



Kankakee Area LGBTQ Network  
**Affirming Business Pledge**

The Kankakee Area LGBTQ Network is a nonprofit whose mission is to create a connected queer space in Kankakee County community. Our vision statement reads “The Network aims to foster an inclusive space within Kankakee county to connect communities through visibility, engagement, advocacy, education and support.”

As part of this mission & vision, the Network has created a business directory of businesses and organizations who uphold the values and priorities of this mission to provide safe and affirming spaces for, particularly, LGBTQ identified patrons/clients, in their business practices and policies. Businesses can be referred to us by community members or can reach out to be a part of this directory and our mission. The network strives to maintain the integrity of this directory with vetting practices including face-to-face contact with the business and follow up, maintaining a relationship with businesses who help us carry out our vision and create a safer community for LGBTQ individuals. With this pledge, businesses and organizations:

- agree to our statement of integrity (attached)
- agree to be listed in our Rainbow Directory as a safe and affirming business
- and work in the spirit of collaboration with the LGBTQ Network for safe and considerate referrals and connections in the future

Business/Agency Name: \_\_\_\_\_

Contact Person: \_\_\_\_\_

Contact Number: \_\_\_\_\_

Signed: \_\_\_\_\_

**Kankakee Area LGBTQ Network**

Contact Person: \_\_\_\_\_

Contact Number: \_\_\_\_\_

Signed: \_\_\_\_\_

# Kankakee Area LGBTQ Network Integrity Statement

## **Section I: Introduction & Rationale**

The Kankakee Area LGBTQ Network Board of Directors unanimously agree to adopt the following Statement of Integrity. We recognize that in the ever changing socio-political landscape the rights of gender and sexual minorities are under constant attack. While we recognize that Illinois extends many protections to the members of the LGBTQ+ community, The LGBTQ+ Network wishes to reaffirm these as unquestionable standards for working alongside us in partnership. The Kankakee Area LGBTQ Network recognizes the imperative need to codify the rights of the members of the LGBTQ+ community and to ensure that all partners we work with clearly and openly align with our Mission and Vision. This expectation extends past direct involvement with the LGBTQ Network and we expect that our community partners will adhere to these rights when interacting with consumers of all backgrounds. The Kankakee Area LGBTQ Network is committed to ensuring that diversity, equity, and inclusion are celebrated in our community and across Illinois. We recognize the following rights as unassailable and hereby, now and in perpetuity, hold ourselves and our community partners to be accountable to the community through upholding them and promoting not just equity but working to establish a framework for justice for those who are gender and sexual minorities.

## **Section II: The Mission & Vision of The Kankakee Area LGBTQ Network:**

The Kankakee Area LGBTQ Network was founded in 2019 as a means to connect the local LGBTQ community to resources and one another. In 2023, we formalized our non-profit and developed our board of directors, bylaws and strategic plan.

### Our Mission

*The Kankakee Area LGBTQ Network exists to create a connected queer space within Kankakee County community.*

### Our Vision

*The Network aims to foster an inclusive space within Kankakee County to connect communities through visibility, engagement, advocacy, education & support.*

### **Anti-racism statement**

The Board of Directors of the Kankakee Area LGBTQ Network choose to adopt an anti-racist framework by:

- Acknowledging the ways racism, oppression, and privilege perpetuate homophobia and transphobia;
- Ensuring that the strategies, actions, and policies that we support and employ do not undermine efforts to combat racism;

- Organizing a movement that is mindful of how the issues of racism affect safety for all of the LGBTQ+ community;
- Developing and implementing anti-racist strategies that are specific to the including, without limitation:
- Practicing and modeling respectful behavior,
- Employing anti-racist language and group dynamics,
- Examining every situation to understand how the dynamics of racism and white privilege work in that situation;
- Challenging all aspects of white privilege—individual, cultural, political, and organizational, and;
- Engaging in ongoing self-assessment and recognizing that doing work with an anti-racist lens is an ongoing process.

### **Land Acknowledgement**

We believe that creating our work — and the opportunity to share it with you is a privilege. Our ability to gather in these spaces and engage with perspectives other than our own is a privilege that we consider sacred. Because of this, it's important to us that we acknowledge both the Indigenous land we occupy, as well as the hands that built the country and cities we call home.

We recognize and acknowledge that today we occupy and gather on Indigenous land, which was taken through deception, coercion, violence and genocide. We acknowledge the continued displacement and oppression of Native people and honor their commitments to survival, identity, and the protection of our world.

We also acknowledge that the United States was built at the often fatal expense of forcefully enslaved Black people. We acknowledge those who still cannot safely walk down the street or fully enjoy fundamental civil rights and freedoms. We aim to cultivate space for Black stories to be uplifted and for Black lives to be celebrated. We pledge to infuse our work with true values of anti-racism. We offer these acknowledgments and experiences into this space with respect and gratitude, along with the intention to spark more awareness, compassion and empathy for every life in our community.

### **Statement on Conversion Therapy**

The Kankakee Area LGBTQ Network recognizes the immense harm that conversion or so called “reparative” therapy has caused the LGBTQ+ community over the years and we emphatically denounce this pseudoscience and its continued use across the United States and the globe. While we recognize that Illinois, at the time of this document's codification, has laws to prevent conversion therapy for minors, these laws are limited in scope and conversion therapy practices continue to take place in Illinois. These limitations allow for unlicensed so-called mental health professionals to act in a manner that skirts the scope of the law and allows them to rebrand these harmful practices into other forms. We recognize that conversion therapy is still allowed in Illinois through faith based practitioners as well. Furthermore, the anti-conversion therapy law signed in 2015 still limits these mandates to those who wish to use these practices on youth and leaves the field wide open for use of conversion therapy on adults. Just like any demographic, there are LGBTQ+ adults who

are more susceptible to these bait and switch schemes and they deserve to be protected from these harmful practices.

The Kankakee Area LGBTQ Network and affiliated signatories to this document affirm that conversion therapy is dangerous, unethical, and can lead to physical, emotional, and mental harm with studies demonstrating that those coerced or forced into conversion therapy are at an increased risk of suicidality.

## **Section III: Rights**

### **Personal Rights**

1. The right to utilize, and have respected, the name and pronoun that best aligns with a person's gender identity.
2. The right to use the facilities that match their gender identity
3. The right to outwardly express gender identity in a manner that makes a person feel comfortable and affirmed.
4. The right to be treated with dignity, respect, and professionalism by businesses, nonprofit organizations, healthcare providers, faith communities, social services organizations, and government entities.
5. The right to feel affirmed not only from an LGBTQIA2S+ perspective, but also from an intersectional standpoint. Understanding that people do not exist in a vacuum of a single identifying feature and that all aspects of their identity should be respected without discrimination.
6. The right to be treated with dignity, respect, care, and professionalism regardless of HIV/AIDS status

### **Healthcare Rights**

1. Be treated with dignity, respect and professionalism in all health care settings by all providers and all staff
2. Receive compassionate, judgment-free and comprehensive care that is mindful of your sexual orientation, gender identity and gender expression for all health services
3. Respectful discussions with providers about your health and health care needs, including your sexual history and current sex life
4. Have your gender identity and gender expression recognized, affirmed, documented and accommodated in all health care interactions
5. Clear explanations of providers' requests for your health information
6. Clear explanations of all medical procedures and risks, and the right to choose or refuse any treatment

### **Inalienable Legal Protections (IL & Federal)**

1. Right to affordable housing
2. Right to employment free of discrimination
3. Right to change gender marker on official documents

4. Right to name change on official documents
5. Right to marriage regardless of gender identity or sexual identity
6. Right to adopt or access in vitro fertilization
7. Right to the abolition of the "Gay Panic Defense"
8. Right to the decriminalization of HIV/AIDS transmission
9. Right to participate in military service without discrimination based on sexual identity or gender identity
10. Right to receive all due benefits for military service regardless of sexual identity or gender identity
11. Right to hospital visitation and to designate medical decisions by partner of the same sex
12. Right to designate gender identification, pronouns, and name in end of life and funeral decisions
13. Right to an equal age of consent
14. Right to donate blood, plasma, and tissue regardless of sexual identity or gender identity

### **Youth Rights**

1. Right to have privacy and autonomy over their gender or sexual identity
2. Right to express their gender identity in school and utilize all facilities that match their gender identity
3. Right to have gender and sexual minorities accurately represented in curricula
4. Right to participate in extracurricular activities including to but not limited to athletics
5. Right to comprehensive and medically accurate sex education
6. Right to anti-discrimination and anti-bullying protections on the basis of sexual identity, gender identity, race, creed, class, disability, etc.

### **Section IV: Failure to Uphold These Rights**

The Kankakee Area LGBTQ Network considers the following rights as inalienable. As such, this document is considered binding as a clear embodiment of our principles, core mission and vision, and values. Any community partner wishing to work with the Kankakee Area LGBTQ Network is expected to not only affirm that the beliefs and values of their organization align with the LGBTQ Network through their signature on this document but they are expected to ensure that these rights are upheld in their day to day capacity. It is imperative that the LGBTQ Network's community partners understand that this document is not just symbolic but is critical to the wellbeing and health of the larger LGBTQ+ community.

The Kankakee Area LGBTQ Network identifies the following actions as hard line violations of this Bill of Rights. This list is not comprehensive and simply serves as an example of actions or inaction that could result in consequences:

1. Repeated misgendering or deadnaming
2. Failure to allow persons to use facilities that match gender identity
3. Refusal to serve patrons based on sexual identity, gender identity, race, nationality, class, disability, etc.
4. Failure to allow the exchange of goods or services based on factors such as gender

identity, sexual identity, race, nationality, class, disability, etc.

Failure of a signatory to adhere to the rights hereby set in this document may result in, but are not limited to, the following actions:

- Recommended training/consultation & follow up regarding the pledge of this document
- Removal from our affirming businesses directory & repossession of any signage provided by the Network as being an affirming business
- Refusal of participation in Pride events/other events that may be perceived as supporting our mission and vision