

# LGBT Activism 101

## Expand rights in your community!



Help in the fight for equal rights in Ohio. Around the state, people are organizing and lobbying their local elected officials to expand the rights of LGBT residents.

Ordinances prohibiting discrimination based on sexual orientation and gender identity, and laws creating domestic partner registries for unmarried couples are two significant ways of expanding these rights.

### Non-discrimination ordinances

Seventeen cities now have anti-discrimination ordinances. 5 of these fully protect individuals from discrimination in employment and housing based on sexual orientation and gender identity. The other 12 have partial ordinances that only protect sexual orientation or may only address housing or employment, but not both.

Full protections:	Limited protections:
Cincinnati	Akron
Columbus	Athens
Dayton	Bowling Green
Oxford	Canton
Toledo	Cleveland
	Cleveland Heights
	Gahanna
	Lakewood
	North Olmsted
	Oberlin
	Shaker Heights

### Domestic partnership registries

Only three cities have domestic partnership registries: Cleveland, Cleveland Heights and Toledo. These registries do not officially recognize same-sex relationships or convey any legal benefits, like a marriage would. But, by being registered, couples are often better able to access private benefits such as employee partner benefits, partner visits at a hospital, or membership in some recreational programs.

### Take action!

Ready to make a difference? Follow these easy steps.

- **Get connected.** Find other concerned people in your community. Search the web or check your local community listings for meetings already taking place. Talk to your friends and get them energized.
- **Organize a meeting.** Discuss your concerns and goals, and how you can make change. Develop strategies for getting the word out about your group and recruiting others. Politicians, religious figures, teachers, doctors, entrepreneurs and others can be powerful coalition partners.
- **Ask the experts.** Is this your first time organizing? Call the experts in to help! Organizations like the ACLU, Equality Ohio and your local LGBT center may be willing to send a representative to your meeting or help you develop strategies for talking to your elected officials. Connecting with groups who have experience will help you navigate the legislative process and maximize your organizing capacity.
- **Introduce yourself.** Schedule an appointment with some of your elected officials. Sometimes it's easier to identify a politician who may sympathize with your views for your first meeting. This person may be able to direct you to others who are open to your cause.
- **Spread the message.** Write letters to the editor, organize programs, speak at community events. The more people that hear your message, the more chance you have to get people committed to your cause.

**For more information, go to [www.acluohio.org](http://www.acluohio.org)**