



OFFICE OF THE SHERIFF CITY AND COUNTY OF SAN FRANCISCO

1 DR. CARLTON B. GOODLETT PLACE
ROOM 456, CITY HALL
SAN FRANCISCO, CALIFORNIA 94102



VICKI HENNESSY
SHERIFF

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE
February 20, 2018

CONTACT: Nancy Crowley
415-554-7225
nancy.crowley@sfgov.org

SF SHERIFF LAUNCHES PIONEERING POLICY

San Francisco, Calif., February 20, 2018 -- San Francisco Sheriff Vicki Hennessy announced that her Department formally implemented new Transgender, Gender Variant and Non-Binary (TGN) policy and procedures at the San Francisco Sheriff's Department, including the County Jails, effective today.

The Sheriff's Department policy and procedures are among the first in the nation to address TGN inmates and cover several changes including inmate searches, housing assignments and gender awareness training for Sheriff's Deputies and civilian employees.

"Our number one priority is safety for all: staff, inmates, visitors and service providers," said Sheriff Hennessy. "We thoughtfully and carefully considered and vetted every policy and procedure, which impacts our TGN inmates to ensure they feel protected, respected and have full access to the County Jail's educational, vocational, recovery and life skills classes and services."

Although the TGN population comprises less than one percent of the total jail population, they are among the most vulnerable communities in the United States and have higher rates of poverty, harassment and unemployment.

"The Sheriff's Department goal is to help all inmates live successfully once they're released from custody," said Sheriff Hennessy. "Respecting TGN individuals, making them feel safe and facilitating their participation in the County Jail's rehabilitation programs will increase the chance TGN individuals won't come back to jail. And that's an outcome we all want for all individuals in our custody."

According to Sheriff Hennessy, the Department put most of its TGN policies and procedures in place gradually. This includes addressing TGN inmates by their chosen pronouns and moving them out of a 12-person cell in the Hall of Justice Jail (850 Bryant St.) to the re-entry housing pod at County Jail #2 (425 - 7th St.) where they can participate in an array of classes and services, including those that are TGN-specific.

Individuals booked into the San Francisco County Jail are asked to voluntarily self-identify their gender identity on a new Statement of Preference form they receive at booking. If they wish, they also will note their preference for the Deputy's gender identity who will perform a visual body search--the first Sheriff's

Department in the country to offer this choice--as well as their housing preferences based on self-identified gender.

Housing assignments consider the TGN inmate's preference; availability of preferred housing where privacy for showering can be ensured; and individual classification concerns for all inmates, including medical and mental health considerations, behavioral history, criminal sophistication, gang affiliation and assaultive/violent history.

"As the Human Rights Commission encourages city departments to consider how their systems and policies contribute to inequity, we are grateful for the leadership at the Sheriff's Department for actually working to disrupt systems of inequity," said Sheryl Davis, Human Rights Commission Executive Director.

To prepare for the adoption and implementation of these groundbreaking policies and procedures, the Sheriff's Department developed and delivered a four-hour accredited POST (Peace Officer Standards and Training) course on Gender Awareness to more than 800 staff. The Department also includes Gender Awareness training in its new employee curriculum and has trained staff on the new universal search policy.

Throughout policy development, the Sheriff's Department consulted and collaborated with multiple stakeholders and partners including TGN advocates and experts such as San Francisco Human Rights Commission Executive Director Theresa Sparks and Retired San Francisco Police Department Lieutenant Stephan Thorne; Transgender Law Center; Just Detention International; San Francisco Police Department; Department of Public Health; San Francisco City Attorney; San Francisco District Attorney; Attorney General of the State of California; San Francisco Sheriff's Managers and Supervisors Association (MSA); and the San Francisco Deputy Sheriffs' Association (DSA).

"The community advocates and agencies came together to address the vital needs of transgender and non-binary community members in jail," said Clair Farley, Senior Advisor to the Mayor and Executive Director of the Office of Transgender Initiatives. "All transgender people deserve safe housing, healthcare, and services in San Francisco and beyond.

Led by elected Sheriff Vicki Hennessy, the San Francisco Sheriff's Department serves the people of San Francisco by administering the county jails, providing security for the Superior Court and other high-profile public buildings, and performing civil court orders. The Sheriff's Department employs more than 850 sworn staff and almost 200 non-sworn employees.