

# RAIN ANNUAL REPORT

## 2023-2024



# A LETTER FROM OUR CO-CHAIRS

Dear RAIN Members and RAIN Community-at-large,

As we get settled into the new fiscal year, we are thrilled to present our Annual Report, highlighting a year of significant achievements for the Rainbow Alliance and Inclusion Network Business Resource Group that reflects our unwavering commitment to inclusivity and belonging.

One of the most noteworthy accomplishments has been the signing into law of ESSB 5793, which expanded the definition of family member for Washington state employees for the purposes of paid sick leave. This legislation started as a recommendation from Best Practices and is a testament to our group's advocacy. It aligns perfectly with our mission to help Washington State create safe and inclusive workplaces where every LGBTQ+ employee can bring their full authentic self to work, enabling them to do their best work every day for the people of Washington, by supporting diverse family structures and promoting equity within our government. It took many people volunteering an astounding amount of time, coordination, and energy to take the Senate Bill from an idea into law.

In addition to this legislative success, we have also undertaken a major update to the RAIN charter. This revision included affirming our Training team as an official subcommittee of RAIN, and fleshing out the newest leadership roles to help with future hand-offs as new leadership is elected each year. RAIN was invited to speak at the Capitol Flag Raising event and held a post-flag reception in coordination with the Washington state LGBTQ Commission that was attended by many community members as well as state workers. We are very proud to welcome Laura Watson, Director of Department of Ecology, as our new Executive Sponsor and look forward to our partnership growing.

We would love to gush about all our subcommittee's milestones and achievements, but this annual report was created by all the leaders of RAIN to tell that story. As we reflect on the collective effort and dedication that has driven our success, it is important to remind our readers that RAIN is entirely made up of volunteers doing this in addition to our normal jobs. These achievements belong to every member of RAIN. They are a direct result of your engagement, advocacy, and commitment to our shared goals. Each one of you has played a crucial role in reaching these milestones, and together, we have made significant strides toward a more inclusive future.

We extend our deepest gratitude to all who have contributed to RAIN and supported our mission throughout the year.

Your RAIN Co-Chairs,



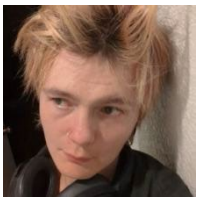
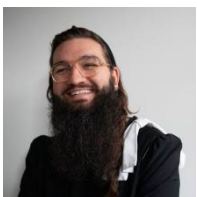

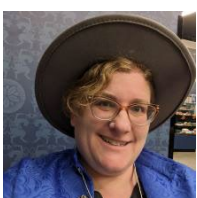
Chase and Mark

# OUR PURPOSE







The purpose of RAIN is to advise and develop strategies for creating safe, diverse, and inclusive workplaces for our LGBTQ+ employees and customers. Identify best practices for employers and employees within state public service agencies and institutions. Work with the Governor's Policy Office and Office of Financial Management to develop and maintain a statewide Safe Place program for public-facing state offices so community members potentially facing harassment can connect with emergency and related services.



# 2024 OFFICERS

<p><b>CHASE BAYNE</b> They/Them, Co-Chair</p>	
<p><b>MARK METZGER</b> He/Him, Co-Chair</p>	
<p><b>SAM SIMSKEY</b> They/Them, Finance &amp; Budget Manager</p>	
<p><b>LUKE MARTIN</b> They/Them, Administrative Liaison</p>	
<p><b>TYLER TROUTMAN</b> He/Him, Administrative Liaison</p>	
<p><b>AYLIS JAY</b> They/Them, Project Manager</p>	

# 2024 ADVISORY COMMITTEE

<b>CALEB BALDWIN</b> He/They, Communications and Outreach Co-Chair	
<b>BETH BARRON</b> She/Her, Safe Places Co-Chair	
<b>CHESS CLAIRE</b> They/He, Training Co-Chair	
<b>KAITY CAZARES</b> They/Them, Best Practices Co-Chair	
<b>MIRANDA LEWIS</b> She/They, Communications and Outreach Co-Chair	
<b>ALISON MIELKE</b> She/Her, Safe Places Co-Chair	
<b>QUINN SNOW</b> He/Him, Best Practices Co-Chair	
<b>REBECCA VIGOREN</b> She/Them, Training Co-Chair	

# 2023-2024 ACCOMPLISHMENTS

<b>1</b>	<b>Active Membership Increased 14.47%</b> We successfully built strong relationships with internal and external entities and increased membership from 159 to 182 active members.
<b>2</b>	<b>Average Attendance Increased 15%</b> Attendance at RAIN general membership meetings increased from 60 to 69 diverse participants from a wide range of state agencies.
<b>3</b>	<b>Email Subscribers Increased 17.49%</b> Email subscriber list increased from 3614 to 4,246 readers.
<b>4</b>	<b>Continued to develop structures and processes</b> Successfully identified and developed best practices for the collection and dissemination of vital information to state employees, employers, and collaborators.
<b>5</b>	<b>Create and Develop Safe Place Program</b> Engaged with sub-committee members, the Governor’s policy office, and partners to develop a sustainable program providing community and safety for LGBTQ+ individuals.

# 2023-2024 GOALS

- Further develop two new leadership positions.
- Continue to create and offer trainings to support LGBTQ+ individuals.
- Create a social media policy.
- Increase active membership, meeting attendance, and meeting engagement.
- Set a standard booking procedure for guest speakers to ensure consistent and timely reservations.
- Establish sustainable funding for RAIN to support operations and expand visibility at pride events.

# FINANCE REPORT

## 7/1/2023-7/5/2024

Prior FY Balance (General)	\$131,713.84
Prior FY Balance (ASL/CART)	\$48,565.32
Prior Balance Total	\$189,279.16
<b>Revenue (WSECU BRG Sponsorship)</b>	<b>\$1,667.00</b>
<b>Expenses</b>	
General	\$9,474.04
ASL/CART	\$1,575.36
<b>Total Expenses</b>	<b>\$11,049.40</b>
<b>TOTAL CURRENT BALANCE</b>	<b>\$170,896.76</b>



# PROJECT MANAGER

This was the second year RAIN has had an elected project manager, and establishing the cadence and capacity for the position is still in development. As projects have turned into cyclical work it became evident that RAIN needed a project manager for the major events each year, but the project manager position also supported efforts and needs that came up as the year progressed. The Project Manager was responsible for the Agency Awards, the annual report, 6 Washington-wide Pride events, Trans Day of Visibility support, and intersectionality efforts.

## ACCOMPLISHMENTS

- RAIN collaborated with and co-backed the LGBTQ Commission during the annual Pride Flag raising at the Capitol, followed by a reception offering refreshments for all participants.
- In an extensive initiative to create community engagement opportunities throughout the state during a challenging national dialogue on the rights and freedoms of the 2SLGBTQIA+ community, RAIN attended six Pride events in Olympia, Seattle, Centralia, Kitsap, Spokane, and Tacoma in June and July. This involved uniting members at shared events, organizing volunteers, and arranging for the production and distribution of promotional materials and informational handouts for these events and other smaller endeavors.
- An Annual Report Template has been developed and is currently undergoing testing and refinement this year.
- Progress continues on the development of a leadership desk aide, and the RAIN Teams folders have been equipped with resources to support ongoing initiatives.
- The charter has been revised to establish the Training Team as an official subcommittee. Additionally, amendments have been made to allow for multiple project managers to address workload and capacity concerns. Project assistance is extended to subcommittees as required, particularly to the Communications and Outreach team during a change in leadership. Processes, protocols, and procedures have been updated for each recurring project. Updates have been made to agency award materials, nominations were initiated through Forms, and a project plan is being formulated for the awards ceremony scheduled for 10/17 at Helen Sommers.

## GOALS

- Enhance a sustainable strategy to advance RAIN projects and initiatives for the communities we support.
- Concentrate project efforts on areas where they can make the greatest impact.
- Emphasize intersectionality.
- Provide opportunities for healing and support in the upcoming year.
- Enhance the skills of Project and Finance Managers.
- Introduce a Trans Day of Visibility alternative for individuals who prefer not to participate in panels but wish to share their voices.



# BEST PRACTICES

The RAIN BRG Best Practices Subcommittee exists to gather, evaluate, and disseminate best practices for use by Washington State agencies and institutions. We meet after general membership meetings and additionally on the first Thursday of each month to discuss subcommittee business. We have had stable leadership this year from Quinn Snow and Kaity Cazares, who both will be continuing their leadership of the group for the foreseeable future.

## ACCOMPLISHMENTS

- Assisted in transforming the ad-hoc training group into a permanent subcommittee.
- Enhanced the Pride Toolkit by incorporating accessibility enhancements
- Broadening the Definition of Family – ESSB 5793 was approved and will be implemented on January 1, 2025.

## IN-PROCESS

- Implementing a Cross-BRG Professionalism project focusing on dress code.
- Refreshing packages from previous years.
- Collaborating with the Department of Commerce to present a case study on bathroom signage.
- Assisting in revitalizing the Space Places program.
- Suggesting revisions to OFM’s DEI Glossary.

## GOALS

- Conduct a fresh membership survey ("I feel..." survey)
- Develop a guide for meeting facilitation
- Revise the Transitioning in the Workplace Toolkit
- Advance the projects of the Sexual Orientation and Gender Identity workgroup
- Keep reviewing and exchanging best practices within the agency



# TRAINING

The training subcommittee was established as an official entity following the approval of the 2024 charter. Its primary objectives include offering up-to-date best practices on gender and pronoun identity to all state employees interested in learning. Moreover, the subcommittee focuses on a train-the-trainer approach and provides numerous chances for the professional and personal growth of state employees. Co-chaired by Rebecca Vigoren and Chess Claire, with Marika Barto serving as the content creation lead.

## ACCOMPLISHMENTS

- Implemented training registration through the "Learning Center" on the Enterprise Learning Management system, enabling state employees to register, attend, and earn credits in collaboration with DES.
- Conducted bi-monthly training sessions, except in June.
- Provided training to 13 trainers using our train-the-trainer program, who then successfully led all 22 training sessions throughout the year.
- Elevated 2 trainers to lead trainer positions.
- Created a companion training for the "Transitioning in the Workplace" Toolkit under the guidance of Marika Barto.
- Marika and her team organized multiple "Transitioning in the Workplace" Trainings to coincide with the toolkit launch in the state enterprise system.

## IN - PROCESS

- Reviewing training content to incorporate the latest best practices updates
- Automating key aspects of onboarding new trainers and administrative tasks involved in managing this subcommittee

# COMMUNICATIONS AND OUTREACH

The Communications and Outreach Subcommittee is vital for raising awareness about RAIN's mission, attracting new members, and fostering a sense of community. By effectively communicating with and engaging collaborators and allies from across the state, RAIN's Communications and Outreach Subcommittee helps to build a strong rapport and ensure the success of the State's 2SLGBTQ+ Business Resource Group.

## ACCOMPLISHMENTS

- Leadership Changes: Caleb Baldwin found a new co-chair in Miranda Lewis.
- Quarterly Newsletter: Successfully published with design support from Cres Perez with contributions from several excellent writers.
- Washington State Pride Tour: Under the leadership of Aylis Jay, we helped coordinate representation at several pride events in June and July.
- Our committee helped coordinate for the RAIN Advisory Committee and members to staff tables, march in parades, and provide resources, including hand-made buttons crafted at a button-making party hosted by Aylis Jay.
- Safe Spaces Committee Support: We spent subcommittee break-out time brainstorming and generating ideas for program implementation. Ultimately, we crafted a comprehensive proposal shared with RAIN leadership, which includes program overview, objectives, rationale, strategy, resources for development, and potential deliverables.

## GOALS

- Engage community for new speakers and partners with [S.P.I.C.E.](#)
  - Seek new partners
  - Partner and work in shared decision-making
  - Connect, collaborate, and compensate community members
  - Engage with others to understand the perspectives of community members
- Enhance Pride participation process
- Engage with state BRGs for intersectional support
- Organize political leader panel for 2SLGBTQ+ community



# SAFE PLACES

RAIN and the Safe Places subcommittee were established by Governor Inslee's directive 16-11 in 2016. This directive created the RAIN BRG and tasked RAIN with developing a Safe Places program similar to the Seattle Police Department's (SPD) initiative. The SPD program features a decal that community members, businesses, and government buildings can display to indicate they are safe locations for LGBTQ+ individuals who are victims of harassment or hate crimes, providing refuge while awaiting an automatic law enforcement response. The directive applies to Washington State Patrol and state buildings only. However, the decal's inclusion of a law enforcement badge is problematic for RAIN due to its historical associations with slavery.

Since then, RAIN's Safe Places subcommittee has collaborated with SPD and WSP. RAIN leadership and members strongly oppose a mandatory law enforcement response for LGBTQ+ individuals or other marginalized communities who are victims of harassment or hate crimes, due to historically challenging interactions with law enforcement. Consequently, the Safe Places subcommittee has faced difficulties in progressing with the program.

## GOALS

Currently, the Safe Places subcommittee has received increased support from the RAIN Advisory Committee and all other RAIN subcommittees. They are reevaluating how to advance this program with RAIN's backing. The goal is to pinpoint ways for RAIN to guide or suggest how the State of Washington can better support its LGBTQ+ staff. This could involve advice on gender-neutral facilities and various other options. Although obtaining a new directive from the incoming Governor in January 2025 would be necessary, it seems vital to sustain the initiatives for supporting LGBTQ+ state employees.

# IN CLOSING: QUEER JOY

The work we do in RAIN serves to support and celebrate the LGBTQ+ community across the state of Washington. We strive to provide the opportunity for every member of our community to thrive and to cultivate queer joy! When we asked our members what brings them queer joy, these were some of their responses:

**GATHERING IN PHYSICAL AND VIRTUAL SPACES OF QUEER PEOPLE.**



**Spending time in Community where we all gather and support and lift one another.**

*Experiencing people living as who they truly are!*

**Uplifting my chosen family, friends, and all of the incredible queer people making society better through their activism, work, and art.**

Supporting fellow queer and trans friends.

**I love seeing people actively living their life and feeling comfortable showing up as they are.**

*Not having to explain myself or "why" I am who I am.*

**people expressing their full authenticity, being weird, and being their truest selves**



Being able to have kinship with others and truly feel like one of a community.