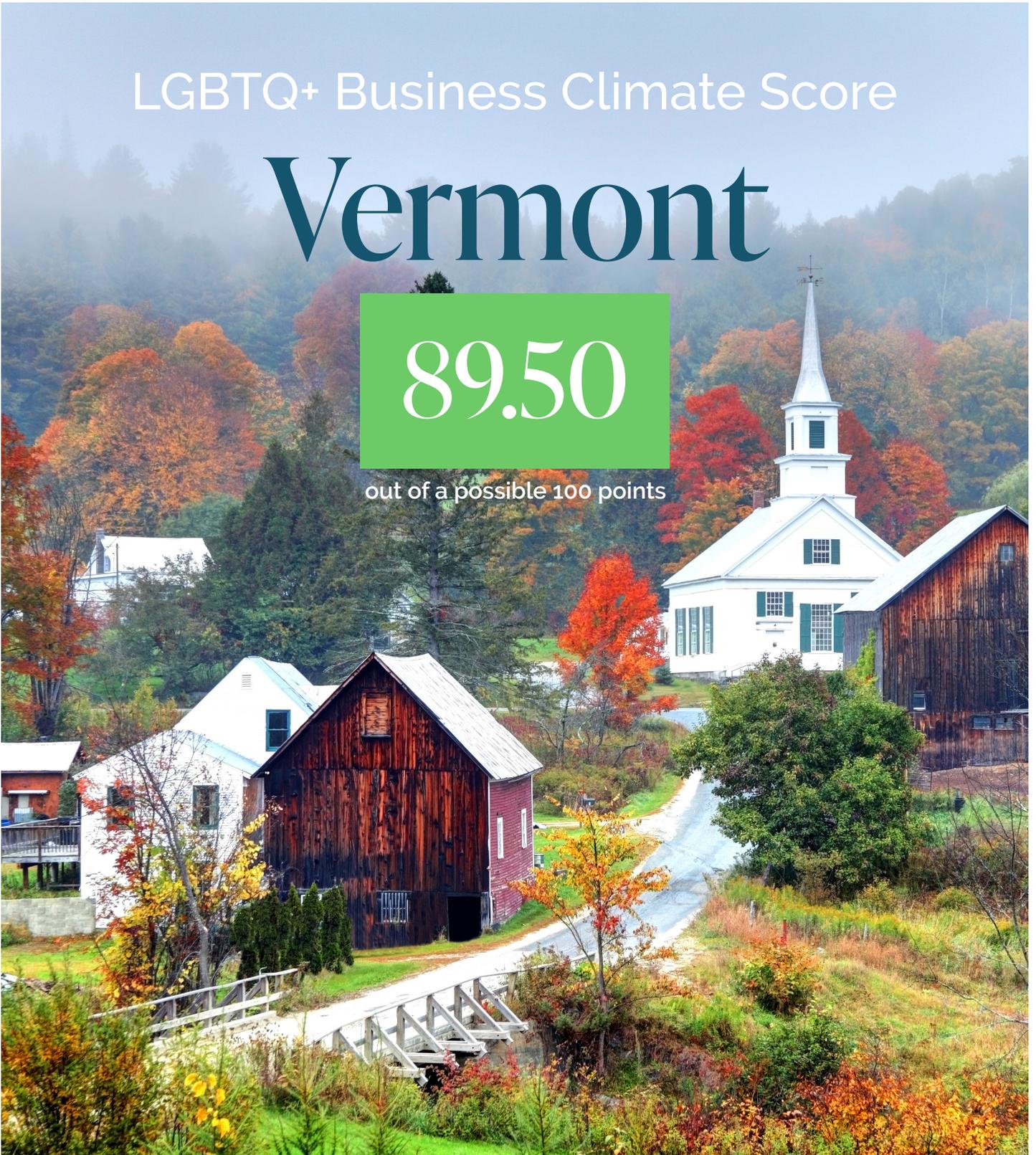


LGBTQ+ Business Climate Score

# Vermont

89.50

out of a possible 100 points



Out Leadership's Business Climate Index for the 50 United States is an assessment of states' performance on LGBTQ+ inclusion. It measures the impact government policies and prevalent attitudes have on the LGBTQ+ people residing in each state, quantifying the economic imperatives for inclusion and the costs of discrimination. It equips business leaders and policy makers with a clear sense of the most impactful steps states can take to make themselves more hospitable to forward-thinking, innovative, inclusive businesses.

## Color Coding



For more context around these scores, and to learn more about the criteria we used to assess how state laws, actions and attitudes toward LGBTQ+ people create business and talent risks, please visit [www.outleadership.com/staterisk](http://www.outleadership.com/staterisk)

# Vermont



### Legal & Nondiscrimination Protection

Vermont has comprehensive nondiscrimination laws inclusive of sexual orientation and gender identity. Changing gender markers on a birth certificate requires a court order but no surgery. Changing the gender markers on a driver's license, which includes a nonbinary option, does not require any supporting documentation at all.



### Youth & Family Support

Conversion therapy for minors is banned in Vermont. Youths in foster care have strong protections against discrimination or mistreatment on the basis of sexual orientation or gender identity. There is no religious exemption that would allow adoption agencies to discriminate against prospective LGBTQ+ parents.





## Political & Religious Attitudes

Vermont's Governor and U.S. Senators consistently speak and vote in favor of LGBTQ+equality and inclusion. Religious organizations are allowed to make employment decisions that "promote the religious principles for which it is established or maintained."This exemption does not allow employers to use religious beliefs as a justification for discrimination.

20/20



## Health Access & Safety

There are comprehensive hate crimes protections for LGBTQ+ people in Vermont. HIV status is not criminalized in the state. Insurers in the state, including Medicaid, must cover trans-related healthcare.\*

18/20



## Work Environment & Employment

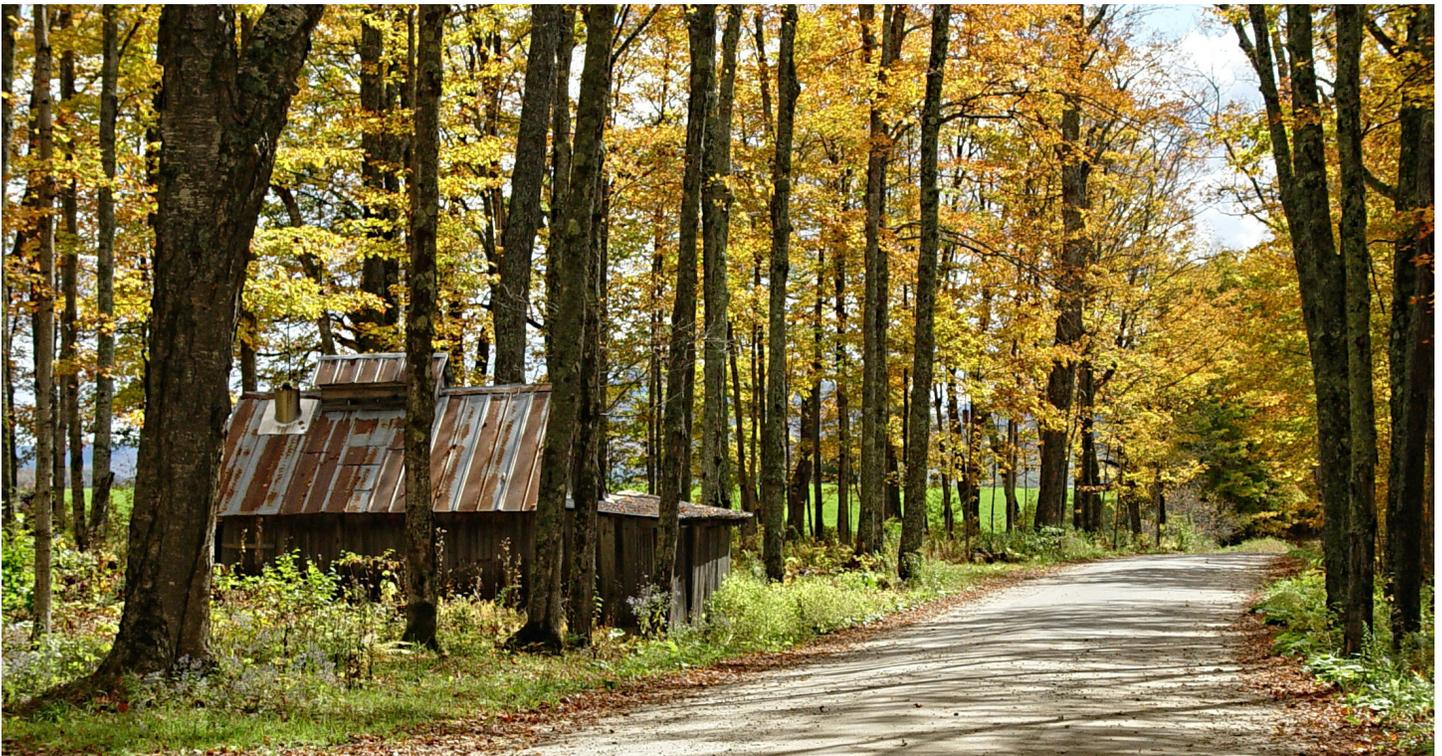
5% of transgender employees in Vermont reported being harassed in the past year due to their gender identity, and 14% report mistreatment such as being forced to use a restroom not matching gender. 27% of LGBTQ+ individuals in Vermont reported food insecurity, almost double the rate for non-LGBTQ+ people (14%). Up to 27% of LGBTQ+ individuals in Vermont reported making less than \$24,000 per year. 7% of LGBTQ+ individuals report unemployment in Vermont, almost double the rate for non-LGBTQ+ people (4%).

13/20

## A Note on Methodology

Download this report to learn how and why Out Leadership created the LGBTQ+ Business Climate Index for the 50U.S. States, with important details about our methodology, including our data standards and practices. NOTE: \*HIV criminalization laws are discriminatory and ineffective. These laws fail to account for advances made in treating and controlling HIV, may deter people from getting tested and seeking treatment, and can exacerbate the stigma targeting people living with HIV and LGBTQ+ people.





# Vermont Talking Points

5.2% of Vermonters identify as LGBTQ+. Conservatively, that's LGBTQ+ personal income of \$1.7 billion – it's a market my business can't afford to ignore.

Vermont's comprehensive nondiscrimination law protects LGBTQ+ people, so the state is already experiencing the positive economic impacts of such policies. One estimate suggests that the state's economy may have grown 3%, or \$976 million, thanks to its inclusive approach. That said, there's still a gap between policy and culture, and organizations in Vermont have a business imperative to ensure that LGBTQ+ people feel welcome in their workplaces.

Vermont has a favorable economic environment for business investment – but taking steps to make LGBTQ+ people feel safer and more included would better enable companies to attract top LGBTQ+ talent.

Millennial and Gen Z consumers prefer to do business with companies with LGBTQ+ friendly advertising and policies – 54% say they're more likely to choose an LGBTQ+ inclusive brand over a competitor – which is why it's important that Vermont continue to foster a business environment where being inclusive is supported.

## Regional Context

# The Northeast

Out Leadership and FCB partnered on original market research into the attitudes of American workers on LGBTQ+ inclusion, which fielded in 2019 and 2020. These briefs as a whole will be updated on an ongoing basis by Out Leadership because we recognize the ever-changing nature of policy on the local, state, and national level.

The Northeast has the lowest percentage of those who are out at work (49.6%). LGBTQ+ workers in urban environments, however, do feel slightly more comfortable talking about their personal lives vs. urban LGBTQ+ workers for the rest of the country (17% more likely than nationwide). Workers in this region are more likely to hear or engage in negative conversations about LGBTQ+ people at work. Particularly for the non-LGBTQ+ group, which is 23% more likely to report observing or experiencing negative conversations about LGBTQ+ people vs the nation as a whole. Despite being more likely to hear negative conversations at work, workers in this region are the least likely to say that they hear this negativity from state leadership. They are 61% less likely to report that leadership in their state talks about LGBTQ+ people in predominantly negative terms. Like most regions, there is a strong difference between urban and rural audiences, especially for the self-rated importance of team diversity when looking for jobs. LGBTQ+ / Allies living in Rural areas care the least about diverse teams when looking for jobs (49% less likely than nationwide). Finally, audiences in the Northeast were 20% more likely to list "Supporting LGBTQ+ Pride celebrations" as one of their top three ways businesses can demonstrate their support for the community.

*Unless otherwise noted, all comparisons for more or less likely are compared to the National results. Regional results are based off of 1,500 respondents (LGBTQ+ and Non-LGBTQ+ responses have been weighted to be age-representative for each audience in each region). National results are based off of 600 respondents representative of each audience (LGBTQ+ vs Non-LGBTQ+).*

States in the Northeast region included:

**Connecticut, Delaware, Maine, Maryland, Massachusetts, New Hampshire, New Jersey, New York, Pennsylvania, Rhode Island, Vermont.**



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# Current Legal Status of LGBTQ+ People in Vermont

## Legal status of the Lesbian, Gay and Bisexual Community

Vermont law bans discrimination based on both sexual orientation and gender identity in public accommodations, education, housing, credit, insurance and union practices.

The state also bans bullying on the basis of sexual orientation and gender identity, including cyber bullying.

By state law, any business or place open to the public must accommodate all members of the public, a protection that includes sexual orientation and gender identity.

Since 1992 LGBTQ+ non-discrimination laws have protected people from discrimination in housing, employment and public accommodations on the basis of sex. In 2007, this law was expanded to include gender identity and expression.

Employment discrimination on the basis of sexual orientation or gender identity is banned in Vermont. However, religious organizations are allowed to make employment decisions that "promote the religious principles for which it is established or maintained." This exemption does not allow employers to use religious beliefs as a justification for discrimination.

The state's Department of Children and Families has a comprehensive policy addressing the needs of LGBT+ youth who come to their attention. The policy outlines ways to assist families with having an LGBT+ child. If the family is not overtly rejecting a child, but they are not as supportive as the child needs them to be, DCF instructs its workers to make appropriate referrals to agencies such as Outright Vermont.

DCF's nondiscrimination policy covers sexual orientation and gender identity.

Same-sex parents are listed as "parent" on a child's birth certificate.

A law went into effect in 2019 making it easier to prove parentage, updating old laws that focused on heterosexual couples.

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There are no religious exemptions available to agencies seeking to prevent LGBT+-parent adoption.

There is no explicit criminalization of exposure or transmission of HIV, though general criminal laws have been used to criminalize HIV status.

The Vermont commissioner of health has the authority to quarantine a person diagnosed or suspected of having a disease dangerous to the public health. This includes HIV.

There are hate crimes protections covering sexual orientation and gender identity.

Conversion therapy for minors is banned in Vermont.

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## Legal Status of the Transgender Community

To change the gender markers on a birth certificate requires an affidavit by a physician stating that the applicant has undergone surgical, hormonal, or other treatment for gender affirmation. This is submitted to receive a court order attesting to completed gender reassignment, and the court order must be submitted to the State Registrar's Office of Vital Records.

To obtain a legal name change in Vermont, an applicant must submit a petition to the court. No publication is required. Individuals must also file a certified copy of their birth certificate, any marriage certificates, birth certificates for any minor children, and authorization to check the sex offender registry.

To update a Vermont ID with a name change, applicants first change their name with the Social Security Administration, then submit a court order certifying the name change. Applicants must notify the DMV of a legal name change within 30 days of the name change.

No documentation is needed to update the gender on a driver's license, and the state has a nonbinary "X" option.

Medicaid in Vermont covers gender affirmation related healthcare, including for minors with parental consent.

Insurers operating in Vermont must cover trans-related healthcare.

State law requires single-user public restrooms to be designated gender neutral.



## Government Statements and Actions

Taylor Small became the first openly trans state lawmaker when she won election to the house in 2020.

In May 2021, the state banned the "gay panic defense."

Christine Hallquist became the first outwardly transgender candidate to win a major party endorsement for Governor in 2018. (She lost the general election.) In 2019, an act signed into law created a working group to make recommendations to the state about how schools can be more inclusive of minority groups – including LGBT+people – in their curricula.

U.S. Senator Bernie Sanders is one of a few lawmakers who puts a transgender flag outside his office in March to mark Trans Visibility Day.

# Impact of LGBTQ+ Discrimination on Business Talent

**1** NO RISK

**2** LOW RISK

**3** MODERATE RISK

**4** NOTABLE RISK

**5** HIGH RISK

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## Brand Risk

**1** NO RISK

Companies incur no brand risk by doing business in Vermont, which has comprehensive laws protecting LGBTQ+ people and a correspondingly great reputation.

## Client Risk

**1** NO RISK

There's no reason to believe that LGBTQ+ or strong ally clients would pull business from companies operating in Vermont, which has consistently helped lead the way on LGBTQ+ inclusion.

## Talent Risk

**1** NO RISK

Vermont has comprehensive nondiscrimination laws and protections, making it a state top LGBTQ+ talent would prioritize.

## Marketing Risk

**1** NO RISK

There's no risk in marketing to the LGBTQ+ community in Vermont.

## Future Risk

**1** NO RISK

Vermont is one of the few states that has seen no anti-LGBTQ+ bills filed in recent years. The state has statewide nondiscrimination protections and we do not see any risk of a negative event in the foreseeable future.

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# Socio-cultural Environment of LGBTQ+ People in Vermont

## Status of LGBTQ+ Organizing and Community

Burlington Pride celebrated its 36th anniversary in 2019. The event went digital due to COVID-19 in 2020.

Vermont is the state with the highest percentage of people identifying as LGBTQ+.

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## Cultural Views of the LGBTQ+ Community

57% of Vermonters oppose religious exemptions that would allow small businesses to discriminate against LGBTQ+ people.

71% of Vermonters support LGBTQ+ nondiscrimination protections.



# Partners

Our partnerships make our work possible. The first State LGBTQ+ Business Climate Index released in 2019 was funded by a grant from the Gill Foundation. The Index is based on data graciously shared by the Movement Advancement Project and the Williams Institute. Ropes & Gray is our pro bono legal partner for the CEO Business Briefs globally, and their research informs this Index. FCB partnered with us to conduct original market research into American attitudes toward LGBTQ+ workplace inclusion, informing the Regional Context section of the State CEO Briefs. America Competes supported the development of the scoring for the Risk Assessments, particularly for the Future Risk score.

