



# October 2019 to September 2020 Annual Report

## Message from the RAIN Advisory Committee

This year brought challenges and opportunities for RAIN. We started the year strong with establishing goals to build on the past year's successes. Some of those goals included expanding the physical presence of RAIN across Washington State for both General Membership meetings and Pride. When COVID-19 moved all BRG business online, we leaned into the challenge and found new ways to connect in the virtual environment. Access to RAIN was equalized and increased, as physical distance was removed as a barrier to engagement in General Membership meetings, subcommittee workgroups, panel presentations, and collaborative meetings with stakeholders. We offered resources and held space for communities disproportionately affected by the pandemic and educated ourselves on individual and systemic racism.

As we lean into the goals for next year, we take the lessons learned about access, engagement, and racism to continue creating safe and inclusive workplaces for Washington State, where every LGBTQ+ employee can bring their full authentic self to work, enabling them to do their best work every day for the people of Washington.



## General Goals for 2020 - 2021

Key indicators of RAIN engagement include:

- Active Members
- General Membership meeting attendance
- Subscribers to the Community-at-Large distribution list

The work of RAIN is accomplished by Active Members who participate on subcommittees. An Active Member is defined as someone who has attended a General Membership meeting within the past 6 months. Active membership numbers are tracked in May, prior to the election.

The accomplishments of RAIN are shared with the Community at Large through GovDelivery. The Community at Large champions the work and implements the recommendations within their organizations. Below are some statistics of accomplishments RAIN achieved in 2020:

2020 Accomplishments:

- Since May 2020, an additional 59 people were added to the active members subscription list
- During the reporting period, an average of 134 people attended RAIN general meetings.
- After switching to virtual meetings, average attendance increased by about 50 people
- In October 2020, the RAIN community-at-large subscription had reached 1,732 people.

Goals:

- Increase by 10% the number of Active Members in May 2021 over May 2020.
- Increase by 10% the average General Membership meeting attendance from October 2020 - September 2021 over the prior year.
- Increase by 10% the number of subscribers to the Community-at-Large distribution list in October 2021 over October 2020.



*From top to bottom:  
Co-Chairs Elizabeth  
Fontanilla and Ryan  
Douglas. Administra-  
tive Liaisons Kristen  
Jenkins and Chase  
Bayne*



# RAIN Goals and Subcommittee Report Outs

## RAIN goals for the upcoming year:

### Specific

- **Transitioning in the Workplace toolkit:** To provide resources to those who are transitioning in the workplace as well as HR staff, leadership, and coworkers to be able to help support the individual transitioning.
- **Family leave research:** To provide conduct research on different family leave types and assess how the language in those leave types relates to the needs of LGBTQ+ families.

### Measurable

- **Transitioning in the Workplace toolkit: BP:** Can be measured by the completion of each section of the project and submitted to OFM for distribution.
- **Family leave research:** Can be measured by a final report written and submitted to OFM.

### Achievable

- **Transitioning in the Workplace toolkit:** Best practices will include SMEs for each section of the project.
- **Family leave research:** Best practices will work with experts to ensure the research is relevant and that the recommendation is applicable.

### Relevant

- **Transitioning in the Workplace toolkit:** Relates to Best Practices subcommittee work as we are responsible for gathering, evaluating, and disseminating best practices for use by Washington State agencies and institutions.
- **Family leave research:** Relates to Best Practices subcommittee work as we are responsible for gathering, evaluating, and disseminating best practices for use by Washington State agencies and institutions.

### Time-Bound

- **Transitioning in the Workplace toolkit:** Will achieve by end of reporting year. Will review progress monthly.
- **Family leave research:** Will achieve by December 31, 2021. Will review progress monthly.

## Best Practices

The Best Practices subcommittee of RAIN exists to gather, evaluate, and disseminate best practices for use by Washington State agencies and institutions.

As part of this work, we did the following in 2020:

**Shifting to Remote Work:** Surprise! There was a global pandemic this year. We very quickly and nimbly shifted monthly meetings online to continue Best Practices work and created a virtual space for subcommittee members to gather in a time of uncertainty.

**Agency Awards Presentation:** RAIN presented Agency Awards to three agencies and highlighted the work of an additional six nominees for creating a safe, welcoming, and inclusive environment for LGBTQ+ employees. This process included distributing the nomination form, scoring nominations, and celebrating winners and nominees during a presentation.

**Building on Prior Work:** Previously, our subcommittee developed and distributed a Pride toolkit and an "I feel" survey. The Pride toolkit provided agencies with resources that could be distributed to help celebrate LGBTQ+ employees and customers. The "I feel" survey was created to help us identify gaps and highlight areas that could benefit from policy recommendations to support the needs of LGBTQ+ folks.

**Hosting Panels and Trainings to Support LGBTQ+ Needs:** From November 2019 to October 2020, Best Practices hosted 15 trainings or panels. These trainings were on topics ranging from basic vocabulary to transitioning in the workplace to the history of Pride month. Participants included HR staff, leadership teams, interagency workgroups, and at times, entire agencies.

**Developing and Establishing Best Practices:** In 2020, the Best Practices subcommittee made two recommendations. The first was to include a gender X/non-binary option on forms that ask for the respondent's gender. The second was to develop a document that provides information about existing Business Resources Groups (BRGs) to new and current Washington State employees.

**Providing Guidance on LGBTQ+ Projects:** As agencies move forward with work that supports the needs of LGBTQ+ employees and customers, they often reach out to the Best Practices subcommittee for guidance. This year we provided support on topics like LGBTQ+ customer support, updating forms to be more inclusive, and updating bathroom signage.

**Participating in OFM's Policy Committee for BRG's:** As representatives of RAIN's Best Practices subcommittee, we worked with most other state BRGs to increase participation in state BRGs. We focused on inclusive language to ensure equal access, so all levels of state employees, including those from historically marginalized groups and those not currently represented by BRGs, can participate.

### Upcoming Plans

In 2021, we will be working on two major projects. The first is the Transitioning in the workplace toolkit. We started this project in 2020 and it is being developed as a resource for HR staff, leadership, coworkers, and individuals transitioning. It will include technical resources, educational resources, and support resources.

The second major project we will be working on this year is related to family leave. Our subcommittee will be looking at how family leave wording affects LGBTQ+ folks. See our SMART goals section below for more information on what we expect progress to look like.

Additionally, we are currently working on distributing the 2021 I Feel survey. We will use data from the survey to help develop our work plan for the rest of the year.

# RAIN Goals and Subcommittee Report Outs

## RAIN goals for the upcoming year:

### Specific

- SP will develop a re-branding strategy to increase community engagement and wellbeing.
- Communications will increase subscriber engagement in its newsletters and meeting attendance.

### Measurable

- SP will produce a strategic report on re-branding as a “brave spaces” program
- Communications will use govdelivery statistics (unique clicks as a percent of total subscribers) to measure subscriber engagement.

### Achievable

- SP will work with agency partners and the LGBTQ commission to ensure the SP program is equitable to all members of the LGBTQ+ community.
- Communications will use best communication practices to increase engagement

### Relevant

- SP’s re-branding goal relates to RAIN’s mission of promoting an authentic work place and equity in state government.
- Communications goal relates to RAIN mission as higher rates of engagement increases interpersonal connection.

### Time-Bound

- SP will complete its strategic report by Fall 2021.
- Communications will track member-at-large engagement and report monthly results to the Advisory Committee on a monthly basis.

## Safe Places

- Safe Place programs were established at many community and state public-facing offices including the Capital Campus, City of Bellevue, City Bremerton, City Centralia, City of Olympia, City of Seattle, City of Tumwater, and Washington State Patrol.
- In addition state offices, Starbucks Stores have also shown interest in becoming Safe Places.
- The RAIN leadership, the Safe Places subcommittee, DES, and LGBTQ Commission Executive Director Manny Santiago have worked with LGBTQ Commissioners, State Agency leadership, and HR directors to encourage participation in Safe Places.
- An Initial Safe Places survey was sent to the RAIN Community-at-Large by Safe Places Committee and is currently under review with the RAIN Advisory Committee.

Under Governor Inslee’s 16-11 directive “public-facing state offices should also be safe places where people can connect with emergency and related support services.” The Safe Place Subcommittee will continue to carry this edict forward in the following ways:

- The Safe Places Committee leadership will meet with RAIN’s executive sponsor quarterly.
- The Safe Places Committee will explore re-branding, i.e., Brave Spaces (state-wide counseling services, trained professional survivor advocates, crisis response, etc.) vs. Safe Places (local law enforcement sponsored and overseen, crisis response).
- Build capacity for crisis response and prevention by examining the roles of law enforcement, counseling services, trained professional survivor advocates, Designated Crisis Responders (DCR; Health Care Authority), DSHS crisis response, County crisis outreach services, and Crisis Clinics
- Build cross-agency relationships
- Survey RAIN general membership concerning Safe Places by February 15, 2021.
- Conduct a comprehensive Safe Places survey discussion with RAIN general membership by March 15, 2021.

## Communications

In 2020, Communications navigated a turbulent year of changes due to the Covid-19 pandemic. During the past year, RAIN’s general community gov delivery subscribers has grown from 924 at the beginning of the year to the current amount of 2,158.

Newsletter unique opens has also increased from 254 unique readers to 398. However, the percent of subscribers reading the newsletter has declined from a high of 31% to 20% of total subscribers.

Going forward, Communications should focus on increasing subscriber engagement. Communications should assist with the transition back to in person events. Communications should also focus on reaching LGBTQ state employees located in Spokane County.

Newsletter Subscriber Engagement

