

TRAINING SCENARIO

2

Equal Access Expectations

Setting: A large urban shelter houses more than 200 men in a single dormitory. The local community requires that the shelter check every resident's identification. Travis stands in line outside the shelter and notices a posted sign on the wall stating that ID is required to use the shelter. Travis has not had the resources or help to change his ID, which lists him as female. Brian, the staff person checking in clients, greets Travis upon entry.



Brian: ID please.

Travis hands over the ID. Brian looks at the ID and sees that the gender marker on the ID does not match Travis's appearance but that it is a photo of Travis. Brian directs Travis to the assigned bed. Later in the evening, Brian, ensuring no other clients are within earshot, follows up with Travis.

Brian: You're all set, but I wanted to let you know that we have staff member that can help if you want to change the information on your ID card. Let me know.

Travis: Maybe, I'll think about it.

While HUD discourages requiring identification as a prerequisite for intake at a shelter or project, some projects continue to do so. This training scenario provides an example of complying with local requirements and the Equal Access Rule.

TRAINING SCENARIO 2 CONTINUED

These steps supported non-discrimination, respecting individuals and confidentiality

- » The staff person demonstrates respect for the client by accepting their ID without calling attention to the difference in current gender expression. The staff appropriately confirms the ID matches the client, and then returns it.
- » The staff person preserves the client's confidentiality by not asking questions about the ID in line where other clients might overhear.
- » The staff person correctly admits the client to the project though the client's current gender expression does not match the gender marker on their ID.
- » Lack of accurate identification can be a major barrier to receiving services, enrolling in community projects and applying for benefits. Many shelters make obtaining replacement ID an initial step in any case plan. Similarly, staff should offer support correcting identification that has an inaccurate gender marker.

Discussion points about harassment

- » Identification that records a client's sex assigned at birth inconsistent with their current gender identity should not be used as a reason to decline services to an otherwise eligible client.
- » Staff should encourage clients without ID to obtain identification, as this is a required document for obtaining employment, accessing benefits and many other services important to self-sufficiency.
- » Staff should carefully explain the delays and costs associated with formally altering the gender marker on identification, including delays to obtaining Social Security benefits, employment eligibility verification or other processes. Clients should be given information to make an informed choice about if or when they will initiate the process of legally changing their gender marker.

Questions to consider

- » Have you experienced similar situations with clients?
- » Were they resolved according to the expectations established by the Equal Access Regulation?
- » Does your agency require clients to present ID and if so, what funding stream or law requires this? Why are they required? Are there exceptions?
- » If a client wants to change their ID, how would you help them? What resources are available?