



The
Real You
at **Work**

THE JOB SEARCH GUIDE

How Trans & Non-Binary Candidates Can Vet a Company Before They Apply

Research • Red Flags • Green Flags • The Interview

A free resource from the Real You at Work to help prepare you in selecting a business or company to work for that supports and champions a diverse workforce and has overt policies or mission statements that serve the interest of non-binary and gender-expansive expression and identity.

How to Use This Guide

Job postings and career pages are marketing. They're written to make every company look inclusive, so it's worth learning to read past the language to what's actually being backed up with policy, budget, and track record.

This guide walks through the search in order: research before you apply, what to watch for once you're in the interview process, and what to check before you accept an offer — plus a quick-reference list of red and green flags you can keep beside you.

- ☐ Part 1 — Research From the Outside: What to check before you ever submit an application.
- ☐ Part 2 — Red Flags & Green Flags: How to tell a real inclusion policy from a performative one.
- ☐ Part 3 — The Interview Process: Questions to ask, and what the answers (and reactions) actually tell you.
- ☐ Part 4 — Evaluating the Offer: What to verify before you say yes.

A note before you start

- No company is perfect, and a single imperfect answer isn't automatically disqualifying — you're looking for an overall pattern, not a flawless scorecard.
- You don't owe any employer your transition status or medical history during a job search. Everything here is about evaluating them, not disclosing to them.
- Trust patterns over promises — what a company has actually done consistently tells you more than what any one person tells you in an interview.

PART 1

Research From the Outside

What to check before you ever hit submit.

1. Start With the Written Policy

- ☐ Search the careers page and employee handbook (if public) for a non-discrimination policy.
- ☐ Confirm it names "gender identity" and "gender expression" specifically — not just "sexual orientation" or generic "diversity."
- ☐ Check whether the policy is company-specific or just a copy-pasted legal boilerplate with no other DEI content anywhere else on the site.

2. Check the Benefits Page

- ☐ Look for explicit mention of transition-related healthcare coverage (hormone therapy, surgery, mental health care).
- ☐ Be wary of vague language like "comprehensive benefits for all" with no specifics — this often means nothing has actually been reviewed for trans-inclusive coverage.
- ☐ If unclear, note it as a question to ask directly later rather than assuming either way.

3. Look for Visible, Consistent Representation

- ☐ Check leadership bios, panels, and "life at the company" content for openly LGBTQ+ employees — not just a single stock photo.
- ☐ Check whether representation appears year-round, or only during Pride month.
- ☐ Look at the company's social media history going back 12+ months, not just the current feed.

4. Search Beyond the Company's Own Materials

- ☐ Search Glassdoor, Comparably, Blind, or similar sites for reviews mentioning LGBTQ+ experience specifically.
- ☐ Search the company name alongside terms like "discrimination," "lawsuit," or "transgender" for news coverage.
- ☐ Check third-party benchmarks like the Human Rights Campaign's Corporate Equality Index, if the company is large enough to be rated — and read the actual score, not just whether they're listed.
- ☐ If you know current or former employees, ask directly about their experience before applying.

PART 2

Red Flags & Green Flags

How to tell a policy with teeth from one that's just words on a page.

Red Flags

- ☐ Non-discrimination policy mentions sexual orientation but omits gender identity/expression entirely.
- ☐ Rainbow branding appears only in June, with no other LGBTQ+ engagement the rest of the year.
- ☐ No visibly out LGBTQ+ employees anywhere in leadership, marketing, or public materials.
- ☐ Benefits language is vague or silent on transition-related care when asked directly.
- ☐ Multiple independent reviews mention misgendering, dismissive HR, or unresolved harassment complaints.
- ☐ Rigidly gendered dress code or facilities policy with no flexibility mentioned.
- ☐ High, visible turnover in DEI, HR, or People Ops roles.
- ☐ Defensive, vague, or irritated reactions to inclusion-related questions during the interview process.

Green Flags — Signs the Policy Has Teeth

- ☐ Non-discrimination policy explicitly and specifically names gender identity and gender expression.
- ☐ Trans-inclusive healthcare is named explicitly in benefits materials, not just implied.
- ☐ An active LGBTQ+ Employee Resource Group with real budget, an executive sponsor, and visible activity beyond a single kickoff email.
- ☐ Out trans or non-binary employees in leadership or public-facing roles, not just entry-level.
- ☐ Pronouns are normalized company-wide — email signatures, Slack, name tags — as a default practice, not a rare exception.
- ☐ A clear, documented process exists for updating a chosen name across internal systems.
- ☐ Managers receive real, recurring training on inclusion — not a single annual click-through module.
- ☐ The company can describe, specifically, how it has supported an employee's transition in the past (without violating that person's privacy).

Third-party badges and awards are a useful signal, but verify rather than take them at face value — treat them as a reason to look closer, not a reason to stop looking.

PART 3

The Interview Process

What to ask, and what the answer — and the reaction — actually tells you.

1. Questions Worth Asking

- ☐ "Can you tell me about the company's approach to gender identity inclusion?"
- ☐ "Does the health plan cover transition-related care?"
- ☐ "What does the LGBTQ+ ERG or affinity group look like here, if there is one?"
- ☐ "How does an employee go about updating their name or pronouns in internal systems?"
- ☐ "Can you share an example of how the company has supported an employee through a workplace transition?"

2. Watch the Reaction, Not Just the Answer

- ☐ Notice whether the person answers directly and specifically, or pivots to generic "we value diversity" language.
- ☐ Notice any visible discomfort, surprise, or defensiveness — that's data, regardless of what's said next.
- ☐ Ask the same or a similar question to more than one person in the process (recruiter, hiring manager, HR) and compare consistency.
- ☐ A confident, specific answer from someone who clearly didn't expect the question is a strong positive signal.

3. Timing These Questions

- ☐ These questions are appropriate at any stage — you don't need to wait for an offer to ask them.
- ☐ If you'd rather not raise it directly with the hiring manager, ask HR or a recruiter instead.
- ☐ You are never obligated to disclose your own trans or non-binary identity to ask these questions — they're relevant to any candidate evaluating a company's culture.

PART 4

Evaluating the Offer

What to verify before you say yes.

1. Get Specifics in Writing

- ☐ Request written confirmation of benefits details — verbal reassurances during an interview aren't binding.
- ☐ If transition-related care coverage was discussed, ask for the specific plan document or summary of benefits.
- ☐ Review the employee handbook if you can access it before accepting.

2. Talk to Someone Who Actually Works There

- ☐ Ask if you can speak with a current LGBTQ+ employee, if the company offers this — and notice if the request itself is met with hesitation.
- ☐ Use your own network, alumni groups, or LinkedIn to find a current or former employee for an informal conversation.

3. Check the Location, Not Just the Company

- ☐ Research the state, provincial, or local legal protections where the role is actually based — company policy and local law both matter, and they don't always agree.
- ☐ If the role is remote, clarify which jurisdiction's policies and protections actually apply to you.

4. Trust the Pattern

- ☐ Reflect on how you were treated throughout the process itself — responsiveness, respect, and consistency in an interview process often predict what day-to-day employment will feel like.
- ☐ If something felt off during the process and was never adequately addressed, treat that as real information, not an overreaction.

A great offer on paper doesn't cancel out a pattern of discomfort or evasiveness you noticed along the way.

A Final Note

You're allowed to be selective. A job search is an evaluation in both directions, and the questions in this guide aren't confrontational — they're the same due diligence any thoughtful candidate should do before committing years of their working life to a company.

The right employer won't just tolerate these questions — they'll have real, specific answers ready, because they've already done the work.