



# Municipal Equality Index

A NATIONWIDE EVALUATION OF MUNICIPAL LAW



## Frequently Asked Questions

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

This booklet contains only a summary of the scorecards for each of the 408 cities rated on the 2015 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) and 75 cities & municipalities that have high proportions of same-sex couples (see page 17 for more information). 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 18-29.

### 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, 18 cities in states without statewide non-discrimination laws for LGBT people scored 100 points in 2015.

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

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

## Research Process

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

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

mail. The feedback window lasted six weeks. Finally, cities were sent their final scorecards and information about the MEI 2015 in the same way. Equality Federation state groups also were able to review the scorecards and provide feedback to the MEI team prior to publication.

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# AN INTRODUCTION



## Dear Friends



**This has been a historic year for equality. Yet, even as we celebrate a major victory for nationwide marriage equality at the U.S. Supreme Court and unprecedented visibility for transgender Americans over the last year, we are surrounded by reminders of how far we still have to go. Violence against transgender people is a national—and global—epidemic, and we continue to see unacceptable discrimination due to a patchwork of state laws that leave LGBT people vulnerable in their schools, homes, and communities.**

In many states today, the same LGBT couples who fought so long and so hard to have their marriages recognized are still at risk of being fired from their jobs or evicted from their homes simply for marrying the person they love. This is fundamentally wrong, and that's why HRC is fighting to pass the Equality Act to finally protect LGBT Americans under our nation's federal civil rights laws.

But as we push Congress and state lawmakers to protect LGBT people from discrimination and violence, cities aren't waiting. They're acting. This year, yet again, cities have demonstrated their commitment to moving equality forward in the Human Rights Campaign Foundation's 2015 Municipal Equality Index. This year's MEI boasts the highest number of 100 point scores in the history of this program, with 47 cities achieving the top score. The number of cities offering trans-inclusive healthcare to city employees is 66, also an all-time high. And 55 new cities are among the ranks of the 408 municipalities scored by this year's MEI.

The MEI's emphasis on policies that are so critical 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 while we've continued to witness momentum for equality grow, there are clear signs we have much work left to do. There is perhaps no starker example of those challenges than Houston, Texas—a city that saw the repeal of a city ordinance protecting LGBT people from discrimination. Had the Houston Equal Rights Ordinance (HERO) not been repealed, Houston's score would have been 77 this year, not 48.

But as we push Congress and state lawmakers to protect LGBT people from discrimination and violence, **cities across the nation aren't waiting.** They're acting.

I hope that what happened in Houston is a wake-up call to other cities around the nation. The tragic repeal of HERO should inspire us to double-down and work harder than ever before. And for those cities that want to spur development, and improve the lives of their LGBT residents and visitors, they should look to the example of the MEI's top-scoring cities as a path forward. The municipalities scoring 100 points are big and small and come from all corners of the country. Their diversity demonstrates that equality is not a value restricted to only cities in certain parts of this country, but is increasingly being embraced far and wide.

We are proud to work alongside leaders in municipalities across the country who are working to make the guidance offered by the MEI a reality, and we thank our partners at the Equality Federation Institute and their state affiliates who work to bring equality to every corner of the country. We have much work ahead of us, but momentum is on our side and together we won't stop fighting until full equality is a reality for all.

Sincerely,

**CHAD GRIFFIN**  
President  
Human Rights Campaign Foundation

## Dear Readers



**This year, an unprecedented wave of discriminatory legislation attempted to roll-back our efforts for LGBTQ equality. Most notably, Houston's recent repeal of its Human Rights Ordinance was a harsh wake-up call that our work is far from complete.**

However, we fully embrace the challenge. We continue to grow our strength and power through local organizing and achievements which pave the way to larger-scale change. We create pockets of protection in hope of propelling our culture towards state and federal wins for true equality.

Our victories this year highlight the tenacity of our advocates all across the country, many of whom donate their time to achieve fairness and equality for LGBTQ people and our families.

Over 20 towns and municipalities passed non-discrimination ordinances in 2015, some in the most unexpected places. The city council of Carmel, Indiana and commissioners in Osceola

County, Florida offered glimmers of hope. Carmel passed non-discrimination ordinances in the face of a statewide religious exemption bill. Osceola County unanimously passed an ordinance that provides employment, housing, and public accommodations protections for LGBTQ individuals.

Many of our members, state-based equality organizations, have led the charge or partnered with local organizers' efforts to expand awareness, acceptance, and legal protections this year. Equality Wyoming worked to pass the state's first nondiscrimination ordinance in Laramie—19 years after the brutal murder of University of Wyoming student Matthew Shepard. The Fairness Campaign successfully promoted a nondiscrimination ordinance in Midway, Kentucky. Fairness West Virginia defeated a proposed law that would have invalidated existing LGBTQ non-discrimination ordinances in the state. Equality Florida, along with the Human Rights Campaign, is currently working in coalition with local organizations to extend LGBTQ protections in Jacksonville, the state's second largest city.

The list goes on and on—our collective efforts are as extensive as they are impressive.

We face setbacks, but we are undoubtedly moving forward with justice on our side. The underreported murders of at least 21 transgender people, mostly transgender women of color, this

year demonstrate how, despite the great progress we have made, many LGBTQ people, especially those low-income or of color, remain disenfranchised. Many Americans are unaware that LGBTQ people are not fully protected by law. Thirty-one states still lack complete, statewide nondiscrimination protections. However, as our opposition capitalizes on fear and misinformation, local campaigns, even when challenging, present opportunities for us to engage in conversation. Around the country, we share the stories of those discriminated against and inform people about the importance of nondiscrimination coverage.

The MEI is an important tool to refer to in our efforts to put pressure on municipalities to honor equality and LGBTQ individuals. We extend our deepest gratitude to HRC for publishing the report and to all the advocates, local and state-based, working to win equality in the communities they call home.

Our work is cut out for us. We have so much to celebrate, and even more reason to fight on.

Sincerely,

**REBECCA ISAACS**  
Executive Director  
Equality Federation Institute

Our victories this year highlight the **tenacity of our advocates** all across the country, many of whom donate their time to achieve fairness and equality for LGBTQ people and our families.

## Enduring Growth for Cities is Driven by Diversity



©Jaime Hogge

America has become a far more open-minded and tolerant nation over the past several decades. Cities across the country have realized the value of full inclusion. Diversity gives a competitive edge in innovation and economic growth. Equality can pay—LGBT inclusion is a key factor in attracting top talent that spurs innovation, higher living standards, and creativity.

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

Inclusivity creates more incentive for businesses to move to a city and plant roots. Residents experience a better life satisfaction and an increased emotional attachment to their community. This not only attracts, but retains people and businesses alike.

Cities across the country have realized the value of full inclusion. **Diversity gives a competitive edge** in innovation and economic growth.

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, LGBT-inclusive employee practices, inclusiveness in city services and law enforcement, and their leadership's outspoken commitment to equality.

### **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.**

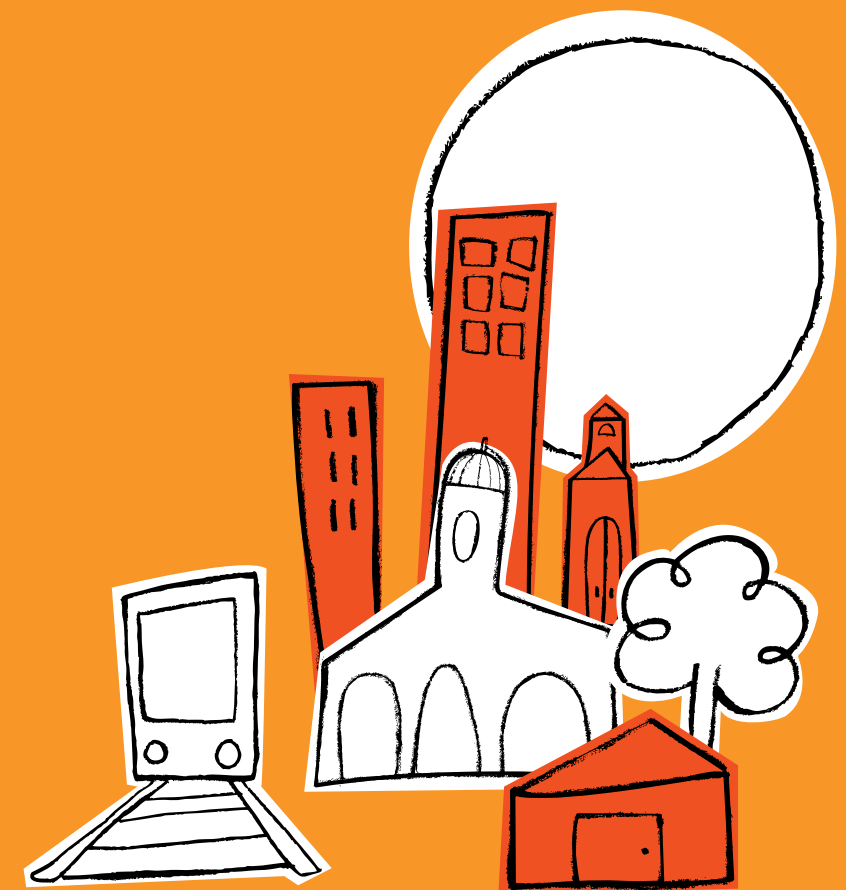
Cities are subject to the same incentives for their employees, and must compete with the private sector in offering inclusive policies and benefits for their LGBT employees or risk losing their best employees to more inclusive employers.

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

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

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

# HOW IT WORKS

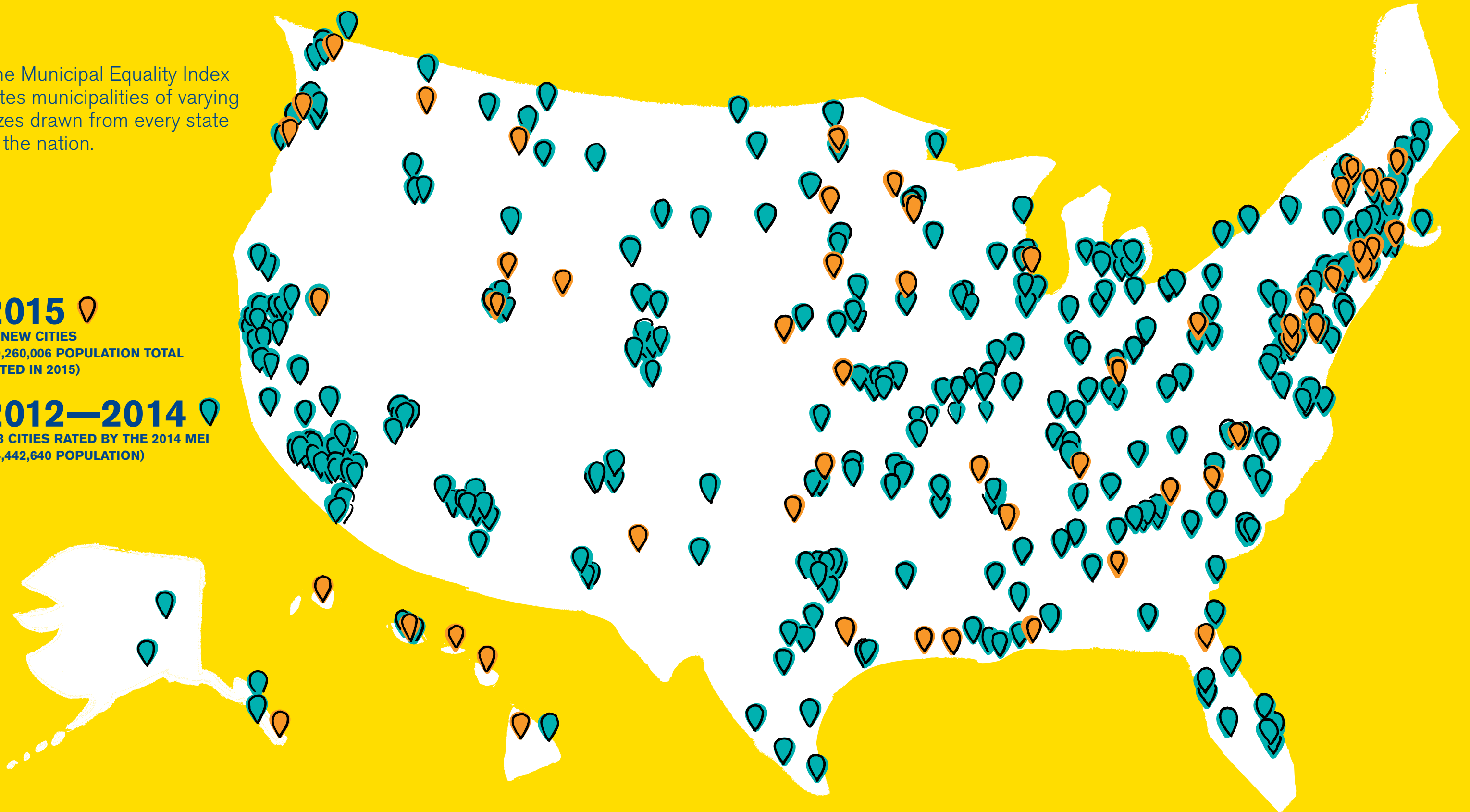


# CITIES RATED BY THE MEI

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

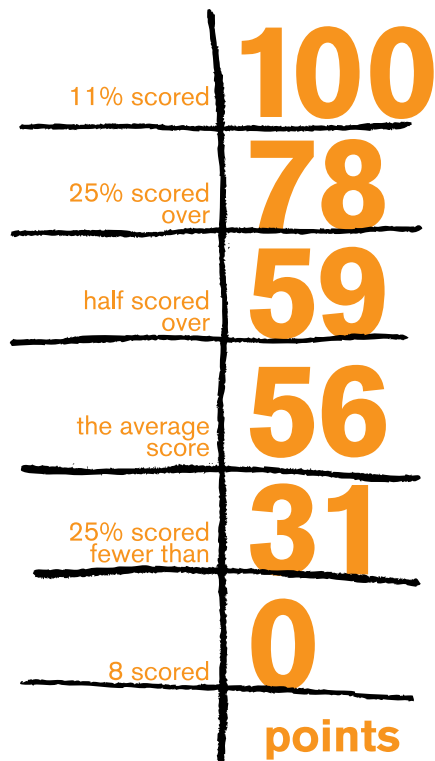
**2015**   
55 NEW CITIES  
(89,260,006 POPULATION TOTAL  
RATED IN 2015)

**2012—2014**   
353 CITIES RATED BY THE 2014 MEI  
(84,442,640 POPULATION)



# EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

## Cities Leading the Way to Equality



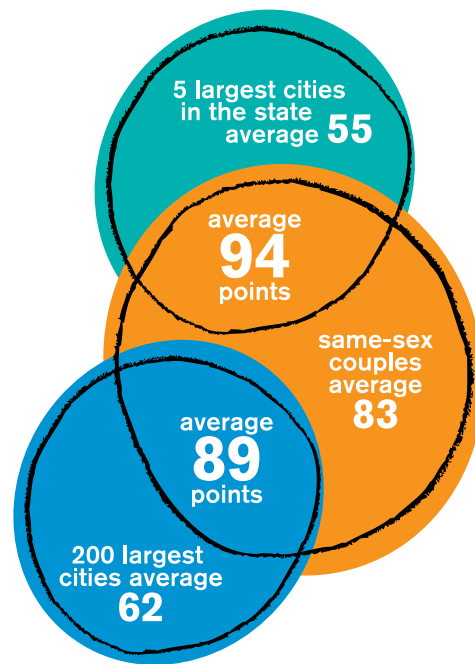
Big changes in the landscape for LGBT equality made headlines this year as marriage equality came to every state across the country, understandably overshadowing municipal changes.

Yet, the continuing forward progress being made at the municipal level in cities big and small and in all regions of the country remains critically important. The 2015 MEI demonstrates the exciting advancements continuing to be made across America; it also demonstrates the power of municipalities to effect change in their communities.

### NON-DISCRIMINATION ORDINANCES

Non-discrimination laws are more important than ever in the wake of this summer's Supreme Court decision. In too many parts of the country it is possible for a person to marry their same-sex partner on a Saturday only to come into the office Monday to find they've been fired for being LGBT.

Nearly half of the states in our country lack statewide non-discrimination laws that include sexual orientation and gender identity.



Cities benefit in multiple ways when they elect openly LGBT leadership.



compared to cities without openly LGBT leadership



in our measure of political leadership on matters of equality



to offer trans-inclusive healthcare benefits

This makes the role of cities that much more urgent: of the 89 million people living in MEI-rated municipalities, 37 million have more inclusive laws at the municipal level than they do at the state level. **32 million people have explicit gender identity or expression protections at the municipal level that they do not have at the state level.**

Cities around the country recognize the importance of ensuring all people have the ability to live and work without fear of discrimination because of their sexual orientation or gender identity.

### MOMENTUM IN CITIES OF ALL KINDS

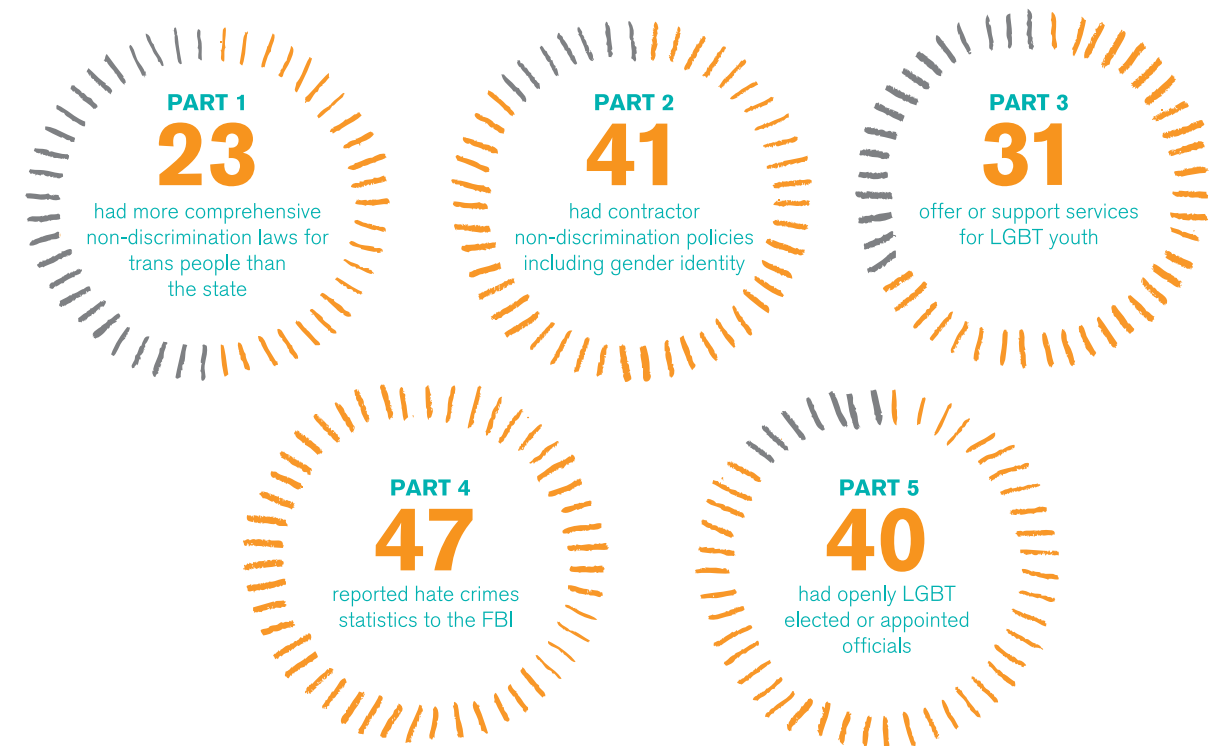
Every region of the country boasted a perfect 100-point score this year—equality isn't a simply coastal phenomenon.

Cities of all sizes, chosen for rating for any of several different reasons, from states with LGBT-inclusive laws and states without, have made municipal equality a priority in their jurisdiction. Ten of the forty-seven cities that scored 100 points had populations of under 100,000 people, and every region of the country had at least one perfect score.

### CITIES ARE ACTING WHERE THEIR STATES HAVE NOT

Thirty-one MEI "All-Stars" scored over 85 points despite the state not having a statewide non-discrimination law including sexual orientation or gender identity as protected characteristics. Cities selected for rating due to their high proportion of same-sex couples did remarkably better than cities as a whole (they averaged 83 points in comparison to the national average of 56 points), and that effect was magnified when the city was also one of the largest cities in the state (average of 94 points). Overall, however, city size did not have a significant relationship to a city's score.

Of the 47 cities that scored 100 points:





### EXPLOSIVE GROWTH IN CITIES OFFERING TRANSGENDER-INCLUSIVE HEALTH CARE TO CITY EMPLOYEES

The number of cities offering transgender inclusive health care to their employees continues to rapidly grow, with 66 cities offering those benefits this year. This is both the highest number of cities offering these benefits as well as the largest percentage of cities rated (16%). This item continues to be one of the most often discussed criterion of the MEI.

### LAW ENFORCEMENT

As we work to reduce the incidence of anti-trans violence, we look to exactly the types of policies and services the MEI focuses on to try to make a difference in changing the attitudes and circumstances that put transgender people at particular risk of experiencing violence.

Prohibitions on discrimination and bullying, proliferation of trans-inclusive healthcare, and city services serving the populations of the LGBT community who are the most at risk, all combined with well-informed, respectful policing, can help address some of the factors that subject transwomen of color to violence at shocking rates. **Every city scoring 100 points reported hate crimes to the FBI, and 91% of them had LGBT police liaisons.**

It is imperative that we not lose focus on implementing these types of policies, and the MEI shows that cities are on the forefront of addressing these challenges. For cities interested in improving their relationship with the LGBT community, the law enforcement section is a good place to begin.

Cities have incredible power to effect change in their communities, and the MEI demonstrates that many cities continue to take action to ensure that LGBT people are included in the city's laws, policies, and services. It also demonstrates that cities are well-positioned to move beyond the major victory for marriage equality this year and address the many ongoing challenges that the LGBT community continues to face.

Law enforcement **plays a key role** in a supportive community.



have police liaisons on the force



report hate crimes to the FBI



report their hate crimes to the FBI

## SUCCESS STORY: JERSEY CITY, NEW JERSEY

**One Tuesday afternoon in September, a group of activists, citizens and elected officials gathered beneath a rainbow flag hung from Jersey City's city hall, and there we announced that we would cover transgender-related health care for municipal employees. We were the first large city in New Jersey to do this.**

This is just the latest of our efforts to advanced LGBT rights.

Jersey City is one of the most diverse cities in the nation, and we pride ourselves on the efforts to celebrate the cultures and communities that make this true.

In 2013, we created the Mayor's LGBT Task Force to serve as a liaison group between our administration and the community. This group has worked tirelessly with city departments and agencies to institute diversity training programs and inclusive hiring practices, as well as partnering with the larger community on events that help local LGBT organizations further spread awareness on important issues.

Government has a responsibility to be a legitimizing force, to pull people in the direction of what is right, especially on LGBT issues. We are working hard to make sure that diversity and inclusion is celebrated in Jersey City, for every individual in every community.

**STEVE FULOP**  
Mayor

Jersey City is one of **the most diverse cities in the nation**, and we pride ourselves on the efforts to celebrate the cultures and communities that make this true.



# SUCCESS STORY: EQUALITY OHIO

While always advocating for statewide nondiscrimination legislation to protect the LGBTQ community, Equality Ohio is continuing to work with municipalities throughout Ohio to increase local protections for LGBTQ people who face discrimination.

Three of Ohio's biggest cities (Cincinnati, Cleveland and Columbus) have robust LGBTQ protections, as do 11 other municipalities in a mix of urban, suburban and rural areas.

But even with 14 municipalities in Ohio having nondiscrimination protections in place, only about 18% of Ohioans are protected.

Equality Ohio's municipal projects aim to increase that percentage.

Our primary strategy to add city protections is data-driven—we assess which Ohio municipalities are most ready to receive our legal and policy analysis and outreach. Our secondary strategy is creative—we recently sent a letter to every mayor's office in Ohio (over 900 in all) explaining how we can help them enact nondiscrimination policy or law. Nine Ohio municipalities ranging in populations from 476 to tens of thousands responded favorably to our letter and are now considering the best way to put protections in place.

Sometimes, municipal projects are prompted by a high-profile case of discrimination and a motivated "champion" on a local city council. We recently found such a champion in Bexley, Ohio (a suburb of Columbus). In partnership with HRC, we were able to assist the city in the process of passing a strong nondiscrimination ordinance earlier this year.

And we work to make existing local laws better. Cleveland's existing nondiscrimination law has a large exemption which allows businesses to discriminate against transgender people. With strong support from HRC, we have built a large coalition of stakeholders from the community and spent more than a year educating about what it means to be transgender. The issue is on the city council's agenda and we are pushing for a vote to remove these harmful exemptions by the end of 2015.

Municipal work can be challenging, but we take pride in every single city that starts the conversation about why it is important to protect all Ohioans from discrimination.

**ALANA JOCHUM**  
Managing Director

Municipal work can be challenging, but we take pride in **every single city** that starts the conversation about why it is important to protect all Ohioans from discrimination.



# CITY SELECTION

## How Cities Were Selected for Rating

The 2015 Municipal Equality Index rates 408 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) and 75 cities and municipalities that have high proportions of same-sex couples.

These 75 cities with highest proportions of same-sex couples are drawn from an analysis of the 2010 Census results by the Williams Institute at the UCLA School of Law which ranked the 25 large cities (population exceeding 250,000), 25 mid-size cities (population between 100,000 and 250,000), and 25 small cities (population below 100,000) with the highest proportion of same-sex couples. 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

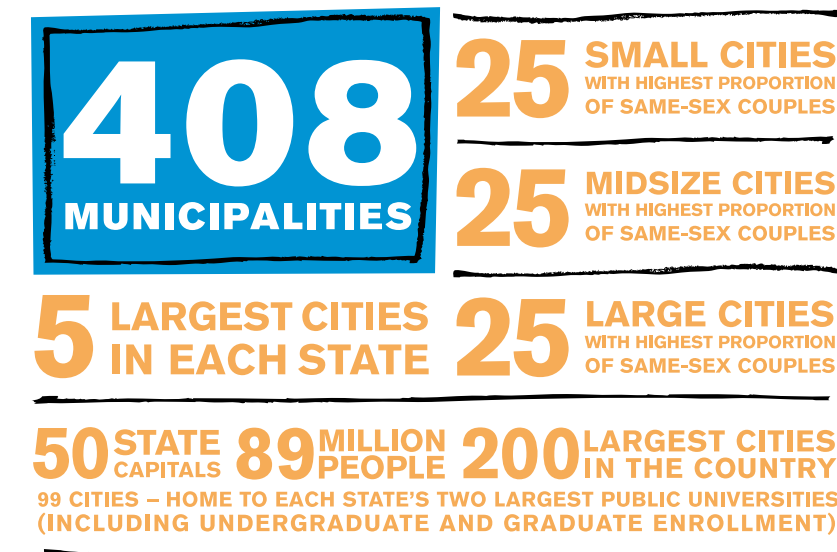
of the applicable incorporated local government (the entity actually rated, often the county, will be clearly indicated).

Significant overlap between these categories of cities brings the total number of cities rated in the 2015 MEI to 408. In 2012, the MEI rated 137 cities; in 2013, 291; and in 2014, 353. 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>.



# 2015 MEI SCORECARD



## CITY, STATE 1/2 2015 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</b>			<b>out of 30</b>

### II. Municipality as Employer

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

	CITY	AVAILABLE
Non-Discrimination in City Employment		
Transgender-Inclusive Healthcare Benefits		
City Contractor Non-Discrimination Ordinance		
<b>SCORE</b>	<b>X</b>	<b>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 LGBT constituents are included in city services and programs.

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



## CITY, STATE 2/2 2015 MUNICIPAL EQUALITY INDEX SCORECARD

### IV. Law Enforcement

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

	CITY	AVAILABLE
LGBT Police Liaison or Task Force		
Reported 2013 Hate Crimes Statistics to the FBI		
<b>SCORE</b>	<b>X</b>	<b>out of 22</b>

### V. Relationship with the LGBT Community

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

	CITY	AVAILABLE
Leadership's Public Position on LGBT Equality		
Leadership's Pro-Equality Legislative or Policy Efforts		
<b>SCORE</b>	<b>X</b>	<b>out of 8</b>
<b>BONUS</b> Openly LGBT 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: EQUALITY ARIZONA

Arizona cities have led the way in enacting non-discrimination protections for their employees and residents. Five Arizona cities now have these protections—Phoenix, Tucson, Flagstaff, Tempe and Sedona—with still more considering municipal laws.

Equality Arizona has been a proud partner in advocating for these policies, knowing that every included municipal employee or resident is another person who need not fear being fired or refused service or housing based on who they are.

We have also been proud to partner with the City of Phoenix on effective and smooth implementation of their non-discrimination ordinance, serving to educate the public about what their rights are and what to do when things go wrong. We seek to share these lessons with other cities to ensure effective implementation and authentic protections in municipalities across the nation.

As a founding member of the Competitive Arizona Coalition, Equality Arizona is a part of the fight for statewide non-discrimination protections. Municipal work has been—and will continue to be—vital in our efforts to secure equal protections all across Arizona, as we build coalitions of support and educate folks across our state about today's reality: too many Arizonans can be fired or evicted because of who they are.

**CATHERINE ALONZO**  
Co-Chair of the Board

**NATE RHOTON**  
Co-Chair of the Board



Every included municipal employee or resident is another person who need not fear being fired or refused service or housing based on **who they are.**

# SCORING CRITERIA

## I. Non-Discrimination Laws

It should not be legal to deny someone the ability 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. All non-discrimination laws ought to be fully inclusive of lesbian, gay, bisexual and transgender people. Sexual orientation-only protections are not sufficient to protect the LGBT community from discrimination.

**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 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.



# ADDRESSING AN EPIDEMIC OF ANTI-TRANSGENDER VIOLENCE: WHAT CITIES CAN DO

In 2014, at least 13 transgender people were murdered in the United States, and at least 19 were murdered in 2013. Their deaths were gruesome—involving gunshots, burning, strangulation and beating—and many have gone unsolved.

As of Transgender Day of Remembrance this year, at least 21 transgender people have been murdered. These totals represent only the known victims; there may very well be countless other victims of fatal anti-transgender violence whose deaths we will never know about because police, the press or family members have consistently misidentified them based on their assigned sex and name at birth.

The brutality and scope of this violence is terrible, and it has a disproportionate effect on transgender women of color. Among the 53 known transgender victims from 2013-2015, 46 (87%) of these were people of color; at least 46 were women. The average age of all of the victims at the time of their death was less than 31 years old. A conservative estimate shows that transgender women face 4.3 times the risk of becoming homicide victims than the general population of all women.

Given the intersections of racism, sexism, and poverty in the lives of the people most vulnerable to anti-transgender violence, it is a tremendous challenge to unwind the social and economic factors that put them at such heightened levels of risk—however, it is critical that we try. Some of the issues are actually relatively easy to tackle, such as correcting the misreporting and underreporting of these hate crimes.

Hate crimes reporting is the single most heavily weighted element rated on the MEI. Every city that scored 100 points on the MEI reported hate crimes to the FBI, but we know for a fact that significant underreporting occurs. The vast majority of jurisdictions either fail to report their data or inaccurately report that they have had no hate crimes in their jurisdiction. An analysis of the FBI's Hate Crime Statistics, 2013 report, the most recent data available during our research period, showed that at least three high-profile anti-transgender murders went unreported despite evidence that the perpetrators were clearly motivated by the victim's gender identity.

Building better relationships between the transgender community and the police is absolutely critical. According to the 2011 National Transgender Discrimination Survey conducted by the National Center for Transgender Equality and the National LGBTQ Task Force, **22% of transgender people who had interacted with police reported bias-based harassment from police, and nearly half said they were uncomfortable turning to the police for help.**

The MEI asks cities to have LGBT liaisons in the police department to ensure that the police are more accountable to the LGBT community and more aware of the ways in which the LGBT community's concerns about interactions with the police are unique.

A liaison can be called to a scene of a suspected hate crime to ensure the situation is handled with the gravity and sensitivity it requires, they can be a source of knowledge to other officers about things like proper pronoun usage and when using a legal name is or

isn't appropriate, and they can provide context about the social conditions that make transgender people particularly subject to discrimination and violence.

Other policy recommendations address anti-transgender discrimination in other facets of life in order to alleviate the discriminatory pressures that can push transgender women, particularly of color, toward situations like survival sex work which put them at extreme risk of violence.

These recommendations include passing non-discrimination laws, ensuring health care coverage includes gender-affirming care, focusing on transgender-specific employment placement and training programs, and implementing inclusive bullying protections in schools.

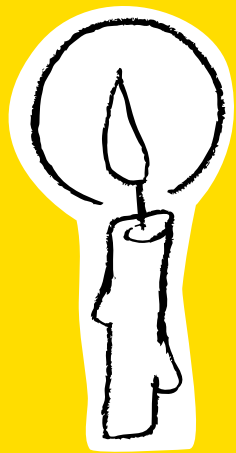
All but one of these policy recommendations have been addressed by the MEI since its inception. The exception is transgender-specific employment placement and training programs.

**To that end, next year's scorecard will reflect an additional bonus item under the Municipal Services Section entitled "City provides services to/supports transgender-specific programming."**

These points will be awarded for employment programs, post-incarceration reentry programs, violence prevention programs, and other transgender-specific programming that isn't captured by one of the existing municipal services criteria evaluating city services for LGBT homeless, LGBT elders, LGBT youth, or people living with HIV or AIDS.

There is no simple answer to curbing this disturbing trend of anti-transgender violence, but the policies articulated by the MEI offer an important place to start. For more information on the causes of and responses to anti-transgender violence, please visit <http://www.hrc.org/trans-violence>.

There is no simple answer to curbing the disturbing trend of anti-transgender violence, but the policies articulated by the MEI offer an **important place to start.**



It is a tremendous challenge to unwind the social and economic factors that put transgender women of color at such heightened levels of risk—however, **it is critical that we try.**

## II. Municipality as Employer

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

### CITY PROHIBITS DISCRIMINATION IN CITY EMPLOYMENT.

Cities can adopt internal hiring policies that prohibit employment discrimination (including hiring, promotions, termination, and compensation) on the basis of sexual orientation (6 points) and gender identity or expression (6 points). It is a fundamental principle of fairness that an employee should be judged on his or her ability to perform the responsibilities of a position, and not by who 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.

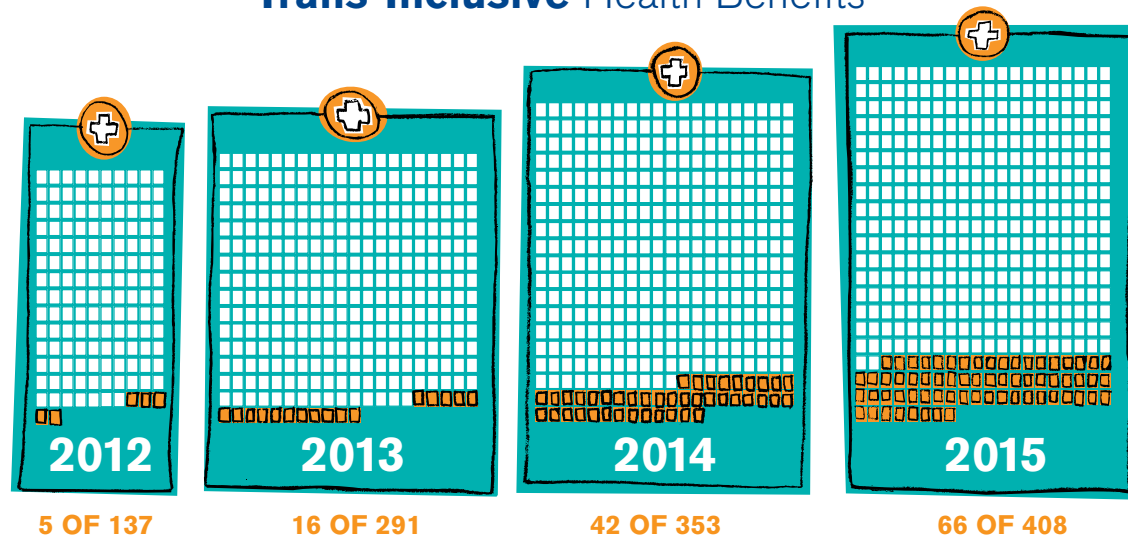
### CITY REQUIRES ITS CONTRACTORS TO HAVE INCLUSIVE NON-DISCRIMINATION POLICIES.

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).

### MUNICIPALITY IS AN INCLUSIVE WORKPLACE (BONUS POINTS).

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

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



## SUCCESS STORY: LOUISVILLE, KENTUCKY

For nearly two decades, Louisville has been a leader of LGBT civil rights in the South. We were among the first cities to pass a trans-inclusive anti-discrimination Fairness Ordinance in 1999 and led on domestic partner benefits for city workers.

Now, with the continued leadership of Mayor Greg Fischer, Louisville has doubled its HRC Municipal Equality Index score in just two years to become one of the only southern cities with a perfect 100!

Fairness Campaign leaders have worked in intentional and meaningful ways with Louisville Metro Government to ensure our entire community is welcoming and inclusive. We've developed and implemented comprehensive

LGBT trainings, changed policy to be certain city contractors protect their LGBT workers, and launched initiatives to address our most vulnerable populations, including LGBT youth, elderly, and homeless.

Most recently, we rolled out the red carpet for LGBT couples by asking them to "Say I do in Lou"—a campaign of the Louisville Convention and Visitors Bureau to encourage LGBT folks to tie the knot in our "fair" city, earning us the distinction as one of Travel & Leisure's "Nine Perfect Places for Your LGBT Wedding Destination."

So come out, "Say I do in Lou," and share some #LouisvilleLove!

**GREG FISCHER**  
Mayor

Fairness Campaign leaders have worked in intentional and meaningful ways with Louisville Metro Government to ensure our entire community is **welcoming and inclusive.**



# SUCCESS STORY: INDIANAPOLIS, INDIANA

**Indianapolis is one of the largest cities in the country, and it's a wonderful place to live.**

We have more cultural attractions per person than most other cities; we have thriving arts and food scenes; we're home to major and minor league sports year round. And we have an entrepreneurial industry that's creating jobs and revitalizing neighborhoods across the city.

The entire state of Indiana was under a spotlight at the beginning of 2015 because of the proposed Religious Freedom Restoration Act. It was important for us in Indianapolis to make clear that we believe every single person has value, regardless of their sexual orientation, gender identity, or gender expression.

Indianapolis has had a comprehensive law on the books for a decade that prohibits discrimination on the basis of sexual orientation or gender identity.

People are increasingly moving to where they want to live, and not necessarily because of where the jobs are. For any city to be competitive and attract top talent, they need to lead by showing they're open for business. Municipal governments can demonstrate that goal by putting into place policies that value diversity. That's what we've done in Indianapolis.

**GREG BALLARD**  
Mayor



For any city to be competitive and attract top talent, they need to lead by showing they're **open for business.**

## III. Services and Programs

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

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

A Human Rights Commission will be worth 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 three bonus points in addition to the five standard points awarded above.

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

Anti-bullying policies in schools are also included in the MEI; a state, county, or city may prohibit bullying on the basis of sexual orientation (3 points) and gender identity or expression (3 points). 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 LGBT population who are particularly vulnerable and may have specific and acute needs. While all people age, battle illness, struggle to fit in, and work hard to improve their lot in life, these struggles can be different and particularly difficult for LGBT people. Cities can address these challenges by offering services—or supporting a third party provider of these services—to LGBT youth, LGBT elderly, LGBT homeless people, or people who are HIV-positive or living with AIDS (2 bonus points for each service the city provides).

While all people age, battle illness, struggle to fit in, and work hard to improve their lot in life, these struggles can be **different and particularly difficult** for LGBT people.

## IV. Law Enforcement

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

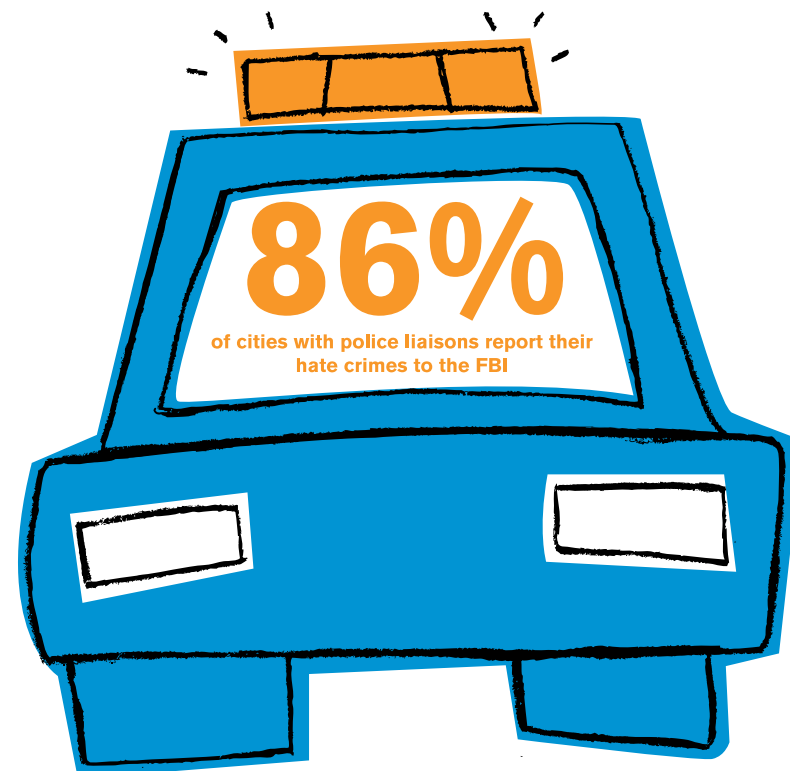
LGBT people are vulnerable to violence arising from bigotry and ignorance, and this danger is only exacerbated when police are perceived to be part of the problem.

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

An LGBT police liaison (10 points) can serve as an important bridge between the community and law enforcement. The liaison is an advocate for fair and respectful enforcement of the law as well as an officer that the community can rely upon to appropriately respond to sensitive issues.

Respectful and fair enforcement includes responsible reporting of hate crimes, including for hate crimes based on sexual orientation and gender identity, to the FBI (12 points). Such reporting demonstrates law enforcement's attention to these crimes and ensures that the larger law enforcement community is able to accurately gauge the scope and responses to them.

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



## V. Relationship with the LGBT Community

**Leadership is an aspect of policy that is not fully captured by executive orders or the passage of legislation into law. When a city leader marches in a Pride parade, a city joins a pro-equality amicus brief, a city council dedicates a park to an LGBT civil rights leader, or a city paints its crosswalks in rainbow colors, it sends a message to LGBT people that they are a valued part of the community.**

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

Further, LGBT youth are twice as likely as their peers to say they will need to move from their hometown in order to feel accepted. When elected leaders speak out on matters of equality, their constituents do hear—and it informs their constituents' perception of safety, inclusion, and belonging.

This category, therefore, measures the commitment of the city to include the LGBT community and to advocate for full equality.

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

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



# THE CASE FOR RETAINING DOMESTIC PARTNERSHIP LAWS AND POLICIES

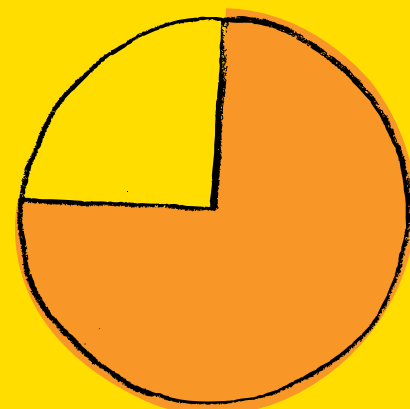
Starting in 1984 with Berkeley, California, municipalities across the country began honoring the commitment of same-sex couples within their workforces and throughout their cities by implementing domestic partner benefits for city employees and citywide domestic partnership registries.

Domestic partnership laws and policies provided a way for cities, unsatisfied with the lack of relationship recognition laws at the state level, to proudly display their values of inclusion and equality while extending vital benefits and legal protections to same-sex couples and their families. In addition to extending benefits to same-sex couples, many domestic partnership laws and policies also extended benefits to unmarried different-sex couples and their families.

With this year's *Obergefell v. Hodges* United States Supreme Court decision, which brought about nationwide marriage equality, municipalities that previously implemented employee domestic partner benefits and citywide domestic partnership registries are faced with the question of whether these benefits and protections should continue to be offered. As a matter of inclusion, fairness, equal compensation, and good business, municipalities should not only retain their domestic partnership laws and policies, but should expand them (where applicable) to include all couples—same and different-sex—and their families.

By continuing to offer domestic partner benefits, municipalities demonstrate their respect for the **broad diversity of families** that exists within their workforces.

**75%**  
of 2014 MEI-Rated Cities Offered Domestic Partner Benefits to City Employees



## Domestic Partner Benefits in City Employment

### RESPECTING FAMILY DIVERSITY

Today's families come in a variety of shapes and sizes. Many couples decide not to get married for important personal and practical reasons. Maintaining domestic partner benefits provides validation and essential benefits to unmarried employees and their families. By continuing to offer domestic partner benefits, municipalities demonstrate their respect for the broad diversity of families that exists within their workforces.

### BENEFITS CONTINUITY AND EQUAL COMPENSATION

Revoking existing domestic partnership policies in municipal employment would take away vital benefits that countless public employees and their families depend on. Municipalities that move to eliminate these policies, and instead require marriage to ensure partner and family benefits, are putting their employees' family members at risk of being uninsured.

Benefits like health insurance, life insurance, family leave, bereavement leave, relocation assistance, and pension benefits are central to the livelihood and well-being of employees, their partners, and their legal dependents. Employees who choose not to get married for personal or practical reasons are just as deserving of these benefits as those who opt to marry. Denying these families the benefits that their married counterparts enjoy amounts to unequal compensation. Moreover, citywide ordinances that require municipalities and private employers to extend equal benefits to domestic partners and legal dependents of employees should be vigorously defended.

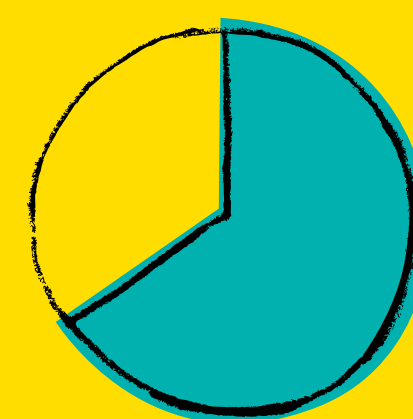
### PROTECTING FAMILIES FROM DISCRIMINATION

While marriage equality is a tremendous step forward, LGBT employees are still left open to risks and vulnerabilities to which their non-LGBT counterparts are not subject. Maintaining domestic partnership policies in city employment is an essential tool in safeguarding LGBT employees and their families from these unique risks.

Requiring that employees obtain marriage licenses in order to qualify for essential benefits can place LGBT employees and their families at risk of discrimination in states without explicit nondiscrimination protections. For example, if an LGBT employee is, in effect, "outed" by being required to obtain a public marriage license in a state that doesn't provide explicit nondiscrimination protections, it could place that employee and their family at risk of being denied credit, housing and access to public accommodations.

These distinctions in protections are significant, and expose LGBT people to risks when traveling or relocating to states that may be forced to honor their marriage license, but still discriminate against them in core aspects of daily life. City employment policies should not place LGBT workers and their loved ones in a position of increased vulnerability and uncertainty. Maintaining private employer-based domestic partnership policies can help protect LGBT employees and their families from the unique risks they still face today.

**66%**  
of Fortune 500 Companies Offered Domestic Partner Health Benefits



### GOOD FOR BUSINESS

Best in class employers continue to offer domestic partner benefits to same and different-sex couples, accounting for family diversity within a competitive talent pool. Cities that continue to provide these benefits are sending a clear message to the most talented workers that they value inclusion and family diversity.

Retaining domestic partner benefits demonstrates that a city values its employees, which in turn increases employee morale and productivity. This is why many municipalities across the country and over sixty percent of Fortune 500 companies have implemented domestic partner benefits for their employees.

### NEGLIGIBLE COST

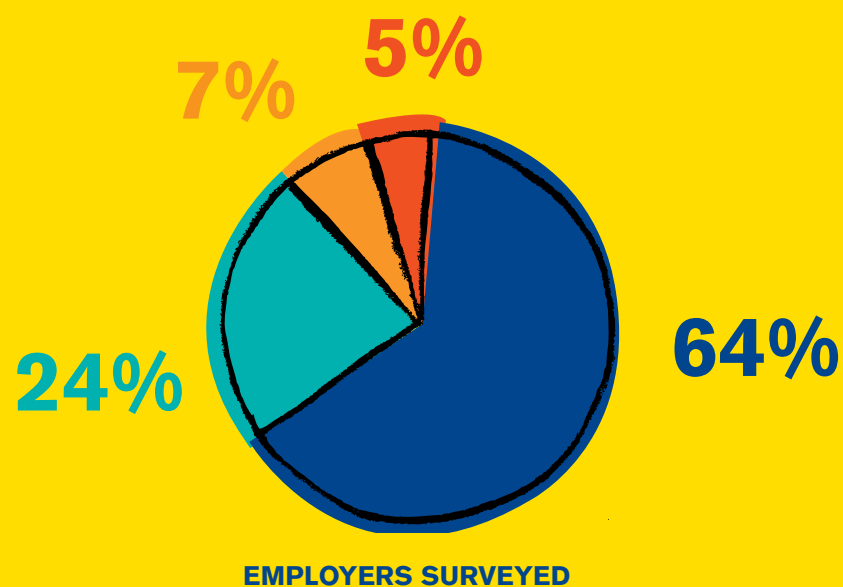
As has been shown over their long history of existence, the cost to employers of maintaining domestic partner benefits is negligible. A 2005 Hewitt Associates study found that the majority of employers—64 percent—experience a total financial impact of less than 1 percent of total benefits cost, 88 percent experience financial impacts of 2 percent or less and only 5 percent experience financial impacts of 3 percent or greater of total benefits cost. Although this study focused on domestic partner benefits offered to same-sex couples, an earlier Hewitt Associates study conducted in 1997 found that the cost to employers was “minimal, with the addition of domestic partners, regardless of whether coverage was extended to same-sex or opposite-sex domestic partners.

Companies report increases in medical claims of less than 1 percent after domestic partner coverage was introduced.” By keeping existing domestic partnership policies, cities can continue to enjoy the many advantages of extending these benefits with negligible associated costs.

## COST OF OFFERING DOMESTIC PARTNER BENEFITS

As has been shown over their long history of existence, the cost to employers of maintaining domestic partner benefits is negligible.

### % OF TOTAL BENEFITS COST



“BENEFIT PROGRAMS FOR DOMESTIC PARTNERS & SAME-SEX SPOUSES,” HEWITT ASSOCIATES (JULY 2005).

## Citywide Domestic Partnership Registries

In addition to offering their employees domestic partner benefits, many municipalities also offer citywide domestic partnership registries that grant unmarried couples and their families important legal protections. These essential protections often include the right to visit a partner at health care and correctional facilities, the right to make health care decisions for an incapacitated partner, and the right to participate in the education of a partner’s children.

### RESPECTING FAMILY DIVERSITY

Domestic partnership registries respect the diversity of all families within a city. As noted with regard to city employee domestic partner benefits, many couples decide not to get married for important personal and practical reasons. Maintaining domestic partnership registries provides validation and essential legal protections to these couples and their families.

### FUNDAMENTAL LEGAL PROTECTIONS

Undoing local domestic partnership registries would suddenly strip families of vital legal protections like the right to make important health care decisions for an incapacitated partner and the right to participate in the education of their partner’s children. All families—even those that decide against marriage—should have access to these fundamental protections.

### PROTECTING FAMILIES FROM DISCRIMINATION

Domestic partnership registries offer a way to extend essential legal protections to all families while providing a greater opportunity for privacy than marriage—which, for same-sex couples living in states without nondiscrimination protections, can mean greater protection from the threat of discrimination. Although citywide domestic partnership registries are public, the need to personally disclose domestic partnerships in everyday life occurs less frequently than the need to disclose one’s marital status. Consequently, residents in same-sex domestic partnerships can have the security of citywide legal protections for their families as well as a greater ability to protect the privacy of their families in places where they are especially vulnerable to discrimination.

### GOOD FOR BUSINESS

Citywide domestic partnership laws fuel economic growth and development by helping attract businesses. Municipalities that extend legal protections to all families signal to businesses that they are inclusive places that will respect the diversity of businesses’ employees and their families; places where businesses’ employees can grow and thrive with the peace of mind that their families will be recognized and afforded key legal protections, even if they decide not to marry.

### CONCLUSION

Retaining domestic partnership laws and policies is a matter of fundamental fairness, inclusion, and equality. Instead of eliminating employee domestic partner benefits and citywide domestic partnership registries, cities that currently maintain these benefits and protections only for same-sex couples should open them up to all couples. Preserving domestic partnership laws and policies honors the many family structures that exist today and respects the important personal and practical considerations that factor into a couple’s decision not to marry. It ensures that families are not cut off from essential benefits like health insurance and vital legal protections like the right to make health care decisions for an incapacitated partner.

Moreover, requiring people to obtain public marriage licenses can effectively “out” LGBT city employees, placing them and their families at a unique risk of discrimination in states that lack explicit protections. Finally, domestic partnership laws and policies continue to be good for business, helping to attract talented workers and businesses, and serving to boost employee morale and productivity—all at a negligible cost.

# ACKNOWLEDGING CONTEXT

## Not All Cities Are Created Equal

Some cities have the autonomy and wherewithal to pass inclusive laws and offer cutting-edge city services; other cities are hampered by severe state-imposed limitations on their ability to pass inclusive laws, or they have found that the small scope of their local government limits their capabilities.

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

The efforts and achievements of each city can only be fairly judged within that city's context; while imposing a score may seem to strip a city of its context, the MEI honors the different situations from which the selected cities come in three major ways:

### BONUS POINTS

First, in addition to the 100 standard points for city laws and services, the MEI includes 20 bonus points.

Bonus points are awarded for essential programs, protections, or benefits that are not attainable or very difficult to attain for some cities; therefore, cities with the item are rewarded, but cities without it are not penalized.

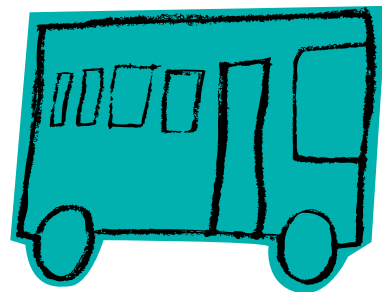
Bonus points can also provide some leeway for cities that face challenges in accomplishing the specific achievements the MEI measures, and ensure that every city has the ability to improve its score for next year.

### CONSIDERATION OF STATE LAW

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

### LEGISLATIVE LEADERSHIP

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



The MEI is 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.

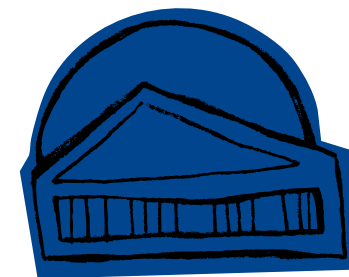
Given the range of authority and incentives that cities have, and acknowledging that our effort to rate small cities as well as large cities exacerbates these challenges, the MEI had to wrestle with three major questions in its initial design.

### 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 LGBT issues?

### ANSWER

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

### QUESTION 3

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

### ANSWER

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 LGBT people—even those living in 100-point cities—face every day.

This question can only be answered by precisely defining what the MEI is designed to do: the MEI is an evaluation of municipal laws and policies.

It is not a rating of the best places for LGBT people to live, nor is it an evaluation of the adequacy or effectiveness of enforcement. It is not an encapsulation of what it feels like to be an LGBT person walking down the street.

While some LGBT people may prefer to live in cities that respect and include them, there are undoubtedly many other factors that make a 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 LGBT person's lived experience in that city.

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

## Accounting for City Size

The MEI rates municipalities as small as Rehoboth Beach, Delaware (2010 population according to the US Census: 1,327) and as large as New York City (2010 population according to the US Census: 8,175,133). Such a range in city size creates concerns about ensuring that the efforts of small cities are not diminished in comparison to the capabilities of large cities.

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

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

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

Second, the MEI uses bonus points to ensure cities are not being held accountable for services that they simply are unable to provide. Points pertaining to a city's administrative structure and capabilities are generally bonus points and there often are multiple paths to earning the same set of points.

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

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

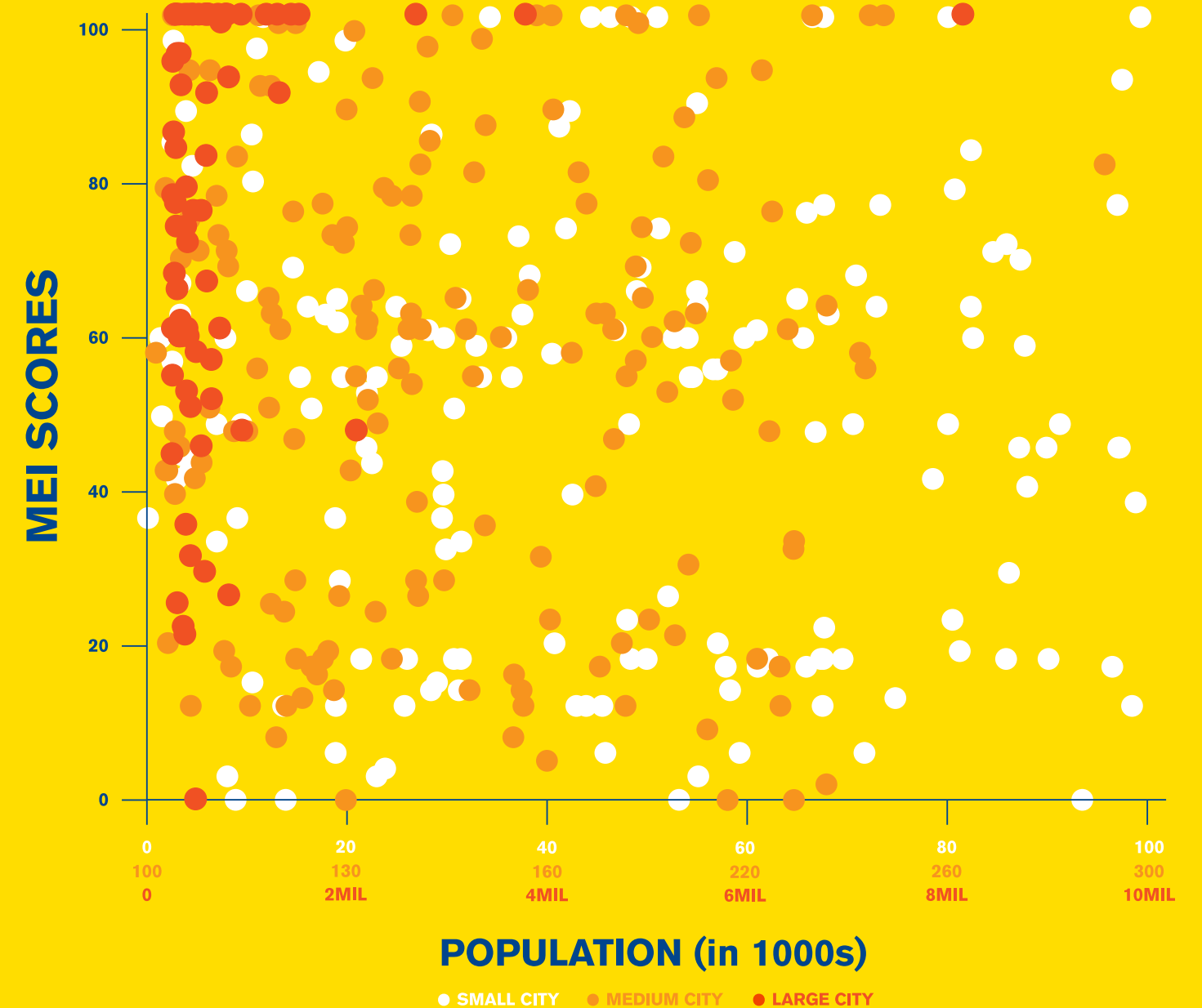
An analysis of the MEI's results over the past several editions shows these efforts to accommodate small cities worked: small cities were able to score comparably with the large cities.

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



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

## CITY SIZE NOT PREDICTIVE OF MEI SCORE





## 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 LGBT-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.

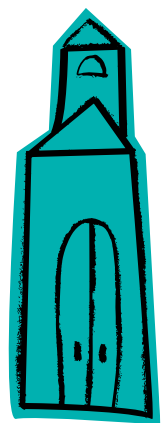
However, the MEI provides avenues for cities who are dedicated to equality—as some cities in Virginia, North Carolina, and Tennessee are—to have that dedication reflected in their score despite restrictive state law.

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.

While this may initially appear to be at odds with the MEI's purpose of evaluating what cities do, the bottom line is that these vital protections don't exist for the folks who live and work in these cities. That these cities will face an uphill battle in earning points for certain criteria on the MEI is a reflection of the actual difficulties they face as a result of restrictive state law.

**Ameliorating the effect of a restrictive state law on the MEI score would be a dishonest representation of the protections that the city truly does offer.**



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

## Effect of Enforcement and Lived Experience

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

Fair and respectful implementation of the best practices described by the MEI is crucial if the policies are to have any meaning. Realistically, the MEI simply has no objective way of measuring the 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 LGBT people—even those living in 100 point cities—face every day.

The MEI can make some limited, blunt judgments about the existence of enforcement, if not its quality. For example, one of the harder questions the MEI faces is evaluating how seriously police departments take anti-LGBT related violence. While the MEI awards points to cities that report hate crimes statistics to the FBI, it does not evaluate whether the report made by the police department to the FBI is an accurate reflection of hate crimes, whether detectives competently collected evidence related to proving a hate-related motivation for the violence or whether the police department created a safe space for victims to come forward. It doesn't measure how respectful police are when making a stop, nor how the police decide whom to stop.

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

A 100-point city, then, may have terrific policies—a well-trained police force, a police liaison, and consistent hate crimes reporting—but nevertheless be an atmosphere in which LGBT people have intense fear of tangling with the police department. This fear may be magnified for LGBT people of color or undocumented LGBT immigrants, and the MEI reflects discrimination against those populations in only a general way. On the other hand, a police department in a 40-point city could have none of these policies but have a reputation for fair and respectful enforcement. The MEI specifically rates cities on their laws and policies; it is not a measure of an LGBT person's lived experience in that city.

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

# WHAT WE FOUND



# SUMMARY OF RESULTS

## Particularly Notable Results

The MEI's top ranking—a 100 point score—was awarded to a record 47 cities this year, making the score of 100 the most frequent score on the 2015 MEI.

This exciting development happened irrespective of the adjustment made to the scorecard this year regarding marriage equality; the relationship recognition points, which evaluated the presence of marriage or jurisdiction-wide domestic partnership registries, were removed from the scorecard as a result of the Supreme Court decision in *Obergefell v. Hodges*.

Points related to domestic partner benefits for city employees were also removed for this year, as scores would have been artificially inflated given that the existing rating system would have given credit for benefits offered to same-sex spouses.

**We strongly encourage cities to continue offering domestic partner benefits to same-sex and different-sex partners** (for more on this recommendation, see page 30), and those will be incorporated into the next revision of the MEI scorecard.

The shift in the scorecard's post-marriage reallocation of points was roughly proportional, and it shifted points toward items like non-discrimination laws and policies, transgender-inclusive health benefits, and hate crimes reporting.

More cities offered transgender-inclusive health benefits than ever before, and while no one criteria is enough to keep a city from earning 100 points, the number of top-rated cities offering trans-inclusive health benefits rose to its highest level as well.

**About two-thirds of 100-point cities offered trans-inclusive health benefits, and this rate was consistent through large, mid-size, and small cities.** The MEI team continues to work with cities to help them understand the necessity for these benefits as well as their low cost and ease of implementation.

Every city that scored 100 points reported hate crimes statistics to the FBI. Again, it is important to emphasize that while no single criteria on the MEI is weighted heavily enough to be a barrier to scoring 100 points, hate crimes reporting is the single most heavily weighted criteria on the MEI and has been since its inception.

Hate crimes reporting is fundamental to good policing, and we simply will not be able to effectively combat anti-LGBT violence unless we understand where and how often it is happening.

That is why it is also significant that 45 of the 47 cities that scored 100 points either have an LGBT police liaison or conduct LGBT cultural competency training or both. We need law enforcement to be educated about the LGBT community and to understand the unique relationship that the LGBT community—particularly transgender women of color—has to law enforcement. And we need law enforcement to be able to recognize, report, and adequately respond to hate crimes against the LGBT community.

# EQUALITY ACROSS AMERICA





# SUCCESS STORY: PHILADELPHIA, PENNSYLVANIA

For decades, Philadelphia has been on the frontlines of LGBT civil rights. Since the first LGBT rights bill was introduced in the 1980s, Philadelphia has grown into a city dedicated to inclusion and equality. Established by Mayor Michael Nutter in 2008, the Office of LGBT Affairs serves as a conduit and advocate for Philadelphia's LGBT communities within our government.

This past November, Philadelphians voted to amend our City Charter to make permanent the Office of LGBT Affairs, recognizing the contributions of LGBT Philadelphians to our city, and ensuring LGBT Philadelphians have a voice in our government for decades to come.

This year also saw the creation of the Gotta Go! Guide, an interactive, Google Maps-based guide to gender-neutral bathrooms across the city. The purpose of the Gotta Go! Guide is to help trans and gender non-conforming folk locate a bathroom they can use without fear or anxiety of gender policing or violence. In October, Philadelphia's City Council unanimously passed legislation requiring all single-stall bathrooms in Philadelphia to be gender-neutral. All people deserve to safely access a restroom when they need one.

The Office has also continued to work closely with the Philadelphia

Police Department to train police cadets in LGBT competency, and to coordinate with the police department's LGBT liaison on the implementation of Directive 152, an internal police directive on appropriate interactions between police and transgender people. There is always room for improvement, but we are proud of the work that can be accomplished when the lines of communication are open.

In other exciting news, LGBT-identified law enforcement officers across the greater Philadelphia region have come together to form the Greater Philadelphia Gay Officer Action League (GOAL), an LGBT law enforcement organization. This new chapter of the Philadelphia Police Department's history undoubtedly marks profound progress, and the Office of LGBT Affairs is proud to support the efforts of these officers as they support each other. Thanks to their brave and pioneering efforts, advocates are no longer fighting alone from the outside, and we will see further progress through these change agents within.

In my role as Director of the Office of LGBT Affairs, I am tasked with elevating the diversity, along with the unique needs, of the LGBT community. This year, the Office has striven to bring increased visibility to each of our LGBT communities.

The City of Philadelphia demonstrated its commitment to bisexual visibility by proclaiming September 23, 2015 to be Bisexual Visibility Day, in honor and celebration of our wonderfully diverse bisexual community.

This year also marked the first official trans pride flag raising ceremony, where the trans pride flag was proudly flown at Philadelphia City Hall for the first time in the City's history. The flag was raised by children attending Philadelphia's Trans Health Conference, and Philadelphia will proudly carry on this tradition for years to come.

In honor of LGBT History Month, the City also unveiled a newly designed rainbow pride flag embroidered with the seal of the City of Philadelphia and the Office of LGBT Affairs. The flag was raised for the first time during the 6th annual LGBT rainbow flag raising ceremony held on October 6, 2015.

**It is my distinct honor to stand on the shoulders of the pioneering Philadelphians who came before me to help organize and energize this large scale response, and to continue to lead Philadelphia towards true equality for all. Let's get stuff done.**

**NELLIE FITZPATRICK**  
Office of LGBT Affairs Director



There is always room for improvement, but **we are proud of the work** that can be accomplished when the lines of communication are open.

## Anatomy of a 100-Point Score

### SMALL CITIES

**10 of the 47 cities scoring 100 points this year had populations of fewer than 100,000 people.** Almost half of these cities were selected for rating based on their high percentage of same-sex couples, about a third were selected because they were home to one of the state's largest public universities, and most of the remainder were chosen because of their size relative to other cities in the state.

9 of the 10 cities had some non-discrimination protections at the local level, with 6 having non-discrimination ordinances that included sexual orientation and gender identity in employment, housing, and public accommodations. 4 of these non-discrimination ordinances were more inclusive of gender identity than the state law.

Perhaps most interesting, all but one of these cities received points for LGBT visibility, meaning there was an openly LGBT elected or high-level appointed official in the city. The significance of that connection seems fairly obvious. The cities averaged 92 standard points and 11 bonus points, with two

thirds of these small cities offering trans-inclusive health benefits to city employees.

### MID-SIZE CITIES

10 cities with populations of between 100,000 and 250,000 scored 100 points on the MEI this year. **Of these, 9 have some municipal non-discrimination protections with 7 of these having more inclusive non-discrimination laws at the local level than they do at the state.**

8 of the 10 cities offer trans-inclusive health benefits to city employees. 9 of the 10 have LGBT liaisons in the police department and 8 received LGBT visibility points. The cities averaged 94 standard points and 11 bonus points.

### LARGE CITIES

27 cities with populations of over 250,000 scored 100 points. Only 2 of these cities rely on state law for their non-discrimination protections; 25 have at least some non-discrimination protections at the local level with 23 boasting non-discrimination ordinances that include sexual orientation and gender identity in employment, housing, and public accommodations.

The rate of cities offering their employees trans-inclusive health benefits holds steady at about two-thirds, with 17 of the 27 offering such benefits. **Every one of these cities had an LGBT liaison in the police department and every one reported hate crimes statistics to the FBI.** 23 of the cities—comprising 85%—had an openly LGBT elected or high-level appointed official in city government. Large cities averaged 95 standard points and 11 bonus points.

### ALL TOP SCORING CITIES

Every city scoring 100 points reported its hate crime statistics to the FBI, and 91% of the cities scoring 100 had an LGBT liaison in the police department.

Every city scoring 100 points reported its hate crime statistics to the FBI, and **91% of the cities scoring 100 had an LGBT liaison in the police department.**

## Success Across America

Every region of the country boasted at least one 100-point score. Cities in the West, Great Lakes, Mid-Atlantic and New England regions on average outscored the MEI overall average score of 56 points, while the Mountain, Plains, Southeast, and Southwest regions fell short.

In the latter regions, the top scorers were large cities while the mid-size and small cities tended to score fairly low. The higher scoring overall regions had more parity, with smaller and mid-size cities scoring quite well. The fates of the regions' averages rose and fell with the success of the small cities. (Please see graph on page 45).

### CITIES ARE ACTING WHERE THEIR STATES HAVE NOT

Thirty-one MEI "All-Stars" scored over 85 points despite the state not having a statewide non-discrimination law including sexual orientation or gender identity as protected characteristics.

Cities selected for rating due to their high proportion of same-sex couples did remarkably better than cities as a whole (they averaged 83 points in comparison to the national average of 56 points), and that effect was magnified when the city was also one of the largest cities in the state (average of 94 points).

Overall, however, city size did not have a significant relationship to a city's score.

### Cities are acting to address the challenges facing the LGBT community, and they are in a unique position to continue to make important change.

Cities have incredible power to effect change in their communities, and the MEI demonstrates that many cities continue to take action to ensure that LGBT people are included in the city's laws, policies, and services. It also demonstrates that cities are well-positioned to move beyond the major victory for marriage equality this year and address the many ongoing challenges that the LGBT community continues to face.

Cities are acting to address the challenges facing the LGBT community, and **they are in a unique position** to continue to make important change.

## SUCCESS STORY: EQUALITY NORTH CAROLINA

In a challenging statewide climate for winning crucial non-discrimination protections, Equality NC and our local and national partners have turned to local municipal work to effect change for LGBT people in the Tar Heel state.

### A local strategy helps win crucial protections in housing, employment, and public accommodations for our community as well as builds momentum for eventual statewide legislation from the ground up.

Just this year we worked with strong LGBT-ally elected officials in North Carolina's third largest city, Greensboro, to enact a first-of-its-kind fair housing ordinance that includes non-discrimination protections in both private and public housing. It passed council unanimously under the leadership of Mayor Nancy Vaughan. We also worked with the Wake County Board of Commissioners to update their employment protections to include gay and transgender employees.

Wake is the largest county in the state and the capital county. And our local advocates are just getting started—conversations are underway as well in Wilmington, Winston-Salem, and many other towns and cities across the state. Equality NC will launch its Municipal Ordinance Toolkit for local elected officials and local advocates this November, which will include sample ordinance language, proposed timelines, and backgrounds on other cities with these protections.

We are also excited to continue our work to win a historic ordinance victory in Charlotte, where Equality NC is working closely with HRC and MeckPAC (a local organization) to pass comprehensive non-discrimination protections in 2016.

**CHRIS SGRO**  
Executive Director

Equality NC and our local and national partners have **turned to local municipal work** to effect change for LGBT people in the Tar Heel state.



# SCORES

STATE	CITY	I. Non-Discrimination	II. Municipality as Employer	III. Services and Programs	IV. Law Enforcement	V. Relationship with LGBT Community	REGULAR POINTS	BONUS POINTS	FINAL SCORE
ALABAMA	Auburn	○	○	○	○	○	0	0	0
	Birmingham	○	○	●	○	●	9	0	9
	Huntsville	○	○	●	○	○	5	0	5
	Mobile	○	○	●	●	○	17	3	20
	Montgomery	○	●	●	●	○	21	0	21
	Tuscaloosa	○	○	●	●	○	18	0	18
ALASKA	Anchorage	●	●	●	●	●	75	6	81
	Fairbanks	○	●	●	●	●	33	0	33
	Juneau	○	○	●	○	●	14	0	14
	Ketchikan	○	○	●	○	○	3	0	3
	Sitka	○	○	○	○	○	0	0	0
ARIZONA	Chandler	○	●	●	●	●	56	7	63
	Gilbert	○	○	●	●	○	27	3	30
	Glendale	○	●	○	●	●	27	2	29
	Mesa	○	●	●	●	●	47	3	50
	Peoria	○	●	●	●	○	36	2	38
	Phoenix	●	●	●	●	●	91	16	100
	Scottsdale	○	●	●	●	●	49	2	51
	Tempe	●	●	●	●	●	91	16	100
Tucson	●	●	●	●	●	94	14	100	
ARKANSAS	Fayetteville	●	●	●	○	●	73	3	76
	Fort Smith	○	○	●	○	○	18	0	18
	Jonesboro	○	○	●	○	○	18	0	18
	Little Rock	○	●	●	●	●	37	9	46
	North Little Rock	○	○	●	●	○	18	0	18
	Springdale	○	○	●	●	○	18	0	18
CALIFORNIA	Anaheim	●	●	●	○	●	61	0	61
	Bakersfield	●	●	●	○	○	59	0	59
	Berkeley	●	●	●	○	●	79	14	93
	Brisbane	●	●	○	○	○	42	0	42
	Cathedral City	●	●	●	●	●	91	9	100
	Chula Vista	●	●	○	○	○	55	0	55
	Concord	●	○	●	○	○	53	2	55

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# SCORES

STATE	CITY	I. Non-Discrimination	II. Municipality as Employer	III. Services and Programs	IV. Law Enforcement	V. Relationship with LGBT Community	REGULAR POINTS	BONUS POINTS	FINAL SCORE
CALIFORNIA	Corona	●	○	○	○	○	60	0	60
	Elk Grove	●	●	●	○	○	77	0	77
	Escondido	●	○	○	○	○	60	0	60
	Fontana	●	○	○	○	○	54	0	54
	Fremont	●	○	●	○	○	82	10	92
	Fresno	●	○	○	○	○	57	0	57
	Fullerton	●	○	○	○	○	74	2	76
	Garden Grove	●	○	○	○	○	59	0	59
	Glendale	●	○	○	○	○	62	0	62
	Guerneville (Sonoma County)	●	○	○	○	○	82	9	91
	Hayward	●	○	○	○	○	58	3	61
	Huntington Beach	●	○	○	○	○	59	3	62
	Irvine	●	○	○	○	○	74	5	79
	Lancaster	●	○	○	○	○	77	7	84
	Long Beach	●	○	○	○	○	100	7	100
	Los Angeles	●	○	○	○	○	94	8	100
	Modesto	●	○	○	○	○	59	0	59
	Moreno Valley	●	○	○	○	○	60	0	60
	Oakland	●	○	○	○	○	68	5	73
	Oceanside	●	○	○	○	○	89	8	97
	Ontario	●	○	○	○	○	60	0	60
	Orange	●	○	○	○	○	71	0	71
	Oxnard	●	○	○	○	○	53	3	56
	Palm Springs	●	○	○	○	○	89	16	100
	Palmdale	●	○	○	○	○	72	0	72
	Pasadena	●	○	○	○	○	68	4	72
	Pomona	●	○	○	○	○	77	0	77
	Rancho Cucamonga	●	○	○	○	○	54	0	54
	Rancho Mirage	●	○	○	○	○	82	11	93
	Richmond	●	○	○	○	○	72	6	78
	Riverside	●	○	○	○	○	65	0	65
	Sacramento	●	○	○	○	○	70	5	75
Salinas	●	○	○	○	○	55	0	55	
San Bernardino	●	○	○	○	○	59	3	62	
San Diego	●	○	○	○	○	100	14	100	
San Francisco	●	○	○	○	○	100	16	100	
San Jose	●	○	○	○	○	100	6	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 LGBT Community	REGULAR POINTS	BONUS POINTS	FINAL SCORE
CALIFORNIA	Santa Ana	●	◐	◐	◐	○	59	0	59
	Santa Clarita	●	◐	◐	◐	○	65	0	65
	Santa Rosa	●	◐	◐	◐	●	81	5	86
	Signal Hill	●	●	●	◐	◐	83	13	96
	Stockton	●	◐	◐	●	○	81	2	83
	Sunnyvale	●	◐	◐	◐	◐	73	0	73
	Thousand Oaks	●	◐	◐	◐	○	60	0	60
	Torrance	●	◐	◐	◐	○	65	0	65
	Vallejo	●	◐	◐	◐	◐	70	0	70
	Visalia	●	◐	◐	○	◐	50	0	50
West Hollywood	●	●	●	◐	●	95	11	100	
COLORADO	Aurora	●	◐	◐	◐	○	59	0	59
	Boulder	●	◐	◐	◐	◐	73	3	76
	Colorado Springs	●	◐	◐	◐	○	59	0	59
	Denver	●	◐	●	◐	◐	82	8	90
	Fort Collins	●	◐	◐	◐	○	59	2	61
	Lakewood	●	◐	◐	◐	○	60	3	63
CONNECTICUT	Bridgeport	●	○	◐	◐	◐	51	0	51
	Hartford	●	◐	●	◐	●	84	7	91
	New Britain	●	○	◐	◐	◐	57	6	63
	New Haven	●	◐	●	●	●	94	5	99
	Stamford	●	◐	●	●	●	86	5	91
	Storrs (Mansfield)	●	◐	◐	◐	○	54	0	54
	Waterbury	●	◐	◐	◐	○	65	5	70
DELAWARE	Dover	●	◐	◐	◐	○	59	0	59
	Middletown	●	○	◐	○	○	36	0	36
	Newark	●	◐	◐	◐	○	60	4	64
	Rehoboth Beach	●	◐	◐	◐	◐	62	3	65
	Smyrna	●	○	◐	◐	○	48	0	48
	Wilmington	●	◐	◐	◐	○	59	0	59
FLORIDA	Cape Coral	○	◐	○	◐	◐	26	0	26
	Fort Lauderdale	●	◐	◐	●	◐	73	7	80
	Gainesville	●	◐	◐	◐	○	65	5	70
	Hialeah	●	◐	◐	○	○	47	0	47
	Hollywood	●	○	◐	○	◐	42	0	42

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# SCORES

STATE	CITY	I. Non-Discrimination	II. Municipality as Employer	III. Services and Programs	IV. Law Enforcement	V. Relationship with LGBT Community	REGULAR POINTS	BONUS POINTS	FINAL SCORE	
FLORIDA	Jacksonville	○	○	◐	◐	○	23	3	26	
	Miami	●	◐	◐	○	◐	48	4	52	
	Miami Shores	●	◐	●	●	◐	79	6	85	
	Oakland Park	●	◐	◐	◐	◐	80	6	86	
	Orlando	●	◐	●	●	●	88	12	100	
	Pembroke Pines	●	◐	◐	◐	◐	78	3	81	
	Port Saint Lucie	○	○	○	◐	◐	14	0	14	
	St. Petersburg	●	◐	●	●	●	94	16	100	
	Tallahassee	●	◐	●	●	◐	82	6	88	
	Tampa	●	◐	●	●	●	88	7	95	
	Wilton Manors	●	◐	●	◐	●	89	16	100	
	GEORGIA	Athens	○	◐	◐	○	◐	19	0	19
		Atlanta	●	●	●	●	●	100	6	100
Augusta-Richmond		○	○	○	◐	◐	12	0	12	
Avondale Estates		○	◐	◐	◐	◐	39	2	41	
Columbus		○	◐	◐	◐	◐	37	3	40	
Decatur		○	◐	○	○	◐	22	6	28	
North Druid Hills (DeKalb County)		○	◐	◐	○	○	12	0	12	
Savannah		○	○	◐	◐	◐	17	2	19	
HAWAII		Hawaii	●	◐	◐	○	◐	55	2	57
	Honolulu	●	◐	◐	○	◐	45	2	47	
	Kalawao	●	○	◐	○	○	36	0	36	
	Kauai	●	◐	◐	○	◐	45	2	47	
	Maui	●	◐	◐	○	◐	56	4	60	
IDAHO	Boise	●	◐	○	◐	◐	61	0	61	
	Idaho Falls	◐	◐	◐	◐	●	55	0	55	
	Meridian	○	○	○	◐	◐	13	0	13	
	Nampa	○	○	◐	◐	◐	19	0	19	
	Pocatello	●	◐	◐	◐	○	59	0	59	
ILLINOIS	Aurora	●	◐	◐	◐	○	65	3	68	
	Champaign	●	◐	●	◐	◐	72	6	78	
	Chicago	●	●	●	●	●	100	12	100	
	Joliet	●	◐	●	●	◐	76	2	78	
	Naperville	●	◐	◐	◐	○	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 LGBT Community	REGULAR POINTS	BONUS POINTS	FINAL SCORE
ILLINOIS	Rockford	●	○	○	○	○	62	0	62
	Springfield	●	○	○	○	○	65	3	68
INDIANA	Bloomington	●	●	●	○	●	90	10	100
	Evansville	○	○	○	○	○	41	6	47
	Fort Wayne	○	○	○	○	○	41	3	44
	Hammond	○	○	○	○	○	20	3	23
	Indianapolis	●	○	○	○	○	82	10	92
	South Bend	●	○	○	○	○	74	6	80
	West Lafayette	○	○	○	○	○	33	3	36
IOWA	Ames	●	○	○	○	○	67	3	70
	Cedar Rapids	●	○	○	○	○	90	9	99
	Davenport	●	○	○	○	○	91	14	100
	Des Moines	●	○	○	○	○	79	3	82
	Iowa City	●	○	○	○	○	91	14	100
	Sioux City	●	○	○	○	○	75	8	83
	Waterloo	●	○	○	○	○	65	3	68
	KANSAS	Kansas City	○	○	○	○	○	24	0
Lawrence		●	○	○	○	○	66	3	69
Manhattan		○	○	○	○	○	23	3	26
Olathe		○	○	○	○	○	5	3	8
Overland Park		○	○	○	○	○	5	3	8
Topeka		○	○	○	○	○	24	0	24
Wichita		○	○	○	○	○	21	0	21
KENTUCKY	Bowling Green	○	○	○	○	○	17	0	17
	Covington	●	○	○	○	○	54	3	57
	Frankfort	●	○	○	○	○	52	6	58
	Lexington	●	○	○	○	○	65	8	73
	Louisville	●	○	○	○	○	88	13	100
	Owensboro	○	○	○	○	○	20	0	20
LOUISIANA	Baton Rouge	○	○	○	○	○	30	2	32
	Lafayette	○	○	○	○	○	12	0	12
	Lake Charles	○	○	○	○	○	6	0	6
	Metairie	○	○	○	○	○	22	4	26

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# SCORES

STATE	CITY	I. Non-Discrimination	II. Municipality as Employer	III. Services and Programs	IV. Law Enforcement	V. Relationship with LGBT Community	REGULAR POINTS	BONUS POINTS	FINAL SCORE	
LOUISIANA	New Orleans	●	○	○	○	○	75	16	91	
	Shreveport	●	○	○	○	○	61	3	64	
MAINE	Auburn	●	○	○	○	○	54	0	54	
	Augusta	●	○	○	○	○	58	3	61	
	Bangor	●	○	○	○	○	58	0	58	
	Lewiston	●	○	○	○	○	54	0	54	
	Orono	●	○	○	○	○	48	0	48	
	Portland	●	○	○	○	○	73	2	75	
	South Portland	●	○	○	○	○	60	3	63	
	MARYLAND	Annapolis	●	○	○	○	○	62	5	67
Baltimore		●	○	○	○	○	94	14	100	
Bowie		●	○	○	○	○	54	0	54	
College Park		●	○	○	○	○	65	6	71	
Frederick		●	○	○	○	○	59	5	64	
Gaithersburg		●	○	○	○	○	56	3	59	
Rockville		●	○	○	○	○	57	3	60	
Towson		●	○	○	○	○	84	5	89	
MASSACHUSETTS		Amherst	○	○	○	○	○	61	3	64
		Boston	●	●	●	●	●	100	12	100
	Cambridge	●	●	●	●	●	100	14	100	
	Lowell	○	○	○	○	○	43	2	45	
	Northampton	●	○	○	○	○	75	10	85	
	Provincetown	○	○	○	○	○	87	10	97	
	Springfield	○	○	○	○	○	53	0	53	
	Worcester	●	●	●	●	●	97	13	100	
	MICHIGAN	Ann Arbor	●	○	○	○	○	73	4	77
Detroit		●	●	●	●	●	99	10	100	
East Lansing		●	○	○	○	○	94	12	100	
Ferndale		●	○	○	○	○	86	11	97	
Grand Rapids		●	○	○	○	○	70	6	76	
Lansing		●	○	○	○	○	62	10	72	
Pleasant Ridge		●	○	○	○	○	53	3	56	
Sterling Heights		○	○	○	○	○	28	0	28	
Warren		○	○	○	○	○	16	0	16	

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# SCORES

STATE	CITY	I. Non-Discrimination	II. Municipality as Employer	III. Services and Programs	IV. Law Enforcement	V. Relationship with LGBT Community	REGULAR POINTS	BONUS POINTS	FINAL SCORE
MINNESOTA	Bloomington	●	◐	◑	◒	○	59	0	59
	Duluth	●	◐	●	◒	◑	68	3	71
	Minneapolis	●	●	●	●	●	100	5	100
	Rochester	●	◐	◑	◒	◑	69	0	69
	Saint Cloud	●	◐	◑	◒	○	59	0	59
	Saint Paul	●	●	●	●	●	100	5	100
MISSISSIPPI	Biloxi	○	○	○	◒	○	12	0	12
	Gulfport	○	○	○	◒	○	12	0	12
	Hattiesburg	○	○	○	○	◑	6	0	6
	Jackson	○	○	◑	○	●	14	2	16
	Oxford	○	○	○	○	◑	6	0	6
	Southaven	○	○	○	○	○	0	0	0
	Starkville	○	○	○	○	◒	4	0	4
	MISSOURI	Columbia	●	◑	◑	◒	◑	69	5
Independence		○	○	◑	◒	○	17	0	17
Jefferson City		○	○	○	◒	○	12	0	12
Kansas City		●	◑	◑	●	●	86	14	100
Springfield		○	○	◑	◒	◑	23	5	28
St. Louis		●	◑	◑	●	●	91	14	100
MONTANA	Billings	○	○	◑	◒	◒	20	0	20
	Bozeman	●	◑	○	◒	●	68	4	72
	Butte-Silver Bow	●	◐	◑	◒	○	54	0	54
	Great Falls	○	○	○	◒	○	12	2	14
	Helena	◑	◑	◑	◒	◑	60	0	60
	Missoula	●	●	◑	●	●	95	7	100
NEBRASKA	Bellevue	○	○	◑	◒	○	18	0	18
	Grand Island	○	◐	○	◒	○	18	0	18
	Kearney	○	○	◑	◒	○	18	0	18
	Lincoln	○	◐	◑	●	◑	47	7	54
	Omaha	◑	◑	◑	◒	◒	65	6	71
NEVADA	Carson City	●	◑	◑	◒	○	63	0	63
	Enterprise	●	◑	◑	●	◑	87	6	93
	Henderson	●	◑	◑	◒	○	60	0	60

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# SCORES

STATE	CITY	I. Non-Discrimination	II. Municipality as Employer	III. Services and Programs	IV. Law Enforcement	V. Relationship with LGBT Community	REGULAR POINTS	BONUS POINTS	FINAL SCORE
NEVADA	Las Vegas	●	●	◑	●	◑	90	11	100
	North Las Vegas	●	◐	◑	◒	○	54	2	56
	Paradise	●	◑	◑	●	◑	87	6	93
	Reno	●	◑	◑	◒	◑	75	0	75
	Sparks	●	◑	◑	○	○	45	0	45
	NEW HAMPSHIRE	Concord	◑	◐	◑	◒	○	39	0
Derry		◑	◑	◑	◒	○	45	0	45
Dover		◑	◐	◑	○	○	32	0	32
Durham		◑	◑	●	●	◑	66	2	68
Manchester		◑	◐	◑	◒	○	39	2	41
Nashua		◑	◐	◑	○	○	27	2	29
Plymouth		◑	○	◑	◒	○	33	0	33
Rochester		◑	◐	◑	◒	○	39	0	39
NEW JERSEY		Asbury Park	●	◐	◑	◒	◑	60	3
	Elizabeth	●	◐	◑	◒	○	59	3	62
	Jersey City	●	●	●	●	●	100	10	100
	Lambertville	●	◑	◑	●	●	83	5	88
	Montclair	●	◐	◑	◒	○	59	3	62
	New Brunswick	●	◑	◑	◒	○	65	0	65
	Newark	●	◐	◑	◒	●	67	0	67
	Ocean Grove	●	◐	◑	◒	◑	62	6	68
	Paterson	●	○	◑	◒	○	48	0	48
Trenton	●	◑	◑	◒	○	65	5	70	
NEW MEXICO	Albuquerque	●	◑	◑	◒	◑	68	7	75
	Eldorado at Santa Fe	●	◑	◐	○	○	45	0	45
	Las Cruces	●	◑	◐	○	○	45	0	45
	Rio Rancho	●	◑	◐	○	○	45	0	45
	Roswell	●	◑	◐	○	○	48	0	48
Santa Fe	●	◑	◐	◑	●	69	7	76	
NEW YORK	Albany	●	●	◑	◒	◑	84	8	92
	Brookhaven	●	◐	◑	○	○	44	0	44
	Buffalo	●	●	◑	◒	◑	84	10	94
	New York	●	◑	●	●	●	91	14	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 LGBT Community	REGULAR POINTS	BONUS POINTS	FINAL SCORE
NEW YORK	Northwest Harbor	●	◐	◐	◐	○	59	3	62
	Rochester	●	●	◐	●	●	95	5	100
	Syracuse	●	◐	●	◐	●	82	10	92
	Yonkers	●	◐	●	●	◐	93	8	100
NORTH CAROLINA	Cary	○	○	◐	◐	○	18	0	18
	Chapel Hill	○	◐	◐	◐	◐	44	11	55
	Charlotte	○	◐	◐	●	◐	50	10	60
	Durham	○	◐	●	●	◐	47	13	60
	Fayetteville	○	○	◐	◐	○	23	0	23
	Greensboro	◐	◐	●	●	●	68	17	85
	Raleigh	○	◐	●	◐	◐	52	8	60
	Winston-Salem	○	◐	◐	◐	◐	33	0	33
NORTH DAKOTA	Bismarck	○	○	◐	◐	○	17	0	17
	Fargo	○	◐	◐	●	◐	41	6	47
	Grand Forks	◐	◐	◐	●	●	57	2	59
	Minot	○	○	◐	◐	○	20	0	20
	West Fargo	○	○	○	◐	○	12	0	12
OHIO	Akron	◐	◐	◐	●	◐	66	7	73
	Cincinnati	●	●	◐	●	●	97	9	100
	Cleveland	●	◐	◐	◐	●	73	5	78
	Columbus	●	●	●	●	●	100	12	100
	Dayton	●	◐	◐	●	◐	90	8	98
	Toledo	●	◐	◐	◐	●	70	6	76
OKLAHOMA	Broken Arrow	○	○	○	◐	○	12	0	12
	Lawton	○	○	◐	◐	○	17	0	17
	Norman	○	◐	◐	◐	◐	37	6	43
	Oklahoma City	○	◐	◐	◐	◐	27	2	29
	Stillwater	○	○	○	◐	○	12	0	12
	Tulsa	◐	◐	◐	○	●	32	3	35
OREGON	Corvallis	●	◐	◐	◐	○	54	0	54
	Eugene	●	◐	◐	●	◐	91	5	96
	Gresham	●	○	◐	○	○	36	0	36
	Hillsboro	●	◐	◐	○	○	48	0	48
	Portland	●	●	◐	●	●	95	6	100
	Salem	●	◐	●	●	○	86	3	89

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# SCORES

STATE	CITY	I. Non-Discrimination	II. Municipality as Employer	III. Services and Programs	IV. Law Enforcement	V. Relationship with LGBT Community	REGULAR POINTS	BONUS POINTS	FINAL SCORE
PENNSYLVANIA	Allentown	●	◐	◐	◐	◐	75	7	82
	Erie	●	○	◐	◐	◐	54	3	57
	Harrisburg	●	◐	◐	◐	◐	65	3	68
	New Hope	●	◐	●	◐	●	76	8	84
	Philadelphia	●	●	●	●	●	100	16	100
	Pittsburgh	●	◐	◐	◐	●	81	14	95
	Reading	●	◐	◐	○	○	55	3	58
	State College (University Park)	●	◐	◐	◐	◐	70	3	73
RHODE ISLAND	Cranston	●	○	◐	◐	○	48	0	48
	East Providence	●	◐	◐	◐	○	60	0	60
	Kingston (South Kingstown)	●	○	◐	◐	○	48	0	48
	Pawtucket	●	◐	◐	◐	◐	67	0	67
	Providence	●	●	●	●	●	100	10	100
	Warwick	●	◐	◐	◐	◐	60	3	63
SOUTH CAROLINA	Charleston	◐	◐	◐	◐	◐	47	0	47
	Clemson	○	○	○	○	○	0	0	0
	Columbia	◐	◐	◐	●	◐	73	2	75
	Mount Pleasant	○	○	◐	◐	○	18	0	18
	North Charleston	◐	◐	◐	◐	◐	41	4	45
	Rock Hill	○	○	◐	◐	○	17	0	17
SOUTH DAKOTA	Aberdeen	○	○	◐	◐	○	18	0	18
	Brookings	○	◐	●	◐	●	46	6	52
	Pierre	○	○	○	◐	○	12	0	12
	Rapid City	○	○	◐	◐	○	17	5	22
	Sioux Falls	○	◐	◐	◐	○	23	5	28
	Vermillion	○	○	◐	◐	○	15	0	15
	Watertown	○	◐	○	◐	○	18	0	18
TENNESSEE	Chattanooga	○	◐	○	◐	●	32	3	35
	Clarksville	○	○	◐	◐	○	17	0	17
	Knoxville	○	◐	○	◐	◐	31	0	31
	Memphis	○	◐	◐	●	◐	48	8	56
	Murfreesboro	○	○	○	◐	○	12	0	12
	Nashville	○	◐	◐	◐	●	54	12	66

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# SCORES

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TEXAS	Amarillo	○	○	◐	◐	○	17	0	17
	Arlington	○	○	○	◐	◐	20	2	22
	Austin	●	●	◐	●	●	95	16	100
	Brownsville	○	◐	○	○	◐	14	0	14
	College Station	○	○	○	○	○	0	0	0
	Corpus Christi	○	◐	◐	◐	○	23	5	28
	Dallas	●	◐	◐	●	●	84	18	100
	El Paso	◐	◐	◐	◐	◐	44	7	51
	Fort Worth	●	◐	◐	●	◐	86	13	99
	Garland	○	○	○	◐	○	12	0	12
	Grand Prairie	○	◐	◐	○	○	12	0	12
	Houston	◐	◐	○	◐	●	39	9	48
	Irving	○	○	○	○	○	0	0	0
	Killeen	○	○	○	◐	○	12	0	12
	Laredo	○	○	○	○	○	0	2	2
	Lubbock	○	○	○	○	○	0	0	0
	McAllen	○	◐	○	◐	○	18	0	18
	McKinney	○	○	○	◐	◐	13	0	13
	Mesquite	○	○	○	○	○	0	0	0
	Pasadena	○	○	◐	◐	○	18	0	18
Plano	●	◐	◐	◐	◐	75	2	77	
San Antonio	◐	◐	◐	●	●	73	17	90	
Waco	○	◐	◐	○	◐	23	2	25	
UTAH	Logan	◐	○	◐	○	○	23	0	23
	Orem	◐	○	◐	◐	○	40	0	40
	Provo	◐	◐	◐	◐	◐	50	0	50
	Salt Lake City	◐	◐	◐	◐	●	67	8	75
	West Jordan	◐	○	◐	◐	○	35	2	37
West Valley City	◐	○	◐	◐	◐	41	0	41	
VERMONT	Barre	●	○	◐	○	○	36	0	36
	Burlington	●	●	◐	◐	◐	83	5	88
	Castleton	●	○	◐	◐	◐	49	0	49
	Essex	●	◐	◐	◐	○	54	0	54
	Montpelier	●	◐	◐	◐	◐	59	0	59
	Rutland	●	○	◐	◐	◐	50	0	50
	South Burlington	●	◐	◐	◐	◐	62	0	62

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STATE	CITY	I. Non-Discrimination	II. Municipality as Employer	III. Services and Programs	IV. Law Enforcement	V. Relationship with LGBT Community	REGULAR POINTS	BONUS POINTS	FINAL SCORE
VIRGINIA	Alexandria	◐	◐	●	●	●	76	12	88
	Arlington County	◐	◐	●	●	●	73	14	87
	Chesapeake	○	◐	○	◐	○	18	0	18
	Fairfax County	○	○	◐	●	◐	36	7	43
	Hampton	○	○	○	◐	◐	14	0	14
	Newport News	○	○	◐	◐	○	20	3	23
	Norfolk	○	◐	◐	●	◐	43	14	57
	Richmond	○	◐	◐	●	●	48	4	52
	Virginia Beach	○	◐	◐	◐	◐	28	3	31
	WASHINGTON	Bellevue	●	●	●	●	◐	95	5
Olympia		●	●	●	●	●	100	6	100
Pullman		●	◐	◐	◐	○	59	0	59
Seattle		●	●	●	●	●	100	11	100
Spokane		●	◐	◐	●	◐	71	0	71
Tacoma		●	●	◐	◐	●	85	14	99
Vancouver		●	◐	◐	◐	◐	62	2	64
Vashon		●	◐	◐	◐	◐	72	7	79
WEST VIRGINIA		Charleston	●	◐	◐	◐	◐	66	7
	Huntington	●	◐	◐	◐	◐	65	0	65
	Morgantown	○	◐	◐	◐	●	37	5	42
	Parkersburg	○	○	◐	◐	○	18	0	18
	Wheeling	○	○	◐	○	○	11	3	14
WISCONSIN	Green Bay	◐	◐	◐	◐	◐	42	0	42
	Kenosha	◐	◐	◐	○	●	35	3	38
	Madison	●	◐	●	◐	●	84	16	100
	Milwaukee	●	◐	◐	◐	◐	73	9	82
	Racine	◐	◐	◐	◐	○	38	3	41
WYOMING	Casper	○	○	◐	○	○	3	0	3
	Cheyenne	○	◐	○	○	○	6	0	6
	Gillette	○	○	◐	◐	○	15	0	15
	Laramie	●	◐	○	○	●	50	0	50
	Rock Springs	○	○	◐	○	○	3	0	3

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# SUCCESS STORY: SEATTLE, WASHINGTON

Seattle has long been a welcoming place for everyone, regardless of race, gender, or sexual orientation. From the 1970s when we outlawed housing discrimination based on sexual orientation, to forming our first Gay and Lesbian Task Force in 1985, Seattle's been a national leader.

Prior to becoming Seattle's first gay Mayor, I served in the state legislature for 18 years—I can speak to the tremendous shift seen across the country recently. Yet, rarely does sweeping change happen overnight. It's important we celebrate local victories as we advance toward our ultimate goal of equity for all.

I'm deeply committed to achieving equity in Seattle. I've launched an initiative to address hate crimes against LGBTQ community members and made ending LGBTQ youth homelessness a priority.

I've signed legislation requiring all public places to designate single-stall bathrooms as all-gender. In 2016, our Office for Civil Rights will launch a media campaign highlighting diversity within Seattle's LGBTQ communities.

I'm proud of what we've accomplished so far and look forward to ensuring Seattle is where gender, identity, sexual orientation and race no longer determine one's ability to earn a living wage, to access quality housing, and to live a safe, healthy life.

**ED MURRAY**  
Mayor

Rarely does sweeping change happen overnight. It's important we **celebrate local victories** as we advance toward our ultimate goal of equity for all.



# 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 and this year to 408 cities. 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 criterion.

In 2015, we had 4 cities successfully self-submit: San Fernando, CA, West Palm Beach, FL, Salem, MA, and Carrboro, NC. By self-submitting, these cities have demonstrated their commitment to equality and are sending a message to their LGBT citizens that they are a welcome and important part of the community.

We might not be able to 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 LGBT equality.

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

# 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 enacting laws that further LGBT 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

**Xavier Persad** serves as Legislative Counsel at the Human Rights Campaign. He focuses on state and municipal law and policy, and assists with the annual Municipal Equality Index. 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.

**C. Kutney** joins our team this year as State and Municipal Program Manager, managing both the Municipal Equality Index and the State Equality Index which assesses state policy and law impacting the LGBT community. Kutney is a graduate of the University at Albany in Albany, NY and brings professionalism, creativity, and a thoughtful approach to both publications.

## ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

The MEI would not be what it is without the contributions of several people whose work ensured this project would be possible, exciting and robust. First and foremost, HRC's Legal Director Sarah Warbelow has continued to provide clarity, direction, and vision to the MEI. Her leadership has been fundamental to the MEI's success and many of its best ideas are attributable to her.

Liz Halloran was invaluable in crafting a successful launch of the MEI and bringing this story of municipal equality to every corner of America where it belongs. Kristen Hildreth stepped up to get this year's MEI in motion and provided critical support. Our law fellows and interns provided invaluable research and assistance. Bob Villaflor helped us deliver another beautiful publication and on-time launch.

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## EQUALITY FEDERATION INSTITUTE

**Last, but not least, we thank our partners at the Equality Federation state groups and the national Equality Federation Institute.**

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