

**Three Rivers Community Action, Inc.**  
**Family Advocacy Services Department Manual**

**Equal Access Rule Policy**

Whereas, HUD has established 24 CFR Part 5 Equal Access in Accordance with an Individual's Gender Identity in Community Planning and Development Programs (Effective 10/1/2016) and

Whereas, SE MN RRH and PSH are Continuum of Care programs funded by HUD. Therefore, Three Rivers Community Action Family Advocacy Department will follow the subsequent procedures to ensure compliance with the Equal Access Rule:

1. The Equal Access Notice from HUD has been posted publicly in all offices.
2. Participants and potentially eligible participants will be offered a private space to complete intake paperwork and data collection.
3. Participants will not be asked to prove their gender identity in any way.
4. Participants will not be asked "how do you identify your gender?" and will be allowed to self-report their gender identity for HMIS question 3.6. Answers must be accurately recorded per participant self-report.
5. Participants self-reported gender identity is not required to match the gender listed on any ID's or documents provided.
6. A participant's sex assigned at birth is confidential information and advocates must use best practices to keep this data secure. This aims to eliminate impact to participant's progress towards self-sufficiency.
7. Three Rivers will not consider a participant or potential participant ineligible because their appearance or behavior does not conform to gender stereotypes.
8. Three Rivers will keep a participant's transgender status confidential and ensure only essential staff, identified by administrators, are told about a participant's transgender status unless the participant gives permission otherwise.
9. Three Rivers does not have programs which involve accommodation according to gender such as a congregate shelter would; therefore, Three River's does not include policies about these types of rules and accommodations.
10. Three Rivers will use appropriate terminology for gender identity, gender expression and sexual orientation. Language to use is as follows:

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- Transgender person, Transgender man/woman (NOT transgendered) = terms that convey respect. (Occasionally, individuals may no longer identify as transgender after they transition.)
  - Gender is a spectrum = more than 2 ways to be.
  - Sexual Orientation = emotional and physical attraction
  - Gender Identity = internal/innate sense of being male/female may not match sex assigned at birth.
  - Gender Expression = external expression of gender identity (dress, mannerisms, facial hair, etc.)
  - I am a trans man = he identifies as a man and uses the pronouns: His, Him, He
  - I am a trans woman = she identifies as a woman and uses the pronouns: She, Hers, Her
  - Gender neutral pronouns: They, Them, Theirs
11. If participants believe they are being discriminated against by the agency related to gender identity, they will be informed of their rights to appeal in accordance with Three Rivers Community Action, Inc. Rights and Responsibilities policy.
12. If participants believe they are being discriminated against by their landlord, or other community members related to their gender identity, they will be referred to file complaints per the Equal Access Rule guidance at <http://portal.hud.gov/hudportal/HUD?src=/topics/housing>. They may also be referred to Southern Minnesota Regional Legal Services for Fair Housing assistance.
13. Three Rivers agency-wide anti-discrimination policy includes gender identity and sexual orientation in its list of protected attributes.
14. Three Rivers staff and sub-recipients have been and will be trained yearly regarding the Equal Access Rule and anti-discrimination policies.
15. Three Rivers staff will meet monthly and as needed to discuss ethical dilemmas, case scenario's with best practices for providing services, and to receive training on Equal Access Rule updates.

**Date Effective:** April 17, 2017

**Date Updated:** March 15, 2019