



WASHINGTON STATE
LGBTQ
COMMISSION

Executive Director's Report

November 19th, 2021

By J. Manny Santiago

Commission Meeting
Virtual Platform

The Washington State LGBTQ Commission envisions a state where every lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender, queer, two-spirit, and intersex Washingtonian of any age feels safe, supported, and empowered.

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Below is a summary of the activities of the Commission staff from September – October 2021, including legislative advocacy and community outreach.

1. STAFF AND COMMISSIONERS ACTIVITIES

Staff: In late September we welcomed Tracey Carlos as Program Manager. Tracey had the chance to work in collaboration with our previous Program Manager, Omar Santana, to transition into her role. As of now, Tracey has completed all the required trainings for her position and is doing a fantastic job.

Contractors: The Commission finished its work with the HIV Medication Access Workgroup and competed the contract with our facilitators. The contract was amended to reflect the actual number of hours the contractors worked on this workgroup.

Outreach:

The following outreach events were hosted or co-hosted by the LGBTQ Commission:

- **HIV Medication Access Town Halls:** as part of the work with the HIV Medication Access Workgroup, the Commission held two public town halls on September 20th and October 12th, to engage community members who were not able to attend regular workgroup meetings. The input received through these town halls was included in the final report.
- **LGBTQ Business Certification Town Halls:** as part of the Business & Economic Development Committee's work, the Commission held two town halls, on October 14th and 21st, with business owners and staff from the Office of Minority and Women Business Enterprises to gather feedback on the need for LGBTQ business certification.

Community and official events attended and relationship with grassroots groups:

- **Yakima Pride:** in mid-September I visited Yakima to share with the community during their pride march and festival. I had the chance to

- share more about the work of the Commission and connect with the local community and LGBTQ leadership.
- **Latino Leadership Network:** participated as a panelist for their monthly “Lunch & Learn”, which was co-hosted by RAIN and focused on the intersection of LGBTQ and Latino/a/x identities.
 - **United Way of Pierce County:** participated of several events and a panel on Latinidad as part of their Hispanic Heritage Month Challenge.
 - **Pierce County League of Women Voters:** participated on a panel for Hispanic Heritage Month.
 - **Washington Nonprofits:** continue meeting with leaders from this organization and other partners to coordinate statewide LGBTQ Executive Directors gatherings.
 - **Entre Hermanos:** met with their Deputy Director to address issues of intersectionality of LGBTQ and Latino/a/x identities.
 - **Spokane Pride:** met with staff to discuss issues related to their work in the area.
 - **Queer Youth Resources:** met with representatives of this organization in Kitsap County, working on anti-LGBTQ policies in a school district.
 - **HIV Coalition:** have participated of calls with a group of HIV activists to discuss concerns regarding recent changes to HCA rules for medications.
 - **King County Public Defender Office:** recently met with staff from the office to address concerns related to LGBTQ youth in foster care.
 - **Community members:** the Commission staff has met with members of the community, especially to address concerns around bullying, school boards not implementing inclusive curricula, and other issues related to discrimination.

2. ADVOCACY AND LEGISLATION

Government Agencies

The Commission has the mandate to engage government agencies and offer support and feedback on issues related to LGBTQ inclusion. Currently, I have met or being involved in work with the following agencies to discuss matters related to LGBTQ inclusion:

- **HIV Medication Access Workgroup:** this group finished its work in late October, and a final report and recommendations were presented to the Legislature by November 1st. All the materials related to this work can be accessed through the Commission's website here: <https://lgbtq.wa.gov/advocacy/community-work/hiv-medication-access-workgroup>
- **Office of Boards and Commissions:** continued working with this office to find suitable candidates for the Commission, and in November two new Commissioners were appointed.
- **Legislative Poverty Reduction Workgroup:** continue participating of meetings with this group to discuss ideas to address poverty in Washington and generate ideas on how to reduce poverty and support vulnerable communities.
- **Universal Basic Income Workgroup:** continue participating of the UBI workgroup which has the mandate to generate ideas to implement a UNI pilot program for the state.
- **Health and Human Services Sex and Gender Coalition:** an interagency workgroup to address the need to update forms, applications, and systems to best record and get information on people's gender identity in way that would both provide them options to self-identify and get services that only recognize the gender binary. I participate of meeting with the Coalition every other week.
- **Saying It Out Loud Conference:** I have continued to participate of monthly meetings for the SIOL Conference in Washington, which provides tools for people interested in working with or currently providing services to LGBTQ people. Participated of the annual conference and continue being part of the coordinating committee for 2022.
- **Department of Health:** met several times with leadership staff of the Infectious Diseases programs for DOH as we prepare for the work with the HIV Medication Access Workgroup.
- **Health Care Authority:** continued regular meetings with the leadership team collaborating on the HIV Medication Access Workgroup.
- **Department of Children, Youth, and Families:** participating of a co-design group to generate ideas and materials to recruit LGBTQ families as foster homes, and to address needs of LGBTQ children and youth in foster care.

- **Office of the Insurance Commissioner:** continue to meet with policy staff from the OIC to work on budget proviso to include infertility treatments as part of ACA mandate in WA.
- **Office of the Speaker of the House:** meet regularly with the Speaker and her team to discuss issues affecting the LGBTQ community.
- **Office of the Education Ombuds:** continue to meet with staff at the office as several community members have reached out for support due to increase in bullying and anti-LGBTQ actions in schools.
- **Office of Financial Management:** OFM hosts monthly meetings with the executive sponsors for the state's business resource groups and I have attended all meetings this year. I also met with staff from OFM to discuss budget provisos and requests.
- **Minority Commissions – Commission on African American Affairs, Commission on Hispanic Affairs, Commission on Asian Pacific Islander Affairs, and Women's Commission:** participated of regular calls with colleagues to support cross-agency work. Additionally, I have met with the leads of these agencies regularly to ask for feedback, offer support, or work on specific projects.
- **Office of Equity:** collaborate regularly and meet once a month with the Director of the office to discuss equity programs.
- **Rainbow Alliance and Inclusion Network (RAIN):** as their Executive Sponsor, I meet with the leadership team monthly for three hours to go over plans, offer support, listen to concerns, help develop programs, and serve as an advocate for the group with the Governor's Office and OFM.
- **Results Washington:** participate of regular meetings and updates on their work as instructed by the Commission during our last meeting.
- **Small Agencies Cabinet Forum:** have participated of regular Small Agencies Cabinet Forums where issues related to governance, policy work, COVID-19 related work, and DEI issues are addressed.
- **Legislation Prework:** continue working on legislation and have met with several legislators and policy advisors:
 - **Infertility treatment:** worked with OIC and policy advisors to submit a budget proviso request to expand infertility treatment as part of the required services covered by insurance policies in WA.
 - **Sex Work Policies:** submitted budget proviso request for \$150,000 to set up a study group on this issue. The request was

approved and now drafting language for the proviso. I have also met with several representatives of communities with an invested interest in this issue, including people currently engaged in sex work, leaders of organizations serving survivors of sexual violence, legislators, and others.

- **Legislators:** I have met with several legislators during this past month, including our Legislative Advisors to start identifying priorities and legislation to work on for the 2022 session.

Budget

Due to recent changes in leadership as well as systems of reporting, the Budget Office has not submitted reports to Commissions.