



HUMAN
RIGHTS
CAMPAIGN
FOUNDATION



Equality
Federation
Institute

Municipal Equality Index

A NATIONWIDE EVALUATION OF MUNICIPAL LAW

2014



Frequently Asked Questions

WHERE CAN I GET MORE INFORMATION ABOUT THE CITIES RATED?

This booklet contains only a summary of the scorecards for each of the 353 cities rated on the 2014 MEI. The full scorecards are available online at www.hrc.org/mei.

HOW WERE THESE CITIES CHOSEN?

This year, the cities rated are: the 50 state capitals, the 200 largest cities in the United States, the four largest cities or municipalities in each state, the city home to the state's largest public university (including undergraduate and graduate enrollment) and 75 cities and municipalities that have high proportions of same-sex couples (see page 15 for more information). Future editions of the MEI will continue to increase the number of cities rated.

DID YOU KNOW THAT ___ ISN'T A CITY?

Yes. A few of the places rated in the MEI are "census-designated places" which are not incorporated as cities. In that case, we rated the local

incorporated government that actually serves that census-designated place, which is usually the county. This is explained further on page 15.

HOW ARE THE SCORES CALCULATED?

Cities are rated on a scale of 0-100, based on the city's laws, policies, benefits, and services. There are 100 standard points and 20 bonus points (bonus points are awarded for items which apply to some but not all cities). For more information on the scoring system, see page 16-26.

WHERE DID THE INFORMATION FOR THESE SCORES COME FROM?

The MEI team conducted the research, compiled it into a draft scorecard, and sent it to the city for review. Cities had an opportunity to review the draft scorecard and offer any feedback prior to publication.

CAN ONLY CITIES IN STATES WITH GOOD LAWS GET GOOD SCORES?

Definitely not. The MEI was specifically designed to measure the

laws and policies of the municipality, not the state. While state law might add to a city's score, positive state law is not necessary for a city to score 100 points. In fact, 15 cities in states without marriage equality or statewide non-discrimination laws for LGBT people scored 100 points in 2014.

IS THIS A RANKING OF THE BEST CITIES FOR LGBT PEOPLE TO LIVE IN?

No – this is not a ranking of a city's atmosphere or quality of life. It is an evaluation of the city's laws and policies, and an examination of how inclusive city services are of LGBT people. Some high-scoring cities may not feel truly welcoming for all LGBT people, and some low-scoring cities may feel more welcoming than their policies might reflect.

WHY ISN'T WASHINGTON, D.C. RATED?

For an explanation as to why Washington, DC is not included in the MEI, please see page 15.

Research Process

The information reflected in this publication was gathered by the MEI team and compiled into draft scorecards using publicly available information. Cities were then offered an opportunity to review the scorecards, ask any questions, and submit any additional information

they wished the MEI team to consider. Our team sent out a letter in April to mayors and city managers notifying them that their cities were being rated by email and certified mail, followed by a draft scorecard sent to the mayors and city managers in July also via email and

certified mail. The feedback window lasted several months. Finally, cities were sent their final scorecards and information about the MEI 2014 in the same way. Equality Federation state groups also were able to review the scorecards and provide feedback to the MEI team.

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AN INTRODUCTION



Dear Friends



From police officers bringing pizza to couples waiting in line to be married to city leaders fighting to remove transgender exclusions from employee health plans, cities continue to demonstrate that all corners of America are ready for equality.

If the recent developments with marriage equality have demonstrated anything, it is that the legal reality for LGBT people shifts dramatically with every crossing of a state border. This means the legal status of a family changes when crossing from Iowa into Nebraska, from Wisconsin into Michigan, or from Pennsylvania to Ohio.

In a third of the states with marriage equality, it means a couple who can legally marry risks being fired from their jobs for doing so. In fact, thousands of legally married same-sex couples live in states in which there are no explicit statewide legal protections against workplace, housing, or public accommodations discrimination based on a person's sexual orientation or gender identity.

This state of affairs is outrageous, and HRC and our partners will continue to fight tirelessly to ensure that everyone, everywhere is protected from anti-LGBT discrimination in all aspects of life. But there is hope: as cities have been showing us since the 1970s, they are ready to act on LGBT equality even as their states are lagging behind.

Cities like Madison, Milwaukee, Philadelphia and New Hope had already been providing inclusive non-discrimination protections for decades by the time marriage equality reached Wisconsin and Pennsylvania. In Florida, despite the lack of a statewide non-discrimination law, 55% of Floridians are covered by inclusive non-discrimination ordinances at the local level.

And it is hard to find a starker example of the difference municipal equality makes than to compare the one hundred-point performance of Kansas City, Missouri with the dismal score of 24 points by Kansas City, Kansas. Borders can make a big difference.

The 2014 MEI tells these stories, and it presents an inspiring picture of how cities are acting even when – especially when – their states are not. This year the number of cities offering transgender-inclusive health care to city employees leaped from 5% to 12%. Cities offering these plans for the first time this year included Rochester, New York, Cincinnati and Columbus, Ohio, and Worcester, Massachusetts. Cities are leading the way on transgender inclusion, too.

From police officers bringing pizza to couples waiting in line to be married to city leaders fighting to remove transgender exclusions from employee health plans, cities continue to demonstrate that all corners of America are ready for equality. HRC is proud to support them in doing so, and I offer sincere appreciation to the Equality Federation and its member groups for their hard work in support of municipal equality and their partnership on this project. **We look forward to continuing to work together until full equality reaches everyone, everywhere.**

Sincerely,

CHAD GRIFFIN

President
Human Rights Campaign Foundation

Dear Readers



But municipal victories aren't simply making cities and counties more inclusive places to live, work, and build a family. They're also fueling the movement for equality in states across this nation.

This year marks the third edition of the Municipal Equality Index (MEI), and Equality Federation is proud to partner with the Human Rights Campaign to release this critical report. In just one year, we've already seen incredible advances toward marriage equality in states across the nation. We celebrate these victories, but know our work is far from over.

While a majority of states now have marriage equality, many of them still allow discrimination against lesbian, gay, bisexual, and transgender (LGBT) individuals. This means that LGBT people will be able to marry their partner, but can still be fired from their jobs, denied housing, and refused services at restaurants, hotels and other businesses.

In fact, 29 states across the country lack statewide non-discrimination protections for LGBT individuals and another three lack protections based on gender identity and expression. **This is why it's critical that advocates and activists continue winning support at the municipal level for policies that truly improve the lives of LGBT people.**

Local non-discrimination ordinances at the city and county level provide vital protections in employment, housing and

public accommodations. In states like Florida and Utah, over half the population is protected from discrimination at the local level. In addition to providing real protections for LGBT people living in our communities, local campaigns contribute significantly to movement building efforts in each state. They provide opportunities to engage in positive, productive public education. They strengthen the capacity of our movement organizations and expand the skills of our leaders. They build political momentum and create political allies.

To be sure, every local win puts us one step closer to full and lasting equality in every state.

As you will see in the 2014 MEI Report, we've seen incredible leadership from local lawmakers -- from enacting discrimination protections and recognizing domestic partners to providing training to government officials and ensuring that the LGBT community is always included. The Federation is particularly proud of the advances in transgender-inclusive healthcare -- the number of cities offering this healthcare has doubled since last year's report. These cities include Cincinnati, Ohio, where this year's MEI Report is being launched.

In many municipalities, local leaders are taking important steps to provide LGBT people with the protections and security they're denied by statewide and federal laws. And because of this leadership, many cities and counties are emerging as welcoming communities where LGBT people are treated with the dignity and respect they've always deserved.

But municipal victories aren't simply making cities and counties more inclusive places to live, work, and build a family. They're also fueling the movement for equality in states across this nation.

Thank you to the local leaders, to the state-based LGBT advocacy organizations, to HRC and our national partners, and to the activists who worked so hard to bring about the advances detailed in this year's Municipal Equality Index. **It's because of you that we have much to celebrate.**

Sincerely,



REBECCA ISAACS

Executive Director
Equality Federation Institute

Enduring Growth for Cities is Driven by Diversity



©Jaime Hogge

Cities with vibrant gay and lesbian communities have better life satisfaction and a stronger emotional attachment to their community.

Cities are the real sources of innovation and economic growth. By attracting and mobilizing talented people across the spectrum, they act as the key social and economic organizing units of our time. **The cities that do that best, and lead in innovation, creativity and higher living standards, recognize that diversity and in particular LGBT inclusion is key to attracting talented people.**

In today's economy, members of the creative class – roughly 50 million people including scientists, engineers, and entrepreneurs, researchers and academics, architects and designers, artists, entertainers and professionals in business, media, management, health care and law – are in search of a home that is collaborative, dynamic, and diverse. Where the creative class goes, businesses follow.

Cities with vibrant gay and lesbian communities have better life satisfaction and a stronger emotional attachment to their community. Our happiness as well as economic prosperity require diversity.

Everyone who cares about and especially those who lead our cities should look closely at this latest edition of the Municipal Equality Index, which rates cities on their non-discrimination laws; relationship recognition; LGBT inclusive employment practices; inclusiveness of city services and law enforcement; and their leadership's commitment to equality. Maintaining or developing a reputation as a city that embraces LGBT diversity is not only the right thing to do, it is the smart thing to do.

RICHARD FLORIDA

Director of the Martin Prosperity Institute at the University of Toronto's Rotman School of Management; Global Research Professor at New York University; and Senior Editor with The Atlantic

Why Cities Should Invest in Equality

Beyond the important issues of fairness and equality lies an additional reason for cities to take matters of equality seriously: it is good business. Cities are in constant competition for residents, business, and employees, and inclusiveness is an important factor that attracts all three.

A growing body of research has shown that cities that have vibrant gay and lesbian communities have higher levels of income, life satisfaction, housing values, and emotional attachment to their community as well as higher concentrations of high-tech business.

Additionally, college-educated people's migration is strongly correlated with a city's concentration of gay and lesbian people, more so than city size, city

wealth, and even the weather. Richard Florida's fascinating work on this subject reveals a link between a city's inclusivity and its ability to attract top talent and innovative business.

The Fortune 500 has long recognized that top talent is attracted to inclusiveness. In fact, the private sector has been using fair workplaces as a tool to recruit and retain top talent for years, because **fair workplaces enhance an employer's reputation, increase job satisfaction, and boost employee morale.**

Cities are subject to the same incentives for their employees, and must compete with the private sector in offering inclusive policies and benefits for their LGBT employees or risk losing their best employees to more inclusive employers.

Cities would be well-advised to respond to the workplace considerations measured by the MEI, some of which are associated with minimal cost and pay dividends in productivity and retention.

The competition to attract new business will only get more fierce as the disparity between the two Americas – the one America where states offer near-legal equality for LGBT people and the other where even the most basic state protections don't exist – continues to grow. **Businesses will increasingly have to evaluate the legal landscape offered by a potential new location in its calculation of where to expand operations;** in the America where state protections are weak, cities are under additional competitive pressure to institute municipal protections that make up for the deficiencies at the state level.

Fair workplaces enhance an employer's reputation, increase job satisfaction, and boost employee morale.



HOW IT WORKS



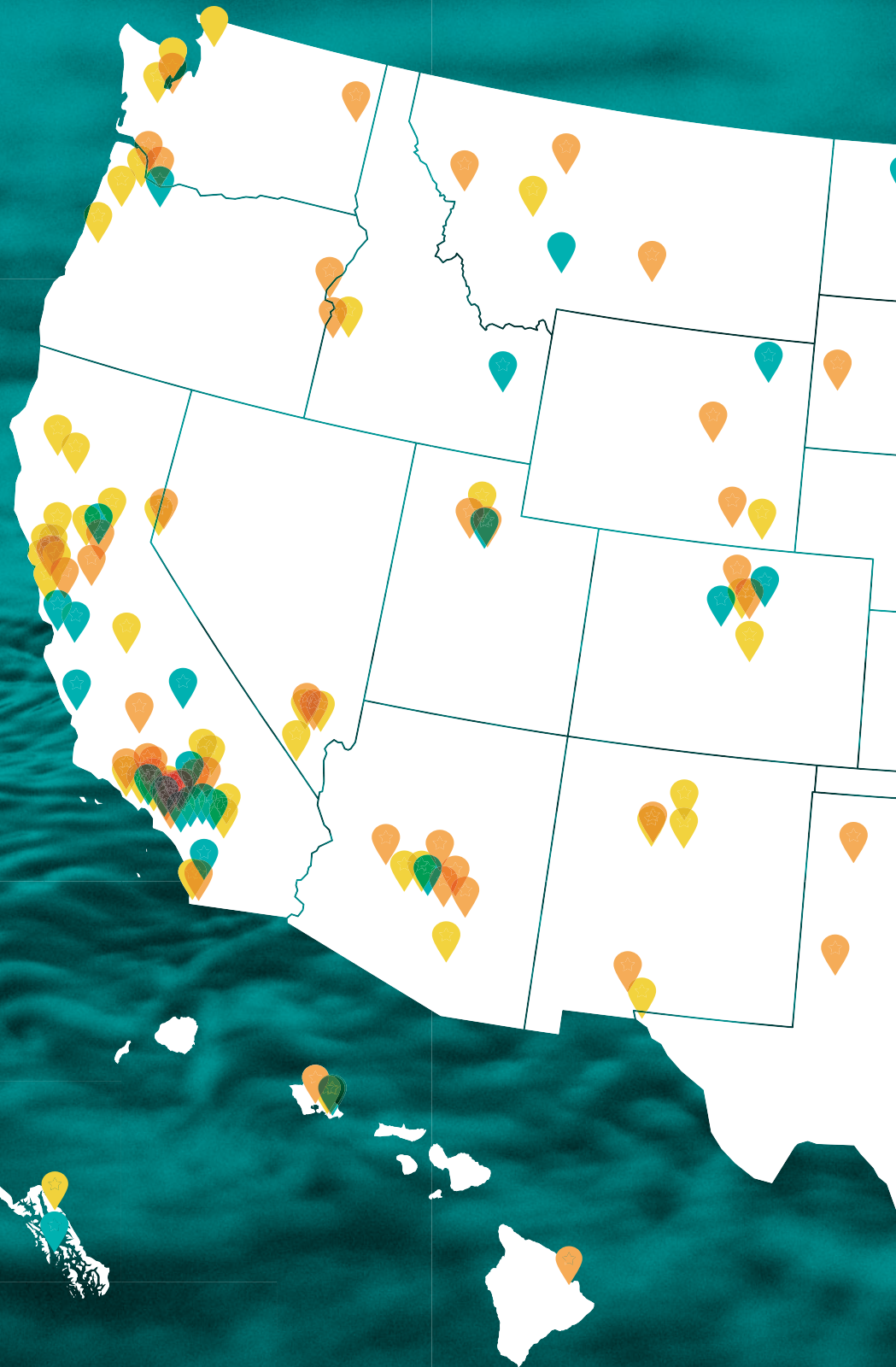
CITIES RATED BY THE MEI

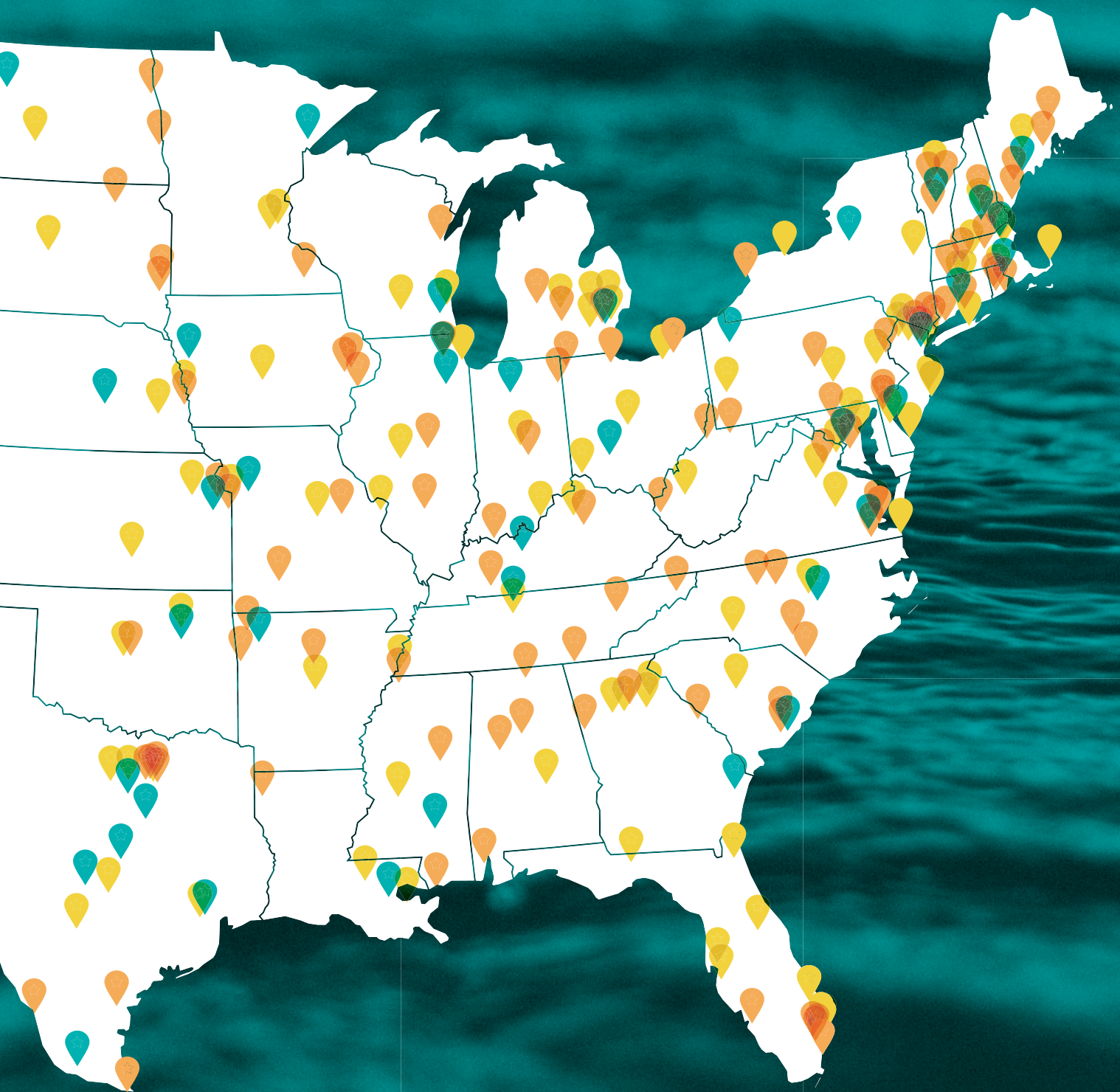
The Municipal Equality Index rates municipalities of varying sizes drawn from every state in the nation.

2012 
137 CITIES
(55,853,651 POPULATION)

2013 
154 NEW CITIES
(77,851,822 POPULATION)

2014 
62 NEW CITIES
(84,442,640 POPULATION)





EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Cities Leading the Way to Equality

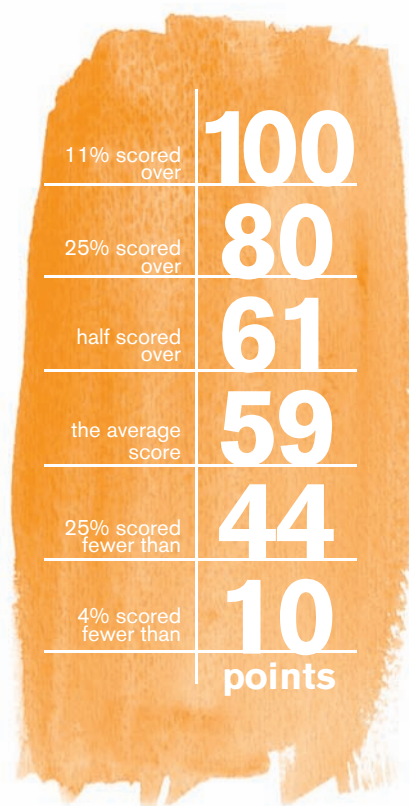
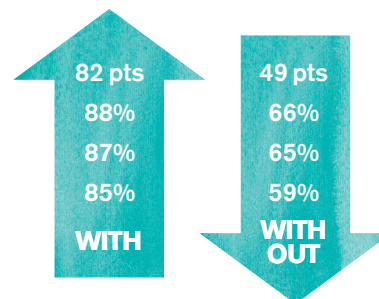
THE PRESENCE OF AN OPENLY LGBT ELECTED OR APPOINTED OFFICIAL IS CORRELATED TO HIGHER SCORES

Average Score

Fully Inclusive Non-Discrimination Law

City Employee Non-Discrimination Policy

City Employee Domestic Partner Benefits

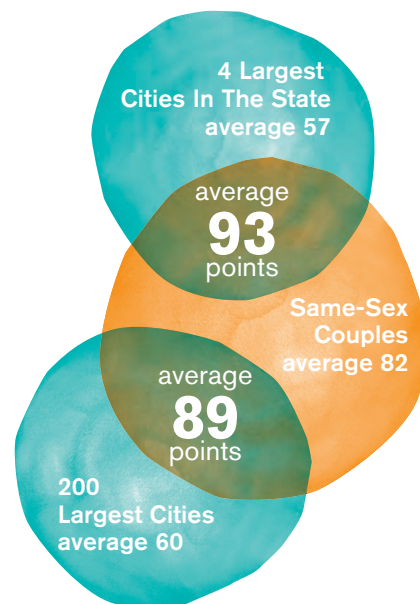


Even as marriage equality expands to 32 states, cities around the country continue to lead the way toward equality for lesbian, gay, bisexual and transgender people. The 2014 Municipal Equality Index highlights the ways cities have acted to ensure their LGBT citizens are treated with dignity and respect, even where the state and federal government have failed to do so.

NON-DISCRIMINATION LAWS

Of the 84 million people living in MEI-rated municipalities, 34 million have more inclusive laws at the municipal level than they do at the state level; in an era where one third of the states with marriage equality lack critical non-discrimination protections for the LGBT community, this is of critical importance. Further, 32 million people have explicit gender identity or expression protections at the municipal level that they do not have at the state level. Cities around the country recognize the importance of ensuring all people have the ability to live and work without fear of discrimination because of their sexual orientation or gender identity.

And this momentum is not limited to cities in any one region of the country. Cities of all sizes, chosen for rating for any of several different reasons, from states with good LGBT laws and states without, have made municipal equality a priority in their jurisdiction.



Eight of the thirty-eight cities that scored 100 points had populations of under 100,000 people, and every region of the country had at least one perfect score. Twenty-three MEI “All-Stars” scored over 85 points without reliance on state law for points in the relationship recognition and non-discrimination categories; nearly half of the perfect scores received full credit in the non-discrimination section based upon municipal law alone.

Cities selected for rating due to their high proportion of same-sex couples did remarkably better than cities as a whole (they averaged 82 points in comparison

to the national average of 59 points), and that effect was magnified when the city was also one of the fifty largest in the country. Overall, however, city size did not have a significant relationship to a city’s score.

One of the most striking changes is that forty-two cities – 12% of cities rated in 2014 – are offering transgender-inclusive health care options to city employees. This is an increase from 16 cities in 2013, which was up from 5 cities in 2012. Of the cities the 2012 MEI rated, there has been a fivefold increase with 25 of those cities – 18% of cities rated in that edition – now

offering transgender-inclusive benefits. This edition is the MEI’s first in counting transgender-inclusive health benefits as standard (not bonus) points, as recent changes have made it possible for cities who had previously been barred from offering trans-inclusive benefits to now do so. For more information about transgender inclusive benefits and the MEI, please see page 28.

Marriage is changing the landscape of equality, but this report underlines that some of the most important progress is happening not in the courts, not in the statehouses, but in city halls in every corner of America.

OF THE 38 CITIES THAT SCORED 100 POINTS...



SUCCESS STORY: CINCINNATI, OHIO



We are now a leading voice in the fight for LGBT equality and for the first time in 60 years, our population is increasing.

Less than 10 years ago, Cincinnati lived under what has been called “the most anti-gay local law our country has ever seen.” While we lived under the law, Article XII, we lost close to \$50 million in Convention business, people moved away and our image as a world-class city suffered tremendously.

But in 2004, when 13 states banned gay marriage in their state’s constitution (including Ohio), Cincinnati voters repealed Article XII, making us the only successful gay rights initiative in the country that year. Since then, we’ve taken every necessary step to be an LGBT-inclusive city, leading to our score of 100 on this year’s Municipal Equality Index. Steps like extending equal partner health benefits to city employees, creating an LGBT police liaison and requiring all city contractors to agree in writing to an inclusive non-discrimination law.

One of those steps, extending transgender-inclusive benefits to city employees, catapulted us from the “back of the pack” to the “first city in the Mid-West.” We are now a leading voice in the fight for LGBT equality and for the first time in 60 years, our population is increasing. And our urban core is thriving with good paying jobs, exciting bars and restaurants, diverse housing and a top-notch park system great for families.

There’s a lot going on in Cincinnati. So please come check it out. I promise you will feel welcome, included and have a “world-class” time!

CHRIS SEELBACH
Councilman

CITY SELECTION

How Cities Were Selected for Rating

The 2014 Municipal Equality Index rates 353 municipalities of varying sizes drawn from every state in the nation. These include: the 50 state capitals, the 200 largest cities in the United States, the four largest cities or municipalities in each state, the city home to the state's largest public university (including undergraduate and graduate enrollment) and 75 cities and municipalities that have high proportions of same-sex couples.

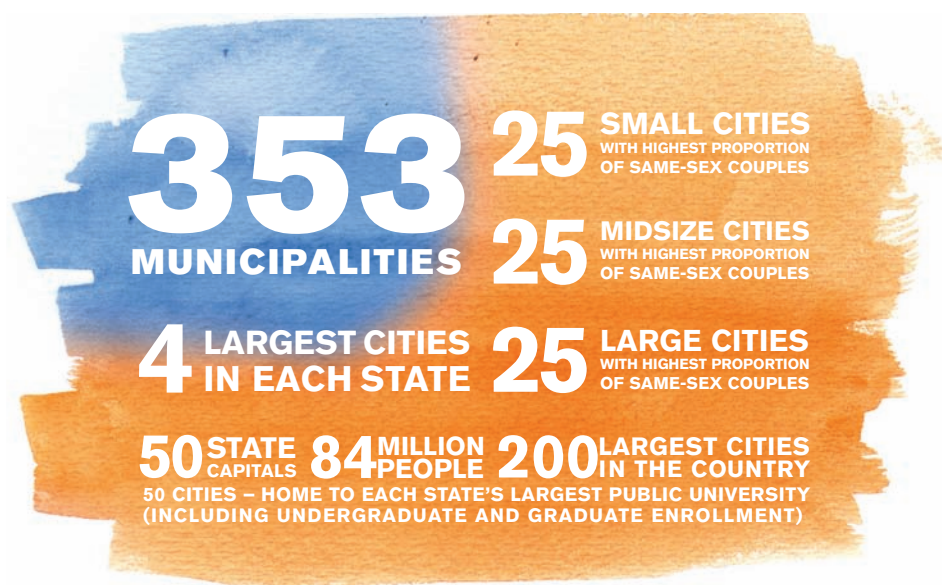
These 75 cities with highest proportions of same-sex couples are drawn from an analysis of the 2010 Census results by the Williams Institute at the UCLA School of Law, which ranked the 25 large cities (population exceeding 250,000), 25 mid-size cities (population between 100,000 and 250,000), and 25 small cities (population below 100,000) with the highest proportion of same-sex couples. Some of these small "cities" are in fact unincorporated census-designated places. To be consistent, we rated all twenty-five of these small cities, even the unincorporated census-designated places, based on the laws and policies of the local incorporated level of government applicable (the entity actually rated, often the county, will be clearly indicated).

Significant overlap between these categories of cities brings the total number of cities rated in the 2014 MEI to 353. In 2012, the MEI rated 137 cities, and, in 2013, we more than doubled the number to reach 291. As the publication goes on, the number of

cities rated will continue to increase.

WHY ISN'T WASHINGTON, D.C. RATED?

Washington, D.C. is not rated by the MEI, even though it has a high proportion of same-sex couples and fits into several of the city selection criteria. Unlike the cities rated in the MEI, however, Washington D.C. is a federal district. This means that it has powers and limitations so significantly different from the municipalities the MEI rates that the comparison would be unfair – for example, no city rated by the MEI has the legal capacity to pass marriage equality, as Washington, D.C. did in 2009. While the District of Columbia is not a state, either, it is more properly compared to a state than it is to a city. For that reason, Washington, D.C. is included in HRC's annual Equality From State to State report. More information on Washington, D.C.'s laws and policies can be viewed on the maps of state laws located at www.hrc.org/resources/entry/maps-of-state-laws-policies.



2014 MEI SCORECARD



CITY, STATE 1/2 2014 MUNICIPAL EQUALITY INDEX SCORECARD

I. Non-Discrimination Laws

This category evaluates whether discrimination on the basis of sexual orientation and gender identity is prohibited by the city, county, or state in areas of employment, housing, and public accommodations.

	STATE	COUNTY	CITY	AVAILABLE
Employment				
Housing				
Public Accommodations				
SCORE	X out of 18			

II. Relationship Recognition

Marriage, civil unions, and comprehensive domestic partnerships are matters of state policy; cities and counties have only the power to create domestic partner registries.

	STATE	COUNTY	CITY	AVAILABLE
Marriage Equality, Civil Unions, or Domestic Partnerships				
Domestic Partner Registry				
SCORE	X out of 12			

III. Municipality as Employer

By offering equivalent benefits and protections to LGBT employees, and by awarding contracts to fair-minded businesses, municipalities commit themselves to treating LGBT employees equally.

	CITY	AVAILABLE
Non-Discrimination in City Employment		
Domestic Partner Health Benefits		
Transgender-Inclusive Healthcare Benefits		
Legal Dependent Benefits		
Equivalent Family Leave		
City Contractor Non-Discrimination Ordinance		
City Contractor Equal Benefits Ordinance		
SCORE	X out of 29	
BONUS Grossing Up of Employee Benefits		
BONUS Inclusive Workplace		



















PTS FOR SEXUAL ORIENTATION PTS FOR GENDER IDENTITY **BONUS PTS** for criteria not accessible to all cities at this time.

FOR MORE INFORMATION ABOUT CITY SELECTION, CRITERIA OR THE MEI SCORING SYSTEM, PLEASE VISIT HRC.ORG/MEI.

All cities rated were provided their scorecard in advance of publication and given the opportunity to submit revisions. For feedback regarding a particular city's scorecard, please email mei@hrc.org.

IV. Municipal Services

This section assesses the efforts of the city to ensure LGBT constituents are included in city services and programs.

	STATE	COUNTY	CITY	AVAILABLE
Human Rights Commission				
LGBT Liaison to City Executive				
Enumerated Anti-Bullying Policies				
SCORE	X out of 15			
BONUS NDO enforcement by Commission/Executive				
BONUS City provides services to/supports LGBT youth				
BONUS City provides services to/supports LGBT homeless				
BONUS City provides services to/supports LGBT elderly				
BONUS City provides services to/supports people living with HIV/AIDS				









V. Law Enforcement

Fair enforcement of the law includes responsible reporting of hate crimes and engaging with the LGBT community in a thoughtful and respectful way.

	CITY	AVAILABLE
LGBT Police Liaison or Task Force		
Reported 2012 Hate Crimes Statistics to the FBI		
SCORE	X out of 18	

VI. Relationship with the LGBT Community

This category measures the city leadership's commitment to fully include the LGBT community and to advocate for full equality.

	CITY	AVAILABLE
Leadership's Public Position on LGBT Equality		
Leadership's Pro-Equality Legislative/Policy Efforts		
SCORE	X out of 8	
BONUS Openly LGBT elected or appointed municipal leaders		
BONUS City tests limits of restrictive state law		

TOTAL SCORE XXX + TOTAL BONUS XX = Final Score XXX

CANNOT EXCEED 100

SUCCESS STORY: TEMPE, ARIZONA



Tempe has a clear understanding that creating an inclusive workforce is imperative to serving a diverse community.

The City of Tempe takes great pride in being a welcoming and inviting community. Tempe is proud and elated to know that based on our Municipal Equality Index score of 100, it is ranked among the top cities in the nation for our inclusive policies and practices. Reaching this goal has required the investment of our City Council, residents and many other contributors along the way.

The City of Tempe started on this road in 1999, when employee groups advocated for being one of the first cities in Arizona to offer domestic partner benefits. Not only did Tempe City Management support implementing this benefit, it decided to go further and search for additional programs, benefits and policies that had equality in mind. This was done with a clear understanding that creating an inclusive workforce is imperative to serving a diverse community.

The Mayor and Council not only approved these policy decisions but actively sought to demonstrate an inclusive vision for Tempe. In

February 2014, the Mayor and Council unanimously approved an Anti-Discrimination Ordinance that secured broad civil rights protections for LGBT residents and visitors to Tempe. In other communities, this may have been an issue that drew opposition or controversy, but in Tempe, there was no opposition at the public hearing. The news headlines included not only information about this giant step forward in our community, but were also able to speak about the unanimous City Council vote and overwhelming community support.

In order to cement these broad civil rights protections into our community, the Council moved to amend our founding document by placing a Charter amendment on the city ballot for voter approval. The Charter amendment, which passed with more than 69 percent of the vote, prohibits discrimination or favor for city positions on the basis of race, color, gender, gender identity, sexual orientation, religion, national origin, familial status, age, disability, political affiliation and United States

military veteran status. This Anti-Discrimination Charter Amendment made the City of Tempe the first municipality to pass a Charter amendment of its kind in the State of Arizona.

Tempe's values and principles have never faulted over the years, and in fact have sustained this community through Arizona's challenges. The road has been long, and Tempe is very grateful for its alliances along the way. Our success is attributed to creating an inclusive partnership comprised of the Tempe workforce, management, City Council, Tempe's Gay/Straight Alliance, Tempe's business community (Downtown Tempe Community), the Tempe Convention and Visitor's Bureau, One Community, Equality Arizona, and finally, our progressive community.

MARK MITCHELL
Mayor

ANDREW CHING
City Manager

SCORING CRITERIA

I. Non-Discrimination Laws

It should not be legal to deny someone the right to work, rent a home, or be served in a place of public accommodation because of their sexual orientation or gender identity.

This category evaluates whether discrimination on the basis of sexual orientation and gender identity is prohibited within the city in areas of employment, housing, and public accommodations. In each category, cities receive three points for prohibiting discrimination on the basis of sexual orientation and three points for prohibiting discrimination on the basis of gender identity. All non-discrimination laws ought to be fully inclusive of lesbian, gay, bisexual and transgender people. Sexual orientation-only protections are not sufficient.

THESE POINTS CAN COME FROM STATE LAW, COUNTY LAW, OR CITY LAW

If the state or county has a comprehensive and inclusive non-discrimination law that applies within the city limits, a city may conclude it is an inefficient use of resources to pass a local non-discrimination ordinance. So long as the protections of a state or county law apply within the city limits, the city will be marked as having such protections. If there is no state or county law, but the city has passed an ordinance of its own volition, the city will receive credit for those non-discrimination protections. However, the maximum points in this section are capped at 18; therefore, where laws exist at both the city and the state (or county) level, the city will not receive double (or triple) points.



II. Relationship Recognition

Marriage equality, civil unions, and comprehensive domestic partnerships are matters of state policy.

Cities and counties only have the power to create domestic partner registries or very limited domestic partnerships. These do not come with all the same benefits as state-level relationship recognition but they do offer some benefits, privileges, and protections to LGBT people seeking to have their relationships legally recognized.

Because the MEI is an evaluation of municipalities, not states, and marriage is a state-level policy, this section is weighted so that an equal number of

points are awarded for marriage and municipal domestic partner registries.

This is a practical matter based on the scope of municipal power and is not a moral or legal valuation of municipal domestic partner rights being equivalent to marriage equality.

Further, a city may have little incentive to create a domestic partner registry where the state recognizes same-sex relationships in a more comprehensive way. Therefore, a city will receive full credit on the basis of city, county, or state-level relationship recognition, if applicable. However, cities may not earn double points in this section for having domestic partner registries and statewide recognition.

Given the rapidly changing status of marriage equality across the country, we will be making a few changes to next year's scorecard. Relationship recognition categories will be removed while the existing non-discrimination and transgender-inclusive health care benefits categories will be weighted more heavily. **An updated scorecard will be available at www.hrc.org/mei in Spring 2015.**

Given the rapidly changing status of marriage equality across the country, the 2015 MEI scorecard will be revised to reflect the reality of the new legal landscape.



SUCCESS STORY: EAST LANSING, MICHIGAN



It's vitally important that local communities play a leading role in the fight for LGBT equality, especially in states like Michigan.

In March 1972, East Lansing became the first community in the United States to ban discrimination based on sexual orientation. Since that time we have worked hard to ensure that our city stands out as a model of LGBT-inclusion.

Being welcoming to all residents and visitors reflects the core values of our university community. It's part of who we are. We also recognize that creating and sustaining a genuine commitment to inclusion and diversity is essential to attracting and retaining an educated, talented workforce. To build a prosperous and vibrant city, we must be welcoming to all who wish to make our community their home and place of business. While equal opportunity and equal protection under the law are clearly moral imperatives and often thought of in those terms, we also recognize that they are economic imperatives for thriving 21st century communities.

It's vitally important that local communities play a leading role in the fight for LGBT equality, especially

in states like Michigan that lack basic relationship recognition and non-discrimination protections for LGBT people. While we fight our state's discriminatory constitutional ban on marriage equality in the courts, East Lansing adopted a domestic partner registry. While we work to amend the Elliot-Larsen Civil Rights Act to ban discrimination based on sexual orientation and gender identity, East Lansing has not only adopted a comprehensive non-discrimination ordinance, but we have also adopted an Equal Benefits Ordinance so that taxpayer dollars are not spent supporting contractors who discriminate.

When we received our first MEI score of 86 in 2013, I set a goal of reaching a score of 100 before the next scores were released. I'm proud that we were able to reach that goal. More importantly, I am proud of what this score says about our community's commitment to inclusion and diversity.

NATHAN TRIPLETT
Mayor

III. Municipality as Employer

This section is the most heavily weighted because almost every municipality has immediate control over its employment policies. Respect for LGBT employees is clearly demonstrated by the inclusiveness of these employment policies.

CITY PROHIBITS DISCRIMINATION IN CITY EMPLOYMENT

Cities can adopt internal hiring policies that prohibit employment discrimination (including hiring, promotions, termination, and compensation) on the basis of sexual orientation (5 points) and gender identity or expression (5 points). It is a fundamental principle of fairness that an employee should be judged on his or her ability to perform the responsibilities of a position, and not by who he or she is or who he or she loves. A state-level non-discrimination law or a local non-discrimination ordinance alone is not sufficient to earn these points. Personnel policies must reflect sexual orientation and gender identity in order for the city to receive credit.

CITY OFFERS DOMESTIC PARTNER BENEFITS, LEGAL DEPENDENT BENEFITS, AND EQUIVALENT FAMILY LEAVE

Employees are extended certain benefits which are sometimes tied to marital status; this means employees in same-sex relationships are often not afforded equivalent employee benefits. Cities may rectify this by offering medical benefits to a domestic partner or to a same-sex spouse if in a marriage equality state (4 points), by recognizing that the legal dependent of an employee's same-sex partner or spouse is also a dependent of the employee and extending equivalent benefits (2 points); and ensuring that

family leave policies recognize the true scope of an employee's family (2 points). If a city offers benefits to same-sex spouses but the city is not in a marriage equality state, partial credit will be granted. Full credit is not appropriate because leaving the state to be married to qualify for these benefits is a significant burden for same-sex couples to be forced to undertake.

TRANSGENDER-INCLUSIVE HEALTH CARE BENEFITS

Cities, like other employers, provide health benefits to their employees, but some employees routinely have critical and medically necessary treatment excluded from the health care options they are offered. Transgender employees are routinely denied health care coverage for gender-affirming care such as hormone replacement therapy, gender confirmation surgery, and other medically necessary care. Municipalities must provide at least one health insurance plan (4 points) that provides coverage for transgender health care needs (gender confirmation surgeries, hormone replacement therapy, and other gender-affirming care). The policy must explicitly include gender-affirming care; a lack of exclusion is not sufficient for an award of points because this care is routinely presumed to be not covered.

READ MORE
ABOUT THESE
BENEFITS ON
PG 28-32

CITY REQUIRES ITS CONTRACTORS TO HAVE INCLUSIVE NON-DISCRIMINATION POLICIES

Cities who take fair workplaces seriously also require city contractors to have inclusive non-discrimination policies. An equal opportunity ordinance, as these are sometimes known, requires city contractors to adopt non-discrimination policies that prohibit adverse employment actions on the basis of sexual orientation (2 points) and gender identity or expression (2 points).

CITY REQUIRES ITS CONTRACTORS TO OFFER EQUAL BENEFITS

An equal benefits ordinance requires a municipality's contractors to offer equal health insurance and other benefits to their employees (3 points). This ensures that employees with same-sex spouses and employees with domestic partners receive the same

compensation (salary and benefits) as do their heterosexual counterparts; it also ensures that the city does not unwittingly engage in or encourage discrimination by awarding bids to contractors who treat employees differently based on their sexual orientation. Cities may receive partial credit if they have no such ordinance but instead give preference to city contractors who offer equal benefits.

BONUS POINTS: GROSSING UP OF EMPLOYEE BENEFITS

Under federal law, until recently, the contribution made by an employer to an employee's same-sex spouse or partner's benefits was considered taxable income to the employee, whereas such a contribution made by the employer to an employee's opposite-sex spouse's benefits was not taxable income. The discrepancy in tax treatment created a tax penalty for employees who received domestic

partner benefits; grossing up policies address this penalty by offsetting it (2 points). While this federal law has been overturned with regard to legally married same-sex couples, it is still in place for couples in a civil union or domestic partnership and some states continue to have similar state tax policies. Because the need for this type of program is no longer universal, these points are bonus points.

BONUS POINTS: MUNICIPALITY IS AN INCLUSIVE WORKPLACE

This section measures whether the city is a welcoming workplace for LGBT employees as measured by the following: the city actively recruits LGBT employees, or conducts LGBT inclusive diversity training, or it has an LGBT employee affinity group (a total of 2 bonus points are awarded if any of these exist).

It is a fundamental principle of fairness that an employee should be judged on his or her ability to perform the responsibilities of a position, and not by who he or she is or who he or she loves.



IV. Services and Programs

Census data shows that LGBT people live in virtually every city in the country, but not every city recognizes that their LGBT constituents can have different needs. This section assesses the efforts of the city to include LGBT constituents in city services and programs.

Human Rights Commissions do important work to identify and eliminate discrimination; even in jurisdictions where LGBT equality isn't explicitly a part of the commission's charter, these commissions investigate complaints, educate the city, and sometimes enforce non-discrimination laws. Human Rights Commissions serve as important bridges between constituents and their city.

A Human Rights Commission will be worth four standard points if its purpose is largely or entirely educational. These commissions may hold community discussions, screen movies, present panels, take public comment, advise the city on matters of diversity and inclusion, develop policies and strategies for making the city more inclusive, and undertake other similar

types of endeavors. Where, in addition to the functions listed above, a Human Rights Commission has the authority to conciliate, issue a right to sue letter, or otherwise enforce non-discrimination protections, that commission will earn three bonus points in addition to the four standard points awarded above.

Similarly, an LGBT liaison to the Mayor's office (5 points) is responsible for looking at city policies and services through an LGBT lens and speaking up when a policy or service might exclude LGBT people. This position is also known to be a friendly ear to constituents who want to bring LGBT-related issues to the city government but are fearful they might be dismissed or misunderstood.

Anti-bullying policies in schools are also included in the MEI; a state, county, or city may prohibit bullying on the basis of sexual orientation (3 points) and gender identity or expression (3 points). Credit will also be given if all school districts within city limits have such policies.

While in some cases cities do not directly control school districts, it is nevertheless appropriate to hold the city accountable for leading a conversation on something as fundamental as ensuring children have a safe place to learn.

The MEI also evaluates city services that address segments of the LGBT population who are particularly vulnerable and may have specific and acute needs. While all people age, battle illness, struggle to fit in, and work hard to improve their lot in life, these struggles can be different and particularly difficult for LGBT people. Cities can address these challenges by offering services - or supporting a third party provider of these services - to LGBT youth, LGBT elderly, LGBT homeless people, or people who are HIV positive or living with AIDS (2 bonus points for each service the city provides).



V. Law Enforcement

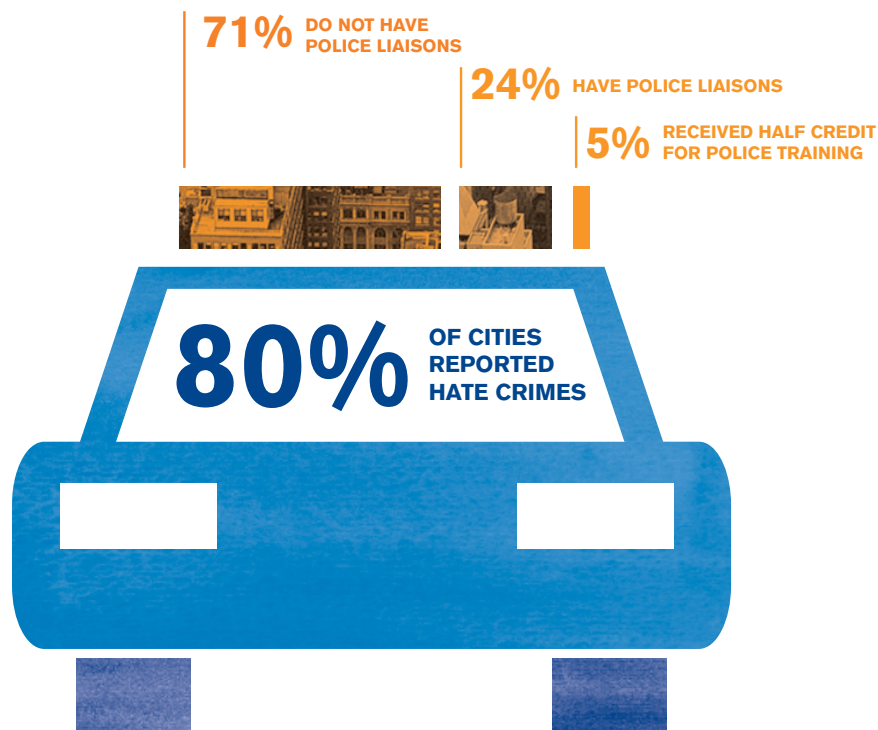
The relationship between law enforcement and the LGBT community is often fraught with suspicion, misunderstanding, and fear.

LGBT people are vulnerable to violence arising from bigotry and ignorance, and this danger is only exacerbated when police are perceived to be part of the problem.

However, a police force can ensure safety for all by treating LGBT people with understanding and respect, remaining mindful of the LGBT community's unique law enforcement concerns and engaging the community in a positive way.

An LGBT police liaison (8 points) can serve as an important bridge between the community and law enforcement. The liaison is an advocate for fair and respectful enforcement of the law as well as an officer that the community can rely upon to appropriately respond to sensitive issues.

Respectful and fair enforcement includes responsible reporting of hate crimes, including for hate crimes based on sexual orientation and gender identity, to the FBI (10 points). Such reporting demonstrates law enforcement's attention to these crimes and ensures that the larger law enforcement community is able to accurately gauge the scope and responses to them.



VI. Relationship with the LGBT Community

Leadership is an aspect of policy that is not fully captured by executive orders or the passage of legislation into law.

When a city leader marches in a Pride parade, a city joins a pro-equality amicus brief, a city council dedicates a park to an LGBT civil rights leader, or a city paints its crosswalks in rainbow colors, it sends a message to LGBT people that they are a valued part of the community.

At first glance, these actions may seem to be more symbol than substance; however, as HRC reported in its groundbreaking youth report in 2012, four in ten LGBT youth surveyed said the community in which they live is not accepting of LGBT people, and 60% of the youth surveyed said they heard negative messages about being LGBT from elected leaders.

Further, LGBT youth are twice as likely as their peers to say they will need to move from their hometown in order to

feel accepted. When elected leaders speak out on matters of equality, their constituents do hear - and it informs their constituents' perception of safety, inclusion, and belonging. This category, therefore, measures the commitment of the city to include the LGBT community and to advocate for full equality.

The first category rates city leadership (on a scale of 0 to 5 points) on its public statements on matters of equality, particularly where the city leadership pushes for equality in the face of substantial adversity.

For example, a city would be awarded points if the city council passed a resolution in support of marriage equality - while this is not something the city can legislate, it is a powerful statement of the city's principles nonetheless.

The level of support for pro-equality legislation is also reflected in this section. The second category rates

the persistence of the city leadership in pursuing legislation or policies that further equality (on a scale of 0 to 3 points).

Note that even small or unsuccessful efforts are recognized in this category, and that these efforts may be heavily weighted if the city's political environment is not conducive to passing pro-equality legislation.

Finally, this section also includes two opportunities to earn bonus points: first, for openly LGBT people holding elected or appointed office in the municipality (3 bonus points); and second, for cities who do all they can in the face of state law that restricts their ability to pass LGBT-inclusive laws or policies (2 bonus points).

When a city leader marches in a Pride parade, a city joins a pro-equality amicus brief, a city council dedicates a park to an LGBT civil rights leader, or a city paints its crosswalks in rainbow colors, it sends a message to LGBT people that they are a valued part of the community.

SUCCESS STORY: WORCESTER, MASSACHUSETTS



These are small steps, but taken as a whole they tell a story: that Worcester is a place where all are welcome to live, work, and play.

Massachusetts is rightly known as a welcoming, inclusive place for all people to raise their families and live their lives. A decade ago, the Commonwealth became the first state in the union to allow same-sex couples to share in the freedom to marry. I'm proud to have been a leader in that fight.

But we cannot rest on our reputation. As a state senator, I co-sponsored a bill to add transgender people to the list of those protected from discrimination. Now, as the chief executive of the second-largest city in New England, I want Worcester to be a leader in human rights and equality. I am deeply proud of the city's perfect score this year, as it comes after months of hard work and community-wide support.

When I became Worcester's city manager in January 2014, the city's MEI score was an unacceptable 55. I made raising that score one of my administration's top priorities.

We immediately met with local PRIDE organizers, the city's Human Rights Commission and key city personnel to hear their concerns and create a step-by-step corrective plan.

Massachusetts has no state protection for public accommodations. So we passed a local protection, sending a clear message to the statehouse that those protections are needed and have local support.

As an employer, we banned discrimination in city employment. We now provide medical benefits for transgender individuals and ensure equal family leave. And we

affirmatively forbid discrimination in awarding city contracts to contractors.

We also sought to deepen the city's connection with the community. We added an LGBTQ liaison in both my office and the police department. This summer I marched with thousands of others in our annual PRIDE parade. Mayor Joseph Petty, who was the parade's grand marshal, also hosted a meet and greet with young LGBTQ leaders.

Our new score of 100 was possible through committed leadership and the strong support of the city council and the community. Some of these are small steps, but taken as a whole they tell a story: that Worcester is a place where all are welcome to live, work and play.

ED AUGUSTUS
City Manager

FEATURED CRITERIA

Trans-Inclusive Health Benefits

BY XAVIER PERSAD

Transgender individuals — those whose gender identity differs from that typically associated with their assigned sex at birth — have long suffered discriminatory barriers in virtually every aspect of life. While progress is being made on advancing workplace non-discrimination protections for transgender people, the elimination of discrimination in one vitally important area has lagged behind: health care benefits for public sector employees.

Many U.S. employer-based health care plans explicitly contain “transgender exclusions.” These exclusions prohibit coverage for medical care related to

gender transition, otherwise known as transition-related health care. Transition-related health care encompasses mental health care, hormone therapy, gender affirmation surgery, and other gender affirming care.

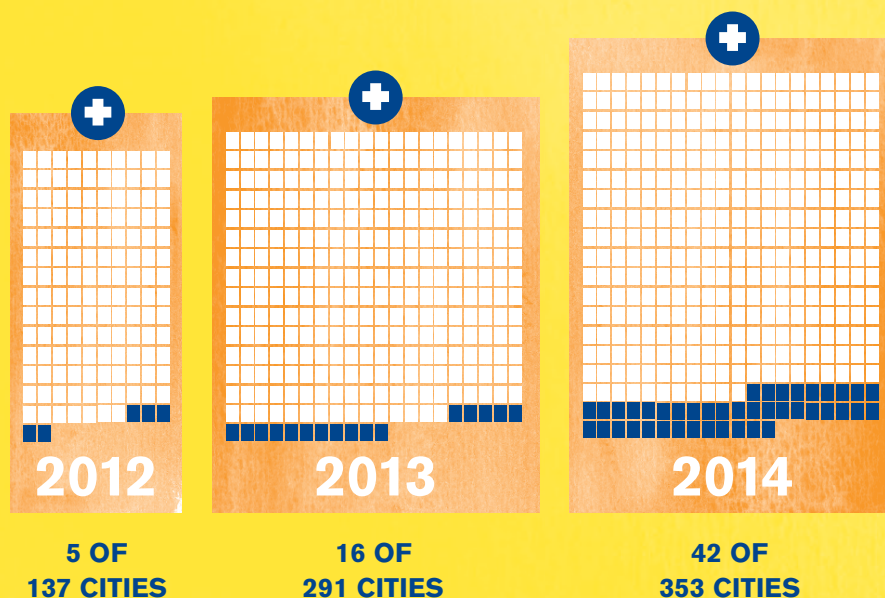
Even when health care plans do not explicitly contain “transgender exclusions,” coverage of transition-related care is still often denied on the basis that it is cosmetic or experiential, and therefore perceived by the insurer to be not medically necessary. Furthermore, transgender people are even denied coverage for many of the procedures routinely provided to people

who are not transgender (such as hysterectomies for transgender men).

These discriminatory exclusions persist despite the fact that the nation’s top professional health associations—including the American Medical Association and the American Psychological Association—have unequivocally denounced the notion that transition-related care is cosmetic or experimental and affirmed that transition-related health care is medically necessary for the health and well-being of many transgender people.

BASED ON
DATA FROM
HRC'S
MUNICIPAL
EQUALITY
INDEX

Percent of Rated Cities Offering Trans-Inclusive Health Benefits



TREND TOWARD INCLUSIVITY

Fortunately, a growing number of employers are doing away with these discriminatory exclusions. More and more municipalities are offering employees transgender-inclusive health care plans that affirmatively cover transition-related health care.

Data compiled by the MEI over the past three years demonstrate this trend. The number of municipalities that offer at least one affirmatively transgender-inclusive health care plan has increased every year since the MEI's inception.

In 2012, only 5 out of 137 MEI-rated municipalities (4%) offered transgender-inclusive health care benefits. This number rose to 16 out of 291 municipalities (5%) in 2013.

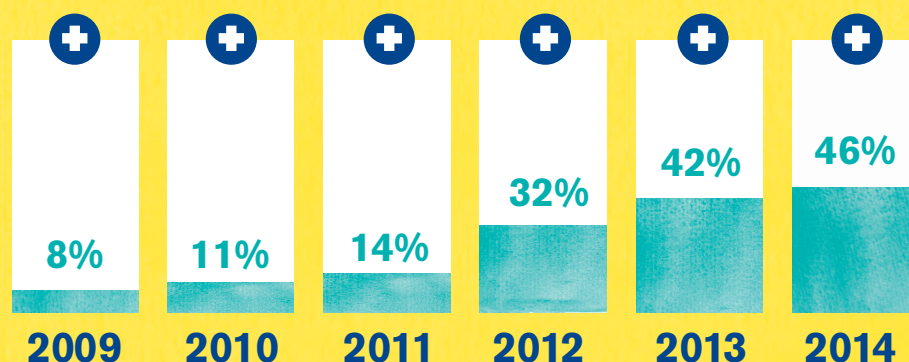
This year's MEI reflects the most encouraging numbers yet, with 42 of 353 municipalities (12%)—more than double the percentage from last year—receiving credit for transgender-inclusive health care benefits.

What's more, a number of states and the federal government have committed to offering transgender-inclusive health coverage. California, Connecticut, Maryland, Oregon, Washington, and the District of Columbia have all removed or are in the process of removing transgender exclusions from state employee health care plans. And in June of this year, the Office of Personnel Management announced that federal employee health care plans would no longer be required to exclude transition-related health care.

The movement toward inclusive health coverage is further paralleled in the private sector. The Human Rights Campaign Foundation's Corporate Equality Index (CEI), which assesses corporate policies and practices, has been tracking the number of major U.S. private employers that offer transgender-inclusive health care benefits since 2008.

From 2009 to 2014, the CEI observed a nearly seven-fold increase in the number of major employers that offer transgender-inclusive health coverage. In 2009, only 49 CEI-rated employers afforded inclusive health care coverage to their employees. As of this year, this number stands at an all-time high of 340 CEI-rated employers.

Percent of Major U.S. **Private Employers Offering** Trans-Inclusive Health Benefits



BASED ON
DATA FROM
HRC'S
CORPORATE
EQUALITY
INDEX

BENEFITS

Providing transgender-inclusive health care coverage isn't just the right thing to do. Inclusive health coverage also brings many invaluable benefits.

A study conducted by the Williams Institute asked employers who provide transition-related health coverage about the benefits they receive as a result. 60% of responding employers stated that providing inclusive health coverage makes them more competitive and improves recruitment and retention. 60% also reported that providing

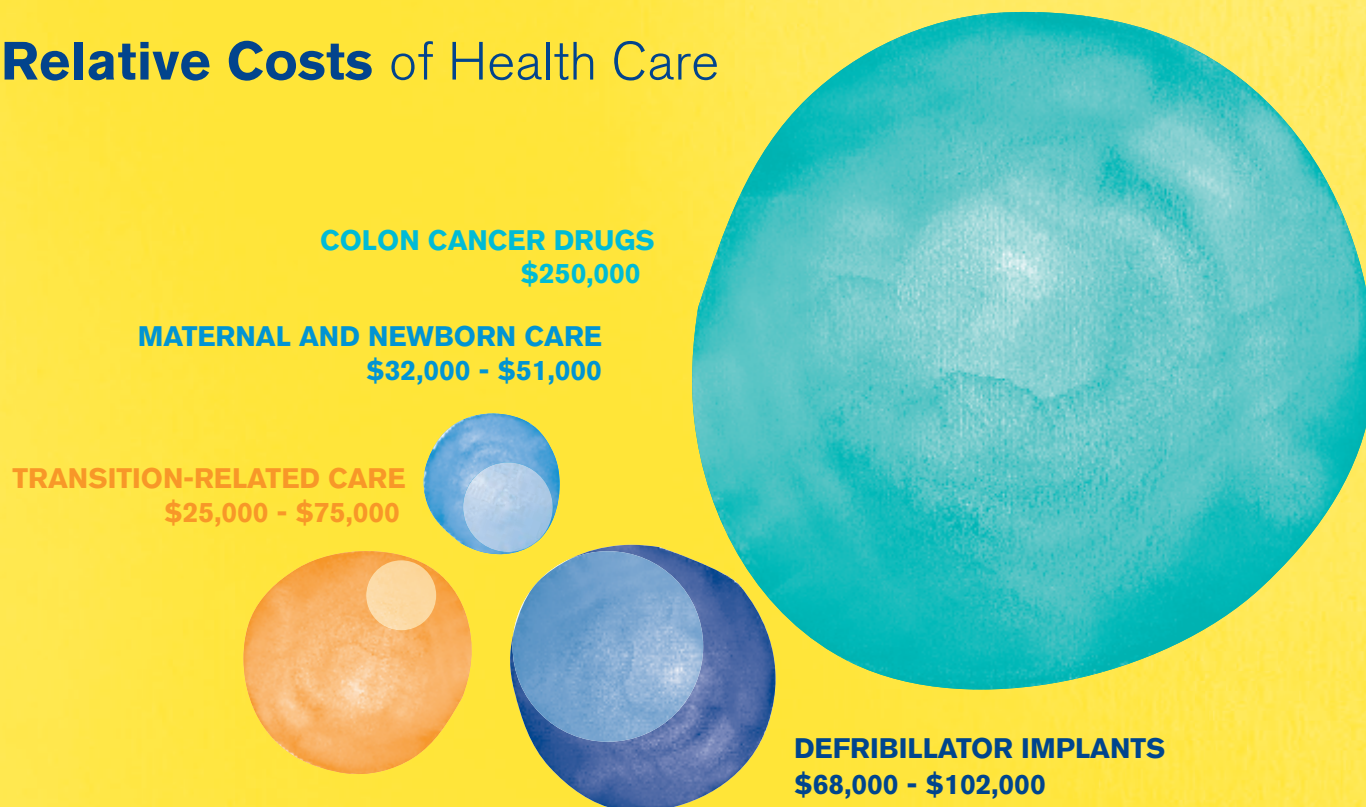
transgender-inclusive benefits brings them in line with and effectively communicates their commitment to fairness and equality. Moreover, employers noted that offering inclusive healthcare benefits increases employee satisfaction and morale, helps attract a diverse workforce, and puts them on the "leading edge."

COST

The most common impediment to cities offering inclusive health coverage is misconceptions about cost.

Studies have consistently shown that the cost of providing transgender-inclusive health coverage is negligible. In fact, according to a Williams Institute study, 85% of responding employers who provide transgender-inclusive benefits report no cost at all. This is because of extremely low utilization rates. Since such a tiny percentage of people undergo transition-related medical care, distributed costs are nominal or nonexistent.

Relative Costs of Health Care



SUCCESS STORY: ROCHESTER, NEW YORK



Since the announcement, a wonderful community dialogue has ensued which allowed people to learn more about what it means to be transgender, as well as the challenges that so many of our friends and family members face every day.

On May 17th, 2014, Rochester Mayor Lovely Warren and City Council member Matt Haag announced that effective January 1st, 2015, the City would offer trans-inclusive health coverage to city employees.

This was an exciting announcement for the City, as Rochester has always been, and continues to be, at the forefront when it comes to the fight for civil rights. The City of Rochester was the first municipality in the State of New York to elect an openly gay person when Tim Maines was elected to City Council in 1985.

As such, this announcement furthers Rochester's commitment to fairness and equality for all of its citizens.

Since the announcement, a wonderful community dialogue has ensued which allowed people to learn more about what it means to be transgender, as well as the challenges that so many of our friends and family members face every day.

A growing number of cities and organizations across the country are realizing the benefits of adopting such policies and the positive effects that the policy change will have on the community. "This is not just a feel-good health measure, it is good business," said Councilman Haag.

Councilman Haag has continually pointed to how the City of Rochester, as well as companies

across the country making such changes, are recognizing the benefit to their organizations when employees and their families are well cared for.

Whether that benefit is corporate profit or public service, we are better served when our workers are well served. Rochester will continue to focus its policies around the common goal of ensuring our community is the most inclusive, and thus the best, community it can possibly be.

MATT HAAG
Councilman

SUCCESS STORY: SAN FRANCISCO, CALIFORNIA



The benefit cost employees virtually nothing.

In July 2001, the City and County of San Francisco became one of the first municipal governments in the country to include transgender benefits in employees' health benefit plans, including gender reassignment surgery. Specifically, the benefit provides surgical coverage, hormone treatments, and appropriate mental health care.

At the time, the Mayor, the San Francisco Board of Supervisors and the Health Service System (HSS) Board approved these new services, yet there was a prevailing concern that providing these benefits would increase health care premiums for employees and the City. There was also a concern that individuals seeking reassignment surgery would seek out City employment disproportionately increasing utilization.

To address these concerns, the City initially set a surgical claim cap and required a one year waiting period. The City was also proactive in addressing cost with service providers. For example, HSS identified clinics in the United States and Canada that were centers of excellence in gender reassignment surgery and entered into specific contracts for those discrete services.

Also, to create a reserve to pay for transgender benefits, HSS loaded an additional \$2 on employee premiums from 2001 to 2006 to build a bank of several million dollars. However, with low utilization of the benefit, and pre-negotiated contracts, the benefit cost employees virtually nothing. In total, from July 2001 through August 2005, HSS had collected \$5.6 million and paid out \$183,000 on 11 claims.

As a result of this beneficial cost data, the City's contracted HMOs no longer separately rate and price the transgender benefit, but instead treats the benefit the same as other medical procedures such as gall bladder removal or heart surgery. As a result, HSS was able to provide transgender benefits to employees at no additional cost. Having now experienced the fiscal impacts of the program, San Francisco has improved upon the program by eliminating the one-year waiting period as well as the surgical cap to make it easier for any City employee to access necessary transgender benefits.

**THE CITY AND COUNTY OF
SAN FRANCISCO**

The City and County of San Francisco—which has offered inclusive health coverage since 2001—demonstrates this. Data submitted for the first four years that San Francisco provided inclusive health coverage show an extremely low utilization rate, with only 11 total claims made between 2001 and 2005. During this period, San Francisco averaged between 80,000 and 100,000 enrollees per year.

Ultimately, San Francisco experienced no increase in overall premiums or plan costs attributable to the addition of transgender-inclusive health benefits.

Inclusive health coverage can even end up reducing health care expenditures. When municipalities ensure that their transgender employees are receiving the appropriate care, their health care plans may save money in the long term. Lasting negative health outcomes that can occur as a result of not being able to access medically necessary gender-affirming care can cost more to treat in the long run than appropriate transition-related care.

Additionally, the total cost of transition-related care is small compared to other procedures that are routinely or mandatorily covered.

MAKING THE CHANGE

All municipalities should make the shift to transgender-inclusive health care benefits. For cities that engage in the health care marketplace in the same way as private employers, this can be done easily through consultation with insurance carriers, as most major insurance carriers already administer transgender-inclusive coverage in at least one employer plan. Most MEI-rated municipalities fall into this category.

Some cities, however, operate within a state benefits and pensions system that limits what health insurance options can be offered. Cities operating within non-inclusive state benefits and pensions systems are encouraged to lobby their respective state systems for change.

To ensure full inclusivity, municipalities should ensure that their health care plans explicitly affirm coverage for the full range of services and procedures considered medically necessary by the latest

World Professional Association for Transgender Health standards of care; cover a dollar maximum of at least \$75,000 for transition-related care; and extend all benefits and covered procedures—even those unrelated to gender transition—to transgender individuals on an equal basis.

Furthermore, cities should ensure that employees have easy access to plan documentation clearly indicating inclusive insurance options.

CONCLUSION

Transgender-inclusive health care benefits are a matter of basic fairness and equality. Offering inclusive coverage promotes a workforce that is healthier, more productive, and more representative of the diversity of our communities. With little or no associated costs, there is no reason not to join the growing number of employers who are embracing inclusive coverage for all.



All municipalities should make the shift to transgender-inclusive health care benefits.

ACKNOWLEDGING CONTEXT

Not All Cities Are Created Equal

Some cities have the autonomy and wherewithal to pass inclusive laws and offer cutting-edge city services; other cities are hampered by severe state-imposed limitations on their ability to pass inclusive laws, or they have found that the small scope of their local government limits their capabilities. The MEI is designed to understand the unique situation of each city and is structured to reward the specific achievements of a local government. The efforts and achievements of each city can only be fairly judged within that city's context; while imposing a score may seem to strip a city of its context, the MEI honors the different situations from which the selected cities come in three major ways:

BONUS POINTS

First, in addition to the 100 standard points for city laws and services, the MEI includes 20 bonus points. Bonus points are awarded for essential programs, protections, or benefits that are not attainable or very difficult to attain for some cities; therefore, cities with the item are rewarded, but cities without it are not penalized. Bonus points can also provide some leeway for cities that face challenges in accomplishing the specific achievements the MEI measures, and ensure that every city has the ability to improve its score for next year.

CONSIDERATION OF STATE LAW

Second, the MEI weights state and municipal law such that the effect of excellent or restrictive state law does not determine the city's ability to score well.

LEGISLATIVE LEADERSHIP

Third, it also rates the city leadership's public position on LGBT equality and gives credit for legislative efforts (even unsuccessful efforts), so if a city has outspoken advocates for equality who are unfortunately still in the minority, the city will still receive credit for the efforts it has made.

The MEI is carefully designed to rate cities in detail while respecting that **a number of factors may boost or inhibit** a city's ability or incentives.

SUCCESS STORY: EQUALITY FLORIDA



Local organizing is where hearts and minds and laws change for the better and ordinary people find their voice to speak up and make a difference.

Equality Florida has always existed in a challenging political climate and we have learned important lessons about building grassroots leadership, developing bipartisan coalitions, enlisting the business community and holding elected leaders accountable.

Under our watch, Florida has led the southeastern United States in passing over 135 local policies outlawing discrimination based on sexual orientation and gender identity, banning harassment of LGBT students, and providing domestic partnership benefits to our families. These victories have been secured in some of the most conservative strongholds of our state and have been a part of building momentum for statewide progress.

Through our continuous public education campaigns, we are winning the battle of public opinion with a strong majority of Floridians now supporting every one of our pro-equality issues including marriage equality.

The Municipal Equality Index has become a valuable tool in motivating city and county leaders to step up when it comes to LGBT equality. Not only does it provide a checklist of top policies that cities should have, it encourages a friendly but real rivalry to be the best between mayors and local legislators. In Florida, 3 cities jumped more than 10 points from last year to reach a 100 despite the MEI increasing the difficulty of reaching a perfect 100-point score.

Today the majority of Floridians live in parts of Florida that include vital protections but our state remains a patchwork where rights are dictated by invisible boundaries between cities

and counties. For Southern states and others who find a legislature that lags behind public support for LGBT equality, local work can be a transformation.

Our campaign to pass a statewide non-discrimination effort gains momentum and our local work has become our most powerful counter to opposition who make outrageous claims about the impact of such laws. It becomes difficult for a legislator to embrace extremists when he lives in a community that has had local protections on the books for nearly a decade.

Local organizing is where hearts and minds and laws change for the better and ordinary people find their voice to speak up and make a difference. The MEI is a tool worth leveraging to accelerate that change.

NADINE SMITH
Executive Director

Fair Assessment Respects Legal Differences

The Municipal Equality Index is carefully designed to rate cities in detail while respecting that a number of factors may boost or inhibit a city's ability or incentives to adopt the laws and policies this project rates.

Given the range of authority and incentives that cities have, and acknowledging that our effort to rate small cities as well as large cities exacerbates these challenges, the MEI had to wrestle with three major questions in its initial design.

QUESTION 1

How could the MEI fairly take state law into account, particularly as the disparity between states with pro-equality laws and states without pro-equality laws continues to grow?

ANSWER

The answer is balance. The rating system would not be fair if cities were not able to score a 100 on the MEI without living in a state that had favorable state law. Allocating the points carefully to respect the dynamic relationship between state and local

government was a must, and we concentrated on what the state law meant for the city being rated.

QUESTION 2

How could the MEI assess a list of cities as diverse as those selected while acknowledging that the smaller places rated may understandably have less capacity to engage on LGBT issues?

ANSWER

We addressed concerns about a small city's capacity to affect change by building flexibility into the scorecard through the use of bonus points and by providing multiple avenues toward earning points.

QUESTION 3

What do MEI scores say about the atmosphere for LGBT people living and working in a particular place?

ANSWER

Even the most thoughtful survey of laws and policies cannot objectively assess the efficacy of enforcement and

it certainly cannot encapsulate the lived experience of discrimination that many LGBT people – even those living in 100-point cities – face every day.

This question can only be answered by precisely defining what the MEI is designed to do: the MEI is an evaluation of municipal laws and policies. It is not a rating of the best places for LGBT people to live, nor is it an evaluation of the adequacy or effectiveness of enforcement. It is not an encapsulation of what it feels like to be an LGBT person walking down the street. While some LGBT people may prefer to live in cities that respect and include them, there are undoubtedly many other factors that make a place a welcoming, inclusive place to live.

To be clear, the MEI specifically rates cities on their laws and policies while respecting the legal and political context the city operates within. It is not a measure of an LGBT person's lived experience in that city.



Even the most thoughtful survey of laws and policies **cannot encapsulate the lived experience of discrimination** that many LGBT people—even those living in 100-point cities—face every day.

Accounting for City Size

The MEI rates municipalities as small as Rehoboth Beach, Delaware (population 1,373) and as large as New York City (8,337,000). Such a range in city size creates concerns about ensuring that the efforts of small cities are not diminished in comparison to the capabilities of large cities.

Fairness dictates that the MEI not measure small cities against a standard only the metropolitan giants of the country can meet.

The MEI is designed to ensure that small cities have the same ability to score well on the MEI as large cities do.

First, while some of the criteria might be more challenging for a small city to accomplish, none of the non-bonus criteria are prohibitive for small cities. Further, flexibility was built into the scoring system to acknowledge that a small city may accomplish the criteria in a slightly different manner: for example, an LGBT liaison may have many other duties, and a Human Rights Commission might be all-volunteer.

Second, the MEI uses bonus points to ensure cities are not being held accountable for services that they simply are unable to provide. Points pertaining to a city's administrative structure and capabilities are generally bonus points and there often are multiple paths to earning the same set of points. A city can earn "Welcoming Workplace" bonus points for LGBT-specific recruitment for city employment opportunities; however, if the city is

too small to actively recruit, it can earn those same points either through an inclusive workplace diversity training or facilitating a Pride group for city employees. Having alternative paths to the same points and classifying some points as bonus accommodates the varying needs and capabilities of different sized cities.

An analysis of the MEI's results shows these efforts to accommodate small cities worked: small cities were able to score comparably with the large cities.

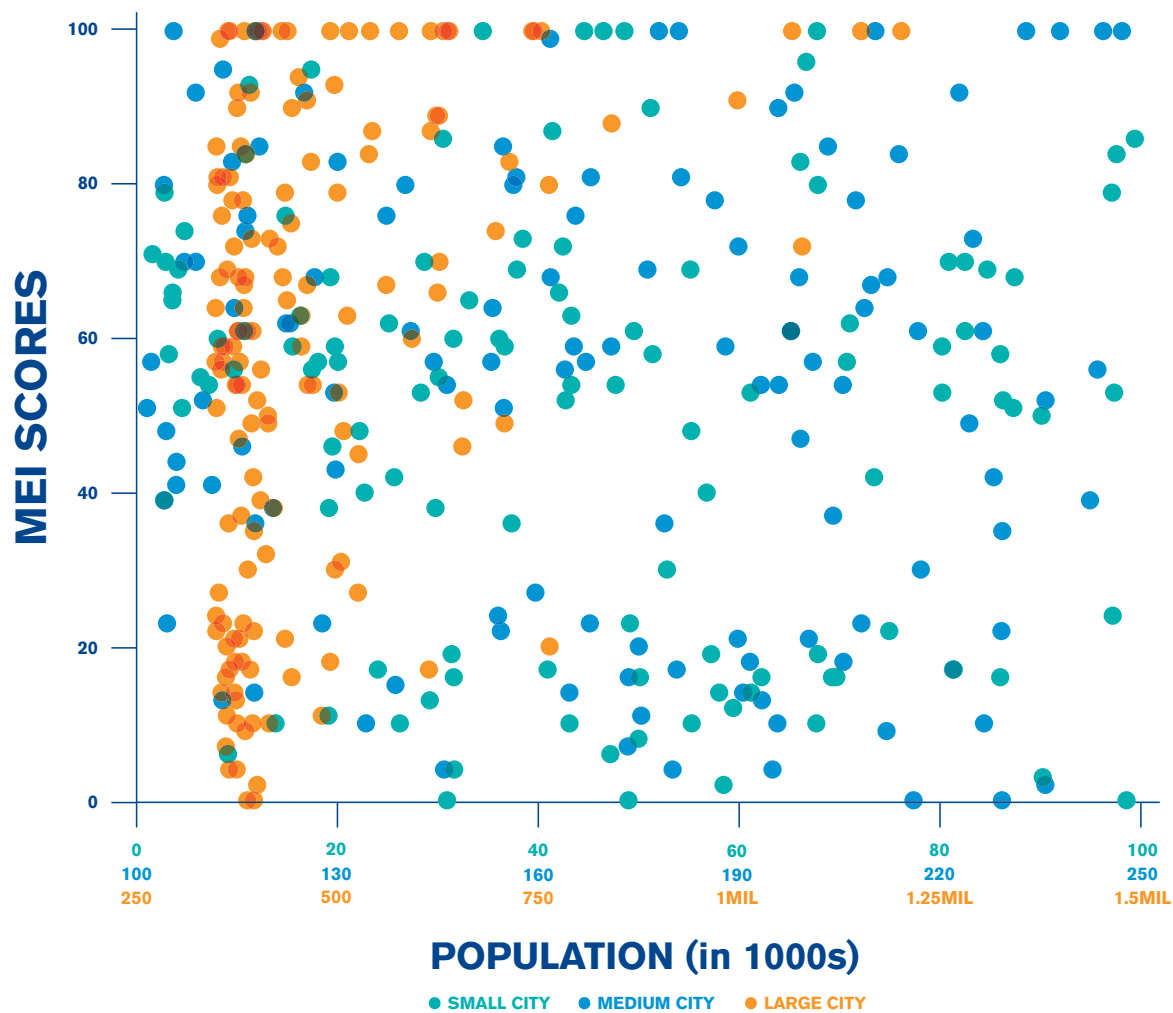
Last year, Missoula earned the distinction of being the only small city (population of less than 100,000) in a state without supportive state law to earn a perfect score.

This year, it is joined in that distinction by Wilton Manors, Florida and East Lansing, Michigan – both of which have populations smaller than Missoula. Other small cities earning perfect scores are: Palm Springs and West Hollywood, California; Iowa City, Iowa; Providence, Rhode Island; and Olympia, Washington.



Having **alternative paths** to the same points and classifying some points as bonus accommodates the varying needs and capabilities of different sized cities

CITY SIZE NOT PREDICTIVE OF MEI SCORE



Balancing State and Local Laws

Cities are creations of the state.

Cities are granted the power to govern by their states, and some states have multiple classes of cities that are invested with varying degrees of autonomy. Some cities are granted so much power that they have nearly complete independence, but other cities – particularly smaller cities – are more limited in the scope of their city government.

To be a worthwhile survey of cities across states, the MEI must be respectful of how different cities are from one another. This is especially true when LGBT law is the subject being surveyed. Some cities are hampered from passing pro-equality laws by state law that limits their ability to do so; others come from states with strong pro-equality laws that ensure a high level of legal protections for all.

The MEI balances the influence of LGBT-inclusive state law by weighting state and local laws equally, and by not awarding double points to a city fortunate enough to have protections at both the state and local levels. If a state has a comprehensive and inclusive non-discrimination law, a city may not be incentivized to pass an ordinance extending duplicative protections, but it should still have those protections reflected in its score.

Conversely, the city should be able to achieve a perfect score on the basis of municipal law alone – otherwise the MEI would not be a true evaluation of cities. The success of this balanced approach is demonstrated by a number of cities who were able to achieve perfect scores despite being in states that do not have pro-equality laws.

To be a worthwhile survey of cities across states, **the MEI must be respectful of how different cities are from one another.**



Understanding Restrictive State Law

Some states restrict their cities from passing inclusive laws either by passing specific legislation that prohibits cities from doing so or through application of the Dillon's Rule (which prevents cities from providing broader non-discrimination protections than those offered under state law) to LGBT-inclusive legislation.

An example of restrictive legislation is a Tennessee law that prohibits municipalities from passing non-discrimination ordinances that affect private employees. Application of the Dillon's Rule also prevents cities in Virginia from providing domestic partner benefits to LGBT city employees because the state does not grant those benefits to its employees.

Because of these types of restrictions, not every city has the power to enact the types of legislation that the MEI measures. Cities with a dedication to

equality that are in Virginia, Tennessee, and North Carolina, for example, will never be able to score as well as cities with comparable dedication to equality that exist in states without the restrictive laws.

However, the MEI provides avenues for cities who are dedicated to equality – as some cities in Virginia, North Carolina, and Tennessee are – to have that dedication reflected in their score despite restrictive state law.

Bonus points are offered for testing the limits of these state restrictions, while standard points reflect city leadership advocating against the state restrictions. These bonus points help to level the playing field for restricted cities; however, the small number of cities suffering such restrictions will find it extremely challenging – and, in some cases, perhaps impossible – to score a 100 on the MEI.

While this may initially appear to be at odds with the MEI's purpose of evaluating what cities do, **the bottom line is that these vital protections don't exist for the folks who live and work in these cities.**

That these cities will face an uphill battle in earning points for certain criteria on the MEI is a reflection of the actual difficulties they face as a result of restrictive state law. Ameliorating the effect of a restrictive state law on the MEI score would be a dishonest representation of the protections that the city truly does offer.

The MEI provides avenues for cities that are dedicated to equality to have that dedication reflected in their score despite restrictive state law.

MEI ALL-STARS

High Scores in States Without Supportive Laws



Effect of Enforcement and Lived Experience

The MEI is an encapsulation of the best practices of inclusion followed by cities nationwide. It is a blueprint for positive change and an opportunity for cities to become aware of best practices in municipal equality. It is not a ranking of the friendliest cities to live. **It neither attempts to quantify how respectfully cities enforce their laws, nor does it try to gauge the experience of an LGBT person interacting with the police or city hall.**

Fair and respectful implementation of the best practices described by the MEI is crucial if the policies are to have any meaning. Realistically, the MEI simply has no objective way of measuring the equality of enforcement. Even the most thoughtful survey of laws and policies cannot objectively assess the efficacy of enforcement and it certainly cannot encapsulate the lived experience of discrimination that many LGBT people – even those living in 100 point cities – face every day.

The MEI can make some limited, blunt judgments about the existence of enforcement, if not its quality. For example, one of the harder questions the MEI faces is evaluating how seriously police departments take anti-LGBT related violence.

While the MEI awards points to cities that report hate crimes statistics to the FBI, it does not evaluate whether the report made by the police department to the FBI is an accurate reflection of hate crimes, whether detectives competently collected evidence related to proving a hate-related motivation for the violence, or whether the police department created a safe space for victims to come forward. It doesn't measure how respectful police are when making a stop, nor how the police decide whom to stop.

Collecting and assessing such data in an objective, thorough way would be impossible. However, a city will not receive credit for reporting hate crimes if the city hasn't reported any hate crimes of any kind this year or for five previous years. The MEI deems this effectively non-reporting because the probability is very low that a city truly experienced zero hate crimes of any kind in five years. While this is a judgment call, it is the best measure the MEI has to determine if hate crimes are being taken seriously at the local level.

A 100-point city, then, may have terrific policies – a well-trained police force, a police liaison, and consistent hate crimes reporting – but nevertheless have an atmosphere in which LGBT people have intense fear of tangling with the police department.

This fear may be magnified for LGBT people of color or undocumented LGBT immigrants, and the MEI reflects discrimination against those populations in only a general way. On the other hand, a police department in a 40-point city could have none of these policies but have a reputation for fair and respectful enforcement.

The MEI specifically rates cities on their laws and policies; it is not a measure of an LGBT person's lived experience in that city.

SUCCESS STORY: FAIR WISCONSIN



From Kenosha to Eau Claire, Janesville to Appleton, and Manitowoc to La Pointe, local leaders have stood up for fairness and equality.

Local ordinances have been absolutely critical in our efforts to build a fair, safe, and inclusive Wisconsin. The day after the 2010 elections, Fair Wisconsin engaged in a grassroots effort to stop an anti-LGBT resolution in Green Bay. More than 100 activists flooded the city council chambers — the largest public turn out to a Green Bay council meeting ever. The anti-LGBT resolution was quickly tabled after our opposition saw the throng of LGBT and allied people packing the chambers.

We quickly realized that even in the absence of support for marriage equality and statewide trans* inclusive non-discrimination in the Capitol, local activists could engage in meaningful work to make their communities more inclusive — and demonstrate to legislative leadership in Madison that the Badger state is ready to move forward on LGBT equality.

Over the past four years, we have worked closely with local elected officials, city and county staff, and grassroots activists to pass inclusive employment benefits and trans* non-discrimination policies. In this short time, we have racked up victories in more than 15 communities. From Kenosha to Eau Claire, Janesville to Appleton, and Manitowoc to La Pointe, local leaders have stood up for fairness and equality.

Local work has provided an opportunity to build broad coalitions of support, including the business community, faith leaders, people of color, educational institutions, and labor unions. Through these ordinances we have demonstrated the depth and breadth of support for equality and delivered tangible results that improve the lives of LGBT Wisconsinites and their families.

As the freedom to marry reaches Wisconsin, local ordinance work is the foundation that will support ongoing efforts to modernize our state non-discrimination laws to include gender identity and expression, as well as ensure that legal equality will become a lived reality for LGBT Wisconsinites.

KATIE BELANGER
Executive Director



WHAT WE FOUND



SUMMARY OF RESULTS

Landscape of Municipal Equality

Cities of all sizes, rated for any of several different reasons, from states with good LGBT laws and states without, have made municipal equality a priority.

A dramatic increase in the number of cities offering transgender-inclusive healthcare benefits is one of the most striking statistics to come from the 2014 MEI; another is that 32 million people have better protections from discrimination on the basis of gender identity at the local level than they do from state law.

While marriage equality spreads across the country, cities in every region are providing the non-discrimination provisions that protect people from being fired or denied services or housing simply because they are lesbian, gay, bisexual, or transgender.

Cities of all sizes in all parts of the country are acting to extend these vital civil rights protections to LGBT people because it is the right thing to do for the city.

CITIES ACROSS THE COUNTRY ARE EMBRACING MUNICIPAL EQUALITY

It will come as no surprise to learn that the New England, Mid-Atlantic, and Western regions of the United States – where marriage equality states have predominated – tend to do better than the national average when it comes to municipal equality. So too does the Great Lakes region, and the Mountain region is not far behind. The Plains region also fares fairly well, with the Southeast and Southwest falling to the bottom.

Each of these regions, however, has at least one 100-point city. For example, in the Southeast, Florida boasts three 100-point scores, and Atlanta repeats its perfect score again in 2014; in the Southwest, Austin repeats its perfect score; and in the Plains, Iowa City joins two perfect scores in Missouri with Saint Louis and Kansas City.

EIGHT PERFECT SCORES CAME FROM CITIES WITH POPULATIONS UNDER 100,000

Last year, Missoula earned the distinction of being the only small city (population of less than 100,000) in a state without supportive state law to earn a perfect score.

This year, it is joined in that distinction by Wilton Manors, Florida and East Lansing, Michigan – both of which have populations smaller than Missoula. Other small cities earning perfect scores are: Palm Springs and West Hollywood, California; Iowa City, Iowa; Providence, Rhode Island; and Olympia, Washington.

AVERAGE SCORE AND IMPACT OF MARRIAGE EQUALITY

The national average score on the 2014 Municipal Equality Index was 59 points; half of cities rated scored over 61 points. This is up from last year's average of 57 points, which is particularly notable because this year's scorecard was made more difficult.

Transgender-inclusive benefits were moved from bonus points to standard points, human relations commissions' enforcement capability was broken off and graded separately, and some bonus points were eliminated.

In addition, the standards for credit were made more stringent across the board. It remains possible for a city to score 100 points without having transgender-inclusive benefits, for example, and in fact just over half of the cities scoring 100s did so (with additional changes coming to the 2015 scorecard, expect that this will become significantly more difficult).

The other explanation for the higher average score is the surge in marriage equality that came to the 4th, 7th, and 10th Circuits as a result of the United States Supreme Court denying review of the cases challenging state constitutional amendments, the consequences of which also spilled over into the 9th Circuit.

This inflated scores of cities in Virginia, West Virginia, North Carolina, South Carolina, Wyoming, Utah, Kansas, Oklahoma, Alaska, Idaho, and Arizona. The next edition of the MEI will be adapting to the new legal landscape by altering the way it assesses relationship recognition on the 2015 scorecard.

CITY SELECTION TYPE AND IMPACT ON SCORE

City size continues to not have a significant correlation to a high score on the MEI. The fifty largest cities in the country generally did a bit better than average with a mean of 76 points.

However, the most significant impact of city size comes when a city was also selected for another reason. Cities selected for rating due to their high-proportion of same-sex couples, for example, did remarkably better than cities as a whole; these cities averaged 82 points in comparison to the national average of 59 points. This trend holds true nationwide – in each region of the country, cities home to a high proportion of same-sex couples outperformed the national and regional average.

The trend is magnified where a city selected for its high proportion of same-sex couples was also selected for its size. Cities that are also one of the nation's fifty largest averaged 92 points; cities that are also one of the four largest in the state averaged 93 points. Cities that met all three of these selection criteria – that is, the city was one of the fifty largest in the country, one of the four largest in the state, and home to a high proportion of same-sex couples – averaged 96 points.

No other city selection criteria played as large a part as did having a high proportion of same-sex couples.

Capital cities averaged 64 points, and cities selected for being home to the state's largest public university averaged 67 points. Cities chosen based on population criteria other than the 50 largest cities in the country scored at or below average: cities with the 51-150 largest populations averaged 57 points; those with the 151-200 largest populations averaged 51 points; and cities chosen for being one the four largest cities in the state averaged 57 points. Cities selected for rating in each category excelled, but success was most closely related to a city having a high proportion of same-sex couples.

These findings demonstrate that the momentum for municipal equality is not a coastal trend or mega-urban phenomenon – it is something cities of all sizes in all parts of the country are doing because the people in those cities demand equality of treatment for all.

Momentum for municipal equality is not a coastal trend or mega-urban phenomenon.



EQUALITY ACROSS AMERICA

Momentum for municipal equality touches every region of the country, in big cities and small.



SCORES

STATE	CITY	I. Non-Discrimination	II. Relationship Recognition	III. Municipality as Employer	IV. Services and Programs	V. Law Enforcement	VI. Relationship with LGBT Community	REGULAR POINTS	BONUS POINTS	FINAL SCORE
ALABAMA	Birmingham	○	○	○	◐	○	◐	9	0	9
	Huntsville	○	○	○	◐	○	○	4	0	4
	Mobile	○	○	○	◐	○	○	4	0	4
	Montgomery	○	○	◐	◐	○	○	8	0	8
	Tuscaloosa	○	○	○	◐	○	○	3	0	3
ALASKA	Anchorage	○	●	◐	◐	○	○	32	3	35
	Fairbanks	○	●	◐	◐	○	○	24	0	24
	Juneau	○	●	◐	◐	○	◐	33	0	33
	Sitka	○	●	◐	○	○	○	20	0	20
ARIZONA	Chandler	○	●	◐	◐	●	◐	65	7	72
	Gilbert	◐	●	◐	◐	●	○	43	0	43
	Glendale	○	●	◐	○	◐	○	34	2	36
	Mesa	○	●	◐	◐	◐	◐	54	5	59
	Peoria	○	●	◐	◐	●	○	33	0	33
	Phoenix	●	●	◐	◐	●	●	90	14	100
	Scottsdale	○	●	◐	◐	●	◐	63	2	65
	Tempe	●	●	◐	●	●	●	93	18	100
	Tucson	●	●	◐	◐	●	●	90	16	100
ARKANSAS	Fayetteville	○	○	◐	◐	◐	●	39	3	42
	Fort Smith	○	○	○	◐	◐	○	16	0	16
	Little Rock	○	○	◐	◐	○	○	11	2	13
	North Little Rock	○	○	○	◐	◐	○	16	0	16
	Springdale	○	○	○	◐	◐	○	16	0	16
CALIFORNIA	Anaheim	●	●	◐	◐	◐	◐	65	2	67
	Bakersfield	●	●	◐	◐	◐	○	54	0	54
	Berkeley	●	●	◐	◐	◐	●	82	13	95
	Brisbane	●	●	◐	◐	○	○	49	2	51
	Cathedral City	●	●	◐	◐	◐	◐	85	5	90
	Chula Vista	●	●	◐	◐	◐	○	59	2	61
	Concord	●	●	◐	◐	◐	○	58	4	62
	Corona	●	●	◐	◐	◐	○	63	0	63
	Elk Grove	●	●	◐	◐	◐	○	76	0	76
	Escondido	●	●	◐	◐	◐	○	59	1	60

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SCORES

STATE	CITY	I. Non-Discrimination	II. Relationship Recognition	III. Municipality as Employer	IV. Services and Programs	V. Law Enforcement	VI. Relationship with LGBT Community	REGULAR POINTS	BONUS POINTS	FINAL SCORE
CALIFORNIA	Fontana	●	●	◐	◐	◐	○	59	0	59
	Fremont	●	●	◐	◐	◐	◐	75	9	84
	Fresno	●	●	◐	◐	◐	○	64	3	67
	Fullerton	●	●	◐	◐	◐	○	58	0	58
	Garden Grove	●	●	◐	◐	◐	○	59	0	59
	Glendale	●	●	◐	◐	◐	○	59	2	61
	Guerneville (Sonoma County)	●	●	◐	◐	●	◐	72	2	74
	Hayward	●	●	◐	◐	◐	◐	58	0	58
	Huntington Beach	●	●	◐	◐	◐	◐	69	3	72
	Irvine	●	●	◐	◐	◐	○	63	5	68
	Lancaster	●	●	◐	◐	●	◐	79	9	88
	Long Beach	●	●	●	●	●	●	100	9	100
	Los Angeles	●	●	◐	●	●	●	96	5	100
	Modesto	●	●	◐	◐	◐	○	63	0	63
	Moreno Valley	●	●	◐	◐	◐	○	64	0	64
	Oakland	●	●	◐	◐	●	◐	86	7	93
	Oceanside	●	●	◐	◐	◐	◐	57	0	57
	Ontario	●	●	◐	◐	◐	○	63	2	65
	Orange	●	●	◐	◐	◐	○	68	0	68
	Oxnard	●	●	◐	◐	◐	○	58	3	61
	Palm Springs	●	●	◐	◐	●	●	89	16	100
	Palmdale	●	●	◐	◐	◐	○	66	0	66
	Pasadena	●	●	◐	◐	◐	◐	72	4	76
	Pomona	●	●	◐	◐	◐	○	76	0	76
	Rancho Cucamonga	●	●	◐	◐	◐	○	59	0	59
	Rancho Mirage	●	●	◐	◐	●	◐	83	10	93
	Richmond	●	●	◐	◐	◐	◐	75	5	80
	Riverside	●	●	◐	◐	◐	○	70	5	75
	Sacramento	●	●	◐	◐	●	◐	82	5	87
	Salinas	●	●	◐	◐	◐	○	59	0	59
	San Bernadino	●	●	◐	◐	◐	○	64	3	67
	San Diego	●	●	◐	●	●	●	94	11	100
	San Francisco	●	●	●	●	●	●	100	16	100
	San Jose	●	●	◐	◐	◐	●	80	8	88
	Santa Ana	●	●	◐	◐	◐	○	59	0	59
	Santa Clarita	●	●	◐	◐	◐	○	67	2	69
	Santa Rosa	●	●	◐	◐	◐	●	76	5	81

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SCORES

STATE	CITY	I. Non-Discrimination	II. Relationship Recognition	III. Municipality as Employer	IV. Services and Programs	V. Law Enforcement	VI. Relationship with LGBT Community	REGULAR POINTS	BONUS POINTS	FINAL SCORE
CALIFORNIA	Signal Hill	●	●	◐	◐	●	◐	88	5	93
	Stockton	●	●	◐	◐	◐	○	77	2	79
	Sunnyvale	●	●	◐	◐	◐	○	69	0	69
	Thousand Oaks	●	●	◐	◐	◐	○	64	0	64
	Torrance	●	●	◐	◐	◐	○	63	0	63
	Vallejo	●	●	◐	◐	◐	◐	74	0	74
	Visalia	●	●	◐	◐	○	◐	48	0	48
	West Hollywood	●	●	●	●	◐	●	96	11	100
COLORADO	Aurora	●	●	◐	◐	◐	○	63	0	63
	Boulder	●	●	◐	◐	◐	◐	74	5	79
	Colorado Springs	●	●	◐	◐	◐	○	63	0	63
	Denver	●	●	◐	●	◐	◐	79	10	89
	Fort Collins	●	●	◐	◐	◐	○	63	2	65
	Lakewood	●	●	◐	◐	◐	○	64	3	67
CONNECTICUT	Bridgeport	●	●	◐	◐	◐	◐	57	0	57
	Hartford	●	●	◐	●	◐	●	85	7	92
	New Haven	●	●	◐	●	●	●	93	8	100
	Stamford	●	●	◐	◐	◐	◐	60	2	62
	Storrs (Mansfield)	●	●	◐	◐	◐	○	59	0	59
DELAWARE	Dover	●	●	◐	◐	◐	○	60	0	60
	Middletown	●	●	◐	○	○	○	38	0	38
	Newark	●	●	◐	○	◐	○	58	2	60
	Rehoboth Beach	●	●	◐	◐	◐	◐	66	5	71
	Wilmington	●	●	◐	◐	◐	○	57	0	57
FLORIDA	Cape Coral	○	○	◐	○	◐	◐	22	0	22
	Fort Lauderdale	●	●	◐	◐	◐	◐	66	10	76
	Hialeah	◐	●	◐	◐	◐	○	46	3	49
	Hollywood	●	●	◐	◐	◐	◐	58	3	61
	Jacksonville	○	○	○	◐	◐	○	17	3	20
	Miami	◐	●	◐	◐	○	◐	46	7	53
	Miami Shores	◐	●	◐	◐	◐	◐	55	6	61
	Oakland Park	●	●	◐	◐	◐	◐	81	6	87
	Orlando	●	●	◐	●	●	●	89	12	100
	Pembroke Pines	●	●	○	◐	○	●	48	3	51
	Port Saint Lucie	○	○	○	○	◐	◐	14	0	14
	St. Petersburg	●	●	◐	●	●	●	89	14	100

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SUCCESS STORY: EQUALITY PENNSYLVANIA



It's a simple equation and municipalities across Pennsylvania are proving that it works each and every day.

On March 20, 2014, Downingtown passed a local ordinance protecting lesbian, gay, bisexual, and transgender (LGBT) people from discrimination in their municipality. It was #34 as municipal ordinances go in Pennsylvania and it was one more victory in the battle for equality.

Every ordinance Equality Pennsylvania helps to pass — from Bristol to Pittsburgh to Philadelphia — shows our lawmakers that Pennsylvanians are in favor of protecting all people from discrimination. Every ordinance we pass puts us one step closer to winning on a statewide level. Every ordinance and act of leadership from municipalities says to our lawmakers “C’mon and take the leap. Equality just makes sense, it’s the right thing to do, we’re prospering because of it and you should want this for the entire state.”

In this year’s MEI, more than half of Pennsylvania cities are in the top quartile. Places like Philadelphia has been an MEI all-star from the beginning, but this year Allentown

and Pittsburgh and New Hope are also sporting notable scores. But where is this reflected in the larger goal of passing statewide non-discrimination protections? The numbers tell the story. This year’s introduction of non-discrimination legislation has been historic, as over 100 legislators from the House and the Senate have signed on to sponsor this bill. In fact, a record-breaking number of sponsors, Democrats and Republicans alike.

Such movement is happening obviously because constituents and society are evolving on these issues, but also because large parts of the state are now covered by local non-discrimination laws and legislators see no negative backlash, a happier and safer populace and greater economic growth in covered locales. It’s a simple equation and municipalities across Pennsylvania are proving that it works each and every day.

TED MARTIN
Executive Director

SCORES

STATE	CITY	I. Non-Discrimination	II. Relationship Recognition	III. Municipality as Employer	IV. Services and Programs	V. Law Enforcement	VI. Relationship with LGBT Community	REGULAR POINTS	BONUS POINTS	FINAL SCORE
FLORIDA	Tallahassee	●	●	🕒	🕒	🕒	🕒	70	11	81
	Tampa	●	●	🕒	●	●	●	89	8	97
	Wilton Manors	●	●	🕒	🕒	🕒	●	87	18	100
GEORGIA	Athens	○	●	🕒	🕒	🕒	🕒	46	0	46
	Atlanta	●	●	🕒	●	●	●	95	6	100
	Augusta-Richmond	○	○	○	🕒	○	🕒	7	3	10
	Avondale Estates	○	●	🕒	🕒	🕒	●	51	7	58
	Columbus	○	○	○	🕒	🕒	🕒	18	3	21
	Decatur	○	●	🕒	○	○	🕒	40	6	46
	North Druid Hills (DeKalb County)	○	○	🕒	🕒	○	○	11	0	11
	Savannah	○	○	🕒	○	🕒	○	16	2	18
HAWAII	East Honolulu	●	●	🕒	🕒	○	🕒	54	2	56
	Hilo (Hawaii County)	●	●	🕒	🕒	○	🕒	61	2	63
	Honolulu	●	●	🕒	🕒	○	🕒	54	2	56
	Manoa (Honolulu)	●	●	🕒	🕒	○	🕒	54	2	56
	Pearl City (Honolulu)	●	●	🕒	🕒	○	🕒	54	2	56
IDAHO	Boise	●	●	🕒	○	●	●	74	0	74
	Idaho Falls	🕒	●	🕒	○	🕒	●	60	0	60
	Meridian	○	●	🕒	○	🕒	🕒	42	0	42
	Nampa	○	●	🕒	🕒	🕒	🕒	37	0	37
ILLINOIS	Aurora	●	●	🕒	🕒	🕒	○	58	3	61
	Champaign	●	●	🕒	🕒	🕒	🕒	70	0	70
	Chicago	●	●	🕒	●	●	●	93	14	100
	Joliet	●	●	🕒	●	●	○	63	0	63
	Naperville	●	●	🕒	🕒	🕒	○	59	0	59
	Rockford	●	●	🕒	🕒	🕒	🕒	57	0	57
	Springfield	●	●	🕒	🕒	🕒	🕒	68	8	76
INDIANA	Bloomington	●	●	🕒	🕒	🕒	🕒	67	0	67
	Evansville	🕒	●	🕒	🕒	○	🕒	56	0	56
	Fort Wayne	🕒	●	🕒	🕒	●	🕒	52	0	52
	Indianapolis	●	●	🕒	🕒	🕒	🕒	70	12	82
	South Bend	●	●	🕒	🕒	○	🕒	64	3	67

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SCORES

STATE	CITY	I. Non-Discrimination	II. Relationship Recognition	III. Municipality as Employer	IV. Services and Programs	V. Law Enforcement	VI. Relationship with LGBT Community	REGULAR POINTS	BONUS POINTS	FINAL SCORE
IOWA	Cedar Rapids	●	●	◐	◐	◐	○	68	0	68
	Davenport	●	●	◐	●	◐	◐	80	6	86
	Des Moines	●	●	◐	◐	●	◐	80	5	85
	Iowa City	●	●	◐	●	●	◐	88	14	100
	Sioux City	●	●	◐	◐	◐	○	58	3	61
KANSAS	Kansas City	○	●	◐	◐	○	○	24	0	24
	Lawrence	●	●	◐	◐	◐	◐	69	3	72
	Olathe	○	●	◐	◐	○	○	24	3	27
	Overland Park	○	●	◐	◐	○	○	24	3	27
	Topeka	○	●	◐	◐	○	●	40	3	43
	Wichita	○	●	◐	◐	◐	○	38	0	38
KENTUCKY	Bowling Green	○	○	○	◐	◐	○	14	0	14
	Frankfort	●	○	○	◐	◐	◐	39	3	42
	Lexington	●	○	◐	◐	◐	◐	55	10	65
	Louisville	●	○	◐	◐	◐	●	54	12	66
	Owensboro	○	○	○	◐	◐	◐	19	0	19
LOUISIANA	Baton Rouge	○	○	◐	○	◐	◐	22	0	22
	Metairie (Jefferson Parish)	◐	○	◐	○	○	○	15	0	15
	New Orleans	●	●	◐	◐	◐	◐	73	10	83
	Shreveport	●	○	◐	◐	○	●	44	3	47
MAINE	Augusta	●	●	◐	◐	◐	◐	65	3	68
	Bangor	●	●	◐	◐	◐	◐	65	0	65
	Lewiston	●	●	◐	◐	◐	○	59	0	59
	Orono	●	●	◐	◐	◐	○	54	2	56
	Portland	●	●	◐	◐	●	◐	79	4	83
	South Portland	●	●	◐	◐	◐	○	59	3	62
MARYLAND	Annapolis	●	●	◐	◐	◐	◐	66	7	73
	Baltimore	●	●	◐	●	●	●	89	16	100
	College Park	●	●	◐	◐	◐	●	78	8	86
	Frederick	●	●	◐	◐	◐	○	59	2	61
	Gaithersburg	●	●	◐	◐	○	◐	61	3	64
	Rockville	●	●	◐	◐	○	◐	60	3	63

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SCORES

STATE	CITY	I. Non-Discrimination	II. Relationship Recognition	III. Municipality as Employer	IV. Services and Programs	V. Law Enforcement	VI. Relationship with LGBT Community	REGULAR POINTS	BONUS POINTS	FINAL SCORE
MASSACHUSETTS	Amherst							66	3	69
	Boston							100	14	100
	Cambridge							93	13	100
	Lowell							51	2	53
	Northampton							70	0	70
	Provincetown							66	4	70
	Springfield							62	2	64
	Worcester							94	13	100
MICHIGAN	Ann Arbor							78	5	83
	Detroit							67	7	74
	East Lansing							91	10	100
	Ferndale							54	3	57
	Grand Rapids							51	8	59
	Lansing							56	8	64
	Pleasant Ridge							41	3	44
	Sterling Heights							24	0	24
	Warren							10	0	10
MINNESOTA	Duluth							55	3	58
	Minneapolis							100	7	100
	Rochester							70	0	70
	Saint Paul							93	10	100
MISSISSIPPI	Gulfport							10	0	10
	Hattiesburg							6	0	6
	Jackson							14	2	16
	Southaven							0	0	0
	Starkville							17	0	17
MISSOURI	Columbia							66	4	70
	Independence							14	0	14
	Jefferson City							10	0	10
	Kansas City							93	12	100
	Springfield							20	7	27
	St. Louis							93	14	100

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SCORES

STATE	CITY	I. Non-Discrimination	II. Relationship Recognition	III. Municipality as Employer	IV. Services and Programs	V. Law Enforcement	VI. Relationship with LGBT Community	REGULAR POINTS	BONUS POINTS	FINAL SCORE
MONTANA	Billings							21	2	23
	Bozeman							40	0	40
	Great Falls							0	2	2
	Helena							53	0	53
	Missoula							93	7	100
NEBRASKA	Bellevue							16	0	16
	Grand Island							8	0	8
	Lincoln							39	10	49
	Omaha							45	6	51
NEVADA	Carson City							50	0	50
	Enterprise (Clark County)							86	6	92
	Henderson							67	0	67
	Las Vegas							85	2	87
	North Las Vegas							63	2	65
	Paradise (Clark County)							86	6	92
	Reno							73	2	75
NEW HAMPSHIRE	Concord							50	2	52
	Derry							55	0	55
	Durham							74	2	76
	Manchester							50	2	52
	Nashua							50	2	52
NEW JERSEY	Asbury Park							60	3	63
	Elizabeth							59	0	59
	Jersey City							93	9	100
	Lambertville							89	5	94
	New Brunswick							67	2	69
	Newark							72	0	72
	Ocean Grove							63	3	66
	Paterson							54	0	54
	Trenton							67	2	69

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SUCCESS STORY: PROMO



We believe that as these local wins mount, each advance puts us that much closer to a full statewide change.

The Municipal Equality Index (MEI) has become an incredible tool for advocates on the ground. The road map it provides to local officials is a sensible way for supporters to advance basic equality issues and, at the same time, provide education on the impact of these broader issues.

For example, this year Columbia, Missouri scored 70 points, which is comparable to last year's score despite the more challenging scorecard in 2014. This progress was an intentional effort by members of the local Human Rights Commission to meet the competitive, pro-equality 100% rating in Kansas City and Saint Louis. We know Columbia is a welcoming and supportive community, yet often our

allies don't see or comprehend how some existing laws impact the LGBT community. The MEI provides more insight into how they can directly take action and improve the lives of community members, as well as how existing laws and policies are already affecting the community.

In a state like Missouri, where there is no statewide law providing protections for employment, housing or public accommodations, the Municipal Equality Index has become a valued tool in our advocacy toolbox. We believe that as these local wins mount, each advance puts us that much closer to a full, statewide change.

A.J. BOCKELMAN
Executive Director

SCORES

STATE	CITY	I. Non-Discrimination	II. Relationship Recognition	III. Municipality as Employer	IV. Services and Programs	V. Law Enforcement	VI. Relationship with LGBT Community	REGULAR POINTS	BONUS POINTS	FINAL SCORE
NEW MEXICO	Albuquerque	●	●	●	●	○	●	60	0	60
	Eldorado at Santa Fe (Santa Fe County)	●	●	●	●	○	●	53	2	55
	Las Cruces	●	●	●	●	○	○	51	2	53
	Rio Rancho	●	●	●	●	○	○	51	0	51
	Santa Fe	●	●	●	●	●	●	71	9	80
NEW YORK	Albany	●	●	●	●	●	●	74	10	84
	Buffalo	●	●	●	●	●	●	71	2	73
	New York	●	●	●	●	●	●	97	16	100
	Northwest Harbor (Town of East Hampton)	●	●	●	●	○	○	62	3	65
	Rochester	●	●	●	●	●	●	93	7	100
	Syracuse	●	●	●	●	●	●	75	10	85
	Yonkers	●	●	●	●	●	●	79	8	87
NORTH CAROLINA	Cary	○	●	●	●	●	○	36	0	36
	Charlotte	○	●	●	●	●	●	57	6	63
	Durham	○	●	●	●	●	●	50	9	59
	Fayetteville	○	●	●	●	●	●	41	0	41
	Greensboro	○	●	●	●	●	●	48	2	50
	Raleigh	○	●	●	●	●	●	49	2	51
	Winston-Salem	○	●	●	●	●	●	51	0	51
NORTH DAKOTA	Bismarck	○	○	○	●	●	○	14	0	14
	Fargo	○	○	●	●	●	●	37	4	41
	Grand Forks	○	○	●	○	●	●	28	2	30
	Minot	○	○	○	●	●	○	17	0	17
OHIO	Akron	●	○	●	●	●	●	59	9	68
	Cincinnati	●	●	●	●	●	●	92	9	100
	Cleveland	●	●	●	●	●	●	74	5	79
	Columbus	●	●	●	●	●	●	93	14	100
	Dayton	●	●	●	●	●	●	87	8	95
	Toledo	●	●	●	●	○	●	55	3	58
OKLAHOMA	Broken Arrow	○	●	●	○	○	○	20	0	20
	Norman	○	●	●	●	●	●	53	8	61
	Oklahoma City	○	●	●	●	○	●	35	2	37
	Tulsa	○	●	●	●	○	●	37	3	40

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SCORES

STATE	CITY	I. Non-Discrimination	II. Relationship Recognition	III. Municipality as Employer	IV. Services and Programs	V. Law Enforcement	VI. Relationship with LGBT Community	REGULAR POINTS	BONUS POINTS	FINAL SCORE
OREGON	Eugene	●	●	◐	◐	◐	◐	78	5	83
	Gresham	●	●	◐	◐	○	○	44	0	44
	Portland	●	●	●	◐	●	●	95	8	100
	Salem	●	●	◐	●	●	○	85	0	85
PENNSYLVANIA	Allentown	●	●	◐	◐	◐	◐	78	7	85
	Erie	●	●	◐	◐	◐	◐	57	0	57
	Harrisburg	●	●	◐	◐	◐	◐	67	3	70
	New Hope	●	●	◐	●	◐	●	79	10	89
	Philadelphia	●	●	●	●	●	●	100	16	100
	Pittsburgh	●	●	◐	◐	◐	●	76	14	90
	University Park (State College)	◐	●	◐	◐	◐	◐	63	3	66
RHODE ISLAND	Cranston	●	●	◐	◐	◐	○	59	0	59
	Kingston (South Kingstown)	●	●	◐	◐	◐	○	54	0	54
	Pawtucket	●	●	◐	◐	◐	●	62	0	62
	Providence	●	●	◐	●	●	●	93	8	100
	Warwick	●	●	◐	◐	◐	●	67	3	70
SOUTH CAROLINA	Charleston	◐	●	◐	◐	◐	◐	55	5	60
	Columbia	◐	●	◐	◐	●	◐	72	2	74
	Mount Pleasant	○	●	◐	◐	◐	○	36	0	36
	North Charleston	◐	●	◐	◐	◐	◐	44	0	44
SOUTH DAKOTA	Aberdeen	○	○	○	○	◐	○	10	0	10
	Brookings	○	○	◐	●	◐	●	45	3	48
	Pierre	○	○	○	○	◐	○	10	0	10
	Rapid City	○	○	○	◐	◐	○	14	5	19
	Sioux Falls	○	○	◐	◐	◐	○	19	5	24
TENNESSEE	Chattanooga	○	○	○	○	◐	●	18	5	23
	Clarksville	○	○	○	◐	◐	○	14	0	14
	Knoxville	○	○	◐	○	◐	◐	34	2	36
	Memphis	○	○	◐	◐	●	◐	40	6	46
	Nashville	○	○	◐	●	◐	●	59	16	75

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SCORES

STATE	CITY	I. Non-Discrimination	II. Relationship Recognition	III. Municipality as Employer	IV. Services and Programs	V. Law Enforcement	VI. Relationship with LGBT Community	REGULAR POINTS	BONUS POINTS	FINAL SCORE
TEXAS	Amarillo							14	0	14
	Arlington							11	0	11
	Austin							85	20	100
	Brownsville							20	0	20
	Corpus Christi							14	2	16
	Dallas							77	14	91
	El Paso							45	7	52
	Fort Worth							71	12	83
	Garland							10	0	10
	Grand Prairie							11	0	11
	Houston							47	7	54
	Irving							0	0	0
	Killeen							10	0	10
	Laredo							0	2	2
	Lubbock							0	0	0
	McAllen							0	0	0
	McKinney							12	0	12
	Mesquite							0	0	0
	Pasadena							10	0	10
	Plano							22	0	22
	San Antonio							63	9	72
	Waco							22	2	24
UTAH	Provo							33	0	33
	Salt Lake City							77	10	87
	West Jordan							45	2	47
	West Valley City							51	0	51
VERMONT	Burlington							82	7	89
	Essex							59	0	59
	Montpelier							65	0	65
	Rutland							56	0	56
	South Burlington							57	0	57

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SCORES

STATE	CITY	I. Non-Discrimination	II. Relationship Recognition	III. Municipality as Employer	IV. Services and Programs	V. Law Enforcement	VI. Relationship with LGBT Community	REGULAR POINTS	BONUS POINTS	FINAL SCORE
VIRGINIA	Alexandria							82	12	94
	Arlington County							82	14	96
	Chesapeake							35	2	37
	Fairfax County							51	9	60
	Hampton							32	0	32
	Newport News							37	0	37
	Norfolk							49	10	59
	Richmond							57	0	57
	Virginia Beach							45	2	47
WASHINGTON	Olympia							100	9	100
	Seattle							100	13	100
	Spokane							64	0	64
	Tacoma							78	14	92
	Vancouver							66	2	68
	Vashon (King County)							82	4	86
WEST VIRGINIA	Charleston							70	8	78
	Huntington							43	0	43
	Morgantown							62	3	65
	Parkersburg							36	0	36
WISCONSIN	Green Bay							54	0	54
	Kenosha							55	3	58
	Madison							87	18	100
	Milwaukee							82	9	91
WYOMING	Casper							30	0	30
	Cheyenne							30	2	32
	Gillette							33	0	33
	Laramie							20	0	20

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SELF-SUBMIT

Cities Not Rated by the MEI Submit Themselves

Each year the MEI expands its scope to evaluate more cities. We do this by adding to our existing city selection criteria (more information about our city selection criteria can be found on page 15), which has allowed us to grow from 137 cities rated in 2012 to 291 cities rated in 2013 to 353 cities rated in 2014. We will continue to increase the number of cities rated as the publication goes on.

However, given there are tens of thousands of municipalities in this country, cities may wish to receive a rating even though the MEI may not be rating them. Therefore, we are

happy to work with cities to submit themselves to be rated by the MEI. In order to do this, city leadership must send to the MEI team *all* of the relevant documentation needed to justify credit for each MEI criteria.

In 2014, we had four cities successfully self-submit: Miami Beach, Florida, Salem, Massachusetts, Appleton, Wisconsin, and Evanston, Illinois.

By self-submitting, these cities have demonstrated their commitment to equality and are sending a message to their LGBT citizens that they are a welcome and important part of the community.

We might not be able to honor self-submit cities in the publication each year, but we will always provide cities with their own scorecard and help them to inform their citizens of their dedication to LGBT equality.

If you are interested in submitting a city to be rated, please contact the MEI team at mei@hrc.org.

By self-submitting, these cities have demonstrated their commitment to equality and are sending a message to their LGBT citizens that they are a welcome and important part of the community.

STATES	CITIES	I. Non-Discrimination	II. Relationship Recognition	III. Municipality as Employer	IV. Services and Programs	V. Law Enforcement	VI. Relationship with LGBT Community	REGULAR POINTS	BONUS POINTS	FINAL SCORE
FLORIDA	Miami Beach	●	●	●	●	●	●	100	18	100
ILLINOIS	Evanston	●	●	◐	●	●	●	93	8	100
MASSACHUSETTS	Salem	●	●	◐	●	●	●	93	7	100
WISCONSIN	Appleton	●	●	◐	◐	◐	●	77	11	88

SUCCESS STORY: MIAMI BEACH, FLORIDA



Florida's prohibition on marriage for same-sex couples impedes our ability to fulfill our core mission of providing for the health and welfare of our residents, thereby eroding the very legitimacy of our governments.

The City of Miami Beach is where diverse people from the United States and around the world come to live, work, and play. There are many reasons why people come here – but few are more important than the vibrancy and visibility of our LGBT community.

We have, for years, worked hard to make sure that we are leaders in the fight for equality. We prohibit discrimination against LGBT people and we have established a Human Rights Committee to enforce our law. We have enacted a domestic partner registry and we gladly provide employment benefits to domestic partners of our employees and to their children. We also require that our contractors provide these benefits to their employees.

In 2013, we became the only Florida government to reimburse our employees for the extra federal income tax charged on our LGBT families' domestic partner health insurance benefits.

Just this year, Miami Beach became one of the first cities in the United States to mandate that our health insurers cover gender affirming care for our transgender employees.

Today, Miami Beach is the leading government voice for marriage equality in Florida. We are the only party – public or private – to appear in every single Florida lawsuit challenging the state's right to continue to deny our gay and lesbian brothers and sisters the right to wed.

In these cases, we argue that Florida's prohibition on marriage for same-sex couples impedes our ability to fulfill our core mission of

providing for the health and welfare of our residents, thereby eroding the very legitimacy of our governments; interferes with the administration of the our business as employers; and denies our taxpayers tourism revenue.

We do all of these things because it is the right thing to do. But equality is also good for us financially. We attract the best investment, a skilled and diverse workforce, and the most cosmopolitan visitors to our city.

The next year promises to be an exciting one for all of us: victory on the horizon and new challenges to meet. Onward!

PHILIP LEVINE
Mayor



SUCCESS STORY: SALEM, MASSACHUSETTS



Our experience has clearly demonstrated that the MEI can effectively serve as a tool for local advocates to enact and protect LGBT equality in cities and towns across the United States.

While best known for a tragic episode of persecution during the witch hysteria of 1692, Salem has worked hard to learn from our infamous history and now places tremendous value on the advancement of human rights and social justice.

These values, as well as Salem's growing LGBT community, led our No Place for Hate Committee – the City's official diversity committee – to approach my office in the spring of 2013 about our voluntary participation in HRC's Municipal Equality Index. With my support and the goal of achieving a 100% rating, the Committee conducted a preliminary self-assessment using

the MEI criteria to identify areas where the City could improve upon our LGBT-inclusivity.

As a result, the Police Chief and I designated official LGBT liaisons in both the Mayor's Office and Police Department to provide direct points of contact for LGBT residents and visitors. Additionally, my office's liaison worked with the Committee to draft a fully inclusive non-discrimination ordinance which was adopted unanimously by the Salem City Council. In doing so, Salem became only the fifth community in Massachusetts to extend protections against discrimination for the transgender community in public accommodations.

In July, we submitted our self-assessment and Salem officially achieved a 100% rating on the 2014 MEI, following Boston and Cambridge as the only Massachusetts communities to have ever achieved a perfect score. However, one area where Salem can still improve upon its LGBT-inclusivity, according to the MEI, is in providing transgender-inclusive healthcare benefits. We look forward to working with state officials to expand this coverage for Salem and over half-a-million other state and municipal employees in the year ahead.

Our experience has clearly demonstrated that the MEI can effectively serve as a tool for local advocates to enact and protect LGBT equality in cities and towns across the United States. I'm proud to say that with the help of the MEI and HRC, Salem is still making history today.

KIM DRISCOLL
Mayor



CHANGES TO THE MEI IN 2015

New Point Distribution and Standards

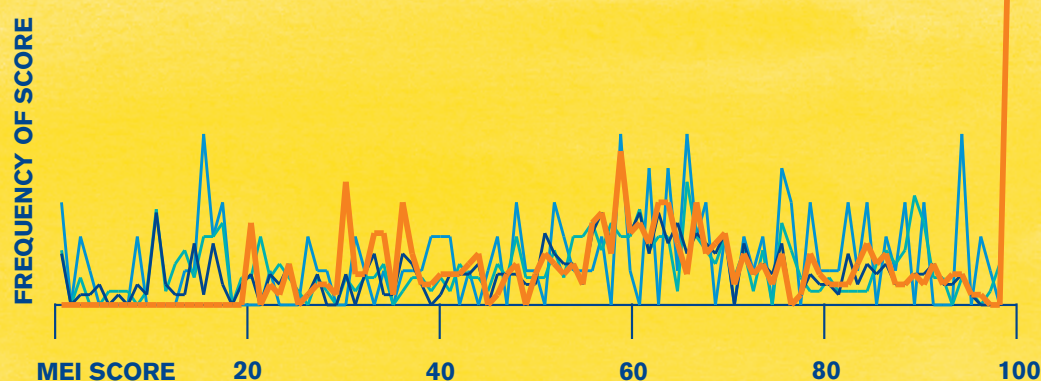
Given the rapidly changing status of marriage equality across the country, the 2015 MEI scorecard will be revised to reflect the reality of the new legal landscape. Relationship recognition points will be reduced or eliminated while the existing criteria pertaining to non-discrimination and transgender-inclusive health benefits will be worth additional points. However, no new criteria will be introduced. The revised scorecard will be available online at www.hrc.org/mei in early 2015.

We recognize how important it is for cities to have adequate notice of the rating system, which is why, in addition to posting the scorecard online in early 2015, we will also not be adding new criteria in 2015.

However, the chart below demonstrates that if we were not to revise the scorecard, nationwide marriage equality would inflate city scores by raising the minimum score and obscuring the fact that many cities may lack vital non-discrimination policies and other elements of the scorecard. **This has been a year of rapid change for LGBT rights, and the scorecard must be adjusted to ensure that stand out cities continue to stand out, and that the remaining work for other cities is not obscured.** As the MEI measures progress in municipal equality over time, it must do so while accurately situated in a meaningful historical and legal context. Look for the revised scorecard online in early 2015.

TRENDS OF MEI SCORES UNDER INFLUENCE OF MARRIAGE EQUALITY

2012 2013 2014 NATIONAL MARRIAGE EQUALITY



ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

ABOUT THE AUTHOR

Cathryn Oakley is Legislative Counsel, State and Municipal Advocacy at the Human Rights Campaign. In addition to conducting, managing, and publishing the Municipal Equality Index, she is responsible for assisting state and local legislators and advocates in enacting laws that further LGBT equality.

Cathryn is a member of the Virginia bar and practiced family law before joining the Human Rights Campaign. She is a graduate of George Mason University School of Law and Smith College.

ABOUT THE MEI TEAM

Creating the third edition of this project posed brand new challenges and exciting changes, all of which were embraced by the truly extraordinary MEI team and those who supported us this year. The MEI owes a debt of gratitude to the following people who made this report possible.

Whitney Lovell deftly managed the logistics of growing the project yet again while nimbly navigating the introduction of a new scorecard as well as a sudden (joyous!) surge in the number of marriage equality states after the MEI data had already been finalized. Her calm focus and relentless efficiency kept the project always moving forward, and her persistence ensured this project actually came to be.

Xavier Persad joined the MEI team this year, and his professionalism, attention to detail, and unwavering commitment to getting it right made this project the robust, data-driven, precise instrument it is. His patience was indefatigable and his enthusiasm for equality was contagious, and the MEI 2014 reflects his dedication and care.

Sarah Warbelow's wisdom, guidance, and vision for this project has been critical to its success from the start, and we truly couldn't do it without her. Her leadership is the foundation of the MEI.

Liz O'Halloran was invaluable in arranging the launch of the MEI and bringing this story of municipal equality to every corner of America where it belongs. Kristin Hildreth again jumped in to lend a hand when we needed her. Our law fellows and interns again provided invaluable research and logistical assistance. Bob Villaflor guided us toward yet another beautiful publication and on-time launch.

The General Design Company, yet again, helped the MEI team (and our readers) see municipal equality in a fresh new way, and we appreciate the long hours and cheerful problem-solving of Soung Wiser and Caroline Brickell.

EQUALITY FEDERATION INSTITUTE

Finally, but especially, we thank our partners at the Equality Federation Institute.

The achievements we celebrate in this publication are often theirs, and the MEI is undoubtedly enriched by the assistance of the state groups who take time out of their extraordinarily busy schedules to help ensure our data is complete and correct.

This project would not be what it is without them, and we recognize the state groups that have been particularly helpful on the following page.

A very special thanks goes out to Ted Martin, Nadine Smith, Katie Bellanger, and A.J. Bockelman for sharing their adventures in municipal equality in this edition of the MEI, and to Andy Garcia and Ian Palmquist for their partnership at a national level. We couldn't do this without you.

For questions or additional information, please contact mei@hrc.org.

The Municipal Equality Index would not have been possible without the valuable contributions made by state and local advocates. A particular thanks therefore goes out to the following:





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