

# Q&A

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## HOW WERE THESE CITIES CHOSEN?

This year, the cities rated are: the 50 state capitals, the 150 largest cities in the United States, the 3 largest cities or municipalities in each state, the city home to the state's largest public university (including undergraduate and graduate enrollment) and 75 cities and municipalities that have high proportions of same-sex couples (see page 16 for more information). Future editions of the MEI will continue to increase the number of cities rated.

## DID YOU KNOW THAT \_\_\_\_ ISN'T A CITY?

Yes. A few of the places rated in the MEI are "census-designated places" that are not incorporated as cities. In that case, we rated the local government that actually serves that census-designated place, which is usually the county. This is explained further on page 16.

## 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 programming or actions that apply to some but not all cities). For more information on the scoring system, see page 17.

## WHERE DID THE INFORMATION FOR THESE SCORES COME FROM?

The MEI team conducted the research, compiled it into a draft scorecard, and sent it 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, some cities without positive state law did score 100 points in this year's index.

## 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 laws 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

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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 for the MEI team to consider.

Our team sent out a letter by email and certified mail in April to mayors and city managers notifying them that their cities were being rated. The letter was followed by a draft scorecard sent to the mayors and city managers in July also via email and certified mail.

The feedback window lasted several months. Finally, cities were sent their final scorecards and information about the 2014 MEI in the same way. Equality Federation state groups also were able to review the scorecards and provide feedback to the MEI team.