

Municipal Equality Index

A NATIONWIDE EVALUATION OF MUNICIPAL LAW

SIXTH EDITION

2017

A colorful paper cityscape illustration featuring various buildings in shades of red, yellow, and orange. A prominent yellow circular sun with the year '2017' inside is positioned in the upper center. The buildings are stylized with simple shapes and cutouts, set against a light blue background.

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 2017 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

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 pages 21, 24-27.

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, 27 cities in states without statewide nondiscrimination laws for LGBTQ people scored 100 points in 2017.

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 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 June also via email and certified

mail. The feedback window lasted four weeks. Finally, cities were sent their final scorecards and information about the MEI 2017 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.

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AN INTRODUCTION



Dear Friends



At this very moment, so much of our progress is under siege. In our nation's capitol and in state legislatures across the country, anti-equality politicians have been emboldened by a political climate where hate and discrimination have entered the mainstream. They are attempting to rip away decades of progress, and they are using the lives of LGBTQ people and our families for their own cynical political gain.

But at a time when it would be easy to grow weary and complacent, cities and towns are leading the way forward.

This year's Municipal Equality Index (MEI) paints a vivid picture: cities big and small, in red and blue states alike, are continuing our progress toward full equality, regardless of the political drama unfolding in Washington, D.C. and in state legislatures across the country.

The MEI also serves as a vital tool for business leaders and municipal officials alike when it comes to economic development. As businesses look for expansion or relocation opportunities, it has become standard practice to prioritize inclusive communities that value diversity. CEOs know that in

order to attract and retain the best employees, they must grow their companies in places that protect LGBTQ citizens from discrimination and actively open their doors to all communities. We've also seen, in places like North Carolina, that corporate America's bottom line is hurt by anti-equality measures and initiatives. And today, North Carolina shamefully has a statewide ban on commonsense non-discrimination protections, due to the patchwork of protections across the country. The MEI is the best tool to help these businesses make crucial evaluations about the welcoming (and unwelcoming) nature of towns and cities across the nation.

Non-discrimination ordinances, city services, employment policies and benefits, and law enforcement practices continue to be at the core of this report – and cities are stepping up to meet these challenges like never before.

A record-setting 68 cities earned perfect scores for advancing fully-inclusive policies and practices --- more than six times the number of 100-point cities since the MEI's inaugural edition in 2012. These 68 cities should rise to the top of the lists for CEOs making relocation and expansion decisions. This year, 111 cities offer trans-inclusive healthcare benefits to city employees, compared to 86 last year.

These policies are having a life-changing impact on millions of LGBTQ people and their families. Indeed, this year's MEI found that 24 million people live in localities that have more comprehensive, transgender-inclusive non-discrimination laws than the state they call home. During a year in which more than 130 anti-LGBTQ bills were

introduced across 30 states, it is vitally important that these cities are stepping up to provide protections for their LGBTQ residents and visitors.

In states with the harshest terrain for LGBTQ citizens, pro-equality cities are critical beacons. Forty-one "All Star" cities in states lacking comprehensive non-discrimination laws scored above 85 points, up from 37 cities last year and just two in 2012.

Across the country, we see municipalities that want to spur development and improve the lives of their LGBTQ residents and visitors embrace inclusive policies that protect the fundamental rights of all. We are proud to work alongside leaders in cities and towns across the country who understand this principle and are committed to ensuring the full equality for all those who work and live in their communities.

This work would not be possible without our partners at the Equality Federation Institute and the statewide LGBTQ organizations and leaders who work to bring equality to the communities they call home. By working in coalition, we continue to expand the map for equality in all corners of our country.

Sincerely,

CHAD GRIFFIN
President

Human Rights Campaign Foundation

Dear Readers



Equality Federation Institute is proud to participate in the annual Municipal Equality Index, which illustrates both the tremendous progress we have achieved as well as the challenges that still lie ahead in our fight for equality in the communities we call home. This important tool provides a roadmap to a future in which every LGBTQ person experiences fairness and equality no matter where they live.

This year, the report shows that our movement is more united and stronger than ever, despite an energized opposition fueled by a most hostile administration. Federation member organizations, from Equality Florida to Freedom Oklahoma, have flexed their muscles, scoring many historic wins in key municipal policy arenas.

Cities and towns are leading the charge to ensure *everyone* is treated fairly under the law while we continue to work toward comprehensive nondiscrimination protections in employment, housing, and public accommodations in the 32 states where they are lacking. This year, Equality Pennsylvania celebrated Carlisle becoming the 37th municipality to provide protections based on

sexual orientation and gender identity, and Equality Ohio celebrated Youngstown becoming their 16th. Freedom Oklahoma won ordinances in Oklahoma City and Norman. Equality Florida won protections in Jacksonville. Fairness West Virginia passed ordinances in Lewisburg, Martinsburg, Shepherdstown, Charles Town, and Wheeling. Equality Wyoming passed nondiscrimination resolutions in Cheyenne, Douglas, and Gillette.

Seattle, Washington joined the ranks of major cities banning the dangerous practice of conversion "therapy" on minors at the city level, which is shockingly still legal in many places. Equality Pennsylvania and Equality Ohio passed similar ordinances in Allentown and Athens.

Now more than ever, we must prioritize local wins to propel us forward to the day we enjoy full equality in every town, county, and state in the nation.

Onward!

REBECCA ISAACS
Executive Director
Equality Federation Institute

Now more than ever, **we must prioritize local wins** to propel us forward to the day we enjoy full equality.

Enduring Growth for Cities is Driven by Diversity



©Jaime Hogge

The nation's top talent and businesses alike place a high premium on a community's openness and the legal equality it affords all of its residents.

Innovators and entrepreneurial talent want to live, work and play in a community that not only embraces diversity, but celebrates it. And businesses want to exist where their employees can live and work free from the specter of discrimination. LGBTQ-equality is essential to the formula that attracts the very best in art, science, business and education—the formula that spurs enduring economic growth.

The creative class is comprised of more than 40 million people—a third of the U.S. workforce—and includes scientists, engineers, and entrepreneurs; researchers and academics; architects and designers; artists and entertainers; and professionals in business, media, management, healthcare and law. The best in these fields are in search of a home that is both collaborative and diverse, and where the creative class goes, businesses follow.

Highly skilled workers select where to live based on several factors including culture and amenities as well as politics and ideology. Among these considerations is how welcoming a community is to residents and visitors of every walk of life. Cities with LGBTQ-inclusive laws, policies and services are more likely to attract new residents, visitors and enterprises, resulting in a higher quality of life and a stronger sense of community.

Laws and policies that exclude—even prejudicial rhetoric from local officials—dissuades top talent from planting roots in a community, instead leading them to settle down in similar, more inclusive environments. Cities with anti-equality reputations send a message to visitors, residents and businesses that they are not welcome, harming a city's potential for growth and increased revenue.

In short, LGBTQ equality is a moral imperative that pays—one that's even more important than ever given the recent unprecedented rollback of hard-won LGBTQ federal protections.

The Municipal Equality Index highlights laws and policies that cities can use to make their community more LGBTQ-inclusive. It assesses cities on their non-discrimination laws, LGBTQ-inclusive employee practices, inclusiveness in city services and law enforcement; and their leadership's outspoken commitment to equality. Taking these steps can help cities not only do the right thing, but create fairer economic opportunity for all.

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; **Senior Editor** with The Atlantic; and author of *The Rise of the Creative Class*.

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 LGBTQ employees or risk losing their best employees to more inclusive employers.

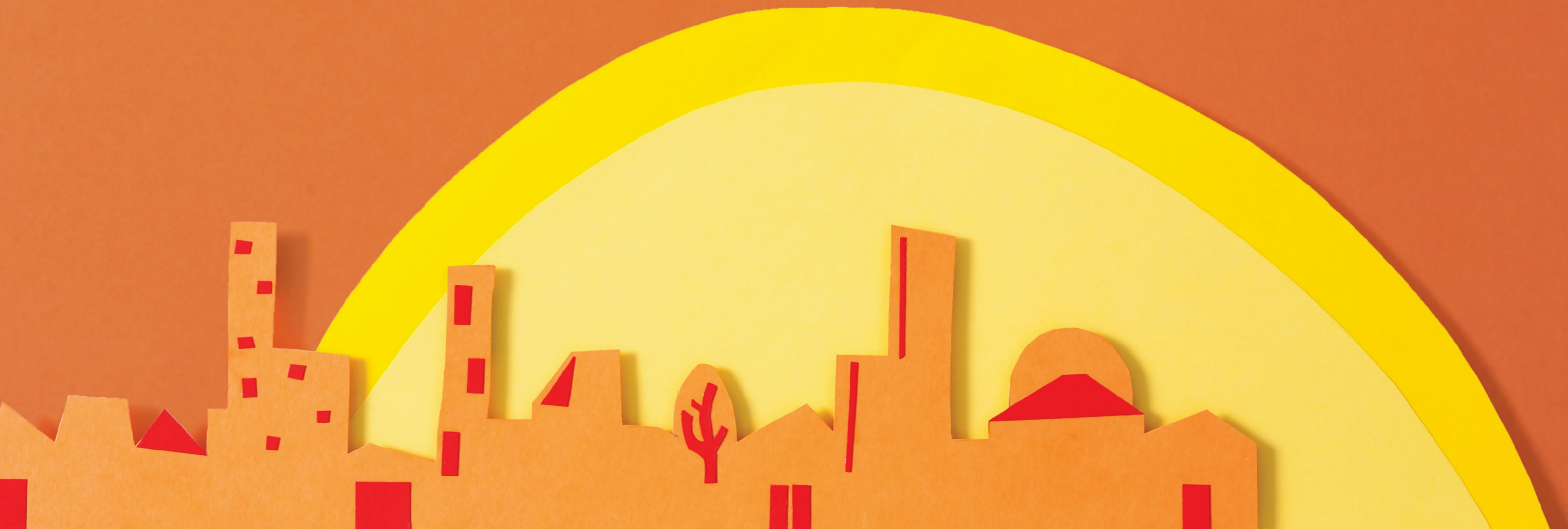
Cities would be well-advised to respond to the workplace considerations measured by the MEI, some of which are associated with minimal cost and pay dividends in productivity and retention.

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 LGBTQ 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.

Cities are in constant competition for residents, business, and employees, and **inclusiveness is an important factor that attracts all three.**

HOW IT WORKS



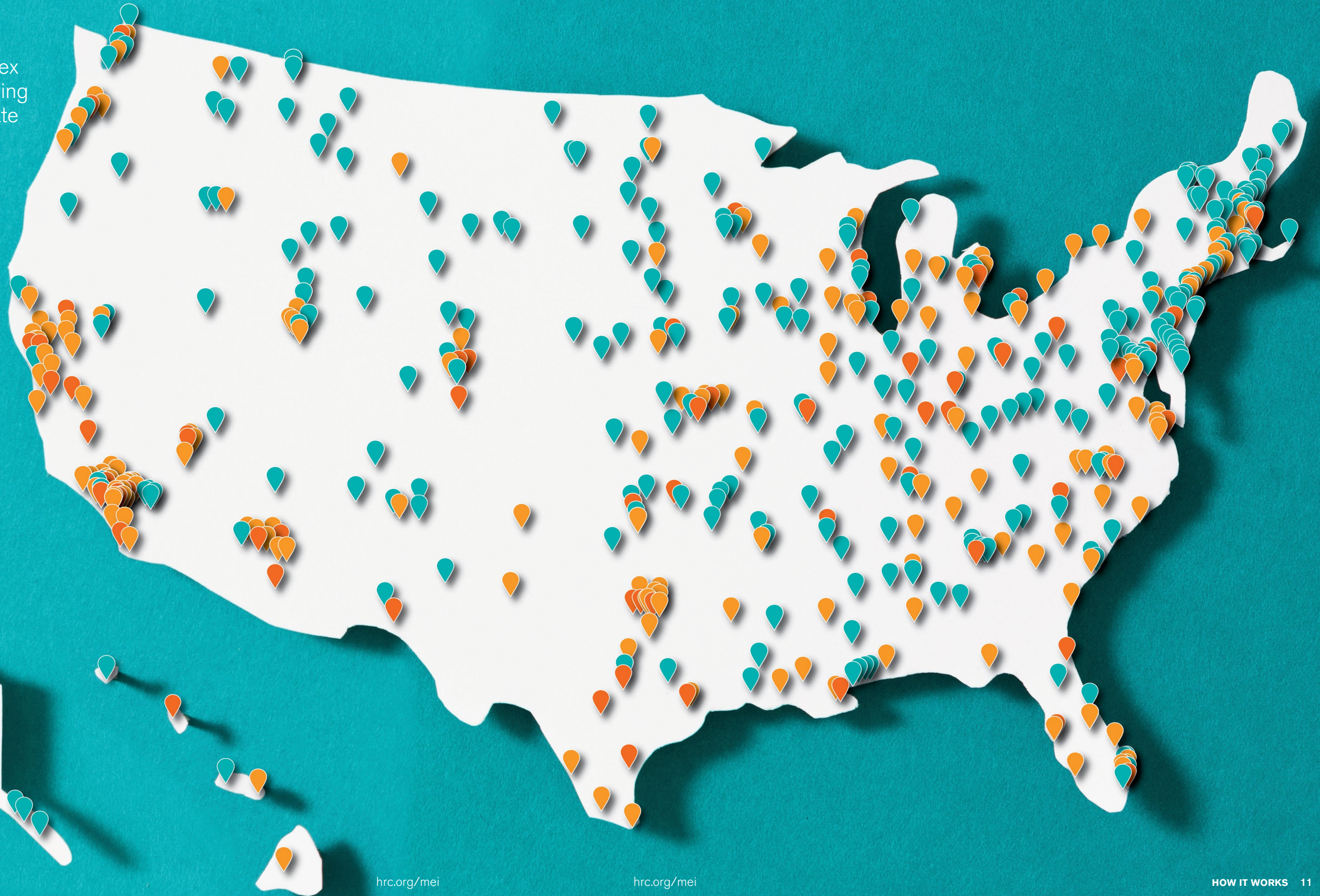
CITIES RATED BY THE MEI

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

2017

506 CITIES
94,237,171 TOTAL
POPULATION RATED

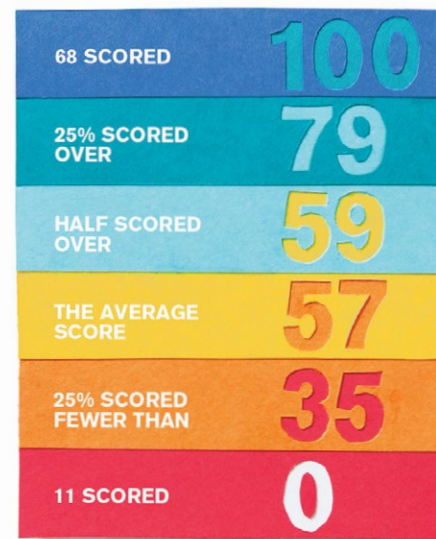
-  **SMALL CITIES**
1-100,000
-  **MEDIUM CITIES**
100,000-300,000
-  **LARGE CITIES**
300,000+



EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Cities Boldly Leading the Way to Equality

Now in its sixth edition, the **Municipal Equality Index (MEI)** demonstrates in the most comprehensive form just how much can be accomplished by tenacious city leaders who stand up for full LGBTQ equality.



As has been true each year following the debut of this report in 2012, municipal leaders are becoming increasingly aware of what truly equal and inclusive laws, policies, and services look like, and have made sustained efforts to inch closer and closer to the ideal of full equality.

This year's MEI demonstrates this encouragingly steady forward motion, manifesting in increased state averages, regional averages, and national average. In a year marked by a wave of anti-LGBTQ state bills and an unprecedented rollback of hard-won federal LGBTQ protections, the MEI reveals many new pinnacles of municipal equality across the country.

PRO-EQUALITY ADVANCES ALL AROUND

In nearly every regard, the 2017 MEI represents an improvement over previous years. Comparisons to 2016's data provide direct insight into how cities improved, given that this year's scorecard and cities rated remained unchanged from last year.

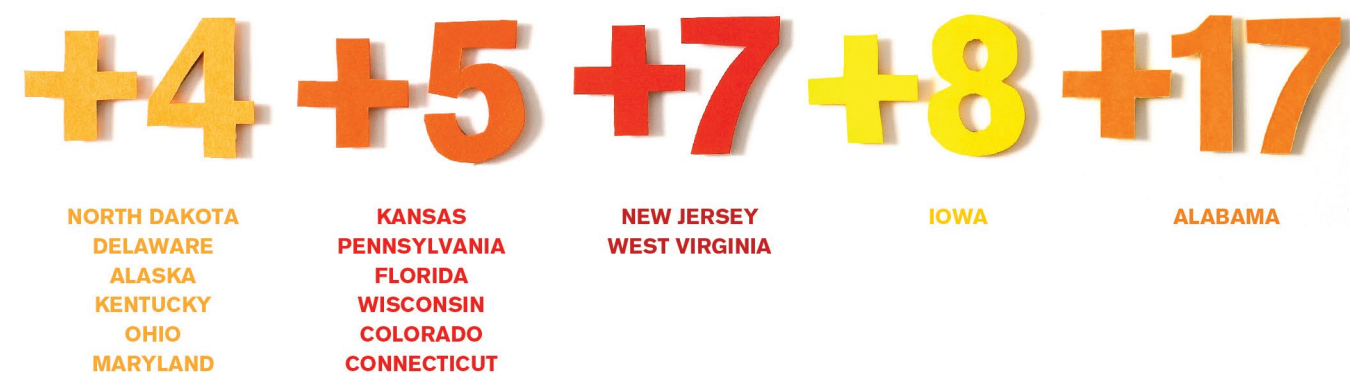
This year saw the most perfect scores ever, with 68 municipalities earning a 100-point rating (compared to 60 last year). Overall, the national average increased from 55 in 2016 to 57 points.

When examined by state and region, pro-equality municipal progress over the past year becomes even more evident. Compared to 2016, thirty-six state averages increased and 3 held steady.

Alabama's city average grew the most, with a laudable increase of 17 points since the 2016 report. MEI-rated Iowa cities came in behind Alabama cities with an 8-point average increase, and MEI-rated cities in New Jersey and West Virginia followed suit with a statewide city average increase of 7 points.

This upward trend is mirrored when this year's data is viewed through a regional lens. Every region of the country experienced a mean score increase. MEI cities in the Southeast demonstrated the largest average score growth, rising by four points from a mean of 39 in 2016 to 43 in 2017.

Top State Average Increases Since 2016



The overall increase in city scores this year sends the promising message that municipalities from every corner of the country—no matter their size or political leaning—continue to strive to realize the fundamental American value that no one should live with the fear of being fired, evicted, or excluded from public places simply because of who they are or who they love.

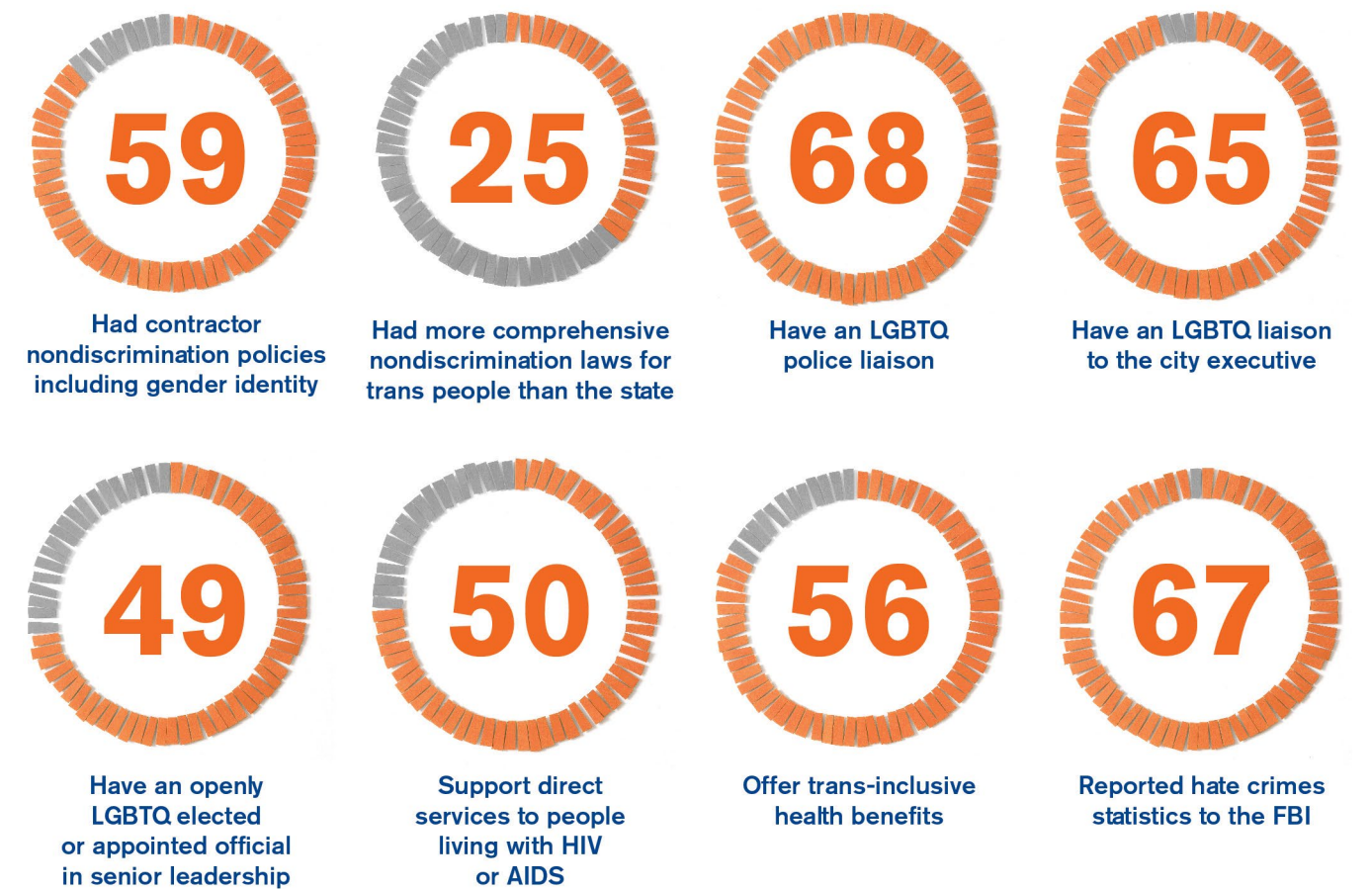
PROGRESS ON NONDISCRIMINATION PROTECTIONS

Despite the wave of anti-LGBTQ legislation introduced in state legislatures this year—as well as the concerted rollback of federal LGBTQ safeguards—cities continued to enact crucial protections for their residents, visitors, and employees. Municipal legislators in Wheeling, West Virginia and Carlisle, Pennsylvania took the bold step of passing LGBTQ-inclusive protections covering private employment, housing, and public accommodations this past year.

In the South, pro-equality efforts led to historic progress. This year, Birmingham became the first city in Alabama to pass an LGBTQ-inclusive nondiscrimination ordinance that protects residents in every area of life.

Cities also undertook administrative changes to make their city employment and contracting policies more inclusive. Eighteen new cities extended their equal employment opportunity policy to expressly include sexual orientation and gender identity since last year, and thirteen more cities extended the same employment nondiscrimination requirements to their contractors.

Of the 68 cities that scored 100 points:



SUCCESS STORY: EQUALITY OHIO

The larger picture is hopeful. 19 states and well over 100 cities, including all but two of the 20 largest cities in the United States, have fully-inclusive nondiscrimination protections for transgender people in places of public accommodation. More than 135 million Americans—or 42 percent of the U.S. population—live in jurisdictions with these protections. Notably, municipalities are at the forefront, providing 24 million Americans with more robust gender identity-protections than offered under state law.

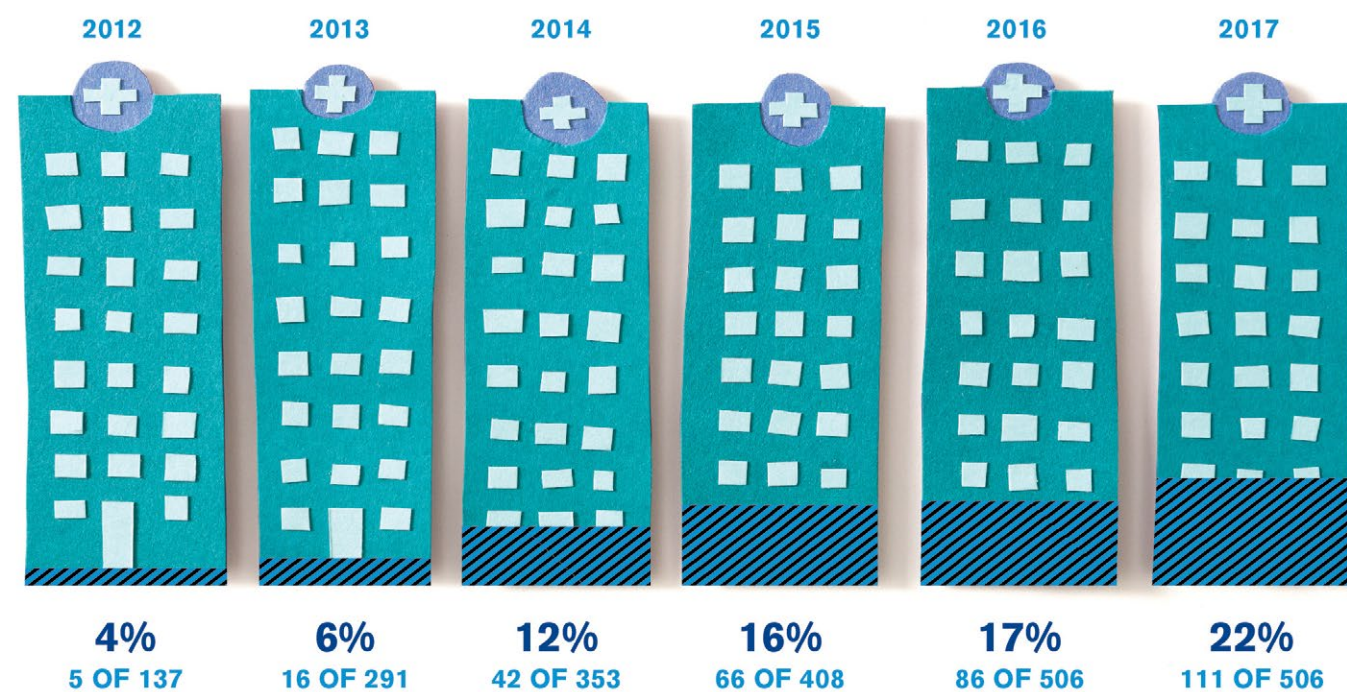
NEW RECORDS

The 2017 MEI ushered in a number of new and exciting milestones, which are outlined below.

- Highest number of perfect scores: 68.
- Largest number of cities that offer their employees transgender-inclusive healthcare benefits: 111.
- Record number of “All-Star” Cities, or cities that scored above 85 points despite being in states with no state-level LGBTQ protections: 41.
- Most LGBTQ liaisons in the city executive’s office and police department: 134 and 148, respectively.
- Most municipalities with openly LGBTQ appointed or elected senior officials: 132.

The exciting progress demonstrated by the 2017 MEI is achieved through the unwavering dedication and passion of local advocates and officials. As the most direct representatives of the people, municipal leaders are best situated to understand and respond to the needs of the communities they represent. The most basic such need is the assurance of safety and equality at work, at home, and in the community. When cities extend an unqualified welcome to everyone—including LGBTQ people—the entire community benefits. The MEI is the most comprehensive guide on how to ensure a city’s message of full inclusivity resonates loud and clear. It is the best roadmap to ensuring that all of a city’s residents are protected equally and holistically from discrimination.

Number of Rated Cities Offering **Trans-Inclusive** Health Benefits



One of the most important lessons we’ve learned is that when you are trying to implement protections for LGBTQ people, the process is just as important as the product. You can’t rush. People are invested in their home, and if you’re going to change things — even for the better — you have to hear about their vision of their community.

That means educating people on why people value living in cities that affirm LGBTQ people and bringing into the process the people who should know about the change, like small business owners.

Sometimes they can be hesitant.

Is this more regulation? Is this a problem here? How much will this cost?

It’s tempting to skip those hard conversations in order to push through policy, check a box, and remind our legislators that cities are doing what they won’t. But these sometimes difficult conversations must be had, so we dutifully join local city council meetings week after week, sharing our stories of how truly important LGBTQ protections are.

A second lesson that I reflect on is that the work has real people behind it.

This mother of a transgender child is not just media-trained and coached for testimony; this is a woman who chose to raise a child in this city and wants the city to value them as much as any other child.

The man who just came out to his workplace is someone whose career is on the line if these protections do not exist.

A victory matters to people’s lives.

Celebrating the people that municipal work helps is contagious — we’re doing it right when the city council bursts out into applause after a vote and I get emails asking how someone can make change in their city.

In a way, both lessons are about people realizing their power and taking action to make our world better.

Not a bad reason to get up in the morning.

GWEN STEMBRIDGE
Northeast Ohio Coordinator
Equality Ohio

So we dutifully join local city council meetings week after week, sharing our stories of **how truly important LGBTQ protections are.**



SUCCESS STORY: EQUALITY PENNSYLVANIA

Pennsylvania is making great strides in becoming a more equal state. This is happening one municipality at a time. Obstructionist ultraconservatives in the Pennsylvania legislature have held up fourteen years of efforts to pass a statewide nondiscrimination ban.

This hold was solidified with the 2016 General Election, in which numerous stalwart supporters were ousted from their Pennsylvania House and Senate seats. We are fortunate to have many local municipalities that see the value in protecting LGBTQ citizens from discrimination and harm.

This year, Pittsburgh and Allentown will receive a 100-point score for the first time. They join Philadelphia, a 100-point city in the MEI since the inaugural report in 2012. Pittsburgh was the first city to pass an ordinance protecting youth from conversion “therapy” in the state, followed by Philadelphia and Allentown. Ambler Borough, Dickson City, Wilkes-Barre City, Carlisle, Kennett Square, Phoenixville, Royersford, Camp Hill, Stroudsburg, and Upper Dublin Township each passed nondiscrimination ordinances, taking the state total to 44.

Equality Pennsylvania looks forward to another year of helping even more municipalities achieve full inclusivity for all.

JOHN DAWE, CNP, CFRE
Managing Director
Equality Pennsylvania



Pittsburgh was the first city to **pass an ordinance protecting youth from conversion “therapy”** in the state, followed by Philadelphia and Allentown.

CITY SELECTION

How Cities Were Selected for Rating

The 2017 Municipal Equality Index rates 506 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 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 and municipalities that have high proportions of same-sex couples and 98 cities selected by HRC and Equality Federation state groups members and supporters.

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. To be consistent, we rated all twenty-five of these small cities, even though some of these small “cities” are in fact unincorporated census-designated places. In that case, we rated the laws and policies of the applicable incorporated local government (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 2017 MEI to 506. In 2012, the MEI rated 137 cities; in 2013, 291; in 2014, 353; and in 2015 we rated 408 cities. 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 State Equality Index. More information on Washington, D.C.’s laws and policies can be viewed on the maps of state laws located at <http://www.hrc.org/campaigns/stateequality-index>.



2017 MEI SCORECARD



CITY, STATE 1/2 2017 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	0/0	0/0	0/0	5/5
Housing	0/0	0/0	0/0	5/5
Public Accommodations	0/0	0/0	0/0	5/5
SCORE	0 out of 30			

II. Municipality as Employer

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

	CITY	AVAILABLE
Non-Discrimination in City Employment	0/0	6/6
Transgender-Inclusive Healthcare Benefits	0/0	6/6
City Contractor Non-Discrimination Ordinance	0/0	3/3
SCORE	0 out of 24	
BONUS Inclusive Workplace	+0	+2

III. Municipal Services

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

	STATE	COUNTY	CITY	AVAILABLE
Human Rights Commission		0/0	0/0	5/5
LGBTQ Liaison to City Executive's Office			0/0	5/5
Enumerated Anti-Bullying School Policies	0/0	0/0	0/0	3/3
SCORE	0 out of 16			
BONUS Enforcement Mechanism in Human Rights Commission	+0	+0	+2	+2
BONUS City Provides Services to LGBTQ Youth			+0	+2
BONUS City Provides Services to LGBTQ Homeless			+0	+2
BONUS City Provides Services to LGBTQ Elders			+0	+2
BONUS City Provides Services to people Living with HIV/AIDS			+0	+2
BONUS City Provides Services to the Transgender Community			+0	+2

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CITY, STATE 2/2 2017 MUNICIPAL EQUALITY INDEX SCORECARD



IV. Law Enforcement

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

	CITY	AVAILABLE
LGBTQ Police Liaison or Task Force	0/0	10/10
Reported 2015 Hate Crimes Statistics to the FBI	0/0	12/12
SCORE	0 out of 22	

V. Relationship with the LGBTQ Community

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

	CITY	AVAILABLE
Leadership's Public Position on LGBTQ Equality	0/0	5/5
Leadership's Pro-Equality Legislative or Policy Efforts	0/0	3/3
SCORE	0 out of 8	
BONUS Openly LGBTQ Elected or Appointed Municipal Leaders	+0	+2
BONUS City Tests Limits of Restrictive State Law	+0	+4

TOTAL SCORE 0 + TOTAL BONUS 0 = Final Score 0
CANNOT EXCEED 100

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.

hrc.org/mei

SUCCESS STORY: HRC MISSISSIPPI

In Mississippi, some of the greatest strides for equality have taken place in cities and towns across our state.

In June of 2016, the capital city of Jackson became the first Mississippi city to pass a comprehensive LGBTQ-inclusive nondiscrimination ordinance. This came about through collaboration with courageous Jackson city leaders and our team at HRC.

On March 7, 2017, Magnolia became the second city in the state to pass a fully comprehensive nondiscrimination ordinance. Again, this achievement came through bold city leadership and with the help of HRC.

These ordinances not only sent a strong message of inclusion, they are tangible acts which enable all citizens to feel safe and welcome in their hometowns.

This summer, our team had the opportunity to be present at the Mississippi Municipal League's summer convention. With municipal leaders present from across Mississippi, we shared the many ways cities can improve their communities. From passing nondiscrimination ordinances to making policies that protect city employees LGBTQ-inclusive, these conversations will help bring about progress.

Most of all, what we learned at the Municipal League Convention and through our travel around the state is that municipalities want to spur development and make it known that their communities are open to all, especially LGBTQ residents and visitors. We are proud to work alongside leaders in cities and towns across Mississippi who understand this principle and are committed to ensuring the fundamental equality of all who work, live and go to school in their communities.

We look forward to continuing to build crucial partnership in cities all across our state in order to achieve full equality for all Mississippians.

ROB HILL
State Director
HRC Mississippi



These ordinances not only sent a strong message of inclusion, they are tangible acts which enable all citizens **to feel safe and welcome** in their hometowns.

SCORING CRITERIA

I. Non-Discrimination Laws

It should not be legal to deny someone the opportunity 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 five points for prohibiting discrimination on the basis of sexual orientation and five points for prohibiting discrimination on the basis of gender identity. There will be a three-point deduction for non-discrimination protections in public accommodations that contain carve-outs prohibiting individuals from using facilities consistent with their gender identity. All non-discrimination laws ought to be fully inclusive of lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender and queer people. Sexual orientation-only protections are not sufficient to protect the LGBTQ community from discrimination.

PART I POINTS CAN COME FROM STATE LAW, COUNTY LAW, OR CITY LAW.

If the state or county has a comprehensive and inclusive nondiscrimination 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. For that reason, so long as the protections of a state or county law apply within throughout city limits, the city effectively has such protections, and the state or county law will earn the city points in Part I. 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, where laws exist at both the city and the state (or county) level, the city will not receive double (or triple) points—the maximum points in this section are capped at 30.



PROTECTING YOUTH FROM HARMFUL “CONVERSION THERAPY”

WHAT IS CONVERSION THERAPY?

“Conversion therapy,” sometimes referred to as “sexual orientation change efforts” or “reparative therapy,” encompasses a range of dangerous practices that seek to change an individual’s sexual orientation or gender identity. These practices are based on the false premise that being LGBTQ is a mental illness that needs to be cured — a theory that has been rejected for decades by every major medical and mental health organization.

There is no credible evidence that conversion therapy can change a person’s sexual orientation or gender identity or expression. To the contrary, research has clearly shown that these practices pose devastating health risks for LGBTQ young people. Conversion therapy is condemned by every major medical and mental health organization, including the American Psychiatric Association, American Psychological Association, and American Medical Association.

THE DANGERS OF CONVERSION THERAPY

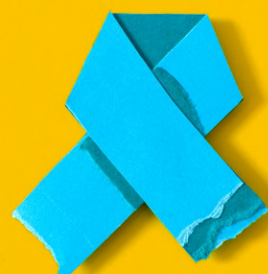
In 2007, an American Psychological Association Task Force undertook a thorough review of existing research on the efficacy of conversion therapy. It confirmed the practice’s inefficacy, and listed over twenty demonstrated harms conversion therapy brings about, including decreased self-esteem, increased self-hatred, depression, self-blame, hopelessness, increased risk of substance abuse, and even suicide.

Moreover, many LGBTQ youth experience conversion therapy as a form of familial rejection. Research from San Francisco State University found that LGBTQ youth who experience familial rejection, when compared to their counterparts who are accepted by their families, are: more than 8 times as likely to attempted suicide, nearly 6 times as likely to have high levels of depression, more than 3 times as likely to use illegal drugs, and more than 3 times as likely to be at high risk for HIV and sexually transmitted infections.

PREVALENCE

Though survivors willing to share their experiences with conversion therapy may be hard to find in some localities, conversion therapy unfortunately still occurs all across the country. Experts estimate that one in three LGBTQ youth have undergone some form of conversion therapy. Many survivors from across the nation have overcome the shame, fear, hurt and retraumatization they may have faced to share their stories in hopes of protecting the next generation from being subjected to the same devastating harms. Additionally, countless mental health professionals who treated survivors of conversion therapy and parents who—once unaware of the dangers—subjected their children to the practice have opened up in public fora about witnessing firsthand the grave consequences of conversion therapy.

LGBTQ Youth Who Experience Familial Rejection Are...



8x

MORE LIKELY TO HAVE ATTEMPTED SUICIDE



6x

MORE LIKELY TO REPORT HIGH LEVELS OF DEPRESSION



3x

MORE LIKELY TO USE ILLEGAL DRUGS



3x

MORE LIKELY TO BE AT HIGH RISK FOR HIV AND STDs

WHAT CAN CITIES DO?

Protecting the next generation from the devastating health risks of conversion therapy should be among the primary goals of municipal decisionmakers. Fortunately, city officials need not wait for state or federal officials to act on this vital issue. It is well within a municipality’s authority to protect its youth from conversion therapy providers within city limits, as an exercise of the city’s inherent authority to protect and promote the health, safety, and wellbeing of its inhabitants.

As of this publication, California, Connecticut, Illinois, Nevada, New Jersey, New Mexico, New York, Oregon, Rhode Island, Vermont, and the District of Columbia have enacted laws or regulations to protect minors from being subjected to conversion therapy by state-licensed mental health providers. Encouragingly, municipalities in states that have yet to act have forged ahead with local protections, including localities in Ohio, Florida, Washington, Pennsylvania, and Arizona.

In partnership with the National Center for Lesbian Rights, the Human Rights Campaign has developed sample legislation that can be adapted to the local context to protect youth from these dangerous practices

CONCLUSION

Efforts to change a person’s sexual orientation or gender identity have no scientific merit, and in fact have been proven to be incredibly detrimental to one’s health and wellbeing. Sadly, youth are most vulnerable to these devastating harms, which include depression, homelessness, and suicidality. City officials can and should take leadership on protecting their youth from the fraudulent practice of conversion therapy by exercising their legislative authority to protect the health, safety, and wellbeing of their residents. To underscore the importance of this issue, next year’s MEI will reward cities for enacting ordinances that protect youth from conversion therapy.

Protecting the next generation from the **devastating health risks of conversion therapy** should be among the primary goals of municipal decisionmakers.

Conversion therapy has been rejected by virtually every major mental health, education, and child welfare organization in the United States, including:

- American Academy of Child and Adolescent Psychiatry
- American Academy of Pediatrics
- American Association of School Administrators
- American Association for Marriage and Family Therapy
- American College of Physicians
- American Counseling Association
- American Federation of Teachers
- American Medical Association
- American Osteopathic Association
- American Psychiatric Association
- American Psychoanalytic Association
- American Psychological Association
- American School Counselor Association
- American School Health Association
- Interfaith Alliance Foundation
- National Association of School Psychologists
- National Association of Secondary School Principals
- National Association of Social Workers
- National Education Association
- Pan American Health Organization (PAHO): Regional Office of the World Health Organization
- School Social Work Association of America

II. Municipality as Employer

Almost every municipality has immediate control over its employment policies. Respect for LGBTQ 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 (6 points) and gender identity or expression (6 points). It is a fundamental principle of fairness that an employee should be judged on their ability to perform the responsibilities of a position, and not by who they are or whom they love. A state-level non-discrimination law or a local non-discrimination ordinance alone is not sufficient to earn these points—personnel policies must enumerate sexual orientation and gender identity in order for the city to receive credit.

TRANSGENDER-INCLUSIVE HEALTHCARE 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 (6 points) that provides coverage for transgender healthcare needs (gender confirmation surgeries, hormone replacement therapy, and other gender-affirming care). The policy must affirmatively 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.

CITY REQUIRES ITS CONTRACTORS TO HAVE INCLUSIVE NONDISCRIMINATION 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 (3 points) and gender identity or expression (3 points).

Partial credit is awarded to cities that do not have an official policy or ordinance to this effect, but maintains a practice of including a qualifying city contractor non-discrimination clause in all city contracts.

MUNICIPALITY IS AN INCLUSIVE WORKPLACE (BONUS POINTS)

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

III. Services and Programs

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

Human Rights Commissions do important work to identify and eliminate discrimination; even in jurisdictions where LGBTQ 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 five 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 two bonus points in addition to the five standard points awarded above.

Similarly, an LGBTQ liaison to the Mayor or City Manager's office (5 points) is responsible for looking at city policies and services through an LGBTQ lens and speaking up when a policy or service might exclude LGBTQ people. This position is also known to be a friendly ear to constituents who want to bring LGBTQ-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). Where there are multiple school districts within city limits, credit will only be given at the local level if at least 75% of students within these school districts are covered by enumerated anti-bullying 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 LGBTQ 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 LGBTQ people. Cities can address these challenges by offering services—or supporting a third party provider of these services—to LGBTQ youth, LGBTQ elders, LGBTQ homeless people, people who are HIV-positive or living with AIDS and the transgender community (2 bonus points for each service the city provides).

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 LGBTQ people.

IV. Law Enforcement

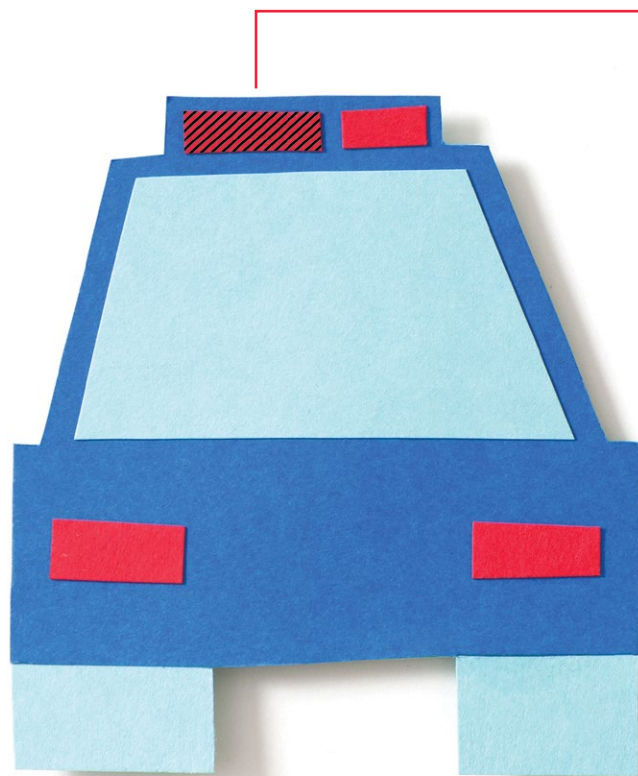
The relationship between law enforcement and the LGBTQ community is often fraught with suspicion, misunderstanding, and fear.

LGBTQ 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 LGBTQ people with understanding and respect, remaining mindful of the LGBTQ community's unique law enforcement concerns and engaging the community in a positive way.

An LGBTQ police liaison (10 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 (12 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.



57%

OF THE POPULATION IN MEI CITIES HAVE AN LGBTQ POLICE LIAISON IN THEIR COMMUNITY

100%

OF 100-POINT CITIES HAVE LGBTQ POLICE LIAISONS ON THE FORCE

V. Relationship with the LGBTQ 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 LGBTQ civil rights leader, or a city paints its crosswalks in rainbow colors, it sends a message to LGBTQ 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 LGBTQ youth surveyed said the community in which they live is not accepting of LGBTQ people, and 60% of the youth surveyed said they heard negative messages about being LGBTQ from elected leaders.

Further, LGBTQ 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 LGBTQ community and to advocate for full equality.

The first category rates city leadership (on a scale of zero to five 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 a state level non-discrimination bill—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 zero to three 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 LGBTQ people holding elected or appointed office in the municipality (two bonus points); and second, for cities who do all they can in the face of state law that restricts their ability to pass LGBTQ-inclusive laws or policies (four bonus points).

When elected leaders speak out on matters of equality, their constituents do hear—and it informs their constituents' perception of **safety, inclusion, and belonging.**

EQUAL ACCESS TO SEX-SEGREGATED FACILITIES

Transgender and gender nonconforming individuals face disproportionately high levels of prejudice and discrimination in everyday life. These members of our community deserve the same dignity and respect as everyone else, in every area of life. This includes being afforded the dignity of equal access to public facilities in accordance with the gender they live every day.

Most people take unhindered access to restrooms and other sex-segregated facilities for granted. Unfortunately, this far from reality for many transgender and gender nonconforming people who often face stress and anxiety when accessing sex-segregated spaces like public restrooms. Transgender and gender nonconforming individuals face an increased risk of violence and harassment in everyday life, and this risk is often amplified in sex-segregated spaces.

Some cities and state leaders have made the unjustifiable and discriminatory choice to enact laws that force residents to use facilities that do not align with their gender identity. These laws attempt to solve a problem that does not exist and is a consequence of misinformation and misunderstanding. Moreover, they harm the very residents city leaders are charged with protecting.

When people are prohibited from using the appropriate restroom, they may opt to not utilize the facility at all for fear of the very real possibility that they will be harassed or physically harmed. This in turn can lead to negative health outcomes. Additionally, as noted earlier, when transgender and gender nonconforming individuals are forced into a sex-segregated space that does not align with their gender identity, they are placed at risk of becoming victims of violence. These risks and potential negative health consequences are exacerbated in the case of young people who cannot access facilities that align with the gender they live daily.

WHAT IS GENDER, GENDER IDENTITY, AND GENDER NONCONFORMING?

Gender refers to the characteristics and expectations society associates with being male or female. Gender, however, is not a simple binary of male or female. Rather, gender exists on a broad spectrum.

For some people, their sex assigned at birth differs from their **gender identity**, or their innate sense of self as male, female, a blend of both, or neither. Additionally, some members of the LGBTQ community identify as **gender nonconforming**, meaning they express themselves in ways that do not follow traditional societal expectations of gender.

Making single-user facilities open to everyone regardless of gender **makes sense on every level**. Not only does it provide a safe space for transgender and gender nonconforming residents, but it benefits everyone by reducing line wait times.

WHAT CAN CITIES DO?

City officials should make the safety and wellbeing of transgender and gender nonconforming residents a top priority. Cities should enact comprehensive nondiscrimination ordinances that expressly cover sexual orientation and gender identity in employment, housing, and public accommodations. These ordinances should be free from any carve-outs that prohibit individuals from using facilities that accord with their gender identity. Further, city leaders should act swiftly to remove carve-outs allowing discrimination in restroom access where they exist.

Municipal officials can also implement administrative policies expressly protecting the right of residents and city employees to access facilities that align with who they are while on city property, accessing city services, and participating in city programs. In addition, city executives should issue rules designating all single-occupancy restrooms on city property as “all-gender.” Further, municipal legislators should extend this rule to all residents by passing an ordinance that requires all single-user sex-segregated facilities within city limits to be designated as all-gender.

ALL-GENDER SINGLE OCCUPANCY FACILITIES

Making single-user facilities open to everyone regardless of gender makes sense on every level. Not only does it provide a safe space for transgender and gender nonconforming residents, but it benefits everyone by reducing line wait times. People will no longer have to wait for an occupied single-user restroom while the bathroom for the gender they don’t identify with goes unutilized. Moreover, all-gender restrooms eliminate the problems that people with disabilities or others who have personal attendants of a different gender sometimes run into when accessing gendered restrooms. Lastly, making single-use restrooms open to all makes it easier for parents or guardians with children of a different gender to access a restroom.

CONCLUSION

The dignitary harm caused by forcing residents to use facilities that do not accord with their gender identity cannot be overstated. What’s more, rules or ordinances that mandate or allow for this type of discrimination place already-vulnerable transgender and gender nonconforming people at an even greater risk of harassment, violence, and personal health problems. City leaders should not delay in carrying out their duty to protect the health, safety, and wellbeing of all residents by ensuring that everyone has equal access to sex-segregated facilities.

Starting in 2018 the MEI will reward cities for laws that require all single-occupancy facilities to be designated for use by all genders.

SEE PAGE 66

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 LGBTQ 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 designed to **understand the unique situation** of each city and is structured to reward the specific achievements of a local government.

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 LGBTQ 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 LGBTQ people living and working in a particular place?

ANSWER

This last point is to recognize that 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 LGBTQ 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 LGBTQ 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 LGBTQ person walking down the street. While some LGBTQ people may prefer to live in cities that respect and include them, there are undoubtedly many other factors that make a community 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 LGBTQ 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 LGBTQ 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 (2010 population according to the US Census: 1,327) and as large as New York City (2010 population according to the US Census: 8,175,136). 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 LGBTQ 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 "Inclusive Workplace" bonus points for LGBTQ-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 over the past several editions shows these efforts to accommodate small cities worked: small cities were able to score comparably with the large cities.

More than half of the cities rated qualify as "small", and these continue to be represented more or less proportionally across the range of scores, including perfect scores. In every edition the data has clearly showed that a city's score is not well predicted by its size.

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



THE IMPERATIVE OF RESPONSIBLE HATE CRIME REPORTING

WHAT ARE HATE CRIMES?

Sometimes called bias-motivated crimes, hate crimes are criminal offenses carried out based on a bias against a protected characteristic. Historically, the U.S. Department of Justice (DOJ) had jurisdiction over only violent crimes that were committed on the basis of race, color, religion or national origin. The passage of the **Matthew Shepard and James Byrd, Jr., Hate Crimes Prevention Act of 2009** expanded this authority by:

- Adding the protected characteristics of actual or perceived sexual orientation, gender identity, disability, and gender;
- Enabling DOJ to assist state and local jurisdictions with investigations and prosecutions of bias-motivated crimes of violence, as well as provide grants to cover the costs of investigating and prosecuting hate crimes;
- Authorizing federal grants for local programs to combat hate crimes committed by juveniles, as well as programs that train local law enforcement officers to identify, investigate, prosecute, and prevent hate crimes; and
- Requiring the Federal Bureau of Investigation (FBI) to track statistics on hate crimes based on gender and gender identity (in addition to already-tracked statistics on sexual orientation and other protected characteristics).

For data collection purposes, the FBI defines hate crimes as a "criminal offense against a person or property motivated in whole or in part by an offender's bias against a race, religion, disability, sexual orientation, ethnicity, gender, or gender identity."¹

In addition to the federal government, the vast majority of states have their own hate crime laws that protect varying classifications and impose differing reporting requirements.

IMPORTANCE OF HATE CRIME DATA COLLECTION

Hate crime statistics collection is vital for many reasons. First, hate crimes data allow federal, state, and local officials to assess the severity and prevalence of bias-motivated crimes against vulnerable communities. With this information in hand, officials are better equipped to make the legislative and policy changes necessary to protect the safety of their most vulnerable residents. Additionally, centralized data collection disarms those who falsely assert that violence based on discrimination and prejudice is negligible or nonexistent.

Hate crime identification and reporting is particularly valuable to law enforcement officials. Equipped with knowledge of who is at heightened risk of hate based violence, law enforcement officials can devise trainings to educate their police force on those communities, increasing cultural awareness and competency. These trainings help officers accurately identify and appropriately investigate hate crimes. Additionally, complete and accurate data from municipalities allow the FBI to strategically appropriate their limited resources to develop the most useful and effective resources for law enforcement support and training. It further allows the FBI to engage in effective public outreach.

Last but certainly not least, accurate and complete FBI hate crime reports are invaluable tools for nonprofit organizations whose mission include education and advocacy on the issues of discrimination, prejudice, crime, and social justice.

Responsible hate crimes reporting is imperative to the larger law enforcement community's ability to accurately **gauge the scope of bias-motivated crimes and effectively address them.**

RESPONSIBLE HATE CRIME REPORTING

Under current federal law, annual reporting of hate crime incidents that take place within a city's jurisdiction is purely voluntary. According to a 2016 Associated Press study, nearly 17 percent of all city and county law enforcement agencies nationwide failed to report hate crimes data to the FBI in the prior six years.

Because reporting is not mandatory, it is imperative that municipal police departments take every step possible to ensure that their hate crimes data is transmitted to the FBI accurately and on time. Moreover, local legislators should ensure that city ordinances include provisions that require local police departments to identify and report hate crimes to state law enforcement agencies as well as the FBI.

Rules regarding if, when, and how cities must report hate crime data to state law enforcement agencies vary by state. Some state law enforcement agencies require local police departments to report hate crime data to the state, and others merely encourage it. In many states, it is common practice for the state to collect municipal hate crime data and forward the municipal data to the FBI. However, in some states, this multi-step reporting process has led to transmission errors that result in the FBI receiving inaccurate or no city data. Therefore, every locality can and should report their hate crime statistics directly to the FBI in addition to their state law enforcement agency to ensure that the FBI receives correct data in a timely fashion.

Local law enforcement agencies can submit their hate crime data directly to the FBI through the Uniform Crime Reporting Program. This should be done even if there are zero recorded hate crime incidents during a reporting period, since failure to report does not carry a presumption that zero hate crimes occurred during a reporting period. Not actively reporting statistics to the FBI will cause the City to be excluded from the respective FBI report for that reporting period.

Detailed training manuals on how to directly report hate crime statistics to the FBI can be found on the FBI website at <https://ucr.fbi.gov/ucr-program-data-collections>.

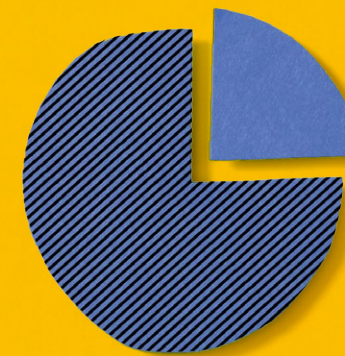
CONCLUSION

Responsible hate crimes reporting is imperative to the larger law enforcement community's ability to accurately gauge the scope of bias-motivated crimes and effectively address them. Moreover, centralized hate crime data proves invaluable to civil society and the vulnerable communities they serve. This is why responsible hate crimes reporting is weighed so heavily on the MEI. For more details on what qualifies as responsible hate crimes reporting for MEI credit, please see pg 26.



17%

OF CITY AND COUNTY LAW ENFORCEMENT AGENCIES NATIONWIDE FAILED TO REPORT HATE CRIME DATA TO THE FBI IN THE PRIOR SIX YEARS



76%

OF MEI RATED CITIES RESPONSIBLY REPORT HATE CRIMES STATISTICS TO THE FBI.

¹ <https://www.fbi.gov/investigate/civil-rights/hate-crimes>

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 LGBTQ 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 LGBTQ-inclusive state law by weighing 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.**

MEI ALL-STARS

High Scores in States Without Supportive Laws



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 nondiscrimination protections than those offered under state law) to LGBTQ-inclusive legislation.

An example of restrictive legislation is a Tennessee law that prohibits municipalities from passing nondiscrimination ordinances that affect private 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.

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 LGBTQ 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 quality 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 LGBTQ people—even those living in 100 point cities—face every day.

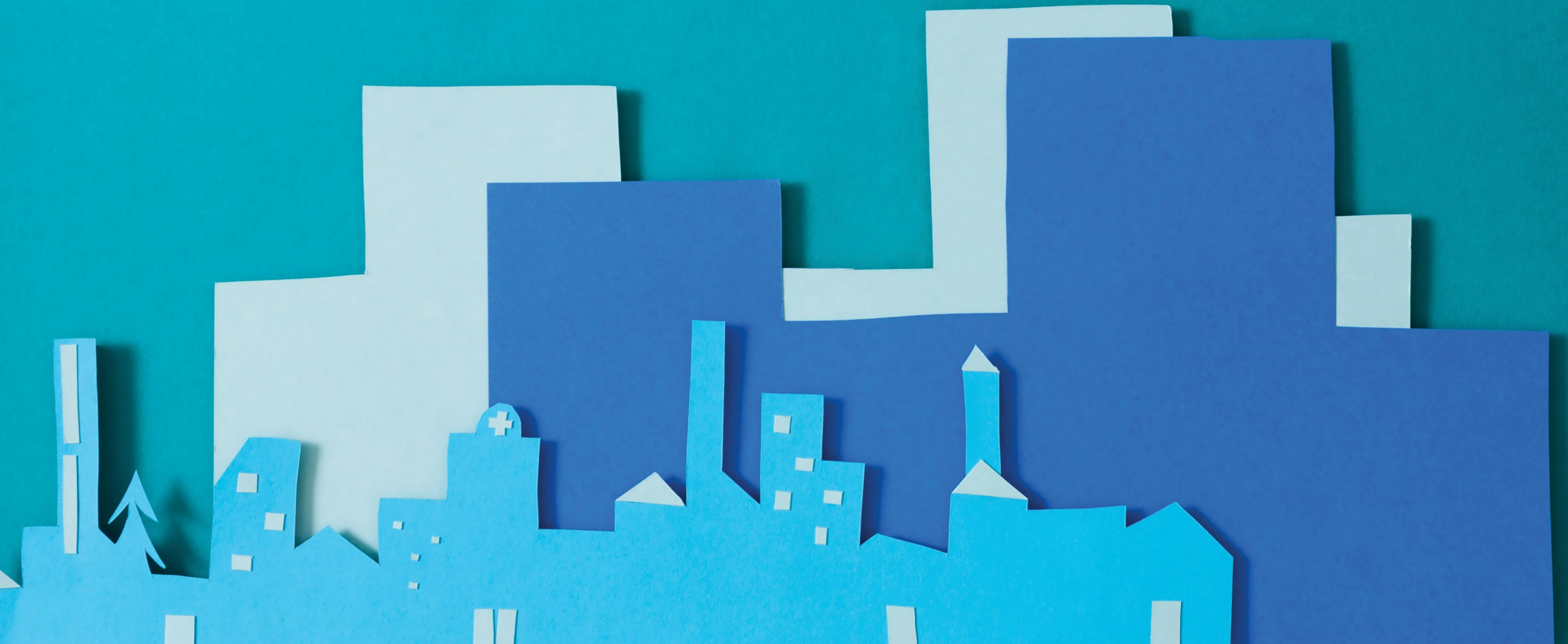
The MEI can make some limited, blunt judgments about the existence of enforcement, if not its quality. For example, one of the harder questions the MEI faces is evaluating how seriously police departments take anti-LGBTQ related violence. While the MEI awards points to cities that report hate crimes 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 be an atmosphere in which LGBTQ people have intense fear of tangling with the police department. This fear may be magnified for LGBTQ people of color or undocumented LGBTQ 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 LGBTQ person's lived experience in that city.

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

WHAT WE FOUND



SUCCESS STORY: PITTSBURGH, PENNSYLVANIA

When Mayor Peduto took office in 2014, he brought a mandate with him that forever changes the culture of our city government. His vision to make Pittsburgh safe and welcoming for all residents—regardless of their sexual orientation, gender identity, and gender expression—guides our endeavors.

Since the 2016 Presidential Election, Pittsburghers have steadfastly supported the Mayor's vision. Shortly after President Trump made his victory speech, residents called upon city government, urging the Mayor and Council to act quickly to protect our LGBTQ youth. Many expressed concerns that the Federal government could endorse conversion therapy.

I mobilized with staff from the Mayor's Office and Council, to craft and distribute a clear message: If your intent and action do not protect our youth, do not enable them to grow and prosper into young adults, it is not for us. We are fortunate to live in a progressive city where the people, their Councilmembers, and their Mayor place people above all.

I worked closely with two Councilmembers to craft and pass Pittsburgh's bill protecting youth from conversion therapy. Councilman Bruce Kraus, the City's first openly gay elected official, was a co-sponsor on the bill that was introduced by Councilman Dan Gilman.

All nine City Councilmembers unanimously voted in support of the bill, making it clear that regardless of the values held by the federal legislature and executive branch, in Pittsburgh we will continue to protect the rights of our residents.

When our city government enacted this bill, I knew that Pittsburgh will be a catalyst for our Commonwealth and our Nation.

COREY BUCKNER
Manager
Office of Community Affairs
Coordinator
Mayor's LGBTQIA+ Advisory Council

Regardless of the values held by the federal legislature and executive branch, in Pittsburgh we will **continue to protect the rights of our residents.**



SUMMARY OF RESULTS

Each year since the MEI's debut in 2012, the number of perfect-scoring cities have risen. This year is no different. The 2017 MEI shows that cities all around the country understand that LGBTQ equality cannot wait—that true inclusivity is a moral and economic imperative that cannot and should not wait on slower-moving higher-levels of government. Given that this is the first year that both MEI criteria and rated cities remained unchanged from the year prior, this report directly demonstrates the encouraging and steady pro-equality trend of cities of all makeups and sizes.

LANDSCAPE OF MUNICIPAL EQUALITY

Nondiscrimination Protections
One key finding of this year's report is that cities continued to enact crucial citywide protections for their residents and visitors, despite the wave of anti-LGBTQ legislation introduced in state legislatures and the concerted rollback of federal LGBTQ safeguards this past year.

Wheeling, West Virginia and Carlisle, Pennsylvania took the bold step of passing LGBTQ-inclusive protections in private employment, housing, and public accommodations this legislative cycle.

In the South, pro-equality efforts led to historic progress. Last year, Jackson, Mississippi became the first city in the state to pass comprehensive LGBTQ-inclusive nondiscrimination protections. This year, Birmingham became the first city in Alabama to enact an LGBTQ-inclusive nondiscrimination ordinance that safeguards residents in all areas of life.

Administrative Progress

In addition to legislative changes, cities modified their administrative policies to safeguard city employees and city contractors' employees from discrimination. This year, eighteen cities updated their equal employment opportunity policies to expressly include sexual orientation and gender identity, and thirteen extended the same employment nondiscrimination requirements to businesses they contract with.

Moreover, twenty-five cities revised their city employee healthcare plan to explicitly cover transgender-related healthcare services. This brings the total number of municipalities offering transgender-inclusive healthcare benefits to an impressive 111 cities (22% of all 506 cities rated), up from 86 in 2016.

LGBTQ Liaisons

Appointing LGBTQ liaisons in the city executive's office and police department sends a clear message to the local LGBTQ community that they are acknowledged and respected, and affirms that their voices will be heard.

Nearly 57 million people currently live in cities with either an LGBTQ liaison in the city executive's office or city police department. That's more than 60% of the total population of MEI-rated cities. These small, medium, and large cities alike are situated in every region of the country.

For the first time ever, 100% of perfect-scoring cities have LGBTQ police liaisons. Of these sixty-eight 100-point cities, sixty-five have LGBTQ liaisons in the city executive's office.

Lastly, cities with LGBTQ liaisons scored better than cities without LGBTQ liaisons. In both cases, cities with LGBTQ city executive liaisons and cities with LGBTQ police liaisons attained an average nearly twice as high as their counterparts with no liaisons.

EQUALITY ACROSS AMERICA

This year's data reaffirms the fact that localities everywhere in the nation, of all sizes, possess the ability to make their laws, policies, and services more inclusive of LGBTQ people and rank well on the MEI.

See **MEI All Star Map** on Pg. 37

Pro-equality municipal progress over the past year is distinctly evident when examined by state and region. Compared to 2016, thirty-six state averages increased and 3 held steady.

- Cities in Alaska, North Dakota, Delaware, Kentucky, Maryland, and Ohio increased by an average of 4 points.
- Cities in Florida, Kansas, Pennsylvania, Wisconsin, Colorado, and Connecticut increased by an average of 5 points.
- Cities in New Jersey and West Virginia increased by an average of 7 points.
- Cities in Iowa increased by an average of 8 points.
- Cities in Alabama increased by an average of 17 points.

Alabama's city average grew the most, increasing by 17 points since the 2016 report. MEI-rated Iowa cities came in just behind Alabama cities with an 8-point average increase, and MEI-rated cities in New Jersey and West Virginia followed suit with a statewide city average increase of 7 points.

This upward trend is mirrored when this year's data is viewed through a regional lens. Every region of the country experienced a mean score increase. MEI cities in the Southeast demonstrated the largest average score growth, rising by four points from a mean of 39 in 2016 to 43 in 2017.

The overall increase in city scores caused this year's national city average to rise from 55 in 2016 to 57 points.

Forty-one "All-Star" Cities—those that scored above eighty-five points despite being in a state with no state-level LGBTQ protections—emerged this year. This is up from thirty-seven in 2016 and marks a new record for the MEI. These All-Star cities hail from Arizona, Florida, Georgia, Indiana, Kentucky, Louisiana, Michigan, Missouri, Montana, Ohio, Pennsylvania, Texas, Virginia, and West Virginia. About a fifth of these All-Stars were small cities with populations below 80,500.

Sixty-eight municipalities earned perfect scores, a noteworthy rise over last year's record of sixty hundred-point cities. This distinguished contingent is marked by geographic, political, and demographic diversity.

100-point cities come from every region of the country. Most perfect scores (twenty-one) came out of the West region, which includes Alaska, Arizona, California, Hawaii, Nevada, Oregon, and Washington. However, the highest proportion of 100s to cities rated was the Great Lakes region, with nearly 1 in 4 cities rated attaining the MEI's top mark. Small and medium-sized cities accounted for more than 60% of perfect scores.

CONCLUSION: NEW HEIGHTS

Many new milestones emerged from the 2017 MEI. Nine cities reached the 100-point mark this year for the first time, bringing the perfect-point city record to a new high of 68 municipalities. A record 111 municipalities now offer their employees transgender-inclusive healthcare benefits, and the number of All-Star cities peaked to a new apex of 41. In the south, Birmingham made history and became the first city in Alabama to pass comprehensive LGBTQ-inclusive protections.

This edition of the MEI also celebrated the most LGBTQ city executive liaisons (134) and LGBTQ police liaisons (148) ever appointed. Encouragingly, this year also brought about the most municipalities with openly LGBTQ appointed or elected senior officials (132).

This remarkable, sustained pro-equality progress could not be possible without tenacious city leaders willing to do the right thing, right now. During a time when opponents of equality on the state and federal levels are rolling back hard-fought LGBTQ protections, it is more vital than ever for city leaders to speak out against inequality and do everything in their power to protect their citizens from prejudice and discrimination.

The 2017 MEI shows that cities all around the country understand that **LGBTQ equality cannot wait.**

SUCCESS STORY: BIRMINGHAM, ALABAMA

Birmingham's place in history will forever be tied to the struggle for human rights. Now, more than fifty years after the Voting Rights Act was signed into law by President Lyndon B. Johnson, basic civil rights—which every single person on the planet deserves—are still under attack.

We see it nationally and we see it on a state level with places like North Carolina passing a bill that forces people to use bathrooms that are inconsistent with their gender identity. That bill ultimately led to the ouster of the then incumbent Republican governor because citizens stood up and said "No." Our actions matter.

Why lawmakers continue to focus on an individual's sexuality or how a single person identifies is beyond me. What I do know is this: in order to keep moving forward, bold steps need to be taken to ensure every single person has equal protection under the law. Anything short of that is an affront to what this country claims to stand for.

The passage of the nondiscrimination ordinance in Birmingham was one such step. But the fight is not over. Now, all Birmingham citizens, regardless of race, nationality, sex, disability, familial status, sexual orientation or gender identity, have a legal path toward relief from discrimination. The ordinance makes it unlawful to discriminate against others, whereas before our LGBTQ family had no legal recourse to fight back against intolerant and unfair treatment. The newly created 11-member human rights commission will be instrumental in identifying entities that choose to traffic in bigotry and help hold them accountable for their actions.

I could not be more proud to have worked with an amazing assortment of advocates and groups like the Human Rights Campaign who continue to fight for equality, even if the road seems bleak at times. These victories are what give us hope and carry us through these uncertain times of renewed bigotry and bluster.






JOHNATHAN F. AUSTIN
President
Birmingham City Council



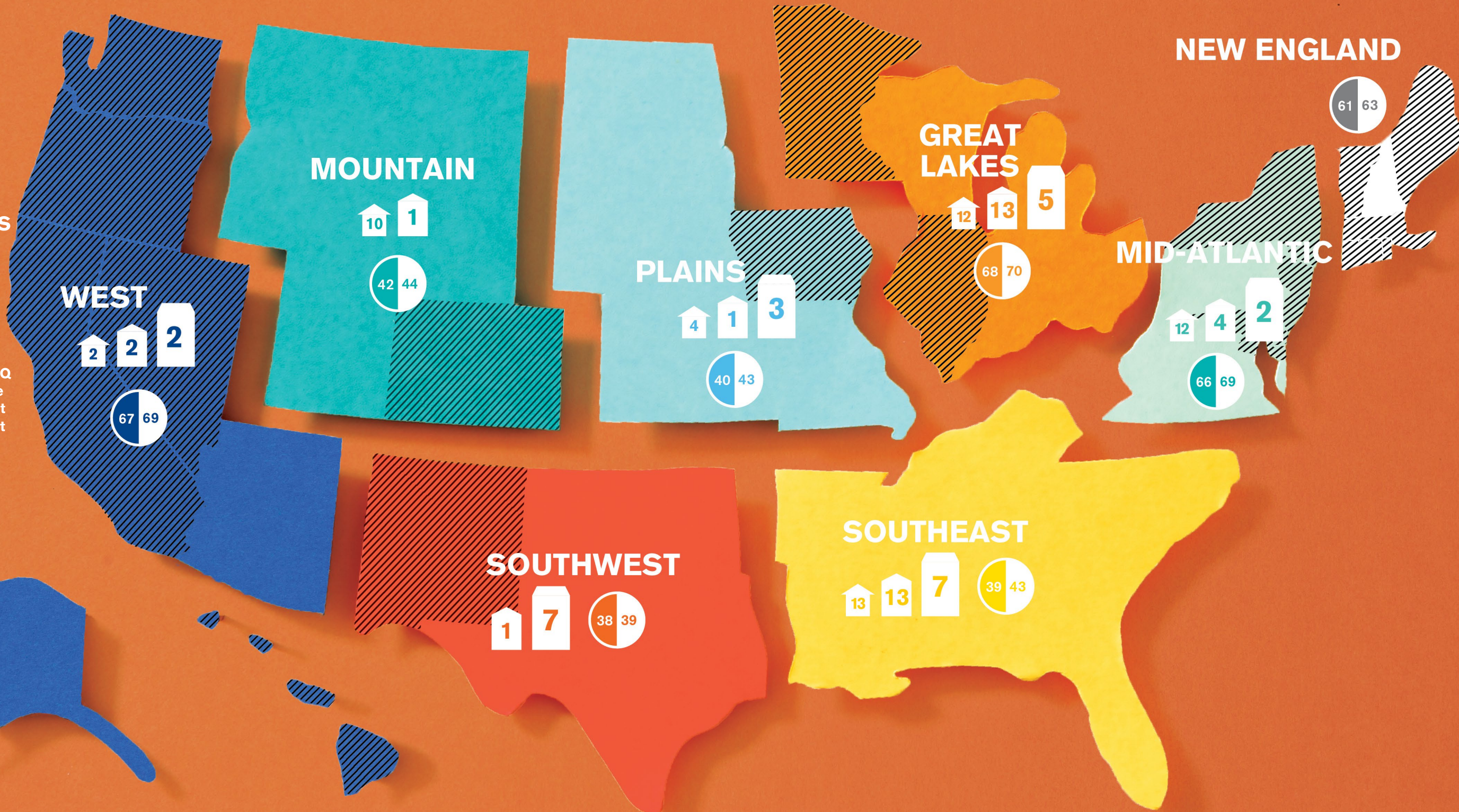
In order to keep moving forward, **bold steps need to be taken** to ensure every single person has equal protection under the law.

EQUALITY ACROSS AMERICA

114 MEI cities have citywide local LGBTQ nondiscrimination protections that go beyond state law

-  number of **SMALL CITIES**
-  number of **MEDIUM CITIES**
-  number of **LARGE CITIES**
-  This state has comprehensive LGBTQ protections statewide and therefore was not counted in this cohort
-  2016 regional average score

2017 regional average score



SCORES

STATE	CITY	I. Non-Discrimination Laws	II. Municipality as Employer	III. Municipal Services	IV. Law Enforcement	V. Relationship with LGBTQ Community	STANDARD POINTS	BONUS POINTS	FINAL SCORE
ALABAMA	Auburn	○	○	○	○	○	0	4	4
	Birmingham	●	◐	◑	◑	●	79	4	83
	Florence	○	○	○	◑	○	12	0	12
	Hoover	○	○	◑	◑	○	18	0	18
	Huntsville	○	◑	◑	○	○	17	0	17
	Mobile	○	○	◑	○	○	5	4	9
	Montgomery	○	◑	◑	◑	◑	23	0	23
	Tuscaloosa	○	◑	◑	◑	◑	32	2	34
ALASKA	Anchorage	●	◑	◑	◑	●	81	4	85
	Fairbanks	○	◑	◑	◑	◑	35	0	35
	Homer	○	○	○	○	◑	5	2	7
	Juneau	●	◑	◑	◑	●	73	2	75
	Ketchikan	○	○	◑	○	○	3	0	3
	Sitka	○	○	○	○	○	0	0	0
	Wasilla	○	○	○	○	○	0	0	0
ARIZONA	Avondale	○	○	◑	◑	○	15	0	15
	Chandler	○	◑	◑	●	◑	55	6	61
	Flagstaff	◑	◑	◑	◑	◑	63	4	67
	Gilbert	○	○	◑	◑	○	17	2	19
	Glendale	○	◑	◑	●	◑	59	4	63
	Mesa	○	◑	●	●	◑	58	2	60
	Peoria	○	◑	◑	◑	○	24	2	26
	Phoenix	●	●	◑	●	●	97	14	100
	Scottsdale	○	◑	◑	●	◑	53	12	65
	Tempe	●	●	◑	●	●	97	12	100
	Tucson	●	●	●	●	●	100	12	100
ARKANSAS	Conway	○	◑	◑	◑	◑	34	0	34
	Eureka Springs	●	◑	◑	○	●	62	6	68
	Fayetteville	●	◑	◑	○	●	61	6	67
	Fort Smith	○	○	◑	◑	○	18	2	20
	Jonesboro	○	○	◑	◑	○	18	0	18
	Little Rock	○	◑	◑	◑	●	37	8	45
	North Little Rock	○	○	◑	◑	◑	20	0	20
	Springdale	○	○	◑	○	○	6	0	6

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SCORES

STATE	CITY	I. Non-Discrimination	II. Municipality as Employer	III. Services and Programs	IV. Law Enforcement	V. Relationship with LGBTQ Community	REGULAR POINTS	BONUS POINTS	FINAL SCORE
CALIFORNIA	Anaheim	●	●	◑	◑	◑	76	4	80
	Bakersfield	●	◑	◑	◑	◑	60	0	60
	Berkeley	●	●	◑	◑	●	85	10	95
	Brisbane	●	◑	◑	◑	○	54	0	54
	Cathedral City	●	●	◑	●	●	95	10	100
	Chula Vista	●	◑	◑	●	◑	80	6	86
	Concord	●	◑	◑	◑	○	59	8	67
	Corona	●	◑	◑	◑	○	60	0	60
	Elk Grove	●	●	◑	◑	○	77	0	77
	Escondido	●	◑	◑	◑	○	60	0	60
	Fontana	●	◑	◑	◑	○	60	0	60
	Fremont	●	◑	●	◑	◑	82	4	86
	Fresno	●	◑	◑	◑	○	57	0	57
	Fullerton	●	◑	◑	◑	○	74	2	76
	Garden Grove	●	◑	◑	◑	○	59	2	61
	Glendale	●	◑	◑	◑	◑	65	0	65
	Guerneville (Sonoma County)	●	◑	●	●	◑	92	10	100
	Hayward	●	◑	◑	◑	◑	65	2	67
	Huntington Beach	●	◑	◑	◑	○	59	2	61
	Irvine	●	◑	●	●	◑	77	6	83
	Lancaster	●	◑	◑	●	◑	76	2	78
	Long Beach	●	●	●	●	●	100	10	100
	Los Angeles	●	●	●	●	●	100	14	100
	Modesto	●	◑	◑	◑	○	59	0	59
	Moreno Valley	●	◑	◑	◑	○	60	0	60
	Oakland	●	◑	◑	◑	◑	80	4	84
	Oceanside	●	◑	◑	●	◑	89	12	100
	Ontario	●	◑	◑	◑	○	54	0	54
	Orange	●	◑	◑	◑	○	71	0	71
	Oxnard	●	○	◑	◑	○	53	0	53
	Palm Desert	●	◑	◑	◑	○	66	6	72
	Palm Springs	●	●	◑	●	●	95	14	100
	Palmdale	●	◑	◑	◑	○	71	0	71
Pasadena	●	●	◑	◑	◑	80	4	84	
Pomona	●	●	◑	◑	○	72	0	72	
Rancho Cucamonga	●	◑	◑	◑	○	54	0	54	
Rancho Mirage	●	●	◑	●	◑	91	12	100	

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SCORES

STATE	CITY	I. Non-Discrimination Laws	II. Municipality as Employer	III. Municipal Services	IV. Law Enforcement	V. Relationship with LGBTQ Community	STANDARD POINTS	BONUS POINTS	FINAL SCORE	
CALIFORNIA	Richmond	●	◐	●	◐	◐	80	4	84	
	Riverside	●	◐	◐	◐	○	65	0	65	
	Sacramento	●	●	◐	●	◐	93	8	100	
	Salinas	●	◐	◐	◐	○	55	0	55	
	San Bernardino	●	◐	◐	◐	○	59	2	61	
	San Diego	●	●	●	●	●	100	10	100	
	San Francisco	●	●	●	●	●	100	16	100	
	San Jose	●	●	●	●	●	100	6	100	
	Santa Ana	●	◐	◐	◐	◐	63	0	63	
	Santa Clarita	●	◐	◐	◐	○	65	0	65	
	Santa Monica	●	◐	◐	◐	◐	78	0	78	
	Santa Rosa	●	◐	◐	◐	●	81	6	87	
	Signal Hill	●	●	●	◐	◐	83	14	97	
	Stockton	●	◐	◐	●	○	70	0	70	
	Sunnyvale	●	◐	◐	◐	◐	73	0	73	
	Thousand Oaks	●	◐	◐	◐	◐	61	0	61	
	Torrance	●	◐	◐	◐	◐	66	0	66	
	Vallejo	●	●	◐	◐	◐	81	0	81	
Visalia	●	◐	◐	◐	◐	62	0	62		
West Hollywood	●	●	●	●	●	100	14	100		
COLORADO	Aspen	●	◐	◐	◐	○	66	4	70	
	Aurora	●	◐	◐	◐	◐	60	0	60	
	Boulder	●	◐	◐	◐	◐	76	10	86	
	Colorado Springs	●	○	◐	◐	○	53	0	53	
	Denver	●	◐	●	●	●	94	6	100	
	Fort Collins	●	◐	●	●	◐	76	2	78	
	Lakewood	●	◐	◐	◐	○	60	0	60	
	Littleton	●	○	◐	◐	○	48	0	48	
	CONNECTICUT	Bridgeport	●	○	◐	◐	◐	52	0	52
		Fairfield	●	◐	◐	◐	○	54	0	54
Hartford		●	◐	●	●	◐	92	4	96	
New Britain		●	◐	◐	◐	◐	69	6	75	
New Haven		●	◐	●	●	◐	90	4	94	
Norwalk		●	◐	◐	◐	◐	67	12	79	
Stamford		●	●	●	●	●	100	6	100	
Storrs (Mansfield)		●	◐	◐	◐	○	54	0	54	

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SCORES

STATE	CITY	I. Non-Discrimination	II. Municipality as Employer	III. Services and Programs	IV. Law Enforcement	V. Relationship with LGBTQ Community	REGULAR POINTS	BONUS POINTS	FINAL SCORE	
CONNECTICUT	Waterbury	●	◐	◐	◐	○	65	4	69	
	DELAWARE	Bethany Beach	●	◐	◐	◐	○	54	0	54
		Dover	●	◐	◐	◐	○	59	0	59
		Middletown	●	○	◐	○	○	36	0	36
		Milford	●	○	◐	◐	○	48	0	48
		Newark	●	◐	◐	◐	○	60	0	60
		Rehoboth Beach	●	◐	◐	◐	○	60	2	62
		Smyrna	●	○	◐	◐	○	48	0	48
Wilmington		●	◐	●	●	◐	85	2	87	
FLORIDA	Cape Coral	○	◐	◐	◐	◐	39	0	39	
	Coral Gables	●	◐	◐	◐	○	59	2	61	
	Daytona Beach	●	○	○	○	○	30	0	30	
	Fort Lauderdale	●	◐	◐	●	◐	79	8	87	
	Gainesville	●	◐	●	●	◐	93	6	99	
	Hialeah	●	◐	◐	○	○	47	2	49	
	Hollywood	●	◐	◐	◐	○	65	2	67	
	Jacksonville	●	◐	◐	○	◐	65	2	67	
	Miami	●	◐	◐	◐	○	57	2	59	
	Miami Shores	●	◐	●	●	◐	89	2	91	
	Oakland Park	●	●	●	◐	◐	91	8	99	
	Orlando	●	●	●	●	●	100	14	100	
	Pembroke Pines	●	◐	◐	◐	◐	76	2	78	
	Port Saint Lucie	○	◐	○	◐	◐	29	2	31	
	St. Petersburg	◐	◐	●	●	●	91	12	100	
	Tallahassee	●	◐	●	●	◐	94	6	100	
Tampa	●	◐	●	◐	●	76	10	86		
Wilton Manors	●	◐	●	●	●	94	14	100		
GEORGIA	Athens	○	◐	◐	◐	◐	33	0	33	
	Atlanta	●	●	●	●	●	100	4	100	
	Augusta-Richmond	○	○	○	◐	◐	12	2	14	
	Avondale Estates	○	◐	◐	○	◐	24	0	24	
	Columbus	○	◐	◐	○	◐	32	2	34	
	Decatur	○	◐	●	◐	◐	49	2	51	
	North Druid Hills	○	○	◐	○	○	6	0	6	
	Roswell	◐	○	◐	○	○	11	0	11	

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SCORES

STATE	CITY	I. Non-Discrimination Laws	II. Municipality as Employer	III. Municipal Services	IV. Law Enforcement	V. Relationship with LGBTQ Community	STANDARD POINTS	BONUS POINTS	FINAL SCORE
GEORGIA	Sandy Springs	🟡	🟡	🟡	🟡	🟡	22	0	22
	Savannah	🟡	🟢	🟡	🟡	🟢	42	2	44
HAWAII	Hawaii County	🟢	🟡	🟡	🟡	🟡	55	0	55
	Honolulu County	🟢	🟡	🟡	🟡	🟡	45	0	45
	Kalawao County	🟢	🟡	🟡	🟡	🟡	36	0	36
	Kauai County	🟢	🟡	🟡	🟡	🟡	44	0	44
	Maui County	🟢	🟡	🟡	🟡	🟡	54	0	54
IDAHO	Boise	🟢	🟡	🟡	🟢	🟡	71	0	71
	Coeur d'Alene	🟢	🟡	🟡	🟡	🟡	66	0	66
	Idaho Falls	🟡	🟡	🟡	🟡	🟡	41	0	41
	Meridian	🟡	🟡	🟡	🟡	🟡	24	0	24
	Moscow	🟢	🟡	🟡	🟡	🟡	57	0	57
	Nampa	🟡	🟡	🟡	🟡	🟡	18	0	18
	Pocatello	🟢	🟡	🟡	🟢	🟡	75	0	75
ILLINOIS	Aurora	🟢	🟡	🟡	🟢	🟡	75	4	79
	Carbondale	🟢	🟡	🟡	🟡	🟡	50	0	50
	Champaign	🟢	🟡	🟢	🟡	🟡	73	6	79
	Chicago	🟢	🟢	🟡	🟢	🟢	95	8	100
	Joliet	🟢	🟡	🟢	🟢	🟡	76	2	78
	Naperville	🟢	🟡	🟡	🟡	🟡	42	0	42
	Peoria	🟢	🟡	🟡	🟡	🟡	65	2	67
	Rockford	🟢	🟡	🟡	🟡	🟡	61	0	61
	Springfield	🟢	🟡	🟡	🟡	🟡	63	2	65
INDIANA	Bloomington	🟢	🟢	🟢	🟢	🟢	100	6	100
	Evansville	🟢	🟡	🟡	🟡	🟢	66	4	70
	Fort Wayne	🟡	🟡	🟡	🟡	🟡	40	2	42
	Hammond	🟢	🟡	🟡	🟡	🟢	67	2	69
	Indianapolis	🟢	🟡	🟡	🟢	🟡	82	6	88
	Muncie	🟢	🟡	🟡	🟡	🟢	55	0	55
	South Bend	🟢	🟡	🟡	🟡	🟡	74	4	78
	Terre Haute	🟢	🟡	🟡	🟡	🟡	41	0	41
	West Lafayette	🟡	🟡	🟡	🟡	🟡	55	2	57

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SCORES

STATE	CITY	I. Non-Discrimination	II. Municipality as Employer	III. Services and Programs	IV. Law Enforcement	V. Relationship with LGBTQ Community	REGULAR POINTS	BONUS POINTS	FINAL SCORE
IOWA	Ames	🟢	🟡	🟢	🟢	🟡	82	2	84
	Cedar Rapids	🟢	🟢	🟢	🟢	🟢	100	4	100
	Davenport	🟢	🟡	🟢	🟢	🟡	90	12	100
	Des Moines	🟢	🟡	🟢	🟢	🟡	93	4	97
	Dubuque	🟢	🟡	🟢	🟢	🟡	88	6	94
	Iowa City	🟢	🟢	🟢	🟡	🟢	88	12	100
	Sioux City	🟢	🟡	🟡	🟢	🟡	85	6	91
	Waterloo	🟢	🟡	🟡	🟡	🟡	65	2	67
	West Des Moines	🟢	🟡	🟢	🟡	🟡	77	2	79
	KANSAS	Emporia	🟡	🟡	🟡	🟡	🟡	23	0
Hutchinson		🟡	🟡	🟡	🟡	🟡	32	0	32
Kansas City		🟡	🟡	🟡	🟡	🟡	35	0	35
Lawrence		🟢	🟡	🟡	🟡	🟡	66	8	74
Manhattan		🟢	🟡	🟡	🟡	🟢	55	2	57
Olathe		🟡	🟡	🟡	🟡	🟡	5	2	7
Overland Park		🟡	🟡	🟡	🟡	🟡	17	2	19
Topeka		🟡	🟡	🟡	🟡	🟡	35	0	35
Wichita		🟡	🟡	🟡	🟢	🟡	31	0	31
KENTUCKY		Berea	🟡	🟡	🟡	🟡	🟡	33	0
	Bowling Green	🟡	🟡	🟡	🟡	🟡	17	0	17
	Covington	🟡	🟡	🟡	🟢	🟡	70	4	74
	Frankfort	🟡	🟡	🟡	🟡	🟡	48	4	52
	Lexington	🟢	🟡	🟡	🟢	🟢	84	8	92
	Louisville	🟢	🟡	🟢	🟢	🟢	94	12	100
	Morehead	🟢	🟡	🟡	🟡	🟡	59	0	59
	Owensboro	🟡	🟡	🟡	🟡	🟡	18	0	18
	LOUISIANA	Alexandria	🟡	🟡	🟡	🟡	🟡	30	8
Baton Rouge		🟡	🟡	🟡	🟡	🟡	30	6	36
Lafayette		🟡	🟡	🟡	🟡	🟡	12	0	12
Lake Charles		🟡	🟡	🟡	🟡	🟡	6	0	6
Metairie		🟡	🟡	🟡	🟡	🟡	16	4	20
Monroe		🟡	🟡	🟡	🟡	🟡	0	0	0
New Orleans		🟢	🟡	🟡	🟡	🟡	75	14	89
Shreveport		🟢	🟡	🟡	🟡	🟢	73	2	75

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MAINE	Auburn	●	◐	◑	◑	◑	55	0	55
	Augusta	●	◐	◑	◑	◑	57	0	57
	Bangor	●	◐	◑	◑	◑	59	0	59
	Brunswick	●	◐	◑	○	○	42	0	42
	Lewiston	●	◐	◑	◑	○	54	0	54
	Orono	●	○	◑	○	○	36	0	36
	Portland	●	◑	◑	●	●	80	0	80
	Scarborough	●	◑	◑	◑	○	60	6	66
	South Portland	●	◑	◑	◑	○	60	0	60
MARYLAND	Annapolis	●	◐	◑	◑	◑	61	4	65
	Baltimore	●	◑	◑	●	●	89	12	100
	Bowie	●	◐	◑	◑	○	59	2	61
	College Park	●	◑	◑	◑	●	79	8	87
	Columbia	●	◐	◑	◑	○	59	0	59
	Frederick	●	●	●	●	●	100	4	100
	Gaithersburg	●	◑	◑	○	◑	57	2	59
	Hagerstown	●	○	◑	○	◑	38	0	38
	Rockville	●	◑	●	●	◑	95	6	100
	Towson	●	◑	●	●	◑	92	4	96
MASSACHUSETTS	Amherst	●	◑	◑	◑	○	65	2	67
	Arlington	●	◑	●	◑	●	86	8	94
	Boston	●	●	●	●	●	100	10	100
	Cambridge	●	●	●	●	●	100	14	100
	Lowell	●	◐	◑	◑	○	54	0	54
	Northampton	●	◑	◑	●	◑	81	8	89
	Provincetown	●	◑	●	●	◑	94	6	100
	Salem	●	●	●	●	●	100	4	100
	Springfield	●	◑	◑	◑	◑	65	0	65
	Worcester	●	◑	●	●	◑	91	12	100
MICHIGAN	Ann Arbor	●	●	●	●	●	100	8	100
	Detroit	◑	●	●	●	◑	96	8	100
	East Lansing	●	◑	●	●	●	94	10	100
	Ferndale	●	◑	◑	●	●	86	8	94
	Grand Rapids	●	◑	◐	◑	◑	70	6	76
	Kalamazoo	●	◐	◑	◑	◑	63	2	65

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SCORES

STATE	CITY	I. Non-Discrimination	II. Municipality as Employer	III. Services and Programs	IV. Law Enforcement	V. Relationship with LGBTQ Community	REGULAR POINTS	BONUS POINTS	FINAL SCORE	
MICHIGAN	Lansing	●	◐	◑	◑	◑	63	2	65	
	Pleasant Ridge	●	◐	◑	◑	◑	56	0	56	
	Sterling Heights	◐	○	◑	◑	◑	28	0	28	
	Traverse City	●	◑	◑	●	◑	84	2	86	
	Warren	◐	○	○	◑	○	16	0	16	
	MINNESOTA	Bloomington	●	◐	◑	○	○	47	0	47
Duluth		●	◐	◑	◑	◑	64	2	66	
Eden Prairie		●	◑	◑	◑	○	62	0	62	
Minneapolis		●	●	●	●	●	100	2	100	
Minnetonka		●	○	◑	◑	○	48	0	48	
Rochester		●	◑	◑	◑	◑	63	0	63	
Saint Cloud		●	◐	◑	◑	○	59	0	59	
Saint Paul		●	●	●	●	◑	99	4	100	
MISSISSIPPI	Bay St. Louis	○	○	○	○	◑	4	0	4	
	Biloxi	○	○	○	○	◑	4	2	6	
	Gulfport	○	○	○	○	◑	2	2	4	
	Hattiesburg	○	○	○	○	◑	5	0	5	
	Jackson	●	◑	◑	○	●	67	4	71	
	Ocean Springs	○	○	○	○	◑	4	0	4	
	Oxford	○	○	○	○	◑	4	0	4	
	Southaven	○	○	○	○	○	0	0	0	
	Starkville	○	○	○	○	◑	2	0	2	
	MISSOURI	Cape Girardeau	○	○	◐	○	○	3	0	3
Columbia		●	◑	●	●	●	96	6	100	
Independence		○	○	◐	◑	◑	18	0	18	
Jefferson City		○	○	○	○	○	0	0	0	
Kansas City		●	◑	◑	●	●	91	12	100	
Springfield		○	○	◐	◑	◑	19	2	21	
St. Charles		◑	◐	◐	◑	○	38	0	38	
St. Louis		●	●	◑	●	●	97	14	100	
MONTANA		Billings	○	○	◐	◑	◑	18	0	18
		Bozeman	●	◑	○	○	◑	55	4	59
	Butte-Silver Bow	●	◐	◑	○	○	42	0	42	
	Great Falls	○	○	○	◑	○	12	0	12	

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STATE	CITY	I. Non-Discrimination Laws	II. Municipality as Employer	III. Municipal Services	IV. Law Enforcement	V. Relationship with LGBTQ Community	STANDARD POINTS	BONUS POINTS	FINAL SCORE
MONTANA	Helena	●	●	●	●	●	60	0	60
	Kalispell	○	○	●	●	○	18	0	18
	Missoula	●	●	●	●	●	95	6	100
	Whitefish	●	○	○	○	●	38	0	38
NEBRASKA	Bellevue	○	○	●	○	○	6	0	6
	Fremont	○	○	○	●	○	12	0	12
	Grand Island	○	●	○	●	●	19	0	19
	Kearney	○	○	●	●	○	18	0	18
	Lincoln	○	●	●	●	●	46	6	52
	North Platte	○	○	○	●	○	12	0	12
	Omaha	●	●	●	●	●	70	2	72
NEVADA	Carson City	●	●	●	○	○	54	2	56
	Elko	●	●	●	○	○	54	0	54
	Enterprise	●	●	●	●	●	95	6	100
	Henderson	●	●	●	●	●	58	0	58
	Las Vegas	●	●	●	●	●	93	14	100
	Mesquite	●	○	○	○	○	37	0	37
	North Las Vegas	●	●	●	●	○	54	0	54
	Paradise	●	●	●	●	●	95	6	100
	Reno	●	●	●	●	●	85	2	87
Sparks	●	●	○	○	○	51	0	51	
NEW HAMPSHIRE	Concord	●	●	●	○	○	39	0	39
	Derry	●	●	●	○	○	45	0	45
	Dover	●	●	●	○	○	49	0	49
	Durham	●	●	●	●	●	72	2	74
	Keene	●	●	○	○	○	42	2	44
	Manchester	●	●	●	○	○	39	0	39
	Nashua	●	●	○	○	○	28	0	28
	Plymouth	●	○	○	○	○	33	0	33
	Portsmouth	●	●	○	○	○	46	2	48
	Rochester	●	●	○	○	○	39	0	39
NEW JERSEY	Asbury Park	●	●	○	●	○	87	4	91
	Elizabeth	●	●	○	○	○	71	2	73

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NEW JERSEY	Hoboken	●	○	○	●	●	84	8	92
	Jersey City	●	●	●	●	●	100	4	100
	Lambertville	●	●	●	●	●	94	4	98
	Montclair	●	○	○	○	○	59	2	61
	New Brunswick	●	○	○	○	○	65	0	65
	Newark	●	○	○	○	○	70	0	70
	Ocean Grove	●	○	○	○	○	61	2	63
	Paterson	●	○	○	○	○	64	0	64
	Princeton	●	○	○	○	○	72	4	76
Trenton	●	○	○	○	○	65	4	69	
NEW MEXICO	Albuquerque	●	○	○	○	○	68	6	74
	Eldorado at Santa Fe	●	○	○	○	○	33	0	33
	Farmington	●	○	○	○	○	48	2	50
	Gallup	●	○	○	○	○	39	0	39
	Las Cruces	●	○	○	○	○	46	0	46
	Rio Rancho	●	○	○	○	○	45	0	45
	Roswell	●	○	○	○	○	48	0	48
	Santa Fe	●	○	○	○	○	59	6	65
NEW YORK	Albany	●	●	●	●	○	99	8	100
	Brookhaven	●	○	○	○	○	62	0	62
	Buffalo	●	●	○	○	○	85	10	95
	Ithaca	●	●	○	○	○	84	0	84
	New York	●	●	●	●	●	100	16	100
	Northwest Harbor	●	○	○	○	○	53	2	55
	Rochester	●	●	○	○	○	95	6	100
	Syracuse	●	○	○	○	○	82	12	94
	White Plains	●	○	○	○	○	83	4	87
Yonkers	●	○	○	○	○	95	6	100	
NORTH CAROLINA	Carrboro	○	○	○	○	○	59	12	71
	Cary	○	○	○	○	○	18	0	18
	Chapel Hill	○	○	○	○	○	50	16	66
	Charlotte	○	○	○	○	○	59	14	73
	Durham	○	○	○	○	○	55	14	69
	Fayetteville	○	○	○	○	○	23	0	23
	Greensboro	○	○	○	○	○	64	18	82

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NORTH CAROLINA	Raleigh	○	◐	●	◐	◐	52	8	60
	Wilmington	○	○	◐	◐	◐	21	0	21
	Winston-Salem	○	◐	●	◐	◐	38	10	48
NORTH DAKOTA	Bismarck	○	○	◐	◐	◐	21	0	21
	Fargo	○	◐	●	●	◐	47	16	63
	Grand Forks	◐	◐	◐	●	◐	56	0	56
	Jamestown	○	◐	○	○	○	6	0	6
	Mandan	○	◐	○	◐	○	18	0	18
	Minot	○	○	◐	◐	○	20	0	20
	West Fargo	○	○	○	◐	○	12	0	12
OHIO	Akron	●	◐	●	●	●	94	6	100
	Cincinnati	●	●	●	●	●	100	12	100
	Cleveland	●	◐	◐	◐	●	73	8	81
	Columbus	●	●	●	●	●	100	4	100
	Dayton	●	●	◐	●	◐	95	6	100
	Dublin	◐	●	◐	○	◐	45	0	45
	Lakewood	●	◐	◐	◐	●	73	4	77
	Toledo	●	◐	◐	●	●	85	4	89
OKLAHOMA	Broken Arrow	○	○	○	◐	○	12	0	12
	Edmond	○	◐	○	◐	○	18	2	20
	Lawton	○	○	◐	◐	○	17	0	17
	Moore	○	○	○	○	○	0	0	0
	Norman	○	◐	◐	◐	●	40	2	42
	Oklahoma City	◐	◐	◐	◐	◐	39	2	41
	Stillwater	○	○	○	○	○	0	0	0
	Tulsa	◐	◐	◐	○	●	32	2	34
OREGON	Ashland	●	◐	◐	○	○	42	4	46
	Bend	●	◐	◐	◐	◐	61	0	61
	Corvallis	●	◐	◐	◐	◐	66	2	68
	Eugene	●	●	◐	◐	◐	84	2	86
	Gresham	●	○	◐	○	○	36	0	36
	Hillsboro	●	◐	◐	○	○	48	0	48
	Portland	●	●	◐	◐	◐	82	6	88
	Salem	●	◐	●	●	◐	88	2	90

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PENNSYLVANIA	Allentown	●	◐	◐	●	●	91	10	100
	Carlisle	●	◐	◐	◐	●	70	2	72
	Erie	◐	○	◐	○	◐	37	2	39
	Harrisburg	●	◐	◐	○	◐	54	2	56
	New Hope	●	◐	●	◐	●	76	4	80
	Philadelphia	●	●	●	●	●	100	16	100
	Pittsburgh	●	●	◐	●	●	97	16	100
	Reading	●	◐	◐	◐	◐	64	2	66
	State College	●	◐	◐	◐	◐	71	2	73
Wilkes-Barre	●	◐	◐	○	●	58	4	62	
RHODE ISLAND	Cranston	●	○	◐	○	○	36	0	36
	East Providence	●	◐	◐	◐	◐	62	0	62
	Kingston	●	○	◐	○	○	36	0	36
	Narragansett	●	◐	◐	○	○	48	0	48
	Newport	●	◐	◐	◐	○	60	0	60
	Pawtucket	●	◐	◐	◐	◐	66	0	66
	Providence	●	●	●	●	●	100	4	100
	Warwick	●	◐	◐	●	◐	68	2	70
SOUTH CAROLINA	Charleston	◐	◐	◐	●	◐	67	0	67
	Clemson	○	○	○	○	○	0	0	0
	Columbia	◐	◐	◐	●	◐	75	0	75
	Greenville	○	◐	◐	◐	○	20	2	22
	Mount Pleasant	○	○	◐	◐	○	18	0	18
	Myrtle Beach	○	○	◐	◐	◐	21	0	21
	North Charleston	◐	◐	◐	◐	◐	43	4	47
	Rock Hill	○	○	◐	◐	○	17	0	17
SOUTH DAKOTA	Aberdeen	○	○	◐	◐	○	18	0	18
	Brookings	○	◐	●	●	●	64	8	72
	Mitchell	○	○	○	○	○	0	0	0
	Pierre	○	○	○	○	○	0	0	0
	Rapid City	○	○	◐	◐	○	17	2	19
	Sioux Falls	○	◐	◐	●	◐	55	8	63
	Spearfish	○	◐	◐	◐	○	21	0	21
	Vermillion	○	◐	◐	◐	◐	27	0	27
	Watertown	○	◐	○	◐	○	18	0	18

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TENNESSEE	Chattanooga	○	◐	◑	◑	●	35	2	37
	Clarksville	○	○	◑	◑	○	17	0	17
	Franklin	○	◑	○	◑	○	18	0	18
	Johnson City	○	○	◑	◑	○	18	0	18
	Knoxville	○	◑	◑	●	●	50	8	58
	Memphis	○	◑	◑	●	◑	47	6	53
	Murfreesboro	○	○	○	◑	○	12	0	12
	Nashville	○	◑	◑	◑	●	54	6	60
	TEXAS	Amarillo	○	○	◑	◑	○	23	0
Arlington		○	◑	◑	◑	◑	40	4	44
Austin		●	●	●	●	●	100	12	100
Brownsville		○	◑	◑	○	◑	21	0	21
College Station		○	○	◑	◑	○	18	0	18
Corpus Christi		○	◑	◑	◑	◑	38	4	42
Dallas		●	◑	◑	●	●	89	16	100
Denton		○	◑	●	◑	◑	44	0	44
El Paso		◑	◑	◑	◑	◑	49	8	57
Fort Worth		●	◑	●	●	◑	93	14	100
Garland		○	○	◑	◑	◑	20	2	22
Grand Prairie		○	◑	◑	◑	○	24	0	24
Houston		○	◑	◑	●	●	59	16	75
Irving		○	○	◑	○	○	6	0	6
Killeen		○	○	◑	◑	○	18	0	18
Laredo		○	○	◑	○	○	6	0	6
Lubbock		○	○	◑	◑	○	18	0	18
McAllen		○	◑	◑	◑	○	24	0	24
McKinney		○	○	◑	◑	○	18	0	18
Mesquite		○	◑	◑	○	◑	21	0	21
Pasadena		○	○	◑	◑	○	18	2	20
Plano		◑	◑	◑	◑	◑	72	2	74
Round Rock		○	◑	◑	◑	○	24	0	24
San Antonio	◑	◑	◑	●	●	79	16	95	
Waco	○	◑	◑	○	○	23	2	25	
UTAH	Logan	◑	○	◑	◑	○	35	0	35
	Ogden City	◑	◑	◑	◑	○	47	0	47
	Orem	◑	○	◑	○	○	23	0	23

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SCORES

STATE	CITY	I. Non-Discrimination	II. Municipality as Employer	III. Services and Programs	IV. Law Enforcement	V. Relationship with LGBTQ Community	REGULAR POINTS	BONUS POINTS	FINAL SCORE
UTAH	Park City	◑	◑	◑	○	○	38	0	38
	Provo	◑	○	◑	◑	○	35	0	35
	Salt Lake City	◑	◑	◑	◑	●	67	2	69
	West Jordan	◑	○	◑	◑	○	35	0	35
	West Valley City	◑	○	◑	◑	○	35	0	35
	VERMONT	Barre	●	○	◑	○	○	36	0
Brattleboro		●	◑	◑	◑	○	54	0	54
Burlington		●	●	◑	◑	◑	82	0	82
Castleton		●	○	◑	◑	○	48	0	48
Essex		●	◑	◑	◑	○	54	0	54
Montpelier		●	◑	◑	○	◑	45	0	45
Rutland		●	○	◑	○	◑	37	0	37
South Burlington		●	◑	◑	◑	◑	61	0	61
Winooski		●	◑	◑	◑	○	60	0	60
VIRGINIA	Alexandria	◑	◑	●	●	●	76	10	86
	Arlington County	◑	◑	●	●	●	79	14	93
	Charlottesville	●	◑	◑	◑	◑	76	4	80
	Chesapeake	○	◑	○	●	○	28	0	28
	Fairfax County	○	○	◑	◑	◑	27	6	33
	Hampton	○	○	◑	●	◑	30	0	30
	Newport News	○	○	◑	◑	◑	21	0	21
	Norfolk	○	◑	◑	●	◑	43	4	47
	Richmond	○	◑	○	●	●	42	0	42
	Roanoke	○	◑	◑	◑	○	24	0	24
	Virginia Beach	○	◑	◑	●	◑	52	2	54
WASHINGTON	Bellevue	●	●	●	●	◑	96	4	100
	Bellingham	●	◑	◑	◑	◑	65	0	65
	Kent	●	○	◑	◑	◑	70	2	72
	Olympia	●	●	●	●	●	100	0	100
	Pullman	●	◑	◑	◑	○	59	0	59
	Seattle	●	●	●	●	●	100	4	100
	Spokane	●	◑	◑	●	◑	77	0	77
	Tacoma	●	●	◑	◑	●	85	4	89
	Vancouver	●	◑	◑	◑	◑	60	0	60
	Vashon	●	◑	◑	◑	◑	76	10	86

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SCORES

STATE	CITY	I. Non-Discrimination Laws	II. Municipality as Employer	III. Municipal Services	IV. Law Enforcement	V. Relationship with LGBTQ Community	STANDARD POINTS	BONUS POINTS	FINAL SCORE
WEST VIRGINIA	Charles Town	●	◐	◐	○	●	50	0	50
	Charleston	●	◐	◐	◐	○	65	2	67
	Huntington	●	◐	◐	●	●	89	6	95
	Lewisburg	●	○	◐	○	●	49	0	49
	Morgantown	○	◐	◐	◐	●	42	6	48
	Parkersburg	○	○	◐	◐	◐	20	0	20
	Wheeling	●	○	◐	◐	●	61	2	63
WISCONSIN	Appleton	●	◐	◐	◐	●	68	10	78
	Green Bay	◐	◐	◐	◐	◐	40	0	40
	Kenosha	◐	◐	○	◐	●	41	2	43
	Madison	●	◐	●	●	◐	93	12	100
	Milwaukee	◐	◐	●	●	◐	88	4	92
	Oshkosh	◐	○	◐	○	◐	29	0	29
	Racine	◐	◐	◐	○	◐	27	2	29
WYOMING	Casper	○	○	◐	○	◐	5	0	5
	Cheyenne	○	◐	○	○	◐	11	0	11
	Gillette	○	○	◐	◐	◐	18	0	18
	Jackson	○	◐	○	○	◐	18	0	18
	Laramie	●	◐	○	○	◐	49	0	49
	Rock Springs	○	○	◐	○	○	3	0	3
	Sheridan	○	○	○	○	○	0	0	0

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SUCCESS STORY: DENVER, COLORADO

In December 2016, on a unanimous vote by City Council, the City and County of Denver amended its building code to require that all new and existing single-stall restrooms provide signs designating them as gender neutral.

“This code change was a commonsensical action that we know will allow people to live their lives without anxiety about something as simple as bathroom access,” Mayor Michael B. Hancock said. “This is also another way in which Denver demonstrates that we are a welcoming and inclusive place to call home for all our people.”

The amendment to the building code provides more options for those who are transgender, caregivers of the elderly and disabled, parents of small children, and customers who should not have to wait in line when there is an empty single-stall restroom available. The amendment does not affect multi-stall bathrooms. Since 2008, transgender individuals have had the right to use the restroom consistent with their gender identity in the State of Colorado.

The change was among a series of pro-LGBTQ recommendations identified by Denver’s Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, Transgender & Queer (LGBTQ) Commission – a group of 21 volunteers appointed by the Mayor to advise him and his team on legislation, policies, programs, and practices that impact the LGBTQ community – and adopted by the Mayor in 2015.

Building on the citywide partnership established through that effort, which included the Mayor’s Office, the LGBTQ Commission, members of City Council and Community Planning and Development, the Mayor next worked with leaders in the Denver Police Department to assign a department liaison to the LGBTQ community in June 2017.

In his first official month in this capacity, Lt. Michael Wyatt unveiled the Safe Place program, a partnership with local businesses modeled after a successful Seattle initiative. The program encourages the reporting of bias motivated crimes and aims to create awareness around and reduce anti-LGBTQ bullying and harassment, and to provide a safe space for victims of crime while they await police.

“There were incidents occurring in Denver where members of the LGBTQ community were being harassed, intimidated and downright assaulted, and many of those not coming to police department attention, and that is wrong,” Lt. Wyatt said.

THE CITY AND COUNTY OF DENVER

“This code change was a commonsensical action that we know will **allow people to live their lives without anxiety** about something as simple as bathroom access.”

MICHAEL B. HANCOCK
Mayor of Denver



SUCCESS STORY: COLUMBIA, MISSOURI

The City of Columbia, Missouri, is committed to building an inclusive community where all people have the opportunity to thrive. While the State of Missouri still does not prohibit discrimination based upon sexual orientation or gender identity, the City of Columbia has been a leader in the state by passing legislation to add sexual orientation and gender identity as protected classes.

The City's Human Rights Commission partners with community organizations to sponsor events such as Pride Fest and an annual Fair Housing and Lending Seminar. Additionally, discrimination complaints are investigated by the Commission.

Consistent with our Strategic Plan, the City works to ensure that all people can feel safe where they live, work, learn and play. While there has been a national debate over inclusive bathrooms, the City amended its building and plumbing codes to allow for more inclusive restrooms in 2012. To promote inclusion, the City offers free inclusive bathroom signage to local businesses and schools. The City is working toward creating inclusive bathrooms in all of its public buildings and parks.

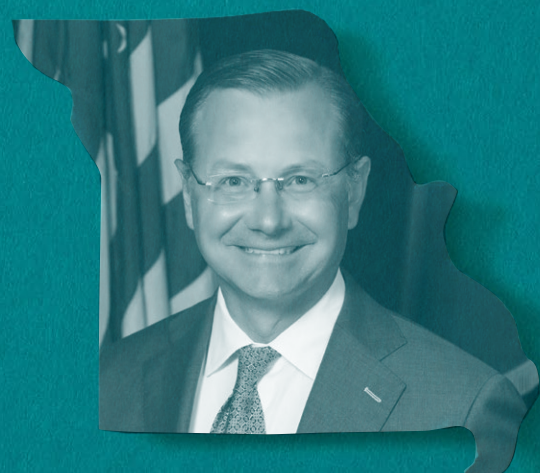
In addition to making public spaces more inclusive, City departments strive to ensure high quality services are provided to all. The Columbia Police Department and City Manager's Office have LGBTQ liaisons who work with businesses, organizations, higher education institutions and community members to improve LGBTQ residents' access to services.

The City's health department operates a domestic partnership registry, provides regular HIV and STD prevention education, provides information on coming out to local LGBTQ youth, partners with LGBTQ groups, and provides inclusive training to City staff and City Council members.

Thanks to the Human Rights Campaign's Municipal Equality Index review last year, we realized that we did not offer transgender-inclusive health benefits, so in December 2016, the City began offering transgender-inclusive health benefits to City employees.

We are proud of our diverse community, which is enhanced by the presence of three higher education institutions: University of Missouri, Stephens College and Columbia College. We are excited at our progress towards achieving our vision that Columbia is the best place for everyone to live, work, learn and play.

BRIAN TREECE
Mayor



We are committed to building an inclusive community where all people have **the opportunity to thrive.**

SELF-SUBMIT

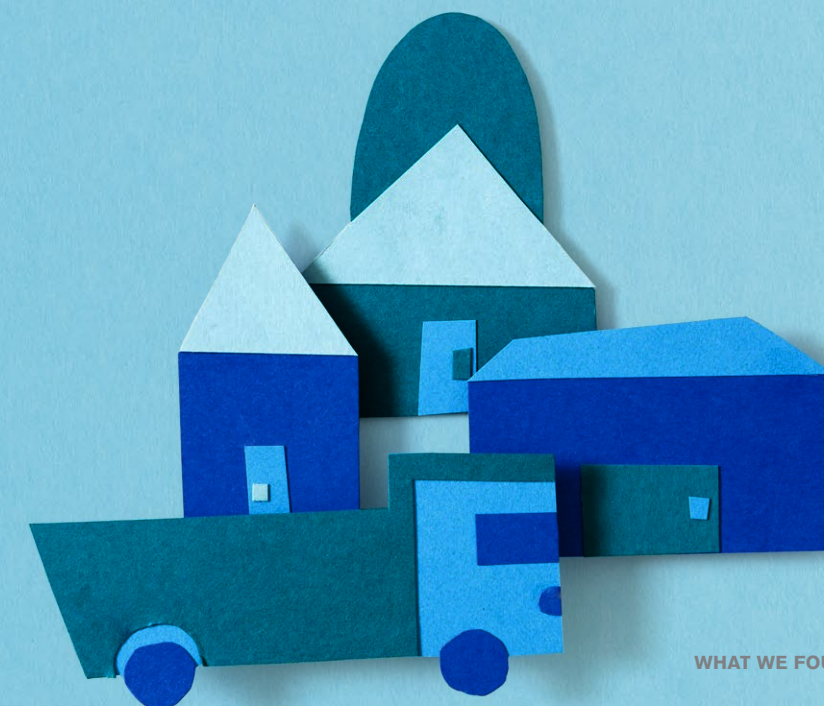
Cities Not Rated by the MEI Submit Themselves

Cities that would like to be rated by the MEI but do not fall within our general city selection criteria can submit themselves to be rated. In order to do this, city leadership must send all of the relevant documentation needed to justify credit for each MEI criteria to mei@hrc.org.

Two cities successfully self-submitted this year: West Palm Beach, Florida and Miami Beach, Florida. By self-submitting, these cities have demonstrated their commitment to equality and are sending a message to their LGBTQ citizens that they are a welcome and important part of the community.

We might not be able to include scores from cities that self-submit in the publication, but we will always provide cities with their own scorecard and support them in working toward LGBTQ equality.

By self-submitting, cities demonstrate their commitment to equality and send a message to their LGBTQ citizens that they are **a welcome and important part of the community.**



WHAT'S AHEAD

Changes to the MEI in 2018

In order to accurately reflect the state of LGBTQ equality in municipalities, the MEI scorecard must occasionally be adapted to reflect the evolving legal landscape on LGBTQ issues. Prior changes were implemented in 2015 related to relationship recognition points due to the U.S. Supreme Court's ruling that brought about nationwide marriage equality. The revisions to the 2018 MEI scorecard will be more wide-ranging to more accurately reflect the scope of nondiscrimination laws and the innovative ways cities are advancing LGBTQ equality across the country.

ANTI-BULLYING

Beginning next year, the *School District Anti-Bullying Policies* standard will be replaced with a new bonus criterion—*City Services Youth Bullying Prevention Policies*. This category will reward cities with a maximum of two points for implementing policies that prohibit bullying on the express basis of sexual orientation and gender identity in all youth-facing city facilities and services. These policies should cover, for example, the city's parks and recreation department, library programs, and any other department or service that incorporate young people. While most cities do not have direct control of the anti-bullying school district policies currently rated, cities have direct authority to implement policies that explicitly prohibit bullying on the grounds of sexual orientation and gender identity in its own programs and services.

RELIGIOUS EXEMPTIONS

To reflect the true scope of the citywide nondiscrimination laws assessed in *Part I* of the MEI scorecard, the 2018 MEI will deduct points for nondiscrimination ordinances that allow discrimination through religious exemptions that single out sexual orientation and/or gender identity. Cities will lose one point for each *Part I* criterion to which a religious carve-out that singles out the LGBTQ community applies. This adds up to a total possible deduction of six points in *Part I*.

Religious liberty is an important American value, which is why it is already robustly protected by the First Amendment and existing civil rights laws. Harmful discrimination that singles out LGBTQ people, however, is contrary to true equality and should not be allowed under the guise of religion.

NEW CRITERIA

Finally, the 2018 MEI will add two new bonus criteria—*Single-Occupancy All-Gender Facilities* and *Laws Protecting Youth from Conversion Therapy*—as well as reintroduce the *City Employee Domestic Partner Benefits* standard as bonus points.

Starting in 2018, cities that require all single-user sex-segregated facilities within the city like bathrooms and changing rooms to be all-gender will receive two bonus points. Cities that designate all single-occupancy facilities within its own buildings as all-gender will receive half credit. All residents deserve the dignity and safety of equal access to facilities in accordance with their gender identity. For more information on the importance of equal access to single-occupancy facilities, see pg 28.

Additionally, cities that enact laws to protect youth from the harmful and discredited practice of so-called "conversion therapy" will garner two bonus points. Conversion therapy refers to any effort to change an individual's sexual orientation or gender identity. It is based on the false notion that being LGBTQ is an illness that needs to be "cured." Every major medical and mental health organization has criticized the dangerous practice. Youth are especially vulnerable to the negative outcomes of conversion therapy, which include increased risk of anxiety, depression, decreased self-esteem, homelessness, substance abuse, and suicidality. At the time of publication, localities in Ohio, Pennsylvania, Washington, Florida, and Arizona have enacted protections against the fraudulent practice of conversion therapy.

Lastly, next year's MEI will reintroduce an expanded *City Employee Domestic Partner Benefits* standard. In years prior to 2015, cities were awarded credit if they offered healthcare benefits to the same-sex domestic partner of an employee and their legal dependents. When reintroduced in 2018, cities will be awarded credit for offering equal benefits to both same- and different-sex domestic partners of employees and their legal dependents. Even after nationwide marriage equality, it is important to respect the diverse family forms that exist by expanding domestic partner benefits to include all families. For more information on this topic, please see our 2015 Issue Brief entitled *The Case for Retaining Domestic Partnership Laws and Policies*, available at www.hrc.org/mei.

It is worth noting that occasionally, bonus point categories are moved into standard point categories. Should this happen, the MEI team will provide cities with advance notice.

The MEI team can be reached at mei@hrc.org to answer any questions about these upcoming scorecard revisions and assist the city with enacting these changes. The official 2018 MEI scorecard will be available on the web at www.hrc.org/mei.

The revisions to the 2018 MEI scorecard will **be more wide-ranging** to more accurately reflect the scope of nondiscrimination laws and **the innovative ways cities are advancing LGBTQ equality across the country.**



2018 MEI SCORECARD



CITY, STATE 1/2 2018 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	MUNICIPAL	AVAILABLE
Employment	0/0	0/0	0/0	5/5
Housing	0/0	0/0	0/0	5/5
Public Accommodations	0/0	0/0	0/0	5/5
SCORE	0 out of 30			
BONUS Single-Occupancy All-Gender Facilities	+0	+0	+0	+2
BONUS Protects Youth from Conversion Therapy	+0	+0	+0	+2

II. Municipality as Employer

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

	MUNICIPAL	AVAILABLE
Non-Discrimination in City Employment	0/0	7/7
Transgender-Inclusive Healthcare Benefits	0	6
City Contractor Non-Discrimination Ordinance	0/0	3/3
Inclusive Workplace	0	2
SCORE	0 out of 28	
BONUS City Employee Domestic Partner Benefits	+0	+1

III. Municipal Services

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

	COUNTY	CITY	AVAILABLE
Human Rights Commission	0	0	5
NDO Enforcement by Human Rights Commission	0	0	2
LGBTQ Liaison to City Executive's Office		0	5
SCORE	0 out of 12		
BONUS Youth Bullying Prevention Policy for City Services		+0/+0	+1/+1
BONUS City Provides Services to LGBTQ Youth		+0	+2
BONUS City Provides Services to LGBTQ Homeless		+0	+2
BONUS City Provides Services to LGBTQ Elders		+0	+2
BONUS City Provides Services HIV/AIDS Population		+0	+2
BONUS City Provides Services to the Transgender Community		+0	+2



CITY, STATE 2/2 2018 MUNICIPAL EQUALITY INDEX SCORECARD

IV. Law Enforcement

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

	MUNICIPAL	AVAILABLE
LGBTQ Liaison/Task Force in Police Department	0	10
Reported 2016 Hate Crimes Statistics to the FBI	0	12
SCORE	0 out of 22	

V. Leadership on LGBTQ Equality

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

	MUNICIPAL	AVAILABLE
Leadership's Public Position on Equality	0	5
Recent Pro-Equality Legislative Efforts	0	3
SCORE	0 out of 8	
BONUS Openly LGBTQ Elected or Appointed Leaders	+0	+2
BONUS City Tests Limits of Restrictive State Law	+0	+3

TOTAL SCORE 0 + TOTAL BONUS 0 = Final Score 0
CANNOT EXCEED 100

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.

hrc.org/mei

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

ABOUT THE AUTHOR

XAVIER PERSAD serves as Legislative Counsel at the Human Rights Campaign and provides his thorough research skills and keen analysis to ensure that the Municipal Equality Index is the most informative and accurate it can be. He focuses on state and municipal law and policy, including protections against conversion therapy. Xavier obtained his Master of Laws degree from the London School of Economics and Political Science and his law degree from Florida A&M University College of Law. He is a member of the Florida bar.

ABOUT THE MEI TEAM

This project has only been possible because of the dedication, persistence, and creativity of the MEI team and those who have supported us. To reach the MEI team with questions, comments, compliments, suggestions, or requests for hard copies of the publication, please email mei@hrc.org.

COLLEN KUTNEY is the other half of the MEI team in the role of Senior Manager for State and Municipal Programs at the Human Rights Campaign. Annually, they manage both the Municipal Equality Index and the State Equality Index, which assesses state policy and law impacting the LGBTQ community. Collen conducts and analyzes municipal research, coordinates logistics for the MEI launch, and builds relationships with city leaders and advocates across the country to advance equality. Kutney is a graduate of the University at Albany in Albany, NY.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

The MEI is a robust assessment of municipal equality, and would not be realized without the professionalism and innovation of several people who contributed their talents to this year's report. First and foremost, HRC's Legal Director **Sarah Warbelow** provides the thoughtfulness, support, and resolve the MEI needs to continue its success.

HRC's communications team of Chris Sgro, Allison Turner, Ianthe Metzger and Liz Halloran were invaluable in arranging the launch and delivering the story of municipal equality to every corner of America where it belongs. We also thank HRC's digital experts, Carolyn Simon and Emily Roberts, for ensuring the MEI is accessible online and that every city's score can be readily found on your computer or phone.

Additionally, we want to thank the HRC field team for helping cities move equality forward on the ground. We particularly want to thank Rob Hill, Ben Needham and the rest of the Project One America team for their work to further equality in the Deep South.

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The General Design Company is a delight to work with, and we enjoy discovering new ways to make municipal equality fun and informative with them. We value the creativity, attention to detail and craftsmanship of Soung Wiser, Carrie Brickell and Michael McDermott.

EQUALITY FEDERATION INSTITUTE

As always, we thank our partners at the Equality Federation Institute. The achievements we celebrate in this publication are often theirs. We recognize the state groups that have been particularly helpful on the following page. We particularly want to acknowledge Andy Garcia for his partnership at the national level. We couldn't do this without you.

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:



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



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