



# DRG DEI RESOURCE

## 4

### REASONS TO UTILIZE FIRST NAMES WHEN LISTING OR ADDRESSING CONSTITUENTS

The question of how to inclusively address constituents in communications is one we receive a lot. We're here to share four reasons why first names should be utilized in place of unearned titles, those social honorifics like "Mr." or "Mrs." Don't worry—titles that came from work or were given with honors like Colonel, Dr., The Honorable, or Rep. are here to stay!

#### Unearned titles are...

##### Based on Assumptions

We're betting that most of the unearned titles currently in your database are based on assumptions, including age and socio-economic status. And then there are names like Jordan, Taylor, and Morgan that aren't traditionally aligned with any particular gender! You know what they say happens when you assume...

##### Tied to marital status

Even if you don't assume and instead opt for a laborious and expensive survey of your entire database, unearned titles for people who identify as women are largely tied to their marital status. This perpetuates outdated societal and gender norms and needs to be stopped.

##### Inextricably tied to gender

Even gender-neutral unearned title options like Mx. are rooted in the idea that a person's gender determines how society will treat them. Mx. was created in response to this very notion! Using unearned, gender-based titles signals (unintentionally) that a person's gender identity is prescriptive, required information to interact with them. And how just or equitable is that?

##### Subject to change

When using unearned titles based on marital status, a divorce will likely require a database update—regardless of if a name change will accompany it. And amidst all that change at home, reaching out to tell a nonprofit organization to update their unearned honorific title is very low on a constituent's to-do list. Also, for many of our constituents, gender identity is a process of discovery that could change throughout life, including their preferred unearned title.

**Instead of using unearned titles, DRG recommends listing or addressing constituents by their first names, with formatting options of:**



Alphabetical by first name

*Arjun Patel & Brittany Patel*

*Arjun Patel & Dr. Brittany Patel*

*Lt. Col. Arjun Patel & Ambassador Brittany Huang Patel*



Alumni/supporter/participant name first

*Brittany Patel & Arjun Patel*

*Brittany Huang Patel & The Honorable Arjun Patel*

*Dr. Brittany Patel & Dr. Arjun Patel*



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