

The City of Detroit's Civil Rights, Inclusion & Opportunity Department (CRIO) in partnership with the LGBTQ+ and Friends Employee Resource Group (ERG) is implementing a new workplace policy as of May 22, 2022, encouraging employees to add their personal pronouns to their email signatures and web conferencing names.

As City employees, adding pronouns affirms that we value creating safe, inclusive spaces for people of any gender and that gender cannot be assumed based on appearance, voice or name. This policy recognition creates a safer, more inclusive environment for everyone.

Pronouns matter to everyone. In fact, many of our employees have already added their personal pronouns to their email signatures and other virtual spaces. The use of pronouns is a natural part of our language that conveys gender identity. However, regardless of gender, improper or assumed use of pronouns can be excluding and potentially offensive to fellow employees. For example, to some transgender and gender non-binary people, pronouns are an important part of expressing their identity. Consistently using the wrong pronouns, especially after being informed of the preference, is viewed as invalidating.

How to add pronouns

There are various ways to display your pronouns and you should feel free to make updates as you learn more. Below are suggestions.

Email Signature

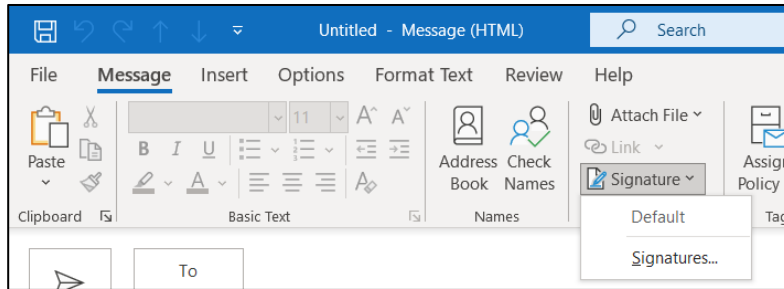
Add your pronouns in parenthesis after your name and any titles, but on the same line. It is a good idea to use a hyperlink in your pronouns to www.mypronouns.org or a similar website so that people can learn more if they have questions. Below are the available links:

- <http://mypronouns.org/she>
- <http://mypronouns.org/he>
- <http://mypronouns.org/they>
- <http://mypronouns.org/ze>
- <http://mypronouns.org/neopronouns>

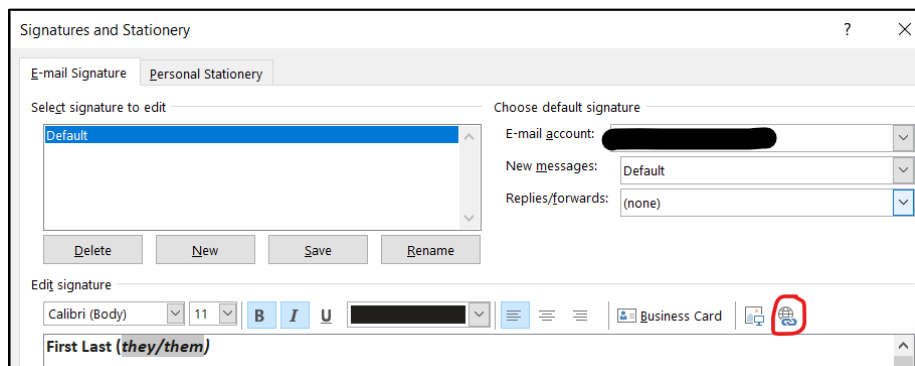
Example: First Last ([they/them](#)).

To add pronouns to your email signature:

1. Open a new message
2. In the "Message" tab on the ribbon, click on "Signature" then select "Signatures" (see below)



3. Type your pronouns in parenthesis after your name, then highlight your pronouns with the cursor, select hyperlink (the icon circled in red below) and insert the www.mypronouns.org link to your chosen pronouns.



Zoom Profile

1. Sign in to the Zoom web portal.
2. In the navigation panel, click **Profile**.
3. On the right side of your name, click **Edit**.
4. In the **Pronouns** field, enter your pronouns.
5. In the **How would you like to share your pronouns?** drop-down field, choose from the following options:
 - **Always share in meetings and webinars:** Your pronouns will appear next to your display name automatically in any meetings that you host or join, and any webinars that you're the host or panelist for.
6. Click **Save**.

Note: Microsoft Teams does not currently have a pronoun feature but we will monitor this feature and update as soon as possible

Why to add pronouns -- Here is a website that can give more information and resources. You can also share with family, coworkers and friends. <https://www.mypronouns.org/>

Frequently Asked Questions about Pronouns in Email Signatures

The below information is based on FAQs originally produced by the [City of Portland](#).

What are pronouns?

- A pronoun is a word that is used instead of a noun or noun phrase.
- There are many pronouns available. The most common pronouns are he, she and they. Some people do not use any pronouns and prefer to be addressed only by name.

Why do pronouns matter to people?

- It is a useful, natural part of our language that conveys gender identity¹.
- Regardless of gender, it can be viewed as disrespectful to use incorrect pronouns for someone.
- For some transgender and gender non-binary people², pronouns are an important part of expressing identity. Consistently using the wrong pronouns, especially after being corrected, can be invalidating.

¹*Gender identity: A person's internal, deeply-felt sense of being male, female, both, neither or other gender(s).*

²*Transgender people: People whose gender does not match their sex assigned at birth. Gender non-binary people: People whose gender is neither male nor female.*

Why should I put my pronouns in my email signature?

- As City employees, it shows that we value creating safe, inclusive spaces for people of any gender and that gender cannot be assumed based on appearance, voice, or name.
 - This recognition creates a safer, more inclusive environment for transgender and non-binary folks.
- As a cisgender¹ person (or "cis" for short), sharing your pronouns normalizes the practice and is often more impactful than a transgender person doing so.

¹*The word "cisgender" was coined as a more respectful way of saying someone is "not transgender". From Latin, "cis" is a prefix that means "on the same side of" while "trans" is a prefix that means "transcend or across".*

Why should the City make this standard practice?

- Unity is an essential part of normalization, and a City-wide commitment is much more impactful than an individual commitment.
- It makes it easier to avoid misgendering someone.
- It helps combat sexism.
 - It is a common assumption that gender-neutral names belong to men. By not sharing their pronouns, some folks are treated with greater respect because the other party believes they are a man¹.

- Sharing our pronouns combats this bias by stating openly that one can occupy a position of power without passing as a man.

†A 2012 Yale study confirmed a similar instance of gender bias. Résumés with traditionally male names were disproportionately considered more competent and hireable than the same résumés with traditionally female names.

If we ask employees to include their pronouns, wouldn't that "out" trans employees who might not be ready or comfortable sharing that information?

- This addition is optional.
- Some transgender and non-binary people are decidedly not "out" in any way, and this would not change that.
- Volunteering our pronouns creates a safer space for people who are not "out" but would like to be. It also lowers the chances of someone being misgendered due to their appearance, voice, or name.

What do I say if someone asks why I have pronouns in my email signature?

- "It is an optional part of the City's signature block that helps create a more inclusive space for people."
- "It supports the City's Policy against discrimination in the workplace."
 - The [City's Executive Order 2014-1 and Executive Order 2014-2](#) prohibits discrimination on the basis of sexual orientation, gender identity and gender expression.

Where can I go if I have more questions?

- For questions or concerns, please contact your supervisor, HR representative, or the CRIO team at crio@detroitmi.gov.
- If you'd like to learn more about the City's LGBTQ+ and Friends Employee Resource Group, please email them at LGBTQ@detroitmi.gov