

US airlines to offer non-binary gender options

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Beginning June 1, 2019, members of Airlines for America, a trade group that represents most leading US carriers, will allow consumers to pick "unspecified" and "undisclosed" in addition to the traditional two gender options of "male" and "female"

US carriers will soon offer passengers additional options besides "male"

and "female" when they buy tickets, an airlines trade association said Tuesday.

The shift comes as a handful of US states permit citizens to identify by non-binary genders and as a minority of countries within the European Union permit citizens to self-identify by their gender preference.

Beginning June 1, members of Airlines for America, a [trade group](#) that represents most leading US carriers, will allow consumers to pick "unspecified" and "undisclosed" in addition to the traditional two options.

"US airlines value a culture of diversity and inclusion, both in the workplace and for our passengers and we work hard each day to accommodate the needs of all travelers, while delivering a safe, secure and enjoyable flight experience," the group said.

Implementation of the shift will be up to members of the group, which is also known as A4A. Members of the association include American Airlines and Southwest Airlines.

United Airlines, another member, said on Twitter, that "In the coming weeks, customers will be able to select the gender with which they most closely identify during the booking process."

Delta Air Lines, which is not in A4A, also plans non-binary gender options during the booking process, a spokeswoman said.

Seven states in the US and the District of Columbia allow citizens to define as "X" gender, in addition to male and female, said Gillian Branstetter, media relations manager at the National Center of Transgender Equality.

The group applauded the airline announcement.

"Non-binary people face unnecessary, invasive, and discriminatory scrutiny by airlines, airports and security services alike," said Arli Christian, state policy director for the National Center for Transgender Equality.

"A4A's work is in line with other states who offer gender neutral designations on IDs and is an important step toward ensuring safe and smooth travel for all passengers regardless of their gender."

Among the 28 EU member states and three European Free Trade Association states, seven countries currently have or will soon have a model that lets adults self-define their gender, according to a November 2018 European Commission report on trans and intersex equality. However, only one jurisdiction—Malta—permits non-binary recognition.

EU countries, as well as the EU itself, "are firmly grounded in a binary conception of sex," said the report.

"While [public awareness](#) is improving, trans and intersex people continue to suffer disproportionate social and legal burdens," the report said.

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