

City of Northfield, Minnesota	Policy Number:
	Adopted: October 5, 2021
COUNCIL ADMINISTRATIVE POLICY	Revised:
Personal Pronoun Sharing Policy	

**1. Purpose**

The purpose of this policy is to establish a voluntary personal pronoun sharing policy for City of Northfield (City) employees. The use of pronouns, phrases that signal one’s gender identification and the way one wishes to be referred to, have become increasingly common in email signature blocks and on workplace business cards and name tags. The goal is to provide permission to share one’s personal pronouns as part of an employee’s “business footprint” and to provide guidance on personal pronoun usage. Sharing and using one’s personal pronouns creates a welcoming space for others to share theirs, as some may initially be reluctant to do so for fear of lack of acceptance. It makes it easier for transgender and nonbinary people to share the pronouns they want others to use when referring to them. Transgender and nonbinary people have historically been the subject of marginalization and intentional misgendering.

**2. Policy**

Any employee is welcome to include their personal pronouns within their work email signature blocks and on their business cards, and ID Badges. Additionally, employees are encouraged to verbally share their personal pronouns when meeting new employees or community members for the first time. This is a voluntary policy.

**3. Definitions**

The following definitions are intended to assist in implementing this Personal Pronoun Sharing Policy.

- a. **Pronoun:**  
A pronoun is a word (such as *I, she, he, you, or they*) that is used to refer to humans either in the first-person or as substitutes for using a person’s name or a group of people’s names.
- b. **Gender:**  
An individual’s social characteristics and behaviors (such as appearance, mannerisms, or social interactions) that may be perceived as masculine, feminine, or androgynous (e.g., ambiguous as to gender or connoting aspects of both masculinity and femininity).
- c. **Gender Identity:**  
An individual’s deeply-felt sense of being a man, woman, or neither.
- d. **Misgendering:**  
Referring, whether intentionally or unintentionally, to a person with pronouns that don’t match the person’s gender identity. Being misgendered is hurtful to many individuals.

e. **Nonbinary:**

Identifying neither as a man nor a woman, but somewhere in between on the gender spectrum.

f. **Sex:**

A biological term independent of gender identity: male, female, or intersexed. Intersexed individuals may have ambiguous genitalia or only be identifiable by a test at the chromosome level, and may or may not be aware that they are intersexed.

g. **Transgender:**

Identifying as a gender other than the one most commonly associated with the sex one was assigned at birth.

4. **Procedure**

Effective immediately, any employee may modify their work email signature block to include their personal pronoun. For example:

First Name Last Name  
Job Title  
Telephone Number  
[she, her, hers]

Similarly, employees may request new business cards, and ID Badges that include their personal pronouns by contacting the City's Communications Specialist.

Employees with questions about this voluntary policy may contact the Communications & Human Resources Director for more information.

5. **Applicability**

This voluntary policy applies to all City employees. While employees are encouraged to use and share their personal pronouns, they are not required to. Employees who opt not to participate in this policy will not be penalized.