



A Community Member's Guide: Encouraging business leaders to join Equality Means Business

What is Equality Means Business?

Equality Means Business is a program designed to showcase local businesses in North Carolina, South Carolina, and Virginia that embrace diversity among employees and clientele. A safe and welcoming atmosphere in the workplace is incredibly important – and many business owners recognize that! These businesses have non-discrimination statements that include protections for their lesbian, gay, bisexual, and transgender (LGBT) employees; plus, they pledge not to turn away any customers or clients based upon their sexual orientation or gender identity.

Why should a business join?

With an estimated 500,000 LGBT individuals in these three states, all of whom have countless family members and friends -- joining makes good business sense!

What if the business doesn't have a non-discrimination statement?

Making a statement is easy – just direct the business leader to the VirginiaFairness.org website. They can click on the “FAQs” tab under the “Equality Means Business” heading. There they can view an example policy, plus receive answers to other frequently asked questions.

What will a business receive for joining Equality Means Business?

All business will be added to our online directory that will help consumers learn which local businesses are inclusive of the LGBT community. Plus, members will receive marketing material to inform the public that their business is a welcoming place to work and shop!

I want to help! How do I get started?

Here is a guide to reaching out to local businesses:

1. Choose a location to approach. We recommend starting with any business that is important to you, or whose ownership you have a relationship with.
2. Explain why Equality Means Business is important to you and to the LGBT community.
3. Provide them with a copy of the Equality Means Business membership form, or encourage them to print out the membership form which they can download from VirginiaFairness.org website.

If business owners have questions regarding the Equality Means Business program, they can visit www.virginiafairness.org or contact a staff member at (804) 643-4816 or info@equalityvirginia.org.