



WASHINGTON STATE
LGBTQ
COMMISSION

Executive Director's Report

November 18th, 2022

By J. Manny Santiago

Commission Meeting
Vancouver, Clark County, WA

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 through mid-November 2022, including legislative advocacy and community outreach.

1. STAFF AND COMMISSIONERS ACTIVITIES

Staff: The staff at the Commission has been navigating the recent changes to emergency proclamations and how it affects our agency. Some of the changes affect our public meetings, and we have discussed how to best address these changes and requirements.

In the past few months, Tracey has taken more responsibilities in representing the Commission at events, boards, and taskforces. We currently have a better balance of representation between staff and Commissioners. In September I attended the Latino Leadership Conference in Miami and took two weeks off to travel. During this time, Tracey led the day-to-day matters of the agency, including representing the Commission in some meetings. Additionally, both Tracey and I supported the leadership of the newly established BRG, HAPPEN, which gathers state workers who identify as Hawaiian, Asian, and Pacific Islanders.

Outreach:

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

- **Statewide LGBTQ Executive Directors Gathering:** the Commission cohosted the third gathering for LGBTQ directors with Washington Nonprofits.
- **Untied Against Hate:** The Commission cohosts this event with the Office of the US Attorney for the District of Western Washington at the UW-Tacoma campus.

Community and official events attended and relationship with grassroots groups:

- **WA Library Association:** we have continued conversations with the WA Library Association to continue addressing the challenges posed to local school libraries. The association is currently drafting guidelines for school libraries to prevent the removal of any material without a thorough review process.
- **WA Education Association:** several meetings have been held to discuss the current coordinated anti-trans and anti-LGBTQ student movement and how to best keep our students safe. The association is also working on some legislative proposals for which they are engaging the Commission as partners.
- **United Way of Pierce County:** I have continued engaging this agency regarding both Hispanic Heritage Month and LGBTQ history month.
- **Disability Rights Washington:** currently working on brainstorming ideas to protect trans and gender diverse prison population.
- **Washington Anti-Trafficking Response Network:** the Commission has established a working relationship with this network to work on strengthening support services for survivors of sex and human trafficking in the state. We are currently working on a proposed bill to create a network of support for survivors.
- **Equal Rights Washignton:** met with the new leadership of the organization to talk about strengthening our partnership and support each other's work.
- **Cascade AIDS Project:** met with representative of the organization to continue partnerships and collaboration.
- **New Beginnings Christian Fellowship:** I was invited to be part of a podcast recording regarding LGBTQ and Latino/a/x identity as part of this congregation's efforts to address justice matters in their community.
- **ALA Consulting:** working with this group on disability-inclusive services that take into consideration all the realities of minoritized individuals.

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:

- **Office of Congressman Adam Smith:** met with the regional representative to talk about federal protections for LGBTQ people, especially in light of recent Supreme Court rulings rolling back rights for people in the USA, as well as possible future actions by the Congress to strip LGBTQ people from certain rights such as marriage, adoption, and access to culturally-competent health services.
- **Office for Regulatory Innovation and Assistance:** met with new staff at ORIA to discuss the Commission's involvement in support for businesses.
- **State Human Resources Office:** currently working with RAIN and State HR to review the definition of family and expand it to include diverse families beyond the traditional nuclear, next of kin, definition.
- **Department of Social and Health Services:** participated of the monthly meeting of the Department's "community of practice" to share about LGBTQ rights in Washington and the work of the Commission.
- **Governor's Interagency Council on Health Disparities:** met with staff from this group to discuss participation and collaboration to ensure LGBTQ Washingtonians are part of the conversations regarding health disparities.
- **Department of Health:** continue working and collaborating with DOH to address concerns regarding the state's response to MPV health emergency.
- **Office of the Superintendent of Public Instruction:** OSPI has been part of the conversations with the WA Education Association to address anti-trans and anti-LGBTQ policies by school boards and local schools.
- **Commission on African American Affairs:** recently met with my colleague Director Ed Prince to strategize on commission related internal processes and support. Out of this conversation, a multi-commission meeting will be scheduled to bring our concerns to the appropriate forums to be addressed.
- **Office of the Education Ombuds:** in addition to regular meetings to discuss matters related to LGBTQ students in schools, I have participated of meetings to help the OEO develop their PEAR strategy.

- **Washington State Patrol:** I have met several times with staff from the WSP to discuss their equity and inclusion efforts regarding LGBTQ employees at all levels.
- **US Department of Health & Human Services:** have continued strengthening these relationships. Staff has participated in discussion groups to address the federal government approach to human services.
- **Washington Resiliency Workgroup:** the groups finalized proposals for the budget to address services to the public. The proposals will include a more coordinated and responsive approach to constituents' needs when they reach out to state agencies.
- **Office of Equity:** currently in ongoing conversations regarding collaboration and implementation of the statewide equity plan. The Commission, along with other partners, has been engaged in every aspect of the work: from identifying areas of growth to participating in interviewing panels for new staff. We are also working on reviewing the Office's guidelines for compensation of people with lived-experience to participate on state boards and commissions.
- **Legislative Poverty Reduction Workgroup & Governor Poverty Reduction Workgroup:** continue participating in meetings with this group to discuss ideas to address poverty in Washington and generate ideas on how to reduce poverty and support vulnerable communities.
- **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 a way that would both provide them options to self-identify and get services that only recognize the gender binary. I participate in meetings with the Coalition every other week.
- **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 provisions and requests.
- **Minority Commissions – Commission on African American Affairs, Commission on Hispanic Affairs, Commission on Asian Pacific Islander Affairs, and Women's Commission:** participated in 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.
- **Governor’s Policy Office:** continue meeting with representatives from the policy office to strategize on policy ideas to support LGBTQ people around the state.

Other – Policy and Budget Update

Currently there are no updates regarding the budget proposals submitted by the Commission. However, I have been able to secure support for our requests from several grassroots coalitions and groups. The details of the budget requests are below:

1. *LGBTQ Youth Advisory Council:* requesting \$250,000 to, in collaboration with the Office of the Superintendent of Public Instruction, create a statewide youth advisory council to work on policy ideas to keep LGBTQ youth protected in schools.
2. *Washington LGBTQ Community Survey:* requesting \$500,000 to contract with a state research institution to develop and conduct a statewide comprehensive survey that will help identify the needs of the LGBTQ community in the state as well as have a clearer picture of the demographics of the community in Washington.

3. COMMISSION EVENTS CALENDAR

Public meetings: The Commission will be looking at the 2023 calendar of meetings during the November public meeting. I urge Commissioners to prioritize these dates on your calendar, as we have had some difficulty ensuring quorum for past meetings.

4. OTHER

As I shared on my last report, I had the immense honor of being recognized as one of the awardees of the National Latino Leadership Award. You [can read](#)

[about this award and the full list of awardees through this link](#). Locally, Mayor Victoria Woodards and the Tacoma City Council confirmed my appointment to the Board of Trustees of the Tacoma Public Library, and Governor Inslee appointed me to the Board of Trustees for Tacoma Community College. I am honored to serve my local community in this matter and look forward to building partnerships locally and throughout the state.