

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