



WASHINGTON STATE
LGBTQ
COMMISSION

Executive Director's Report

May 20th, 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 March through mid-May 2022, including legislative advocacy and community outreach.

1. STAFF AND COMMISSIONERS ACTIVITIES

Staff: During these past months, both members of the staff have completed DEI Professional Certification through Cornell University.

The staff also met and interviewed four prospective interns from the University of Puget Sound. Three students accepted internship positions that will begin in late May and early June.

Outreach:

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

- **Spokane County Town Hall:** the Commission held a town hall in Spokane County on April 30th. Attendance was very low, with only one family participating, along with Commissioner A. Figueroa. Nevertheless, the staff and Commissioner were able to hear their concerns and share with them about how the Commission can support the LGBTQ community in their area. We were also able to make some important connections in the region.
- **Washington State LGBTQ Executive Directors Gathering:** once again, the Commission cosponsored and cohorted the statewide LGBTQ ED Gathering in collaboration with Washington Nonprofits on May 4th.

Community and official events attended and relationship with grassroots groups:

- **Spokane Pride Gala:** I had the honor of being the keynote speaker at the Spokane Pride Gala on April 9th.
- **A Way Home:** met with the executive director of the organization to discuss collaboration and support for LGBTQ Washingtonians experiencing homelessness.

- **MultiCare Health Systems:** met with director of health equity to discuss collaboration.
- **Untied Way of Pierce County:** met with community outreach director to discuss Pride Month Equity Challenge being coordinated by the agency.
- **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 been involved in work with the following agencies to discuss matters related to LGBTQ inclusion:

- **Office of Equity:** this Office has been restricting their work after the release of their strategic plan. The Commission, along with other partners, has been engaged in every aspect of the work: from identifying areas of growth to participating of interviewing panels for new staff.
- **America250 Washington State Committee:** the Commission was invited by the Office of the Lieutenant Governor to participate of the state's committee to coordinate the 250th anniversary of the Declaration of Independence and the founding of the United States.
- **Office of the Corrections Ombuds:** upon invitation from the Governor's executive team, participated of the interviewing panel for the recently appointed Director of the Office of the Corrections Ombuds. The announcement of the appointment can [be found here](#).
- **Office of Independent Investigations:** have continued providing support to the interim leadership of the agency as they structing the office and work with appointed members of the advisory board.
- **Department of Licensing:** in addition of participating of workgroup to review real estate training curriculum, I also met with the Director of the DOL to discuss issues of equity and inclusion for LGBTQ employees and clients.
- **Department of Archeology and Historic Preservation:** met with the Director and team of the department to discuss a recently funded

project to identify and preserve buildings of interest to the LGBTQ community in metropolitan Seattle.

- **Washington Department of Transportation:** Tracey represented the Commission on first meeting between the WDOT and Commissions to discuss collaboration to help the Department on their equity and inclusion goals.
- **Office of the Education Ombuds, Office of the Superintendent of Public Instruction, and WA Association of School Librarians:** have continued to engaged with these groups to find ways to protect LGBTQ students and their right to access LGBTQ books and publications.
- **Washington Resiliency Group:** regularly participate of meetings of the WA Resiliency Group, currently addressing system-wide challenges to accessing services and support by underserved communities. A preliminary plan to update systems and processes is currently being developed.
- **Office of the Governor's General Counsel:** met with policy advisor and team members of the office to start brainstorming ideas on how to best respond to anti-LGBTQ legislation in other states.
- **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.
- **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.
- **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.
- **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.

In addition of participating of the regular meetings of taskforces and workgroups to which the Commission is appointed, I have also met with constituents and participated of community service projects. We also met with community members who have applied to serve in the Commission to get to know them and make recommendations to the Office of Boards and Commissions for upcoming appointments. I also had the chance to meet with three out of five Commissioners whose terms end this year to get their feedback and hear their ideas to continue improving the work of the Commission.

Finally, both Tracey and I were able to take some time off during the last month.

3. COMMISSION EVENTS CALENDAR

Public meetings:

- Friday, July 15th from 10:00 am – 12:30 pm
- Friday, September 16th from 10:00 am – 12:30 pm
- Friday, November 18th from 10:00 am – 12:30 pm (officers elections during this meeting)

Town Halls:

- Skagit County Town Hall – Friday, June 10th in the afternoon/evening
- Benton/Franklin Counties Town Hall – August 20th during the day