

SUCCESS STORY: OUTNEBRASKA

We make it our business to know who is in the room, who wants to be involved, and what other community partners share our vision for equality.

OutNebraska launched as a statewide organization in 2019. In the years since, we have helped our communities grow in their advocacy, celebrations, and education of LGBTQ+ people.

Nebraska is home to numerous volunteer organizations working toward LGBTQ+ equality. As a staffed, statewide organization, OutNebraska is uniquely positioned to bring these different groups together. Through advocacy, celebration, and education, we have helped organizations and individuals across the state access resources and push for change. We make it our business to know who is in the room, who wants to be involved, and what other community partners share our vision for equality. That's where OutNebraska has really thrived: as a hub of information, resources, and connections. We have been proud to partner with national organizations like HRC and Equality Federation to bring their resources, knowledge, and experience home to organizers across the state.

From the panhandle to the Missouri river, Nebraska has seen improvement in acceptance for LGBTQ+ people and families. 2021 was the year of Pride. More Pride events happened in 2021 than ever before including in Alliance, Scottsbluff, Hastings, Grand Island, Lincoln, Omaha, Norfolk, and more. We are seeing more rural communities celebrating Pride and embracing LGBTQ+ members of their community more fully. Our second largest city, Lincoln, held its first ever Pride Parade in 2021, marching around the capitol building to say "We're here, we're queer, get used to it."



Support for LGBTQ+ Nebraskans has also come from our business communities and local city governments. We launched Nebraska Competes in April 2021, which is a nonpartisan coalition of businesses who believe Nebraska needs nondiscrimination protections for LGBTQ+ people. These businesses are located across the state, showing that Nebraska is ready to move to greater acceptance and inclusion.

Our city leaders are also coming out for equality. Lincoln's city council passed the Youth Mental Health ordinance in 2020 to prohibit the practice of "conversion therapy" on minors. The Omaha LGBTQ+ Mayor's advisory board (established in 2016) continues to point our largest city toward progress, and Lincoln celebrates its most diverse city council to date with three of its seven councillors identifying LGBTQ+ as.

OutNebraska has advised the city of Lincoln in its inclusive efforts, using the MEI as a tool to guide policy and improve its score. We are proud of the work we are supporting across the state and will continue our efforts to push LGBTQ+ equality forward in Nebraska.

**ABBI SWATSWORTH
EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR,
OUTNEBRASKA**