



WASHINGTON STATE
LGBTQ
COMMISSION

Executive Director's Report

January 19, 2024

By J. Manny Santiago

Commission Meeting
Olympia, Thurston County

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 mid-November 2023 through mid-January 2024, including legislative advocacy and community outreach.

1. STAFF AND COMMISSIONERS ACTIVITIES

Staff: During the last weeks of November and early December, I worked with OFM human resources unit to recruit for the position of Program Manager. The Commission received over a dozen applications, from which 5 people were invited to interview. An interviewing panel consisting of Commissioner Ebo Barton, former Commissioner Josette Ross, WSP and RAIN member Kim Maki, OSA and RAIN leader Marissa Sanchez-Reed, and I interviewed the candidates and offered recommendations. Through this process, Samuel Fennell (he/him) was offered the position, which he started on January 8th, 2024. Sam and Sawyer are a great team and we have already gone over each other's roles, responsibilities, and collaborative work.

As part of the administration's transition, I met with the Chief of Staff and Deputy Chief of Staff to go over the work of the Commission, its Strategic Plan, and current and future goals. This is in preparation for any possible transition after the general election in November 2024.

In late November and early December, I traveled to the District of Columbia to attend the Victory Institute International Leaders Conference. This was a great opportunity to meet other elected and appointed officials from throughout the world who are fighting for 2SLGBTQIA people through policymaking processes. At the conference, I was able to share some of our successes in Washington and connected with leaders from Peru, Brazil, Mexico, Argentina, Republic of Congo, and several US states.

In December, both Sawyer and I had to take medical leave for different reasons, which meant that the Commission was closed or working on a limited basis for approximately two weeks between December and January.

Finally, as you are aware, in December I informed the Governor of my decision to step down from the role of Executive Director of the WA State LGBTQ Commission. This decision was made public in early January to Commissioners and the community. My last day with the Commission is January 31st. I am currently working with the Deputy Chief of Staff and the Co-Chairs of the Commission to identify potential candidates for Acting Director while the search is in place for a permanent appointment. The job posting is now public and interested candidates can [apply through this link](#).

It has been a real honor to serve the people of Washington and the 2SLGBTQIA community in our state. I am grateful for the support I have received from all of you, the community, and my colleagues in the Inslee administration. The work continues, and I have full confidence in Sawyer and Sam's ability to support the work as the Governor considers candidates and makes a formal appointment to this position.

Outreach:

- **Pierce County Chamber of Commerce:** On December 6th, I participated of the Pierce County Chamber of Commerce's holiday gathering. This event was organized to offer the opportunity for business leaders to meet with elected and appointed officials from the Pierce County area. I was able to connect with several business owners and local and statewide officials and share about the LGBTQ certification process the Commission has advocated for.

Community and official events attended, meetings, and relationship building with grassroots groups:

- **Seattle LGBTQ Center (formerly Gay City):** Met with their new Executive Director Nakita Venus, to welcome them, discuss the role of the Commission and how we can support their and the organization's work.
- **GSBA:** After the great news about Governor Inslee adding LGBTQ certification to his budget, I reached out and met with staff at GSBA to talk about strategies and next steps.

- **AHAT Homecare:** Continued meeting with leadership to provide support as the agency helps clients impacted by the DOH's cancellation of contracts with PCAF.
- **QLaw:** Sawyer represented the Commission at QLaw's meeting to plan and strategize for the 2024 legislative session. They shared our legislative priorities and concerns, as well as gathered feedback from the community on their priorities and concerns.
- **Anti-Defamation League of WA:** I have met with their director and participated of their legislative brief to coordinate efforts to support the establishment of a bias helpline within the Office of the Attorney General.
- **Queer Power Alliance:** Met with their Executive Director to discuss their work and explore partnership for the comprehensive LGBTQ survey.
- **Rainbow Center:** Met with the President of their Board to discuss support for the agency as they go through leadership transitions.

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 the Governor:** met with Chief of Staff Jamila Thomas and Deputy Chief of Staff Kelly Wicker to discuss government transition in January 2025.
- **Office of the Education Ombuds:** recently met with their Director, Erin Okuno. This was a very productive meeting where I shared with Director Okuno some of our concerns with OEO's strategic priorities leaving sexual orientation and gender identity out of their priorities.
- **DCYF Advisory Committee:** I have met regularly with the EDI advisory committee for the agency to provide guidance and support regarding their internal LGBTQ policies.
- **Office of the Insurance Commissioner:** I met with leaders of their diversity council to discuss LGBTQ displays and flag raising during Pride

- month. The OIC is creating internal guidelines for the display of cultural symbols and they consulted with us regarding LGBTQ cultural symbols.
- **DES Cal Anderson Memorial Workgoup:** met with the workgroup to continue exploring ideas related to honoring the memory of the late Cal Anderson, the first openly gay legislator in the state.
 - **Western Washington University:** I recently was a speaker at their annual Queering Research: Legislative Update, where I had the chance to share the Commission's priorities and the anti-LGBTQ legislation presented this session.
 - **Department of Health:** Provided feedback and analysis for anti-trans youth legislation that is being prepared by the DOH as requested by the Legislature.
 - **Governor's Policy Office:** I am attending the weekly sub-cabinet meetings related to the current legislative session. During these weekly meetings, the different agencies that work on specific topics share their priorities and update each other on where the bills that impact their constituents are in the process. I currently participate in the Education and the General Government sub-cabinets.
 - **Office of Financial Management:** I continue meeting with staff of OFM for different things such as:
 - **Budget Office:** continue meeting regularly with state CFO and staff to discuss operating budget for the Commission.
 - **OFM Human Resources:** continued meetings with HR consultant to discuss personnel evaluations, recruitment and onboarding of new staff, and address other personnel matters. I also met with the recruiter several times as we discussed the plan for hiring a Program Manager.
 - **Contracts Office:** I met several times with staff from the Contracts Office to go over the proposals to conduct a comprehensive LGBTQ survey, finalize the contract, and plan next steps. I have also attended training sessions offered by the Contract Office related to the changes in contracting rules in the state.
 - **BRGs Coordinator:** there are two regular meetings with OFM staff regarding BRGs and leadership. These meetings are designed to address the most common challenges that members of the BRG leadership teams face.

- **Office of Equity:** Sawyer and I attended part of the two-day Equity Summit hosted by this agency. I also attend the regular meetings between the Office of Equity and the different commissions, committees, and agencies that serve minoritized communities. These meetings help in coordinating a unified voice to advocate for justice and equity in our state.
- **Washington State Women’s Commission:** I continue meeting regularly with their Director Grace Yoo, and staff.
- **Governor’s Subcabinet on Business Diversity:** The Commission is now a full member of the Subcabinet, and I will continue attending meetings and receiving updates on their progress.
- **Poverty Reduction Workgroup:** The official representative from our agency is Commissioner Ebo Barton, and I receive regular updates from the staff of this workgroup on the status of the implementation of the policies.
- **Commission on Hispanic Affairs:** I continue the regular check-in meetings with Director Sigüenza.
- **Health and Human Services Sex and Gender Coalition:** This group is currently not meeting regularly as the staff implements some of the guidelines already approved. However, they send regular updates to the members of the coalition. The group will convene again in 2024.
- **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.

Other – Policy and Budget Update

- a) LGBTQ Comprehensive Survey: the contract is signed, and the research team is already planning community meetings. Recently, the research team and the staff of the Commission met to go over the details of the work and to plan for the next steps. Sam is now the primary point of contact and he is working with the research team on the next steps for this project.
- b) LGBTQ Youth Advisory Council: Sam has presented his plan for this project and will be taking the lead on reaching out to community groups and partners.

c) LGBTQ Business Certification: this project now resides within the Office of Minority and Women Business Enterprises. They will be working with the Commission and the GSBA to create informational materials as the budget is presented to the Legislature and as the program is rolled out.

3. BUDGET REPORT (AS OF SEPTEMBER 2023)

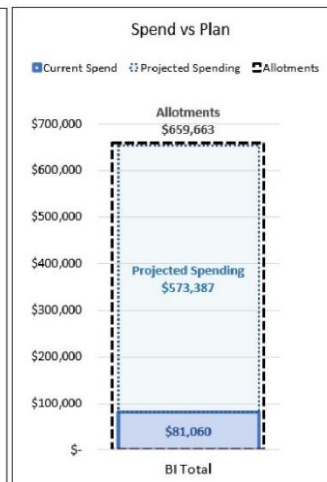
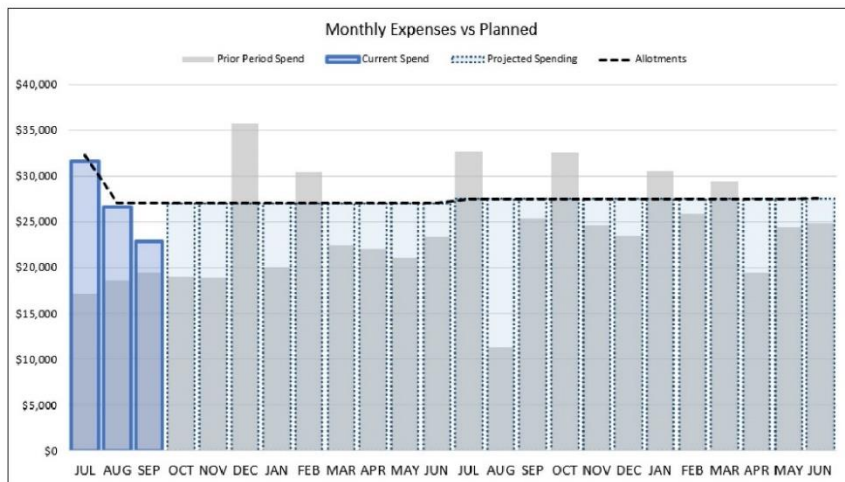
LGBTQ (031) - Salaries and Expenses

Fund 001 General Fund: 011/012

Expenses	FM01 JUL	FM02 AUG	FM03 SEP	YTD Total	YTD Allotments	Variance	Total Annual Allotments	Total Annual Projections	Projected Variance	
A / Salaries	-	19,598	18,765	14,431	52,794	51,856	(938)	195,418	196,356	(938)
B / Employee Benefits	-	5,024	5,552	4,818	15,394	16,075	681	60,580	59,899	681
C / Professional Service Contracts	-	-	-	-	-	1,125	1,125	4,500	3,375	1,125
EA / Supplies and Materials	-	312	-	214	526	651	125	2,900	2,475	125
EB / Communications/Telecommunications	-	-	247	132	379	375	(4)	1,500	1,504	(4)
EC / Utilities	-	-	-	311	311	876	565	3,500	2,935	565
ED / Rentals and Leases - Land & Buildings	-	1,087	1,087	1,087	3,261	2,451	(810)	9,800	10,610	(810)
EF / Printing and Reproduction	-	-	-	-	-	24	24	100	76	24
EG / Employee Prof Dev & Training	-	395	595	-	990	249	(741)	1,000	1,741	(741)
EH / Rental & Leases - Furn & Equipment	-	-	-	-	-	549	549	2,200	1,651	549
EM / Attorney General Services	-	-	426	218	644	600	(44)	2,400	2,444	(44)
ER / Other Contractual Services	-	-	-	140	140	1,476	1,336	5,902	4,566	1,336
EY / Software Licenses and Maintenance	-	-	-	-	-	1,650	1,650	6,600	4,950	1,650
EZ / Other Goods and Services	-	-	-	-	-	3,249	3,249	13,000	9,751	3,249
G / Travel	-	4,935	(66)	1,319	6,188	5,070	(1,118)	20,300	21,418	(1,118)
J / Capital Outlays	-	-	33	-	33	-	(33)	-	33	(33)
N / Grants	-	200	-	200	400	-	(400)	-	400	(400)
TOTAL EXPENSES	-	31,551	26,639	22,870	81,060	86,276	5,216	329,400	324,184	5,216

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4. COMMISSION EVENTS CALENDAR

- *Public meetings:*
 - Friday, March 15th, 9:00 am – 5:00 pm: Snohomish County
 - Friday, May 17th, 9:00 am – 5:00 pm: Yakima County
 - Friday, July 19th, 12:00 noon – 5:00 pm and Saturday, July 20th, 9:00 am – 12:00 noon: Jefferson County
 - Friday, October 18th, 9:00 am – 5:00 pm: Thurston County
- *LGBTQ Comprehensive Survey Grounding Session*
 - Tuesday, January 30th, 9:00 am – 12:00 noon at LGBTQ Commission Office (virtual option will be provided by the research team.)
- *LGBTQ Youth Advisory Board Town Hall*
 - Saturday, February 17th, 1:00 – 5:00 pm, [virtual through this link](#).