

The following outlines our standards for credit in each section of the 2021 Municipal Equality Index (MEI) scorecard. Please note that we have strengthened our standards for credit in *Part II(B) - Transgender-Inclusive Healthcare Benefits*.

SECTION I. NON-DISCRIMINATION LAWS

- **Non-Discrimination in Private Employment, Housing, and Public Accommodations** (Up to 30 points). This category evaluates whether a city has an *enforceable* non-discrimination ordinance that *expressly* covers sexual orientation and gender identity and applies to private employment, housing, and public accommodations citywide. In each category (private employment, housing, and public accommodations), cities receive 5 points for explicitly prohibiting discrimination on the basis of sexual orientation and 5 points for expressly prohibiting discrimination on the basis of gender identity. A 3-point deduction is applied for protections that contain carve-outs prohibiting individuals from using facilities consistent with their gender identity. Up to six points will be deducted for religious exemptions that single out sexual orientation and/or gender identity.
 - **Required Documentation:** Copy of relevant municipal code provision(s).
- **Flex: All-Gender Single-Occupancy Facilities** (2 flex points). Cities that require all single-user sex-segregated facilities within the city like bathrooms and changing rooms to be all-gender will receive two flex points. Cities that have a policy designating all single-occupancy facilities within its own buildings to be all-gender will receive half credit. For more information on the importance of equal access to single-occupancy facilities, see our issue brief entitled *Equal Access to Sex-Segregated Facilities* [here](#) or at www.hrc.org/mei.
 - **Required Documentation:** Copy of relevant municipal code provision(s).
- **Flex: Protects Youth from Conversion Therapy** (2 flex points). Cities that enact laws to protect youth from the harmful and discredited practice of so-called “conversion therapy”—any effort to change an individual’s sexual orientation or gender identity—will garner two flex points. To learn more about this dangerous practice, see our issue brief entitled *Protecting Youth from Harmful “Conversion Therapy”* [here](#) or at www.hrc.org/mei.
 - **Required Documentation:** Copy of relevant municipal code provision(s).

SECTION II. MUNICIPALITY AS AN EMPLOYER

- **Non-Discrimination in City Employment** (7 points for sexual orientation/7 points for gender identity). Whereas Section I assesses private employment citywide, this section evaluates non-discrimination protections for *city* employees (public employment). To qualify for credit, the city must have an enforceable non-discrimination ordinance or policy that *expressly* applies to all municipal employees and *explicitly* includes sexual orientation and gender identity.



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- **Required Documentation:** Copy of relevant municipal code provision(s) or city equal employment opportunity policy.
- **Transgender-Inclusive Healthcare Benefits** (6 points). To obtain credit in this category, the city must offer at least one municipal employee health insurance plan that expressly covers transgender healthcare needs, including gender-affirming surgical procedures, hormone therapy, mental health care, and all related medical visits and laboratory services. The lack of express exclusions for these services is not sufficient for credit because this care is routinely not covered. The plan should also ensure coverage of routine, chronic, or urgent non-transition services and eliminate other barriers to coverage including, but not limited to, separate dollar maximums and exclusions for covered dependents. Moreover, all out-of-network gender-affirming care for which in-network care is unavailable should be covered on the same terms as out-of-network coverage for other types of necessary care. For more information on extending transgender-inclusive healthcare benefits to city employees, read our issue brief [here](#) or at www.hrc.org/mei.
 - **Required Documentation:** Copy of city employee health insurance plan benefits booklet.
- **City Contractor Non-Discrimination Ordinance or Policy** (3 points for sexual orientation/3 points for gender identity). This refers to a city law or policy that requires all businesses the city contracts with for goods or services to have an employee non-discrimination policy that *expressly* covers sexual orientation and gender identity. Partial credit may be awarded in instances where the city has no qualifying ordinance or policy but consistently includes a contractor non-discrimination provision in all contracts with businesses, or when a city gives a bidding preference to businesses with a qualifying employee non-discrimination policy.
 - **Required Documentation:** Copy of relevant municipal code provision(s) or city policy.
- **Inclusive Workplace** (2 points). This section assesses whether a municipality has LGBTQ-specific programming to attract LGBTQ applicants and promote diversity in the workplace. Cities will receive credit if they have any one of the following: an LGBTQ employee pride alliance or resource group, LGBTQ-inclusive diversity training for *all* city staff, *or* a recruitment program that actively advertises available positions to the LGBTQ community. For more information on this topic, see our 2018 MEI issue brief entitled *Working Toward a Fully-Inclusive Municipal Workplace* [here](#) or at www.hrc.org/mei.
 - **Required Documentation:** Confirmation from city human resources department of an LGBTQ employee pride alliance or resource group; copy of LGBTQ-inclusive all-staff diversity training; or documentation of recruitment efforts directed to the LGBTQ community.
- **Flex: City Employee Domestic Partner Benefits** (1 flex point). Cities will receive credit for offering equal



benefits to both same- and different-sex domestic partners of city employees and their legal dependents. Even after nationwide marriage equality, it is important to respect the diverse family forms that exist by expanding domestic partner benefits to include all families. For more information on this topic, see our issue brief entitled *The Case for Retaining Domestic Partnership Laws and Policies* [here](#) or at www.hrc.org/mei.

- **Required Documentation:** Copy of relevant municipal code provision(s) or city policy.

SECTION III. MUNICIPAL SERVICES

- **Human Rights Commission** (5 points). Credit is awarded in this section if the city has a community-facing body tasked with eliminating discrimination and educating the public on issues of diversity and inclusion. To these ends, the commission can hold community discussions, screen movies, present panels, take public comment, advise city leaders and develop policies and strategies to make the city more inclusive. The commission must be active and meet regularly.
 - **Required Documentation:** Copy of relevant municipal code provision(s) or link to city human rights commission website.
- **Enforcement of Non-Discrimination Ordinance by Human Rights Commission** (2 points). 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 citywide non-discrimination protections, that commission will earn two additional points.
 - **Required Documentation:** Copy of relevant municipal code provision(s) or link to city human rights commission website.
- **LGBTQ Liaison to City Executive** (5 points). To earn credit in this category, the city must have an officially designated liaison to the LGBTQ community who reports to the city executive *and* whose designation as LGBTQ liaison and contact information is posted on the city website. An LGBTQ liaison serves as an accessible and friendly ear to the city's LGBTQ community and elevates LGBTQ-related concerns to the city executive and other city officials. LGBTQ persons who work in the city executive's office do not qualify for credit in this category unless they serve as the official LGBTQ liaison and meet the above criteria. This role may be assigned to existing city staff. Additionally, the LGBTQ liaison to the city executive cannot double for credit as an LGBTQ police liaison (which is rated in Part IV), given the unique function of each of these divisions of city government.
 - **Required Documentation:** A link to the city website displaying the LGBTQ liaison's title and contact information.



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- **Flex: Youth Bullying Prevention Policy for City Services** (1 flex point for sexual orientation/1 flex point for gender identity). This category awards cities up to two flex points for implementing policies that prohibit bullying on the express basis of sexual orientation and gender identity in all youth-facing city facilities and services. These policies should cover, for example, the city's parks and recreation department, library programs, and any other department or service that incorporate young people. For more on this topic, see our issue brief entitled *Inclusive and Innovative Approaches to Citywide Bullying Prevention* [here](#) or at www.hrc.org/mei.
 - **Required Documentation:** Copy of relevant municipal code provision(s) or city policy.
- **Flex: City Provides Services to/Supports LGBTQ Youth** (2 flex points). Cities should offer services designed to address the unique needs of LGBTQ youth, who often face higher rates of bullying, harassment and rejection after coming out. Cities can earn credit here by (1) directly providing services targeted to LGBTQ youth, (2) funding organizations that provide these services, **OR** (3) providing other meaningful types of support (such as in-kind support, subsidized use of city facilities, etc.) to community organizations that provide services designed for LGBTQ youth. For LGBTQ youth resources, visit <https://www.hrc.org/resources/lgbtq-youth>.
 - **Required Documentation:** (1) A record of the city's support for the qualifying service (ex: A copy of the current city budget showing city funding for a community organization that provides the qualifying service) **AND** (2) Documentation of how the service qualifies (ex: A link to the city-supported community organization describing the service that is targeted to LGBTQ youth).
- **Flex: City Provides Services to/Supports LGBTQ People Experiencing Homelessness** (2 flex points). LGBTQ people – particularly youth – are disproportionately impacted by homelessness. Cities can earn credit in this section by (1) directly providing services targeted to LGBTQ individuals experiencing homelessness, (2) funding organizations that provide these services, **OR** (3) providing other meaningful types of support (such as in-kind support, subsidized use of city facilities, etc.) to community organizations that provide services or resources targeted to LGBTQ individuals experiencing homelessness.
 - **Required Documentation:** (1) A record of the city's support for the qualifying service (ex: A copy of the current city budget showing city funding for a community organization that provides the qualifying service) **AND** (2) Documentation of how the service qualifies (ex: A link to the city-supported community organization describing the service that is targeted to LGBTQ individuals experiencing homelessness).
- **Flex: City Provides Services to/Supports LGBTQ Older Adults** (2 flex points). As LGBTQ individuals age, they encounter unique health, social and cultural challenges. Cities can earn credit in this section by



(1) directly providing services targeted to LGBTQ older adults, (2) funding organizations that provide these services, **OR** (3) providing other meaningful types of support (such as in-kind support, subsidized use of city facilities, etc.) to community organizations that provide services or resources targeted to LGBTQ older adults. For more information on this topic, see our 2018 MEI issue brief entitled *Addressing the Unique Needs of LGBTQ Older People* [here](#) or at www.hrc.org/mei.

- **Required Documentation:** (1) A record of the city's support for the qualifying service (ex: A copy of the current city budget showing city funding for a community organization that provides the qualifying service) **AND** (2) Documentation of how the service qualifies (ex: A link to the city-supported community organization describing the service targeted to LGBTQ older adults).
- **Flex: City Provides Services to/Supports People Living with HIV or AIDS** (2 flex points). HIV continues to disproportionately impact segments of the LGBTQ community. Cities can earn credit in this section by (1) directly providing services for people living with HIV or AIDS, (2) funding organizations that provide these services, **OR** (3) providing other meaningful types of support (such as in-kind support, subsidized use of city facilities, etc.) to community organizations that provide services or resources targeted to individuals living with HIV or AIDS. For resources on HIV and AIDS, visit <https://www.hrc.org/resources/health-aging?topic=hiv-aids>. Additionally, please review the 2019 MEI issue brief entitled *Expanding PrEP Access to Help End the HIV Epidemic* [here](#) or at hrc.org/mei.
- **Required Documentation:** (1) A record of the city's support for the qualifying service (ex: A copy of the current city budget showing city funding for a community organization that provides the qualifying service) **AND** (2) Documentation of how the service qualifies (ex: A link to the city-supported community organization describing the service targeted to people living with HIV or AIDS).
- **Flex: City Provides Services to/Supports the Transgender Community** (2 flex points). Transgender individuals face disproportionate levels of discrimination, stigma and systemic inequality. Cities can earn credit in this section by (1) directly providing services targeted to transgender residents such as employment programs, post-incarceration reentry programs, and violence prevention programs; (2) funding organizations that provide these services; **OR** (3) providing other meaningful types of support (such as in-kind support, subsidized use of city facilities, etc.) to community organizations that provide services or resources targeted to the transgender community. For resources on the transgender community, please visit <https://www.hrc.org/resources/transgender> and review the issue brief entitled *Anti-Transgender Violence: What Cities Can Do* available [here](#) or at hrc.org/mei.
- **Required Documentation:** (1) A record of the city's support for the qualifying service (ex: A copy of the current city budget showing city funding for a community organization that provides the qualifying service) **AND** (2) Documentation of how the service qualifies (ex: A link to the city-supported community organization describing the service that is targeted to transgender residents).



SECTION IV. LAW ENFORCEMENT

- **LGBTQ Police Liaison or Task Force** (10 points). To get credit in this category, the city must have an officially designated liaison from the police department to the LGBTQ community (or a police task force charged with addressing LGBTQ issues) whose designation as LGBTQ liaison and contact information is posted on the police department's website. An LGBTQ police liaison serves as an accessible and friendly ear to the city's LGBTQ community and elevates LGBTQ-related concerns to the police chief and other city officials. LGBTQ police officers, including high-ranking officers, do not qualify for credit in this category unless their service as liaison is part of their official job and the required information is published online. Partial credit will be awarded if the entire police force was trained on LGBTQ issues within the past year.
- **Required Documentation:** A link to the police department website displaying the LGBTQ police liaison's title and contact information.
- **Reported 2019 Hate Crimes Statistics to the FBI** (12 points). To qualify for points in this section, the city must report hate crimes statistics to the FBI in all categories, including sexual orientation and gender identity, **and** either:
 - Report a positive number of hate crimes in any protected category in 2019 (i.e. report more than "0" for hate crimes reported in any one or more of the protected categories), **OR**
 - Report zero hate crimes in 2019 **AND** have reported a positive number of hate crimes in any one or more of the protected categories some year in the past five years of published reports. This second prong is to recognize that while statistically it is possible that no hate crimes of any kind occurred in a small city one year, it is highly improbable that no hate crimes of any kind occurred in a city in the past five years of a published FBI hate crimes reports. For more information on this topic, see our 2017 MEI issue brief entitled *The Imperative of Responsible Hate Crime Reporting* [here](#) or at www.hrc.org/mei.
 - *The 2019 FBI Hate Crime Statistics are available online [here](#).*

SECTION V. LEADERSHIP ON LGBTQ EQUALITY

- **Leadership's Public Position on LGBTQ Equality** (0-5 points). This section grades, on a sliding scale from zero to five points, how pro-equality the city leadership is in its public statements. City leadership includes the city executive, city council, and other municipal government officials. These statements may include joining a pro-equality association such as Mayors Against LGBTQ Discrimination, coming out publicly in favor of LGBTQ rights, supporting LGBTQ community organizations publicly, attending a pride parade, speaking out against anti-LGBTQ legislation, partnering with LGBTQ groups to create solutions to city problems, etc. It also includes comments made during city council meetings or at other public events.



- **Required Documentation:** Links to recent news articles, photographs of city leadership at LGBTQ events, op-eds, Facebook posts, tweets, etc.
- **Leadership's Pro-Equality Legislative or Policy Efforts** (0-3 points). This section grades, on a sliding scale from zero to three points, how actively the city has been pursuing pro-equality legislation and policies. This includes ordinances, city policies, and pro-equality city council resolutions and proclamations, whether or not passed.
 - **Required Documentation:** Links to news articles, copies of introduced ordinances and policies, or a written summary from city officials demonstrating recent pro-equality legislative and policy efforts.
- **Flex: Openly LGBTQ Elected or Appointed Municipal Officials** (2 flex points). Appointed or elected city officials who are openly LGBTQ will qualify the city for two flex points in this category. While the city should seek to employ LGBTQ persons at all levels of government, this criterion specifically addresses city officials who are well-known in the public eye like the mayor, vice mayor, city manager, vice city manager, and members of the city council. A state or federal elected representative from the city or a local school board member does not qualify.
 - **Required Documentation:** Links to relevant news articles, for example.
- **Flex: City Tests Limits of Restrictive State Law** (3 flex points). This category only applies to cities located in states with statewide laws that restrict cities' authority to pass LGBTQ-inclusive ordinances. Such cities that take distinct actions to push back against state limits to their ability to pass pro-equality laws will qualify for three flex points in this section. Cities can advocate against restrictive state law through council resolutions or declarations and engagement with state legislators. For more information on preemption laws, please see the 2016 MEI issue brief entitled *Power Struggles and Preemption* [here](#) or at www.hrc.org/mei.
 - **Required Documentation:** Links to relevant news articles, copies of council resolutions or declarations, summaries of state-level advocacy by city officials, etc.