



WASHINGTON DEI
**EMPOWERMENT
CONFERENCE**

Equity and Belonging
through disrupting
Policy and Practice

June 5 6 11 12
2024 

Brought to you by Washington state employees and agencies

Welcome to the 2024 Diversity, Equity and Inclusion (DEI) Empowerment Conference!

We are committed to supporting statewide and agency-specific equity and anti-racism work, with the goal of building more just systems and fostering a culture of inclusion and belonging in our state workforce. The following ground rules help provide the safety of structure so you can be yourself while engaging in learning and discussion with others.

Thank you for participating,
The Washington State Employee DEI Empowerment Conference Planning Committee

Participation Guidelines for Empathetic Dialogues



You are where you are.

Each of you brings unique experiences, perspectives, and ideas. No one expects you to have all the answers. Learn to be comfortable with very different experiences, perspectives, and ideas.

You are here to teach and to learn. And so is everyone else.

Great leaders are great teachers, & great teachers are great learners. Strive for a lifelong commitment to cultural learning. Don't be afraid to respectfully challenge one another by asking questions. Try to challenge the idea, not the individual. Be open to receiving feedback or being respectfully challenged by others. Take good care of yourself in the moment: it is okay to delay or exit a discussion.

Avoid judging people. Bring empathy, grace and confidentiality.

Learners are striving to learn about deeper issues. Avoid assumptions about individuals based on generalizations about groups. Avoid speculation, inflammatory language, and blame. Also, mistakes will be made, acknowledge and learn from them. This journey often requires learning through iterations of growth and failure.

Share the spotlight and W.A.I.T.

Listening well is a vital part of teaching and learning and so is speaking your truth. Share the spotlight and use the acronym W.A.I.T. (Why Am I Talking) to understand your purpose for talking. WAITing or stopping to be mindful about your role and input in the discussion puts you back in choice. Growth and understanding often come after we have chosen to sit in silence and listen to lived experience and expertise. Seek first to understand, then to be understood.





Be a Revolution! - Welcome Keynote and Q&A

Ijeoma Oluo, Seattle-based Writer, Speaker and Internet Yeller

Washington's own New York Times Best Selling author, Ijeoma Oluo, joins us with an inspirational call to action from her latest book, "Be A Revolution: How Everyday People Are Fighting Oppression and Changing the World – and How You Can, Too." Oluo will share insights from and her DEI work and scholarship, which also includes the celebrated books, "So You Want to Talk About Race" and "Mediocre: the Dangerous Legacy of White Male Power."



Ownership > Buy In: Creating a Curious Culture

Pat McGregor (he/him) & Amandeep Puri (she/her), Washington State Patrol

Join us as we seek to address the critical aspects of organizational development. We'll talk about the importance and impact of bridging learning gaps, establishing effective norms, structuring inclusive conversations, creating engaging activities, and fostering community engagement within an agency. Participants will gain practical insights and strategies to enhance learning experiences, promote collaboration, and build a positive organizational culture.



Equity and Belonging – Why am I so emotional?

Aunna Moss (she/her) & Lenora Sneva (she/her), Office of Financial Management

Aunna and Lenora will navigate you through the emotional aspects of change in equity and belonging work. This session will help you identify feelings and acknowledge loss using practical organization change management frameworks including the Kubler Ross Change Curve and the William Bridges Transition Model. The Office of Financial Management (OFM) is using organization change management frameworks to help embed diversity, equity, inclusion and belonging into agency culture. We will share how OFM developed and implemented an equity and belonging forum.



Building DEIB Momentum Amid the War Against DEI

Marianne Ozmun-Wells (she/they), Department of Licensing

In a Pro-Equity, Anti-Racist state, we are obligated to acknowledge and speak truth and mobilize against common threats to equity. This session will look at narrative and statistical evidence of "anti-DEIB" efforts combined with data about hate-motivated actions. Through media and case studies, we will explore how anti-DEIB efforts have succeeded, while simultaneously exploring "bright spots," DEIB models that have shown sustainability and success. We will discuss best practice tools for building DEIB momentum; and share self and community care approaches in this emotionally taxing work.





Combatting Islamophobia and Antisemitism

Maha Elgenaidi and Karen Stiller, Islamic Networks Group Interfaith Speaker's Bureau

Since the escalation of violence in Gaza and Israel in October 2023, both Islamophobic and antisemitic incidents have surged in the U.S. A panel featuring a Muslim speaker and a Jewish speaker aims to shed light on these forms of bigotry. They will define the roots and tropes of Islamophobia and antisemitism and examine how they've impacted ordinary Americans from diverse backgrounds – Muslim, Arab, Palestinian, Jewish, and Israeli. The panel concludes by offering recommendations to combat these prejudices at both interpersonal and institutional levels.



The ADA: A Model for Disrupting Policies and Practices to Foster Equity

Northwest Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA Center)

The Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) recognizes that seemingly neutral policies or practices can create barriers that unnecessarily exclude individuals with disabilities. The ADA creates a roadmap for the disruption of such policies and practices. This session will share practical tips and examples of using the ADA reasonable modification and reasonable accommodation processes; examine ways to promote equity by creating inclusive environments that adhere to or exceed ADA requirements; and demonstrate how we can extend these concepts and methods to disrupt any exclusionary policy and promote equity and belonging.



The Myth of the Model Minority

Jim Mendoza (he/him), Hawaiians, Asians, and Pacific Islanders Promoting an Empowerment Network BRG (HAPPEN)

Stereotypes about Asian Americans are often held up as proof that racial labels can be flattering, but they subtly produce a number of problems in schools and workplaces. This presentation will define the term "model minority", illustrate through video and personal experience the impact of micro and macro-aggressions caused, and offer solutions via open forum.



Immigration as a Barrier to Employment- Raising Every Voice

Teddy Dianah Kemirembe (she/her), Sarah MacLeod (she/her), & Seth Pilkey (he/him), Department of Social and Health Services

This session will discuss what practices are needed to remove or reduce immigration as a barrier to employment. We will review the ways organizations can hear directly the voice of every team member and how to raise that voice. We will discuss the development of recruitment materials, the process of holistic review of immigration H.R. policy, and how to structure a raise every voice tour that increases Shared Power. With the goal of mitigating bias and comparing candidates as equitably as possible.





Disrupting Organizational Status Quo By Identifying Equity Gaps

Dr. William Lewis (he/him), Willhouse Global

Dr. Lewis, award-winning author (Sweet Potato or Pumpkin Pie: Conversations with my White Friends) and national people and culture thought leader, invites participants into a conversation about why organizational assessment is important in disrupting status quo policies and practices that keep diverse employee populations from reaching their full potential within the organization. Participants will take a belonging organizational assessment, discuss results and receive feedback in real time. Participants will leave with tips and strategies for using assessment data to help build a culture of belonging.



Enhancing Veteran Inclusivity in Washington State Workforce

Veterans Employee Resource Group (VERG) BRG Members

This session aims to highlight the current state of veteran’s preference policies in WA, and the underutilization of veterans’ special appointments. It will address the issue of veterans’ service time not accruing leave/sick time benefits, diminishing benefits for veterans and the very definition of ‘Veteran’ for the purposes of awarding benefits and legal recognition. The need for waivers for education in job postings, military service/training to be equivalent to college degree/courses for position qualifications, and how the lack of veteran’s preference policy affects employment. The presentation will conclude with a discussion of the legal framework and challenges, and the Veterans In-State Shared Leave Policy.



Disability Inclusion: Simple Steps You Can Take Today

Linda Lohdefinck (she/her) and Sarah Norton (she/her), Disability Inclusion Network (DIN) BRG

Understanding what access, accessibility, and usability are is just the first step in creating an inclusive, equitable, and just workplace where all employees have a sense of belonging. Join members of the WA State Disability Inclusion Network BRG as we not only provide a background on these key terms, but give you practical steps you can take to improve access, accessibility, and usability for people with disabilities in your workspaces. Whether you are a director, administrator, supervisor, or you are leading change from within, this is the place to be to learn how to make all employees belong in our workspaces.



Embedding The 4-D Model of Neuro-Inclusive Communication

Chris Hooten, M.A. (they/them), Chris Hooten Consulting

Learn about the 4-D Model of Neuro-inclusive Communication, a customizable framework that helps managers tackle communications challenges while breaking down each of the four D's that make up the communication mode: Direct, Deliberate, Descriptive, and Diverse. With one in five people being Neurodivergent in today's America, this model is crucial for ensuring that no one is left behind and that everyone can effectively communicate to drive a mission forward.





Supporting Leadership and Utilizing BRGs to Recruit and Retain Latine Employees

Hermína Esqueda (she/her/ella), Tony Griego (he/him) & Monica Andrade Hupp (she/her), Latino Leadership Network (LLN) BRG

Washington’s Latine population continues to grow at a rate higher than other demographic groups. Despite this, Latines are underrepresented in our public service workforce. Latine employees are also entering a work environment that often doesn’t understand their lived experience,



challenges, or unique gifts and opportunities. This leads to challenges with recruitment and retention. Fortunately, BRGs can help provide community and support agency efforts to recruit, retain, and support Latine employees. This session will provide information on how to engage with BRGs in a way that avoids exploitation and leverages BRG knowledge and experience. It will provide real examples of agencies leveraging BRGs for PEAR results.

Building an Organizational Road Map for Equity & Belonging

LueRachelle Brim-Atkins (she/her), Brim-Donahoe & Associates

At long last, organizations are seeking to dismantle the racism and inequities that allow discrimination, isolation and other atrocities at work. Ending racism does not take time. It takes a decision, intention and a plan. This session will provide a Road Map by which leaders and their organizations can begin &/or continue the work to dismantle racist and inequitable systems. This session will help leaders: muster the courage and determination to do their part to abolish racist systems; identify barriers to equity and belonging; and develop a plan, strategies & tools to disrupt inequitable policies and practices.



Living in Two Worlds-Unpacking Institutional and Policy Inequities Through Story

Elizabeth Coleman (she/her), Tammy Cooper-Woodrich (she/her), Angela Letoi (she/her), and Melody Woodrich (she/her), Healing Through Hope

Using the gift of indigenous and personal stories, three generations of mixed heritage presenters will share their lived experiences navigating society and services. Together, they will take you through a journey of their lived experiences with walking in two worlds, code switching, and resiliency using traditional and personal stories.



Normalizing Shared Power as a tool to Disrupt Policies, Practices, and Processes

Rauniesha Larkins (she/her/diva), Sabrina Njoroge (she/her), Amber Ortiz-Díaz (she/her/ella) & Jean Paul (he/him), Office of Equity

Shared Power Consultants from the Office of Equity will conduct a workshop that introduces Relational Partnership (RP) and its significance to government employees and community. For the Pro-Equity Anti-Racist (P.E.A.R.) framework to thrive, Relational Partnership must be at its foundation. The consultants



will cover the definition & importance of Relational Partnership, our partnership with the Centre for Public Impact, and review RP Toolkit resources that will further PEAR outcomes in WA.





Washington State
DEPARTMENT OF
ENTERPRISE SERVICES

Strengthening the business of government: for a sustainable and just future

Our commitment to equity and belonging
compel us to act on our values

BE the
change

EMBRACE
the journey

SERVE with
intention

DEFY
convention

LEAD
with love

DES.wa.gov

Join OSPI in making a difference!

The Office of Superintendent of Public Instruction (OSPI) is the primary agency charged with overseeing public K–12 education in Washington. Our diverse OSPI staff and leadership team support the diversity of more than 1 million students in the state's 295 public school districts and 6 state-tribal education compact schools.

Apply your talents to prepare all students for postsecondary pathways, careers, and civic engagement:

ospi.k12.wa.us/job-opportunities

In our work to support educational equity, we are pushing for:

- Access to nutritious meals at school for all students
- Equitable access to dual credit opportunities
- Access to dual language learning starting in elementary school
- Fully funded inclusive special education services
- Access to high-quality early learning
- Targeted grant funds to where need is highest



Photo taken in Sunnyside School District



Washington Office of Superintendent of
PUBLIC INSTRUCTION

WSECU

Proud to support

DEI Empowerment Conference

in their mission to support statewide and agency-specific efforts to build a broad path towards equity, anti-racism and belonging in the workplace.

wsecu.org
800.562.0999



I believe an agency's success hinges on a strong commitment to diversity, equity, and inclusion in every area—a goal that extends beyond policies and protocols.

It's a privilege to collaborate with so many passionate, knowledgeable, and kind individuals—people genuinely committed to excellence and making a positive impact on state government and the lives of every Washingtonian.



Leticia Gomez-Esposito,
Human Resources Director
Office of Financial Management (OFM)



Office of Financial Management
Working together for the equitable future of every Washingtonian.

Learn More
and Join Us!
ofm.wa.gov/jobs

INTERAGENCY COMMITTEE OF STATE EMPLOYED WOMEN



Meeting Info: 3rd Tuesday of each odd-numbered month
from 8:30am to 12pm.



SCAN THIS
CODE TO
LEARN
MORE AND
JOIN US!



MISSION

To improve the lives of state employees by advising the Governor
and agencies on policies that affect state-employed women.

 www.icsew.wa.gov  icsew@ofm.wa.gov





WASHINGTON STATE LATINO LEADERSHIP — NETWORK —

The Latino Leadership Network (LLN) is a Washington State government employee resource group working to build, connect and inspire the Latinx workforce in state government.



WHAT WE DO

- Professional development
- Influence state workplace policy
- Build Community
- Offer free workshops
- Educate on equity, diversity, and inclusion and matters involving our community

WHAT'S IN IT FOR YOU?

- Networking
- Skill building
- Celebrate and build cultural connections and relationships
- Leadership opportunities



JOIN US! ¡ÚNETE!

Contact us! LLN@ofm.wa.gov



The Rainbow Alliance and Inclusion Network (RAIN) is an LGBTQ+ and ally **Business Resource Group**.

We are committed to diversity and inclusion efforts that allow staff to bring their full authentic selves to work in order to do their best work on behalf of Washingtonians.

Visit our website
[LGBTQ.wa.gov/RAIN](https://lgbtq.wa.gov/RAIN)



Connect with us!
RAIN@ofm.wa.gov





You are cordially invited to join the WIN group and attend a general membership meeting on the 1st Tuesday of the month.

When

***The first Tuesday of the Month
12 pm - 1 pm***

Where

Virtual - Zoom

WIN membership is open to all current and former Washington State Employees!

Mission

Expand opportunities for immigrants who are current and future employees within Washington state government. Serve as a resource for all immigrants who are state employees to connect, share, and educate each other and Washington state agencies on the skills, expertise, and cultural value of a diverse workforce.

Who We Are

WIN formed in 2018 as a [business resource group](#) to:

- Support the professional development of immigrant state employees.
- Recommend strategies to advance recruitment, retention, career progression, and leadership development.
- Educate state agencies on the experience, skills, and knowledge of immigrants and the value of a diverse workforce.

What We Do

- Provide a support structure, educational resources, and leadership assistance for immigrant state employees.
- Encourage immigrants to consider the state as an employer of choice through interagency and external outreach activities.
- Serve as a resource for the Office of Financial Management, State Human Resources Division, and state agencies in creating and sustaining a diverse and inclusive workforce.

Website

www.washingtonimmigrantnetwork.org

Contact

WIN@OFM.WA.GOV

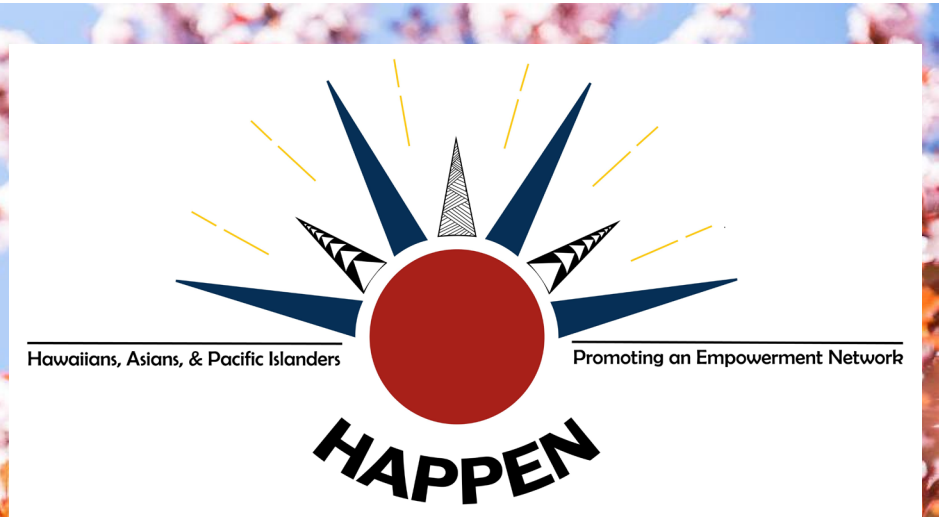
INTRODUCING
OUR STATE'S
NEWEST BUSINESS
RESOURCE GROUP

JOIN US!

REGULAR
MONTHLY
VIRTUAL
MEETINGS

2ND WEDNESDAYS

1:00 – 2:00 pm



Representing over 100 different communities

More Information



www.happen.wa.gov

Newsletter Subscription



https://public.govdelivery.com/accounts/WAGOV/subscriber/new?topic_id=WAGOV_258

Facebook



<https://www.facebook.com/groups/happenbrg/>

LinkedIn



<https://www.linkedin.com/groups/14301151/>

HAPPEN (Hawaiians, Asians, and Pacific Islanders Promoting an Empowerment Network) improves the experiences and representation of Asian Native Hawaiian and Pacific Islander (ANHPI) employees by:

- increasing representation in leadership and general employment
- building a culture of inclusion and belonging
- empower, support, and amplify voices of ANHPI employees
- advocate for policies promoting equity, diversity and inclusion in the workplace



Blacks Unity In Leadership and Diversity (BUILD) is one of seven Washington State Business Resource Groups. BUILD exists to improve the experiences of current and future Black state employees, increase representation of Black people in leadership positions, give voice to the Black perspective in policy discussions about Washington communities, and build each other up as we move forward.



BUILD
Website



BUILD
Facebook



BUILD
LinkedIn



BUILD
(Twitter)



Join Us
MONTHLY VIRTUAL MEETINGS
THIRD THURSDAY OF EACH MONTH
9:00 AM TO 11:00 AM

Email: build@ofm.wa.gov

Website: www.buildwa.org/



Veterans Employee Resource Group



The VERG exists to help integrate the experience, values, and knowledge of both veterans, service members, and spouses in state employment. The VERG shall provide advice and assistance to state agencies on veteran recruitment, retention, and development strategies in accordance with the Governor’s Executive Order 19-01. The VERG assists state agencies in support of existing state employees who have served as members and spouses of members of the armed forces through recognition, resource identification, and mentorship.



Recruit | Retain | Recognize
Veterans and their Spouses and Families





Washington Department of
FISH & WILDLIFE

CONSERVATION *Starts here*

Our Mission: To preserve, protect and perpetuate fish, wildlife and ecosystems while providing sustainable fish and wildlife recreational and commercial opportunities.



JOIN US!



OUR MISSION

The nation's best and most future-ready workforce, with opportunities for all.

Employment Security is a proud sponsor of the 2024 DEI Empowerment Conference – fostering an equitable, diverse and inclusive workplace.

Employment Security Department is an equal opportunity employer/program. Auxiliary aids and services are available upon request to individuals with disabilities. Language assistance services for limited English proficient individuals are available free of charge.

ESD.WA.GOV



**Employment
Security
Department**
WASHINGTON STATE



Sponsors and Core Team

Thank you to our sponsors:

WSECU

Executive branch cabinet members and
other state HR contributing agencies

Statewide DEI Council



Thank you to our Core Team member agencies:



WASHINGTON STATE DEPT OF
**NATURAL
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Office of Financial Management
Working together for the equitable future of every Washingtonian.





Contacts, Connections & Comments:





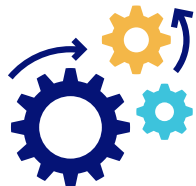
Diversity, Equity and Inclusion Training

"A Path Toward Equity: Disrupting Structural Racism through Awareness and Belonging" is Washington's foundational learning experience for growing the state workforce's diversity, equity, and inclusion (DEI) competence. [Visit the DES Training Website.](#)



Use Data to Reinforce DEIB Anti-Racism Efforts

The Workforce Strategies and the HR Analytics teams of State HR improve business performance by anticipating human resource needs, planning and executing workforce strategies, and monitoring success. Explore: Workforce data dashboards, State Employee Engagement Survey, Statewide Exit Survey and more online [the OFM Website.](#)



Eliminating systemic racism and inequities

Honoring the inherent dignity and worth of every individual is at the core of achieving racial equity. Together, we will pivot from policies and practices that perpetuate harm to policies and practices that perpetuate equity, justice, and belonging for all so freedom can endure for the next seven generations and beyond.

Explore the [Office of Equity website.](#)



Support Statewide Business Resource Groups

Statewide business resource groups (BRGs) bring together groups of employees and their allies who have a common interest or characteristic. All BRGs have a charter, mission, goals and bylaws and contribute to an overall statewide business strategy. BRG members bring their unique knowledge and perspectives, making them an asset to state business needs, such as recruitment and retention. [Explore Washington State's BRGs.](#)



Thank you for joining us on this journey. We are so thankful to the presenters that proposed topics. We had many come through this year, so many that we did not have space to share them all with you in this conference. However, we look forward to providing more content for you and sharing the voices of additional communities and intersections.

