

Louisiana

LGBTQ+ Business Climate Score

out of a possible 100 points

31.50

HIGH RISK

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 outleadership.com/driving-equality/us-state-ceo-briefs/

Louisiana



Legal & Nondiscrimination Protection

The Legal and Nondiscrimination Protections section includes two subsections: The **Personal Legal Scale** assesses the state's laws directly impacting LGBTQ+ individuals. This includes processes for transgender people to change their gender markers on birth certificates and driver's licenses, as well as protections for individuals in housing, the workplace, public spaces, foster care, and more. **Two Nondiscrimination Protections Scales** assess the extent to which LGBTQ+ people are protected under state law. One evaluates nondiscrimination laws related to employment and the other evaluates any nondiscrimination laws related to housing, public accommodations, credit and lending.



Youth & Family Support

The Youth and Family Support section contains three subsections. The **Family Support Scale** measures how supportive the state is of LGBTQ+ people who are in or wish to start families. Elements of this scale include: the percentage of LGBTQ+ families raising children, and whether state family leave laws cover same-gender couples and allow workers to care for the children they are raising. The **Children and Youth Scale** assesses the resources available to LGBTQ+ children and youth in the state, including whether the state has non-discrimination laws and policies for LGBTQ+ students. The **Targeted Laws** section evaluates states on whether they ban discussion of same-gender marriage in schools, and whether they ban conversion therapy for minors.





Political & Religious Attitudes

The Political and Religious Attitudes section contains two subsections. Taken together, these scales assess the tone of the state's conversation around LGBTQ+ rights. The **Religious Protections Scale** assesses the extent and impacts of a state's constitutional or statutory religious exemption laws, and whether state law provides for targeted religious exemption from laws governing child welfare services, private wedding services, and the provision of medical care. The **State Leadership Scores** are Out Leadership's unique measures evaluating the state's most senior elected officials – the Governor and the two U.S. Senators – and assessing how they've represented their views of LGBTQ+ people in speeches and in their political platforms, and in terms of how they've acted with regard to laws impacting LGBTQ+ equality.

7.6/20



Health Access & Safety

The Health Access and Safety section contains two subsections. The **Health Scale** assesses LGBTQ+ people's access to insurance and medical care in each state, giving particular emphasis to the most economically precarious and vulnerable members of the community. The **Safety Scale** is based on two significant laws protecting or criminalizing behaviors affecting LGBTQ+ people. It asks whether the state protects LGBTQ+ people in its hate crime laws. It also assesses whether the state criminalizes exposure to or transmission of HIV.

6.5/20



Work Environment & Employment

The Work Environment and Employment section contains two subsections. The **Work Environment Scale** assesses transgender individuals' experiences at work, including incidences of verbal harassment, sexual assault, and other mistreatment. The **Employment Scale** is based on assessments of LGBTQ+ employment in the state. This scale includes the percentage of LGBTQ+ people making less than \$24,000 annually (approximately the current Federal poverty line), and the differences in unemployment rates and food insecurity between LGBTQ+ and non-LGBTQ+ identified individuals.

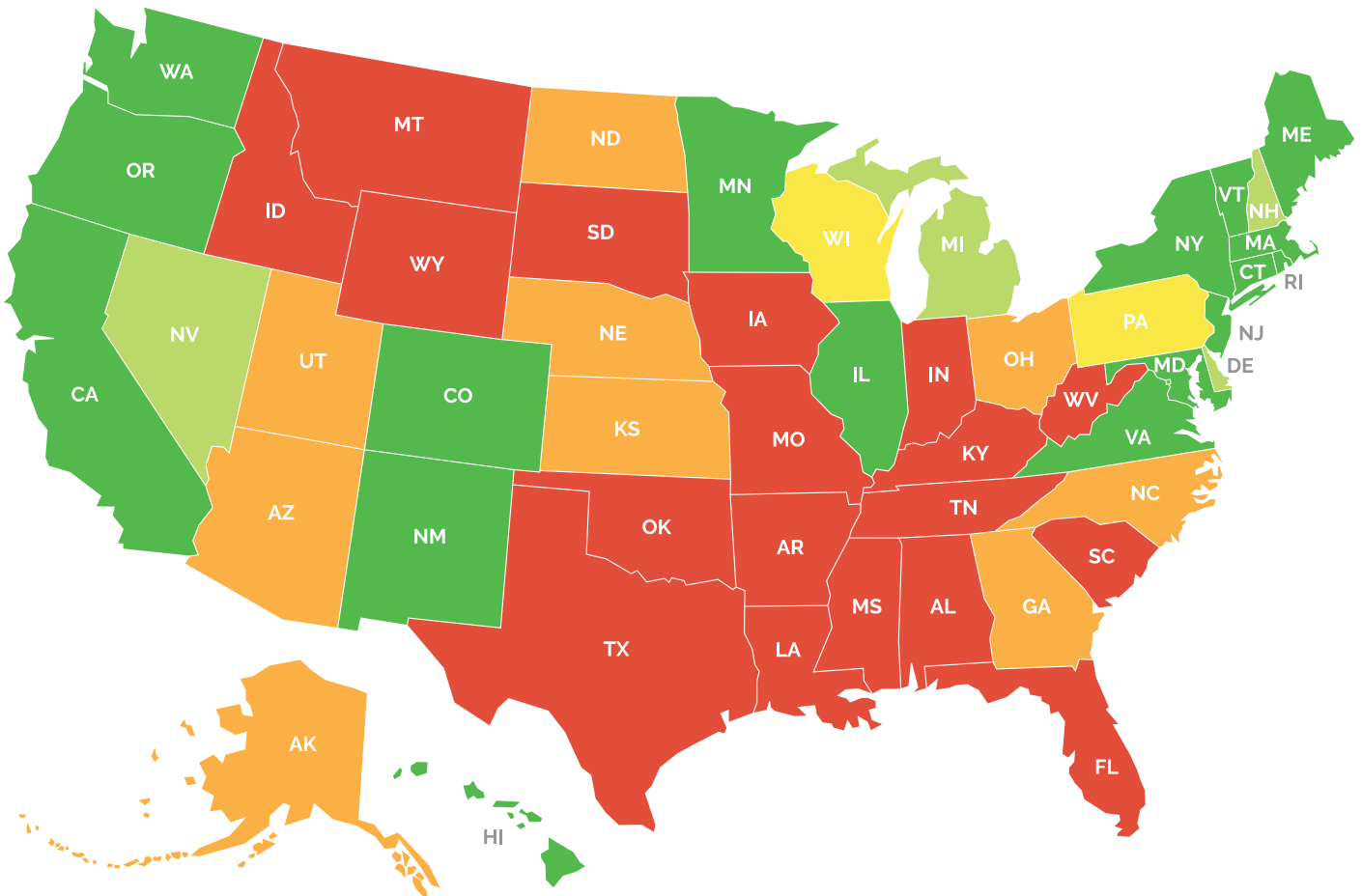
10.0/20

A Note on Methodology

Download this report to learn how and why Out Leadership created the LGBTQ+ Business Climate Index for the 50 U.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.

United States Heat Map

The legal and cultural situation for LGBTQ+ people varies widely across the country. This map, based on each state's total Business Climate Score, illustrates the states where LGBTQ+ people are empowered to participate more fully and openly in the economy, and the states that are lagging behind.





Louisiana Talking Points

5.7% of Louisianans identify as LGBTQ+. Conservatively, that's LGBTQ+ personal income of \$8.4 billion – it's a market my business can't afford to ignore.

When LGBTQ+ employees don't feel welcome at work, they're less likely to stay, and employee turnover is a drag on the state economy and business competitiveness. It costs companies an average of \$8,318 to replace an employee in Louisiana, and it can cost up to \$443,274 to replace senior executives. Louisiana and the businesses operating there have strong financial incentives to create inclusive workplaces in the interest of keeping these costs down.

Nondiscrimination policies allow LGBTQ+ people to participate more fully in the economy.

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 in Louisiana to foster a business environment where being inclusive is supported.

Increased hostile policy toward the LGBTQ+ community will have a negative impact on companies ability to attract and retain top talent.

State leaders should set a welcoming, not a stigmatizing tone.

Louisiana has a regressive attitude towards trans-inclusive health coverage. Treating trans people as unequal makes us look complicit if we choose to do business in Louisiana – equality is good for everyone's bottom line.

Regional Context

The Southeast

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.

LGBTQ+ workers in the Southeast are the most likely to be out at work (54.4%), but they are also 25% more likely to feel that covering behaviors are important for work place success. More broadly, non LGBTQ+ workers in this region preferred for businesses to demonstrate their support for the LGBTQ+ community using internal initiatives (like hiring more LGBTQ+ employees and creating more inclusive HR policies). However, this group was 57% less likely to approve of more public demonstrations of support (like withdrawing sponsorship from sporting events in less inclusive areas). LGBTQ+ workers in this region are 39% more likely to support inclusive businesses and 17% more likely to consider LGBTQ+ friendliness in making spending decisions compared to the non-LGBTQ+ workers nationwide. However, there is a perception that state leadership speaks about the LGBTQ+ community in a more negative way (39% more likely than nationwide), which could partially explain why LGBTQ+ workers in the Southeast are 19% more likely to say that they would be open to moving to a state with better LGBTQ+ support.

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 Southeast region included: Alabama, Arkansas, Kentucky, Florida, Georgia, Louisiana, Mississippi, North Carolina, South Carolina, Tennessee, Virginia, and West Virginia.

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

5

HIGH RISK

Companies incur high risk to their brands by operating in Louisiana, where there are no statewide LGBTQ+ inclusive nondiscrimination protections and the governor was blocked from extending them to public employees at the state level. The state's senators have negative voting records on LGBTQ+ issues, and stand vocally against LGBTQ+ interests.

Client Risk

5

HIGH RISK

There is notable risk of LGBTQ+ or strong ally clients pulling their business from companies operating in Louisiana in light of the state's business climate and reputation.

Talent Risk

4

NOTABLE RISK

LGBTQ+ professionals are likely to consider Louisiana's legal and social environment unfriendly. There is no statewide LGBTQ+ inclusive nondiscrimination law, which makes working in North Carolina unattractive to LGBTQ+ talent.

Marketing Risk

5

HIGH RISK

There is notable risk involved in marketing to the LGBTQ+ community in Louisiana, where there is no statewide LGBTQ+ inclusive nondiscrimination law, gender identity is not protected under state hate crimes legislation, no statewide restrictions exist on the practice of conversion therapy, and religious freedom laws that consider institutions as people are in place.

Future Risk

1

NO RISK

Louisiana has a divided government, and recent years have seen a dwindling number of discriminatory bills filed. We do not see risk of a negative event in the foreseeable future.

Current Legal Status of LGBTQ+ People in Louisiana

Legal status of the Lesbian, Gay and Bisexual Community

Louisiana does not have statewide non-discrimination laws inclusive of sexual orientation or gender identity. New Orleans and Shreveport have those protections; Alexandria, Baton Rouge, Lafayette, Lake Charles, and Jefferson offer similar protections only to public employees.

Children in foster care are protected from discrimination based on sexual orientation but not gender identity.

Teachers in Louisiana are prohibited from discussing LGBTQ+ topics in a positive manner.

There are no laws restricting same-sex married couples from adopting. The state had a prohibition in place, but it was ruled unconstitutional in 2014. Under current Louisiana law, same-sex married couples must be able to adopt under the same terms and conditions of opposite sex married couples.

Louisiana does not have a law allowing adoption agencies to discriminate based on religious beliefs, but it also does not have a prohibition on adoption agencies discriminating based on religious beliefs.

A 2016 Louisiana law prohibits surrogacy contracts for same-sex couples.

Louisiana has a Religious Freedom Restoration Act that prohibits the government from substantially burdening a person's exercise of religion unless it is in furtherance of a compelling governmental interest and is the least restrictive means of furthering such interest. A "person" includes an individual, a church, association of churches or religious order, and nonprofit religious organizations. The law allows religious freedom to be used as a defense in lawsuits between private citizens.

In Louisiana, knowingly exposing another person to HIV is punishable by up to 10 years in prison (with or without hard labor) and/or a \$5,000 fine. If the plaintiff is a first responder, the penalties rise to 11 years and/or \$6,000. Defendants must also register as sex offenders.

Louisiana's hate crime law includes sexual orientation and perceived sexual orientation, but does not include gender identity.

Louisiana does not have a ban on conversion therapy.

Legal Status of the Transgender Community

In July of 2023, the Louisiana lawmakers overrode Governor Edwards' veto to enact HB 648, an extreme gender-affirming care ban.

To update the gender marker on a birth certificate, an individual must receive a court order, and the court requires proof of surgery. After receiving a court order, the person must apply for a new birth certificate by submitting a certified copy of the court order, a copy of the original birth certificate, a copy of a driver's license or photo ID, and a check or money order to Louisiana Vital Records.

To update the gender marker on a driver's license, an individual must submit a statement signed by a physician stating that the individual has completed a successful gender change or reassignment (the word "surgery" isn't used in the policy).

Government Statements and Actions

While in July of 2023, Democratic Governor John Bel Edwards vetoed a "Don't Say Gay" bill and a pronoun restriction bill, new versions of those bills have been proposed and are expected to be signed by Governor Jeff Landry. Landry, who had served as Attorney General since 2016, was elected Governor in 2023. As Attorney General, he was a major proponent of the state's abortion ban and challenged both then-Governor Edwards and President Biden on LGBTQ+ issues.

A state senate bill that banned trans girls from playing girl's sports became law in June 2022 after Democratic Gov. John Bel Edwards did not take action on the bill.

Peyton Rose Michelle became the first openly trans woman elected official – and the second openly trans person overall – in Louisiana history when she won a seat on the Democratic State Central Committee for the 46th District A in the 2020 elections.

Shortly after taking office, Edwards rescinded an executive order from predecessor Bobby Jindal that allowed state agencies and businesses that get public funding to deny services to LGBTQ+ people on religious grounds.

Socio-cultural Environment of LGBTQ+ People in Louisiana

Status of LGBTQ+ Organizing and Community

A bill proposed in 2021 that would have barred minors from receiving gender-affirming care without both parents' written consent was dropped after a large public outcry. 400 people voiced opposition to the bill and zero voiced support.

New Orleans is regularly deemed one of the most welcoming cities in America for LGBTQ+ people.

New Orleans's annual LGBTQ+ event, Southern Decadence, will celebrate its 52nd year in 2023. It regularly attracts upwards of 250,000 attendees.

The city also had a pride parade that was to celebrate its 10th anniversary in 2020. After that year's event was canceled by COVID-19, it was disbanded.

Cultural Views of the LGBTQ+ Community

51% of Louisiana residents oppose allowing small businesses to discriminate against LGBTQ+ people on religious grounds.

63% of Louisianans favor LGBTQ+ discrimination protections.

In April 2019, a straight Mississippi man was beaten so severely his jaw was broken in two places because attackers thought he was gay.



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.

