

A BUSINESS GUIDE TO

LGBTQ+ INCLUSIVE TRAVEL



APRIL 2025

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The Massachusetts LGBT Chamber of Commerce extends our gratitude to the staff, fellows, and volunteers who made this guide possible:

Clare Thomsen, Graduate Research Fellow
and
Kati Wilkes, Volunteer

Thank you for your work and wisdom!

INTRODUCTION

Welcome to the Massachusetts LGBT Chamber of Commerce's 2025 Guide to LGBTQ+ Inclusive Travel. With the rise in anti-LGBTQ+ rhetoric, legislation, and policies across the United States, it has become increasingly important for businesses and employees to remain informed, and recognize how these changes in climate for LGBTQ+ community affect every aspect of an organization, its staff, and business-related travel.

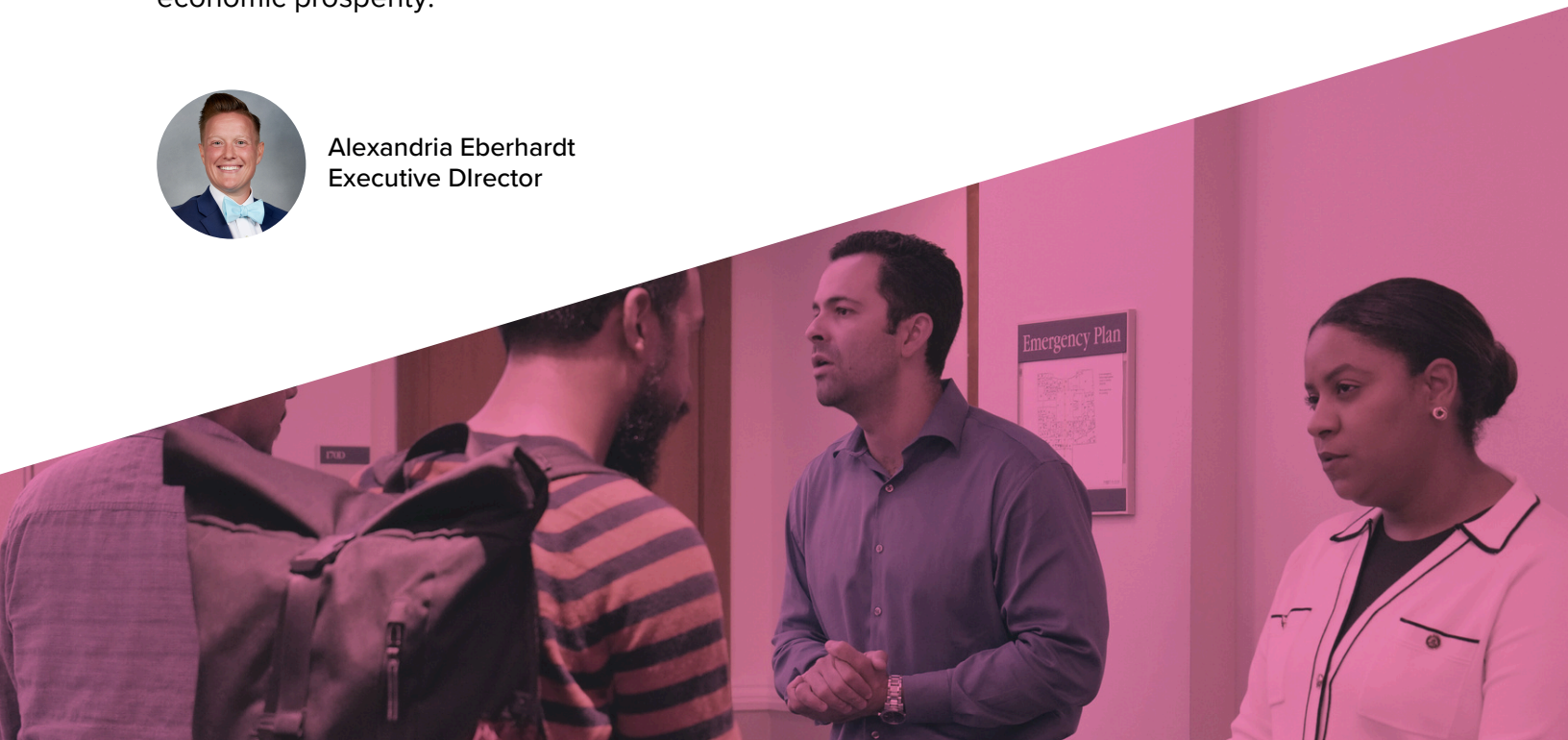
In order to genuinely understand and care for LGBTQ+ employees and staff, especially as it relates to their political and physical safety, company policies and practices need to stay aware of their needs including the ability to be fully present in all aspects of one's life and career. Employers have a responsibility to their employees; considerations for the safety, well-being, and freedom in their workforce should be a primary factor in determining where company events are held and where business travel funding is allotted.

Since its founding in 2017, the Massachusetts LGBT Chamber of Commerce (MALGBTCC) has been advising corporate partners, as well as LGBTQ+ and ally business owners on how best to serve their employees, advocate for their organizations and staff, and focusing on expanding economic opportunities for those in the LGBTQ+ communities.

We do that by fostering meaningful connections throughout business, education, and government sectors; understanding and acting upon the key factors impacting LGBTQ+ financial well-being; guiding members on their journeys to greater economic prosperity.



Alexandria Eberhardt
Executive Director



LEGAL OVERVIEW

The legislative and legal climate for LGBTQ+ rights continues to fluctuate across the US. Federal protections regarding discrimination in employment were established in 2020 when the Supreme Court ruled to interpret sex nondiscrimination established in the Civil Rights Act of 1964 included gender identity and sexual orientation. However, other LGBTQ+ rights are fluctuating, there are significant considerations for LGBTQ+ communities while traveling that their employers should be aware of:

- ➔ Gender Affirming Care
- ➔ Sex Segregated Facilities
- ➔ HIV Criminalization
- ➔ Nondiscrimination Laws
- ➔ Reproductive Care Restrictions



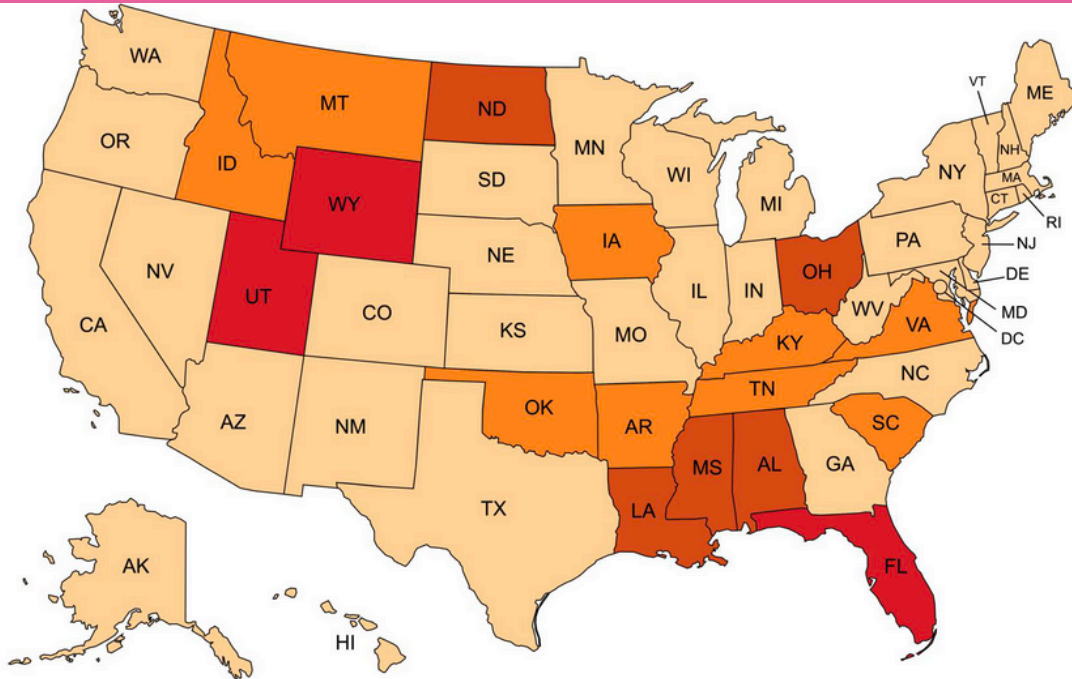


CAN YOU IMAGINE?

A transgender woman is traveling to Florida for a conference in her industry, at the request of her employer. While walking out of the Orlando airport, she trips on a curb and injures her knee. An airport employee advises that she seek care at the nearest hospital which happens to be religiously affiliated. She goes to that hospital for care, which is in her employer's health insurance network. During her time at the hospital, she is only referred to as her prior name (deadname), incorrect pronouns, and when she corrects a nurse they tell her that only her legal name and "legal sex" will be recognized by hospital staff. She is left to wait for over an hour in an exam room while she hears hospital staff discuss her in disparaging terms outside the room.

During the visit she experiences distress, an elevated heart rate, and becomes agitated by the mistreatment. As a result, a doctor recommends she is admitted to the hospital, where her agitation continues to escalate. When she asks about her medications, specifically her prescribed gender affirming medications, the hospital refuses to provide those medications as they consider the medications "outside the scope of care."

What could an employer do, or could have done in advance, to keep this employee safe in these circumstances? Especially knowing all the actions of the hospital may likely be deemed legal under Florida State Law?



Guide to Sex-Segregated Facilities

- State bans transgender people from using bathrooms and facilities consistent with their gender identity in all government-owned buildings and spaces, including K-12 schools, colleges, and more
- State bans transgender people from using bathrooms and facilities consistent with their gender identity in K-12 schools and at least some government-owned buildings
- State bans transgender people from using bathrooms and facilities consistent with their gender identity in K-12 schools
- No state ban on transgender people's use of bathrooms or facilities

SEX SEGREGATED FACILITIES

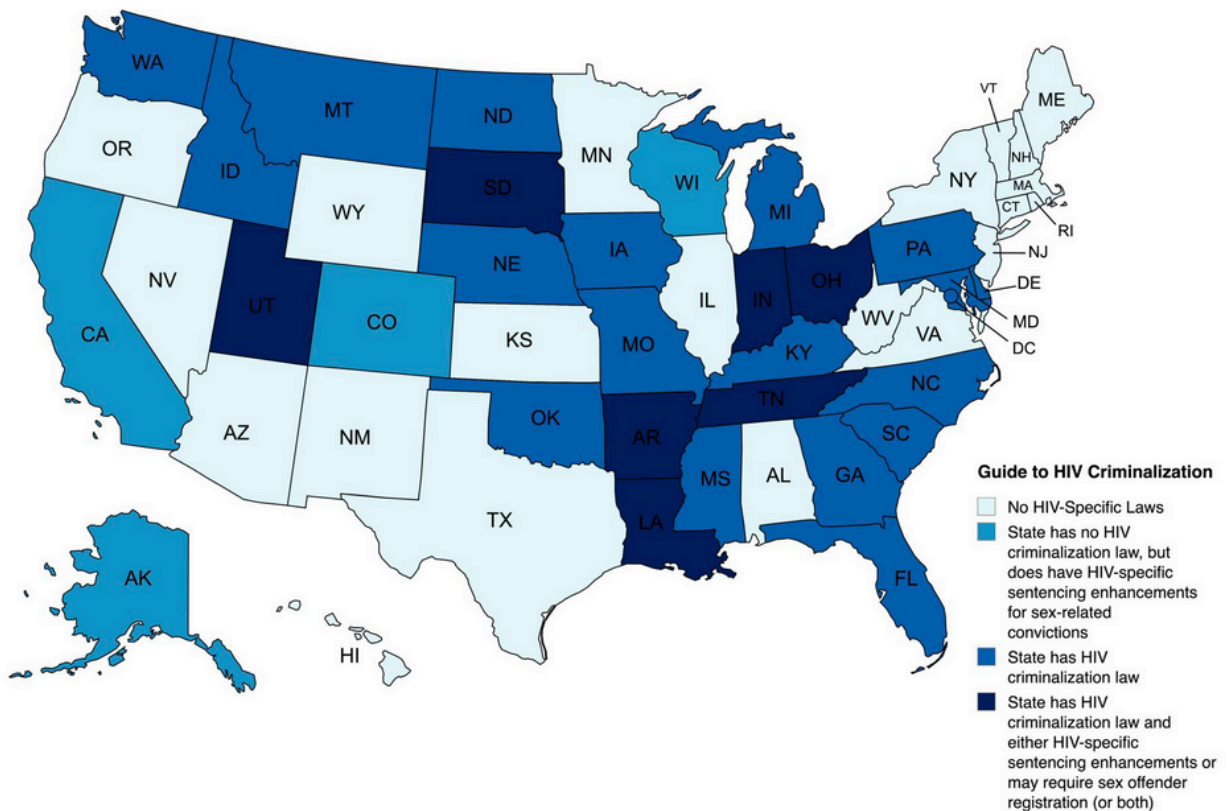
Restrooms and locker rooms have long been a battleground for transgender and gender diverse (TGD) equity. This has come to a head in states that have passed legislation basing access to these facilities on the sex one is assigned at birth, effectively banning TGD people from these spaces. While some state laws only impact facilities in K-12 school buildings, others (including Florida and North Dakota at the time of writing) include state or government owned buildings. While enforcement of these laws is still unclear, TGD people traveling to states with these bans may be at risk for confrontation, fines, or potentially arrest when accessing these necessary spaces.

Currently, facility use bans have passed in the states shows above. Please note that many of these bans may be blocked by courts, on hold, not yet in effect, or the subject of litigation.

HIV CRIMINALIZATION

Discrimination against people living with HIV has been codified into law in several states across the US. Many of these laws were passed in the early days of the epidemic, and are now outdated and do not reflect the realities of HIV transmission or medical advancement. These discriminatory laws criminalize actions that could potentially expose others to HIV, regardless of the intent or actual transmission. Some states even criminalize acts that have negligible risk of transmitting HIV, such as spitting, biting, and oral sex. Employees with HIV traveling to these states could face fines, arrest, even imprisonment for up to 10 years. These laws impact anyone living with HIV, including, but not limited to LGBTQ+ people.

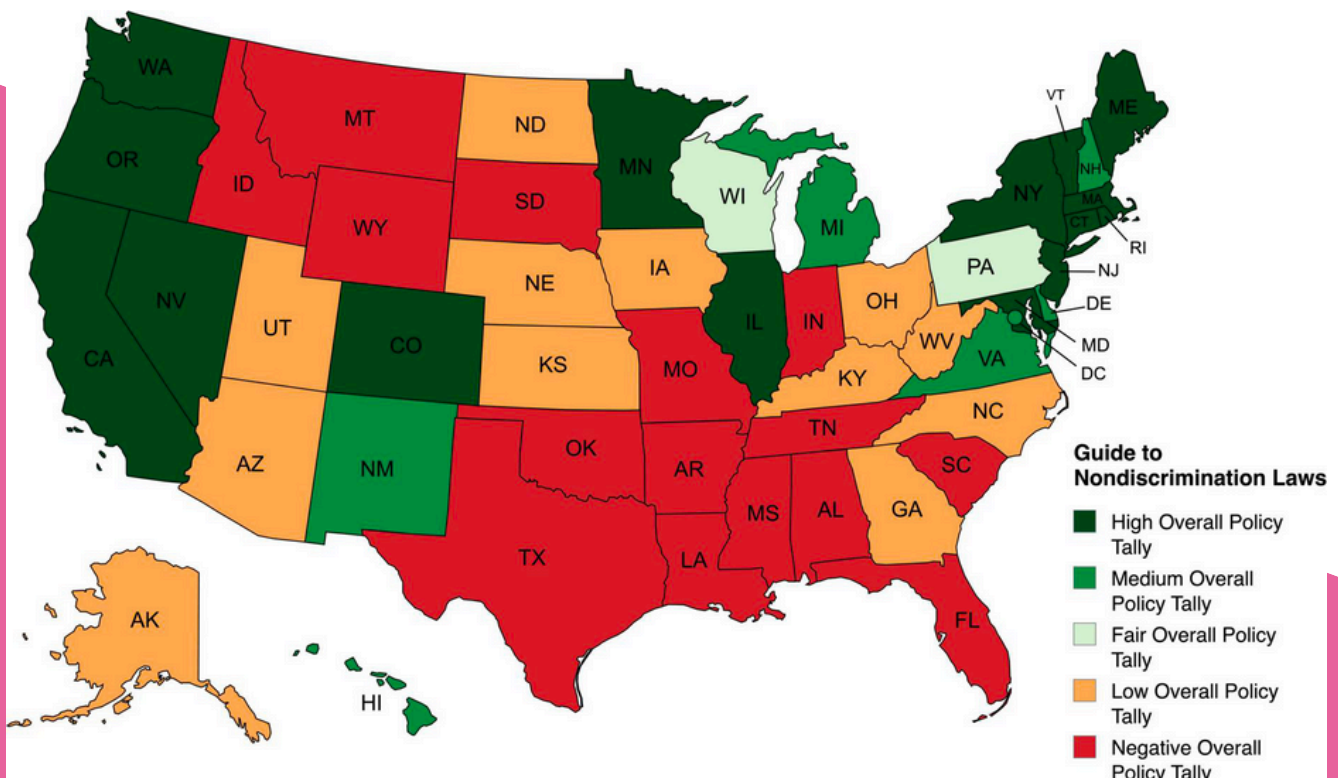
Currently, HIV criminalization laws have passed in the following states. Please note that many of these laws may be blocked, on hold, not yet in effect, or the subject of litigation.



NONDISCRIMINATION LAWS

While employment nondiscrimination protections exist at the federal level, other nondiscrimination protections vary widely across the states. Many states in recent years have passed laws to remove any protections for transgender and gender diverse people in nondiscrimination laws, by codifying a narrow reading of the word “sex” that excludes these communities. Additionally some states have prohibited the passage of local nondiscrimination protections, such as those enacted in cities or towns. Lastly, many states have remained silent on the issue, thus providing no remedy or protections from discrimination for LGBTQ+ people in housing, education, credit/lending, or public accommodations.

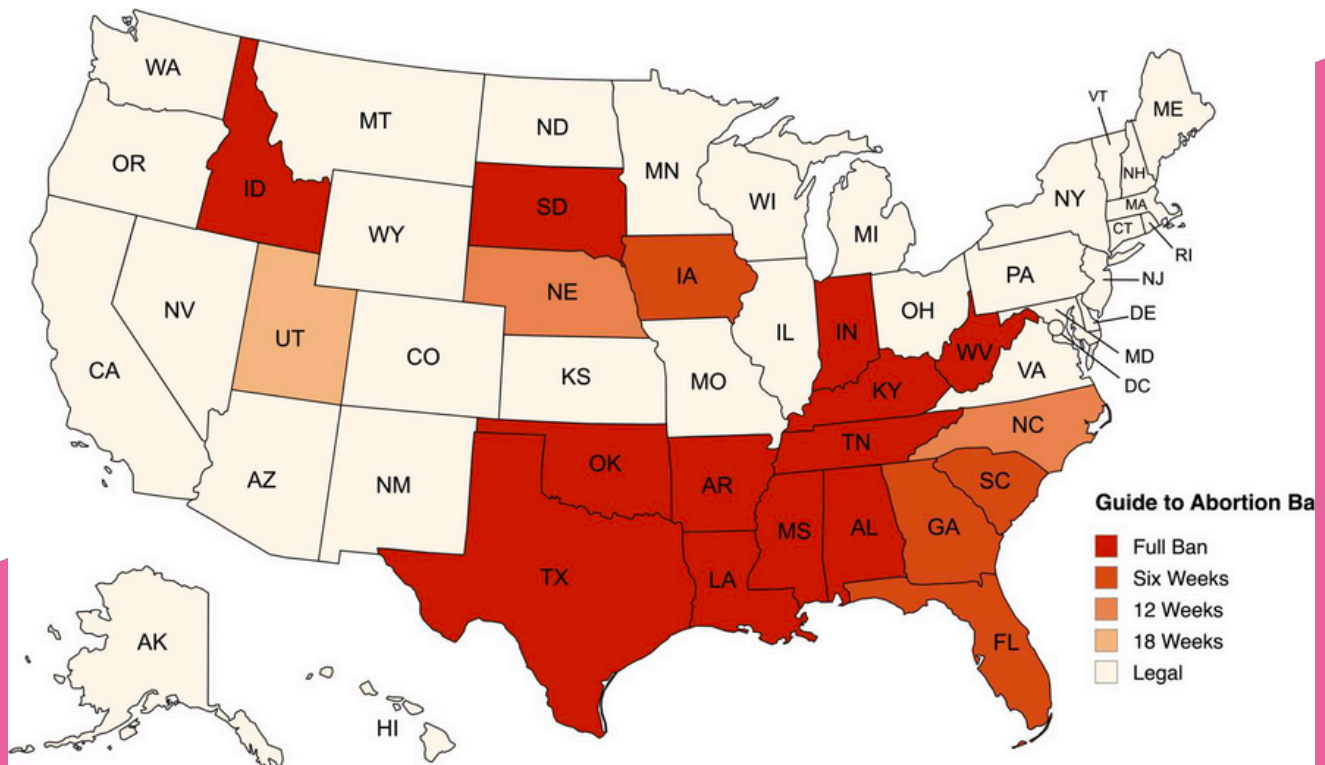
Currently nondiscrimination laws have been limited or blocked in the following states. Please note that many of these bans may be blocked, on hold, not yet in effect, or the subject of litigation:



REPRODUCTIVE CARE

Access to reproductive care is deeply tied to LGBTQ+ rights and equity. Bisexual, lesbian, intersex, nonbinary, and trans masculine people all deserve access to equitable healthcare, including contraception, pregnancy care, and abortion. A pregnant employee traveling to a state that limits or restricts reproductive healthcare in cases of emergency could present a serious threat to that employee's life and/or wellbeing. Discrimination in healthcare on the basis of sexual orientation or gender identity could be a risk in many states passing restrictions and LGBTQ+ people may be wary of traveling to these places.

Currently abortion care limitations or bans have passed in the following states. Please note that many of these bans may be blocked, on hold, not yet in effect, or the subject of litigation:





IMPORTANT NOTE!

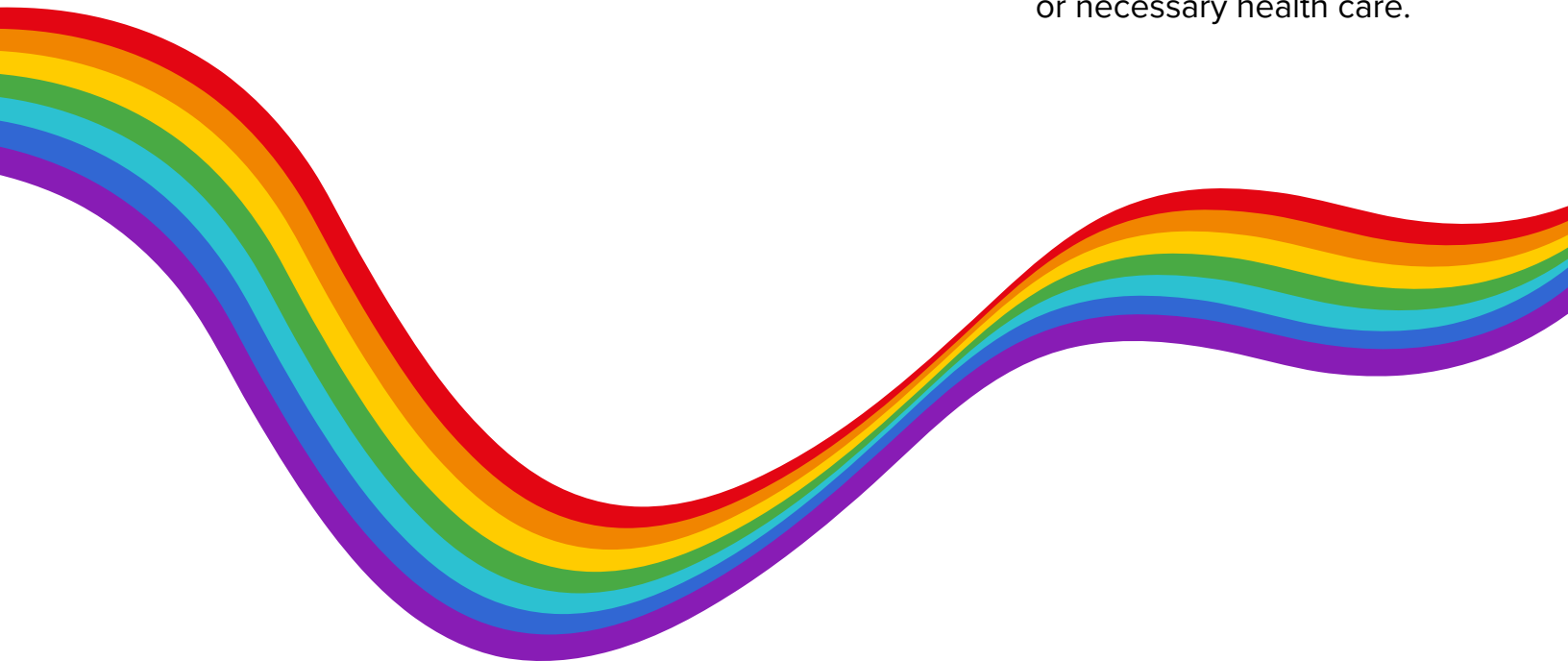
Employers sending LGBTQ+ staff to states who have enacted laws like those discussed, should consult with a lawyer about the risks and liability associated with travel to those locations.

LGBTQ+ people and their employers should check the status of laws and rights in individual states regularly, to ensure safe travel.

PRACTICAL TIPS AND POLICIES

In the last few years, there has been a remarkable increase in business travel and trips as more people are healthy, vaccinated against COVID-19, and businesses resume delayed or rescheduled travel. However, as discussed above, recent years have not been kind in terms of state policies, especially regarding LGBTQ+ communities and those seeking reproductive healthcare. These restrictive and discriminatory policies have led employers and organizers to rethink business travel, and how and where events such as conferences are held.

The last time businesses needed to make sweeping policy changes in regards to business travel was in reaction to the COVID-19 pandemic, but many are just beginning to grapple with more nuanced and diverse travel needs and experiences to promote the safety and comfort of their employees. Circumstances have changed, and now employers need to seriously consider what can happen to LGBTQ+ employees in areas and states where access to public accommodations is limited by policy, one could be arrested for using a bathroom or locker room that does not align with their sex assigned at birth, or one could not receive appropriate or necessary health care.



WHAT CAN BUSINESS LEADERS DO?

➔ Be aware of state policies

The American Civil Liberties Union has an active tracker of LGBTQ+ related legislation in all 50 states. Before you determine whether to ask your employees to travel to different states, or host events in different locations, check that employees will be safe, secure, and protected.

➔ Enact no-retaliation travel policies

If your business is requiring employees to travel, enact and emphasize policies that allow people to express their concerns, establish personal boundaries, and refuse travel to certain locations or offices, especially if they deem the travel a personal, mental, or physical safety risk without the added risk of job loss.

➔ Hosting Events Out Of State

Guarantee that the state or city in which you are hosting is safe for BIPOC and LGBTQ+ residents and employees. As previously stated, understand their needs related to medical emergencies, medication, criminalization of HIV/AIDS status, and any related medical or political emergency needs, as well as the policies in place to protect or harm LGBTQ+ folks.

If your business is hosting an event for or including LGBTQ+ folks, reach out for training for your staff and personnel as you plan a conference or events. Allow everyone to reach a common ground and plan with professionals to include and incorporate as many identities and ideas as possible.

WHAT CAN BUSINESS LEADERS DO?



Work with LGBTQ+ Specific Travel Firms

For those in the LGBTQ+ community, it is important and necessary to take precautions before and while traveling that their cisgender and/or heterosexual peers may not have to prepare for. It is important that preparations, including airfare or travel, lodging, and transportation, are all done with and alongside the employees traveling, with individual precautions and needs taken into account.

For domestic travel, consider working with an LGBTQ+ specific travel service in your state or city, or the city under consideration. They can help coordinate lodging, flights, and even last minute changes to ensure safe LGBTQ+ travel and planning.

For international travel, the International Gay and Lesbian Travel Agency (IGLTA) is a firm dedicated to securing safe and secure travel for LGBTQ+ people. There are various country guides, general safety precautions, and more specific emergency and harassment precautions and guides for use, and businesses can become a member to garner more business travel specific information.



ADVOCACY

The role of corporations and employers in LGBTQ+ advocacy has expanded in recent years, as more states have sought to pass restrictive and discriminatory laws impacting the rights and well being of employees.

When North Carolina passed anti-trans legislation in 2016, corporations and small businesses united to send a powerful message: either all people, including LGBTQ+ people are welcome, or they will take their business elsewhere. Journalists estimated that the anti-trans law cost the state of North Carolina nearly \$4 billion in revenue as businesses took their projects and travel plans to other states.

If employee safety and well-being is a priority for businesses, then speaking up when that safety is under attack becomes a moral and business imperative. Furthermore, this imperative extends beyond the walls of the business, but into the community and political arenas as well. Businesses should consider advocacy for LGBTQ+ rights an essential tool in supporting their LGBTQ+ employees.

ADVOCACY

Below are some recommendations for advocacy efforts businesses can take on when thinking about what's happening in states where they are potentially doing business:

➔ Stay Aware and Up-to-Date

As this guide has already mentioned, it is critical that businesses know what laws or policies may be enacted in states where they are sending employees or hosting events. Much can change in a short amount of time, so it is important to keep awareness fresh and check on policies regularly. Resources and references for information about laws and policies are listed at the conclusion of this guide.

➔ Make it Known

Information about business policies regarding travel to states with anti-LGBTQ+ policies should be made available to employees and the wider public. For example, an LGBTQ+ applicant may find this information an incentive to apply for a position in a business knowing that their potential employer is open about limiting travel to states where they would not be safe or welcome. Additionally, such policies may set a business apart from its competitors or build momentum for other businesses to establish similar policies.





➔ Join Business Coalitions for Equality

Across the US there are state coalitions that have been established to bring like-minded businesses together for LGBTQ+ equality and equity. From the “Equality Means Business” coalition in Florida, to the global advocacy with “Open for Business,” there are coalitions leading the way for business equity and advocacy.

➔ Offset the Harm

If a business is unable to avoid travel or hosting engagements in anti-LGBTQ+ states, consider ways to offset the harm for LGBTQ+ advocacy in that state. Donating a portion of proceeds to a local LGBTQ+ organization, for example, can help counteract the harm associated with spending money in that state. Businesses might also consider ways to engage local LGBTQ+ owned businesses, to ensure that money spent in these states is going directly to LGBTQ+ communities.

CONCLUSION

While anti-LGBTQ+ efforts may not be taking hold in the state a business is headquartered in, there are many ways these efforts in other states can have an effect on employees and business operations.

It is in the best interest of businesses to stay aware and make plans and policies to mitigate the harm caused to employees and communities. As businesses craft policies for LGBTQ+ inclusive travel, the MA LGBT Chamber of Commerce stands ready to assist in this critical work.



RESOURCES

Looking for LGBTQ+ businesses in other states?

Check out our colleagues in other LGBTQ+ Chambers around the country for a directory of their local LGBTQ+ and ally-owned businesses:

Location	Organization	Website
National	National LGBT Chamber of Commerce	https://nglcc.org/
Arizona	Greater Phoenix Equality Chamber of Commerce	https://www.equalitychamber.org/
	Tucson LGBT Chamber of Commerce	https://tucsonlgbtchamber.org/
California	San Diego Equality Business Association	https://www.sdeba.org/
	Los Angeles LGBTQ Chamber of Commerce	http://www.laglcc.org/
	Long Beach LGBTQ+ Chamber of Commerce	https://www.lbglcc.org/
	Sacramento Rainbow Chamber of Commerce	http://rainbowchamber.com/
	Rainbow Chamber Silicone Valley	http://rainbowchamber.org/
	Desert Business Association	http://www.desertbusinessassociation.org/
	Golden Gate Business Association	http://ggba.com/
Colorado	Colorado LGBTQ Chamber of Commerce	https://colgbtqcc.org/

RESOURCES

State	Organization	Website
Connecticut	Connecticut Gay and Lesbian Chamber of Commerce	http://www.ctglc.org/
DC	Equality Chamber of Commerce DC Metro Area	http://eccdc.biz/
Florida	Greater Fort Lauderdale LGBT Chamber of Commerce	http://www.gogayfortlauderdale.com/
	The Pride Chamber of Greater Orlando	https://thepridechamber.org/
	The Greater Miami LGBTQ Chamber of Commerce	http://www.gaybizmiami.com/
	Tampa Bay LGBT Chamber	https://tampabaylgbtchamber.org/
Georgia	OUT Georgia Business Alliance	https://outgeorgia.org/
Hawaii	Hawaii Rainbow Chamber of Commerce	http://www.hirainbowchamber.org/
Idaho	Pride Business League	https://www.pridebusinessleague.org/
Illinois	LGBT Chamber of Commerce of Illinois	http://www.lgbtcc.com/
Indiana	Indy Rainbow Chamber of Commerce	http://www.indyrainbowchamber.org/
Iowa	Iowa LGBTQ Chamber of Commerce	https://iowalgbtqchamber.org/
Kansas	Mid-America LGBT Chamber of Commerce	https://www.midamericallgbt.org/
Kentucky	Civitas: Regional LGBTQ Chamber of Commerce	https://www.civitaslgbtq.org/

RESOURCES

State	Organization	Website
Louisiana	Gulf South LGBT Chamber of Commerce	http://gslgbtchamber.org/
Maryland	Maryland LGBT Chamber of Commerce	http://www.md-lgbt.org/
Massachusetts	MA LGBT Chamber of Commerce	http://malgbtcc.org
Michigan	Detroit Regional LGBT Chamber of Commerce	http://www.detroitlgbtchamber.com/
Minnesota	Quorum	http://www.twincitiesquorum.com/
Missouri	St. Louis LGBTQ Chamber of Commerce	https://stlouislgbtqchamberofcommerce.com/
	Mid-America LGBT Chamber of Commerce	https://www.midamericalgbt.org/
Nevada	Gay and Lesbian Chamber of Commerce of Nevada	http://www.glccnv.org/
New Jersey	New Jersey Pride Chamber of Commerce	https://www.njpridechamber.org/
New Mexico	New Mexico Out Business Alliance	https://www.nmoba.org/
New York	National LGBT Chamber of Commerce New York	http://www.nglccny.org/
North Carolina	Carolinas LGBT+ Chamber of Commerce	https://www.clgbtcc.org/
	Harmony: NC LGBT+ Allies Chamber of Commerce	https://www.harmonyinc.org/

RESOURCES

State	Organization	Website
Ohio	Diversity Chamber of Central Ohio	http://www.diversitycolumbus.org/
	Plexus LGBT & Allied Chamber of Commerce	http://www.thinkplexus.org/
Oregon	Oregon Pride in Business	http://www.orpib.com/
Pennsylvania	Independence Business Alliance	http://www.independencebusinessalliance.com/
	Three Rivers Business Alliance	http://www.3rba.com/
	Keystone Business Alliance	http://www.keystonebusinessalliance.org/
South Carolina	Carolinas LGBT+ Chamber of Commerce	https://www.clgbtcc.org/
	Upstate SC LGBT Chamber	https://www.upstatelgbt.org/
Tennessee	Tennessee Pride Chamber	https://www.tnpridechamber.com/
Texas	Greater Houston LGBTQ+ Chamber of Commerce	http://www.houstonlgbtchamber.com/
	Austin LGBT Chamber of Commerce	https://www.austinelgbtchamber.com/
	North Texas LGBT Chamber of Commerce	http://glbtchamber.org/
	San Antonio LGBT Chamber of Commerce	http://www.salgbtchamber.org/
Utah	Utah LGBTQ+ Chamber of Commerce	https://www.utahlgbtqchamber.org/

RESOURCES

State	Organization	Website
Virginia	Richmond LGBTQ Chamber	http://www.richmondbusinessalliance.com/
	Hampton Roads Business Outreach	http://www.hrbor.org/
Washington	GSBA	http://www.thegsba.org/
Wisconsin	Wisconsin LGBT Chamber of Commerce	http://www.wislgbtchamber.com/

Legislative Tracking

- [ACLU](#)
- [Equality Federation](#)
- [Movement Advancement Project \(MAP\)](#)

Businesses for Equality Coalitions

- [Business Coalition for the Equality Act](#) - US National
- [Open to All](#) - US National
- [Equality Means Business](#) - Florida
- [Open for Business](#) - Global

MASSACHUSETTS LGBT
COUNCIL ON
BUSINESS AND
INDUSTRY
COMMERCE



CONTACT Us



www.MALGBTCC.org



info@malgbtcc.org