



City of Arts & Innovation

News Release

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE:

Dec. 22, 2020

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City of Riverside Receives Highest Score Possible in LGBTQ Inclusion Survey

The Municipal Equality Index ranks cities on multiple issues related to inclusivity

RIVERSIDE, Calif. – The City of Riverside received the highest score possible in a nationwide assessment of LGBTQ inclusion in municipal law, policy, and services, marking the second year in a row the City has improved its score.

The 2020 Municipal Equality Index results were announced recently by the HRC Foundation in partnership with the Equality Federation Institute. The ninth annual report and scorecards for cities, including Riverside, can be found at www.hrc.org/mei.

Riverside received a score of 100, the highest possible, an increase from last year's score of 91 and a substantial improvement from the 2018 score of 65. Other cities receiving the maximum score this year include Palm Springs, Rancho Mirage, Cathedral City, West Hollywood, Santa Monica, San Francisco, San Diego, Sacramento and Long Beach.

“Riverside has for years demonstrated that it values inclusivity, and this year's Municipal Equality Index reflects that,” Mayor Patricia Lock Dawson said. “Our city can be proud of its efforts, from the Mayor's Multicultural Forum, to the Inclusivity Statement that guides everything we do, to the annual Carlos E. Cortés Award for Championing Diversity and Inclusivity.”

Other cities in the Inland area include Palm Desert (94), Moreno Valley (60), Corona and Fontana (59), San Bernardino (53) and Ontario (52).

Riverside and other California cities got a boost in their scores from state laws that prohibit discrimination on the basis of sexual orientation and gender identity in the areas of employment, housing and public accommodations. Additional points came from the state's requirement of single-occupancy, all-gender facilities and protection of youth from gender conversion therapy.

Other recognitions were a direct result of actions taken by cities. Riverside, for example, received points for prohibiting discrimination in city employment, ensuring discrimination does not occur in the

city contracting process, for offering benefits to the domestic partners of city employees, for having a Human Relations Commission and for having a LGBTQ liaison in the City Manager's Office.

"Riverside residents can take pride in the efforts their city has made on inclusion," Mayor Pro Tem Steve Hemenway said. "These steps declare and reinforce our values as a city, and it is rewarding to see those efforts recognized."

City officials worked to improve on last year's score of 91 by specifically looking for areas where more could be done, said City Councilmember Erin Edwards, whose election last year as the city's first openly LGBTQ member added two points to this year's score. Riverside's score sheet can be found [here](#).

"I am inspired by all the people in the City who worked to reach a score of 100," Edwards said. "A year ago, department heads, my office, and the City Manager's office met to analyze our 2019 score. Everyone around the table agreed that we needed to actively strive for the best possible results for LGBTQ equity in 2020, and we did! We celebrate reaching 100 this year, and we know that we still have areas for growth. The City remains committed to this work in the years to come."

For the latest information and resources regarding COVID-19 -- www.RiversideCA.gov/COVID-19