

# WHAT'S AHEAD

## Scorecard Changes Coming in 2018

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

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

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

### ANTI-BULLYING POLICIES

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

Beginning in 2018, the MEI's assessment of anti-bullying policies will adjust to more closely align with what cities have authority to accomplish directly.

For that reason, the MEI's measurement of anti-bullying policies will be phased out in favor of a new criterion, a task force charged with ensuring that all youth—including at-risk LGBTQ youth—are protected from bullying in all city services, city-supported services, and city facilities. For more detail about youth bullying prevention task forces, see pg. 28-31.

### DOMESTIC PARTNERSHIP BENEFITS

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

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

### ALL-GENDER SINGLE-OCCUPANCY FACILITIES

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

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

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

