



**Blacks United in Leadership and Diversity (BUILD)  
Annual Report**

June 1, 2023, THROUGH July 1, 2024  
PREPARED BY SHERINA JAMES



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## Message from the Chair



Dear BUILD Members and Supporters,

As I reflect on my time as Chair for the 2023-2024 year, I feel a deep sense of gratitude for the journey we undertook together. As a Business Resource Group (BRG), we recognized that our strength is in our collective voices, and continued our commitment to amplifying those voices, particularly those of Black state employees. Blacks United In Leadership and Diversity (BUILD), is more than just a name; it embodies our mission to foster leadership and diversity throughout our state's workforce.

Throughout the year, we created a supportive environment where our members could cultivate connection and flourish. We believe wholeheartedly in the brilliance, talent, and potential each of you brings to our community. BUILD worked diligently to ensure that this brilliance was recognized and celebrated across our state agencies, so that all state employees, supervisors, and leaders would understand the invaluable role that BUILD, and other Business Resource Groups play in promoting professional development, employee engagement, community, and belonging.

We forged stronger connections with other BRGs, sharing resources, experiences, and insights that enhanced our collective impact. Together, we aimed to create a more inclusive and supportive environment for everyone.

I focused on ensuring that our subcommittees operated efficiently and effectively, prioritizing smarter work methods to maximize our limited time together. This approach allowed us to foster connection, community, and collaboration while amplifying our voices and visions.

I want to express my heartfelt appreciation for your support and attendance at BUILD meetings and events. My sincere thanks to all who contributed their time, talent, skill, and energy to make BUILD a successful and vital community. Thank you to the 2022-2024 Executive Team, Subcommittee members, BUILD's Executive Sponsor Marcus Glasper. I am incredibly proud of the accomplishments we achieved and confident that our good work will continue to thrive. Thank you for being an essential part of this journey.

Sincerely,

*Sherina*

Sherina James

## Introduction

BUILD was developed when two individuals, Lonnie Spikes and Beth Winstead, recognized a need for a community for the Black Community and acted upon that idea. They recruited the individuals who would form BUILD's planning committee. From June 2019 until BUILD's launch, this planning committee drafted the charter and bylaws, a fundamentals map, a highlights page, and planned the kickoff event. BUILD's first general membership meeting was in November 2019 in the Labor and Industries Auditorium. Over the past four years, BUILD's Executive Committee and six subcommittees have made significant accomplishments.

The annual report captures the significant activities and accomplishments BUILD's Executive Committee and six subcommittees delivered throughout the year.

### Executive Committee 2023-2024

- Sherina James: Chair
- Brian Lindstrom: Co-Chair
- Shawnte Florek: Executive Assistant
- Erikamarie Guzman: Executive Assistant
- Yeni Sandoval: Treasurer
- Marcus Glasper: Executive Sponsor, DOL Director

### Executive Committee 2022-2023

- Tyrone Jordan-Oliver: Chair
- Sherina James: Interim Co-Chair
- Nolan Washington: Co-Chair
- Shawnte Florek: Executive Assistant
- Erikamarie Guzman: Executive Assistant
- Yeni Sandoval: Executive Assistant
- Francesca Hermsen: Treasurer
- Marcus Glasper: Executive Sponsor, DOL Director

## Subcommittees

### History and Activities

*Co-Leads: Undra Simpson and RaChelle Nelson*

#### **Purpose:**

The History and Activities subcommittee recognizes the historical mental and physical impacts on Black people who have been traditionally excluded from a positive, well-deserved narrative of our collective accomplishments and achievements.

We are dedicated to correcting the record and affirming an inspirational narrative of historical Black excellence by uncovering, sharing and celebrating the stories, achievements, valor, strength and genius of the African diaspora from the Motherland, to the homeland.

## Communications (formerly Marketing, Communications, and Data)

*Co-Leads: Devon Brim, Catherine Schuetzle, and Daisha Gomillion*

This group manages BUILD's digital presence including our website, newsletters, surveys, and social media.

### **Purpose:**

Like BUILD as a whole, the Marketing, Communications, and Data subcommittee recognizes the disparities in our society and seeks to promote BUILD's message of support and empowerment of the Black Community to all Washingtonians.

Greater representation of the Black Community within state employment at all levels from executive leadership to front-line staff is not simply overdue, it is also a business imperative.

We're going to undo years of disenfranchisement by highlighting BUILD's value through face-to-face interactions, expert use of social media, and capitalizing on the impact of email.

## Membership Engagement and Support

*Co-Leads: Lenora Sneva, Annette Parker, Chelsea Wright, and Sherina James*

### **Purpose:**

Our purpose is to greet and welcome new and/or existing BUILD members and allies, to connect members with relevant resources and information, to provide a space to build relationships and promote equity and inclusion within our communities, and to create opportunities to be more involved with BUILD.

## Policy and Data (formerly Policy and Legislation)

*Co-Leads: Terrence McCall, Crisshon Bond, and Mikia Guy*

### **Purpose:**

The BUILD Policy & Legislative Subcommittee seeks to improve the lives of state-employed BIPOC (Black Indigenous People of Color) by addressing the disparities in the Black Community by way of making policy recommendations to the Governor and state agencies with respect to desirable changes in state programs and law, especially in the areas of career development, training, and other conditions of employment.

We will train our subcommittee members to track and report on legislation to the general membership, and engage in supporting and providing feedback to appropriate state agencies on the potential impacts to the Black community on both existing and proposed laws and rules.

## Professional Development and Leadership Support

*Co-Leads: Donald Paul and Shannon Williams*

### **Purpose:**

The Professional Development and Leadership Support Subcommittee (PDLS) is committed to promoting equity and excellence through processes, networking, career planning and practices, mentorship, and leadership development.

We are devoted to the empowerment of the black community, and our allies, dedicated to justice and equity within all levels of state government. BUILD provides a platform for PDLs to remove barriers, increase opportunities and increase the number of black state employees.

### Outreach and Resources

*Co-Leads: Mikia Guy and Heather May*

**Purpose:**

Our purpose is to greet and welcome new and/or existing BUILD members and allies, to connect members with relevant resources and information, to provide a space to build relationships and promote equity an inclusion within our communities and opportunities to being more involved with BUILD. We advance BUILD’s vision by increasing awareness of Black history, culture, perspectives, and intersectionality



BUILD Leadership Strategic Planning Meeting 2023

## Year in Review

The year in review covers activities from June 2023 through July 2024.

### Key Accomplishments

- Held the first ever BUILD leadership and strategic planning retreat so that subcommittee members and executive leadership could connect as a team to review goals, vision, and values.
- Produced a new section in the General Membership Meeting called the HR Corner, inviting Executive Leadership, Human Resources Managers or Recruiters to share about their agency’s book of business and job opportunities with BUILD members.
- Established an Outreach and Resources Subcommittee to grow BUILD’s network by building relationships with other Business Resource Groups, Washington State agencies, and communities.
- Increased BUILD’s collaboration and partnerships with other BRGs, including the Latino Leadership Network and RAIN.
- Expanded the Meet and Greet program that was started in 2002 and created member “match ups” for new members to learn more about BUILD while providing opportunities to network across agencies.
- Distributed quarterly newsletters.
- Partnered with Washington Employee Assistance Program to host Connect Space, a virtual gathering for community support.
- Created a new position, Treasurer, to serve on BUILD’s Executive Leadership Team.
- Developed attendance forms and event evaluation forms and gather feedback to inform program design and meeting topics.

## Activities Report

### Events

Month	Event	Organization
June 2023	Juneteenth Celebration	
July 2023	Employee Wellness	Office of the Insurance Commissioner
July 2023	Black Lives Matter Day Event (virtual)	
August 2023	Listening Session: Preserving Pauli Murray (virtual)	
October 2023	BRG Panel <i>Office of Equity’s Annual Convening: We The People</i>	Office of Equity
November 2023	Public Performance Review Employee: Engagement and Wellness (hybrid)	Governor's Results Washington Initiative
February 2024	Black History Month Celebration (hybrid)	
June 2024	Juneteenth (hybrid)	

## Presentations

Month	Event	Organization
June 2023	Juneteenth Celebration	
June 2023	Juneteenth	Employment Security Department
July 2023	Employee Wellness	Office of the Insurance Commissioner
October 2023	BRG Panel	Office of Equity
November 2023	Public Performance Review Employee: Engagement and Wellness	Governor's Results Washington Initiative
December 2023	Introduction to BUILD/Intro to Cultural Holidays	Department of Ecology
December 2023	Introduction to BUILD/Employee Engagement	Office of Financial Management
March 2024	BRG Panel	Liquor and Cannabis Board Diversity, Equity, Inclusion and Belonging Council
May 2024	Public Service Recognition Week	
June 2024	Juneteenth Flag Raising	Office of the insurance Commissioner
July 2024	Washington Equity Project	Office of Equity
July 2024	WSLCB Annual Employee Event	Liquor and Cannabis Board

General Membership Meeting	Location	Number in Attendance
June 2023	Juneteenth Celebration Event- Olympia	162 in person attendees
July 2023	Virtual	88
August 2023	Virtual	79
September 2023	Virtual	86
October 2023	Virtual	90
November 2023	No meeting scheduled due to holidays	
December 2023	No meeting scheduled due to holidays	
January 2024	Virtual	61
February 2024	Black History Month Event-Seattle	158 in person, 129 virtual attendees
March 2024	Virtual	78
April 2024	Virtual	57
May 2024	Virtual	101
June 2024	Juneteenth Celebration Event Olympia	131 in person, 137 virtual attendees
July 2024	Virtual	90



## State Agency Engagement and Outreach

Month	Event	Organization
June 2024	Juneteenth SmartHealth activity	Health Care Authority, Washington Wellness
June 2023	BUILD and EAP Connect Space	Washington State Employee Assistance Program (EAP), Washington State Department of Enterprise Services
June 2023	Juneteenth Celebration	
June 2023	Juneteenth	Employment Security Department
July 2023	Employee Wellness	Office of the Insurance Commissioner
October 2023	BRG Panel	Office of Equity
November 2023	Public Performance Review Employee: Engagement and Wellness	Governor's Results Washington Initiative
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July 2024	Washington Equity Project	Office of Equity
July 2024	WSLCB Annual Employee Event	Liquor and Cannabis Board

## BUILD Member Engagement

<b>Month</b>	<b>Event</b>	<b>Organization</b>
June 2024	Juneteenth SmartHealth activity	Health Care Authority, Washington Wellness
June 2023	BUILD and EAP Connect Space (virtual)	Washington State Employee Assistance Program (EAP), Washington State Department of Enterprise Services
June 2023	Juneteenth Celebration (hybrid)	
July 2023	Black Lives Matter Day Event (virtual)	July 2023
August 2023	Listening Session: Preserving Pauli Murray (virtual)	
October 2023	Domestic Violence Awareness/Action Month- Wear Purple Day	
October 2023	BRG Panel	Office of Equity
November 2023	Public Performance Review Employee: Engagement and Wellness	Governor's Results Washington Initiative
February 2024	Black History Month Celebration (hybrid)	
April 2024	Sexual Assault Awareness Month- Denim Day	
May 2024	Public Service Recognition Week	
June 2024	Juneteenth SmartHealth activity	Health Care Authority, Washington Wellness
June 2024	Juneteenth Celebration (hybrid)	

## Subcommittee Activities

Subcommittees meet monthly to discuss issues, develop ideas, provide input, and create outcomes that support BUILD's vision, mission, and values. We encourage all of our members to become involved in BUILD by joining a subcommittee.

In 2023, BUILD gathered our executive and subcommittee leadership for a strategic planning and team building meeting. When asked, what had been the most exciting thing about their involvement with BUILD, responses reflected the impact BUILD is making:

- *"Continued engagement of members; new leaders emerging."*
- *"All of my BUILD involvement!"*

### Communications

- Reviewed and confirmed official purpose statement
- Expanded and maintained website ([buildwa.org](http://buildwa.org))
- Continued a social media presence through [Facebook](#) and [LinkedIn](#)
- Continued creation and distribution of quarterly newsletter
- Collaborated with ICSEW for the statewide DEI Book Club
- Produced one-page BUILD informational flyer
- Collaborated in the design of the second Black Lives Matter Day event

### History and Activities

- Reviewed and confirmed official purpose statement
- Planned and hosted special events to include:
  - Black History Month
  - Juneteenth
- Collaborated in the design of the second Black Lives Matter Day event
- Disseminated messages around important events in the Black Community such as:
  - Reverend Dr. MLK Jr Day
  - Black History Month
  - Juneteenth
  - Women's History Month

### Membership Engagement and Support

- Reviewed and confirmed official purpose statement
- Coordinated and hosted Membership Mingles events
- Tracked BUILD meeting and event attendance
- Developed and deployed BUILD's annual survey
- Developed a survey to gather feedback from new BUILD members and BUILD mentorship participants
- Created event evaluation forms to gather feedback and inform program design and meeting topics
- Developed a Subcommittee Strategic Plan

## Outreach and Resources

- Reviewed and confirmed official purpose statement
- Provided feedback to agencies regarding policies/equity statements
- Researched and compiled workforce data for BUILD
- Collaborated with the Policy and legislation Subcommittee to develop a presentation about the importance of disaggregating data
- Developed and provided presentations about allyship and conversations about race

## Policy and Legislation

- Reviewed and confirmed official purpose statement
- Provided feedback to agencies regarding policies/equity statements
- Collaborated with The Washington State Commission on African American Affairs for Black History Month and Juneteenth proclamations
- Collaborated in the design of the second Black Lives Matter Day event
- Researched and compiled workforce data for BUILD

## Professional Development and Leadership Support

- Reviewed and confirmed official purpose statement
- Participated in the Cross BRG Dress Code Workgroup
- Partnered with the Membership and Engagement subcommittee
- Researched and compiled workforce data for BUILD
- Developed and provided Women's History Month presentation

## Member Engagement

### Annual Survey

The annual membership survey is posted in October on BUILD's website and sent to our GovDelivery distribution list. Any general membership member employed by Washington State was invited to participate in the survey.

The following highlights were taken from the survey:

Attendees represent over 25 state agencies, offices, commissions, courts, and private sector organizations. Over 25% of participants attended five or more of the meetings or events BUILD hosted over the year.

61% of our membership identify as Black or African American.

43% of our membership reside in Thurston County, Pierce (28%), and King (10%).

Most participants want BUILD to help them:

- Learn and be an advocate for policies that affect the Black community
- Build and strengthen relationships with others
- Be able to talk about race at work
- Further their understanding of racial and social justice

- Strengthen professional development and leadership skills
- Learn more about Black history

Participants would like BUILD meetings and events to:

- Have time for networking
- Share resources about wellness, financial wellness, homeownership, and education
- Be interactive
- Speak to conditions that affect the Black community (environment, health, education, etc.)

As a result of survey feedback BUILD reduced the length of our general monthly meetings from three hours to two hours. We created additional opportunities for members to connect and network during general membership meetings and member mingles.

When asked what barriers prevent them from attending BUILD meetings or events, 37.5% of respondents cited balancing job responsibilities as a factor. Nearly five percent cited issues with supervisor approval as a barrier, indicating a slight increase in this issue since 2022.

Survey Responses:

“BUILD continues to be a source of support for me - as the only Black person in my work group it is great to have the BUILD community as a resource.”

“It’s very good to feel included and sense of belonging. I hope we can continue building and lifting each other up.”

“The tone of respect, community, togetherness, professionalism, information, fun and joy always runs strong in every meeting.”

BUILD strives to have guest speakers who can speak honestly and bring value to breadth of experiences of Black state employees and the realities that impact Black individuals. Our meeting and events include information on topics that support our fundamentals map as well as key issues impacting the Black Community such as:

- Professional development or career advancement
- Disparities that impact the Black community and possible solutions
- Strategies for health and well being
- Inspirational messages that provide hope in challenging times

BUILD uses its platform to highlight Black leaders in state government as well as others in and around our region. BUILD maintain its values of creating an environment that is welcoming and unifying, acknowledging rhetoric that is divisive or attacking will create unnecessary additional barriers for BUILD’s objectives and goals. Therefore we:

- Ask BUILD members for speaker suggestions.

- Connect with each speaker in advance to communicate BUILD’s mission, vision, and values.

Leadership continues to adapt communications to better serve our members and effectively communicate BUILD activities.

BUILD is thankful for the support the Office of Financial Management (OFM) for their assistance in the planning and setup of virtual meetings, Communication Access Realtime Translation (CART), and American Sign Language (ASL) services for our meetings and events.

<b>Social Media Engagement</b>	
<b>Facebook</b>	
Followers	425= 84% increase
Page Likes	362=72% increase
Top Posts	2024 BHM FB Live Event, 2024 Juneteenth Save the Date Announcement, 2024 Public Service Recognition Week, 2023 Fall Newsletter
Demographics	92% of our fans are women Majority of fans are in Olympia, Tacoma and Lacey area.

<b>LinkedIn</b>	
Followers	768= 1100% increase
Top Posts	2024 Juneteenth Save the Date Announcement, EJI On This Day: Breonna Taylor, EJI On this Day: Brown vs Board of Ed, 2024 Public Service Recognition Week, Men’s Mental Health
Demographics	83% of visitors are in Human Resources 12% are in Community and Social Services

<b>Membership via Gov Delivery</b>	
General Membership	Active Membership
545	440
The total number for all GovDelivery subscribers is across all BRGs is 22,192.	

## Financial Report

BUILD, like the other BRGs, has not been allocated state funds. BUILD receives funds through donations or sponsorships. We received funds from several sponsoring state agencies for our Black History Month and Juneteenth events. We are thankful for each agency and sponsor that supported BUILD this year. We appreciate all of the state employees who have volunteered their time outside of their job roles to support BUILD.

<i>Current Fiscal Year (FY) Financials: 7/1/23 through 07/15/2024</i>	<b>BUILD Blacks United in Leadership and Diversity</b>
Prior Unspent Balance	\$137,498
Prior Unspent Balance (ASL/CART)	\$43,541
New Revenue this FY	\$1,666
Budget for FY	\$46,000
Expenses FY to Date	\$34,044
<i>Variance</i>	<i>\$11,956</i>
ASL/CART Budget for FY	\$15,000
ASL/CART Expenses FY to Date:	\$4,205
<i>ASL/CART Variance</i>	<i>\$10,795</i>
Current Balance	\$105,120
Current Balance (ASL/CART)	\$39,336
<b>Total Current Balance</b>	<b>\$144,456</b>

During the Fiscal Year expenditures were made for:

- Black History Month event decor and food
- Juneteenth Celebration decor and Food
- Leadership Strategic Planning Meeting food
- Speaker, presenter, entertainment fees and honorariums
- Tablecloth and promotional swag for events

# Looking Forward

## Strategy and Goals

In its first year, BUILD developed its [fundamentals map](#) that displays the organization’s mission, vision, values and goals in a one-page format. It provides a concise view of BUILD’s key processes and expected outcomes that connects the organization’s purpose. BUILD’s goals and objectives, as laid out in the fundamentals map will remain the same for the next year, July 2024- June 2025.

<b>BUILD: Blacks United In Leadership &amp; Diversity</b> Washington State Goal: Employer of Choice						
<b>Foundations</b>	<b>Mission:</b> Improve the experiences of Black state employees, increase representation in leadership positions, give voice to the Black perspective, and build each other up as we move forward.		<b>Vision:</b> Change the state’s narrative and give identity and voice to current employees while enforcing policies that promote diversity, inclusion and respect in the workplace.		<b>Values:</b> We are firmly committed to diversity and inclusion.	
<b>Key Goals</b>	1. Build up the Black Community in State Employment	2. Create a Welcoming BUILD environment	3. Give Black People a Voice	4. Integrate Black Culture		
<b>Outcome Measures</b>	1.1 Increase in Black Representation	2.1 Consistent Engagement From Diverse Group	3.1 Black Perspective Considered in Key Policy-Making Decisions	4.1 Black Culture and History Shared and Celebrated		
<b>Measure Owner</b>	Chair		Chair		Chair	
<b>Core Processes</b>	1.1.1 Support recruitment and retention of qualified Black candidates		2.1.1 Effectively recruit new BRG members		2.2.1 Maintain an engaged BRG membership	
	3.1.1 Participate in outreach opportunities and network on behalf of the BRG		3.2.2 Advise and advocate on behalf of the BRG		4.1.1 Provide a variety of opportunities to display and inform on Black culture	
<b>Process Owner</b>	Prof. Development; Membership; Activities	Marketing; Membership; Prof. Development	Membership; Activities; Prof. Development	Leadership; Marketing	Leadership; Marketing	Marketing; Activities
<b>Sub Processes</b>	1.1.1.1 Share job opportunities 1.1.1.2 Highlight benefits of working for the state 1.1.1.3 Provide professional development program opportunities 1.1.1.4 Provide support and recognition	2.1.1.1 Develop tools to promote BUILD 2.1.1.2 Develop networking opportunities 2.1.1.3 Develop ways to market BUILD	2.2.1.1 Welcome and reach out to new members 2.2.1.2 Develop recognition methods 2.2.1.3 Develop ally support 2.2.1.4 Be available for general membership questions, concerns, suggestions	3.1.1.1 Seek & participate in outreach/network opportunities 3.1.1.2 Broaden BRG network 3.1.1.3 Strengthen relationships	3.2.1.1 Develop and respond to requests for input 3.2.1.2 Develop and present ideas for policy improvements 3.2.1.3 Evaluate and provide input on bills 3.2.1.4 Evaluate agency policies for disparate impact	4.1.1.1 Prepare celebration for Black History Month 4.1.1.2 Share Black stories through membership list and agencies 4.1.1.3 Develop and implement an annual calendar of social and cultural events 4.1.1.4 Secure speakers for events
<b>Process Measures</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Mentor program exists &amp; is continuously improved</li> <li>Number of jobs shared</li> <li>Deliverable of benefits of state work</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>General membership attendance</li> <li>Active membership counts</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Engagement/results of mini surveys</li> <li>Gov/Delivery data</li> <li>Subcommittee attendance</li> <li>Ally membership</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Growth in network</li> <li>Document outreach performed</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Document and catalog proposals and responses</li> <li>Document and catalog policy/bill recommendations</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Document activities</li> <li>Mini surveys</li> </ul>

In addition to the sub processes laid out in the fundamentals map, BUILD will continue to:

Collaborate with fellow BRGs.

- Establish practices to insure the group’s future.
- Connect and share information to build BUILD’s network.





Juneteenth Celebration 2024

### Activities Plan

BUILD will continue to convene general membership meeting every month, except November and December as noted in the Bylaws. BUILD's activities for the year will include:

- Continue to provide information about important events in the Black Community such as: MLK Day
- Black History Month
- Women's History Month
- Juneteenth
- Black August
- Host special events to include:
  - Black History Month
  - Juneteenth
  - Black Lives Matter Day
- Present, as requested, at state events and meetings.
- Provide, as requested, Black perspective in policies, procedures, and processes.
- Develop and deploy a mentoring program for professional development.
- Collaborate with other BRGs, Interagency Council of State Employed Women (ICSEW), DEI Council, and other allied groups.
- Strengthen BUILD's website and social media presence.
- Create visibility around Black people for current and future state leadership roles.

- Complete policies in collaboration with other BRGs and OFM to strengthen BUILD participation and support.
- Annual survey to solicit feedback on what is working well and what can be improved with BUILD activities.
- Complete BUILD officer elections.
- Assess creation of a career mentorship program.



Office of Equity Convening 2023

## Summary

BUILD has experienced a tremendous year due to exciting events, a social media presence, outreach, partnerships, and most importantly, cultivating community for Black state employees within the work environment. The objectives for the next year will continue to strengthen BUILD and develop innovative methods for meeting the needs of this community to advance Washington State’s goal of becoming an employer of choice.

# Let's Keep BUILDing!

Contact

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Website:

<https://www.buildwa.org/>

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