



The Queer voice behind the Civil Rights Movement

BAYARD RUSTIN

by Allison Fine (she/her), DSHS

In January, we celebrate the life and accomplishments of the Reverend Martin Luther King Jr. (MLK). So many people know his role as a civil rights leader; his leadership, his assassination and are inspired by his legacy. Many people may not be familiar with the man behind so much of the work MLK did, Bayard Rustin.

Born in West Chester Pennsylvania in 1912, Rustin was raised by his Maternal Grandparents who were active in both the Quaker community and African Methodist Episcopal Church and the National Association for the Advancement of Colored People (NAACP). Black leaders like W.E.B. Du Bois were frequent guests in his home growing up and are sure to have shaped his view on elevating Black people in his youth. He was only a teenager when he protested against Jim Crow Laws.

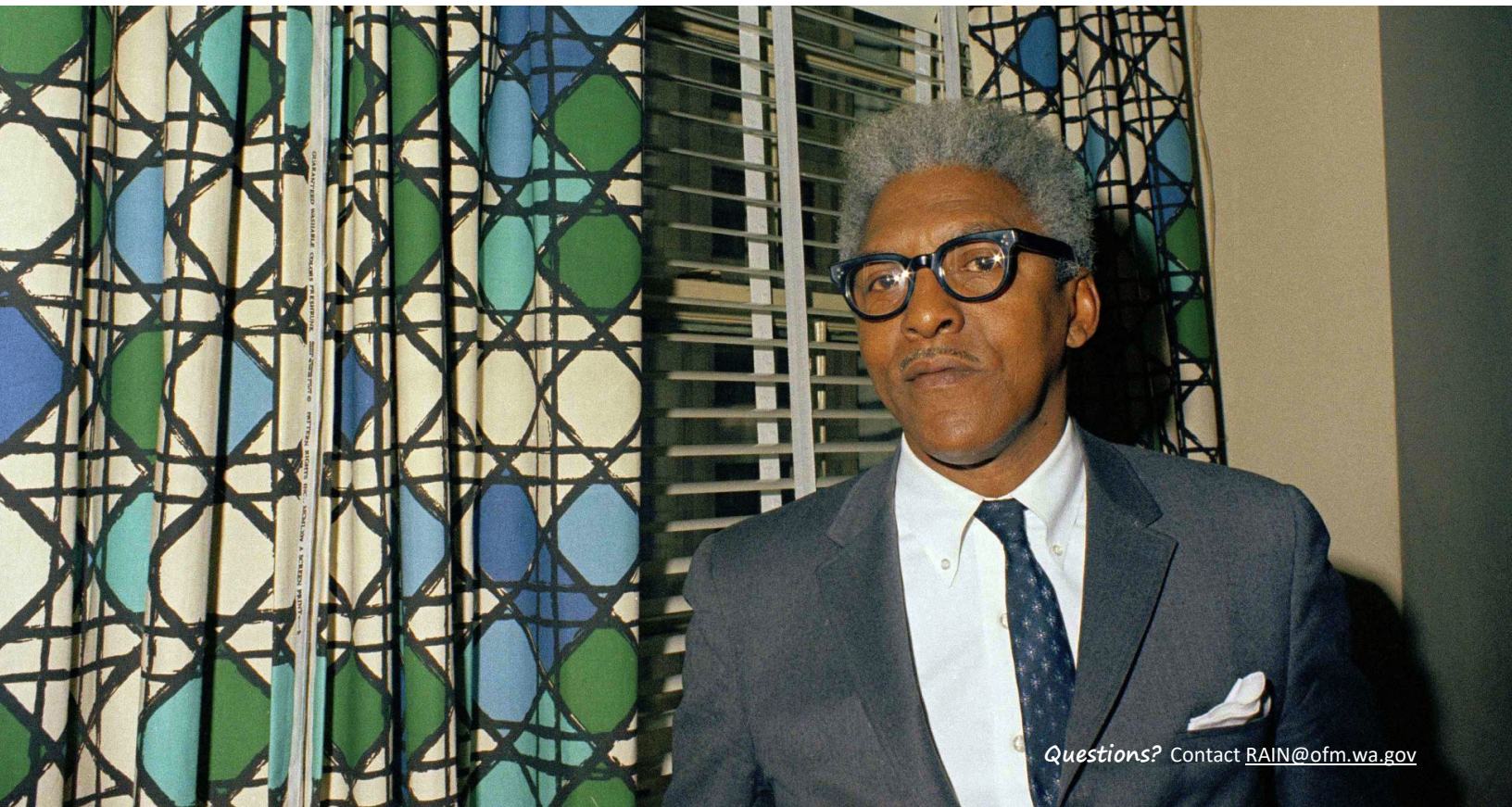
Early on, there is record of Rustin telling his Grandmother he preferred spending time with “males more often than females”. His Grandmother reportedly said “Well I suppose that’s what you need to do” which could be seen as some level of reserved support for what the world would eventually come to find out; Bayard Rustin was a gay man.

Rustin received music (vocal) scholarships to two different colleges and after organizing a strike at Wilberforce University, he was expelled and completed his studies at Cheyney State Teachers College.

Post-college he worked with Socialist party leaders, including well-known Socialist labor and union leader A. Phillip Randolph. Together, they established the [A. Phillip Randolph Institute](#) (APRI) in 1965. APRI is an organization aimed at combining the work of the civil rights movement and the work of labor that is still very active today.

It’s unclear when Rustin met MLK but it’s well-known that Rustin taught King about the non-violent tactics and theories of Gandhi, something that MLK was later known for. He also helped write speeches and co-wrote King’s well known book “Stride Towards Freedom”, although he didn’t allow himself to be credited because he said “I did not feel that he (MLK) should bear this kind of burden”, meaning that he didn’t want the message of the book to be overshadowed by his sexuality.

Continued on following page...



In his private life, Bayard was openly gay around his closest friends and community, but did not engage in any gay rights activism until he was older in life. His partner during his younger years, David Platt said "I never had any sense at all that Bayard felt any shame or guilt about his homosexuality. That was rare in those days. Rare."

Rustin himself said, in his contribution to the book *In the Life: A Black Gay Anthology*, "I was not involved in the struggle for gay rights as a youth... I did not "come out of the closet" voluntarily—circumstances forced me out. While I have no problem with being publicly identified as homosexual, it would be dishonest of me to present myself as one who was in the forefront of the struggle for gay rights... I fundamentally consider sexual orientation to be a private matter. As such, it has not been a factor which has greatly influenced my role as an activist."

As an older man, Rustin had a younger White partner, Walter Neagle, that he actually adopted in 1982 when Neagle was 30 years old since gay marriage was not legal. Neagle said "That was the only thing we could do to kind of legalize our relationship. We actually had to go through a process as if Bayard was adopting a small child. My biological mother had to sign a legal paper, a paper disowning me. They had to send a social worker to our home. When the social worker arrived, she had to sit us down to talk to us to make sure that this was a fit home".

Rustin died in 1987.

His legacy is vast, though much of it is attributed to others. Rustin balanced his quietly open sexuality with the understanding that many people outside of his immediate circle would make their opposition to his sexuality an issue that would overshadow the civil rights, labor and union activism that was his focus.

The work of Bayard Rustin will continue to influence these movements through those who familiarize themselves with his life work, the ongoing efforts of APRI and those who recognize his voice in the leaders that he influenced. The man "behind" MLK is a hero of the LGBTQIA+ community, and even if you've just learned about him today, he's worth knowing.



Rainbow Alliance and Inclusion Network (RAIN)

RAIN exists to help Washington State create safe and inclusive workplaces where every LGBTQ+ employee can bring their full authentic selves to work, enabling them to do their best work every day for the people of Washington. It is a business resource group that advises state agencies on how to create inclusive environments for LGBTQ+ employees and customers.

CORETTA SCOTT KING

by Tracey Carlos (she/her), LNI



We often think of Coretta Scott King as the wife of Dr. Martin Luther King Jr. or his widow. Those are accurate statements, but did you know she was also an activist in her own right long before she married Dr. King? In Antioch College, she was involved on the campus NAACP, serving on the Race Relations and Civil Liberties Committees. She didn't meet her future husband until she later received a scholarship to the New England Conservatory of Music.

According to one biographer, Coretta Scott King was actually the more political of the two when they met. This continued throughout her life. As one of the organizers of the 20th Anniversary of the March on Washington, she stood up to those who insisted that no gay rights activists speak and made space for Audre Lorde, an openly lesbian Black poet. She also pledged her support for the Gay and Civil Rights Act then before Congress. This bill would have prohibited discrimination against gay men and lesbians in housing, employment and public accommodation, things we are still fighting for nationally.

When the Supreme Court ruled in 1986 in *Bowers v. Hardwick* that there was no constitutional right to engage in consensual sodomy, one of King's long-time friends, Winston Johnson, came out to her. Her passion for gay rights led him to arrange for her to speak as a featured guest at the Human Rights Campaign Fund Gala in New York City that year. King stated at the gala that she was there to express her solidarity with the gay and lesbian movement and that she applauded "gays" for having "always been a part of the civil rights movement."

Throughout the 80's and 90's Coretta Scott King was known to visit and help care for friends of hers who had HIV. At the National Skills Building Conference (now known as the United States Conference on AIDS) she spoke, saying "the fight against HIV is a fight for the civil rights of the people living with HIV".

In 1998 King stated at the 25th anniversary Lambda Legal Defense and Education Fund luncheon, "I still hear people say I should not be talking about the rights of lesbian and gay people and I should stick to the issue of racial justice... But I hasten to remind them that Martin Luther King,

Jr. said 'Injustice anywhere is a threat to justice everywhere'... I appeal to everyone who believes in Martin Luther King, Jr.'s dream to make room at the table of brotherhood and sisterhood for lesbian and gay people." Later in 1999 she would go on to give the keynote address at the AIDS Memorial Quilt Initiative event.

Coretta Scott King never stopped trying to build the bridge between the Black Civil Rights Movement and the Lesbian and Gay Civil Rights Movement. In 2003, she invited the National Gay and Lesbian Task Force to take part in the 40th Anniversary observance of the March on Washington. This was the first time any LGBTQ+ rights group had been invited to a major event specifically honoring the Black community.

Coretta Scott King died in 2006 but the work she did will last long after we are gone. While she fought alongside her husband and later in memory of him, she played a major role in shaping and expanding the enormous King family legacy.

CIVIL RIGHTS

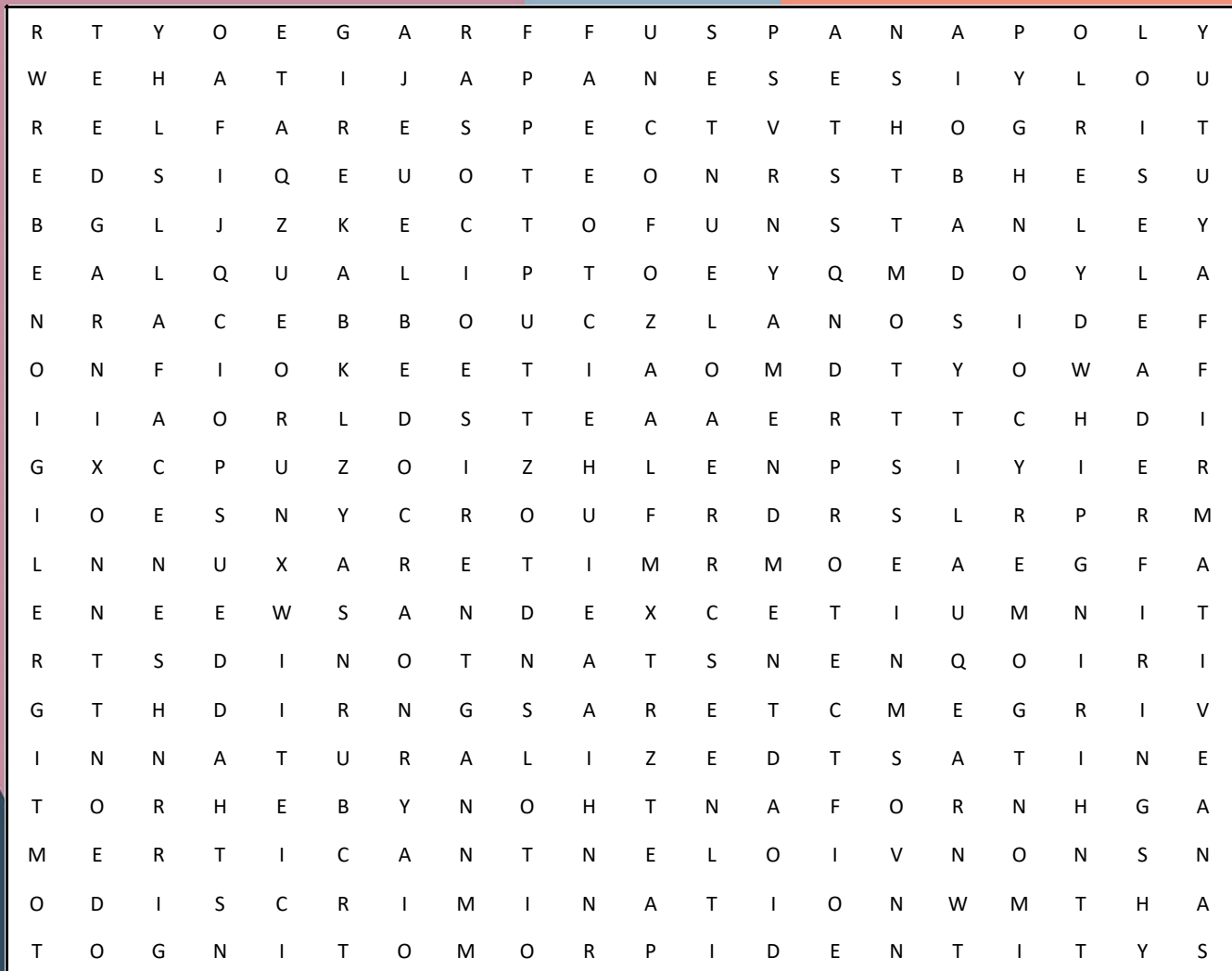
WORD SEARCH

by Cari'ssa Writer (she/her), DOC

Read the clues to figure out the missing words and then try to find them in the puzzle on the following page!

1. _____ was the first former slave to win a freedom suit in Massachusetts, in 1781.
2. The 14th _____ was originated by anti-slavery leader _____ Stevens in 1866 and ratified in 1868, granting _____ to all persons "born or _____ in the United States."
3. Josephine St Pierre Ruffin was a suffragist, editor and the co-founder of the first chapter of the _____.
4. _____ bus boycott organizer and civil rights activist _____.
5. Lucy _____ was a women's suffrage/voting rights _____.
6. Ella _____ initiated the Student _____ Coordination Committee, also known as the SNCC.
7. Winifred C. _____ was the first member of Congress to introduce legislation prohibiting _____ in pay on the basis of sex.
8. _____ Uno was civil rights advocate best known for opposing laws used to implement the mass detention of _____ Americans during World War II.
9. The first attempt to organize a national movement for women's rights occurred in _____, New York, in July 1848.
10. Susan B. _____, Elizabeth Cady _____ and Lucretia _____ are the three founders of Americas' women's _____ movement.
11. The Civil Rights Act of 1964 prohibits discrimination on the basis of _____, _____, _____, _____ or national origin. Provisions of this act forbid discrimination on the basis of sex/race in _____, _____ and _____.
12. In June of 2020, the Supreme _____ determined that against discrimination by sex in Title VII of the Civil Rights Act _____ workers.
13. _____ action seeks to overturn historical trends of discrimination against an individual's _____ by providing assistance to groups identified as subject to past or present discrimination.
14. We hope we can act in the struggle in such a way that they will see the error of their approach and will come to _____ us. Then we can all live together in peace and _____. – Martin Luther King

Helpful hint: words may be forwards, backwards or diagonal
(Ok, fine...the answers can be found on the last page, but no peeking!)



SERVE WASHINGTON



Due to the ongoing pandemic, Serve Washington is unable to host the Governor's Volunteer Service Awards this year. While we can't gather, we can still recognize the many ways Washingtonians made a difference.

Volunteers and helpers continue to show up for their communities in a variety of ways. We are eager to recognize and honor their contribution. Serve Washington is excited to announce a new effort to recognize Washington's volunteers: [The 2021 Volunteer Story Project](#)

From now until March 1 we are [collecting volunteer stories](#) to highlight on our social media channels throughout April. This will coincide with National Volunteer Week. We ask you to help us honor your volunteer (s) by participating and/or promoting the 2021 Volunteer Story Project.

Additional information and the submission form can be found on Serve Washington's [website](#).

Questions? Contact RAIN@ofm.wa.gov

A flurry of Executive Orders include protections for members of the **LGBTQ+ COMMUNITY**

by Ryan Douglas (he/him), DFI

As of the writing of this article, we are just coming up on the end of the first week of the Biden Administration, but already the new President has taken several actions that affect the LGBTQ+ community. Particularly, two Executive Orders issued in these first seven days address discrimination against people based on sexual orientation or gender identity as well as the ability for transgender folks to serve in the military.

Preventing and Combating Discrimination on the Basis of Gender Identity or Sexual Orientation

This order, signed by President Biden on his first day in office, January 20, 2021, aims to “prevent and combat discrimination on the basis of gender identity or sexual orientation, and to fully enforce Title VII [of the Civil Rights Act of 1964] and other laws that prohibit discrimination on the basis of gender identity or sexual orientation.” It instructs the heads of federal agencies to review all existing orders, regulations, guidance documents, policies, programs or other agency actions and determine whether they comply with the policy. Any that are or may be inconsistent with the Executive Order are to be considered for revision, suspension, or rescission in order to effect compliance.

The Order also acknowledges that discrimination based on gender identity or sexual orientation is experienced differently by different people, and that discrimination may overlap with other forms of prohibited discrimination, such as on the basis of race or disability. The Order instructs agencies to consider the effects of such overlapping discrimination as part of any actions it may take. Agencies must develop plans to carry out any needed action within 100 days of the date of the order, which was effective immediately.

Enabling All Qualified Americans to Serve Their Country in Uniform

Signed on January 25, 2021, this order affirms that all Americans who are qualified to serve in the Armed Forces of the United States should be allowed to do so. It revokes a Presidential Memorandum, issued by the prior administration on March 23, 2018, which barred transgender people from joining the military in most cases and also disallowed members of the military to take steps to transition gender while serving. The Order relies on the results of a 2016 study performed at the request of the Department of Defense that found that allowing transgender individuals to serve openly would have minimal impact on military readiness and healthcare costs.

The Secretary of Defense in 2016 concluded that it would be appropriate to create a process to allow transgender people to serve and to take steps to transition while serving. The Order also discusses the fact that, in 2018, all four Chiefs of Staff (Army, Navy, Marines, and Air Force) testified that they were not aware of any issues of unit cohesion, disciplinary problems, or issues of morale stemming from open service by transgender members. Further, a group of former United States Surgeons General also stated in 2018 that “transgender troops are as medically fit as their non-transgender peers and that there is no medically valid reason – including a diagnosis of gender dysphoria – to exclude them from military service or to limit their access to medically necessary care.”

The Order prohibits involuntary separations, discharges, and denials of reenlistment or continuation of service on the basis of gender identity; allows for the correction of records previously discharged under the ban; and requires the branches of the Armed Forces to report on their progress within 60 days.

Other Orders Related to Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion

Several other orders and actions related to equity have also been issued. Here is a list of some of the other orders issued through January 26, 2021.

January 20, 2020

- [Executive Order On Advancing Racial Equity and Support for Underserved Communities Through the Federal Government](#)
- [Proclamation on Ending Discriminatory Bans on Entry to The United States](#)

January 21, 2020

- [Executive Order on Ensuring an Equitable Pandemic Response and Recovery](#)

January 26, 2020

- [Memorandum Condemning and Combating Racism, Xenophobia, and Intolerance Against Asian Americans and Pacific Islanders in the United States](#)
- [Memorandum on Tribal Consultation and Strengthening Nation-to-Nation Relationships](#)
- [Executive Order on Reforming Our Incarceration System to Eliminate the Use of Privately Operated Criminal Detention Facilities](#)
- [Memorandum on Redressing Our Nation's and the Federal Government's History of Discriminatory Housing Practices and Policies](#)



Help Starts Here.

Washington State Employee Assistance Program

During the January 2021 RAIN General Membership meeting, we welcomed **K. Darrow Brown, Director of the Washington State Employee Assistance Program (EAP).**

We appreciate him taking time to facilitate a discussion that provided members the opportunity to reconnect with others and share thoughts and experiences around the issues and events of 2020 (and 2021!) that have tested our emotional, mental and physical well-being.

In addition, K. Darrow provided a [list of available resources](#).

On behalf of RAIN - thank you K. Darrow!



The Doctor is Out:

DR. RACHEL LEVINE

by Ryan Douglas (he/him), DFI

Nominated to Lead U.S. Health Policy

The last year has been a time of upheaval and work for all of us, but particularly for Dr. Rachel Levine. As the Secretary of Health for the State of Pennsylvania, she was one of the faces, along with Pennsylvania Governor Tom Wolf, of that state's response to the COVID-19 pandemic. She was confirmed to that role in 2018, elevated from her prior role as the state's physician general, which she took on three years earlier. Trained in pediatrics at Mount Sinai Medical Center in New York, she graduated from Harvard College and the Tulane University School of Medicine. Dr. Levine is also a transgender woman.



That final aspect of her identity grabbed the headlines when Joe Biden, then president-elect, announced her as his nominee to serve as the new assistance secretary of health at the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services (HHS). If confirmed, it would make her the highest-ranking openly transgender government official in U.S. history and the first ever to be confirmed by the Senate.

(To be clear, Dr. Levine will not be the first openly trans person to be appointed to a position by a president. President Obama named Amanda Simpson to be senior technical advisor to the Bureau of Industry and Security in the Commerce Department in 2010; however, that position did not require Senate confirmation.)

She will have a big job ahead of her. One of her first tasks will be helping the new administration develop a distribution plan for COVID-19 vaccines. Beyond the pandemic, she will oversee the federal government's public health policy, including reproductive, adolescent, and LGBTQ+ health. In an [interview with Philadelphia magazine](#) last July, she talked about her holistic approach to health policy, "Economic opportunity is health. A living wage with an increase in the minimum wage is actually health. Improving educational opportunities, improving nutrition, improving the environment, improving transportation for people is health. Getting rid of racism is health," she said.

In a time when LGBTQ+ access to healthcare – and especially trans healthcare – is threatened, both in the U.S. and abroad, her identity as a transgender woman is important for LGBTQ+ visibility. However, her qualifications speak for themselves, as evidenced by being confirmed three times – twice unanimously – by Pennsylvania's largely conservative state Senate. That didn't stop many news outlets from focusing predominantly, and almost exclusively, on her identity, [with many headlines](#) failing to even mention her name.

In an [interview with The Advocate](#) in March of last year, Dr. Levine laid out how she feels her identity as a transgender woman should affect her work. "I want to be judged upon my work in medicine and in public health and in this difficult time, in my work to help to protect the public health in the face of this global pandemic," she said. "It doesn't make any difference what someone's gender identity or sexual orientation is. We're really all in this together."

10-YEAR PLAN

by Marianne K. Ozmun-Wells (she/her-they/them), DSHS



Over the past twenty years or so, whenever issues of advancing equity have arisen, people in sexual orientation and gender identity minority (SGM) groups are often an afterthought or add on. We have talked for years about disproportionate involvement in systems and disparity in outcomes for women, people of color and those with disabilities, but when it comes to LGBTQIA+ communities, it's been a bit of a backward glance like, "Oh yeah, and don't forget the gays."

Those of us who identify as anything other than strictly cisgender and/or heterosexual know that we do not always have access to adequate housing or food security. Employment opportunities and advancements have often eluded us. The inability to get spousal benefits prior to 2015 left us without insurance and inheritance. The world outside of our communities has failed to consider those inequities in part because we have not historically been counted.

On January 13, 2021, a coalition of Washington State private and public agencies, spearheaded by a steering committee of people with lived experience in poverty, released their 10-year plan to dismantle poverty in our state.

That plan, '[A Blueprint for a Just and Equitable Future](#)' calls out the inequities that contribute to poverty:

"Race and social justice at the center.

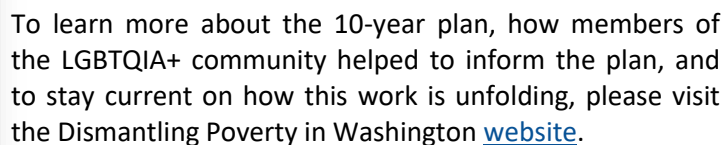
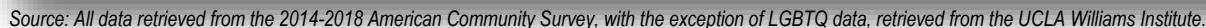
The experience of poverty is not shared equally.

Indigenous, Black, and Brown Washingtonians, women, families with young children, youth, rural residents, immigrants and refugees, seniors, LGBTQIA+, and people with disabilities have poverty rates above the state average. Reducing poverty in a way that achieves equity for each of these groups is essential for Washington state to maximize the well-being of its residents and fully realize the talent, potential, and contributions they have to offer."

LGBTQIA+ individuals, like so many other people with lived identities in historically marginalized groups, do not have access to opportunity and prosperity in the same way that cisgender and heterosexual people do. The recognition of this truth is both novel and necessary.

Continued on following page...

Percent of People Living Below 200% of the Federal Poverty Level by Age, Race, Disability, Sex, Sexual Orientation, & Gender Identity, Washington State 2014-2018*



SAFE PLACES

by RAIN Safe Places Subcommittee

The Safe Place program is a partnership of law enforcement, city offices, community businesses, and state agencies. The purpose of this program is to help LGBTQ+ community members find safety when they are experiencing harassment, bullying, bias crimes, or violence, and to increase reporting of bias-related crimes. The program combines education, training, partnership, and opportunity to encourage the community to work together to reduce bias and increase understanding and safety. Special attention is given to growing understanding of the unique danger faced by transgender individuals and promoting their protection. Local law enforcement is the program “owner” and the lead organization called to respond when someone requests assistance through the Safe Place program.

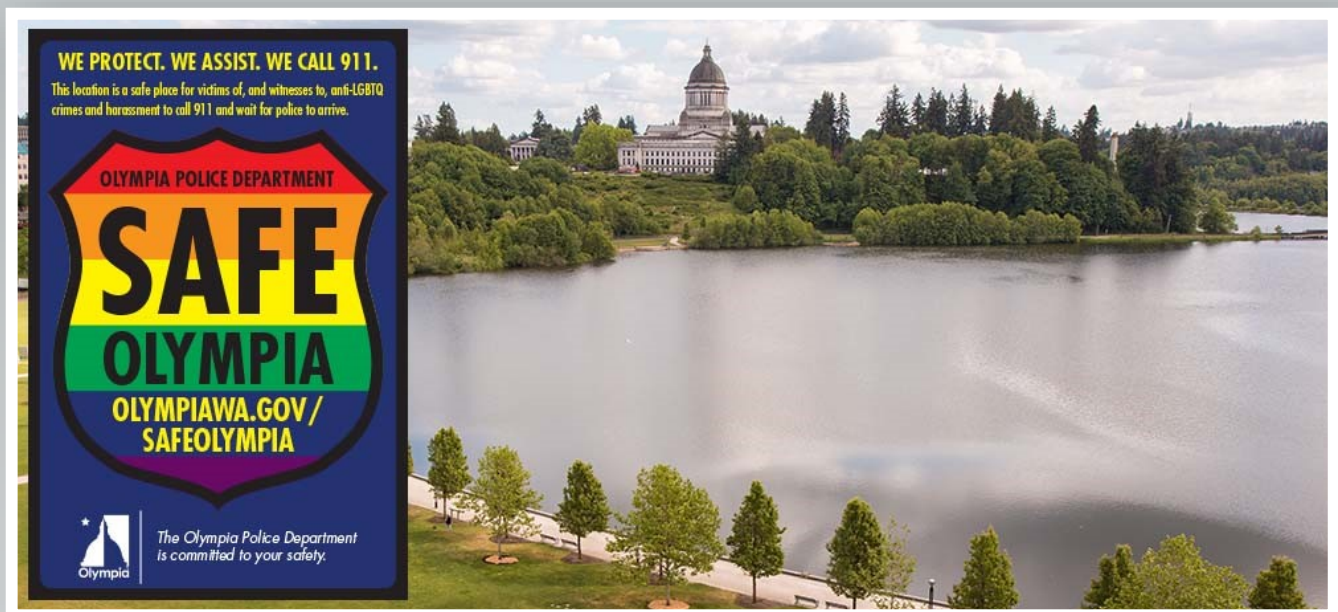
The program has expanded from Seattle, where it was launched by the Seattle Police Department, throughout the United States and around the world. Governor Inslee's [Directive 16-11](#) promotes the Safe Place program and advocates its replication. RAIN's Safe Places subcommittee has been delivering on this directive since 2017. As of January 2021, [28 state agencies](#) are participating in Olympia and nearby areas, making 32 local buildings a Safe Place.

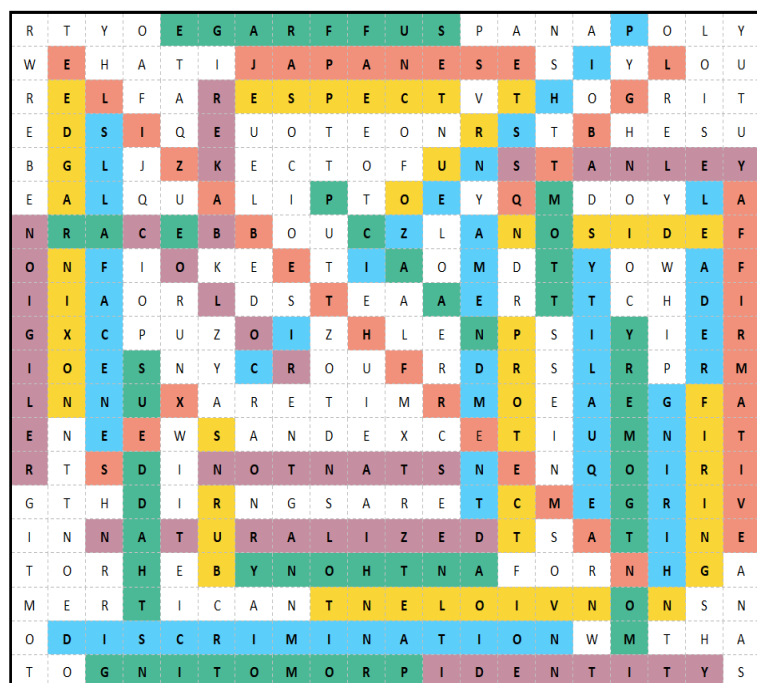


Safe Place works like this: Someone experiencing harassment can enter a building displaying the Safe Place logo and receive trained help right away. Staff in the building will call 9-1-1 immediately and welcome the person seeking help to stay inside until police arrive. Staff in each participating location are trained in specific safety protocols, offering informed and ideally culturally-sensitive assistance to the person seeking protection. The spread of the program worldwide has promoted cultural sensitivity by broadening understanding of LGBTQ+ issues and encouraging humane and effective protections.

The process for an agency to participate in the program is uncomplicated. The [Safe Place WA website](#) provides information about how to join a local Safe Place program, as well as other links and resources, including training and informational videos.

RAIN's Safe Places Subcommittee helps guide policy and provide communication and contact information. We encourage state offices, community partners, and police departments to work collaboratively with systems already in place, grow the number of Safe Place locations, and contribute to safety for all LGBTQ+ persons.





Answer Key: Civil Rights Word Search

1. Elizabeth Freeman
2. Amendment, Thaddeus, citizenship, naturalized
3. NAACP
4. Montgomery, Edgar Nixon
5. Burns, leader
6. Baker, Nonviolent
7. Stanley, discrimination
8. Edison, Japanese
9. Seneca Falls
10. Anthony, Stanton, Mott, suffrage
11. Race, color, religion, sex, hiring, promoting, firing
12. Court, protect, LGBTQ
13. Affirmative, identity
14. Respect, equality

Future newsletter ideas?

Are you aware of a community event others should know about?

Is your agency hosting a diversity-related event that needs to be highlighted?

If you have ideas for our next newsletter or would like to contribute content, please send your articles (photos are great too if you have permission!) to RAIN Communications and Outreach member [Tracey Carlos](#), no later than April 19, 2021.

