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SUBJECT: Duluth Increases Municipal Equality Index by 29 Points

BY: Kate Van Daele, Public Information Officer

Duluth Increases Municipal Equality Index by 29 Points

[Duluth, MN] The City of Duluth increased their final score from the annual Human Rights Campaign Foundation's Municipal Equality Index (MEI) scorecard by 29 points for a total of 89 out of 100. The MEI examines how inclusive municipal laws, policies, and services are of Lesbian Gay Bisexual Transgender and Queer (LGBTQ) people who live and work there. Cities are rated based on non-discrimination laws, the municipality as an employer, municipal services, law enforcement and the city leadership's public position on equality. In 2019, 506 cities participated in the evaluation.

"I am very excited to see the increase in our score reflect the work that Carl Crawford, City staff, and the Human Rights Commission, have been doing to make not only our organization, but our community more inclusive," said mayor Emily Larson. "This work is so important to seeing and hearing our community members, and valuing everyone who chooses to be in Duluth. This is the highest score that the city has ever received, which I am very proud of."

The City of Duluth saw big increases within several categories. Within the law enforcement category, the City received a perfect 22 out of 22 score, an increase of ten points from 2018. This category evaluates fair enforcement of the law which includes responsible reporting of hate crimes and engaging with the LGBTQ community in a thoughtful and respectful way.

"This is a big step forward towards building a more inclusive community," said human rights officer Carl Crawford. "This important work will continue regardless of our score."

The City had another big gain in points within the municipality as employer with a score of 12 out of 12, an increase of five within that section. Evaluation of this section includes offering equivalent benefits and protections to LGBTQ employees, awarding contracts to fair-minded businesses, and taking steps to ensure an inclusive workplace. To be successful, municipalities commit themselves to treating LGBTQ employees equally.

In 2018, the average national city score was 50 out of 100.

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