

LGBTQ+ Business Climate Score

out of a possible 100 points

88.47

NO RISK

Illinois

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

NO RISK	LOW RISK	MODERATE RISK	NOTABLE RISK	HIGH RISK
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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/

Illinois



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.

18.8_{/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.

18.0_{/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.

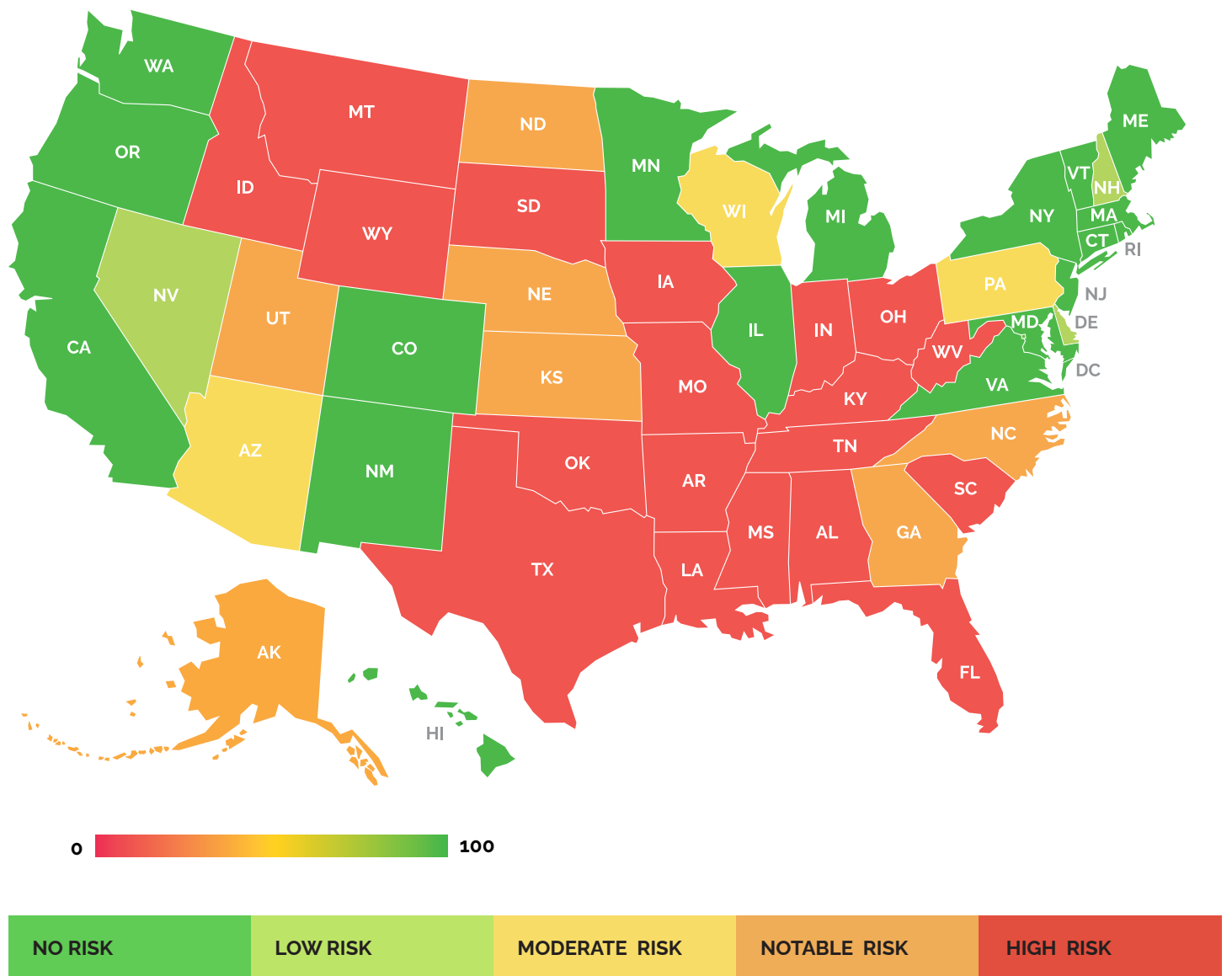
13.0_{/20}

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.





Illinois

Talking Points

4.5% of Illinois residents identify as LGBTQ+. Conservatively, that's LGBTQ+ personal income of \$21.8 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 \$10,482 to replace an employee in Illinois, and it can cost up to \$490,000 to replace senior executives. Illinois and the businesses operating there have strong financial incentives to create inclusive workplaces in the interest of keeping these costs down.

Illinois's nondiscrimination laws protect 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 \$24.67 billion, thanks to its inclusive approach. That said, there's still a gap between policy and culture, and organizations in Illinois have a business imperative to ensure that LGBTQ+ people feel welcome in their workplaces.

Illinois 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 Illinois continue to foster a business environment where being inclusive is supported

Regional Context

The Midwest

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.

Only 50.8% of LGBTQ+ workers in the Midwest are out at work. They are only slightly more comfortable being open with their managers than other regions (14% more likely), but they are the least likely to cover their identity at work (17% less likely than nationwide). This could be due to the Midwest having the lowest rates for observing microaggressions (23% less likely) and hearing or engaging in negative conversations on average. However, workers in this region do not typically go out of their way to do business with inclusive companies (21% less likely than the nation as a whole). This is primarily driven by those who live in more rural areas where respondents were 85% less likely to do business with companies that are inclusive.

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 Midwest region included: Illinois, Indiana, Iowa, Kansas, Michigan, Minnesota, North Dakota, Missouri, Nebraska, Ohio, South Dakota, and Wisconsin.

Illinois: 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 risk to their brands by operating in Illinois, where there are comprehensive LGBTQ+ inclusive nondiscrimination protections and the state's governor and senators have strong pro-LGBTQ+ records.

Client Risk

1

NO RISK

There is no risk of LGBTQ+ or strong ally clients pulling their business from companies operating in Illinois in light of the state's business climate or reputation.

Talent Risk

1

NO RISK

Illinois has strong legal protections for LGBTQ+ people, making working there attractive to LGBTQ+ professionals.

Marketing Risk

1

NO RISK

There is no risk involved in marketing to the LGBTQ+ community in Illinois.

Future Risk

1

NO RISK

While Illinois sees the occasionally discriminatory bill filed, these bills have not become law. The state has state wide nondiscrimination protections and we do not see any risk of a negative event in the foreseeable future.



Current Legal Status of LGBTQ+ People in Illinois

Legal status of the Lesbian, Gay and Bisexual Community

The Illinois Human Rights Act protects sexual orientation and gender identity from discrimination in employment and accommodations in any company with one or more employees. Certain religious organizations remain exempt.

The Illinois Foster Child and Youth Bill of Rights states that all youths in foster care have the right to be free from discrimination or harassment due to their sexual orientation or gender identity.

In 2023, The Governor passed LGBTQ+ inclusive school curriculum Bill into law. In August 2019, Governor J.B. Pritzker signed an expansion to the Jury Act to include sexual orientation as a protected category for excluding an otherwise qualified person from jury selection.

Illinois does not provide state funding to adoption agencies that discriminate against same-sex couples on religious grounds.

Illinois has a religious exemption law, which says the state can't "substantially burden" a person's exercise of religion unless it is the least restrictive means of furthering a compelling governmental interest.

In August of 2021 the HIV Criminal Transmission law was repealed and people with HIV can no longer be criminally prosecuted for exposing someone else to the virus without their knowledge.

Hate crime protections extend to sexual orientation and gender identity.

Conversion therapy for minors was banned in 2015.

Public schools must include LGBTQ+ history in their curricula as of August 2019.

As of 2020, LGBTQ+ senior citizens will be considered priority for aging programming, a change that will also make it illegal to discriminate in nursing homes on the bases of sexual orientation or gender identity.

Legal Status of the Transgender Community

Transgender people can amend the gender markers on birth certificates by submitting an affidavit and a form signed by a physician or therapist.

Individuals can change gender markers on a driver's license by filling out a form. Illinois Medicaid includes coverage for transgender care, including hormone treatment and surgery.

Illinois prohibits insurance companies from excluding transgender healthcare from coverage.

In July 2019, Governor Pritzker signed a bill requiring that, effective January 1 2020, all single-stall bathrooms in the state be deemed gender-neutral. In 2021, the state house passed a bill that would allow businesses to open multi-person, all-gender bathrooms.

Illinois approved a nonbinary option for state IDs and driver's licenses in 2019, but it can't be instituted until the state's system for issuing the cards is updated, which could take until 2024.

Government Statements and Actions

Governor J.B. Pritzker has been steadily signing bills expanding the rights of LGBTQ+ people in Illinois since taking office in January 2019.

Illinois continues to have multiple religious exemption laws on the books including for medical professionals. This can limit access and affordability of healthcare for LGBTQ+ individuals.

Currently, the ACLU is tracking 13 anti-LGBTQ bills in Illinois.



Socio-cultural Environment of LGBTQ+ People in Illinois

Status of LGBTQ+ Organizing and Community

2025 marks the 54th annual Chicago Pride Parade.

7.5% of Chicago's population identifies as LGBTQ+. That's about 3% higher than the national and the state average.



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.

