



Reporting on "Human Rights" Credit Scores

The Societal Impact of Scoring Companies and Municipalities

By

Mark McGee

Most journalists should be familiar with financial ‘credit scores’ that address the likelihood of someone getting a personal loan, mortgage, or credit card. They’ve been around for decades. There is another type of “scoring” that is having a big impact on society, but it has received less attention from journalists until recently. It’s known as “Human rights” credit scores.

Whether you have or haven’t covered this major story, here is some information you may find helpful for preparing stories for your audience.

Background on HRC

Human Rights Campaign (HRC), U.S. political advocacy organization promoting equality for lesbian, gay, bisexual, transsexual, and queer (LGBTQ) individuals and communities. The Human Rights Campaign (HRC) was founded in 1980 by American gay rights activist Steve Endean as the Human Rights Campaign Fund (HRCF), a political action committee (PAC) that endorsed and funded political candidates sympathetic to ending discrimination against homosexuals in health care and employment. [Britannica.com](https://www.britannica.com)

The **Human Rights Campaign (HRC)** is an American LGBTQ advocacy group. It is the largest LGBTQ political lobbying organization within the United States. Based in Washington, D.C., the organization focuses on protecting and expanding rights for LGBTQ individuals, most notably advocating for same-sex marriage, anti-discrimination and hate crimes legislation, and HIV/AIDS advocacy.

The organization has a number of legislative initiatives as well as supporting resources for LGBTQ individuals. [Wikipedia](#)

Under the leadership of its former president, Chad Griffin, HRC has leveraged its position as the largest advocate for LGBT interests to pressure major corporations, law firms, hospitals, and local governments into implementing and expanding socially liberal policies, supporting Human Rights Campaign financially, and withdrawing support from conservative and religious organizations through implicit threats of low scores on its Corporate Equality Index, Healthcare Equality Index and Municipal Equality Index “scorecards.” [Influence Watch](#)

[Open Secrets, Following the Money in Politics — Human Rights Campaign](#)

HRC Scoring

The *Human Rights Campaign* has been scoring companies for about 21 years, and municipalities for about 15. The Corporate Equality Index (CEI) began in 2002 with 319 participants. Seven of those companies have held a 100% score for the entire 20+ years. 842 businesses scored 100% in 2022, “earning a designation as one of the ‘Best Places to Work for LGBTQ+ Equality.’”

Gender identity protections included in company “nondiscrimination policies” increased from 3% in 2002 to 91% of the Fortune 500 companies in 2022. The increase in all CEI businesses increased from 5% in 2002 to 97% in 2022.

The number of major businesses adopting gender transition guidelines “to establish best practices in transgender inclusion” increased from 90 in 2008 to 662 in 2022.

The process towards LGBTQ+ inclusion does not end with nondiscrimination policies. Companies continue to amplify their global LGBTQ+ inclusion efforts through the targeted expansion of equitable benefits and inclusive practices. Globally, companies are adopting critical benefits such as domestic partner recognition and transgender-inclusive healthcare benefits. These companies are also deepening employee engagement efforts by expanding employee resource groups for LGBTQ+ workers and their allies. [Reports HRC](#)



Here are examples of businesses with high HRC scores that may be in your community. You may be able to gain corporate permission to talk with local employees and managers about what the HRC scoring means for them. How has it benefitted them? Also talk with customers for their perspectives.

- Walmart
- Target
- Best Buy
- Kohl's Corp.
- Macy's Inc.
- IKEA Holding US
- Office Depot
- Wayfair
- Neiman Marcus
- Tiffany & Co.
- Lowe's Companies
- Apple
- Samsung Electronics Americ
- Northrop Grumman Corp.
- CVS
- Walgreens

- Hallmark Cards
- Nike Inc.
- J. Crew Group
- Verizon
- AT&T
- T-Mobile
- Blue Cross Blue Shield (several states)
- Humana Inc.
- CIGNA Corp
- UnitedHealth Group
- Ford Motor
- Hyundai Motor America
- Toyota Motor North America
- CarMax
- General Motors
- Tesla Inc.
- Tractor Supply Company
- Bank of America
- Ally Financial
- JPMorgan Chase
- Fifth Third Bancorp

- Capital One Financial
- Franklin Templeton Investments
- H&R Block Inc.
- Citigroup Inc
- Charles Schwab & Co
- Edward Jones
- Liberty Mutual Group
- State Farm Group
- Eli Lilly & Co.
- CUNA Mutual Group
- Morgan Stanley
- Principal Financial Group
- Prudential Financial Inc.
- Raymond James Financial Inc.
- Regions Financial Corp.
- Wells Fargo
- Chevron
- ConocoPhillips
- Marathon Petroleum Corp.
- Shell Oil Co.
- Phillips 66

- Kroger
- Food Lion
- Hannaford Supermarkets
- Instacart
- McDonald's
- Wendy's
- Ben & Jerry's Ice Cream
- Sherwin-Williams Co.
- Kelly Service
- Marriott International
- MGM Resorts International
- American Airlines
- Southwest Airlines Co.
- United Airlines
- United Parcel Service

You can find a larger list of top-rated [2022 CEI participants here](#). You'll find a list of [supporting partners here](#).



The Municipal Equality Index (MEI) began in 2011 -

Since 2011, we have seen city leaders from across the country prioritize LGBTQ+ equality through political initiatives and inclusive social policies. This year, a record-breaking 118 cities earned the highest score of 100 – up from 110 in 2021. The national city score average jumped to an all-time high of 68 points, marking the fifth consecutive year of national average increases. And this advancement was not limited to just one part of the country -- almost every region of the U.S. achieved a higher average score than last

year. Kelley Robinson, President, Human Rights Campaign Foundation

Here are the top-scoring (100%) communities —

- Albuquerque, New Mexico
- Ann Arbor, Michigan
- Arlington, Texas
- Atlanta, Georgia
- Austin, Texas
- Baltimore, Maryland
- Berkley, California
- Bloomington, Indiana
- Boston, Massachusetts
- Cathedral City, California
- Cedar Rapids, Iowa
- Champaign, Illinois
- Chapel Hill, North Carolina
- Chicago, Illinois
- Chula Visa, California
- Cincinnati, Ohio
- Cleveland, Ohio

- Columbia, Missouri
- Dallas, Texas
- Denver, Colorado
- Detroit, Michigan
- Erie, Pennsylvania
- Eugene, Oregon
- Ferndale, Michigan
- Fort Collins, Colorado
- Fort Worth, Texas
- Greensboro, North Carolina
- Henderson, Nevada
- Hoboken, New Jersey
- Irvine, California
- Jersey City, New Jersey
- Juneau, Alaska
- Lambertville, New Jersey
- Lexington, Kentucky
- Long Beach, California
- Los Angeles, California
- Louisville, Kentucky
- Madison, Wisconsin

- Milwaukee, Wisconsin
- Minneapolis, Minnesota
- Missoula, Montana
- Morgantown, West Virginia
- New Orleans, Louisiana
- New York City, New York
- Norman, Oklahoma
- Northampton, Massachusetts
- Oakland, California
- Oceanside, California
- Philadelphia, Pennsylvania
- Phoenix, Arizona
- Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania
- Portland, Oregon
- Princeton, Pennsylvania
- Providence, Rhode Island
- Rancho Mirage, California
- Reno, Nevada
- Rochester, New York
- Rockville, Maryland
- Sacramento, California

- Salt Lake City, Utah
- San Antonio, Texas
- San Diego, California
- San Francisco, California
- Santa Monica, California
- Scottsdale, Arizona
- Seattle, Washington
- St. Paul, Minnesota
- State College, Pennsylvania
- Tampa, Florida
- Virginia Beach, Virginia

If you don't see your city listed, that probably means it scored less than 100%. However, not every city in the U.S. was scored. You can read about how the HRC selected cities under the **How Cities Were Selected for Rating** section.

Impact?

How can MEI scores impact municipalities and their employees? One recent example of the influence of MEI comes from the city of Dallas, Texas -

Employees of the City of Dallas, Texas, must use people's preferred pronouns or risk termination, according to recently publicized documents.

An internal document titled "Workplace Gender Transition Protocols & FAQ" explains the city's expectations for conduct regarding transgender individuals.

The guidelines explain that "gender transition" can refer to a spectrum of situations, all of which are equally protected.

The document reads, "Transition may include 'coming out' (telling family, friends, and coworkers), changing the name and/or sex on legal documents, and/or accessing medical treatment such as hormones and/or surgery."

City employees are "expected to respectfully use the transitioning employee's preferred name and pronouns, regardless of whether or not they 'believe in,' approve of, or accept an individual's right to be transgender or undergo a gender transition," according to the guidelines. [Fox News](#)

You may find an interesting story like this in towns, cities, and counties in your news coverage area. Request copies of similar documents to the "Workplace Gender Transition Protocols & FAQ," then interview government leaders and employees to get their responses. Some may not want to be identified in your report, so be sure to run that by your editor or news director to get their approval for including people who ask for anonymity. You can also interview citizens to get their reaction.



If your “beat” includes state or federal governments, you can do similar stories by asking for those same types of internal documents. You may find it published as part of a government employee handbook. Get a copy of the handbook and you can quote directly from it. If the document is not included in an employee handbook, then it may be available as an addendum or other type of government document. If your request for documents is refused at any level of government, file an FOIA (Freedom of Information Act) after checking with your editor or news director to be sure you are following your

paper, online, or station's guidelines for doing that. The link above will take you to the Federal Government's website about how to file an FOIA.



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