



## A Business Owner's Guide: Equality Means Business

*Three southern lesbian, gay, bisexual, and transgender (LGBT) advocacy organizations in North Carolina (Equality NC), South Carolina (SC Equality), and Virginia (Equality Virginia) have launched "Equality Means Business," a coordinated, multistate campaign designed to showcase businesses that know how vital LGBT employees and customers are to their success in a modern economy.*

- A majority of businesses know that hiring LGBT employees and opening their doors to LGBT clients and customers is not only the right thing to do, but is also good for business.
- The Equality Means Business campaign recognizes those businesses that protect their LGBT employees from discrimination and have also pledged to welcome LGBT customers and clients.
- These businesses not only improves each state's reputation as a welcoming place to live, work, and visit but also, improves the lives of the more than 500,000 LGBT people who call these states home.
- Plus, Equality Means Business is also a tool for consumers to use if they want to ensure their patronage is supporting a business – or any place of public accommodation – that is welcoming to LGBT people.

"We are thrilled to work with equality groups in North Carolina and South Carolina to launch this exciting program," said James Parrish, executive director of Equality Virginia. "Businesses that welcome LGBT customers and clients and take a stand for workplace non-discrimination deserve to be recognized for moving Virginia, the region, and indeed the whole country in the right direction."

### **To become a member of Equality Means Business:**

1. Complete the Equality Means Business membership form
2. Sign the public accommodations pledge (on the membership form), which guarantees that your LGBT customers and clients will not be denied service because of their sexual orientation or gender identity
3. Provide us with a copy of your non-discrimination policy that includes both "sexual orientation" and "gender identity"
4. Send us your completed form and non-discrimination policy – that's it!

After you become a member, your business will be listed in the Equality Means Business online directory, and you will receive marketing material that will let everyone know that your business is a welcoming place to work and shop!