

A stylized, abstract cityscape background in shades of orange and yellow. It includes various geometric shapes representing buildings, a tree, and a sun. The sun is a large white circle partially obscured by a yellow arc. The overall style is modern and graphic.

**YEARS**  
OF PROGRESS & CHANGE

# Municipal Equality Index

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A NATIONWIDE EVALUATION OF MUNICIPAL LAW

**2016**

## Frequently Asked Questions

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### WHERE CAN I GET MORE INFORMATION ABOUT THE CITIES RATED?

This booklet contains only a summary of the scorecards for each of the 506 cities rated on the 2016 MEI. The full scorecards are available online at [www.hrc.org/mei](http://www.hrc.org/mei).

### HOW WERE THESE CITIES CHOSEN?

This year, the cities rated are: the 50 state capitals, the 200 largest cities in the United States, the five largest cities or municipalities in each state, the cities home to the state's two largest public universities (including undergraduate and graduate enrollment), 75 cities & municipalities that have high proportions of same-sex couples (see page 17 for more information) and 98 cities selected by HRC and Equality Federation state groups members and supporters. Future editions of the MEI will continue to increase the number of cities rated.

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

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

### DID YOU KNOW THAT \_ ISN'T A CITY?

Yes. A few of the places rated in the MEI are "census-designated places" which are not incorporated as cities. In that case, we rated the local incorporated government that actually serves that census-designated place, which is usually the county. This is explained further on page 17.

### HOW ARE THE SCORES CALCULATED?

Cities are rated on a scale of 0-100, based on the city's laws, policies, benefits, and services. There are 100 standard points and 20 bonus points (bonus points are awarded for items which apply to some but not all cities). For more information on the scoring system, see page 21.

### WHERE DID THE INFORMATION FOR THESE SCORES COME FROM?

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

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

Definitely not. The MEI was specifically designed to measure the laws and policies of the municipality, not the state. While state law might add to a city's score, positive state law is not necessary for a city to score 100 points. In fact, 22 cities in states without statewide non-discrimination laws for LGBTQ people scored 100 points in 2016.

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

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

## Research Process

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

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

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

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# AN INTRODUCTION

The background features a stylized cityscape composed of various geometric shapes in shades of blue. On the left, there is a building with a large dome and a circular window. In the center, a building with a gabled roof and three arched openings is prominent. To the right, a taller building with a grid of rectangular windows is visible. The overall aesthetic is clean and modern, using a monochromatic blue color palette.

## Dear Friends



**This year, we have been confronted with vivid reminders of just how much further have to go in the fight for full equality.**

Anti-LGBTQ lawmakers introduced more than 200 bills attacking our community across 34 states. These hateful bills targeted the transgender community and shamefully promoted prejudice and discrimination under the guise of “religious freedom.” But in the face of these legislative attacks, many cities big and small, in red states and blue states alike, were determined to fight for LGBTQ equality at the local level.

As we continue our efforts to pass the Equality Act in Congress and protect our community from discrimination at the federal level, cities aren’t waiting for lawmakers in Washington to catch up.

Our work is far from over, but because of this crucial partnership in cities all across our nation, full equality is **within our reach**.

The Municipal Equality Index (MEI) has placed emphasis on policies that are crucial to our fight to extend full equality to all Americans—including non-discrimination ordinances, city services, employment policies and benefits, and law enforcement practices—continue to be at the core of this report.

And this year’s MEI boasts the highest number of 100-point scores in the history of this program, with 60 cities achieving the top score. The number of cities offering trans-inclusive healthcare to city employees is 86, also an all-time high. And we have added 98 new cities to the ranks of the 506 municipalities scored by this year’s MEI.

Despite this progress, we’ve still come up against politicians who have refused to listen, refused to learn, and who have willfully and intentionally planted themselves on the wrong side of history. There is perhaps no better example than in North Carolina, where anti-LGBTQ lawmakers called a special session with the sole purpose of overturning Charlotte’s non-discrimination ordinance.

The passage of Governor Pat McCrory’s HB2 has caused enormous damage to North Carolina’s reputation and economy. By rescinding protections for LGBTQ people, and attacking the rights of transgender people, companies have scrapped planned expansions, concerts and conferences have been canceled, and a growing number of sporting events have been moved to other states—including the NBA All-Star Game, which was moved to New Orleans, a city with an 89 rating on the MEI.

Municipalities that want to spur development, and improve the lives of their LGBTQ residents and visitors, must embrace inclusive policies that protect the equality dignity 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 fundamental equality of all those who work, live and go to school in their communities.

We couldn’t do this work without our partners at the Equality Federation Institute and the statewide LGBTQ organizations and leaders who work to bring equality to every corner of the country. Our work is far from over, but because of this crucial partnership in cities all across our nation, full equality is within our reach.

Sincerely,

**CHAD GRIFFIN**  
President  
Human Rights Campaign Foundation

## Dear Readers



**Despite another year of legislative attacks on LGBTQ equality, we are not merely holding our ground; we also continue to make significant gains across the country.**

These victories are the result of strong, resilient leaders at the state and local level. This report recognizes important gains made by Equality Federation Members such as Equality North Carolina, Equality Michigan, Alaskans Together for Equality, Freedom Oklahoma, Equality Ohio, and 35 more across the country. In partnership with local organizations, Federation members worked tirelessly to defeat hostile legislation and to advance proactive policies, many at the municipal level.

Whether passing nondiscrimination ordinances or offering trans-inclusive healthcare to employees, cities and counties are blazing the path to full, lived equality for all. Even in states with legislatures hostile to our issues, cities and towns of every size are doing what they can to positively impact the lives of their LGBTQ residents. For example, this year the city of Charlotte bravely passed a historic LGBTQ nondiscrimination ordinance. Even in aftermath of the passage of North Carolina’s now infamous—and widely condemned—HB2, the city refused to repeal it.

Whether passing nondiscrimination ordinances or offering trans-inclusive healthcare to employees, cities and counties are **blazing the path** to full, lived equality for all.

But Charlotte is just one part of the story when talking about local LGBTQ equality. Just this year, cities like Juneau, Alaska and Oklahoma City passed nondiscrimination ordinances. Cleveland scored a major victory in unanimously repealing its anti-transgender bathroom ordinance. The number of cities with protections for LGBTQ residents swelled to over 40 this year in Michigan, following the passage of an ordinance just last month in Lake Orion Village. And the list goes on, building momentum for change across the country.

The opportunity for further progress is huge, and we are proud to partner with HRC on the Municipal Equality Index, a powerful roadmap for elected officials and community advocates who want to continue down the path to full equality. As we celebrate our success and plan for the future, we thank our members and their local partners for their dedication to winning equality in all the communities we call home.

Sincerely,

**REBECCA ISAACS**  
Executive Director  
Equality Federation Institute



# Enduring Growth for Cities is Driven by Diversity



©Jaime Hogge

## **Diversity is not just an ethical imperative it is an economic driver.**

Studies affirm time and time again that diversity and inclusion spur economic growth. Cutting-edge businesses place a high premium on diversity, and cities looking to lure tax dollars, tourism and jobs would be wise to prioritize inclusion. LGBTQ-inclusion draws top talent in industry, art and education, and in turn, attracts businesses.

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, entertainers and professionals in business, media, management, health care 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.

**Communities that are home to the creative class have a higher standard of living, better life satisfaction and greater emotional attachment by residents.** Cities that protect their LGBTQ residents from discrimination and offer employees transgender-inclusive health benefits show that they fully embrace diversity and inclusion. This gives those cities a competitive edge by attracting and retaining the best and brightest of the creative class. The eleven cities that have received perfect scores on the MEI for five consecutive years also tend to have above-average hourly wages and housing values as well as higher population growth than the rest of the country.

When states or cities enact discriminatory laws, it can devastate them financially. Nowhere is this more evident than in North Carolina, where the legislature passed one of the most discriminatory anti-LGBTQ laws in history. Companies that sought to bring jobs moved elsewhere, entertainers canceled shows in protest. Even the NBA moved the All-Star game out of state to find a more inclusive community. Discrimination can cost big time and in this case, at least \$448.2 million to the state. North Carolina will be suffering from the economic reverberations of this intolerant legislation for years to come.

The Municipal Equality Index provides a roadmap of laws and policies that cities can use to make their community more inclusive. Each city is held accountable to their non-discrimination laws, LGBTQ-inclusive employee practices, inclusiveness in city services and law enforcement; and their leadership's outspoken commitment to equality. Taking those steps can help cities not only do the right thing, but build the kind of community that keeps on building and building.

## **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.

Beyond the important issues of fairness and equality lies an additional reason for cities to take matters of equality seriously:  
**it is good business.**




# HOW IT WORKS



# CITIES RATED BY THE MEI

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

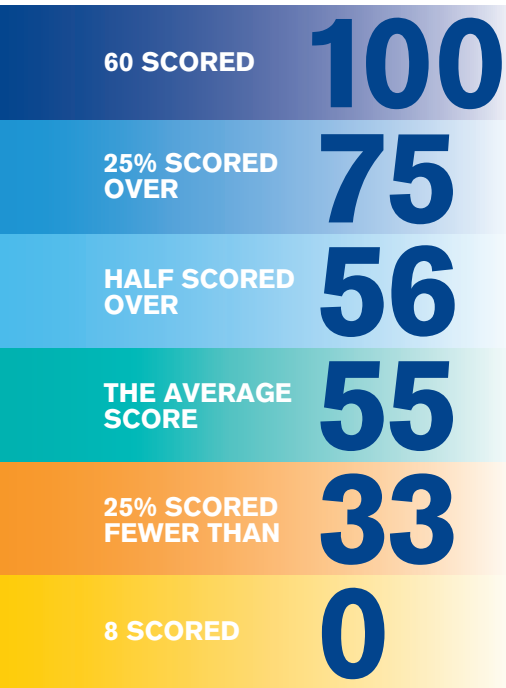
 **2016**  
98 NEW CITIES  
94,237,171 TOTAL  
POPULATION RATED  
IN 2016

 **2012—  
2015**  
408 CITIES RATED BY  
THE 2015 MEI  
89,260,006 POPULATION



# EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

## Cities Leading the Way to Equality



This fifth edition of the Municipal Equality Index is thrilled to report that yet again cities continue to lead the way on matters of equality.

While state legislatures around the country grappled with a record number of anti-LGBTQ bills during the 2016 legislative session, cities continued to show that matters of municipal equality continue to matter to local governments in red states and blue states alike. Cities big and small, hailing from every region of the country, continue to do the work in their communities to ensure that LGBTQ people are able to live, work, visit and engage in the places they call home. For four years the MEI has demonstrated the power of municipalities to effect change, and this year is no different.

### NON-DISCRIMINATION ORDINANCES

Non-discrimination ordinances continue to be among the most important work that municipalities are doing to ensure that their LGBTQ residents and visitors are able to bring their whole selves to the places where they live, work, and play.

In a year where anti-transgender bathroom bills stole headlines across the country, cities continued to listen to the voices of the transgender youth and adults in their communities and they responded appropriately and respectfully to their needs. In fact, Cleveland, Ohio—which has had a non-discrimination ordinance on the books for some time—removed a transgender exclusion from the public accommodations section of their ordinance. Chicago, Illinois did the same. Jackson, Mississippi and Juneau, Alaska joined the ranks of cities offering non-discrimination protections on the basis of sexual orientation and gender identity to their residents and visitors.

And Charlotte joined these cities and many more when it passed the ordinance that would catalyze the North Carolina legislature to pass the law that became the infamous HB2.

19 states and more than 100 cities, including all but three of the 20 largest cities in the United States, have non-discrimination 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.

Municipalities continue to lead the way, however. 24 million Americans live in cities where the local ordinances outpace the state in offering non-discrimination laws that protect citizens from discrimination on the basis of gender identity. Happily, that number has fallen since last year's edition of the MEI as a result of the extension of transgender-inclusive non-discrimination protections in Massachusetts and New York. There, cities led the way, demonstrating how successful and important these protections are, and the state followed.

### CITIES LEAD THE WAY IN RED STATES, TOO.

87 cities from states without statewide non-discrimination laws protecting LGBTQ people scored above the overall nationwide mean of 56 points, and those cities averaged 80 point scores and included 22 perfect 100s. While some of the cities in this cohort are quite large (like Phoenix, Philadelphia, Dallas, Houston, and San Antonio) others are not (Eureka Springs, Arkansas; Morehead, Kentucky; and New Hope, Pennsylvania all have fewer than 10,000 residents).

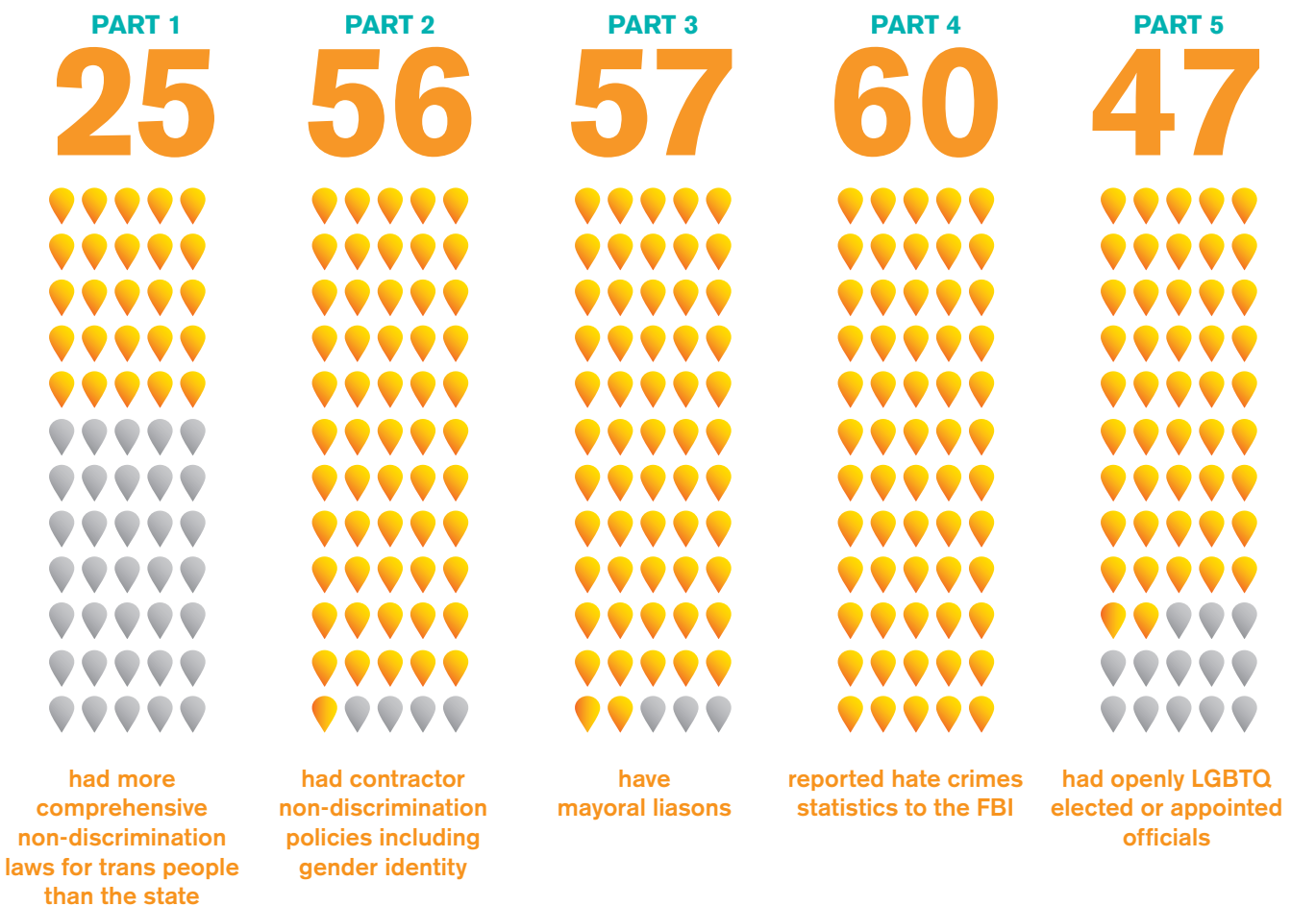
Cities benefit in multiple ways when they elect openly LGBTQ leadership

SCORE  
**27**  
POINTS  
HIGHER  
on average than cities without

DO  
**TWICE**  
**AS WELL**  
in our measure of political leadership on matters of equality

ARE  
**2X**  
MORE  
LIKELY  
to offer trans-inclusive healthcare benefits

Of the 60 cities that scored 100 points:





87% of the cities in this cohort have non-discrimination protections that include LGBTQ people, and every one reported their hate crimes statistics to the FBI in 2014. But one thing these cities don't have in common is very important: geography.

They hail from the Southeast, Southwest, West, Plains, Mountains, Mid-Atlantic and Great Lakes—and these results demonstrate that municipal equality is not a coastal phenomenon or a blue state activity. Cities are accustomed to being pragmatic problem-solvers who don't let partisan quibbling get in the way of letting the trains run on time, and cities are neither waiting for their states to act nor cowed by their state legislature's disapproval.

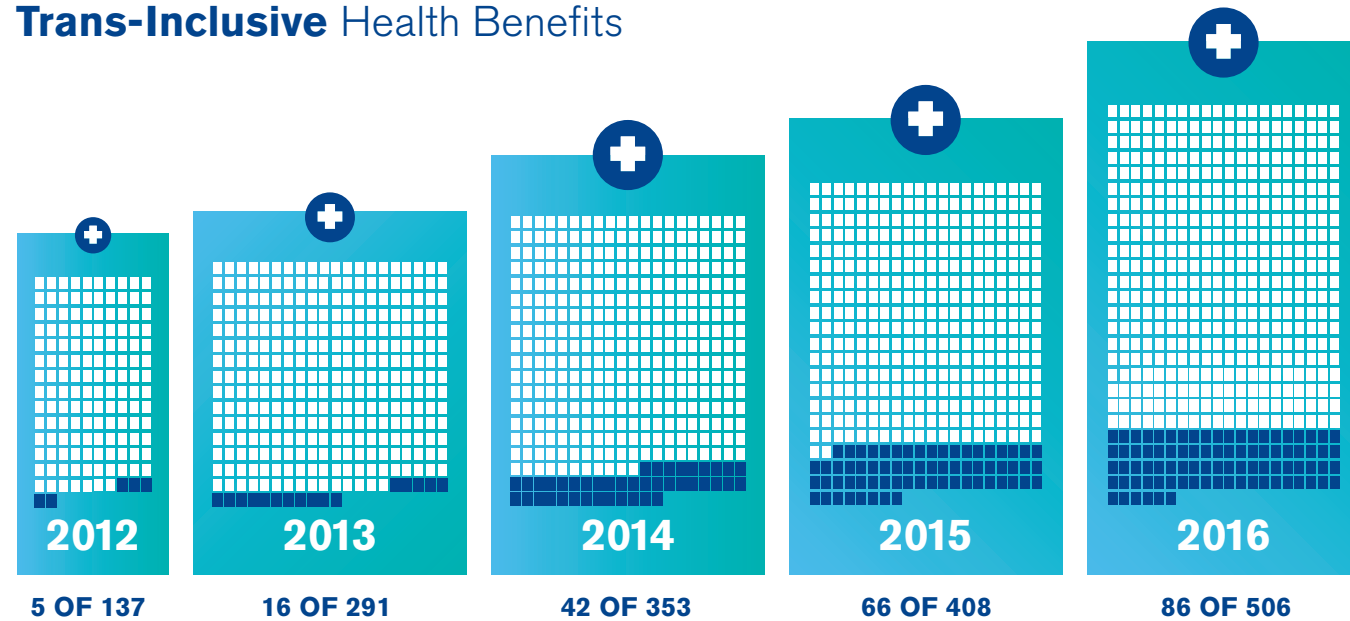
They are acting now to make sure that their cities are doing right by the LGBTQ people who live, work, and travel there, and in doing so they are coming down on the right side of history. This year's MEI features 37 of All-Stars (cities that scored more than 86 points despite hailing from states without statewide non-discrimination protections for LGBTQ people)—up from 31 such cities last year.

**FIVE YEARS OF MARKING—AND SPARKING—MUNICIPAL CHANGE**

In 2012, 5 cities rated on the MEI offered their city employees at least one health plan offering transgender-inclusive health care; in 2016, 86 cities did. In 2012, 59 cities rated had policies forbidding employment discrimination against transgender employees; in 2016, 228 did.

As the project expanded to include more cities, it also evolved through several scorecards—yet, adjusted for those scorecard changes, cities rated in 2012 increased their score by an average of 20 points by 2016. While the MEI cannot claim to have been the only driver of this change, by drawing attention to what cities are doing, what they can be doing, and how they can do what they ought to be doing, the MEI likely was a significant contributing factor. Further, simply by documenting and drawing attention to the issue of municipal equality the MEI brought a new visibility to the importance of municipal work and continues to celebrate the important progress being made by cities around the country with the help of local partners. It may be impossible to know the exact extent to which the MEI has directly or indirectly led to improved laws and policies, but there is no doubt that the state of municipal equality in 2016 is both more advanced and more visible than it has ever been before.

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



# SUCCESS STORY: MASSACHUSETTS TRANSGENDER POLITICAL COALITION

**Working on trans rights in Massachusetts between 2014 and 2016 was much like watching a series of dominos fall, leading up to a massive win for equality in the Bay State.**

As the coalition of LGBTQ organizations, including the Massachusetts Transgender Political Coalition, were working to set the stage for statewide public accommodations legislation, we looked to the cities and towns of Massachusetts to test the waters. We had already passed local nondiscrimination ordinances in Boston, Cambridge, Northampton, and Amherst, but we strategized that by passing more inclusive policies on the local level, we would gain important momentum. Starting with Salem in March of 2014, the dominos began to fall, as local ordinances were proposed and passed across the commonwealth.

Over the course of two years, we went from four local ordinances to fourteen. These local efforts built the foundation for passing the statewide nondiscrimination legislation in 2016. We built trust with legislators, residents, and business owners, to show that these inclusive laws and policies were good for our communities.

Thanks to the MEI, we were able to illustrate that not only are nondiscrimination ordinances important for our cities and towns, but they are also just one step in a larger journey to becoming an inclusive community. Matters of health insurance, representation on city government, local LGBTQ resources, and so much more are all vital to LGBTQ inclusion and equality.

**MASON DUNN**  
Executive Director

Working on trans rights in Massachusetts between 2014 and 2016 was much like **watching a series of dominos fall**, leading up to a massive win for equality in the Bay State.



# SUCCESS STORY: EQUALITY VIRGINIA

**It has been wonderful to watch the success of the MEI over the past five years. It's reassuring to see communities across the nation focus on improving LGBTQ rights at the local level despite state and federal resistance.**

Unfortunately, in Virginia this progress has been measured in a way that's like comparing apples to oranges. Virginia's Dillon Rule does not allow our local governments to extend protections to our LGBTQ community. Despite this barrier, our supporters across the commonwealth remain eager to have their cities implement fair policies for gay and transgender residents, and they have worked within the limitations of our laws to make their communities as inclusive as possible with support of statewide legislation, reporting hate crimes, and adding police liaisons.

A significant victory came within the last year by way of an opinion from Virginia's Attorney General Mark Herring. He found that school boards have the constitutional authority to implement nondiscrimination policies for their employees and students and that these policies can include sexual orientation and gender identity.

Since then, school boards representing over one-fourth of the state's students and teachers passed updated nondiscrimination policies. These school boards not only created safer classrooms for students but also competitive recruiting opportunities for teachers and spaces where they too felt valued. Equality Virginia was encouraged by these results which showed that, when allowed, our local communities are eager to enact policies creating a Virginia that is a safe, welcoming, and equal place for LGBTQ individuals and their families to live, work, and play.

There is much work to be done, but we are heartened by the progress made in a short period of time in communities throughout the Commonwealth of Virginia.

**JAMES PARRISH**  
Executive Director



There is much work to be done, but we are **heartened by the progress** made in a short period of time in communities throughout the Commonwealth of Virginia.

# CITY SELECTION

## How Cities Were Selected for Rating

**The 2016 Municipal Equality Index rates 506 municipalities of varying sizes drawn from every state in the nation.**

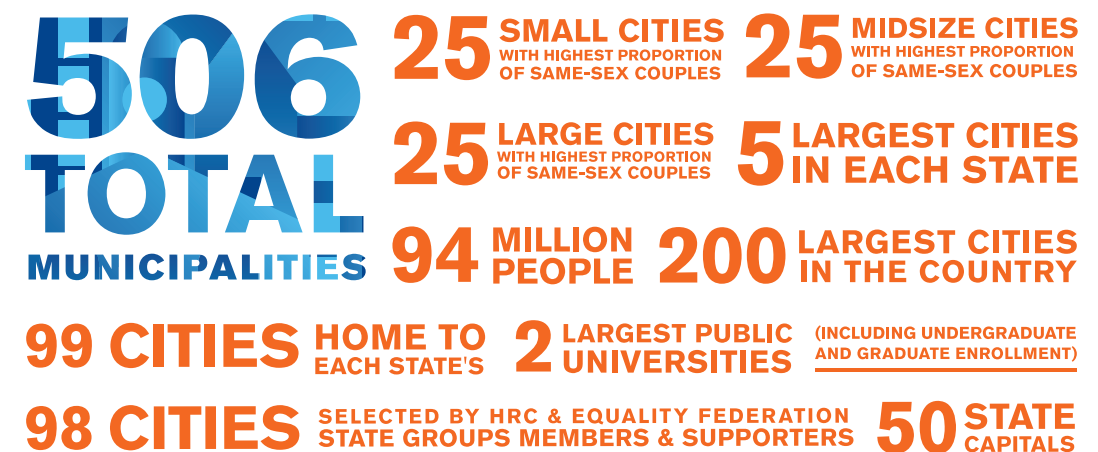
These include: the 50 state capitals, the 200 largest cities in the United States, the five largest cities or municipalities in each state, the cities home to the state's two largest public universities (including undergraduate and graduate enrollment), 75 cities and municipalities that have high proportions 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 2016 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/state-equality-index>.





# 2016 MEI SCORECARD



## CITY, STATE 1/2 2016 MUNICIPAL EQUALITY INDEX SCORECARD

### I. Non-Discrimination Laws

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

	STATE	COUNTY	CITY	AVAILABLE
Employment				
Housing				
Public Accommodations				
<b>SCORE</b>	<b>X out of 30</b>			

### 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		
Transgender-Inclusive Healthcare Benefits		
City Contractor Non-Discrimination Ordinance		
<b>SCORE</b>	<b>X out of 24</b>	
<b>BONUS</b> Municipality is a Welcoming Place to Work		

### 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				
LGBTQ Liaison in the Mayor's Office				
Enumerated Anti-Bullying School Policies				
<b>SCORE</b>	<b>X out of 16</b>			
<b>BONUS</b> Enforcement mechanism in Human Rights Commission				
<b>BONUS</b> City provides services to LGBTQ youth				
<b>BONUS</b> City provides services to LGBTQ homeless				
<b>BONUS</b> City provides services to LGBTQ elderly				
<b>BONUS</b> City provides services to people living with HIV/AIDS				
<b>BONUS</b> City provides services to the transgender community				

## CITY, STATE 2/2 2016 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		
Reported 2014 Hate Crimes Statistics to the FBI		
<b>SCORE</b>	<b>X out of 22</b>	

### 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		
Leadership's Pro-Equality Legislative or Policy Efforts		
<b>SCORE</b>	<b>X out of 8</b>	
<b>BONUS</b> Openly LGBTQ elected or appointed municipal leaders		
<b>BONUS</b> Cities are pro-equality despite restrictive state law		

**TOTAL SCORE XXX + TOTAL BONUS XX = Final Score XXX**  
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](http://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](mailto:mei@hrc.org).

# SUCCESS STORY: CLEVELAND OHIO

In 2009, Cleveland added “gender identity or expression” to protected classes in its nondiscrimination ordinance. Unfortunately, an exception was also included that allowed for business owners and employers to discriminate against transgender people with regard to restroom usage.

In 2014, community organizations and individuals in Cleveland formed the “Cleveland is Ready” Coalition and began efforts to change that.

“As an African American woman, I know the indignity of being treated as someone not as valuable as others. When I was sworn in as a councilwoman, I pledged to serve and uphold the dignity of all people,” said Cleveland City Council member Phyllis Cleveland. “The amended law, Ordinance 1446-13, brings the city code into alignment with nondiscrimination protections of more than 150 cities nationwide. I’d like to say the road to this achievement was smooth, but it wasn’t. Nevertheless, equality prevailed.

Before approaching this issue, leaders knew they needed to take steps to amplify knowledge of injustices faced by the transgender community and the details and implications of this proposed ordinance. The HRC Cleveland Steering Committee provided support and stability to the trans-led coalition to host educational events in wards across the city, faith forums, and events at the prestigious City Club of Cleveland.

A large component of the effort was one-to-one conversations with Clevelanders, as well as reaching out to local media with pitches and best practices for covering LGBTQ stories.

By the time ordinance 1446-13 had passed, over 60 local businesses had pledged their support to the transgender community.

Cleveland City Council President Kevin Kelley applauded the accomplishment saying, “Our city takes great pride in its efforts to be open and inclusive to all people, regardless of race, religion, ethnicity, gender or gender expression. Cleveland City Hall over the years has been in the forefront of the struggles for social justice, human dignity and civil rights.”

## THE CITY OF CLEVELAND



“I’d like to say the road to this achievement was smooth, but it wasn’t. Nevertheless, equality prevailed.”

**PHYLLIS CLEVELAND**  
Cleveland City Council member

# 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 non-discrimination law that applies within the city limits, a city may conclude it is an inefficient use of resources to pass a local non-discrimination ordinance. 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.





# POWER STRUGGLES AND PREEMPTION

**As North Carolina's HB2 has grabbed national attention in recent months, it has resurrected a conversation about how much power cities do have—or should have—to pass non-discrimination ordinances that prohibit discrimination against the LGBTQ community. It has also demonstrated the struggle that can ensue when a state legislature interferes with the work of local government.**

The question of how much power cities have is not a simple question to answer. Because cities are delegated their power to govern by the states, the legal authority of a city to legislate around issues of discrimination varies greatly from one state to the next, and sometimes even from city to city. Essentially, a state has the ability to reserve the power to legislate on a certain subject to itself (known in some states as "Dillon's Rule"), to explicitly grant the city the power to legislate on the subject, to allow the city the power to legislate on a certain subject without an explicit grant of authority, or to revoke the power to legislate on a certain subject after the city has been previously given the power to do so. This last is known as "preemption", and HB2 is an example of this type of legislation.

Preemption laws have been used to challenge a slate of progressive issues in the last few years, including municipal bans on firearms, plastic shopping bags, smoking in public, and even fracking. It has also been used to challenge labor-related ordinances that govern paid sick leave or set a living wage. And, in the last five years, three states have passed laws eradicating the authority of cities to pass non-discrimination ordinances that protect LGBTQ people.

None of these three states have language explicitly calling out protections for sexual orientation or gender identity as being specifically forbidden, but rather the laws are framed as the state reserving to itself the authority to govern in matters of discrimination. However, in all three instances a city that had passed an LGBTQ-inclusive ordinance was the primary target of the legislation: Nashville, Tennessee passed such an ordinance that was preempted by the state legislature in 2011; Fayetteville, Arkansas did the same in 2014 followed by nearly immediate passage of a preemption law in 2015; and earlier this year in North Carolina HB2 was passed in a special session made necessary, according to its proponents, to prevent Charlotte's newly enacted non-discrimination law from going into effect before the regular legislative session began.

It is important to point out that HB2 made history as one of the worst anti-LGBTQ bills ever due to a provision in the law that mandates discriminatory treatment of transgender people in publicly-owned facilities, among other provisions. The anti-LGBTQ and especially anti-transgender rhetoric surrounding the opposition to the Charlotte ordinance and adopted by proponents of HB2 make quite clear the intent of HB2: to undo Charlotte's extension of its existing non-discrimination ordinance to include LGBTQ people, and implement in its place a legal scheme that mandates anti-transgender discrimination. The context and legislative history in the other jurisdictions bears out the same message: that these ordinances were not allowed to stand because they offered non-discrimination protections specifically for LGBTQ people.

This underlying truth—that these preemption laws are nothing but thinly veiled anti-LGBTQ legislation—sets these bills up to be challenged for violating the United States Constitution. In *Romer v. Evans*, a case decided in 1996, the United States Supreme Court held that if "the constitutional conception of 'equal protection of the laws' means anything, it must at the very least mean that a bare ... desire to harm a politically unpopular group cannot constitute a legitimate governmental interest."

One of the several cases currently pending against the State of North Carolina in relation to HB2 makes this argument, and it may well be that the logic behind the laws in Arkansas and Tennessee gets struck down alongside HB2.

The national spotlight on HB2 may serve to expose the discriminatory underbelly of these wonky, innocuous-sounding laws. Those who are attracted to the skin-deep messaging that praises uniformity, traffics in transphobia, and critiques cities that pass ordinances as "extreme" simply miss the point.

**Cities are laboratories for democracy that are even closer to the people than state legislatures, and as such they are accustomed to putting partisanship aside to solve real problems that are facing their communities.**

Discrimination against LGBTQ people is a real problem, and city leaders look to their communities as well as to best practices vetted by other cities in order to solve those problems.

More than 200 cities (as well as 20 states) have laws prohibiting discrimination in employment on the basis of sexual orientation and gender identity, and more than 100 cities (and 19 states) have such laws prohibiting discrimination in places of public accommodation, some of which go back several decades.

As tested in hundreds of municipalities with populations of totaling in the tens of millions of Americans, in red states and blue, and subject also to decades of experience, non-discrimination ordinances including sexual orientation and gender identity have proven themselves over and over to be good public policy. They're good for LGBTQ people. They're good for economic development. They're good for a city's competitiveness. And they're so good that nearly every major American city has adopted them. That's why it is so remarkable when a state legislature overrides a non-discrimination ordinance—it shows that to some, policy making is about taking power to solve problems away.

In the last five years, three states have passed laws **eradicating the authority of cities** to pass non-discrimination ordinances that protect LGBTQ people.



## 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 NON-DISCRIMINATION POLICIES

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

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.



**98%**

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.**



# INCLUSIVE AND INNOVATIVE APPROACHES TO CITYWIDE BULLYING PREVENTION

Bullying is a pervasive and extremely harmful problem that affects youth and their families in communities across the nation. Every young person deserves to live, learn, and grow in an environment that is safe, supportive, and fully inclusive. Unfortunately, for too many young people—particularly at-risk groups like lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender, and queer (LGBTQ) youth—school and the wider community are places that bring fear of bullying.

One of the most important responsibilities of local government is to ensure the safety and wellbeing of our youth. As leaders entrusted with the task of protecting the next generation, it is incumbent on city officials to take every measure possible to safeguard youth from the devastating and enduring harms of bullying.

## WHAT IS BULLYING?

Though no single definition of bullying is ubiquitously utilized, the U.S. Centers for Disease Control and Department of Education worked together to create the first uniform federal definition of bullying in 2014. According to this definition, bullying includes any unwanted, aggressive behavior among youth that is repeated (or likely to be repeated) and involves a real or perceived power imbalance.

Bullying includes making threats, spreading rumors, intentionally excluding someone from a group, and physical or verbal attacks. Importantly, bullying can occur through the use of communication tools like text messages, email, online chat, and social media. Bullying that occurs through these channels is known as cyberbullying.

## PREVALENCE AND EFFECTS

Bullying is a serious public health issue that affects an alarming number of youth. According to the 2015 Youth Risk Behavior Survey (YRBS)—a national survey of high school students—more than twenty percent of students experienced bullying on school property, and more than fifteen percent reported being cyberbullied. Moreover, the National Center for Education Statistics 2013 School Crime Supplement reported a twenty-two percent prevalence of bullying among students between the ages of twelve and eighteen.

**Bullying inflicts severe and lasting physical, psychological, social, and educational harm. Bullied youth are more likely to engage in drug or alcohol use and experience anxiety and depression, which can lead to suicidality and other self-destructive behaviors. Bullied youth are also more likely to experience negative academic outcomes, including an increased risk of dropping out of school. Furthermore, studies show that the negative social, physical, and mental health effects of bullying persist well into adulthood.**

## DISPROPORTIONATE IMPACT ON LGBTQ YOUTH

LGBTQ youth and those perceived to be LGBTQ face a disproportionately high risk of being bullied. According to the 2013 National School Climate Survey, 74.1% of nearly eight thousand LGBTQ students surveyed nationwide reported being verbally harassed during the previous school year because of their sexual orientation and 55.2% because of their gender expression. Furthermore, 27.9% reported being physically assaulted because of their sexual orientation or gender expression.

Additionally, the 2015 YRBS revealed that over 59.1 percent of lesbian, gay, and bisexual (LGB) students and students who reported being unsure of their sexual orientation were targets of bullying on school property, compared to just 18.8 percent of heterosexual students—a prevalence rate of almost 3.4 times more than their heterosexual counterparts. The same observation held true for cyberbullying. The prevalence of cyberbullying was more than 3.5 times higher for LGB and unsure students nationally than their heterosexual counterparts.

Additionally, the severe physical, mental, social, and educational harms caused by bullying can be greatly compounded for LGBTQ youth and those perceived to be LGBTQ. Sadly, LGBTQ youth still face rejection from family, peers, teachers, and their larger communities. These challenges, together with the direct impacts of bullying, place LGBTQ youth at an even higher risk of negative health outcomes like depression and suicidal ideation.

## WHAT CAN MUNICIPALITIES DO?

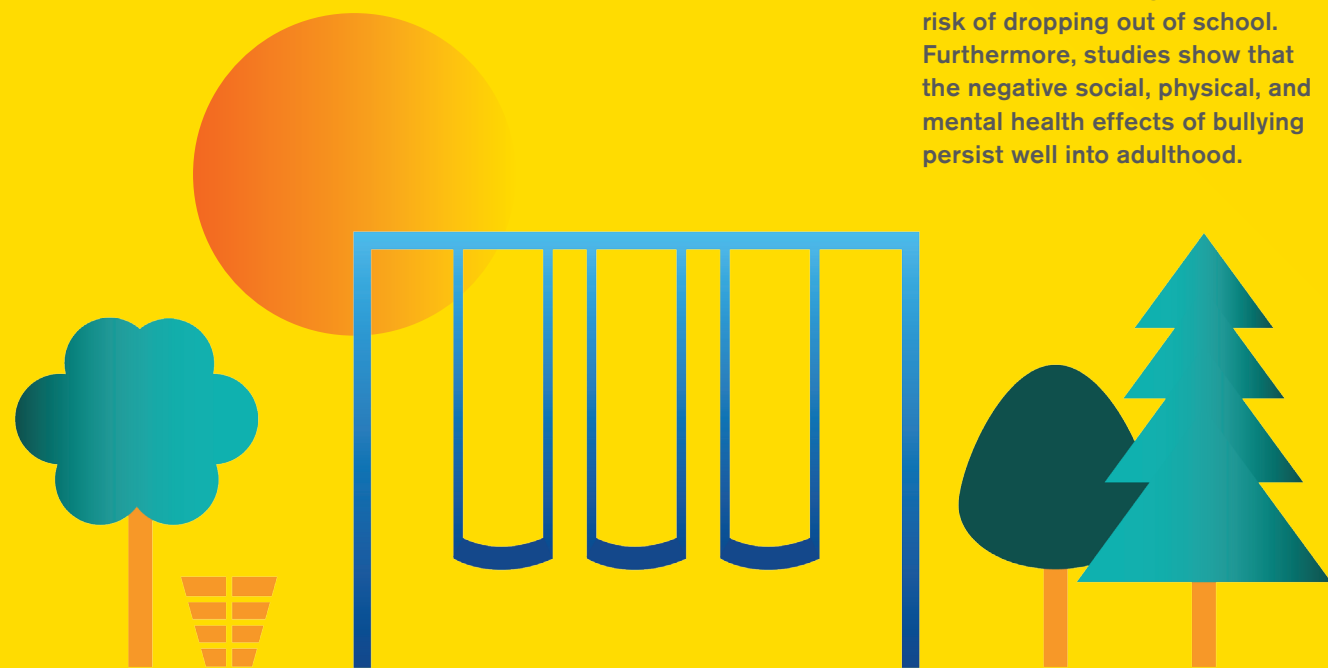
It is imperative that cities do everything in their power to ensure that their youth—including especially-at-risk LGBTQ youth—are safeguarded from the harms of bullying. Municipalities are uniquely positioned to holistically protect youth from bullying.

First, while anti-bullying school district policies that enumerate sexual orientation and gender identity are vital, many cities lack direct control over school district rules and regulations. Municipalities in this position can still address the problem by actively working with school boards to educate them about the importance of LGBTQ-inclusive anti-bullying policies and advocating for their enactment.

Further, although much of the existing research on bullying focuses on youth in schools, it is clear that bullying often spills over into other realms of the daily life of youth. One such area is the wide range of youth services that many cities support or provide directly. These include services provided by a city's parks and recreation department or public library, for instance. Municipalities generally exercise a great deal of control over policies governing participation in city services or the use of city facilities. Consequently, cities can and should take immediate and wide-reaching action to protect all youth from bullying while accessing city services or facilities.

In 2012, the District of Columbia (D.C.) implemented an innovative and fully-inclusive approach to do just that. This approach centered on the establishment of a Youth Bullying Prevention Task Force. While D.C. is a federal district that possesses a legal structure and authority different from municipalities, its approach to tackling the problem of bullying is one most municipalities can adopt either through local legislation or administrative action.

Bullying inflicts severe and lasting physical, psychological, social, and educational harm. Studies show that the negative social, physical, and mental health **effects of bullying persist well into adulthood.**





**AN EMERGING MODEL: CITYWIDE YOUTH BULLYING PREVENTION TASK FORCE**

The primary charge of a municipal Youth Bullying Prevention Task Force is to develop and implement inclusive citywide policies and programs to protect youth from bullying. The Task Force should be given a wide remit, to include but not be limited to:

- Eliminating bullying in schools through engagement and advocacy with school boards and the development of LGBTQ-inclusive anti-bullying educational and awareness programs for schools within the City;
- Eliminating bullying in all youth-serving city agencies and facilities, including public libraries, parks, recreation centers, and other public spaces, through the development and implementation of sexual orientation and gender identity-inclusive bullying prevention policies;
- Developing educational and awareness anti-bullying community programming, including programs with a focus on particularly at-risk youth like LGBTQ youth;

- Developing and implementing city employee training on the City’s bullying prevention policies and current evidence-based best-practices in bullying prevention; and
- Periodically reviewing existing laws and policies for efficacy and compliance with the latest evidence-based best-practices, and recommending appropriate legislative and policy updates to the City Council and Mayor/City Manager

Importantly, LGBTQ-inclusive anti-bullying laws and policies that apply to city services and the use of city facilities should also apply to organizations that receive city funds or provide services to youth for or on behalf of a city. Moreover, the Task Force should be comprised of representatives from relevant city agencies, teachers, school administrators, parents, mental health professionals, direct service providers, advocates, community members, and youth.

A Task Force created with the above framework ensures that the City utilizes the greatest extent of its authority and reach to prevent bullying against all youth. In addition, requiring periodic review of existing laws and policies ensures that the City’s bullying prevention laws and policies are working and kept in line with current best-practices.



**RECOGNIZING LGBTQ-INCLUSIVE CITYWIDE BULLYING PREVENTION EFFORTS**

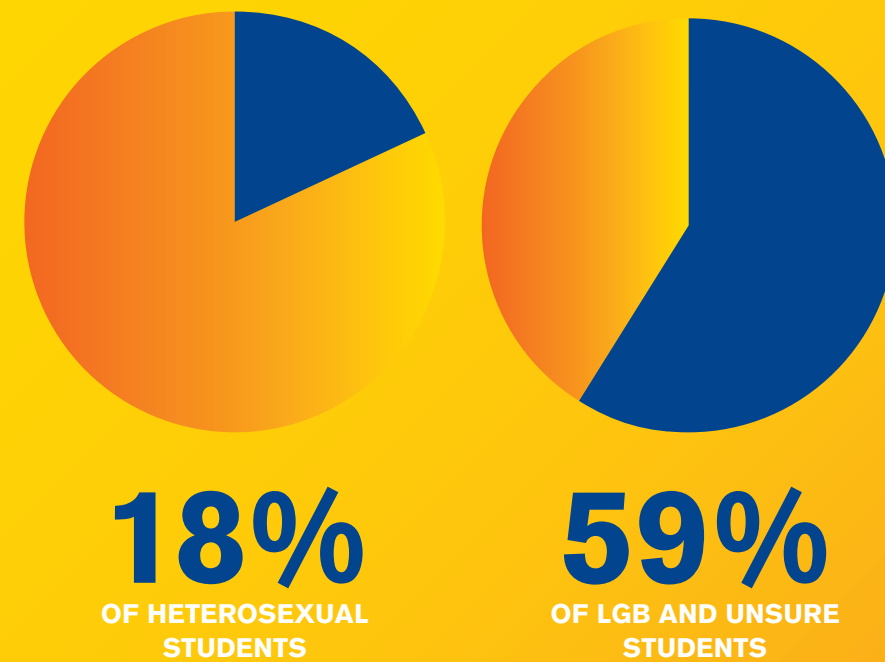
As noted on page 66, the MEI scorecard will undergo significant revisions in 2018. One of these changes include the way we assess anti-bullying policies for local credit. Municipalities that implement a citywide bullying prevention task force that expressly incorporates efforts to protect at-risk LGBTQ youth will be awarded credit in the 2018 MEI.

**CONCLUSION**

Bullying is a pervasive and extremely detrimental problem that affects youth in every community across the country. LGBTQ youth and those perceived to be LGBTQ are especially at risk of being targets of bullying, and its devastating effects—including depression and increased suicidality—are often heightened for these young people who may also be struggling with familial and societal rejection and discrimination.

It is crucial that local leaders make every effort to protect all youth—including particularly-at-risk LGBTQ youth—from bullying in city services and facilities, in organizations and services supported with city funds, and in schools through advocacy and engagement with local school boards. Citywide Youth Bullying Prevention Task Forces focused on achieving these goals can help ensure the safety and wellbeing of our next generation.

LGB and unsure youth are over three times more likely to be **targets of bullying** on school property



# 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.

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

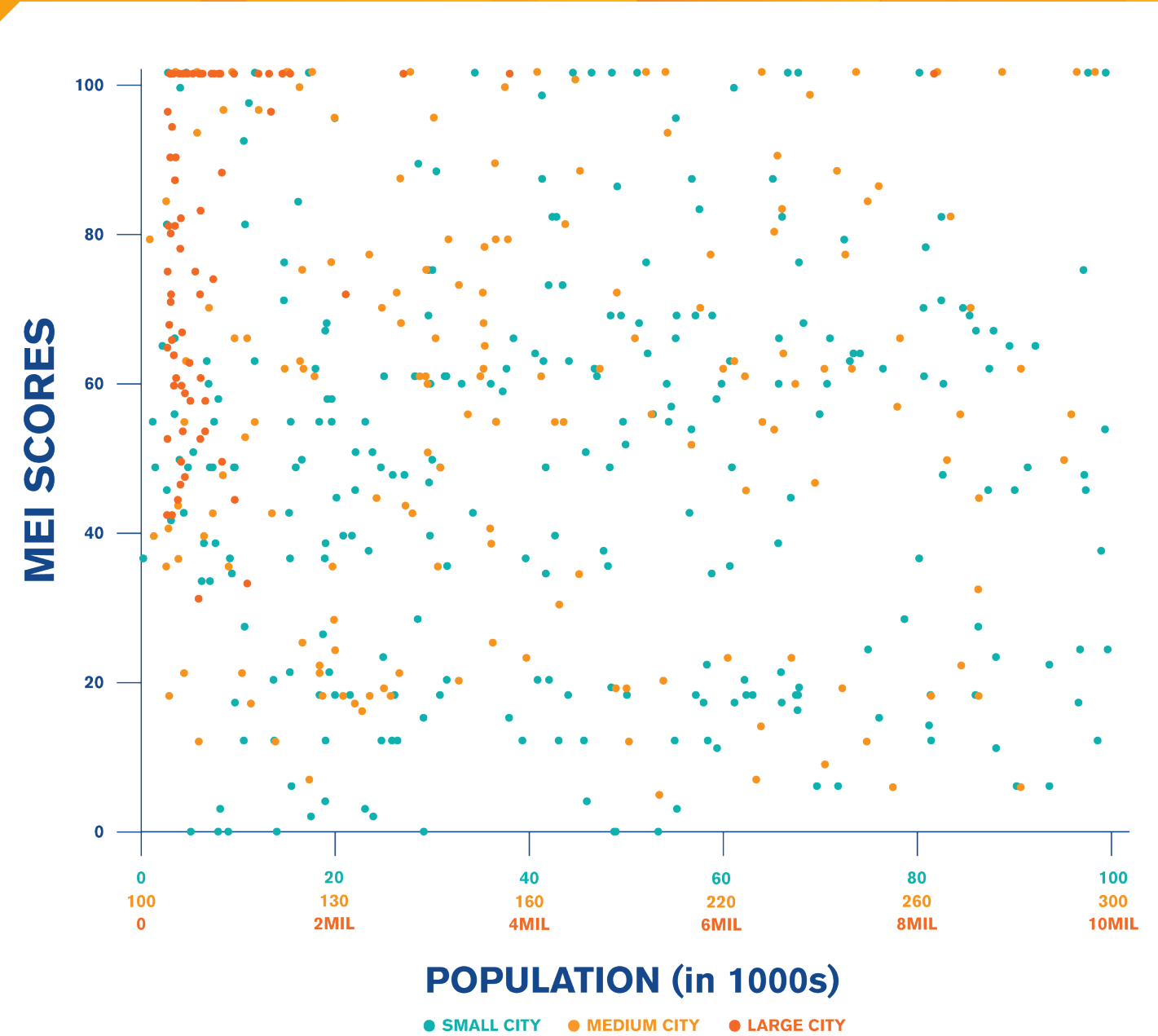
A city can earn "Welcoming Workplace" bonus points for LGBTQ-specific recruitment for city employment opportunities; however, if the city is too small to actively recruit, it can earn those same points either through an inclusive workplace diversity training or facilitating a Pride group for city employees.

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.

## CITY SIZE NOT PREDICTIVE OF MEI SCORE



## Balancing State and Local Laws

### Cities are creations of the state.

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

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

This is especially true when 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 non-discrimination 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.

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

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.**

## 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

The background features a stylized cityscape in various shades of teal. On the left, there are three tall buildings with arched windows at the top and a row of four square windows below. In the center, a large, dark teal building with a pointed roof is prominent. To its right, a lighter teal building with a gabled roof is visible. On the far right, a smaller building has a row of four square windows. The overall aesthetic is modern and geometric.

# SUMMARY OF RESULTS

## Five Years of Indexing Municipal Equality

**Over the course of the last five editions, the MEI reflects tremendous growth in the number of cities who have implemented the laws and policies that the MEI rates.**

In 2012, 61 cities rated by the MEI had comprehensive, inclusive non-discrimination laws; in 2016, 164 did. In 2012, 34 of the cities rated had LGBTQ liaisons in the police department; in 2016, 125 did. Of course, the number of cities rated changed dramatically as well—in 2012, the MEI rated 137 cities; in 2016 it rated 506.

Keeping the rise in number of cities with a policy in proportion to the number of cities rated highlights progress in a different way: while the number of commissions, cities reporting hate crimes, and city employee non-discrimination policy grew roughly proportionally to the number of cities rated, the number of cities offering transgender-inclusive health care to city employees grew much more quickly.

While many factors likely influenced the high level of growth in that important category, one hopes that the encouragement and education offered by the MEI on this topic was a contributing factor.

Every criterion measured by the MEI has more cities receiving points in 2016 than it did in 2012, but there are some criteria where the percentage of cities rated receiving those points has fallen. These likely demonstrate that the MEI's city selection process early in the project's history skewed toward cities especially likely to have non-discrimination ordinances and LGBTQ elected leadership.

This is consistent with the gentle but noticeable fall in the average MEI score across the five editions. Further, cities in the 2012 class of MEI rated cities, with their scores adjusted for changes in the scorecard and averaged over the course of five MEIs, tend to do better than cities that weren't rated until the 2013, 2014, or 2015 MEIs. The most probable explanation for this is that the cities most likely to excel on the MEI also are likely to have the demographics the MEI relied on to select cities in that first year (a high proportion of same-sex couples, for example).

There are other probable explanations for the excellent performance of cities first rated by the MEI in 2012. For one, cities had more time to familiarize themselves with the MEI and utilize the scorecard as a to-do list if they wished, which is something that cities rated in subsequent years haven't had a full five years to do (the class of 2013 improved by an average of 16 points, adjusted, and 2014 only 8).

For another, while the MEI team researches these cities and believes the data reflect best available resources, we know that cities that engage with the MEI research process often are able to provide the team with additional documentation that raises scores. These cities have had more rounds of rating to understand the process and engage with the MEI team.

**With all of that said, however, one exciting fact remains: cities rated by the MEI in 2012 have improved, with scores adjusted to accommodate the changes in scorecard, on average about 20 points over the course of five years.** It may be impossible to know the exact extent to which the MEI has directly or indirectly led to improved laws and policies, but there is no doubt that the state of municipal equality in 2016 is both more advanced and more visible than it has ever been before.

By encouraging cities to engage with LGBTQ issues, to lead on those issues and to continue to ensure that the needs of LGBTQ people are being met by city leadership, the MEI has catalyzed change across the country in communities big and small.

There is no doubt that the state of municipal equality in 2016 is both **more advanced and more visible** than it has ever been before.

## Anatomy of a 100-Point Score

**With a record 60 cities scoring 100 points on the 2016 MEI it is worth examining what those paths to 100 looked like.** Unsurprisingly, the paths looked quite different in some ways—19 cities reached the 100 point threshold by having every policy measured in the standard 100 points, while others relied heavily on bonus points to meet that same threshold. Still others, generally the most populous cities rated, did both.

A word about those “bonus” points: the MEI scorecard is very intentionally designed so that a smaller city, with less infrastructure and capacity to provide direct services, is nonetheless able to showcase its commitment to adopting best practices in LGBTQ-inclusion on the MEI. Large cities like New York, Philadelphia, Los Angeles, and the like will more easily be able to offer some of the services and programs that the MEI rates, and as explained elsewhere in the publication (see page 34) those differences in infrastructure shouldn't keep small cities from scoring well on the MEI.

Bonus points are one way that the MEI accommodates those cities—but an analysis of paths to 100 show that one small city actually reached the 100 point benchmark using entirely standard points, while four large cities relied on 16 bonus points to put them over the top.

On average, cities in this category scored in the mid- to upper-nineties with 8 or 9 bonus points, and that's consistent across various city sizes as well. 26 of the 60 cities with 100-point scores had populations of 300,000 residents or above, compared to 19 medium-size cities and 15 small cities (populations of under 100,000). The dedication of these small cities to matters of equality is particularly inspiring.

And while the paths cities tread toward 100 were quite different in some respects, they were quite similar in others. Every city that scored 100 points reported their 2014 hate crimes statistics to the FBI, and all but one has an LGBT police liaison on the force. 93% had contractor non-discrimination policies including gender identity.

About 60% of the 100 point cities came from states that had at least some laws prohibiting discrimination on the basis of gender identity, but 25 of the 60 had more comprehensive non-discrimination laws protecting transgender people than did the state. The vast majority (nearly 80%) also had openly LGBTQ elected or high-level appointed officials in city government.

Here's another thing that was the same: every region of the country boasted at least one perfect score. The region with the most 100s was the West—which includes Alaska, Arizona, California, Hawaii, Nevada, Oregon, and Washington—but the region with the highest proportion of 100s to cities rated was the Great Lakes region, with 1 in 5 cities rated earning the MEI's top score. That region includes Illinois, Indiana, Michigan, Minnesota, Ohio, and Wisconsin, and it boasted eleven 100s.

With a record 60 cities scoring 100 points on the 2016 MEI it is worth examining **what those paths to 100 looked like.**



# SUCCESS STORY: EQUALITY OHIO

**Working with local municipalities to improve LGBTQ equality is deeply rewarding work. It's not merely because it creates earned media, which elevates stories about LGBTQ people and fuels our momentum. It's not just because it increases the number of cities across Ohio that provide legal remedies and protections for LGBTQ people. Municipal work is deeply rewarding because it is an investment in community.**

Coordinating with local partners and boots-on-the-ground activists is a practice in developing leadership and giving people the tools they can use to effect change. In each community Equality Ohio has worked in, we now have a strong network of leaders that are ready to mobilize for LGBTQ equality.

LGBTQ-inclusive nondiscrimination protections aren't the only issue that cities can address. Recently, Cincinnati became the first city (outside of Washington D.C.) to ban conversion therapy. This was only possible because of a strong network of leaders with the expertise and passion to get the job done.

Our biggest accomplishment this year happened in Cleveland. With the support of HRC and local partners, we took the restroom issue on directly—and won. When Cleveland first passed LGBTQ nondiscrimination protections including gender identity/expression in 2009, they put in a bad exception allowing for transgender people to be told by employers and business owners what restroom they could or could not use.

After nearly three years of work and coalition-building, Cleveland City Council passed an ordinance to remove that exception in a unanimous vote—just days before the Republican National Convention. The contrast of the GOP's anti-LGBTQ platform and the inclusiveness of the city holding the convention was a powerful story that is inspiring other cities across the country to do the right thing.

Equality Ohio is committed to a data-driven municipal strategy side-by-side with our work at the state level for laws that truly reflect the needs of LGBTQ Ohioans.

**ALANA JOCHUM**  
Executive Director



Municipal work is deeply rewarding because it is an **investment in community.**

## Equality Across America

**87 cities from states without non-discrimination laws protecting LGBTQ people scored above the overall nationwide mean of 56 points.** These cities averaged 80 point scores and boasted 22 perfect 100s. These statistics illustrate an important phenomenon—cities across the country continue to lead the way on matters of equality.

And it isn't just the big cities who demonstrate the courage to speak out for equality—while some of the cities in this cohort are quite large—including Phoenix, Philadelphia, Dallas, Houston, and San Antonio—more of these cities were not. Small cities like Eureka Springs, Arkansas, Morehead, Kentucky, and New Hope, Pennsylvania—all cities with fewer than 10,000 residents—scored in the top half of all cities rated, nationwide. In fact, the average population of the cities in this cohort is approximately 190,000.

To be in the top half of cities nationwide and to come from a state without non-discrimination laws that include sexual orientation and gender identity as protected classes, cities have to do most of the heavy lifting themselves. That's why nearly all—87%—of these cities have at least some kind of non-discrimination ordinance that include LGBTQ people, and about 70% of these cities receive full credit on the MEI for an ordinance that prohibits discrimination on the basis of sexual orientation in employment, housing, and places of public accommodation.

The cities in this cohort without such an ordinance all have inclusive employment protections for city employees in place; all but one have a human or civil rights commission; most have both types of liaisons as well as anti-bullying protections, and every single one reported their hate crimes statistics to the FBI in 2014.

Notably, more than half of the cities in this cohort have a final thing in common: they have an openly LGBTQ elected or appointed official serving in a high-level office in city government.

What the cities don't have in common, however, is geography. This finding underscores the diversity of cities who are acting to embrace matters of LGBTQ equality even when their states have not—or have explicitly rejected them.

Of this cohort of cities that have scored above the national median despite hailing from states that lack state-level non-discrimination protections for LGBTQ people, the largest group of cities was located in the Southeast, with 29 such cities. This region includes two of the smallest cities in the cohort as well as the perhaps less surprising Orlando, Atlanta and Louisville. The small cities in the group hail from a remarkably varied group of states—Florida, Arkansas, Kentucky and North Carolina—with Florida dominating the medium-sized cities in the group. Tennessee and North Carolina also get in on the fun being had by Florida, Georgia, Kentucky and Louisiana in the large city sub-group.

Arizona dominates the West region in all city sizes, and Texas has seven large cities which steal the show in the Southwest. The Plains states are led by Missouri, who brings home all of the 100s in the region, but Kansas and Nebraska make a strong showing as well. Missoula, Montana brings the Mountain region its only 100, but in a region comprised of predominantly small cities both Montana and Idaho shine. Pennsylvania is a standout in the Mid-Atlantic region, offering strong contenders in each city size category. The Great Lakes region boasts the second largest group of cities in the cohort; Indiana, Michigan and Ohio split these fairly evenly—and between them this region has seven perfect scores.

**These results demonstrate that equality isn't a coastal phenomenon, nor is it one relegated to big cities or blue s.**

Cities across the country—many of which are accustomed to being pragmatic no-nonsense problem-solvers while their state legislatures get mired down in politics—are neither waiting for their states to act nor cowed by their state legislature's disapproval of them taking action.

They are acting now to make sure that their cities are doing right by the LGBTQ people who live, work, and travel there.




# EQUALITY ACROSS AMERICA

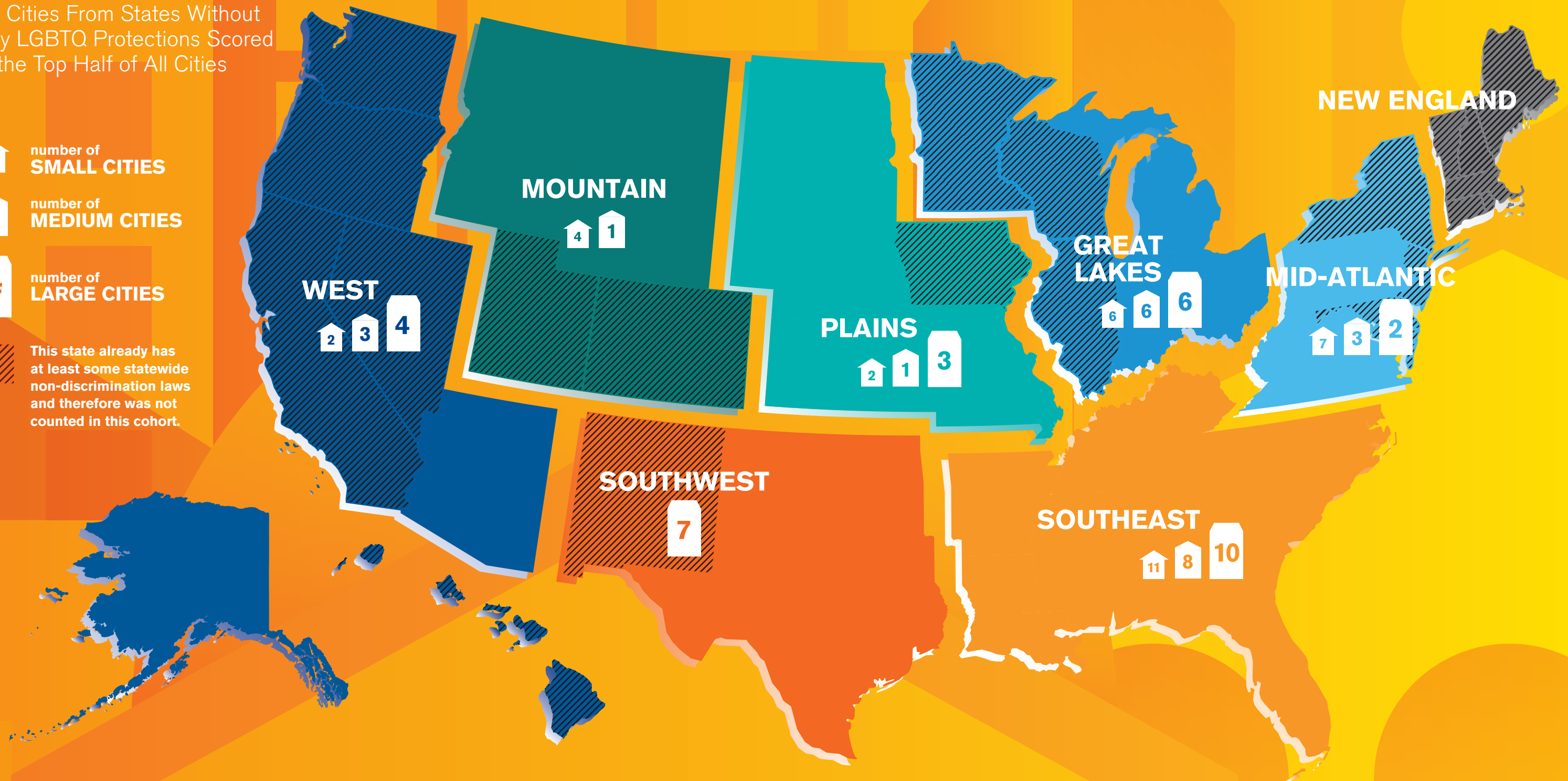
87 Cities From States Without Any LGBTQ Protections Scored in the Top Half of All Cities

# number of **SMALL CITIES**

# number of **MEDIUM CITIES**

# number of **LARGE CITIES**

 This state already has at least some statewide non-discrimination laws and therefore was not counted in this cohort.



# 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
ALABAMA	Auburn	○	○	○	○	○	0	0	0
	Birmingham	○	○	◐	○	◐	10	2	12
	Florence	○	○	○	◐	○	12	0	12
	Hoover	○	○	○	◐	○	12	0	12
	Huntsville	○	○	◐	○	○	5	0	5
	Mobile	○	○	◐	○	○	5	2	7
	Montgomery	○	◐	◐	○	○	9	0	9
	Tuscaloosa	○	○	◐	○	○	6	0	6
ALASKA	Anchorage	●	◐	◐	◐	●	75	4	79
	Fairbanks	○	◐	◐	◐	◐	35	0	35
	Hoover	○	○	○	○	○	0	0	0
	Juneau	●	◐	◐	○	●	58	2	60
	Ketchikan	○	○	◐	○	○	3	0	3
	Sitka	○	○	○	○	○	0	0	0
	Wasilla	○	○	○	○	○	0	0	0
ARIZONA	Chandler	○	○	◐	◐	○	15	0	15
	Conway	○	◐	◐	●	◐	55	6	61
	Flagstaff	◐	◐	◐	◐	◐	63	2	65
	Gilbert	○	○	◐	◐	○	17	2	19
	Glendale	○	◐	◐	●	◐	51	4	55
	Mesa	○	◐	●	●	◐	56	2	58
	Peoria	○	◐	◐	●	○	36	2	38
	Phoenix	●	●	◐	●	●	97	14	100
	Scottsdale	○	◐	◐	●	◐	53	12	65
	Tempe	●	◐	◐	●	●	91	12	100
Tucson	●	◐	●	●	●	94	12	100	
ARKANSAS	Conway	○	◐	◐	◐	◐	34	0	34
	Eureka Springs	●	◐	◐	○	●	62	2	64
	Fayetteville	●	◐	◐	○	●	61	2	63
	Fort Smith	○	○	◐	◐	○	18	0	18
	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	●	◐	◐	○	○	42	0	42
	Cathedral City	●	●	◐	●	●	95	10	100
	Chula Vista	●	◐	◐	◐	◐	55	0	55
	Concord	●	○	◐	◐	○	53	8	61
	Corona	●	◐	◐	◐	○	60	0	60
	Elk Grove	●	●	◐	◐	○	77	0	77
	Escondido	●	◐	◐	◐	○	60	0	60
	Fontana	●	◐	◐	◐	○	54	0	54
	Fremont	●	◐	●	◐	◐	81	4	85
	Fresno	●	◐	◐	◐	○	57	0	57
	Fullerton	●	◐	◐	◐	○	74	2	76
	Garden Grove	●	◐	◐	◐	○	59	2	61
	Glendale	●	◐	◐	◐	○	62	0	62
	Guerneville (Sonoma County)	●	◐	●	●	◐	92	10	100
	Hayward	●	◐	◐	◐	◐	57	2	59
	Huntington Beach	●	◐	◐	◐	○	59	2	61
	Irvine	●	◐	●	●	◐	77	6	83
	Lancaster	●	◐	◐	●	◐	76	2	78
	Long Beach	●	●	●	●	●	100	8	100
	Los Angeles	●	◐	●	●	●	94	14	100
	Modesto	●	◐	◐	◐	○	59	0	59
	Moreno Valley	●	◐	◐	◐	○	60	0	60
	Oakland	●	◐	◐	◐	◐	73	4	77
	Oceanside	●	◐	◐	●	◐	87	12	99
	Ontario	●	◐	◐	◐	○	54	0	54
	Orange	●	◐	◐	◐	○	71	0	71
	Oxnard	●	○	◐	◐	○	53	0	53
	Palm Desert	●	◐	◐	◐	○	66	2	68
	Palm Springs	●	●	◐	●	●	95	14	100
Palmdale	●	◐	◐	◐	○	71	0	71	
Pasadena	●	◐	◐	◐	◐	67	2	69	
Pomona	●	●	◐	◐	○	72	0	72	
Rancho Cucamonga	●	◐	◐	◐	○	54	0	54	
Rancho Mirage	●	●	◐	●	◐	91	12	100	

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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	Richmond	●	◐	●	◐	◐	79	4	83
	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	4	100
	Santa Ana	●	◐	◐	◐	◐	63	0	63
	Santa Clarita	●	◐	◐	◐	○	65	0	65
	Santa Monica	●	◐	◐	◐	◐	64	0	64
	Santa Rosa	●	◐	◐	◐	●	81	6	87
	Signal Hill	●	●	●	◐	◐	82	14	96
	Stockton	●	◐	◐	●	○	70	0	70
	Sunnyvale	●	◐	◐	◐	○	67	0	67
	Thousand Oaks	●	◐	◐	◐	○	60	0	60
	Torrance	●	◐	◐	◐	○	65	0	65
	Vallejo	●	○	◐	◐	◐	52	0	52
Visalia	●	◐	◐	◐	◐	62	0	62	
West Hollywood	●	●	●	●	●	100	14	100	
COLORADO	Aspen	●	◐	◐	◐	○	60	2	62
	Aurora	●	◐	◐	◐	○	59	0	59
	Boulder	●	◐	◐	◐	◐	72	2	74
	Colorado Springs	●	○	◐	◐	○	53	0	53
	Denver	●	◐	◐	◐	◐	76	6	82
	Fort Collins	●	◐	●	●	○	74	0	74
	Lakewood	●	◐	◐	◐	○	60	0	60
	Littleton	●	○	◐	◐	○	48	0	48
	CONNECTICUT	Bridgeport	●	○	◐	◐	◐	50	0
Fairfield		●	◐	◐	◐	○	57	0	57
Hartford		●	◐	●	○	◐	70	4	74
New Britain		●	○	◐	◐	◐	56	6	62
New Haven		●	◐	●	●	◐	90	4	94
Norwalk		●	◐	◐	◐	○	56	12	68
Stamford		●	●	●	●	◐	98	4	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	●	◐	◐	◐	◐	50	0	50
	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	●	◐	◐	◐	○	59	0	59
FLORIDA	Cape Coral	○	◐	○	◐	◐	25	0	25
	Coral Gables	●	◐	◐	◐	○	59	2	61
	Daytona Beach	●	○	◐	◐	○	48	0	48
	Fort Lauderdale	●	◐	◐	●	◐	72	8	80
	Gainesville	●	◐	●	●	◐	92	6	98
	Hialeah	●	◐	◐	○	○	47	2	49
	Hollywood	●	○	◐	○	○	41	2	43
	Jacksonville	○	◐	◐	◐	◐	47	2	49
	Miami	●	◐	◐	○	○	47	2	49
	Miami Shores	●	◐	●	●	◐	89	2	91
	Oakland Park	●	◐	◐	◐	◐	78	8	86
	Orlando	●	●	●	●	●	94	10	100
	Pembroke Pines	●	◐	◐	◐	◐	76	2	78
	Port Saint Lucie	○	◐	○	◐	◐	28	2	30
	St. Petersburg	◐	◐	◐	●	●	86	14	100
Tallahassee	●	◐	●	●	◐	88	4	92	
Tampa	●	◐	●	◐	●	76	10	86	
Wilton Manors	●	◐	●	◐	●	89	12	100	
GEORGIA	Athens	○	◐	◐	○	◐	21	0	21
	Atlanta	●	●	●	●	●	100	4	100
	Augusta-Richmond	○	○	○	◐	◐	12	2	14
	Avondale Estates	○	◐	◐	◐	◐	39	2	41
	Columbus	○	◐	◐	◐	◐	36	2	38
	Decatur	○	◐	○	○	◐	21	0	21
	North Druid Hills	○	◐	◐	○	○	12	0	12
	Roswell	◐	○	◐	○	○	11	0	11

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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
GEORGIA	Sandy Springs	🟡	🟡	🟡	🟠	🟡	22	0	22
	Savannah	🟠	🟡	🟡	🟡	🟢	42	2	44
HAWAII	Hawaii County	🟢	🟡	🟡	🟠	🟠	51	0	51
	Honolulu County	🟢	🟡	🟡	🟠	🟡	44	0	44
	Kalawao County	🟢	🟠	🟡	🟠	🟠	36	0	36
	Kauai County	🟢	🟡	🟡	🟠	🟡	44	0	44
	Maui County	🟢	🟡	🟡	🟠	🟡	54	0	54
IDAHO	Boise	🟢	🟡	🟠	🟡	🟡	61	0	61
	Coeur d'Alene	🟢	🟡	🟡	🟡	🟠	62	0	62
	Idaho Falls	🟡	🟡	🟡	🟡	🟡	53	0	53
	Meridian	🟠	🟡	🟠	🟡	🟠	24	0	24
	Moscow	🟢	🟡	🟡	🟠	🟠	50	0	50
	Nampa	🟠	🟠	🟡	🟡	🟡	18	0	18
	Pocatello	🟢	🟡	🟡	🟡	🟠	59	0	59
ILLINOIS	Aurora	🟢	🟡	🟡	🟢	🟠	75	4	79
	Carbondale	🟢	🟡	🟡	🟠	🟠	47	0	47
	Champaign	🟢	🟡	🟢	🟡	🟡	73	4	77
	Chicago	🟢	🟢	🟢	🟢	🟢	100	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	8	100
	Evansville	🟡	🟡	🟡	🟡	🟡	50	4	54
	Fort Wayne	🟡	🟡	🟡	🟡	🟡	40	2	42
	Hammond	🟢	🟡	🟡	🟡	🟢	67	2	69
	Indianapolis	🟢	🟡	🟡	🟢	🟡	81	6	87
	Muncie	🟢	🟠	🟡	🟡	🟢	55	0	55
	South Bend	🟢	🟡	🟡	🟡	🟡	74	4	78
	Terre Haute	🟢	🟠	🟡	🟠	🟠	35	0	35
	West Lafayette	🟡	🟡	🟡	🟢	🟡	66	2	68

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# SCORES

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IOWA	Ames	🟢	🟡	🟡	🟡	🟡	66	2	68
	Cedar Rapids	🟢	🟢	🟢	🟢	🟡	99	4	100
	Davenport	🟢	🟡	🟢	🟢	🟡	89	12	100
	Des Moines	🟢	🟡	🟢	🟢	🟡	93	4	97
	Dubuque	🟢	🟡	🟡	🟡	🟡	76	6	82
	Iowa City	🟢	🟡	🟢	🟢	🟡	90	12	100
	Sioux City	🟢	🟡	🟡	🟡	🟡	75	6	81
	Waterloo	🟢	🟡	🟡	🟡	🟠	65	2	67
	West Des Moines	🟢	🟡	🟡	🟠	🟠	42	0	42
KANSAS	Emporia	🟠	🟠	🟡	🟡	🟠	23	0	23
	Hutchinson	🟠	🟠	🟡	🟡	🟠	20	0	20
	Kansas City	🟠	🟡	🟡	🟡	🟡	35	0	35
	Lawrence	🟢	🟡	🟡	🟡	🟠	59	2	61
	Manhattan	🟢	🟡	🟡	🟡	🟢	61	2	63
	Olathe	🟠	🟠	🟡	🟠	🟠	5	2	7
	Overland Park	🟠	🟠	🟡	🟡	🟠	17	2	19
	Topeka	🟠	🟡	🟡	🟠	🟡	22	0	22
	Wichita	🟠	🟡	🟡	🟡	🟠	21	0	21
KENTUCKY	Berea	🟠	🟡	🟡	🟡	🟡	32	0	32
	Bowling Green	🟠	🟠	🟡	🟡	🟠	17	0	17
	Covington	🟡	🟡	🟡	🟢	🟡	61	2	63
	Frankfort	🟡	🟠	🟡	🟡	🟡	48	4	52
	Lexington	🟢	🟡	🟡	🟡	🟡	65	6	71
	Louisville	🟢	🟡	🟡	🟢	🟢	88	12	100
	Morehead	🟢	🟡	🟡	🟡	🟠	59	0	59
	Owensboro	🟠	🟠	🟡	🟡	🟡	18	0	18
	LOUISIANA	Alexandria	🟠	🟡	🟡	🟠	🟡	29	8
Baton Rouge		🟠	🟡	🟡	🟡	🟡	30	2	32
Lafayette		🟠	🟠	🟠	🟡	🟠	12	0	12
Lake Charles		🟠	🟡	🟠	🟠	🟠	6	0	6
Metairie		🟠	🟡	🟡	🟠	🟡	16	2	18
Monroe		🟠	🟠	🟠	🟠	🟠	0	0	0
New Orleans		🟢	🟡	🟡	🟡	🟡	75	14	89
Shreveport		🟢	🟡	🟡	🟠	🟢	61	2	63

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MAINE	Auburn	●	◐	◑	◑	○	54	0	54
	Augusta	●	◐	◑	◑	◑	57	0	57
	Bangor	●	◐	◑	◑	◑	59	0	59
	Brunswick	●	◐	◑	○	○	42	0	42
	Lewiston	●	◐	◑	◑	○	54	0	54
	Orono	●	○	◑	◑	○	48	0	48
	Portland	●	◑	◑	●	◑	79	2	81
	Scarborough	●	◑	◑	◑	○	60	6	66
	South Portland	●	◑	◑	◑	○	60	0	60
MARYLAND	Annapolis	●	◐	◑	◑	◑	61	4	65
	Baltimore	●	◑	●	●	●	94	12	100
	Bowie	●	◐	◑	◑	○	54	2	56
	College Park	●	◑	◑	◑	●	79	8	87
	Columbia	●	○	◑	◑	○	53	0	53
	Frederick	●	◑	◑	◑	◑	82	4	86
	Gaithersburg	●	◑	◑	○	◑	57	2	59
	Hagerstown	●	○	◑	○	○	36	0	36
	Rockville	●	◑	●	●	◑	92	6	98
	Towson	●	◑	●	●	◐	90	4	94
MASSACHUSETTS	Amherst	●	◑	◑	◑	○	65	2	67
	Arlington	●	◑	◑	◑	●	73	8	81
	Boston	●	●	●	●	●	100	10	100
	Cambridge	●	●	●	●	●	100	14	100
	Lowell	●	◐	◑	◑	○	54	0	54
	Northampton	●	◑	◑	●	◑	80	8	88
	Provincetown	●	◑	●	●	◑	94	6	100
	Salem	●	◑	●	●	●	96	4	100
	Springfield	●	◑	◑	◑	◑	64	0	64
	Worcester	●	◑	●	●	◑	90	12	100
MICHIGAN	Ann Arbor	●	●	◑	●	●	94	8	100
	Detroit	◑	●	●	●	◑	96	8	100
	East Lansing	●	◑	●	●	◑	93	10	100
	Ferndale	●	◑	◑	●	◑	84	10	94
	Grand Rapids	●	◑	◐	◑	◑	70	6	76
	Kalamazoo	●	◐	◑	◑	◐	61	2	63

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MICHIGAN	Lansing	●	◐	◑	◑	◑	63	2	65	
	Pleasant Ridge	●	◐	◑	○	◑	43	2	45	
	Sterling Heights	◐	○	◑	◑	◑	28	0	28	
	Traverse City	●	◑	◑	◑	◑	73	2	75	
	Warren	◐	○	○	◑	○	16	0	16	
	MINNESOTA	Bloomington	●	◐	◑	◑	○	59	0	59
Duluth		●	◐	◑	◑	◑	64	2	66	
Eden Prairie		●	◑	◑	◑	○	62	0	62	
Minneapolis		●	●	●	●	●	100	2	100	
Minnetonka		●	◐	◑	◑	○	54	0	54	
Rochester		●	◑	◑	◑	◑	62	0	62	
Saint Cloud		●	◐	◑	◑	○	59	0	59	
Saint Paul		●	●	●	●	◑	99	6	100	
MISSISSIPPI	Bay St. Louis	●	○	○	○	◑	34	0	34	
	Biloxi	○	○	○	◑	◑	16	2	18	
	Gulfport	○	○	○	◑	◑	14	2	16	
	Hattiesburg	○	○	○	○	◑	4	0	4	
	Jackson	●	◑	◑	○	●	67	4	71	
	Ocean Springs	○	○	○	○	◑	2	0	2	
	Oxford	○	○	○	○	◑	4	0	4	
	Southaven	○	○	○	○	○	0	0	0	
	Starkville	○	○	○	○	◑	2	0	2	
	MISSOURI	Cape Girardeau	○	○	◑	◑	○	15	0	15
Columbia		●	◑	●	●	◑	86	6	92	
Independence		○	○	◑	◑	○	17	0	17	
Jefferson City		○	○	○	◑	○	12	0	12	
Kansas City		●	◑	◑	●	●	91	14	100	
Springfield		○	○	◑	◑	◑	21	2	23	
St. Charles		◑	◑	◑	◑	○	38	0	38	
St. Louis		●	●	◑	●	●	97	14	100	
MONTANA		Billings	○	○	◑	◑	◑	18	0	18
		Bozeman	●	◑	○	○	◑	54	4	58
	Butte-Silver Bow	●	◐	◑	○	○	42	0	42	
	Great Falls	○	○	○	◑	○	12	0	12	

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MONTANA	Helena	●	●	●	●	●	60	0	60
	Kalispell	○	○	●	●	○	18	0	18
	Missoula	●	●	●	●	●	95	6	100
	Whitefish	●	○	○	○	●	38	0	38
NEBRASKA	Bellevue	○	○	●	●	○	18	0	18
	Fremont	○	○	○	●	○	12	0	12
	Grand Island	○	●	○	●	●	19	0	19
	Kearney	○	○	●	●	○	18	0	18
	Lincoln	○	●	●	●	●	46	6	52
	North Platte	○	○	○	●	○	12	0	12
	Omaha	●	●	●	●	●	64	2	66
NEVADA	Carson City	●	●	●	●	○	66	2	68
	Elko	●	●	●	○	○	54	0	54
	Enterprise	●	●	●	●	●	94	6	100
	Henderson	●	●	●	●	●	64	0	64
	Las Vegas	●	●	●	●	●	93	14	100
	Mesquite	●	○	○	○	○	36	0	36
	North Las Vegas	●	●	●	●	○	54	2	56
	Paradise	●	●	●	●	●	94	6	100
	Reno	●	●	●	●	●	79	2	81
Sparks	●	●	○	○	○	45	0	45	
NEW HAMPSHIRE	Concord	●	●	●	●	○	39	0	39
	Derry	●	●	●	●	○	45	0	45
	Dover	●	●	●	●	●	49	0	49
	Durham	●	●	●	●	●	70	0	70
	Keene	●	●	○	○	○	35	2	37
	Manchester	●	●	●	●	○	39	0	39
	Nashua	●	●	○	○	○	27	0	27
	Plymouth	●	○	○	○	○	33	0	33
	Portsmouth	●	●	●	●	○	39	0	39
	Rochester	●	●	●	●	○	39	0	39
NEW JERSEY	Asbury Park	●	●	●	●	●	79	4	83
	Elizabeth	●	●	●	●	○	59	2	61

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NEW JERSEY	Hoboken	●	○	●	●	●	51	0	51
	Jersey City	●	●	●	●	●	99	4	100
	Lambertville	●	●	●	●	●	94	4	98
	Montclair	●	●	●	●	○	59	2	61
	New Brunswick	●	○	○	○	○	65	0	65
	Newark	●	○	○	○	●	67	0	67
	Ocean Grove	●	○	○	○	●	61	4	65
	Paterson	●	○	○	○	○	48	0	48
	Princeton	●	○	○	○	●	70	4	74
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	●	○	○	○	○	45	0	45
	Rio Rancho	●	○	○	○	○	45	0	45
	Roswell	●	○	○	○	○	48	0	48
	Santa Fe	●	●	○	○	●	69	6	75
NEW YORK	Albany	●	●	●	●	●	99	8	100
	Brookhaven	●	○	○	○	○	62	0	62
	Buffalo	●	●	○	○	○	85	10	95
	Ithaca	●	●	○	○	○	74	0	74
	New York	●	●	●	●	●	100	16	100
	Northwest Harbor	●	○	○	○	○	53	2	55
	Rochester	●	●	○	○	○	95	6	100
	Syracuse	●	○	○	○	○	82	12	94
	White Plains	●	○	○	○	○	82	4	86
Yonkers	●	○	○	○	○	95	6	100	
NORTH CAROLINA	Carborro	○	○	○	○	○	47	10	57
	Cary	○	○	○	○	○	18	0	18
	Chapel Hill	○	○	○	○	○	50	18	68
	Charlotte	○	○	○	○	○	59	14	73
	Durham	○	○	○	○	○	55	14	69
	Fayetteville	○	○	○	○	○	23	0	23
	Greensboro	○	○	○	○	○	64	16	80

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NORTH CAROLINA	Raleigh	○	◐	●	◐	◐	51	8	59
	Wilmington	○	○	◐	◐	◐	21	0	21
	Winston-Salem	○	◐	●	◐	◐	38	6	44
NORTH DAKOTA	Bismarck	○	○	◐	◐	○	17	0	17
	Fargo	○	◐	◐	●	◐	39	4	43
	Grand Forks	◐	◐	◐	●	◐	55	0	55
	Jamestown	○	◐	○	○	○	6	0	6
	Mandan	○	◐	○	◐	○	18	0	18
	Minot	○	○	◐	◐	○	20	0	20
	West Fargo	○	○	○	◐	○	12	0	12
OHIO	Akron	◐	◐	◐	●	◐	78	4	82
	Cincinnati	●	●	●	●	●	100	12	100
	Cleveland	●	◐	◐	◐	●	73	8	81
	Columbus	●	●	●	●	●	100	4	100
	Dayton	●	●	◐	●	◐	95	6	100
	Dublin	◐	◐	◐	○	○	34	0	34
	Lakewood	●	◐	◐	◐	●	73	4	77
	Toledo	●	◐	◐	●	●	85	4	89
OKLAHOMA	Broken Arrow	○	○	○	◐	○	12	0	12
	Edmond	○	○	○	◐	○	12	2	14
	Lawton	○	○	◐	◐	○	17	0	17
	Moore	○	○	○	◐	○	12	0	12
	Norman	○	◐	◐	◐	●	40	2	42
	Oklahoma City	○	◐	◐	◐	◐	29	2	31
	Stillwater	○	○	○	◐	○	12	0	12
	Tulsa	◐	◐	◐	◐	●	44	2	46
	OREGON	Ashland	●	◐	◐	○	○	42	2
Bend		●	◐	◐	◐	◐	61	0	61
Corvallis		●	◐	◐	◐	○	54	0	54
Eugene		●	●	◐	●	◐	94	4	98
Gresham		●	○	◐	○	○	36	0	36
Hillsboro		●	◐	◐	○	○	48	0	48
Portland		●	●	◐	●	◐	94	6	100
Salem		●	◐	●	●	○	86	2	88

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PENNSYLVANIA	Allentown	●	◐	◐	●	◐	87	8	95
	Carlisle	○	◐	◐	◐	◐	26	0	26
	Erie	◐	○	◐	○	◐	37	2	39
	Harrisburg	●	◐	◐	◐	◐	66	2	68
	New Hope	●	◐	●	◐	●	76	4	80
	Philadelphia	●	●	●	●	●	100	16	100
	Pittsburgh	●	◐	◐	◐	●	81	12	93
	Reading	●	◐	◐	◐	◐	64	2	66
	State College	●	◐	◐	◐	◐	70	2	72
Wilkes-Barre	●	◐	◐	○	●	58	4	62	
RHODE ISLAND	Cranston	●	○	◐	○	○	36	0	36
	East Providence	●	◐	◐	◐	○	60	0	60
	Kingston	●	○	◐	◐	○	48	0	48
	Narragansett	●	◐	◐	○	○	48	0	48
	Newport	●	○	◐	◐	○	48	0	48
	Pawtucket	●	◐	◐	◐	◐	65	0	65
	Providence	●	●	●	●	●	100	4	100
	Warwick	●	◐	◐	●	◐	68	2	70
SOUTH CAROLINA	Charleston	◐	○	◐	◐	◐	42	0	42
	Clemson	○	○	○	○	○	0	0	0
	Columbia	◐	◐	◐	●	◐	75	0	75
	Greenville	○	◐	◐	◐	○	20	2	22
	Mount Pleasant	○	○	◐	◐	○	18	0	18
	Myrtle Beach	●	○	◐	◐	○	47	0	47
	North Charleston	◐	◐	◐	◐	◐	43	4	47
	Rock Hill	○	○	◐	◐	○	17	0	17
	SOUTH DAKOTA	Aberdeen	○	○	◐	◐	○	18	0
Brookings		○	◐	●	◐	●	46	4	50
Mitchell		○	○	○	◐	○	12	0	12
Pierre		○	○	○	◐	○	12	0	12
Rapid City		○	○	◐	◐	○	17	2	19
Sioux Falls		○	◐	◐	◐	◐	34	6	40
Spearfish		○	◐	◐	◐	○	21	0	21
Vermillion		○	◐	◐	◐	◐	27	0	27
Watertown		○	◐	○	◐	○	18	0	18

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TENNESSEE	Chattanooga	○	◐	○	◐	●	32	2	34
	Clarksville	○	○	◐	◐	○	17	0	17
	Franklin	○	◐	○	◐	○	18	0	18
	Johnson City	○	○	◐	◐	○	18	0	18
	Knoxville	○	◐	◐	●	◐	49	6	55
	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		○	◐	◐	○	◐	19	0	19
College Station		○	○	◐	○	○	6	0	6
Corpus Christi		○	◐	◐	◐	◐	38	4	42
Dallas		●	◐	◐	●	●	89	16	100
Denton		○	◐	◐	◐	○	35	0	35
El Paso		◐	◐	◐	◐	◐	49	8	57
Fort Worth		●	◐	●	●	◐	93	14	100
Garland		○	○	◐	◐	◐	20	2	22
Grand Prairie		○	◐	◐	○	○	12	0	12
Houston		○	◐	◐	●	●	59	12	71
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	◐	◐	◐	◐	○	47	0	47	
	Salt Lake City	◐	◐	◐	◐	●	67	2	69	
	West Jordan	◐	○	◐	◐	○	35	0	35	
	West Valley City	◐	○	◐	◐	○	35	0	35	
	VERMONT	Barre	●	○	◐	○	○	36	0	36
Brattleboro		●	◐	◐	◐	○	54	0	54	
Burlington		●	●	◐	◐	◐	81	0	81	
Castleton		●	○	◐	◐	○	48	0	48	
Essex		●	◐	◐	◐	○	54	0	54	
Montpelier		●	◐	◐	◐	◐	57	0	57	
Rutland		●	○	◐	◐	◐	49	0	49	
South Burlington		●	◐	◐	◐	◐	61	0	61	
Winooski		●	○	◐	◐	○	48	0	48	
VIRGINIA	Alexandria	◐	◐	●	●	●	76	10	86	
	Arlington County	◐	◐	●	●	●	73	14	87	
	Charlottesville	●	◐	◐	◐	◐	72	0	72	
	Chesapeake	○	◐	○	◐	○	18	0	18	
	Fairfax County	○	○	◐	◐	◐	27	6	33	
	Hampton	○	○	◐	◐	◐	19	0	19	
	Newport News	○	○	◐	◐	○	20	0	20	
	Norfolk	○	◐	◐	●	◐	43	6	49	
	Richmond	○	◐	○	●	●	42	4	46	
	Roanoke	○	◐	◐	◐	○	24	0	24	
	Virginia Beach	○	◐	◐	●	◐	45	2	47	
	WASHINGTON	Bellevue	●	●	●	●	◐	95	5	100
		Bellingham	●	◐	◐	◐	○	60	0	60
Kent		●	○	◐	◐	○	62	2	64	
Olympia		●	●	●	●	●	100	0	100	
Pullman		●	◐	◐	◐	○	59	0	59	
Seattle		●	●	●	●	●	100	4	100	
Spokane		●	◐	◐	●	○	76	0	76	
Tacoma		●	●	◐	◐	●	85	4	89	
Vancouver		●	◐	◐	◐	◐	60	0	60	
Vashon		●	◐	◐	◐	◐	76	4	80	

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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
WEST VIRGINIA	Charles Town	●	◐	◐	○	●	50	0	50
	Charleston	●	◐	◐	◐	○	65	2	67
	Huntington	●	◐	◐	●	●	83	2	85
	Lewisburg	●	○	◐	○	●	49	0	49
	Morgantown	○	◐	◐	◐	●	42	4	46
	Parkersburg	○	○	◐	◐	◐	20	0	20
	Wheeling	○	○	◐	◐	◐	26	2	28
WISCONSIN	Appleton	●	◐	◐	◐	●	68	10	78
	Green Bay	◐	◐	◐	◐	◐	40	0	40
	Kenosha	◐	○	○	◐	●	35	2	37
	Madison	●	◐	●	●	◐	93	10	100
	Milwaukee	◐	◐	◐	◐	◐	69	2	71
	Oshkosh	◐	○	◐	○	○	21	0	21
	Racine	◐	◐	◐	○	○	26	2	28
WYOMING	Casper	○	○	◐	○	○	3	0	3
	Cheyenne	○	◐	○	○	◐	11	0	11
	Gillette	○	○	◐	◐	○	15	0	15
	Jackson	○	◐	○	○	◐	17	0	17
	Laramie	●	◐	○	○	◐	48	0	48
	Rock Springs	○	○	◐	○	○	3	0	3
	Sheridan	○	○	○	○	○	0	0	0

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# SUCCESS STORY: EQUALITY NORTH CAROLINA

North Carolina has been at the epicenter of the debate on LGBTQ non-discrimination protections since March when extreme state legislative leaders and Governor Pat McCrory declared war on municipal non-discrimination protections. After an 18-month fight to win a non-discrimination ordinance inclusive of public accommodations for Charlotte—the largest city in North Carolina and the 17th largest in the nation—our legislature decided to use that ordinance as a statewide wedge issue. That wedge issue is commonly known as HB2.

In doing so, they not only overturned the Charlotte ordinance but also forced all communities to discriminate against transgender people, attacked local authority over minimum wage protections, prohibited law suits based on race or age discrimination in employment, and overturned many other local anti-discrimination measures. In short, they enacted the most radical anti-LGBTQ law in the nation. It has been a difficult year for LGBTQ North Carolinians, especially our transgender brothers and sisters.

But Equality NC, the Human Rights Campaign, and other local and national partners like the National Center for Transgender Equality banded together to fight the law. More than 200 major businesses have demanded repeal. A massive campaign was waged to repeal the law in the legislative short session. Cities and towns across the state have passed resolutions calling for the repeal of HB2. The majority of North Carolinians are standing against discrimination and for the repeal of HB2. We have won a statewide hearts-and-minds campaign for LGBTQ protections, and many cities will no doubt pass their own protections once the law is repealed. Additionally, statewide, fully inclusive protections are now a very real possibility in the near future for this Southern state.

**CHRIS SGRO**  
Executive Director



The majority of North Carolinians are **standing against discrimination** and for the repeal of HB2.

# SUCCESS STORY: JACKSON, MISSISSIPPI

In the 2016 Mississippi legislative session, we saw one of the worst pieces of discriminatory legislation in the country pass both houses and swiftly signed by the governor.

HB 1523, dubbed the “Religious Liberty Accommodations Act,” would have allowed individuals, religious organizations and private associations to use religion to discriminate against lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender and queer (LGBTQ) Mississippians in some of the most important aspects of their lives, including at work, at school, in their family life and more.

While this law is currently in the courts, the Jackson City Council had to make it clear that everyone is welcome and should feel safe in our capitol city, the largest city in our state. That is why on June 14, the Jackson City Council unanimously passed a city-wide non-discrimination ordinance which protects LGBTQ citizens from discrimination in housing, public accommodations and employment.

In the midst of the fight over HB 1523, the superintendent and members of the Jackson Public School Board of Trustees voted to extend fully-inclusive sexual orientation and gender identity protections to their employees and students.

All of these efforts to promote diversity and inclusion came about through strong leadership in conjunction with help from our friends at the Human Rights Campaign.

Jackson is a diverse and vibrant city that is open for business, and our city leaders are committed to working on behalf of all our citizens.

**TYRONE HENDRIX**  
City Council President



The Jackson City Council had to make it clear that **everyone is welcome** and should feel safe in our capitol city.

# SELF-SUBMIT

## Cities Not Rated by the MEI Submit Themselves

Each year the MEI expands its scope to evaluate more cities. We do this by adding to our existing city selection criteria (more information about our city selection criteria can be found on page 17), which has allowed us to grow from 137 cities rated in 2012 to 291 in 2013 to 353 cities in 2014 to 408 cities in 2015 and to 506 cities rated this year. We will continue to increase the number of cities rated as the publication goes on.

However, given there are tens of thousands of municipalities in this country, cities may wish to receive a rating even though the MEI may not be rating them. Therefore, we are happy to work with cities to submit themselves to be rated by the MEI. In order to do this, city leadership must send to the MEI team all of the relevant documentation needed to justify credit for each MEI criteria.

In 2016, we had four cities successfully self-submit, Bloomington, IL, Evanston, IL, West Palm Beach, FL and Port Townsend, WA. 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

## Scorecard Changes Coming in 2018

The Municipal Equality Index (MEI) has gone through many changes and much growth since its inaugural edition in 2012.

Each year, the MEI has expanded its reach by adding new cities to bring its message of equality to all corners of America. Starting with just 137 cities in 2012, the MEI now rates 506 cities—covering cities big and small, liberal and conservative, industrial centers and sleepy college towns, and everything in between. The scorecard serves as a roadmap for cities to make their laws, policies and services more LGBTQ-inclusive. Over the past five years, the legal landscape for equality has evolved and the MEI has evolved with it.

Starting in 2018, the MEI will undergo further changes to reflect the current state of equality.

### ANTI-BULLYING POLICIES

Anti-bullying laws and policies have been a part of the MEI scorecard since its inception. Any comprehensive assessment of the LGBTQ-inclusivity of local laws and policies would be incomplete without considering the protection of LGBTQ youth. Currently, cities are awarded credit if the school district that serves their city has an anti-bullying policy that expressly includes sexual orientation and gender identity (for the full criteria on Anti-Bullying School Policies, see pg. 24). While most cities do not directly control school district policies, the MEI has counted on leadership by city officials to advocate for LGBTQ-inclusive anti-bullying school district policies.

Beginning in 2018, the MEI's assessment of anti-bullying policies will adjust to more closely align with what cities have authority to accomplish directly. For that reason, the MEI's measurement of anti-bullying policies will be phased out in favor of a new

criterion, a task force charged with ensuring that all youth—including at-risk LGBTQ youth—are protected from bullying in all city services, city-supported services, and city facilities. For more detail about youth bullying prevention task forces, see pg. 28-31.

### DOMESTIC PARTNERSHIP BENEFITS

As domestic partner benefits were removed from the MEI scorecard due to nationwide marriage equality, which made the MEI's current approach to recognizing domestic partnership benefits moot, the 2015 MEI featured an issue brief entitled *The Case for Retaining Domestic Partnership Laws and Policies*. Domestic partnership laws and policies that cover both same-sex and different-sex couples will be recognized for credit in the 2018 MEI.

To obtain the 2015 issue brief on domestic partnership laws and policies, visit [hrc.org/mei](http://hrc.org/mei) or email us at [mei@hrc.org](mailto:mei@hrc.org).

### ALL-GENDER SINGLE-OCCUPANCY FACILITIES

Lastly, starting in 2018, the MEI scorecard will acknowledge municipalities that require single-occupancy restrooms to be designated as all-gender. Many municipalities have already made their own city facilities more inclusive by designating single-occupancy restrooms as all-gender. By doing this, municipalities will create a more inclusive environment for everyone—particularly those who identify as transgender or gender-nonconforming.

More details on these and any additional forthcoming scorecard revisions will be provided in the 2017 MEI and on the web at [www.hrc.org/mei](http://www.hrc.org/mei).

The scorecard **serves as a roadmap** for cities to make their laws, policies and services more LGBTQ-inclusive. Over the past five years, the **legal landscape for equality** has evolved and the MEI has evolved with it.



# ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

## ABOUT THE AUTHOR

**CATHRYN OAKLEY** is Senior Legislative Counsel at the Human Rights Campaign. In addition to managing the development and publication of the Municipal Equality Index, she advises state and local legislators to enact laws that further LGBTQ equality. Oakley is a member of the Virginia bar and practiced family law before joining the Human Rights Campaign. She is a graduate of George Mason University School of Law and Smith College.

## ABOUT THE MEI TEAM

The continued expansion of 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](mailto:mei@hrc.org).

**XAVIER PERSAD** serves as Legislative Counsel at the Human Rights Campaign and provides his meticulous research skills to ensure the data in the Municipal Equality Index is the most accurate and up-to-date. He focuses on state and municipal law and policy, including conversion therapy bans. Persad 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.

**COLLEN KUTNEY** fills out the MEI team as the State and Municipal Program Manager, managing both the Municipal Equality Index and the State Equality Index which assesses state policy and law impacting the LGBTQ community. Kutney is a graduate of the University at Albany in Albany, NY and has been the driving engine behind this year's report.

## ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

The MEI is a comprehensive and robust assessment of municipal equality, and would not be realized without the professionalism and can-do attitude of several people who contributed their talents to this year's report. First and foremost, HRC's Legal Director Sarah Warbelow's problem-solving, wisdom, and support for this project continue to be vital to the MEI's success.

Our communications team of Liz Halloran, Sarah McBride and Allison Turner were invaluable in arranging the launch and developing the story of municipal equality to tell in every corner of America where it belongs. Additionally, we want to thank the HRC field team for helping cities move equality forward on the ground and providing logistical support for our launch cities.

The newest addition to the HRC legal team, Breanna Diaz, stepped in to provide additional research and analysis. Our law fellows and interns provided extra hands with their research skills and logistical assistance. Bob Villaflor guided us toward yet another beautiful publication and on-time launch.

A special thank you goes to law firms Cooley LLP, Hogan Lovells US LLP and Sidley Austin LLP for sharing their legal expertise. Their extra support proved invaluable when researching for 500+ cities and this year's report would truly not be possible without them.

The General Design Company is always a pleasure to work with. Their talented designers help the MEI team (and our readers) reimagine municipal equality year after year. We value the patience, creativity and long-hours of Soung Wiser and Caroline Brickell.

## EQUALITY FEDERATION INSTITUTE

As always, we thank our partners at the Equality Federation Institute. The newest batch of cities was selected due to the advocates and supporters of our state partners across the country. In addition, 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 want to recognize Mason Dunn, Chris Sgro, Alana Hochum, and James Parrish for their contributions and persistence in the face of adversity and, to Troy Williams for being a gracious host with the MEI launch, and to Andy Garcia for his partnership at the national level. We couldn't do this without you.

For questions or additional information, please contact [mei@hrc.org](mailto:mei@hrc.org).

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





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A stylized cityscape background composed of various shades of blue and purple geometric shapes representing buildings. A large orange and yellow sun is partially obscured by a dark blue building in the foreground.

**FPO  
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COVER FILE**