

City of Tallahassee  
LGBTQ Initiatives & Programs

The Mayor and City Commission have had a long history of being supportive of the LGBTQ+ community in Tallahassee going back to 2009, despite state limitations, when the City was the first municipal government in North Florida to offer domestic partner benefits. The following provides some examples of how the City has shown its support of the LGBTQ+ community.

The Mayor and City Commission have been supportive of state legislation to expand discrimination protections to the LGBTQ community in Florida and have been consistent leaders at the local level. In 2009 the City expanded anti-discrimination policies to include sexual orientation and gender identity. The City's mandatory discrimination and harassment training for all employees includes coverage of the organization's protection of LGBTQ employees in its discrimination policies. That same year, the City enacted domestic partner benefits and began providing access to healthcare and other city benefits to registered domestic partners.

In addition to policy and legislative leadership, the City supports LGBTQ+ events and organizations. Since 2016, the City of Tallahassee has been an official sponsor of the annual Equality Florida Tallahassee Gala. Equality Florida is the largest civil rights organization dedicated to securing full equality for Florida's lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender and queer (LGBTQ) community. The City has been an official co-sponsor of the Tallahassee Pride Festival since 2016 and the Mayor has presented Proclamations in recognition of the festival every year since.

To ensure that the City remains responsive to the needs of the LGBTQ community in Tallahassee, Mayor John Dailey created the Mayor's LGBTQ+ Advisory Council in 2020 to advise him and the City Commission on LGBTQ+ issues in the city.



**LGBTQ+ Advisory Council**

In February 2020, Mayor Dailey [established](#) the Mayor's LGBTQ+ Advisory Council, one of the first of its kind in the state. This Council advises the Mayor and City Commission on LGBTQ+ issues in the city.

**Conversion Therapy Ban**

On April 8, 2020, the City Commission unanimously approved protections against the harmful practice of conversion therapy. This ordinance represents is the most inclusive protections against conversation therapy in the state

Below are additional highlights of the City's policies and action taken to support our LGBTQ+ employees and citizens

## HRC Municipal Equality Index

Over the years, the city has consistently rated high on the Human Rights Campaign's Municipal Equality Index, receiving perfect scores a number of times, including most recently in 2020 and 2021. View Tallahassee's most recent MEI Scorecard [here](#).

Additionally, Tallahassee was highlighted in the 2020 MEI publication as one of four Success Stories for our commitment to the LGBTQ+ community and our ability to score well on the scorecard despite being in a state that lacks adequate LGBTQ+ protections.

**SUCCESS STORY:  
TALLAHASSEE, FLORIDA**

As Mayor of Florida's capital city, I could not be prouder that Tallahassee has received a score of 100 on the Municipal Equality Index (MEI). I want members of the LGBTQ+ community to know that Tallahassee is a safe, welcoming, and inclusive city to live, work, and play.

The Tallahassee City Commission has been a leader in our community on LGBTQ+ equality since 2006, creating state legislation, when the City expanded our anti-discrimination policies to include sexual orientation and gender identity and created domestic partner benefits. For years, the MEI has been a critical benchmark for our continued commitment to advancing LGBTQ+ equality, and this year's perfect score represents the work of countless individuals over many years.

We have made great progress, but we know there is still more work to do. With the recent completion of our City's first comprehensive five-year strategic plan, we developed a new set of core values, including promoting equity and expanding diversity. We got to work right away to implement those core values in tangible ways. In 2020, the City Commission unanimously passed the state's most inclusive non-competition ban with the assistance of many members of the public. We also capitalized on negotiations underway in City Hall to build gender-neutral restrooms to ensure our facilities are more accessible to all.

As Mayor, I also took explicit steps to build a more fair, equitable, and inclusive city. Early in 2020, I created an LGBTQ+ Advisory Council, one of the first of its kind in the state, to evaluate City policies and services, identify performance gaps in service delivery, and provide feedback to my office on better serving the LGBTQ+ community. The Advisory Council of volunteer citizens has and will continue to use the MEI scorecard to identify opportunities for improvement.

It is one thing to say we are an inclusive city; it's another thing to actually implement policies and services that help every member of our community feel seen, heard, and valued. The MEI is an important tool in helping us be such a city, and we are thankful for the tireless work of the Human Rights Campaign to provide municipalities with a framework and tools that help us achieve these goals.

Keep an eye on Tallahassee. We scored 100 this year, but we're not done yet.

**JOHN E. DAILEY  
MAYOR**

**Tallahassee is an inclusive community that welcomes visitors with open arms and southern charm. Residents enjoy a high quality of life, which includes awe-inspiring natural beauty; creative, engaging public spaces; and a full-service city government that redefines the standard of public service.**

hrc.org/mei SUCCESS STORY 29

## City Contractor Non-Discrimination Ordinance

As a general practice, the City includes the following nondiscrimination language in all City contracts. This language mandates that City contractors shall not discriminate against any Federal, State or Local protected class, which includes sexual orientation and gender identity as protected classes. The City strives to foster an environment, not only within the City government structure, but also within the City contractors' structure, that prohibits discrimination against all Federal, State and Local protected classes.

*The Contractor shall not discriminate, directly or indirectly, against any employee or applicant for employment on the basis of race, color, creed, religion, sex, age, handicap, disability, sexual orientation, gender identification, ancestry, national origin, marital status, familial status, or any other protected class pursuant to Federal, State or Local law. Such action shall include, but not be limited to, the following: employment, upgrading, demotion or transfer; recruitment, advertising; layoff or termination; rates of pay or other forms of compensation; and selection for training, including apprenticeship. The Contractor shall post in conspicuous places, available to employees and applicants r employment, notices as provided by the City setting forth the provisions of this nondiscrimination clause. The Contractor shall incorporate this provision in all subcontracts for services provided under this Agreement.*

## Inclusive Health Benefits

The City's health care plan is compliant with Section 1557 of the Affordable Care Act which prohibits discrimination on the basis of gender identity. As such, gender reassignment surgery and services related to gender dysphoria or gender transition are covered if deemed medically necessary and all clinical criteria is met.

### The City's Youth Bullying Prevention Policy

Both the City's Anti-Harassment & Discrimination Policy and the Working Conditions Policy apply to all employees, officials, volunteers, vendors, independent contractors, and recipients of and participants in City services, including youth. Both policies are clear about prohibiting harassment and bullying. Additionally, the City's Parks and Recreation Department apply these policies as part of their operating procedures. The Department's webpage reinforces the city's anti-harassment and anti-bullying policy with the following language:

*The Parks, Recreation & Neighborhood Affairs Department is committed to making programs and community recreation settings safe for patrons, participants, employees and volunteers, free from physical and emotional harm. That includes bullying or harassment based on race, color, national origin, religion, sex, sexual orientation, or gender identity which will not be tolerated.*

### City Provides Funding for Programs Providing Services to LGBTQ Homeless

The City provides over \$2.5 million annually to assist non-profit organizations in the provision of services to targeted populations. Included in this annual allocation is funding for Capital City Youth Services (CCYS), a facility for homeless youth. The center manages the Going Places Street Outreach Program which focuses on LGBTQ youth.

The City is also major funder of the Big Bend Homeless Coalition that runs the LGBTQ-inclusive Hope Community Center. The center provides emergency shelter/temporary housing, case management, and support services for families and women moving out of homelessness and into stable housing.

### Paid Parental Leave

In June 2019, under the leadership of Mayor Dailey, a paid parental leave policy was unanimously approved by the commission to include fathers. Now mothers and fathers who work for the City of Tallahassee who meet the criteria under FMLA have up to six weeks of paid leave after birth or adoption.

### Support of Reproductive Rights

October 2021 Mayor Dailey voted to approve Resolution No. 21-R-30 which supports legislative efforts to protect and strengthen Florida citizens' right to abortion, reproductive healthcare, and individual choice to make reproductive decisions about their own bodies.

### Opposing Florida Trans Youth Sports Ban

In May 2021 Mayor Dailey signed onto a letter opposing HB 1475 and SB 2012, the ban on transgender youth playing sports.

### Pride Month Celebration

Mayor Dailey has issued proclamations in April celebrating Tallahassee Pridefest and in June celebrating June as Pride Month in the City of Tallahassee. During the month of June, you can find the Cascades Bridge and Lake Anita lit up in rainbow colors to celebrate Pride Month.

### Tallahassee Pridefest by Visit Tallahassee

The City is a proud supporter of Tallahassee Pridefest. Learn more and to stay updated on Tallahassee Pridefest meetings and events at [TallahasseePride.com](https://www.tallahasseepride.com).