

THE LGBT BUSINESS COUNCIL OF THE  
GREATER LEHIGH VALLEY CHAMBER OF COMMERCE

*Presents*

BEST PRACTICES FOR WORKPLACE EQUALITY:  
THE ESSENTIALS



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FORWARD BY MARY E. LISICKY



## Forward

In 2012, The Chamber launched its newest mission council, the LGBT Business Council. One of the goals of the LGBT Business Council is to provide resources to all Chamber members about the best-practices for workplace equality. For small businesses without a dedicated human resources team or in-house counsel, drafting new policies for workplace equality can be cumbersome and sometimes costly. This white paper is meant to provide our members with policies that have worked for some Lehigh Valley employers. By drawing on the success of other local companies, your business can enact these policies without the worry about if they work.



When businesses offer domestic partner benefits and have an LGBT-inclusive non-discrimination policy, they are more likely to attract and retain talented LGBT employees. The cost to create an equal workplace is literally negligible, as is explained in this white paper, but the benefits associated with doing so will help your business grow. In addition to non-discrimination and domestic partner benefits, this white paper provides background information and sample policies regarding supplier diversity and relationships with vendors and contractors as well as policies and goals regarding community giving and sponsorship. This white paper highlights successful policies not just from any business, but from businesses with a presence in the Lehigh Valley. All of these policies were publicly accessible on the organizational websites, and that in and of itself is a best practice for workplace equality (it shouldn't be considered proprietary to say that a company doesn't discriminate against gay employees.)

While it makes good business sense to create an equal workplace, doing so also reduces risk for employers in Pennsylvania. Neither state nor federal law requires LGBT-inclusive non-discrimination, but 30 Pennsylvania municipalities do and that number continues to grow. In the Lehigh Valley, the Cities of Allentown, Bethlehem and Easton all require it, so for businesses with multiple office locations, part of reducing risk means adopting the same policies for all your employees. The patchwork of civil rights laws in this country and this state makes navigating the laws complex. It is easiest to simply adopt the most comprehensive of these policies (the ones that are LGBT-inclusive) and make that the policy for your entire company.

The LGBT Business Council is proud to support Chamber members' efforts to create equal workplaces for LGBT employees. Our goal is for Chamber members to voluntarily create workplaces that support the diversity of the Lehigh Valley. Any business that follows the guidance and policy suggestions framed in this white paper will truly be an equal workplace, and that's not just a benefit for LGBT employees, it also makes good business sense. The reason that these policies are considered "best practices" is because they have been enacted by a vast majority of Fortune 500 companies across the country. I hope you find this white paper to be informative and user-friendly!

Mary E. Lisicky  
Morgan Stanley Wealth Management

Chair, LGBT Business Council  
Greater Lehigh Valley Chamber of Commerce

## Introduction

It's my experience that most small businesses want to treat their employees equally, most just don't know how to and many don't have the time or the in-house expertise to know what to do. Some small businesses would like to provide an equal workplace but believe that doing so would be cost-prohibitive. This white paper addresses those concerns.

The reality is that providing the essentials for an equal workforce is not cost-prohibitive, in fact for most businesses, the cost will be so negligible that it will likely go unnoticed. There is no cost for a business to have a robust non-discrimination policy, and as long as the employer isn't intent on discriminating against their employees, and will not tolerate their managers doing so either, there is no risk involved. Same-sex partner benefits have a minimal cost associated with them, but the cost is negligible and the truth is that when something is morally right, then minimal cost should not be a deterrent. In actual fact, providing an equal workplace is not just the right thing to do, which it is, but it also makes good business sense. There is a reason that the vast majority of Fortune 500 companies offer an equal workplace for their LGBT employees. There is a reason why corporate America has led by example on issues of LGBT equality --- it's not just that they feel it's the right thing to do. The business community has led on equality because it makes financial sense to do so. It helps to attract and retain their top talent, it helps to attract a thoughtful customer base and it helps to increase morale among LGBT employees.

Large corporations often have the benefit of in-house human resource expertise, they often have the benefit of in-house legal counsel, and they often have the benefit of being large enough to have a group of LGBT employees who have organized themselves to ask the company for specific policy changes. These situations are not the case for most small and medium-sized businesses. And it's easy for an employer to believe that they provide an equal workplace if they haven't yet been challenged to enact specific policies. However, a supportive business owner or management team is only the first step toward an equal workplace, and inclusive sentiments need to be backed up by robust policy.

This white paper brings forth examples of companies with a large presence in the Lehigh Valley who have enacted policies that make them a more equal place to work for LGBT employees than they are required to by law. Included is a cross-section of employers: public and private sector, non-profit and Fortune 500 --- these are all employers that have considered the many benefits of an inclusive workplace and determined that it is right for them. Employers like Muhlenberg College, The City of Allentown, Lehigh University, Air Products and Chemicals, The City of Easton, TD Bank, Via of the Lehigh Valley, Lafayette College and more. If you were to ask any of these employers about the costs associated with enacting the policies that they have enacted, I am confident that they would all reply that doing so made financial sense for them and that equality, quite simply, is not cost-prohibitive. While our state and federal governments delay long-sought efforts to require equal workplaces, the business community can continue to lead the way on non-discrimination, domestic partner benefits, supplier diversity and community giving in support of the LGBT community.

Adrian E. Shanker  
President, Equality Pennsylvania

## Overview of Sections

### **Non-Discrimination**

Neither federal nor state law protects LGBT employees from employment discrimination. As a result, there is a patchwork of municipal laws providing this vital protection for employees but even when municipal laws exist, it can be a challenge to find out what exact protections and loopholes exist. And to be sure, nobody wants to work for an employer who wants to discriminate against them.

Employers who want to make it clear that they judge their employees based on their skills, talents, effectiveness, efficiency, and results and not based upon their sexual orientation, their gender identity or gender expression (or various other classes) can and should implement a non-discrimination policy. In this section, employers can find sample non-discrimination policies that go beyond legal requirements in order to provide an equal workplace.

### **Domestic Partner Benefits**

With the lack of marriage equality, employers are not legally required to recognize spouses of LGBT employees for purposes of healthcare, family medical leave, bereavement leave, pension survivor benefits, or even for purposes as simple as family invitations to corporate events. The lack of domestic partner benefits means that employees with same-sex spouses receives less total compensation than their coworkers whose marriages are legally recognized.

There is a misguided assumption that the creation of same-sex partner benefits is cost-prohibitive to employers, particularly small employers. Given the rising cost of healthcare small businesses have grown accustomed to, it is a practical concern but it is not the case.

### **Business Relationships with Vendors and Contractors**

Often when we speak of inclusive employers, we discuss workplace equality for employees without discussing how the employer interacts with and evaluates their vendors and contractors. In this section we discuss LGBT-inclusive supplier diversity goals, requirements or incentives for vendors and contractors that have their own workplace policies, and avoidance of vendors with anti-LGBT policies or sponsorships.

Vendor and contractor relationships, in particular, are important tools that small and medium-sized businesses can use to maximize their impact on LGBT equality. While internal policies create an equal workplace for employees, vendor relationships can sometimes have a further-reaching impact.

### **Community Giving**

Any business that is actively seeking an LGBT customer base is likely interested in advertising to the LGBT community. To be sure, there are many ways to do so, but LGBT employees and customers alike are loyal to companies that support the LGBT community, and there is a significant difference between advertising and supporting the community. In this section, we will discuss methods for companies to become more visible to the LGBT community and in turn, increase morale among their LGBT employees, simply by considering community giving to events or organizations serving the LGBT community. Corporate support, including small business support, is integral to the success of LGBT equality at the state and federal levels. Businesses who go on record in support of equality, from a business perspective, will be noticed by the LGBT community. Similarly, businesses engaged in community giving can support equality by requiring adherence to an LGBT-inclusive non-discrimination policy.

## Non-Discrimination

### Background

An LGBT-inclusive non-discrimination policy is simple to create and is the most essential policy a company should enact, and it is in the best interest of every company, regardless of size, to have one. Some companies choose to be direct and succinct, while others choose to draft a more verbose vision statement inclusive of their commitment to non-discrimination. It is important that a non-discrimination policy does not simply state, “we support diversity and comply with the law.” The reason for this is because “the law” in most municipalities does not include sexual orientation or gender identity. The best practice is to craft a policy that demonstrates the company’s complete commitment to non-discrimination. This means that the so-called ‘laundry list’ of protected classes needs to be written out. For LGBT employees and prospective employees, the words that apply most directly to us are “sexual orientation,” “gender identity” and “gender expression.” The best policies will include all three, however policies that include both “sexual orientation” and “gender identity” will protect LGBT employees from undue discrimination. It is also very important that a company’s policies are not in conflict with each other, so if your company has an EEO policy and an anti-harassment policy, the protected classes should be the same in each policy.

### Sample Non-Discrimination Policies

*Muhlenberg College does not discriminate against any person based on age, color, disability, gender, gender identity, national or ethnic origin, race, religion, sexual orientation, veteran status, or any other basis protected by applicable federal, state or local laws.*

*The City of Allentown is an equal opportunity employer. Employment decisions are made without regard to race, color, religion, national origin, ancestry or place of birth, sex, gender identity, sexual orientation, disability, marital status, age or use of a guide or support animal because of blindness, deafness or physical disability. Employment with the City of Allentown depends solely on qualifications.*

*ArtsQuest values diversity. ArtsQuest is an equal opportunity employer and prohibits unlawful discrimination against applicants for employment and employees on the basis of race, color, sex, sexual orientation, gender identity, national origin, citizenship, marital status, veteran status, disability, age, religion or any other classification protected by federal, state or local law.*

*Via of the Lehigh Valley, Inc. provides equal opportunity employment and advancement opportunities to employees and all applicants for employment. Via does not discriminate on the basis of race, color, sex, sexual orientation, gender identity, age, religion, creed, disability, national origin, citizenship, or status as a disabled Vietnam era veteran, or any other protected basis. Via complies with all federal, state and local Equal Opportunity Employment laws, regulations and ordinances. Via of the Lehigh Valley, Inc. is an Equal Opportunity Employer*

## Domestic Partner Benefits

### Background

By offering domestic partner benefits, a business clarifies that they believe all of their employees should be treated equally, regardless of the gender of their spouses. In states without marriage equality, this may be the only way a person can access healthcare for their spouse. Domestic partner benefits are proven to increase recruitment and retention rates for LGBT employees and are also proven to not be cost-prohibitive. An actuarial study conducted by the City of Allentown in advance of their enactment of same-sex domestic partner benefits estimated that it would cost \$16,000 over three years, and that was for an employer with more than 1,000 employees. The reality is that providing these benefits is such a negligible cost that most actuarial firms are unable to measure it because the cost comes in at just under 1% of the benefits budget for most businesses. In addition to health insurance, domestic partner benefits include any benefit offered to spouses - for most businesses, this includes Family Medical Leave and Bereavement Leave, but it would also include benefits such as inclusion in corporate events when spouses are invited to participate.

### Same-Sex Partners Only or Everyone?

Some companies offer domestic partner benefits to same-sex partners and to unmarried heterosexual partners of their employees and others offer it only to same-sex partners of their employees. While it is wonderful to offer benefits to everyone, the necessity for offering it to same-sex partners could not be clearer. Heterosexual people could and would get married if there was a medical situation that required it. That's not the case for same-sex partners. In fact, most same-sex partners will not opt-in to their partners' employee health plan even when it is available to them, because the IRS counts it as taxable income for the employee. If the employee's partner has health insurance at a reasonable cost, they are very unlikely to utilize these benefits. The choice of whether to limit domestic partners to same-sex couples is up to the individual company. The cost is minimal when it comes to same-sex partners, but it could add up when offered universally.

### Sample Domestic Partner Benefits Policies

*The City of Easton shall provide the same health and other employment benefits to employees with domestic partners and their dependent children as it provides to employees with spouses, consistent with the fullest extent of the City's authority under the law. It is the intent of this article to apply to all employees and future retired employees.*

*Lehigh University provides the same benefits to same and opposite sex domestic partners as we do for spouses of our employees. A simple registration process is required to establish eligibility. Staff members should be made aware that the benefits provided may be considered taxable income to the employee.*

*Lafayette College: The same benefits provided to the spouses of the College's married employees will be made available to same-sex partners of eligible employees provided that the employee and the partner meet the criteria for such relationships as established by the College.*

## Business Relationships with Vendors and Contractors

### Supplier Diversity

Many companies large and small seek out diverse suppliers for contracting purposes. Companies who want to support women, LGBT people, people with disabilities, and people of color in their business practices can implement specific policies, goals or targets intended to increase their supplier diversity rates. While it is common to see companies do this for woman-owned or minority-owned businesses, it is less common for businesses to enact these policies in support of LGBT-owned businesses. Increasingly, companies are including LGBT-owned businesses in their supplier diversity programs.

Supplier diversity policies can be as strict as quotas or as simple as an intention. The magnitude of the policy really depends on the type of business and how detailed they get when evaluating vendors and contractors. In this sample policy, there is a good middle ground, it isn't a quota (eg: 10% of contracts must be made with diverse suppliers) however it has clear intention (seeking out diverse suppliers.)

### Sample LGBT-inclusive Supplier Diversity Policy

*At TD Bank Group, we believe diversity is a key contributor to success in the competitive global marketplace. Our commitment to diversity is a fundamental element of how we do business today and in the future. TD Bank Group believes its Supplier Diversity Program is necessary to achieving its goal of being the better bank.*

*Our Supplier Diversity Program focuses on creating a level playing field for suppliers certified as being minority owned and who are interested in providing goods and or services to TD Bank Group.*

*To be eligible for our Supplier Diversity Program, a supplier must be certified as any of the following:*

- *51% Aboriginal-owned and operated business;*
- *51% Minority-owned and operated business;*
- *51% Woman-owned and operated business;*
- *51% Gay/Lesbian/Bisexual/Transgender - owned and operated business, or*
- *51% Owned and operated by a member of other recognized diverse communities (i.e. Persons with Disabilities, Veteran/Veteran Disabled etc.)*

*by one of the following councils:*

- *Canadian Aboriginal & Minority Supplier Council (CAMSC)*
- *WEConnect*
- *Canadian Gay and Lesbian Chamber of Commerce (CGLCC)*
- *National Minority Supplier Development Council (NMSDC)*
- *Womens Business Enterprise National Council (WBENC)*
- *National Gay and Lesbian Chamber of Commerce (NGLCC)*
- *Any other recognized Certifying Organizations*

## Best Practices for Workplace Equality: The Essentials

### Supplier Standards

Companies can go a step beyond supplier diversity by requiring standards for all of their suppliers. The first supplier standard is whether the supplier affirms the company's non-discrimination policy, which should be inclusive of sexual orientation and gender identity. The importance of this cannot be understated. When a company requires that all of their vendors and contractors affirm a non-discrimination policy that is LGBT-inclusive then every supplier that wants to seek business from the company needs to comply. The same can be done for measuring suppliers on their benefits, most importantly, if the supplier offers same-sex domestic partner benefits. By requiring corporate equality in supplier standards, businesses can have a tangible external impact on the values they hold. Contractors are unlikely to decide against doing business with a company just because they require a stronger non-discrimination policy or the provision of domestic partner benefits.

While these standards are a bit more cutting-edge than supplier diversity goals, it is commonplace for companies to have numerous requirements for their vendors from ethical business practices to environmental standards, including non-discrimination and equal benefits.

### Sample Policy for Supplier Non-Discrimination Requirement

*Air Products is committed to consistently treating employees with respect, fairness, and dignity. Suppliers are expected to meet the Equal Opportunity Employment and Human Rights and Labor and Employment Laws as noted in our Code of Conduct.*

### Sample Policy for Supplier Equal Benefits Requirement

*City of Philadelphia: If this is a Service Contract, as defined in Philadelphia Code Section 17-1901(4), for an amount in excess of \$250,000, Contractor shall, for employees providing services under the Service Contract who reside in the City or employees who are non-residents subject to City wage tax under Philadelphia Code Section 19-502(b), extend the same employment benefits the Contractor extends to spouses of its employees to life partners of such employees. By submission of its Bid, Contractor so acknowledges and certifies its compliance with Chapter 17-1900 of the Philadelphia Code and shall notify its employees of the employment benefits available to life partners pursuant to Chapter 17-1900. Following the award of a contract subject to Chapter 17-1900 and prior to execution of the contract by the City, Contractor shall certify that its employees have received the required notification of the employment benefits available to life partners and that such employment benefits will actually be available, or that the Contractor does not provide employment benefits to the spouses of married employees.*

*Contractor's failure to comply with the provisions of Chapter 17-1900 or any discrimination or retaliation by the Contractor against any employee on account of having claimed a violation of Chapter 17-1900 shall be a material breach the Service Contract.*

## Community Giving and Corporate Sponsorship

### Sponsoring LGBT Events and Organizations

To be sure, the best way to be recognized as an LGBT-affirming business is to sponsor and support LGBT community events and organizations. This can include corporate grants, event sponsorship, matching of employee gifts to LGBT organizations, advertising in LGBT non-profit organization event programs, exhibiting at the annual LGBT pride festival and contracting LGBT organizations to provide training, programs, or events internally for staff and potentially for customers.

Event sponsorship isn't always expensive, although for large corporations with community giving programs, corporate grants to LGBT non-profits will go a long way toward visibility with LGBT community members and LGBT employees. For retail or consumer-service businesses, donating in-kind items to LGBT non-profits for their fundraisers will be noticed by organizational members. For business-to-business companies, event sponsorship will often increase morale among LGBT employees.

To be clear, supporting LGBT community events or organization is not a "political contribution." A political contribution would include a donation to a candidate or candidate committee or a contribution to a 501c4 non-profit organization. Most LGBT organizations are 501c3 non-profit organizations and are educational in nature.

### Corporate Sponsorship Non-Discrimination Requirements

While support for LGBT events and organizations is a wonderful demonstration to the LGBT community of a businesses support for equality, it is equally important for a business to discontinue funding non-profit organizations that are either hostile to LGBT equality or that discriminate against LGBT employees or program participants. In order to ensure that grant recipients comply in this regard, some funders have begun requiring their grantees to adhere to an LGBT-inclusive non-discrimination policy. Here is an example of this requirement, implemented by the Merck Company Foundation. Merck's policy includes sexual orientation but does not include gender identity.

*As a general rule, The Office of Corporate Philanthropy and The Merck Company Foundation do not support organizations that discriminate on the basis of race, gender, sexual orientation, marital status, religion, age, national origin, veteran status or disability.*

When corporate and foundation funders cease making donations to organizations that don't adhere to an LGBT-inclusive non-discrimination policy, many non-profits will enact a policy, which will protect countless employees and program participants from discrimination. Certainly, there are numerous organizations that currently enjoy corporate support while they continue to actively and openly discriminate against LGBT employees and program participants. For businesses who are clear in their support for an equal workplace, it is antithetical to fund those organizations. They may provide important, even vital, services to the community. But if an organization is opposed to a core value of the funder, then they are not worthy of grants or sponsorship from that funder. As it is said, money talks. The best and quickest way to change discriminatory non-profits is to pull funding until they change, and businesses are in a position to do that.

Its not just large companies with community giving programs in place that can have an impact, any business can ask to see a non-discrimination policy before making a donation.

# Conclusion

### **Just the Essentials**

This white paper is not all-inclusive, and to be sure, the discourse around these policies are ongoing. There are always new methods to being cutting-edge, and what is cutting-edge today will be common place a year from now. In this document, we presented the basics - the lowest common denominator for what an employer needs to do in order to be called an equal workplace: a robust non-discrimination policy and same-sex domestic partner benefits on the employee side, supplier diversity and supplier evaluation on the vendor side, and LGBT directed community giving on the customer side.

Employers wishing to be cutting-edge in their approach to equality at work can and should expand on this and do much more. Examples of “more” include: requiring their health plan to include transgender health services including transition-related care, support for LGBT employee affinity organizations or employee resource groups, provide gender neutral restroom facilities (both for customers and for employees,) implementing a “grossing-up” policy to cover the federal tax burden LGBT employees face when accepting same-sex partner benefits, and ensuring that company forms and documents and employee ID cards easily allow a person to self-identify and to change their name and gender. There is no one-size-fits-all solution, however. Not every policy or accommodation makes sense for every company. But most of these policies, even if adapted to fit a specific business or industry, apply across-the-board. As more laws are passed to provide (and sometimes require) certain forms of LGBT equality, we will find new ways to measure workplace inclusion. This document can get any business started and there are endless possibilities. to be cutting-edge and do more to create an equal workplace.

### **Accessibility of Inclusive Policies**

Having inclusive policies is only the first step. The commitment to having the policy needs to be extended to the ability to easily access the policy, both in an internal employee handbook but also on the company website for prospective employees and customers to view. In fact, these policies are not intended to be secrets, they are intended to accurately reflect the values a company holds. Current employees should be notified of a change of the non-discrimination policy, employee benefits, and even the company’s commitment to diversity through vendor relationships and community giving. All company employment forms should include the written non-discrimination policy and all of these policies should be available (and easily findable) on the corporate website, allowing prospective employees, customers, and vendors to see your commitment to an equal workplace. Inclusive policies should be a source of pride for the company, and making them easily accessible to current employees as well as the general public is in line with the same values as the policies themselves.

All of the policies included in this White Paper were accessed on the respective company websites. There are many other employers in the Lehigh Valley that offer domestic partner benefits, LGBT-inclusive non-discrimination and supplier diversity policies. However, in order to demonstrate that the accessibility of the policy is as important as the enactment and enforcement of the policy itself, only policies that could be found online (which means a policy that an employee, prospective employee, or a customer could access it online) were included. To be sure, other companies may very well include this information in their employee handbooks or on their intranet, but those weren’t included because they were not publicly accessible to non-current employees, including prospective employees and recently terminated employees. These policies should be worn with pride and made as accessible as possible.

## Glossary

### A) Employment Discrimination

Discrimination or unfair treatment or consideration based upon a protected class in recruiting, hiring, salary or hourly compensation, promotions, raises or bonuses, tenure, termination, benefits, transfers, layoffs or return from layoffs, employer-sponsored training or education and tuition reimbursement. Not all of these categories apply to every business, and additional scenarios could apply for certain businesses, but a policy banning employment discrimination would refer to, at a minimum, all of these scenarios.

### B) Domestic Partner

A legally unrecognized spouse of an employee. Best practices suggest that a domestic partner shares both a joint residency and joint responsibility with the employee (meaning, they live together and are financially interdependent.) Given the patchwork of marriage and relationship recognition laws in different states, a couple in a domestic partnership may or may not be legally married or in a civil union in a different state. For same-sex couples, it is generally understood that couples who would be legally married if it was legal in their state to do so, would be considered domestic partners. Some employers have, rather than create a process for domestic partner registration, required same-sex couples to obtain a marriage license from a state or country where it is legal to do so. Other employers in states that now recognize same-sex marriages, have dissolved their domestic partnership process in favor of legal marriage recognition. The purpose of domestic partnership is to create parity where the law has not.

### C) Gender Identity

A persons self-perception, perception by others, preference or innate feeling of their gender as male, female, or a different gender entirely. A persons Gender Identity may be the same as or different than their physical anatomy, chromosomal sex, or their sex assigned at birth. This includes, but does not always include, people who identify as transgender.

### D) Gender Expression

A persons method of expressing their gender including but not limited to, clothing, shoes, jewelry, behavior, and changeable physical characteristics including but not limited to hair style and color, nails, makeup, or the lack thereof. A persons gender expression may or may not align with hegemonic stereotypes of their biological sex or their gender identity. It is common, but not exclusive, that a person's gender identity and gender expression are aligned.

### E) LGBT

A commonly used acronym representing "Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual and Transgender." The order of the letters in the acronym is irrelevant, sometimes this is written as "GLBT" and sometimes additional letters representing other words members of the community identify as, are added, most commonly a "Q" or an "A." "Q" typically refers to either "Queer" or "Questioning" and "A" typically refers to "Allies". LGBT is a safe umbrella term to describe members of the gay, lesbian, bisexual and transgender community.

### F) Sexual Orientation

A persons self-perception, perception by others, preference or innate feeling of being gay, lesbian, bisexual, or heterosexual. A person's ability to be open about their sexual orientation is a crucial element of non-discrimination based upon their sexual orientation.

### G) Supplier Diversity

The effort made by businesses to utilize vendors and contractors that are at least 51% owned by women, people of color, people with disabilities, LGBT people, and sometimes veterans. Supplier diversity is a requirement for many government agencies and large corporations. Most supplier diversity programs require certification by a government agency or national certification organization. The only organization recognized to certify LGBT-owned businesses is the National Gay and Lesbian Chamber of Commerce (NGLCC.)

## About the Author



Photo Credit: Ryan Hulvat

Adrian Shanker, President of Equality Pennsylvania, the statewide political organization advocating for full equality for the LGBT community. He previously served as Vice President of Pennsylvania Diversity Network, the regional LGBT advocacy organization serving northeast Pennsylvania, and he served at the appointment of Mayor Ed Pawlowski as Vice Chair of Human Relations Commission of the City of Allentown, the city agency charged with enforcement of their civil rights laws.

Shanker has led successful campaigns to pass a non-discrimination law in Bethlehem, PA; same-sex domestic partner benefits in Allentown and Easton, PA; and Gender Identity non-discrimination and Gender Neutral Housing at

Muhlenberg College. In 2006, he was the Research Assistant on the first edition of the “*GENIUS Index*” (Gender Equality National Index of Universities and Schools), which was published by the Gender Public Advocacy Coalition, under the direction of transgender political pioneer, Riki Wilchins.

At the request of Councilwoman Blondell Reynolds Brown, Adrian delivered testimony to the Philadelphia City Council Committee on Law and Government regarding the passage of their landmark, “Equal Benefits Bill,” which requires large city contractors to provide same-sex partner benefits to their employees and at the invitation of Councilman James Kenney, he delivered testimony to the Philadelphia City Council Committee on Labor and Civil Service regarding passage of the “LGBT Equality Bill,” which created the first-in-the-nation Equality Tax Credit and includes cutting-edge provisions related to Transgender equality and LGBT relationship recognition. He has also testified to Whitmarsh and Cheltenham Townships regarding passage of their municipal non-discrimination ordinances and the Bethlehem Area School District on their Administrative Change to grant same-sex domestic partner benefits. In response to Adrian’s request, the PPL Corporation, a Fortune 300 company with more than 15,000 employees, added Gender Identity to their corporate non-discrimination policy in 2012.

In response to attempts to limit the rights of Pennsylvania’s LGBT youth, Adrian successfully fought the Bangor Area School District’s attempts to mandate parental notification for students to attend a Gay-Straight Alliance (2011) and the Northampton Area School District in their attempt to bar LGBT students from forming a GSA (2010.)

Further, Adrian is a respected leader in political circles in Pennsylvania. He was a member of Senator Arlen Specter’s LGBT Steering Committee during his final campaign in 2010. In 2012, he was elected as an Alternate Delegate for President Obama to the Democratic National Convention and later that year served on the Personnel Committee on the Transition Team for Pennsylvania Auditor General Eugene DePasquale. Congressman Matt Cartwright (D-PA) credits Shanker with educating him about marriage equality, causing him to make a public endorsement and Shanker was an integral leader of the successful three-year campaign to encourage Senator Bob Casey Jr. (D-PA) to endorse marriage equality.

In 2009, he graduated *Cum Laude* from Muhlenberg College with a B.A. in Political Science and Religion Studies, and is also an alumnus of the Pennsylvania Political Leaders Fellowship at the Center for Progressive Leadership.

He has been named “Person of the Year” by the *Philadelphia Gay News*, a “Young Trailblazer of the Lehigh Valley” by *Elucidator Magazine* and *Lehigh Valley Business* included him in their 2013 ‘Forty Under Forty’ list. He has received numerous awards, including the City of Allentown’s Human Relations Award, the Anne Frank Center USA’s Spirit of Anne Frank Award, and GLSEN Hudson Valley’s Leadership Award. He has been featured on CBS Evening News, CQ Weekly, the Philadelphia Inquirer, Voice of Russia Radio and Diversity Matters on Voice of America Radio and has delivered lectures or facilitated workshops at numerous colleges and national conferences including a workshop on LGBT employment discrimination at the 2011 White House Community Partner Summit.

For more information, visit his website at [www.adrianshanker.com](http://www.adrianshanker.com) or email him at [aeshanker@gmail.com](mailto:aeshanker@gmail.com).