



## Hosting Your Own African American Education Teach-In to Support African American LGBTQ Youth:

A toolkit for individuals and communities to accelerate African American Educational Excellence and otherwise respond to urgent needs of African American LGBTQ students.

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White House Initiative on Educational Excellence for African Americans

U.S. Department of Education

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Hosting Your Own African American LGBTQ Teach-In: A Toolkit Created by the White House Initiative on Educational Excellence for African Americans



Supporters of Educational Excellence for African Americans,

I am excited by your interest in holding a Teach-In to highlight opportunities to support African American lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender, and queer/questioning (LGBTQ) students. *All* African American students, regardless of gender identity or sexual orientation, deserve opportunities and environments that support their ability to thrive.

To support the goals outlined in the Executive Order establishing the White House Initiative on Educational Excellence for African Americans (Initiative) by President Obama and to provide a platform for African American youth to make recommendations for how caring and concerned adults can ensure all African American students feel safe, engaged, and supported in schools and in life, the Initiative has hosted the African American Educational Summit Series (AfAmEd Summits) in communities across the nation. On June 9-11, 2016, the Initiative hosted the [first AfAmEd Summit on African American lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender, and queer or questioning \(LGBTQ\) Youth](#) in partnership with the National Education Association and the National Black Justice Coalition to specifically address the unique challenges faced by those living at the intersection of both Blackness and queerness (see Appendix 15). The Summit gathered students, parents, families, individuals, and organizations for informative and uplifting days of storytelling, empowerment, networking, and strategizing. AfAmEd Summits are a powerful tool to disrupt and supplant negative stereotypes of Black LGBTQ students and to highlight opportunities for individuals to support learning and development.

Now it is your turn! This toolkit is designed to support you in hosting a Teach-In on African American LGBTQ youth to raise awareness about the importance of investing in African American LGBTQ youth, highlight individuals and organizations in your community supporting the learning and advancement of African American LGBTQ students, and support networks of individuals and community based organizations engaged in this critical work.

Included in this toolkit, you will find tips and best practice learned from hosting AfAmEd Summits. Please do not hesitate to contact us with any questions, comments, or concerns that may arise. Please also be sure to share pictures, video, and recommendations from your Teach-In. We are eager to support you and celebrate your work. Thank you in advance for responding to President Obama's call to improve educational outcomes for African Americans of all ages, and to ensure that all African Americans receive an education that properly prepares them for college, productive careers, and satisfying lives.

Sincerely,

David Johns  
Executive Director

White House initiative on Educational Excellence for African Americans

## About the Teach-In to Support African American LGBTQ Youth

This Teach-In Toolkit is based on the ***White House Summit on African American LGBTQ Youth***, hosted on June 9-11, 2016 by the White House Initiative on Educational Excellence for African Americans (Initiative). The Summit was a first of its kind convening to highlight unique opportunities to support the learning and development of African American lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender and queer (LGBTQ) students. The ***White House Summit on African American LGBTQ Youth*** explored the needs of African American youth who identify as LGBTQ and highlighted promising and proven strategies to provide safe and supportive environments in which the cognitive, social and emotional needs of African American LGBTQ youth are nurtured. The summit highlighted the economic and social impact of excluding or otherwise failing to support African American LGBTQ youth and provided platforms for African American LGBTQ youth to provide their critical perspective and contribute to solutions designed to address critical needs in the African American LGBTQ community.

The ***White House Summit on African American LGBTQ Youth*** continued the Initiative's investments in support of African American LGBTQ youth which includes a White House screening of the film *Holler If You Hear Me: Being Black and Gay In The Black Church* in collaboration with the My Brother's Keeper Initiative during Black History Month as well as a series of AfAmEd Twitter Chats and Webinars focused on highlighting programs and practices benefitting African American LGBTQ youth.

Goals for the Summit include:

- Highlighting the economic and social impact of excluding or otherwise failing to support African American lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender and queer or questioning (LGBTQ) youth.
- Sharing the perspectives of African American LGBTQ youth.
- Contribute to designing solutions to address critical needs in the African American community and the greater society.
- Embracing African American LGBTQ youth.
- Working with organizations charged with supporting the learning and development of Black and LGBTQ youth to ensure educational excellence.

## Summit Outcomes

### Recommendations:

1. Educators must listen to the needs of Black LGBTQ students without judgement (consider hosting an #AfAmEdTeachIn to provide youth with a platform to make recommendations for the programs, policies, and practices that may best meet their learning and development needs and goals).
2. Teachers should not project an identity onto LGBTQ students, instead students should be able to articulate how they identify to their educators. For example, students should be referred to by the name and pronouns they prefer.
3. School administrators are responsible for creating school spaces that make it comfortable for LGBTQ teachers, adults and students to be open about their identity. Panelists indicated that it is important for LGBTQ adults to openly identify, because they serve as role models and mentors that let LGBTQ youth know that they too can become happy, healthy adults.
4. Educators should be prepared to work through uncomfortable situations for the interest of the students.
5. Panelists highlighted the need for educational training in order to ensure that LGBTQ students have the most safe and supportive environments. This includes cultural competency training for faculty and administrators, student-peer training workshops, and sexual education training for LGBTQ youth.
6. Educators must be attentive and sensitive to the needs of Black LGBTQ students.
7. Adults should seek answers to anything that is unclear to them about the LGBTQ community and their experiences.

# Essential Elements of a Teach-In

## 1. Honor youth as experts

It is important to provide a platform for experts, African American LGBTQ youth, to speak truth to power and to make recommendations for how caring and concerned adults can ensure African American LGBTQ students feel safe, engaged, and supported. Invite students from your community to serve as panelists. Empower them to lead in the design and execution of the Teach-In. Be sure to engage and partner with youth serving and youth education organizations to ensure success. Encourage youth to present in creative ways and to honor how their experience gives them valuable expertise that should inform policy and practice. Student films, poetry, songs, artwork and other multimedia presentations are a great way to promote engagement before, during, and following the Teach-in. Above all else, ensuring the Teach-in responds to or otherwise addresses the most pressing concerns faced by Black LGBTQ youth in your community.

## 2. Highlight resources

Highlighting opportunities for individuals to support the learning and development of African American LGBTQ students is critical to ensuring success. Engage diverse individuals and organizations who can highlight programs as well as financial and other resources to accelerate the learning and development of African American LGBTQ youth at every level.

## 3. Strengthen community

Allow time for participants, stakeholders, and leaders in the community to meet and to exchange resources and information. This will help to strengthen community among caring and concerned adults engaged in this village work. Before the Teach-in, consider hosting a luncheon or convening to establish rapport and identify assets and resources. During the Teach-In, include time for a community forum so attendees can highlight programs and resources. At the conclusion of the Teach-In, consider hosting a reception to allow for extended conversations and networking and to discuss follow-up and accountability.

## 4. Use technology to optimize impact

It is important to give everyone a seat at the table – by sharing information and allowing for engagement, including virtually. Consider showing a live Twitter feed during the Teach-In to highlight virtual community and discussion. Using the hashtags #AfAmLGBTQ, and #AfAmInclusion allows anyone with a broadband connection to engage. Videotaping the event can enable you to highlight and share key themes and recommendations. Also consider livestreaming the event should resources permit. Please refer to our social media guide for tips on leveraging technology and new media (Appendix 9).



## Frequently Asked Questions:

### 1. Why is it important to host a Teach-In?

A Teach-In can:

- i. Create a safe space in which African American LGBTQ students can be leaders, feel affirmed in their identity, and make recommendations to enhance efforts to advance their learning and development and
- ii. Highlight individuals, organizations, policies, and practices that support the learning and development of African American LGBTQ youth; and
- iii. Support community engagement by creating and facilitating opportunities for educators, family members, guardians and other caring adults to discuss ways to ensure African American LGBTQ youth feel safe, engaged, and supported both at school and in the community;

### 2. Who should I invite to my Teach-In?

It takes a village to create change. Invite individuals to attend who are or who should be engaged in supporting the learning and development of African American LGBTQ youth of all ages. Invite individuals responsible for learning and development including: local government officials, scholars, teachers, parents, faith leaders, and business and industry leaders.

### 3. Who should I invite to serve on panels?

Panelists should primarily be comprised of students – remember to use the Teach-In to highlight the experiences of African American LGBTQ youth from the community. Allow students to identify the most pressing issues in the schools/community, make recommendations, and design solutions.

### 4. What are good panel topics?

Panels should focus on 1) highlighting the assets and experiences of African American LGBTQ students and 2) facilitating opportunities to address critical, local concerns, especially those impacting learning and achievement. The AfAmLGBTQ Summit discussed a wide variety of topics including: the role of Black LGBTQ educators in supporting Black LGBTQ students; the importance of Black allies doing the work of supporting Black LGBTQ students and colleagues; the biggest challenges faced by Black LGBTQ students and educators ; and the practices and policies that best support the personal, academic, and professional development of Black LGBTQ youth, such as creating comfortable school spaces, cultural competency training for educators, and sex education for Black LGBTQ youth.

**5. What if I want leadership from the Initiative to attend or otherwise participate in my Teach-In?**

Supporting the work of individuals and communities facilitating the learning and development of African American LGBTQ students is important to us. Please contact us in writing at least six months in advance of your scheduled Teach-In so that we can have a thoughtful conversation about how we can support your work.

**6. How do I make sure my Teach-In is a success?**

We hope this Teach-In toolkit will support your success and ultimately increase access to opportunities for African American LGBTQ students in your community. Consider forming a planning committee, comprised of individuals committed to successfully executing the Teach-In. Ensure highlighting opportunities to support African American LGBTQ students remains the center and most important focus of your efforts. Create an actionable plan to ensure that the community is committed to and will be held accountable for responding to what is shared during the Teach-In. Set goals and create a timeline to advance the work.

**7. How do I ensure an asset based Teach-In?**

Highlight the promise and potential of African American LGBTQ students by ensuring their voice and experience remain at the center of all conversations and work. Also, rely on evidence and data. Urge participants to ask those who use deficit language to provide evidence or data to “show the receipts.” The narrative about Black youths in the U.S. is cloaked in myths. For example, one popular myth implies that there are more Black men in jail than in college. [In reality, there are approximately 600,000 more Black men in college than in jail.](#) Do not be afraid to speak up! Your Teach-In can change the narrative about Black LGBTQ youth by highlighting the many ways they demonstrate, in the words of Nina Simone, being “young, gifted, and black.”<sup>1</sup>

**8. How do I ensure there is meaningful follow up beyond the conclusion of the Teach-In?**

Create time for networking at the event. Encourage participants to exchange contact information and continue to build upon the foundation established during the Teach-In. Invite graduate students to take notes and then synthesize Teach-In themes and recommendations into an event summary. Arrange a stakeholder’s breakfast to discuss themes and create strategies and recommendations to move forward. After the Teach-In, send an event summary highlighting key themes and recommendations. Identify follow-up commitments and activities to advance the work. Develop a virtual resource list of individuals, organizations, and other sources of support and share it among participants.

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<sup>1</sup> Visit [www.ed.gov/AfAmEducation](http://www.ed.gov/AfAmEducation) for other resources and opportunities for extended involvement.

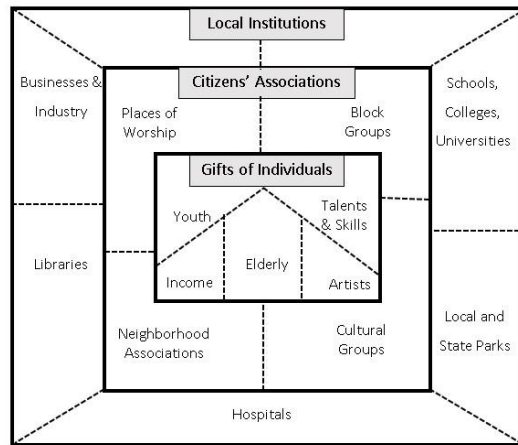


### 9. How do I advertise the Teach-In?

Leverage both new and traditional media to advertise the Teach-In. We have included a sample press release sample that can be sent to local media. Build excitement and encourage attendance and active engagement through personalized outreach to community leaders. Additionally, please refer to our social media guide (Appendix 7) for tips on leveraging Twitter and other new media.

### 10. How do I find partners and sponsors?

A great first step is to develop an asset map such as the one shown here. It is a diagram of individuals, businesses, and organizations in your community that can contribute time, resources and expertise to the Teach-In. Once your asset map is completed, you will have a better idea of the resources available to you in your community and this document can also be used throughout the planning process to assist with inviting panelists and Teach-in attendees. Potential partners and sponsors can be highlighted during the Teach-In.





## Teach-In Check List

The following checklist has been developed to help you successfully plan and execute a Teach-In. Additionally, we have appended templates and sample documents to support you throughout the process.

### Develop the Teach-In Structure

- Identify goals and objectives for the event, including the main focus, which is to highlight the voice and experiences of African American LGBTQ students and to develop a plan to provide safe and supporting environments for the learning and development of African American LGBTQ students.
- Secure a venue or institutional partner (e.g., public facilities including elementary and secondary schools, libraries, and postsecondary institutions of higher learning).
- Identify date, time, and teach-in structure.
- Identify expected outcomes (e.g. a call to action or commitments to ensure active engagement following the Teach-In).
- Identify and/or establish a planning committee.

### Develop Agenda

- Develop Agenda (Appendix 1)
  - Identify panel goals
  - Identify youth experts to serve on the panels
  - Identify workshop leaders for youth and adult breakout sessions
- Extend Invitations to: (Appendix 2)
  - Panelists
  - Workshop leaders
  - Community, faith and industry leaders, and sponsors
  - Attendees and community partners
  - Local elected officials and education leaders
- Confirm Participants
  - Determine pre-teach-in who the panelists and workshop leaders will be.
  - Hold a meeting with the panelists prior to the teach-in to ensure they feel comfortable and affirmed in their expertise.

- Determine the on-site registration process to ensure you are aware of who attended and can be engaged in the follow-up work.
- Identify and engage partners, such as
  - Talent (celebrities, entertainers, athletes, and other validators)
  - Media
  - Community-based organizations
  - Business and industry leaders
- Create master list of Invited attendees (Appendix 3)
  - Identify community and youth-led organizations, educators, community and faith leaders, or business/industry leaders to invite and engage in this important work.

### Event Materials

- Invitation letter (Appendix 5)
- Press release or media advisory (Appendix 8)
- Social media guide (Appendix 9)
- Event Slides
- Appreciation
- Thank you notes to participants (Appendix 6)
- Thank you notes for institutional hosts
- Memo (Appendix 10)

### Gather and Finalize Teach-In Day of Materials/Logistics

- Venue walk-through
  - Identify location of gender-neutral facilities
- Confirm receipt of materials to be used at the Teach-In, such as
  - Videos, as applicable
  - PowerPoint or multimedia presentations, as applicable
  - Physical production materials, such as
    - Stage backdrop
    - Leave behinds
    - Pop-ups and signage
- Confirm grad students to record/synthesize themes and recommendations

### Teach-In Follow-up

- Send Thank you letters to
  - Panelists
  - Partners and host
  - Community, faith and industry leaders, and sponsors
- Find, collect, and share media from the events using Storify.com
- Draft/disseminate final event summary
- Discuss next steps with partners



## Appendix 1: Draft Agenda

[DATE]	[TIME]	[INSTITUTION]	[LOCATION]
[TIME]		<b>Welcome Remarks</b>	[NAME, ORGANIZATION]
		<b>Overview or Keynote Address</b>	[NAME, ORGANIZATION]
[TIME]		<b>PANEL ONE: Students First</b> Students discuss the policies and practices (including enforcement action) hurting LGBTQ students of color and theorize about a set of policies and practices needed to ensure supportive and inclusive environments. Moderator: [NAME, ORGANIZATION] Panelists:	
[TIME]		<b>PANEL TWO: The Role and Responsibility of Caring &amp; Concerned Adults/Advocates</b> LGBTQ youth advocates respond to what they hear from the youth panel, discussing the work required to honor the experiences of students who are both Black and LGBTQ. Moderator: [NAME, ORGANIZATION] Panelists:	
[TIME]		<b>LUNCH</b>	
[TIME]		<b>WORKSHOP I</b>	
[TIME]		<b>BREAK</b>	
[TIME]		<b>WORKSHOP II</b>	
[TIME]		<b>Fishbowl – Town Hall (Reflection and Recommendations)</b> Student participants and parents sit within the inner ring of the fish bowl and engage in a conversation about the work required to ensure that Black LGBTQ children and youth leave their homes WHOLE.	
[TIME]		<b>Closing Remarks</b>	[NAME, ORGANIZATION]
[TIME]		<b>Reception</b>	

## Appendix 2: Invitation for Panelists/Speakers

Dear \_\_\_\_\_,

On behalf of [YOUR ORGANIZATION] and [PARTNER OF THE SUMMIT], I invite you to participate in a dialogue about how to support the learning and development of African American lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender and queer (LGBTQ) students.

[In this paragraph, discuss why the summit is important to your community and goals you hope to accomplish through organizing this teach-in.]

To ensure members of our community have the information and resources needed to support African American LGBTQ youth, [YOUR ORGANIZATION] and [PARTNER(S) OF THE SUMMIT], will host an Teach-In designed to ensure all caring adults have the information and support needed to enhance the experiences of African American LGBTQ youth.

We invite you to participate in our Teach-In at [LOCATION AND DATE]. Specifically, we invite you to [describe the role you wish for the panelist/speaker/workshop leader to play during the teach-in].

We thank you in advance for considering this humble request to contribute to educational excellence for African Americans. Should you have any questions or need any additional information to reach a favorable decision, please do not hesitate to contact [CONTACT PERSON].

Sincerely,

### Appendix 3: Invitation List

Names of Invitees	Organization	E-mail	Response



## Appendix 4: Stakeholder Breakfast Invitation

Dear Colleagues,

After our African American Education Teach-In this coming [DATE] at [LOCATION] we will have a stakeholder's breakfast, to which you are cordially invited. The breakfast will take place in the [LOCATION] [ADDRESS] from [TIME]. The breakfast will serve as a time for community members to discuss themes presented during the #AfAmEdTeachIn and create strategies and recommendations to move forward. I look forward to seeing you there, and many thanks to [PARTNERS] for sponsoring this wonderful event.

To RSVP for the Breakfast please email [CONTACT PERSON], copied here, by [DATE AND TIME].

Warmest regards,

## Appendix 5: Sample Invitation to Participants

December 20, 2013

*The first paragraph should include Teach-In logistics, such as the location, time and partnering individuals/organizations.*

The White House Initiative on Educational Excellence for African Americans (Initiative) and the American Federation of Teachers (AFT) invite you to attend a one-day education summit on Tuesday, January 14, 2014. The AFT will host the event at their headquarters in Washington, DC located at 555 New Jersey Ave. N.W., Washington, DC 20001.

*This paragraph should discuss your Teach-In goals and objectives*

The summit is designed to facilitate collaborative discussion and engagement among individuals and organizations committed to addressing educational inequality especially among African American students, schools and communities. In particular, the aim of the summit is to:

1. Strengthen community among individuals working in education reform, civil rights, youth development and related fields and industries;
2. Facilitate increased collaboration and coordination by allowing individuals and organizations to share significant areas of focus and key dates throughout the calendar year; and
3. Ultimately serve to reinforce collective impact by leveraging resources and effort.

The AFT, a union of professionals championing fairness, high-quality public education and healthcare services through community engagement and political activism is pleased to partner with the Initiative, a cross-agency effort aimed at identifying evidence-based practices that improve student achievement, and developing a national network that shares these best practices.

Your participation is critical to contribute to developing and pursuing a shared strategy for increasing African American learning and development including identifying measurable goals and a timeline to inform the work going forward. This process is critical to ensuring that our efforts result in sustained investments to improve learning and development for African American students, families and communities throughout the United States.

*In this paragraph, explain why your invitee's presence is important.*

*In this final part, include details for how to RSVP or follow-up.*

To accept this invitation, please register at the following link: <https://docs.google.com/forms/d/1dZx6NZi1KWbEJPTg3dKOU71aXxYLVspkCyrOGsmeAQs/viewform>. Please note that registration will close at midnight on January 8, 2014. A detailed agenda with confirmed guests and a program draft will be sent to you prior to the event.

Should you have any questions, please contact Russella Davis-Rogers at 202.453.5543 or [Russella.Davis@ed.gov](mailto:Russella.Davis@ed.gov).

There will be a reception immediately following the summit and we hope you can join us. We greatly appreciate your willingness to participate and look forward to our continued partnership on these very important topics in the future.

Sincerely,

David J. Johns  
Executive Director  
White House Initiative on Educational Excellence for African Americans

Dr. Lorretta Johnson  
Secretary-Treasurer  
American Federation of Teachers

## Appendix 6: Sample Thank you Letter

May 1, 2014

Dear Dr. Harris:

*Thank participants for their involvement, reminding them of your Teach-In goals*

On behalf of the White House Initiative on Educational Excellence for African Americans I thank you for your participation in the 2014 Summit Series on Educational Excellence for African Americans at Morehouse College in Atlanta, Georgia. Thank you for sharing your time and discussing your commitment to improving academic and life outcomes for African Americans. Your expertise helped to elevate promising and proven strategies—equipping caring and concerned participants with resources they can implement, today, to support our students, schools and communities.

The White House Initiative on Educational Excellence for African Americans is working with individuals and organizations throughout the country to highlight and share effective national and local programs, policies and practices that support the development and success of African American students. The Summit Series has had a particular focus on identifying strategies supporting boys and men of color. We encourage you to share any resources that you are aware of so that we may share them with others.

*Explain the work of you and your partners, with the goal of creating sustainable partnerships*

Your participation in the Summit Series, and your leadership in education more generally, are critical. Photos from the event can be found ([link](#)). Please do not hesitate to share with us any new research or examples you happen upon as we would love to share that news with our networks. Please do not hesitate to contact me directly at 202-205-9853, or by email at [david.johns@ed.gov](mailto:david.johns@ed.gov), if I, or a member of the Initiative's staff, may be of assistance to you.

We thank you for all that you do, every day, for our students, schools and our country.

Sincerely,

David J. Johns

Executive Director

White House Initiative on Educational Excellence for African Americans

*Guide them to online resources post-event and your contact information for follow-up.*

## Appendix 7: White House Summit on African American LGBTQ Youth Media Coverage

**[Op-Ed] Why We Need To Support LGBT Youth in Schools** Black Enterprise, May 17  
<http://www.blackenterprise.com/education/op-ed-need-support-lgbt-youth-schools/>

**First African American LGBTQ Youth Summit Advances the Inclusion Conversation** NBC Parent Toolkit, June 10 <http://www.parenttoolkit.com/index.cfm?objectid=F95183F0-2F10-11E6-B3F30050569A5318>

**The #Pulse Shooting: Can Educating the Public Keep LGBTQ Youth Safe?** The Root, June 13  
<http://www.theroot.com/articles/culture/2016/06/lgbtq-pulse-orlando/>

**5 Ways Schools Can Support African American LGBTQ Youth** Education Post, June 14  
<http://educationpost.org/5-ways-schools-can-support-african-american-lgbtq-youth/>

**Youth Leader Grace Dolan-Sandrino joins the Thom Hartmann radio show “A New Generation Speaks Out On The Future For The LGBTQ Community!”** June 14  
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=6P4VdgDNZbM>

**Orlando Massacre Reminds Us Why LGBTQ Youth Advocacy is So Important** NBC Parent Toolkit, June 17 <http://www.parenttoolkit.com/index.cfm?objectid=ECB295F0-349F-11E6-AEE40050569A5318>

## Appendix 8: Sample Press Release or Media Advisory

### First African American LGBTQ Youth Summit Advances the Inclusion Conversation

June 10, 2016 / Parent Toolkit

African American LGBTQ youth are gathering today in Washington DC to share their experiences at the intersection of black and queer identity.

The [White House Initiative on Education Excellence for African Americans](#) (WHIEEAA), the [National Education Association](#) (NEA), and the [National Black Justice Coalition](#) (NBJC) are hosting the first-of-its kind event on supporting African American LGBTQ Youth.

This event, the White House Summit on African American LGBTQ Youth, is bringing together students, educators, parents, and thought leaders to discuss the need to better advocate for African American LGBTQ students.

The Executive Director of the WHIEEAA, David Johns, said recognizing the intersectional identity of African American LGBTQ youth is essential in order to provide tangible tools and tips to support them in educational spaces and at home. An intersectional perspective takes into account that an individual can experience discrimination in many forms, overlapping with multiple identities such as race, gender, class, and sexual orientation.

“There is power in precision,” Johns told NBC’s Parent Toolkit. “When we don’t think about intersectionality, we miss significant opportunities to acknowledge every challenge that black people face and that they have additional challenges being LGBTQ. If we only focus on the black or gay part, their experience goes unrealized in its entirety. We are required to move beyond the surface.”

The goals of the summit are to give voice to and honor the stories of black LGBTQ youth, but also to equip adults in the education space and parents to be inclusive of these students.

[Karamo Brown](#), a father and the first openly gay African American in the history of reality TV, will be moderating a panel at the summit about the role and responsibility of caring and concerned adults and advocates.

Parents Ron Ford Jr. and Vanessa Ford will also be at the event, talking with educators about their experience as parents of a transgender child. They recently [wrote](#) an Op Ed for the Washington Post, praising their transgender daughter’s school on being a “model of inclusiveness.” They posed the question, “What if? What if we lived in a place that wasn’t so supportive of transgender youth?”

That’s the reason this summit is important in starting conversations around inclusion, explained Johns.

“If we don’t support these students, the consequences are too dangerous,” Johns said. “They are more likely to experience bullying, have poor mental health, they have a greater risk for HIV and other STDs, and they are more inclined to be living in poverty.”

A [study](#) published in the June 2014 issue of the *American Journal of Public Health* showed that LGBT youth of color has a significantly higher prevalence of suicide attempts compared to their white LGBT youth counterparts. LGBT Youth of Color are at a high risk for homelessness and harassment according to a 2007 [report](#) published by Advocates for Youth. A 2009 California Safe Schools Coalition [study](#) found that “there was a significant overlap in race-based and sexual orientation-based harassment; nearly a third of students who were bullied experience both types of harassment, and this group reported the lowest feelings of safety at school.”

At the summit, students will have an opportunity to theorize about policies and practices needed to foster supportive and inclusive environments.

“By acknowledging this part of their lives and making them a part of the conversation, we affirm that they’ve always been here,” Johns said.

The summit will also incorporate a discussion with parents, both LGBTQ parents themselves and parents of LGBTQ youth, about working to ensure that African American LGBTQ children are healthy and supported mentally, physically, emotionally, spiritually, and financially.

“It’s important to remember that there have always been black LGBTQ people,” Johns said. “Every February, we celebrate black leaders like Malcolm X and Martin Luther King Jr., but seldom do we think of queer, black leaders like Alice Walker, Langston Hughes, and Audre Lorde.”

To further the conversation, WHIEEAA produced a web-series for educators and parents about supporting inclusive and affirming environments for African American LGBTQ students. These videos will be available as resources on the [WHIEEAA website](#) in the next two weeks. WHIEEAA is using the hashtags #AfAmLGBT and #AfAmInclusion to continue the conversation on Twitter.

“As a black man who has struggled, while as a student and a professional, to find examples of people who show up in the world like me, I am excited to bring together a group of young, queer people already making important change in their communities,” Johns said. “That’s the thing that I’m most excited about and I’m honored to be a part of it.”



## Appendix 9: AfAmLGBTQ Social Media Toolkit

To amplify your efforts during and following the Teach-In, please leverage technology in the following ways:

Our hashtags for the event are: **#AfAmLGBTQ** and **#AfAmInclusion**

Feel free to tag the following social media accounts in any post.



@AfAmEducation



OfficialAfAmEducation



OficialAfAmEd

[Include Speaker and Facilitator accounts]

### Social Media Basics

- Be sure to include the hashtags **#AfAmLGBTQ** and **#AfAmInclusion**
- Include pictures, video, and why you support African American LGBTQ Youth
- On Facebook, Twitter, and Instagram make sure that your privacy settings are set to “Public” so that we can share your posts via the White House Initiative on Educational Excellence for African Americans social media sites.

### Sample Social Media Posts

#### Twitter

- I stand in solidarity with African American LGBTQ youth. **#AfAmLGBT #AfAmInclusion**
- Making the Internet a safe space for LGBTQ youth of color starts with you. **#AfAmLGBT #AfAmInclusion**

#### Facebook

- I stand in solidarity with African American LGBTQ youth across the nation. Follow **#AfAmLGBTQ** and **#AfAmInclusion** to keep up with the conversation at today’s **#AfAmEdTeachIn** on African American LGBTQ Youth.

#### Instagram

- [Photo] Supporting African American LGBTQ youth nationwide **#AfAmLGBTQ #AfAmInclusion**

## Appendix 10: Sample Memo

### Executive Summary

The White House Initiative on Educational Excellence for African Americans (Initiative) in collaboration with the National Education Association (NEA) and the National Black Justice Coalition (NBJC) hosted the inaugural White House Summit for African American lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender, and queer or questioning (AfAmLGBTQ Summit) Youth at the National Education Association on June 10, 2016, in Washington, DC. This AfAmLGBTQ Summit provided a platform for African American LGBTQ students to make recommendations to adults, educators, and advocates to ensure all students feel safe, engaged and supported—in school and in life.

Plenary panels featured high school and college students discussed the unique challenges faced by those living at the intersection of both Blackness and queerness. Youth leaders describe the ways they need to be supported. A plenary panel of leaders of organizations charged with the learning and development of Black LGBTQ youth followed. Among the recommendations youth leaders discussed were the following:

- Incorporating African American LGBTQ narratives into curricula;
- Providing safe schools where Black LGBTQ students and faculty feel comfortable openly expressing their identities;
- Providing professional development and coaching to support educators, students, and advocates in better understanding the unique needs and experiences of Black LGBTQ youth; and
- Increasing representation of African American LGBTQ youth in media to combat negative images that persist about Black LGBTQ youth.

The Summit proved to be useful for all in attendance. Educators, advocates, and students left with a renewed commitment to ensuring that African American LGBTQ students receive the education that they deserve. Allecyn Gay, Founding Dean of KIPP Delta: Forrest City, reflected on her time at the Summit. She tweeted, “As I leave DC, I’m actively planning to roll out yesterday’s recommendations from #AfAmLGBTQ summit at Institute [Teach for America] next week #DeltaLove16.” (Gay, 2016).

Worth Noting: Just one day after the conclusion of the inaugural Summit, a tragic shooting took place at an Orlando, FL nightclub popular among the Orlando LGBTQ communities of color. Fifty club goers were murdered and 53 club goers were injured. Please read President Obama and Vice President Biden’s respective responses to the mass shooting [here](#).

## Appendix 11: Letter to Youth Leaders (Youth Packet)

Youth Leaders,

We are excited that you have joined us for the African American Education Teach in on African American LGBTQ Youth! We have designed a Teach-In with guest speakers, activities, and, most importantly, opportunities to meet other LGBTQ African American students and adult mentors. We are gathering to celebrate and affirm you – brave, out scholars currently improving the school communities and spaces you move through and to leverage your experience and expertise to improve the programs, policies, and practices necessary to ensure you thrive.

As you prepare for the Teach-In, we encourage you to think about three questions:

1. What does it mean to be young, gifted, Black and LGBTQ?
2. What do you need to feel safe, supported and engaged in school?
3. What do you need adults to know and do to ensure that you thrive/succeed?

As you think about your answer to these questions, we encourage you to tweet your thoughts (as well as selfies) using the hashtags #AfAmInclusion and #AfAmLGBTQ. These hashtags will help us share ideas and build community.

During parts of the Teach-In, you may experience a range of emotions. Counselors, mentors, and caring and concerned adults will be onsite to support you. If you ever need to call someone to talk, use the hotline numbers on the following page.

Thank you in advance for showing up, in your fullness, and for showing OUT!

Sincerely,

[Hosts]

## Appendix 12: Telling Our Stories (Youth Packet)

**1(800) 799-SAFE (7233)**  
National Domestic Violence Hotline  
24 hours a day, seven days a week

WHO WE ARE and WHAT WE NEED should inform the way the world views and supports us and others like us.

Among the things we hope to accomplish during the Teach-In is to affirm the importance of celebrating and leveraging the power in who we are as African American/Black LGBTQ leaders. Communication is essential. Who you are and how you make sense of the world around you impacts your ability to self-actualize – to leverage your skills, interests and experience to do that which makes you feel most alive, at peace, to be able to show up in the way that makes you feel most comfortable.

We know that sometimes when people think about the needs of Black students they miss (or assume it's not possible for us to) show up as also LGBTQ. Conversely, when advocates do work to support LGBTQ students they're usually advocating on behalf of white students – missing the unique benefits and challenges associated with also being a racial or ethnic “minority”.

To fill this critical gap we invite you to reflect upon who you are – the uniqueness of your experience – and exercise your power to articulate your desires. We have included a number of essays from individuals who demonstrate the power of storytelling, communication and self-actualization for you to consider.

## Appendix 13: About Me (Youth Packet)

My name is: \_\_\_\_\_

The school I attend is: \_\_\_\_\_

My preferred gender pronouns are: \_\_\_\_\_

3 things that make me unique are:

1. \_\_\_\_\_

2. \_\_\_\_\_

3. \_\_\_\_\_

3 goals I have for the future are:

1. \_\_\_\_\_

2. \_\_\_\_\_

3. \_\_\_\_\_

I need the following support/assistance to support my goals for the future:

1. \_\_\_\_\_

2. \_\_\_\_\_

3. \_\_\_\_\_

Commitments/Ground Rules:

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1. A caring and concerned adult I can depend on is:

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2. My AfAm LGBTQ Teach-In peer mentor is:

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My AfAm LGBTQ Teach-In adult mentor is:

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## **Appendix 14: Support Hotlines**

### **FOR LGBTQ YOUTH**

1(800) 850-8078

Trevor Helpline Crisis Intervention for LGBT Youth  
24 hours a day, seven days a week

1(888) 843-4564 (THE GLNH)

GLNH Gay & Lesbian National Hotline  
Monday-Friday, 6:00 PM-11:00 PM Eastern Time

(800) 246-7743 The GLBT National Youth Talk Line

### **FOR HIV AND AIDS INFORMATION**

1(800) CDC-INFO

24 hours a day, seven days a week

### **FOR HOMELESS AND RUNAWAY YOUTH**

1(800) 999-9999

The Nine Line

24 hours a day, seven days a week

1(800) 231-6946

24 hours a day, seven days a week

### **FOR SURVIVORS OF DOMESTIC VIOLENCE**

1(800) 799-SAFE (7233)

National Domestic Violence Hotline  
24 hours a day, seven days a week

## Appendix 15: Terminology

Below we have included terms<sup>2</sup> to help us understand what it means for African American LGBTQ youth to live at the intersection of Blackness and queerness, and to give us language to approach discussions on racial justice, LGBTQ oppression, and LGBTQ people.

### Intersectionality and Black LGBTQ Youth

Intersectionality is an approach to social issues that recognizes that people exist in multiple social categories (race, class, gender, sexual orientation) at once, and experience unique forms of privilege or disadvantage based upon how those categories overlap. For example, a Black, cisgender, heterosexual man experiences discrimination differently than a Black trans woman, and accesses certain privileges she is unable to.

Thus, when working with African American LGBTQ youth, we cannot approach their experience only thinking of them as “Black”, nor can we think of them only as “LGBTQ”. Their unique experiences and perspectives are shaped by them existing as both as Black and LGBTQ at the same time (see “Experiences of LGBT Youth of Color” and “Power in Partnerships” in Appendix 16).

People of color make up more than 30% of the individuals who identify as LGBTQ in the U.S., and data shows that Black people are more likely to identify as lesbian, gay, bisexual, or transgender than any other racial group. When talking about the LGBTQ community, it is important to remember its racial diversity, as well as when talking about the African American community, it is important to remember its LGBTQ population. Avoid using language that creates a dichotomy between people of color and LGBTQ people, as this can exclude LGBTQ people of color or pressure them to choose between their race and their sexual or gender identity.

### Approaching Discussions on Race and Racism

Racism is a complex system of beliefs and behaviors grounded in a presumed superiority of the white race. These beliefs and behaviors are conscious and unconscious; personal and institutional; and result in the oppression of people of color and benefit the dominant group, whites.

#### Types of Racism:

##### Individual

The beliefs, attitudes, and actions of individuals that support or perpetuate racism in conscious and unconscious ways.

##### Cultural

Cultural racism refers to representations, messages, and stories conveying the idea that behaviors and values associated with white people or “whiteness” are automatically “better” or more “normal” than those associated with other racially defined groups.

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<sup>2</sup> Terms and definitions are adapted from “Power in Partnerships: Building Connections at the Intersections to End the School-to-Prison Pipeline” pp. 14-18. View the report (Appendix 16) for more resources on coalition-building between racial justice and LGBTQ advocacy groups and information on Black LGBTQ youth and the school-to-prison pipeline.

### Institutional

Institutional racism refers specifically to the ways in which policies and practices of organizations or systems create different outcomes for different racial groups. The institutional policies may never mention any racial group, but their effect is to create, maintain, or fail to remedy accumulated advantages for white people and accumulated disadvantages for people from other racial groups.

### Structural

The term structural racism refers to a system in which public policies, institutional practices, cultural representations, and other norms work in various, often reinforcing ways to perpetuate racial group inequity.

## **Approaching Discussions on LGBTQ Issues**

### Homophobia

Critical or hostile behavior (such as discrimination) directed at non-heterosexual individuals or communities.

### Heteronormativity

A term used to describe the way that heterosexuality is naturalized, normalized, and assumed, while other sexual identities are stigmatized or rendered invisible. While homophobia is often used to describe individuals' attitudes, heteronormativity helps to describe systems, institutions, and practices that privilege heterosexuality over other sexual identities.

### Transphobia

Fear, anger, disgust, or hatred directed at transgender or gender-nonconforming individuals or communities.

### Cissexism

A term used to describe norms that assume all individuals are either male or female, and that gender is always congruent with one's biological sex.

When talking about LGBTQ issues like discrimination in employment and housing, marriage, bullying, and other topics, it is important to start by establishing a common ground and illustrating the concrete harms that are experienced by LGBTQ people.

#### **You can emphasize common ground by:**

- Using the language of shared values, hopes, and beliefs.
- Making it about people and their stories.
- Reminding people that LGBTQ people are neighbors, coworkers, and friends.

#### **You can illustrate concrete harms by:**

- Avoiding abstract "rights" and "discrimination" language.
- Making it clear that existing laws don't protect LGBTQ people.
- Focusing on a few meaningful injustices and illustrating them with emotionally compelling stories.

## Basic LGBTQ Terminology

Throughout this Toolkit, we use the acronym LGBTQ as an inclusive way to talk about lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender, and queer or questioning youth. Though there are many ways to talk about the vast diversity of sexual and gender identities, in most spaces these terms are the most widely accepted and commonly understood. Note that not everyone knows what the LGBTQ acronym means. When speaking to a general audience that may not be familiar with this, saying out “lesbian, gay, bisexual and transgender” or “gay and transgender” is important to help them understand. It is also important to remember that gay and transgender are adjectives, not nouns. It’s best to talk in terms of “gay men,” “gay people,” and “transgender people,” as opposed to “gays” or “transgenders.”

### Sexual Orientation

Sexual orientation refers to the gender(s) that a person is romantically, emotionally, and sexually attracted to. We avoid terms like “lifestyle” or “preference” because they suggest that this orientation is a choice, or something that can be changed or cured. It is often most useful to think of sexual orientation as a spectrum, with heterosexual and homosexual on either end. Between the two are a multitude of different identities and variations, including bisexuality and pansexuality.

Though it is common for individuals to have an innate sense of what gender(s) we are attracted to, sexual orientation can be fluid and complicated. Note that the “Q” in LGBTQ is used to refer to both queer and questioning individuals as a way to include individuals who may be unsure of their sexual orientation or gender identity as well as those who prefer to avoid identifying themselves as “gay,” “bisexual,” “lesbian,” or “transgender,” which some view as rigid or confining categories.

### Gender Identity

We use the terms gender and gender identity to refer to an individual’s innate sense of self as a man, a woman, transgender, or other gender category. “Gender” describes the way a person identifies themselves, as opposed to the biological “sex” they were assigned at birth. The term transgender refers to individuals whose biological sex does not match their gender identity. Individuals whose gender identity and biological sex are congruent are referred to as cisgender. The term gender nonconforming is used to describe individuals who do not identify as trans, but perform their gender in a way that differs from traditional ideas about men and women.

At some point in their lives, many transgender people decide they must live their lives as the gender they have always known themselves to be, and often transition to living as that gender. Not all transgender individuals choose to transition; some feel more comfortable somewhere between male and female identities. It is important never to assume someone’s gender identity and to give everyone the opportunity to define themselves. Accept the fact that you do not need to know the intricacies of someone’s gender or sexual orientation to engage with them as a human being.

When talking about issues affecting the LGBTQ community, such as nondiscrimination or safe schools protections, it is important to mention both sexual orientation and gender identity, as both must be included to protect the whole community.

### Additional Terminology

You may hear people use terms such as queer, genderqueer, pansexual, nonbinary, or other words to refer to themselves and their identities. When addressing a general audience, remember that not everyone understands these terms, and some may even be offensive to some LGBTQ people. When working with LGBTQ activists, it is okay to ask how someone identifies, what terms they prefer, and how they want you to refer to their organization or group. For example, an activist may prefer that you refer to her group's work as "advocating for the queer community."

### Pronouns

It is important to respect the identities that people share with you in the course of working together. One way to do this is to always refer to people using the gender pronouns they prefer. A "preferred pronoun" is the pronoun that a person wants used when others are talking about them. You can't always know what someone's preferred pronoun is by looking at them. Asking for and correctly using someone's preferred pronoun shows your respect for their gender identity.

Some commonly used pronouns are she, her, hers; he, him, his; and they, them, theirs. For example, if someone named Dylan prefers a gender-neutral pronoun like "they," you would say, "I talked to Dylan, and they are running a few minutes late for the meeting."

A great way to discover a person's preferred pronoun is to ask. Many groups begin meetings by asking everyone to share their pronouns. This practice can make a safe space for people to share their preferred pronouns, as well as educate new folks to the importance of respecting everyone's preferred pronouns. When meeting a new person, it is polite to share your preferred pronouns and ask them for theirs.

### Coming Out and Family Rejection

"Coming Out"<sup>3</sup> refers to the process of sharing one's sexual orientation with people in one's life. It is important for caring and concerned adults, especially family and those whose support LGBTQ youth need the most, to respond with love and care. Many youth are hesitant to come out due to fear of rejection, which can have detrimental mental health effects. LGBTQ youth who experience family rejection were 8.4 times more likely to report having attempted suicide, 5.9 times more likely to report high levels of depression, 3.4 times more likely to use illegal drugs, and 3.4 times more likely to report having engaged in unprotected sexual intercourse compared with peers from families that reported no or low levels of family rejection.<sup>4</sup> It is critical for family members and educators to show up with love and support.

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<sup>3</sup> See "Coming Out As You: The Guide" in Appendix 16 for resources on helping youth through the coming out process.

<sup>4</sup> Visit <http://www.thetrevorproject.org/pages/safe-community> for more information.

## **Appendix 16: Additional Resources**

### **Experiences of LGBTQ Youth of Color**

<http://www.glsen.org/sites/default/files/Shared%20Differences.pdf>

### **Power in Partnerships: Building Connections at the Intersections to End the School-to-Prison Pipeline**

[http://b.3cdn.net/advancement/85066c4a18d249e72b\\_r23m68j37.pdf](http://b.3cdn.net/advancement/85066c4a18d249e72b_r23m68j37.pdf)

### **Serving as an Ally for LGBTQ Youth**

<http://www.lgbtyouthnorthwest.org.uk/wp-content/uploads/2014/04/How-You-Can-Help-Us-Full-Report.pdf>

### **Ways to Support LGBTQ Youth in the Classroom**

[http://www.huffingtonpost.com/desiree-raught-/5-easy-ways-to-support-lg\\_b\\_10281882.html](http://www.huffingtonpost.com/desiree-raught-/5-easy-ways-to-support-lg_b_10281882.html)

### **GLSEN Safe Space Toolkit**

[http://www.glsen.org/sites/default/files/GLSEN%20Safe%20Space%20Kit%202016\\_0.pdf](http://www.glsen.org/sites/default/files/GLSEN%20Safe%20Space%20Kit%202016_0.pdf)

### **Request SafeZone Training for Your School or Workplace**

<http://www.gayalliance.org/programs/education-safezone/safezone-programs/>

### **Coming Out As You: The Guide**

<http://www.thetrevorproject.org/pages/the-guide>

### **Talking about LGBT Issues Series**

<http://www.lgbtmap.org/effective-messaging/talking-about-lgbt-issues-series>

### **An Ally's Guide to Terminology**

<http://www.lgbtmap.org/file/allys-guide-to-terminology.pdf>

## Appendix 17: Department of Education Regional Representatives

Representatives of the Department of Education in your region can guide you to the latest information and resources available to support educational excellence (e.g. programs, events, and funding opportunities). The list below includes the names, addresses, and telephone numbers of each representative.

### Headquarters

**Office location:** Washington, DC  
Denis Bega, Director, Regional Operations  
Darlene Mayo, Staff Assistant  
Kathrina Bridges, Staff Assistant, TAF  
U.S. Department of Education  
400 Maryland Avenue, SW  
Washington, DC 20202  
Fax: 202-260-7465

### Region I

**Office location:** Boston, MA  
**States:** Connecticut, Maine, Massachusetts, New Hampshire, Rhode Island, Vermont  
Elizabeth Williamson, Northeast HUB Leader  
U.S. Department of Education  
POCH Building, 5 Post Office Square  
9th Floor, Room 24  
Boston, MA 02110  
Telephone: 617-289-0100  
Fax: 617-289-0151

### Region II

**Office location:** New York, NY  
**States:** New Jersey, New York, Puerto Rico, Virgin Islands  
Jacquelyn Pitta  
Taylor Owen Ramsey, Education Program Specialist  
U.S. Department of Education  
Financial Square  
32 Old Slip, 25th Floor  
New York, NY 10005  
Telephone: 646-428-3906  
Fax: 646-428-3904

### Region III

**Office location:** Philadelphia, PA  
**States:** Delaware, District of Columbia, Maryland, Pennsylvania, Virginia, West Virginia  
Elizabeth Williamson, Northeast HUB Leader  
The Wanamaker Building

100 Penn Square East-Suite 505  
Philadelphia, PA 19107  
Telephone: 215-656-6010  
Fax: 215-656-6020

#### **Region IV**

**Office location:** Atlanta, GA

**States:** Alabama, Florida, Georgia, Kentucky, Mississippi, North Carolina, South Carolina, Tennessee

Dennis Bega, Deputy Director, Regional Operations/South and Midwest HUB

Martin Richburg

Jonava Johnson

Malissa Coleman

U.S. Department of Education

61 Forsyth St. SW, Suite 19T40

Atlanta, GA 30303

Telephone: 404-974-9450

Fax: 404-974-9459

#### **Region V**

**Office location:** Chicago, IL

**States:** Illinois, Indiana, Michigan, Minnesota, Ohio, Wisconsin

Julie Ewart

Shirley Jones

U.S. Department of Education

500 W. Madison Street, Suite 1427

Chicago, IL 60661

Telephone: 312-730-1700

Fax: 312-730-1704

#### **Region VI**

**Office location:** Dallas, TX

**States:** Arkansas, Louisiana, New Mexico, Oklahoma, Texas

Dennis Bega, (Acting)

U.S. Department of Education

1999 Bryan St. Suite 1510

Dallas, TX 75201-3136

Telephone: 404-974-9450

Fax: 214-661-9594

#### **Region VII**

Office location: Kansas City, MO

States: Iowa, Kansas, Missouri, Nebraska

Patrick Kerr

Elaine Venard



Jeanne Ackerson  
U.S. Department of Education  
One Petticoat Lane  
1010 Walnut, Suite 452  
Kansas City, MO 64106  
Telephone: 816-268-0404  
Fax: 816-268-0407

**Region VIII**

**Office location:** Denver, CO  
**States:** Colorado, Montana, North Dakota, South Dakota, Utah, Wyoming  
Helen Littlejohn, Western HUB Leader  
Diana Huffman  
U.S. Department of Education  
Regional Office, Federal Bldg.1244  
Speer Blvd, Suite 615  
Denver, CO 80204-3582  
Telephone: 303-844-3544  
Fax: 303-844-2524

**Region IX**

**Office location:** San Francisco, CA  
**States:** Arizona, California, Hawaii, Nevada, American Samoa, Guam, Northern Mariana Islands  
Joe Barison, PAS  
U.S. Department of Education  
50 Beale Street, room 9700  
San Francisco, CA 94105  
Telephone: 415-486-5700  
Fax: 415-486-5719

**Region X**

**Office location:** Seattle, WA  
**States:** Alaska, Idaho, Oregon, Washington  
Linda Pauley  
U.S. Department of Education  
Jackson Federal Bldg.  
915 2nd Avenue, Room 3362  
Seattle, WA 98174-1099  
Telephone: 206-607-1655  
Fax: 206-607-1661