

SUCCESS STORY: FORT COLLINS, COLORADO

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Fort Collins prides itself on being a friendly and welcoming community and is consistently recognized as one of the best places to live in the country. Achieving a 100 score on the MEI is a necessary milestone in making clear to our LGBTQ+ residents and visitors that they are truly welcome, safe and valued in Fort Collins.

A seminal point in our City's equity journey was 2016, when staff formed an LGBTQ Subcommittee to address inequities for LGBTQ+ people in Fort Collins. In 2017, Fort Collins became a member of the Government Alliance on Race and Equity (GARE). In 2019, City Council adopted a priority for equity and inclusion. In the same year, we added the Municipal Equality Index to the set of metrics we use to evaluate our progress and success as both a public service provider and an employer.

Centering equity through these frameworks empowered staff to prioritize service and relationship building for our underserved populations. However, our momentum and progress wouldn't have been possible without leveraging the unwavering passion of City staff who elevate issues and collaborate for innovative solutions with leadership buy-in and strategic guidance and support.



The LGBTQ Subcommittee has since evolved into the City's PRIDE Employee Resource Group. This team of staff volunteers have worked tirelessly for our queer community—in coordination with community stakeholders, City departments and executive leaders—and have been integral to many of our City's inclusive updates over the last several years. This includes revising our purchasing policy to include all queer identities in our non-discrimination clause, establishing liaisons in Police, Human Resources and in the City Manager's Office, and adding a full suite of trans-inclusive healthcare benefits for our employees.

When we began this journey, we knew it was paramount to center the Municipal Equality Index as a framework for our focus. We are incredibly proud to achieve a 100% score and of what we have accomplished in such a short time. We are excited to find even more ways to support and celebrate our LGBTQ+ community in Fort Collins!

**HEATHER COX
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