

# CONNECTING COMMUNITIES

HUMAN RIGHTS CAMPAIGN FOUNDATION • NATIONAL LGBTQ+ LIAISON SUMMIT

OCTOBER 19 – 21, 2021



HUMAN  
RIGHTS  
CAMPAIGN  
FOUNDATION™



City of Atlanta

ATL LGBTQ

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## DEAR MUNICIPAL LEADERS

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**Thank you for joining us for the second Connecting Communities Summit.**

Last year, we established the Connecting Communities Summit to assist pro-equality municipal liaisons and officials like yourselves in addressing the challenges faced by the most marginalized members of LGBTQ+ community.

Local leaders are on the frontlines of ensuring the health, safety and wellbeing of their residents. Particularly for vulnerable communities, municipal governments provide life-changing — and sometimes life-saving — support.

For the second year in a row, municipal leaders and the people they serve are grappling with insurmountable challenges. Amidst a global pandemic and our ongoing national epidemic of racial injustice, LGBTQ+ communities are trying to navigate multiple crises fueled by long standing inequities. LGBTQ+ people — particularly trans and non-binary people, LGBTQ+ people of color, and those who live at the intersection of these identities — face overwhelming economic uncertainty, daily harassment, discrimination and even violence, as well as high barriers to opportunity, resources, and care.

It is rewarding to see leaders like yourselves continue to show up to assist our community and other vulnerable populations. Our municipal partners serve with integrity, courage, and creativity. You have brought all your experience and expertise to bear, working to create change from Atlanta to Sioux Falls.

At this summit, we hope you will learn from your peers and return to your community with a renewed energy for progressing LGBTQ+ equality.

We remain grateful for your leadership, as we acknowledge the fierce urgency of the work ahead. Because we are not out of the woods on COVID-19, and we know we have only just begun to transform our systems so that they truly serve all of us. Our communities are counting on us to help them weather the storm and bring a brighter, more just future to life.

We hope you leave today with new information, new connections and new resources to assist you and your colleagues in your critical work. Today and every day, we are proud to be in the fight alongside you to support the LGBTQ+ community and further greater equality and equity across all areas of life.

Sincerely,

**JoDee L. Winterhof** (she/her)  
Senior Vice President, Policy and Political Affairs  
Human Rights Campaign



## LETTER FROM MAYOR BOTTOMS

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Greetings,

As the 60th Mayor of Atlanta, it is my pleasure to welcome attendees to the second annual LGBTQ Liaison Summit, Connecting Communities.

Atlanta was the first southern city to earn a perfect score on Human Rights Campaign's Municipal Equality Index (MEI) in 2013, and our Administration has continued the city's commitment to LGBTQ Atlantans by achieving another perfect score on the most recent 2020 MEI. Our Administration is honored to participate in this summit to continue learning about the most critical issues facing the LGBTQ community and how we, in partnership with cities across the country, can best address them.

The City of Atlanta looks forward to welcoming the Human Rights Campaign and their supporters to our vibrant city in the near future. Until then, conferences, such as Connecting Communities: A National LGBTQ Liaison Summit, will equip attendees with the knowledge and skills necessary to continue to create positive change in our communities.

I am proud to join you during this exciting event. Thank you to the Human Rights Campaign and all who participate in this event for making our communities more welcoming to the LGBTQ community. On behalf of the people of Atlanta, I offer our best wishes on a successful summit.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Keisha Bottoms".

**Mayor Keisha Lance Bottoms**  
Atlanta, GA

# 10 YEARS OF THE MUNICIPAL EQUALITY INDEX

This year marks the 10th edition of the Municipal Equality Index (MEI). The MEI, published in partnership with the Equality Federation, makes clear how municipalities continue to lead the way for progress by advancing protections for LGBTQ+ residents and visitors.

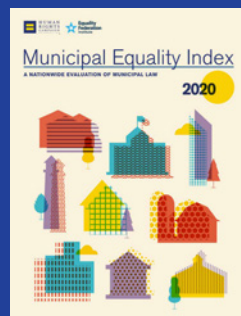
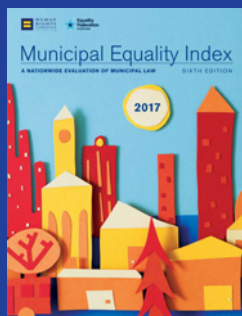
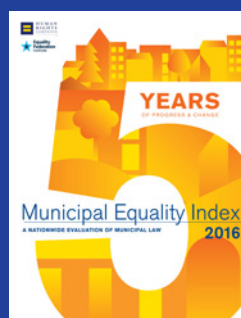
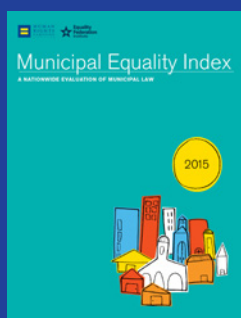
Since 2012, the MEI has examined how inclusive municipal laws, policies, and services are of the LGBTQ+ people who live and work there. Cities are rated based on non-discrimination laws, the municipality as an employer, municipal services, law enforcement and leadership on LGBTQ+ equality.

Cities are in constant competition for residents, visitors, employees, and businesses. A demonstrated commitment to equality through laws and policies that protect everyone, including LGBTQ+ people, sends a clear message that all residents, visitors, workers, and businesses are

welcome and valued. In doing so, city leaders will help ensure the health, safety, and well-being of all residents while encouraging real economic growth that benefits everyone.

The 506 municipalities selected for rating are comprised of the 50 state capitals, the 200 largest cities in the United States, the five largest cities or municipalities in each state, the cities home to the state's two largest public universities (including undergraduate and graduate enrollment), 75 cities & municipalities that have high proportions of same-sex couples (see page 19 for more information) and 98 cities selected by HRC and Equality Federation state groups members and supporters.

For more information about the Municipal Equality Index, including detailed scorecards for each municipality rated, visit [hrc.org/mei](http://hrc.org/mei).



# SUMMIT SCHEDULE

## TUESDAY, OCTOBER 19

<b>1 pm EST</b>	Supporting the LGBTQ+ Community: A Foundation (optional)
<b>2 pm EST</b>	Welcome from HRC Vice President Jodee Winterhof
<b>2:30 pm EST</b>	Plenary Session: Critical Issues Facing the Transgender Community
<b>3:30 pm EST</b>	Guest Speaker to be Announced
<b>3:40 pm EST</b>	Break
<b>4:00 pm EST</b>	Concurrent Session: Building a Generation Free of HIV Stigma
<b>4:00 pm EST</b>	Concurrent Session: Gender-Affirming Care for Your Colleagues and Community
<b>5:00 pm EST</b>	Closing

## WEDNESDAY, OCTOBER 20

<b>1 pm EST</b>	Brown Bag Lunch (optional)
<b>2 pm EST</b>	Welcome from HRC Legal Director Sarah Warbelow
<b>2:30 pm EST</b>	Plenary Session: Utilizing an Intersectional Lens in the Development and Implementation of Municipal Laws, Policies, and Services
<b>3:30 pm EST</b>	Guest Speaker: Phillippe Cunningham, Minneapolis City Council
<b>3:40 pm EST</b>	Break
<b>4:00 pm EST</b>	Plenary Session: Non-Discrimination Laws and Policies
<b>5:00 pm EST</b>	Closing

## THURSDAY, OCTOBER 21

<b>2pm EST</b>	Welcome from Malik Brown with a message from Mayor Keisha Lance Bottoms, City of Atlanta
<b>2:30 pm EST</b>	Workshop Session and Breakouts: Municipal Services for Vulnerable Members of the LGBTQ+ Community
<b>3:30 pm EST</b>	Guest Speaker: Reggie Greer, Senior Advisor on LGBTQ+ Issues at the White House
<b>3:40 pm EST</b>	Break
<b>4:00 pm EST</b>	Workshop Session: Community Conversations with Transgender and Non-Binary People
<b>5:00 pm EST</b>	Closing



# SESSION DESCRIPTIONS

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Tuesday, October 19, 1:00 - 2:00 PM EST

## **Supporting the LGBTQ+ Community: A Foundation (optional)**

LGBTQ+ communities and issues are more visible and present in the national dialogue with each passing year. It is crucial that leaders are able to discuss issues impacting your LGBTQ+ community members effectively and with awareness as you strive to create an environment that is inclusive of the rich diversity present in your communities. This session will begin with a review of some common terms and definitions to give you a foundational language, and then introduce you to some common issues that may arise within LGBTQ+ communities in order to support you in providing the best services, policies, and community-building possible.

Presenter: Rebecca Hershey, (she/her), *Director of Diversity, Equity and Inclusion*

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Tuesday, October 19, 2:30 - 3:30 PM EST

## **Plenary Session: Critical Issues Facing the Transgender Community**

Transgender and gender-nonconforming individuals face disproportionately high levels of prejudice and discrimination in everyday life. This session will lay out a foundational understanding of what it means to be transgender and will identify the most pressing issues facing the transgender and gender-nonconforming community, including the epidemic of violence against Black transgender women and transgender people of color. Attendees will also learn about the work other municipalities are doing to begin directly addressing these critical issues.

Presenters: Tori Cooper (she/her), *Director of Community Engagement for the Transgender Justice Initiative* and Lindsey Clark (they/them), *Associate Director for the Transgender Justice Initiative*

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Tuesday, October 19, 4:00 - 5:00 PM EST

## **Concurrent Session: Building a Generation Free of HIV Stigma**

The epidemic of HIV/AIDS has disproportionately impacted the LGBTQ community and people of color and this epidemic has been exacerbated by the lack of comprehensive sex education, testing, and services. Panelists will share best practices and experiences to help local governments increase education and preventative program efforts, build a network of governments for innovative collaboration, and advocate for treatment and community housing programs that increase their impact on reducing HIV/AIDS epidemic and advance their communities forward.

Presenters: J. Maurice McCants-Pearsall (he/him), MBA, *Director of HIV and Health Equity; Venton Hill-Jones (he/him), Chief Executive Officer, Southern Black Policy and Advocacy Network (SBPAN); Javontae Williams (he/him), Senior Coordinator, HIV Prevention Services, City of Philadelphia; Eric Paulk (he/him), Deputy Director of Georgia Equality; Carmarion D. Anderson-Harvey (she/her), Alabama State Director, Human Rights Campaign*

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Tuesday, October 19, 4:00 - 5:00 PM EST

## **Concurrent Session: Gender-Affirming Care for Your Colleagues and Community**

Despite changes in the law and clear best practices from major health organizations, insurance providers do not always proactively offer transgender-inclusive healthcare benefits as a standard option. This session will provide information about what constitutes best practice transgender-inclusive health care benefits and how Section 1557 of the Affordable Care Act and Bostock v. Clayton County impacts obligations of employers with respect to benefits. We will explore common questions from benefits coordinators, how to navigate pushback from insurance companies, and discuss success stories and challenges.

Presenters: Sarah Warbelow (she/her), *HRC Legal Director; Jamison Green (he/him), World Professional Association for Transgender Health (WPATH); Priya Nair (they/them), Associate Director of Gender Equity, NYC Health + Hospitals / Office of Diversity and Inclusion*

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Wednesday, October 20 2:30 - 3:30 PM EST

**Plenary Session: Applying an Intersectional Lens in the Development and Implementation of Municipal Laws, Policies, and Services**

Every single municipal law, policy, and service — regardless of intent — either further equity for marginalized communities or adds barriers to genuine equity. True equity for all residents cannot be reached without understanding and addressing how intersectionality — the cross-sections of multiple identities — creates compounded challenges and barriers for people who possess multiple marginalized identities. This session will equip attendees with the framework needed to assess laws, policies, and services through an intersectional lens in order to ensure that equity is furthered for all.

Presenters: Rebecca Hershey (she/her), *Director of Diversity, Equity and Inclusion* and Rebecca Marques (she/her), *Texas State Director*

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Wednesday, October 20 4:00 - 5:00 PM EST

**Plenary Session: Non-Discrimination Laws and Policies**

On June 15, the United States Supreme Court issued a landmark ruling in *Bostock v. Clayton County, Georgia* affirming that sexual orientation and gender identity discrimination are prohibited under the sex-based protections of Title VII of the Civil Rights Act. Despite the sweeping implications of this historic decision, it is imperative that local governments continue enacting comprehensive nondiscrimination protections for residents and visitors that are fully inclusive of the LGBTQ community. This session will provide an overview of the Bostock decision, lay out the case for continuing to localize nondiscrimination safeguards, and outline the essential components of effective, robust, and fully-inclusive local nondiscrimination laws. Moreover, attendees will hear directly from local elected and appointed municipal officials who have successfully led the charge for inclusive laws and policies in their respective communities.

Presenters: Cathryn Oakley (she/her), *State Legislative Director and Senior Counsel*; Bob Hagemann, (he/him), *Partner, PoynerSpruill LLP, formerly, City Attorney's Office, City of Charlotte*

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Thursday, October 21 2:30 - 3:30 PM EST

**Workshop Session and Breakouts: Municipal Services for Vulnerable Members of the LGBTQ+ Community**

Local governments' primary duty is to ensure the health, safety, and wellbeing of all of their residents and visitors, including those who have multiple marginalized identities. Attendees will break into smaller groups based on city budget size to learn from each other, collaborate, and share their ideas to address the unique needs and realities of LGBTQ+ people who live at the intersection of numerous marginalized identities, including Black, Indigenous, and People of Color (BIPOC), transgender and non-binary people, youth, older adults, people experiencing homelessness, and people living with HIV or AIDS.

Presenters: Colin Kutney, (he/him), *Associate Director, State & Municipal Programs*; Malik Brown (he/him), *Director of LGBTQ Affairs, City of Atlanta*; Jim Nixon (he/him), *LGBTQ+ Liaison, City of St. Petersburg*; Rick Kavin (he/him), *LGBTQ+ Liaison, City of Trenton*

Facilitators: Amritha Venkataraman (she/her), *Michigan State Director*; Ryan Wilson (he/him), *Associate Regional Campaign Director - Southern U.S.*; Wendy Strout (she/her), *Wisconsin State Director, Human Rights Campaign*

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Thursday, October 21 4:00 - 5:00 PM EST

**Workshop Session: Community Conversations with Transgender and Non-Binary People**

Involving affected communities directly in policy-making conversations is the best and most responsible way to move forward impactful change. Trying to gauge a community's experience and needs without hearing directly from that community increases the likelihood that you'll miss the mark and also leaves you without important buy-in to support your work. This session will discuss the ins and outs of pulling together effective listening sessions with transgender and non-binary community leaders. We'll model some of our own best practices for facilitating productive feedback conversations and attendees will be given practical tools for finding and organizing your own local advisory group.

Presenters: Lindsey Clark (they/them), *Associate Director of the Transgender Justice Initiative*; Track Trachtenberg (they/them), *Trans Equity Project Coordinator, City of Minneapolis*



# HUMAN RIGHTS CAMPAIGN FOUNDATION RESOURCES

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## **The Municipal Equality Index 2020**

### **MEI Issue Briefs**

[Bostock vs. Clayton County, Georgia Supreme Court decision](#)  
[Addressing an Epidemic of Anti-Transgender Violence: What Cities Can Do](#)  
[Expanding PrEP Access to Help End the HIV Epidemic](#)  
[Achieving A Healthier, Stronger Workforce Through Inclusive Paid Leave](#)  
[Working Toward a Fully-Inclusive Municipal Workplace](#)  
[Addressing the Needs of Older LGBTQ+ People](#)  
[Protecting Youth from Harmful “Conversion Therapy”](#)  
[Addressing Systemic Racism Through Municipal Action](#)  
[Equal Access to Sex-Segregated Facilities](#)  
[The Imperative of Responsible Hate Crime Reporting](#)  
[Inclusive and Innovative Approaches to Citywide Bullying Prevention](#)  
[Trans-Inclusive Healthcare Benefits](#)  
[The Case for Retaining Domestic Partnership Laws and Policies](#)

### **State Equality Index**

### **Corporate Equality Index**

### **Healthcare Equality Index**

### **Long-Term Care Equality Index**

### **Welcoming Schools**

### **Transgender Justice Initiative**

### **My Body, My Health**

### **Coming Out Guides**

### **Being an LGBTQ+ Ally**

# GLOSSARY OF TERMS

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**Asexual/Ace:** A term that describes a person who lacks sexual attraction or desire for other people.

**Birth Assignment (Sex Assigned at Birth):** This is generally determined by external genitalia at birth—female, male or intersex.

**Bisexual/Bi+:** A term that describes a person who is emotionally, romantically or sexually attracted to people of more than one gender, sex, or gender identity.

**Cisgender:** A term that describes a person whose gender identity aligns with the sex assigned to them at birth.

**Cis-Heteronormative:** This term refers to the assumption that heterosexuality and being cisgender are the norm, which plays out in interpersonal interactions and society, and furthers the marginalization of queer and gender diverse people.

**Dyadic:** Not Intersex.

**Equity:** Providing tools and resources according to need such that historically disadvantaged communities truly have the same access to opportunities intended to be equally available to everyone. This takes into account the unequal footing traditionally marginalized groups, including LGBTQ people and Black and Brown communities, start off on because of historical and present systems of discrimination.

**Gay:** A term that describes a person who is emotionally, romantically or sexually attracted to some members of the same gender.

**Gender Binary:** The idea that there are two distinct and opposite genders—female and male. This model is limiting and doesn't account for the full spectrum of gender identities and gender expressions.

**Gender Dysphoria:** Clinically significant distress caused when a person's assigned birth gender is not the same as the one in which they identify. According to the American Psychiatric Association's Diagnostic and Statistical Manual of Mental Disorders

(DSM), the term - which replaces Gender Identity Disorder - "is intended to better characterize the experiences of affected children, adolescents, and adults".

**Gender Expression:** External appearance of one's gender identity, usually expressed through behavior, clothing, haircut or voice, which may or may not conform to socially defined behaviors and characteristics typically associated with being either feminine or masculine.

**Gender Identity:** An internal, deeply felt sense of being female, male, a blend of both or neither. Refers to how individuals perceive themselves and what they call themselves. Can be the same as or different from their sex assigned at birth.

**Gender Non-Conforming:** A broad term referring to people who do not behave in a way that conforms to the traditional expectations of their gender, or whose gender expression does not fit neatly into a category.

**Genderqueer:** People who embrace a fluidity of gender identity and often, though not always, sexual orientation. Other terms you may hear under this umbrella are gender expansive, gender fluid, or gender creative.

**Heteronormative:** The assumption of heterosexuality as the given or default sexual orientation instead of one of many possibilities, and that the preferred or default relationship is between two people of "opposite" genders.

**Intersectionality:** The complex, cumulative way in which the effects of multiple forms of discrimination (such as racism, sexism, [homophobia, transphobia, ablism] and classism) combine, overlap, or intersect especially in the experiences of marginalized individuals or groups.

**Intersex:** An umbrella term used to describe a wide range of natural bodily variations. In some cases, these traits are visible at birth, and in others, they are not apparent until puberty.

**Lesbian:** A woman who is emotionally, romantically, and/or sexually attracted to women. This includes cis, trans and other people who are women.

**LGBTQ+:** An acronym for lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender and queer people plus community members who use different language to describe identity

**Non-Binary:** An adjective describing a person who does not identify exclusively as a woman or a man. They may identify as both, somewhere in between, or outside the categories of a woman and a man.

**Pansexual/Pan:** Describes someone who has the potential for emotional, romantic or sexual attraction to people of any gender though not necessarily simultaneously, in the same way, or to the same degree.

**QTPOC:** Queer, Trans, People of Color.

**Queer:** A term people often use to express fluid identities and orientations. Often used interchangeably with "LGBTQ+".

**Same-Gender Loving:** A term coined and used by communities of color instead of lesbian, gay or bisexual to express attraction to and love of people of the same gender.

**Sexual Orientation:** An inherent or immutable enduring emotional, romantic or sexual attraction to other people.

**SOGIE:** Sexual Orientation Gender Identity and Expression.

**Transgender/Trans:** An umbrella term for people whose gender identity and/or expression is different from cultural expectations based on the sex they were assigned at birth. Being transgender does not imply any specific sexual orientation.

**Two Spirit:** An umbrella term and identity within many first nations communities both historically and presently that describes people who live within a spectrum of genders, sexual identities, gender expressions and gender roles.



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