

HAMPTON, VIRGINIA

The Hampton Roads region continues to demonstrate that true progress is achieved through collective commitment and collaboration. Comprising seven diverse cities, our region has established a unified approach to advancing inclusivity, equity, and representation for our LGBTQ+ community through the formation of the Hampton Roads Regional Public Safety/City LGBTQ+ Liaison Collaborative.

What began as an informal partnership among liaisons from the Cities of Virginia Beach and Hampton has evolved into a structured regional convening that meets quarterly and now includes representatives from Hampton, Virginia Beach, Newport News, Norfolk, Chesapeake, Suffolk, and Williamsburg. By adding LGBTQ+ public safety liaisons to the group, we've demonstrated a strong commitment to strengthening trust and visibility for the community. Joining forces with other cities in the region continues to demonstrate that true progress is achieved through collective commitment and collaboration.

Each convening of the liaison group rotates among host cities, allowing participants to highlight local efforts, share innovative practices, and engage in meaningful dialogue around emerging challenges and opportunities. A core component of this collaboration is the collective review and discussion of the Municipal Equality Index Scorecard. Through shared learning, participating cities exchange best

practices, policy recommendations, and implementation strategies that strengthen municipal inclusivity and ensure alignment with national equity and human rights benchmarks.

Beyond policy alignment, the collaborative serves as both a proactive and responsive network. Together, members coordinate responses to potential crises and intervention needs affecting the LGBTQ+ community, while also taking intentional steps to embed equitable treatment, representation, and inclusive decision-making into local planning and governance efforts. This proactive engagement ensures that all voices are represented—not only when challenges arise, but as a standard of practice across city operations and community initiatives. Inviting guests in from community partners like the LGBT Life Center or Hampton Roads Pride also allows the group to hear what services we as municipalities can share with the community.

The collaborative has also established a strategic regional approach to Pride celebrations, intentionally coordinating city Pride events on separate weekends throughout the summer and fall. This scheduling framework ensures maximum participation and support from community members, organizations, and stakeholders across all seven cities. It reflects a shared understanding that visibility and engagement are strengthened when we celebrate one another's progress collectively rather than in competition. It also allows the entire



group of liaisons to participate in each other's celebrations, whether it's marching together in a parade, hosting an informational table, or even having an LGBTQ+ Public Safety job recruiting booth at pride events.

Through this sustained partnership, the Hampton Roads LGBTQ+ Liaison Collaborative exemplifies regional unity in action. Together, we are setting a precedent for cross-jurisdictional cooperation—one grounded in shared values of inclusion, transparency, and equity.

Our work continues to affirm that when cities collaborate intentionally, we not only advance our individual communities but also elevate the collective wellbeing and pride of our entire region.