

# OREGON YOUTH AUTHORITY

## Policy Summary



### **Supporting LGBTQ+ Youth in OYA Custody**

The following is only a summary of OYA policy [I-A-10.1 Meeting LGTBQ+ Youth Needs](#). Please refer to the policy for full details and as the official policy record. For other policies, visit <https://www.oregon.gov/oya/aboutoya/pages/policies.aspx>.

Oregon Youth Authority (OYA) is committed to creating a safe, supportive, and inclusive environment for all youth, including those who identify as lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender, queer, questioning, intersex, gender fluid, or gender diverse (LGBTQ+). OYA ensures that all youth receive equal access to services, programs, and opportunities regardless of their sexual orientation, gender identity, or gender expression.

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### **How OYA Supports LGBTQ+ Youth**

LGBTQ+ youth in OYA custody have access to:

- Health and wellness information tailored to their needs.
- Gender-affirming clothing and hygiene products.
- Cultural events and youth development activities.
- The right to file grievances if they experience discrimination or mistreatment.
- The OYA Reporting Line (800-315-5440) to report concerns about their rights or safety.

If any of these resources are restricted, it must be part of a documented clinical treatment plan developed by a qualified mental health professional, psychologist or medical doctor.

### **Creating a Safe and Inclusive Environment**

#### **Staff Training**

- OYA staff, volunteers, and contractors receive training on LGBTQ+ issues to ensure they understand how to support and protect LGBTQ+ youth.
- Training includes recognizing discrimination, respecting identity, responding to harassment, and ways adults are expected to support positive adolescent development.

## **Respecting Identity**

- Youth are given the opportunity to share their identity during the intake process.
- Staff will use a youth's correct name and pronouns unless legal records require otherwise.
- Staff must ask youth who identify as transgender if they prefer staff who identify as male or female to conduct their physical searches.

## **Housing and Placement**

- Placement decisions are made case by case to ensure youth safety and well-being.
- The Sexual Orientation, Gender Identity, and Expression Committee (SOGIEC) helps determine safe housing and placement options. The committee may recommend a location consistent with the youth's stated gender identity if appropriate. They will consider the youth's input to determine whether a gender-affirming placement is reasonable and possible.
- Youth cannot be placed in isolation simply because of their sexual orientation or gender identity.
- If a youth feels safer sleeping in a private room, staff will provide one if available. If a private room is not an option, staff will work with the youth to develop an alternative safety plan.

## **Clothing, Grooming, and Personal Items**

Youth may request clothing, grooming items, and hygiene products that align with their gender identity.

- Requests are reviewed on a case-by-case basis to ensure youth needs are met.
- Staff cannot deny these requests based on sexual orientation or gender identity—they must have a specific, documented, credible reason for denial.

## **Bathrooms, Showers, and Privacy**

- Youth cannot be forced to use separate facilities just because of their gender identity.
- If a youth reports a safety concern, staff will work with them to create a safety plan.
- Staff must give transgender, gender fluid, gender diverse, and intersex youth the option to shower and change clothes in a private space separate from other youth.

## **Medical and Mental Health Support**

- Youth in facilities have access to gender-affirming health care and mental health services.
- Youth with Oregon Health Plan benefits can receive gender-affirming treatment if eligible.

- Qualified mental health professionals (QMHP) offer counseling and support for LGBTQ+ youth and youth exploring their identity.

### **How Families Can Support Their Youth**

- Families can request information about OYA's LGBTQ+ policies and services.
- If a youth faces discrimination or mistreatment, families can help them file a grievance or call the OYA Reporting Line (800-315-5440).
- Families can connect with their youth's case manager for placement and support questions.

### **Commitment to Safety and Inclusion**

OYA is dedicated to protecting the rights of LGBTQ+ youth and ensuring they receive the respect, care, and support they deserve. If you have questions about how OYA supports LGBTQ+ youth, please reach out to facility staff or your youth's case coordinator or parole/probation officer.