



WASHINGTON STATE
LGBTQ
COMMISSION

Executive Director's Report

January 21st, 2022

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 November and December 2021, and part of January 2022, including legislative advocacy and community outreach.

1. STAFF AND COMMISSIONERS ACTIVITIES

Staff: In early January, Commission staff interviewed with a prospective student intern from University of Puget Sound. This intern will start working with the Commission early summer, at a yet to be determined date.

Outreach:

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

- **LGBTQ Commission Reception & Celebration:** the Commission hosted a virtual reception and celebration with close to 40 participants on Tuesday, January 11th. This was a great way to connect with the community and to launch the legislative session.

Community and official events attended and relationship with grassroots groups:

- **Science and Math Institute:** in late November, I had the chance to share about the work of the Commission, Washington government, and citizenship engagement at two Advanced Spanish classes at SAMI in Tacoma.
- **University of Puget Sound:** Participated of a panel on disabilities and intersectional identities sponsored by student organizations.
- **Reframing Health & Justice:** met with staff to discuss sex work decriminalization taskforce budget proviso and get input on process.
- **API Chaya:** met with staff to discuss sex work decriminalization taskforce budget proviso and get feedback on the idea and work.
- **OutBuro:** met with founder to discuss LGBTQ policies and protections in WA, and participated of podcast to talk about the Commission and the work accomplished thus far.

- **WSCADV:** Participated of community outreach event with the Washington State Coalition Against Domestic Violence.
- **GSBA & community partners:** participated of the statewide LGBTQ leaders and LGBTQ Legislative Caucus meeting to set priorities for 2022 legislative session.
- **Cascade AIDS Project:** met with representative and lobbyist of the agency to go over legislative priorities and collaboration.
- **Fertility Access lobbyist:** met with lobbyist working on fertility care access to discuss budget proviso on infertility treatments and legislation to address this issue.
- **Diversity Center of WA:** met with director, Jean Carciun, to explore collaboration and introduce the work of the Commission.
- **Community members:** the Commission staff continues to meet with community members who bring up important issues to our attention.

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:

- **LGBTQ Legislative Caucus:** met with Senator Marko Liias, convener of this caucus, to discuss priorities for the community and strategies to move legislation forward.
- **WA Military Department:** met with representative of the Emergency Management department to discuss needs of LGBTQ Washingtonians for long-term emergency needs after pandemic.
- **Department of Social and Health Services:** have met with staff from the department to discuss LGBTQ issues, and currently participating of interviewing process for candidates for the Assistant Secretary of Economic Service Administration.
- **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.
 - **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. Additionally, have engaged staff of the department to discuss important issues related to placement 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 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.

Finally, during both November and December, I had the chance to take time off spend with family both in the mainland and in Puerto Rico. I believe it is imperative that leaders set the example on self-care and family time, and I am honored to have a member of the team, and a group of Commissioners who understand and support this perspective.