



USDA LGBTQI+ Pride Month 2024
CULTIVATING RESILIENCE • HARVESTING HOPE

2024 USDA LGBTQI+ Pride Month Observance

June 05, 2024 | 1:00–2:30 p.m. ET

USDA Whitten Patio
[Virtual event on Zoom](#)

Presented by
OASCR, OCDIO,
NASS and Equality USDA



Observance Program



Program Welcome

Jeremy Wood, Event Moderator (he/him)
DEIA Policy & Strategy Advisor
Office of the Chief Diversity & Inclusion Officer
President, Equality USDA



Presentation of Colors

Pledge of Allegiance

Audience



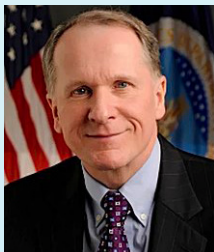
National Anthem

Tremayne Wilson (he/him)
Head, Livestock and Specialty Surveys Section
Survey Administration Branch/ Census and Survey Division
National Agricultural Statistics Service



Civil Rights Greeting

Dr. Penny Brown Reynolds (she/her)
Deputy Assistant Secretary for Civil Rights,
Office of the Assistant Secretary for Civil Rights



USDA Executive Remarks

Kevin Shea (he/him)
Senior Advisor
Office of the Deputy Secretary



Keynote Speaker

Raffi Freedman-Gurspan (she/her)
Principal Deputy Director of Public Engagement
U.S. Department of Transportation

Observance Program



Employee Resource Group Remarks and Presentations

Jeremy Wood (he/him)
DEIA Policy & Strategy Advisor
Office of the Chief Diversity & Inclusion Officer
President, Equality USDA



Keynote Speaker

The Honorable Vincent Logan (he/him)
Board Chair and CEO
Farm Credit Administration



Closing Remarks

Jody McDaniel (he/him)
Director, Eastern Field Operations
National Agricultural Statistics Service

Message from the Secretary and Deputy Secretary



Dear USDA Employees,

LGBTQI+ Pride Month provides an opportunity to honor the countless contributions of LGBTQI+ men and women who have advocated for LGBTQI+ rights. While now we celebrate Pride month with parades, festivals, and other diverse events, we also take the time to recognize the journey necessary to arrive at this place and the continued efforts still needed to ensure the safety and inclusion of LGBTQI+ individuals.

LGBTQI+ farmers are becoming more open and face a unique set of challenges. In rural agricultural communities, stigma, discrimination and bias, in all its forms, impact mental health, healthcare support and coverage, especially gender-affirming care, and mental health services.

Employees who identify as LGBTQI+ are valued members of our teams, catalysts for change, drivers of progress and help us to cultivate a resilient workplace where all people are celebrated for who they are.

Thank you for your continued dedication and commitment to promoting diversity and inclusion within our organization. We look forward to celebrating with you.

Sincerely,

Secretary Thomas J. Vilsack

Deputy Secretary Xochitl Torres Small



The Office of the Assistant Secretary for Civil Rights, the Office of the Chief Diversity and Inclusion Officer, the Office of Operations, the Office of Safety, Security and Protection and Equality USDA collaborated to light the Whitten Building June 3-10 in support of LGBTQI+ employees.

Speaker Bios



Raffi Freedman-Gurspan (she/her) is the Principal Deputy Director of Public Engagement at the United States Department of Transportation. She was previously a Deputy States Director for the All on The Line campaign of the National Redistricting Action Fund and oversaw work in the Midwest and East Coast. Raffi also has extensive experience in LGBTQI+ and gender justice community advocacy.

Her experience includes serving as Director of External Relations at the National Center for Transgender Equality (NCTE) and Senior Associate Director for Public Engagement, and Outreach and Recruitment Director for Presidential Personnel at the White House during the Obama Administration, where she was the first openly transgender staffer in history to work at the White House. A graduate of St. Olaf College in Minnesota, Raffi was adopted from Honduras and grew up in Brookline, Massachusetts.



The Honorable Vincent Logan (he/him) was appointed to the FCA board by President Joseph Biden on October 3, 2022. He was designated board chairman and CEO on October 21. Chairman Logan is the first openly gay person to serve on the FCA board; as a member of the Osage Nation, he is also the first Native American. He is serving a term that expires on May 21, 2026.

Chairman Logan is also a member of the board of directors of the Farm Credit System Insurance Corporation, an independent U.S. government-controlled corporation that insures the timely payment of principal and interest on obligations issued jointly by Farm Credit System banks.

Prior to joining FCA, Chairman Logan was chief financial officer and chief investment officer for the Native American Agriculture Fund, which is the largest philanthropic organization dedicated solely to serving the Native American farming and ranching community.

Nominated by President Barack Obama and confirmed by the U.S. Senate in 2014, Chairman Logan served as the Special Trustee for American Indians at the U.S. Department of the Interior. During his tenure, he was appointed to the Department of the Treasury's Financial Literacy Education Commission.

Chairman Logan has worked in New York both as a lawyer, practicing in aircraft, shipping, and equipment finance, and as an investment advisor, focusing on institutional asset management and permanent fund development.

Chairman Logan previously served as a director to the Federal Reserve Bank of St. Louis, Little Rock Branch, and as an Oklahoma State University Foundation governor. He was educated at Oklahoma State University; the University of Oklahoma College of Law; Queen's College, Oxford University; and the School of International and Public Affairs at Columbia University.

Equality USDA Board

Equality USDA is the employee resource group for LGBTQI+ employees and retirees of the U.S. Department of Agriculture. The mission of Equality USDA is to create and continue to foster a work environment free of discrimination and harassment based on sexual orientation, gender identity, and gender expression. Equality USDA seeks to make USDA a place where you can grow your own destiny, no matter who you are or whom you love.

To join Equality USDA, visit equalityusda.org!



President: Jeremy Wood (he/him)

Jeremy has been a part of the USDA family for over 23 years and works in the Office of the Chief Diversity and Inclusion Officer, Office of the Secretary. Jeremy has worked in Civil Rights/Affirmative employment at several USDA Agencies and been involved with the LGBTQI+ Special Emphasis Program since its creation in 2009.

Jeremy is currently serving as the President of Equality USDA, the LGBTQI+ Employee Resource Group and has been a leader in establishing LGBTQI+ inclusive policies that help make USDA welcoming workplace.



Vice-President: Joshua Allen (he/him, they/them)

Joshua "Josh" Allen was born and raised in Lake Charles, LA. Joshua, received their Bachelor of Science in Agriculture with a concentration in Agronomy from Prairie View A&M University, Prairie View, TX. They began their career as a Biology Teacher/ Events Coordinator with P.U.S.H. Academy in Denver, CO working with High School Seniors to prepare for next steps in their academic or occupational journey. In 2015, Josh shifted their career trajectory serving as a Soil Conservationist, and Outreach Coordinator with NRCS in TX and VT, where he also served as the LGBTQI+ SEPM. Currently, Joshua serves as the national LGBTQI+ and Disability SEPM with the Civil Rights & EEO Division on the Title VII Team in the FPAC Business Center. In their spare time, Josh loves long hikes with their dog Blu, swimming, cookouts, gymnastics workouts and building community! Additionally, Josh is a musician and plays guitar, piano, saxophone, in addition to singing, writing, and producing music.



Communications Director: Justin Fritscher (he/him)

Justin is the Public Affairs Section Chief for USDA's Farm Production and Conservation Business Center, leading communications for USDA's farm program agencies (Farm Service Agency, Natural Resources Conservation Service, and Risk Management Agency). He joined USDA in 2011, originally working for the USDA's Natural Resources Conservation Service in Jackson, Mississippi. Justin is a Louisiana native and a Louisiana State University and Jackson State University alumnus.

Equality USDA Board



Secretary: Esther Lattin (he/she/they/esther/mix it up)

Esther is the Business Tools Coordinator for USDA Natural Resources Conservation Service in Oregon. Esther also serves as the Disability Special Emphasis Program Manager and a member of the Equality USDA Pronouns Cadre. Esther is a scientist, an educator and a community builder. Esther firmly believes that together, we can save the world one soil aggregate and human interaction and at a time.



Acting Treasurer: Chris Nasados (he/him)

Chris is a Senior Program Specialist who has worked for the last thirteen years in the Mid-Atlantic Regional Office of the Food and Nutrition Service in Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP) Program Integrity. Prior to Federal service, he worked for the State of Pennsylvania for 10 years as both an Income Maintenance Caseworker and then as a Human Services Program Specialist.



Partnership Liaison: Cristina Miller (she/her)

Cristina is a health economist with Rural Development Innovation Center supporting the work of the USDA Rural Health Liaison. She has been part of the USDA family for 14 years. Prior to federal service, she was a golf pro and a German-to-English translator for the senior executives of a large German corporation in the U.S. She holds a M.A. in Political Science, a M.S. degree in Agricultural Economics, a certificate in agriculture health and safety, and M.A. and Ph.D. degrees in Economics.



Past President: Meghan Walter (she/her)

Meghan is an Environmental Engineer for NRCS's West National Technology Support Center in Portland, Oregon. She provides technical expertise to the western 13 states in dam safety, hydrology, hydraulic and environmental engineering, and stream and wetland restoration. She holds a bachelor's degree in Civil Engineering, a master's degree in Water Resources Engineering, and is a licensed Professional Engineer in Oregon and Iowa. Meghan served as the President of Equality USDA from 2018-2021.

Acknowledgments

The Office of the Assistant Secretary for Civil Rights (OASCR) would like to extend our gratitude to all the amazing speakers who shared their time and talents for the 2024 USDA Pride Month Activities.

Thanks to the Office of the Chief Diversity Officer (OCDIO), the National Agricultural Statistics Service (NASS), and Equality USDA for leading the Pride Planning efforts in 2024 and thank you to the Pride Planning committee members whose efforts are reflected in today's program.

- 2024 Pride Planning Committee
 - Allison Lindsay (she/her), Senior Equal Opportunity Specialist, OASCR-MAL
 - Wytonya Jackson (she/her), Deputy Director, OASCR-MAL
 - Tanisha Bradley (she/her), Equal Opportunity Specialist, OASCR-MAL
 - Tremayne Wilson (he/him), Livestock and Specialty Surveys Section Survey Administration Branch/ Census and Survey Division, NASS
 - Jeremy Wood (he/him), DEIA Policy and Strategy Advisor, OSEC-OCDIO/President, Equality USDA
 - Gregory York (he/him), Program Analyst, REE-ERS

A very special thank you to the following for their outstanding efforts to make USDA's Pride events a success:

- 2024 Pride Month Graphics, Poster, Observance Program, & Postcards from the Field Video Production
 - Kirsten Strough (she/her), Visual Information Specialist, Farm Production and Conservation Business Center
 - Jennifer Cole (she/her), Public Affairs Specialist, Farm Production and Conservation Business Center
 - Justin Fritscher (he/him), Public Affairs Chief, Farm Production and Conservation Business Center/ Communications Director, Equality USDA
- Pride Flag Raising & USDA Whitten Building Lighting
 - Mike Illenberg (he/him), Director, Brands, Events, Print and Editorial Review, and Internal Communications, USDA Office of Communications
 - Duane Williams, Director, USDA Office of Operations
 - Tom Hoffman, Director of Facilities Management, USDA Office of Operations
 - Buffy Brown, Branch Chief, Facilities Operations and Maintenance, USDA Office of Operations
 - Chad Carroll, Chief Security Director, USDA Office of Safety, Security, and Protection, and security staff
- Pride Flash Mentors
 - Steven Brammer (he/him), Associate General Counsel, USDA-OGC
 - Ryan Brewster (he/him), Senior Advisor, TFAA-FAS
 - Vanessa Eisemann (she/her), Deputy Assistant General Counsel, USDA-OGC
 - Jody McDaniel(he/him), Director, Eastern Field Operations REE-NASS
 - Laura White (she/her), Senior Trade Advisor, TFAA-FAS
- Pride Month Social Media and employee spotlights
 - Thanh-Thanh Pham (she/her), Social Media Manager, USDA Office of Communications
 - Sasha Harrison (she/her), Web Graphic Designer, USDA Office of Communications
 - Thomasina Brown (she/her), Graphic Designer, USDA Office of Communications
 - Chelsea Anderson (she/her), Digital Analytics Manager, USDA Office of Communications
- Pride at the USDA Farmer's Market
 - Evan Rakshys (he/him), Student Administrative Trainee, USDA Farmer's Market, MRP-AMS
 - Equality USDA

Notes

Equality USDA uses the acronym LGBTQI+ to represent the range of sexual orientations, gender identities, and gender expressions present in our world, including but not limited to lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender, queer, questioning, pansexual, Two Spirit, gender nonconforming, nonbinary, intersex, asexual, and ally.

EEO

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To file a program discrimination complaint, complete the USDA Program Discrimination Complaint Form, AD-3027, found online at [How to File a Program Discrimination Complaint](#) and at any USDA office or write a letter addressed to USDA and provide in the letter all of the information requested in the form. To request a copy of the complaint form, call (866) 632-9992. Submit your completed form or letter to USDA by: (1) mail: U.S. Department of Agriculture, Office of the Assistant Secretary for Civil Rights, 1400 Independence Avenue, SW, Washington, D.C. 20250-9410; (2) fax: (202) 690-7442; or (3) email: program.intake@usda.gov.