

AN NDO FOR GREAT FALLS



The Great Falls LGBTQ+ Center

Our Mission is to enhance and sustain the health and well-being of the LGBTQ+ community by providing activities, programs and services that will empower our community to embrace and support our cultural diversity.



What we do

- Community events/services
 - Potlucks, Bingo nights, holiday celebrations
 - Referrals to clinicians, free HIV testing
- Education
 - Free Safe Zone trainings
- Youth Services
 - Teen socials, peer mentoring,
 - Over 140 suicide screenings in 2019
- Volunteers
 - Farmers Market, MT State fair, Parade of Lights, United Way park clean up days



Why are we needed?

- **40%** of LGBTQ+ people experience **rejection**
<https://www.pewsocialtrends.org/2013/06/13/a-survey-of-lgbt-americans/>
- Queer people are between **2-4x more** likely to experience **PTSD** as a result of **trauma/discrimination**
<https://www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/pmc/articles/PMC3395766/>
- Queer youth are **120X more** likely to experience **homelessness**
<https://voicesofyouthcount.org/wp-content/uploads/2018/05/VoYC-LGBTQ-Brief-Chapin-Hall-2018.pdf>
- Queer youth are **almost 5x more** likely to attempt **suicide**
<https://www.lgbtqihealtheducation.org/wp-content/uploads/2018/10/Suicide-Risk-and-Prevention-for-LGBTQ-Patients-Brief.pdf>



What is a Non-Discrimination Ordinance?

- A local ordinance that protects LGBTQ+ people by creating a regulation that prohibits discrimination against LGBTQ+ people. This includes protections based on both sexual orientation and gender identity.
- Helena, Bozeman, Butte, Missoula, and Whitefish all have successfully instituted NDOs.
- Currently there are no black-letter protections for LGBTQ+ people in housing and public accommodations at the state level. Employment has only recently been protected.

Why do we need an NDO?

- LGBTQ+ people in Great Falls experience discrimination. Currently, there are NO black letter protections for LGBTQ+ people in Housing and Public Accommodation
- Housing
 - The only explicit protections in housing are at the federal level and only under HUD's equal access rule
 - This does not provide protection for the LGBTQ+ community in any other housing or rental settings
 - HUD is currently rolling back protections to allow shelters to discriminate against trans people
<https://www.nytimes.com/2020/07/01/us/politics/hud-transgender.html>
- Public Accommodations
 - If protections existed, they would be in the Civil Rights Act of 1963 or the Montana Human Rights Act
 - These have only provided protection for employment thus far
 - Require going to court for both housing and public accommodations
- Court is Cost Prohibitive
 - Costs for a lawyer in Great Falls ranges from \$150 - \$300 per hour.
 - This is equivalent to 17 -35 hours of work for a person making Montana minimum wage of \$8.50
 - Many LGBTQ+ people cannot afford the cost of a lawyer making this course of action inaccessible
- **The prospect of winning FUTURE litigation does not protect people RIGHT NOW**

Economic Benefits

- Increased revenue to local business from LGBTQ+ community members and allies
- 2019 Helena Pride Weekend
 - 10,000 visitors
 - \$800k-\$1 million dollars revenue
 - Downtown bars, hotels, restaurants
- 2019 Helena Former Felons Ball
 - 30,000 in revenue
 - 3 local bars
 - These figures don't include hotels and restaurant revenue



Municipal Equality Index Score

- Human Rights Campaign
- Rates queer-friendliness of a city
- Important resource for LGBTQ+ people



Inbox

Hello,
 I am newer to Great Falls, and was curious to talk to your organization about the area. From what I gather, it isn't very friendly to the LGBTQ community as a whole. Wondering if you can tell me more.
 Thanks 🙏

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.

Sexual Orientation
 Gender Identity

	STATE	COUNTY	CITY	TOTAL POINTS AVAILABLE
Employment	0 0	0 0	0 0	5 5
Housing	0 0	0 0	0 0	5 5
Public Accommodations	0 0	0 0	0 0	5 5

Great Falls experiences consistent negative press due to our lack of protections for LGBTQ+ people.

The Best and Worst Places in the U.S. to Be LGBTQ

THE MOST (AND LEAST) QUEER-FRIENDLY AMERICAN CITIES MAY SURPRISE YOU.

Worst: Great Falls, Montana



Shutterstock

Municipal Equality Index Score: 0

<https://bestlifeonline.com/best-worst-lgbtq-cities/>

Missoula earns perfect score, Great Falls scores lowest on LGBT inclusivity list in Montana

Billings Gazette Staff | Dec 18, 2015 Updated Oct 17, 2016

Great Falls scores low in LGBTQ equality report

Phil Drake Great Falls Tribune

Published 3:50 p.m. MT Oct. 19, 2017 | Updated 12:01 p.m. MT Oct. 20, 2017



Great Falls received 12 out of a possible 100 points by the nation's largest lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender and queer civil rights organization in its sixth annual Municipal Equality Index report that assesses LGBTQ equality issues in 506 cities nationwide, giving the Electric City the lowest score of eight cities graded in Montana.

The NDO would

- Assure equal access to housing and public accommodations
- Protect queer people from being evicted or denied housing due to their sexual orientation, gender identity, etc.
- Prevent businesses from discriminating
 - Example: prevent a restaurant from refusing to serve a queer couple
- Provide local regulation and local recourse for instances of discrimination
- Increase the city's MEI score and desirability as a home/tourist destination
- Promote economic growth
- Affirm that our community believes everyone deserves dignity, equality, and respect

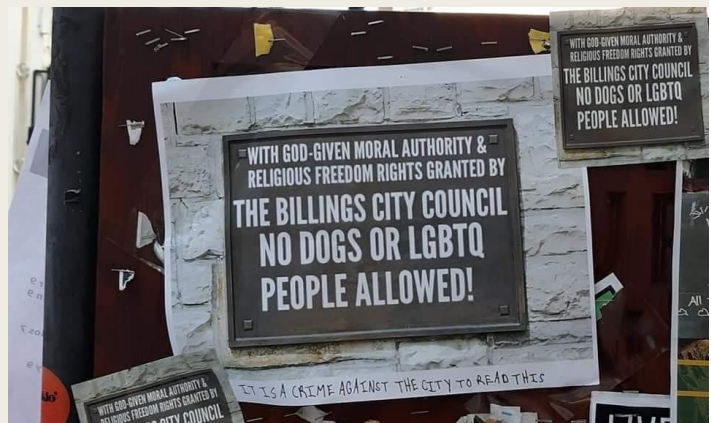
The NDO would NOT

- Affect churches. Religious organizations are already protected by the 1st Amendment
- Affect organizations that require membership. Private membership organizations are not open to the public and do not provide public accommodations
- Change any laws/regulations relating to bathrooms



Consequences of failing to pass an NDO

- Continued negative image of our city
- Open door for further discrimination
- Significant loss of potential revenue



All citizens of Great Falls deserve to feel safe, welcome, and protected.



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