

Hope, Rook (EQUITY)

From: Office of Equity <OfficeOfEquity@updates.gov.wa.gov>
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To: EQUITY mi Connect
Subject: Upcoming Events & Convening 2024 | Equity News Now!



Welcome to Equity News Now!

Hello Dear Readers,

Thank you for taking the time with us to **reflect on our most popular event: our 3rd Annual Office of Equity Convening**, which occurred in October 2024. This event sets intentional time aside for Washingtonians, both in and outside of State Government, to build, learn, and support a Washington For All.

We're continuing to invest in our event series to create spaces of belonging and learning: **the Equity Learning Series, our Community of Practice, the Regional Digital Equity Coordination Sessions and our Solidarity Gatherings**. We will also be announcing the future of our beloved Convenings in this issue, so please read on to learn more.

Thanks for reading!

What is the Office of Equity? Click here to learn more!



*Megan Matthews, Director, &
TraeAnna Holiday, Communications
Director, at the 2024 Convening
Awards Dinner*

Convening 2024 Lookback



Convening 2024 Lookback



This year was the 3rd Year for our Annual Office of Equity Convening, held for the first time in Yakima, WA. Throughout this highlight you will see comments straight from our Office – the team that put this event together!

Our Be Bold – Be Change Convening was a hit! We had 780 in person attendees and 1755 virtual attendees. Sarah Bisson (she/her), our Financial & Business Analyst, shared, “working at the help desk and seeing late registrations and the number of attendees... we were over our anticipated registrants!” Our Culture and Belonging Administrator, Beth Winstead (she/her) defined the Convening as “a safe and supportive place to engage, share, and learn with and from people with different experiences and perspectives.”

TraeAnna Holiday, Director of Communications, uplifted that “it was so impactful to hear the work happening in the community- from [Anthony Powers](#) to [Rosalinda Guillen](#)! I learned a lot about the power of people stepping up to advocate and create solutions for their communities and for people who experience similar life situations. The beauty in collectivism was shown in all the speakers as [Kamal Patel](#) and [Dr. Lily Copenagle](#) shared their work to create Circular Economies. It's inspiring and I'm thrilled that our Convening could be a space to share their work broadly- truly bringing government and community together!”





WA State Office of Equity Convening - Oct. 15th & 16th, 2024

Our Community Advisory Board (CAB) participated in the *Community Engagement Panel* and was able to provide valuable feedback on community need, impact, and what they hope to see in the coming year. The CAB members spoke about the need for additional resources to housing and homelessness services, a change in the grant funding landscape to honor the resources of small, grassroots organizations, and the inclusion of young people in government. There was representation from a multitude of communities, and the message was that our communities are not a monolith – that each community and region has different and separate needs and a desire to be seen and heard. As one of our CAB members stated, “We are done checking boxes, you have the data, now use the data.”





Vic Vong (they/them), our Digital Communications Accessibility Specialist, shared that “listening directly to farmworkers is essential for shaping food justice. That’s why I’m thankful we got to hear from Rosalinda Guillen for speaking at the Annual Office of Equity’s 2024 Convening. She spoke on how farmworkers are on the frontlines of climate change in Washington state, impacts of the pandemic on farmworkers, and helping establish the state’s first binding labor contract between farmworkers and an agricultural employer.”

The Convening is a time for government and community members to meet and learn from each other. As iisaaksiichaa braine, he/him/bade, our Tribal Liaison put it, “it’s hard to measure impact when we’re always moving forward, but one thing is clear, our team made sure tribal and Indigenous voices were heard. We hosted local tribal leadership, followed cultural protocols, and created space for real conversations. Those connections will lead to real action.”



three whole years.

The Future

Due to budget constraints and growing priorities of the Office of Equity we decided to forego the Convening this year. This was the best decision for us at this time. We know the impact of this event and we want to continue it with a firm understanding of community participation and government sharing. We will work to ensure next year’s 2026 Convening is impactful.

We are immensely grateful for the attendees, PEAR Star Award winners, and all the staff who have supported the Annual Office of Equity Convening for

Event Updates

Event Updates



COMMUNITY OF PRACTICE



Community of Practice

Community of Practice is open to ALL Washingtonians.

Community of Practice is hosted monthly on the last Tuesday of every month from 11 am – 12:30 pm PT. Our next session will be on April 29th, 2025, at 11 am - 12:30 pm PT.

Our Session for March was yesterday, March 25th, and our attendees hit 150 people. In this session, we uplifted Washington State Department of Commerce and discussed what they are doing to make their Agency an equitable space that can promote a Washington for All!

[Subscribe to our Community of Practice newsletter to learn more!](#)

Community of Practice is a monthly gathering event, put on by the [Equity & Belonging team](#) and hosted by the Office of Equity. Community of Practice's purpose is to center [Pro-Equity Anti-Racism strategies](#), model [Relational Partnership](#), and [demonstrate best practices for showing up authentically](#)!



Connecting Digital Equity Communities Statewide

2025 Regional Digital Equity Coordination Sessions

The Regional Digital Equity Coordination Sessions are intended for ALL Washingtonians invested in Digital Equity.

Are you passionate about improving Digital Equity in your community? If so, you are invited to the 2025 Regional Digital Equity Coordination Sessions!

These virtual sessions, hosted by the Office of Equity, will bring together people advancing digital equity to develop strategies and coordinate efforts to improve digital access for all across Washington state. [Learn more about this series by clicking here to visit our website.](#)

Join us in:

- **Expanding** who is coordinating digital equity at the state and local level
- **Discussing** what coordination is happening regionally and identifying local priorities and how state government can help address them
- **Sharing** promising practices, models, and resources
- **Amplifying** digital equity stories
- **Co-designing** impact measures and an accountability framework
- **Forging new partnerships** and connecting with others passionate about advancing digital equity

REGISTER FOR THESE REGIONAL & STATEWIDE SESSIONS TODAY!

Be part of the movement to bridge the digital divide.



SOLIDARITY GATHERING

The Solidarity Gathering is a brave space where we can learn, grow, build trust, and celebrate the different cultures and histories that make us who we are.



Solidarity Gathering

Solidarity Gathering is intended for Washington State Employees.

We are excited to share that the **Solidarity Gathering was a great success, with approximately 290 attendees** coming together to connect, reflect, and support one another. The space was filled with **vulnerability, genuine connections, and meaningful dialogue**. Participants shared their experiences and exchanged stories and information.

A **big shout out and thank you** to everyone who joined, as well as to those who helped in planning and executing this gathering. Your efforts made it possible to create a **brave and supportive space** where people **felt heard, seen, and valued**.

Let's continue to show up for one another and foster belonging in our workplaces and communities. [Subscribe to our Show Up - Speak Up! Newsletter here](#) for more information about our next Solidarity Gathering!



Equity Learning Series

The Equity Learning Series are intended for Washington State Employees.

[Click here to register to the Equity Learning Series.](#)

Speak Up: Your Voice Matters

In case you weren't able to attend the first few sessions, Jolene Jang is back to host a final webinar in the series - a **Communication Confidence Coaching Series for Asian-Americans on April 3rd, 2025, 10 am - 12 pm PT**. Seats are limited to 50 attendees.

This session is designed to help Asian American, Native Hawaiian, and Pacific Islanders overcome barriers, be heard, and be seen personally and professionally.

Sign up, elevate your confidence, showcase your value, and realize that people want to hear from you. This series will provide practical strategies, empowering exercises, and supportive community interactions to foster a more confident and outspoken you.

[Click here to register to the Equity Learning Series.](#)

Innovate the State

Our next **Innovate the State: Washington Employees Earn Awards for Big Ideas on April 17th, 2025, 11 am – 12 pm PT**.

Ever think the state could be doing things better? Find out everything you need to know about the Productivity Board program run by the Office of the Secretary of State. They are looking for suggestions that reduce state spending. Program Manager [Greg Mennegar](#) will go over how it all works & how to sign up for the newsletter. There's even a chance to get \$10,000 for your idea!

[Click here to register to the Equity Learning Series.](#)

Serving our Customers for a Washington For All!

Our next **Serving our Customers for a Washington For All!** is on **May 29, 2025, 10 am - 11 am PT**.

What are some ways we can show up for every individual we serve? How can we help them navigate their current situation, removing barriers so they can achieve the future they want for themselves?

In this session, we discuss with Marisa Cairns, a Career and Training Specialist at Skill Source, how she does just that. Please join us to learn from her, and possibly share your tips, for providing excellent customer service.

[Click here to register to the Equity Learning Series.](#)

Thank You to our Equity Learning Series Attendees!

We wanted to thank everyone who has been able to attend our Equity Learning Series over the last few months. This month we partnered with Scott Shigeoka, internationally-recognized curiosity expert, TED speaker, and award-winning author of [Seek: How Curiosity Can Transform Your Life and Change the World.](#)

During the *Curiosity is a Bridge for Connection* webinar, we looked at how we can strengthen our relationships to one another and build a sense of belonging. As a follow-up to this webinar, we have posted some additional talks provided by Scott on our [Equity Learning Series webpage.](#) These will give attendees who participated in the webinar additional ways to deepen their learning, while providing first-time listeners a chance to be exposed to the content they missed.

Thank you!



Thank You!



Thanks for reading, supporting, and following along on our journey to shape a **Washington for All!**

Make sure to follow us on all our social medias at [Instagram](#), [LinkedIn](#), [Facebook](#), & [YouTube](#).

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WASHINGTON for ALL

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