



WEST PALM BEACH

NEWS RELEASE

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November 9, 2016

WEST PALM BEACH SCORES BETTER THAN PERFECT LGBTQ RATING FROM THE HUMAN RIGHTS CAMPAIGN FOUNDATION

Extra Credit: West Palm Beach earned 106 points on a scale of 100

(West Palm Beach, FL) – On a scale of one to one hundred, earning a score of 106 is pretty hard to beat. That’s the rating given to the City of West Palm Beach by the National Human Rights Campaign Foundation and Equality Federation for the city’s role in supporting LGBTQ (lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender, and queer) equality.

The rating is part of the 2016 Municipal Equality Index. The Municipal Equality Index (MEI), examines 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 the city leadership’s public position on equality. The 2016 MEI is the fifth annual edition and rates a total of 506 cities from every state in the nation.

Only six cities in the southeast portion of the United States earned a similar score. See the City of West Palm Beach MEI report card following this news release.

Under the leadership of Mayor Jeri Muoio, West Palm Beach has continued a tradition of leading the way in LGBTQ equality in a state that, according to the Human Rights Campaign Foundation, is “without LGBTQ-inclusive statewide non-discrimination laws.” West Palm Beach’s score is based on exemplary, best-practice policies such as local non-discrimination laws, providing transgender-inclusive health benefits for city employees, and offering LGBTQ-inclusive city services.

“This has always been and will continue to be a top priority for me. It’s why I have actively pushed for equality laws in our city. It’s why I have periodically ordered travel bans on city-funded trips to states that don’t support the rights of the LGBTQ community. Ensuring equality is not a government issue. It is a human rights issue. I am proud of our city’s record and I look forward to the day when the Florida state legislature follows our lead,” said West Palm Beach Mayor Jeri Muoio.



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“For a quarter century West Palm Beach has led the way on LGBTQ issues. The MEI score is a reflection of a deep, long-standing commitment to equality in a city that has traditionally led the way and not waited for the state or federal governments to catch up,” said Rand Hoch, President and Founder of the Palm Beach County Human Rights Council.

The City of West Palm Beach earned perfect scores in all five categories measured by the MEI, including non-discrimination laws, municipality as employer, municipal services, law enforcement, and relationship with the LGBTQ community. In addition, the city earned six bonus points for providing services to people living with HIV/AIDS, for an enforcement mechanism in the Human Rights Commission, and for having a municipality that is a welcoming place for the LGBTQ community to work.

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2016 MUNICIPAL EQUALITY INDEX SCORECARD

I. Non-Discrimination Laws

This category evaluates whether discrimination on the basis of sexual orientation and gender identity is prohibited by the city, county, or state in areas of employment, housing, and public accommodations.

	STATE	COUNTY	CITY	AVAILABLE
Employment				
Housing				
Public Accommodations				
SCORE				30 out of 30

II. Municipality as Employer

By offering equivalent benefits and protections to LGBTQ employees, and by awarding contracts to fair-minded businesses, municipalities commit themselves to treating LGBTQ employees equally.

	CITY	AVAILABLE
Non-Discrimination in City Employment		
Transgender-Inclusive Healthcare Benefits		
City Contractor Non-Discrimination Ordinance		
SCORE	24 out of 24	
BONUS Municipality is a Welcoming Place to Work		

III. Municipal Services

This section assesses the efforts of the city to ensure LGBTQ constituents are included in city services and programs.

	STATE	COUNTY	CITY	AVAILABLE
Human Rights Commission				
LGBTQ Liaison in the Mayor's Office				
Enumerated Anti-Bullying School Policies				
SCORE				16 out of 16
BONUS Enforcement mechanism in Human Rights Commission				
BONUS City provides services to LGBTQ youth				
BONUS City provides services to LGBTQ homeless				
BONUS City provides services to LGBTQ elderly				
BONUS City provides services to people living with HIV/AIDS				
BONUS City provides services to the transgender community				

*CITY SELF-SUBMITTED TO BE RATED



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2016 MUNICIPAL EQUALITY INDEX SCORECARD



IV. Law Enforcement

Fair enforcement of the law includes responsible reporting of hate crimes and engaging with the LGBTQ community in a thoughtful and respectful way.

LGBTQ Police Liaison or Task Force

10

10

Reported 2014 Hate Crimes Statistics to the FBI

12

12

SCORE

22 out of 22

V. Relationship with the LGBTQ Community

This category measures the city leadership's commitment to fully include the LGBTQ community and to advocate for full equality.

Leadership's Public Position on LGBTQ Equality

5

5

Leadership's Pro-Equality Legislative or Policy Efforts

3

3

SCORE

8 out of 8

BONUS Openly LGBTQ elected or appointed municipal leaders

+0

+2

BONUS Cities are pro-equality despite restrictive state law

+0

+4

TOTAL SCORE 100 + TOTAL BONUS 6 =

Final Score 100

CANNOT EXCEED 100

PTS FOR SEXUAL ORIENTATION  PTS FOR GENDER IDENTITY

 **BONUS PTS** for criteria not accessible to all cities at this time.

FOR MORE INFORMATION ABOUT CITY SELECTION, CRITERIA OR THE MEI SCORING SYSTEM, PLEASE VISIT HRC.ORG/MEI.

All cities rated were provided their scorecard in advance of publication and given the opportunity to submit revisions. For feedback regarding a particular city's scorecard, please email mei@hrc.org.