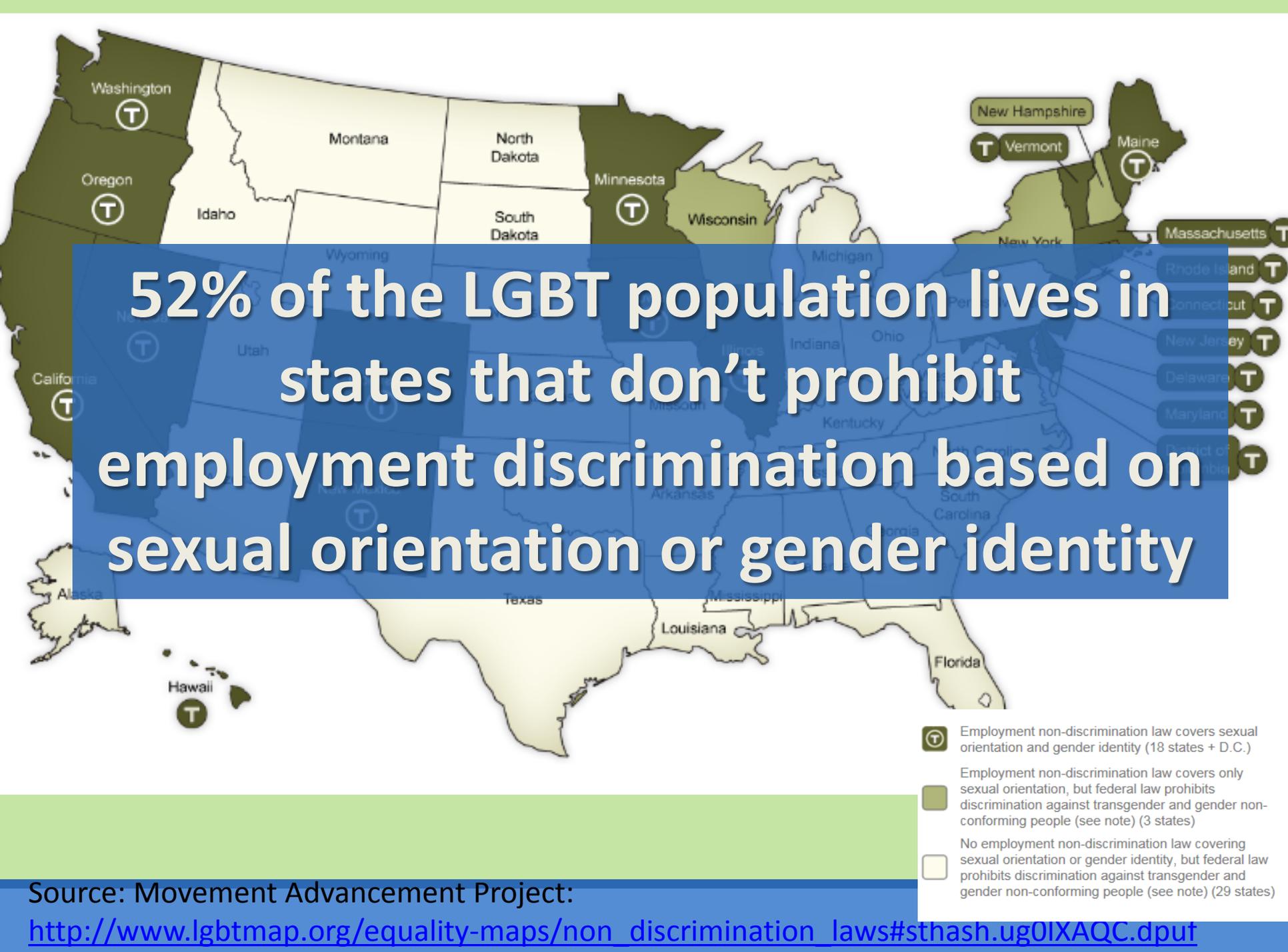
The success of today's "People's Department" requires the steadfast support and commitment of every USDA employee. We will have zero tolerance for any form of discrimination or reprisal. There exists *no reason to discriminate* based on race, color, religion, national origin, age, sex (including gender identity and expression), sexual orientation, disability, marital or familial status, political beliefs, parental status, receipt of public assistance, or protected genetic information. Our policy at USDA is not only to understand that there will be zero tolerance for any form of discrimination, but to ensure that this standard is maintained throughout the Department. This standard is *applicable to every employee and manager* at USDA and to every action taken at USDA.

USDA must become a model department of tolerance and inclusion. Only then will we live up to President Lincoln's description of USDA as "The People's Department." Strengthening "The People's Department" is my commitment to you. I expect every employee and manager to demonstrate respect for and adherence to USDA civil rights, equal employment opportunity, and diversity policies and our program civil rights responsibilities.

To this end, accountability is key. I will hold all employees and managers accountable for doing their part to ensure that all USDA applicants, customers, constituents, and stakeholders are provided equal access to the opportunities, programs, and services available through "The People's Department." Accordingly, I am counting on all senior leaders, managers, and supervisors to model appropriate behavior and to lead by example.

We must all strive to create an inclusive environment in which every employee is respected, trusted, and valued. As we approach the 50th Anniversary of the Civil Rights Act of 1964, USDA must continue to ensure that the civil rights of USDA constituents and employees are respected and protected. We have corrected past errors, learned from past mistakes, and moved into a new era of equitable service and access for all. Let us continue to cultivate and reap the benefits of a diverse USDA workforce that is rich in talent, ideas, background, and experience. The USDA mission depends on it.

Thomas J. Wilsack
Secretary
July 24, 2013

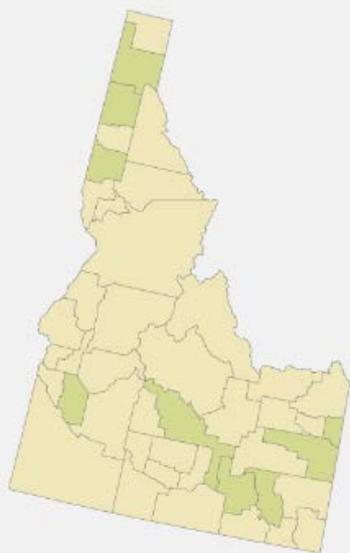


Source: Movement Advancement Project:

http://www.lgbtmap.org/equality-maps/non_discrimination_laws#sthash.ug0IXAQC.dput

Nondiscrimination ordinances covering private employers

Sexual Orientation



29%
of population protected

Legend

- State Protections
- County Protections
- City Protections
- No Protections
- NDOs Banned

Gender Identity



29%
of population protected

Legend

- State Protections
- County Protections
- City Protections
- No Protections
- NDOs Banned



Quick Facts About Idaho

Total State Population:

1,567,582

Total Adult Population:

1,169,075

Total LGBT Population:

31,565

LGBT % of State Adult Population:

2.7%

% of Same-Sex Couples Raising Children:

22%

Sexual Orientation Policy Tally:

4.25/19

MEDIUM

Gender Identity Policy Tally:

-0.5/15

NEGATIVE

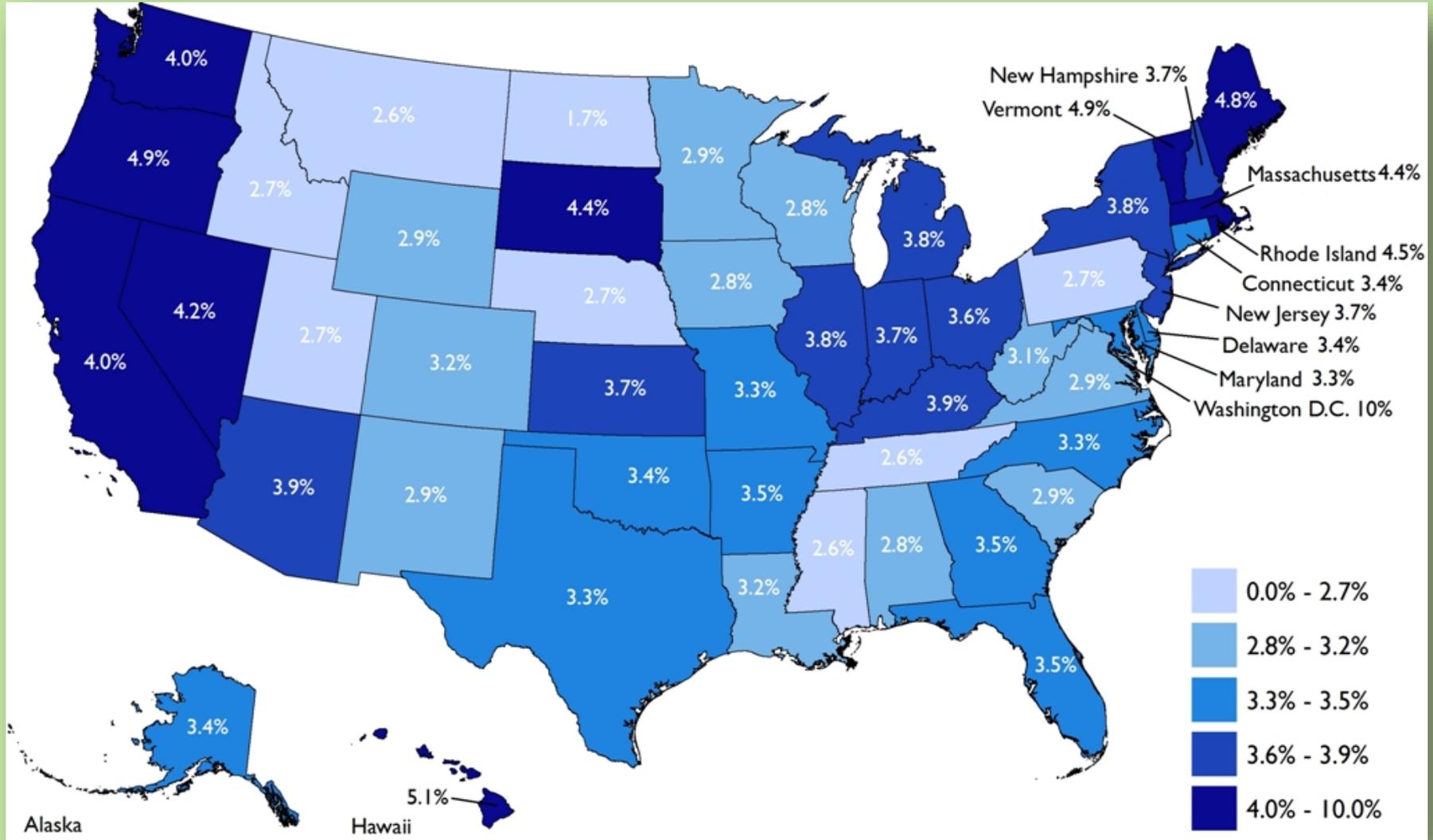
Overall Tally:

3.75/34

LOW



LGBT demographics

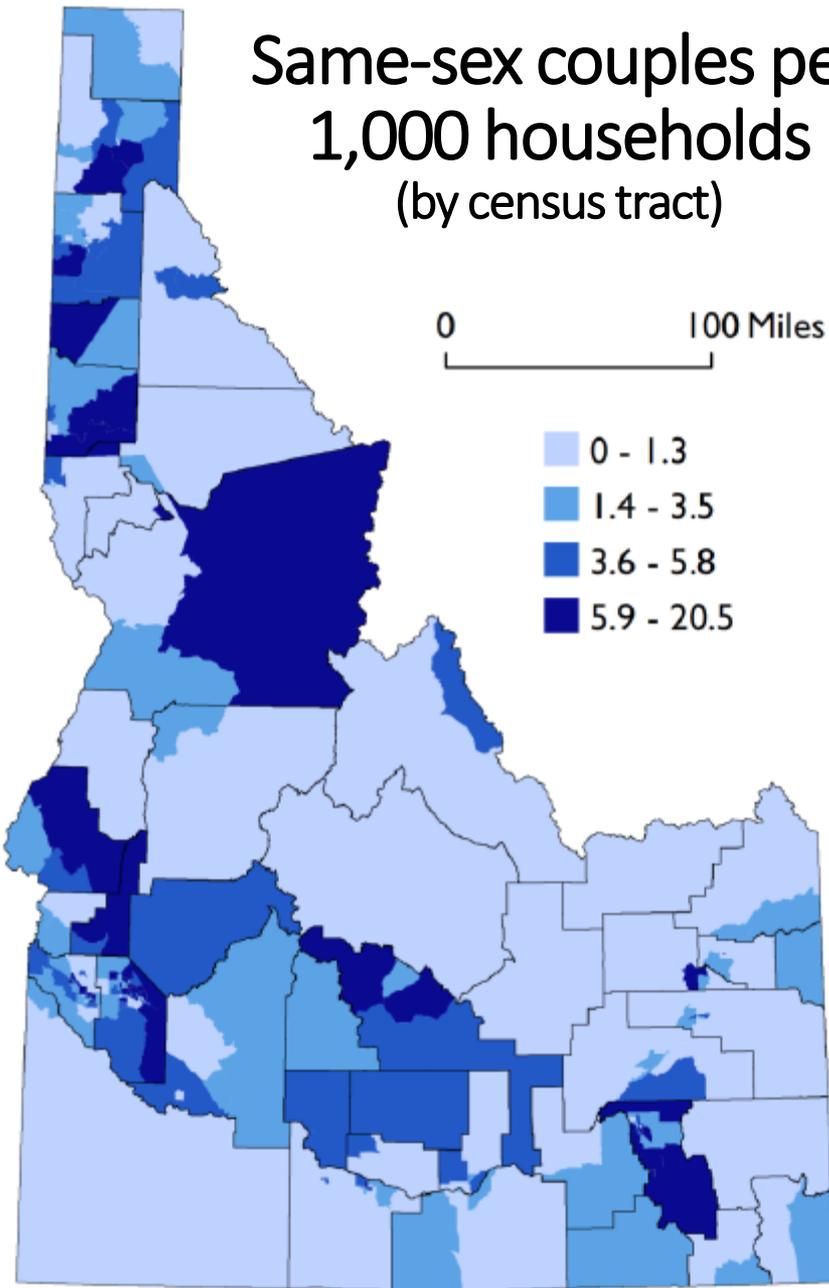
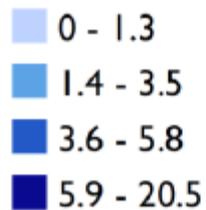


Source: Gallup Special Report (2013) available from The Williams Institute

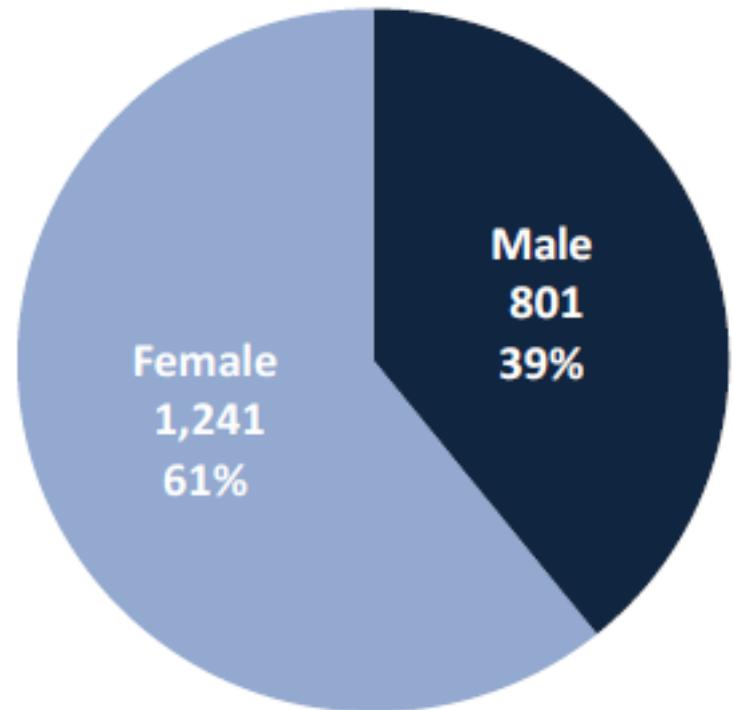
<http://williamsinstitute.law.ucla.edu/research/census-lgbt-demographics-studies/gallup-lgbt-pop-feb-2013/>

Same-sex couples per 1,000 households (by census tract)

0 100 Miles



All Same-sex Couples





Religious Objections

What if my religion says that homosexuality is morally wrong?

- The USDA workforce includes a diversity of religious views, and discrimination on the basis of religion is prohibited in the Federal workplace.
- This means that no one can or should ask an employee to change his or her religious beliefs on homosexuality.
- Conversely, this also means that religious objections to homosexuality cannot be imposed on other coworkers or be used to obstruct nondiscrimination laws, policies, and diversity activities.

In the Workplace

Why do some people need to talk about their sexual orientation and gender identity at work?

- It is exceptionally difficult to avoid any indication of one's sexual orientation or gender identity in most interactions.
- Sharing aspects of one's personal life with coworkers is often a normal part of the workday.
- Conversations about spouses, friends, and family help to form bonds of mutual respect and trust that support a productive workplace.
- To enhance the productivity of ALL employees, it is just as important for LGBT individuals to be comfortable to speak about personal issues as other employees.





Common Misconception

When LGBT employees share the same day-to-day anecdotes with coworkers, they are seen as over-sharing, or forcing their “lifestyle” upon coworkers.

Fact: Non-LGBT employees often do not recognize that when they mention their own gender and husbands/wives at work, they are making casual references to their own sexual orientation and gender identity.

Source: Human Rights Campaign, *“The Cost of the Closet and the Rewards of Inclusion: Why the Workplace Environment LGBT People Matters to Employers”*

NRCS is a family



“If you don’t create the world you want to live in, then others will do it for you and it may not be a world you like.”

Discriminatory Comments

People who identify as lesbian, gay, bisexual, or transgender often:

- Are stereotyped based on their sexual orientation or gender identity and grouped together.
- Are accused of pushing their sexual orientation or gender identity onto others when they do something to indicate what it is.
- Are asked why they made their choice of sexual orientation or gender identity.
- Are often accused of being abused, warped, or psychologically confused because of their sexual orientation or gender identity.
- Encounter people who try to convince them to change their sexual orientation or gender identity.



What You Can Do

- Don't assume that everyone is straight. Someone close to you could be looking for support in their coming out process or may have a family member who is LGBT. By not making assumptions, you can help give them the space they need.
- Defend LGBT people against discrimination and speak out against statements or jokes that attack them. Letting others know you find anti-LGBT comments offensive and unacceptable can go a long way toward reducing homophobia, biphobia, and transphobia.
- If you witness someone making LGBT jokes and negative comments,
 - Tell them that you find it offensive, or
 - Leave the room, and
 - Report it to their supervisor
- *Never* use an individual's sexual orientation or gender identity as a factor in hiring, promotions, evaluations, or work assignment decisions.

Takeaways

- **Everyone** has a sexual orientation *and* gender identity.
- **You** can make a difference by speaking up against or walking out on offensive comments and behavior.
- At USDA, it is **everyone's** responsibility to create a work environment where LGBT employees and customers are safe, respected, and able to share in the full responsibilities and benefits of employment.



Questions?

“Make a career of humanity. Commit yourself to the noble struggle for equal rights. You will make a greater person of yourself, a greater nation of your country, and a finer world to live in.”

--Martin Luther King, Jr., 1959



Thank You!

*The U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA) prohibits discrimination against its customers, employees, and applicants for employment on the bases of race, color, national origin, age, disability, sex, **gender identity**, religion, reprisal, and where applicable, political beliefs, marital status, familial or parental status, **sexual orientation**, or all or part of an individual's income is derived from any public assistance program, or protected genetic information in employment or in any program or activity conducted or funded by the Department.*



Putting an End to Bullying

Watch the video:

Secretary Vilsack's It Gets Better Video

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=uEw569vABLo>