



## Take the Civility Pledge

Yes, I want to become a Civility Advocate. I will do my part to help my community become a safe place for citizens to engage in civil discourse about public issues.

Visit [yourvalley.net/civility-pledge/](http://yourvalley.net/civility-pledge/) to take the pledge.

## Your Opinion

Our opinions page is to provide an open forum for our readers. We hope to stimulate debate, not to dominate or control it. We reserve the right to edit our opinions.

Please include your name and phone number so we can contact you for clarification or confirmation. We also welcome your photo.

## Speak Up

The Independent supports the use of pen names. Too many people don't speak up because they fear intimidation or even danger to their families and/or careers, and we want to reengage them. We insist on civility when editing, and pen names are an important part of our nation's history.

We don't express our own opinions.

## Corrections

Independent strives for accuracy and pledges to bring errors that have appeared in our newspaper to the attention of our readers. We offer a "right of reply" to the people about whom we write. Readers who disagree with a news story or the way it was handled or edited are welcome to respond with a letter to:

AZOpinions@iniusa.org.

## OPINION

# LGBTQ+ parents can adopt a child from foster care

**T**housands of children in Arizona need a safe, loving home. Child Crisis Arizona is happy to work with members of the LGBTQ+ community who are looking to start their foster or adoptive journey.

The process to foster or adopt can be confusing for anyone but it may be particularly complex for those in the LGBTQ+ community.

Since 2014, Arizona law has allowed anyone over the age of 18 to adopt a child, regardless of race, gender or sexual orientation. As long as you can provide for a child financially, emotionally and physically, you can be considered as an adoptive placement.

Anyone interested in adopting will need to undergo the process of licensing, including a very thorough home study. This home study is completed by an agency but not all foster care and adoption agencies work with lesbian, gay, queer and transgendered individuals who may have unique

challenges in growing their families through adoption.

Child Crisis Arizona is proud to work with couples and individuals

regardless of race, color, religious beliefs, sexual orientation, gender expression, including gay, lesbian, bisexual and transgender individuals. In fact, we are the only foster care and adoption agency in Arizona awarded the All Children-All Families seal by the HRC, recognizing our efforts to support the LGBTQ+ community.

While you may have questions about your own situation, here are some answers to the most commonly asked questions about LGBTQ+ adoption:

Can LGBTQ+ couples adopt in Arizona?:

Yes! Anyone, married or single, regardless of race, gender or sexual orientation, over the age of 18 is eligible to adopt in Arizona.

You should be aware, not all agencies are prepared to work with the LGBTQ+ community. While their policies may allow for it, sometimes specialized training is helpful to address any issues that may come up within the system. Agencies also have the right to turn away families that do not meet their religious requirements.

Families must complete all adoption requirements set up in Arizona, including a very thorough home study. During this process the couple or individual will complete several interviews with a licensing specialist and will be asked to share financial information and personal references.

Can I adopt if I'm single or divorced?: Yes, individuals may adopt regardless of current or previous marital status.

Not all agencies will work with unmarried individuals so be sure

and ask this question when selecting the agency that you want to work with. Child Crisis Arizona is happy to work with single individuals or married couples.

If I am in a long-term relationship, can we adopt together?: Unfortunately, Arizona does not allow unmarried couples to adopt together. The couple must be married to adopt jointly.

It is possible for one member of the couple to adopt and for the other parent to adopt as a stepparent once you are married.

Does it matter which agency I choose?: There are so many different agencies to choose from in Arizona. All agencies follow the same process and requirements set up by the state but the level of support and resources they are able to offer does vary. Take your time to research agencies and conduct interviews before making your final selection.

The Human Rights Campaign evaluates organizations within the child welfare system for their willingness to wel-

come and affirm members of the LGBTQ+ community. They shared some questions you should ask when choosing an agency:

Does the agency's non-discrimination statement include the terms "sexual orientation" or "gender identity"?

- Does the agency use LGBTQ+ inclusive advertising images?
- Does the agency have LGBTQ+ inclusive paperwork?
- Does the agency train its staff on providing LGBTQ+ inclusive services?
- Does the agency have LGBTQ+ inclusive parent training and support?
- Have agency staff received guidance on conducting LGBTQ+ affirming home studies?

*Editor's note: Allison Hurtado is a content and communications specialist with Child Crisis Arizona. Learn more at [childcrisisaz.org](http://childcrisisaz.org).*

## SPEAK UP

## QUESTION OF THE DAY

With the Suns trade of Cam

Payne and the signing of Bol Bol, the team now has 11 players under minimum contracts. Did they make the right decision in signing these players to

minimum contracts? Send your comments to [azopinions@iniusa.org](mailto:azopinions@iniusa.org).

*Got a comment on a story you've recently seen? Email us at [azopinions@iniusa.org](mailto:azopinions@iniusa.org) with the name of the story and a one or two line comment.*