DIVERSITY COMPETENCE IN PERMANENCY PLANNING

Key Terminology and Concepts

**Sex** - The combinations of physical characteristics (including but not limited to genitals, chromosomes and sex hormone levels) typical of males or females.

**Sexual Orientation** - A person’s emotional, romantic and sexual attraction to other people. Sexual orientation is separate and distinct from gender identity and gender expression.

**Gender** - Refers to the psychological characteristics of a person in relation to male/female/nongender, set of meanings assigned by a culture or society to someone’s perceived sex.

**Gender Identity** - A person’s internal sense of being male, female, or, for some people, a blend of both or neither.

**Gender Expression** - The many ways people show their gender to others, such as the clothing and haircuts they wear or the roles and activities they choose.

**Cisgender** - An adjective that describes any person whose gender identity matches the sex they were assigned or presumed to be at birth.

**Transgender person** - Term for a person whose gender identity (internal sense of self) is incongruent with that person’s sex assigned at birth. Note: transgender is an adjective, not a noun. It is inappropriate and can be considered offensive to use transgender alone or to add an –ed or –s at the end (e.g., the transgendered or transgenders are both incorrect).

**Non-Binary** - An adjective referring to any person whose gender identity is neither male nor female.

**Gender Binary** - A system that constructs gender as two discrete categories: male/boy/man and female/girl/woman. This view of gender is limiting and leaves out many—including transgender and non-binary people.

**Gender Spectrum** - It denotes gender as a continuum that includes male and female, without assigning them at birth and without establishing them as absolutes or polar opposites. This understanding of gender is inclusive of people of all sexes, gender identities and gender expressions.

**Gender History** - Information related to a transgender or non-binary person’s sex, name and pronouns assigned at birth, as well as aspects of their past social, legal and/or medical transitions.

**Pronoun** - The pronouns that people would like others to use when referring to them. Also referred to as preferred gender pronouns or PGPs. The most common pronouns are: She/her/hers, He/him/his, They/them/their: “They use gender neutral pronouns and go by the name Sam.” Zie or Ze/hir/hirs: (sounds like “zee,” “here,” and “heres”). “Ze has an appointment with hir dentist for next week.”