

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 506 cities rated on the 2016 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 five largest cities or municipalities in each state, the cities home to the state's two largest public universities (including undergraduate and graduate enrollment), 75 cities & municipalities that have high proportions of same-sex couples (see page 17 for more information) and 98 cities selected by HRC and Equality Federation state groups members and supporters. Future editions of the MEI will continue to increase the number of cities rated.

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

For an explanation as to why Washington, DC is not included in the MEI, please see page 17.

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 17.

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 21.

WHERE DID THE INFORMATION FOR THESE SCORES COME FROM?

The MEI team conducted the research, compiled it into a draft scorecard, and sent the draft scorecard 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, 22 cities in states without statewide non-discrimination laws for LGBTQ people scored 100 points in 2016.

IS THIS A RANKING OF THE BEST CITIES FOR LGBTQ 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 law and policies, and an examination of how inclusive city services are of LGBTQ people. Some high-scoring cities may not feel truly welcoming for all LGBTQ people, and some low-scoring cities may feel more welcoming than their policies might reflect.

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 May 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 August also via email and certified

mail. The feedback window lasted four weeks. Finally, cities were sent their final scorecards and information about the MEI 2016 in the same way. Equality Federation state groups also were able to review the scorecards and provide feedback to the MEI team prior to publication.