

Equity and Inclusiveness

ASWWU recognizes the injustices many people of marginalized identities face in Bellingham. Bellingham has a long history of white supremacy, from the colonial violence against Coast Salish peoples, to the white mobs and leaders that drove out Chinese families in 1885, Sikhs in 1907, and Japanese in 1942. The present-day racism directed against people of color and city's denial of racial profiling shows that this is not an issue of the past. We also have a serious issue with too many people in our community experiencing poverty. We support the city's strategic commitments to 'Equity and Social Justice' and encourage the city to innovate robust policy and programs to back them up.

ASWWU Urges Policymakers to:

- Support the WWU Blue Group's version of the 'Keep Bellingham Families Working Ordinance'. We believe their version and collaboration with local social justice organizations has produced a policy that will best protect vulnerable community members from racial and immigration status discrimination.
 - Model Legislation: [Contact WWU Blue Group](#)
- Ban conversion therapy within city limits. Research has shown the practice is harmful to LGBTQ people and leading organizations such as the American Medical Association have voiced opposition to conversion therapy.
 - Model Legislation: [City of Seattle, WA, Ordinance No. 125100](#)
- Explore forming a Bellingham Office of Civil Rights to advance civil rights and improve equity in Bellingham. A dedicated office to assist dismantling deeply embedded systems of oppression within our society would be a great asset.
 - Model Program: [City of Seattle, WA, Office of Civil Rights](#)
- Impose a surtax on companies whose chief executives earn more than 100 times the median pay of their rank-and-file workers. Income inequality is causing social malaise in our city and country. Support small business and ethical practices with this innovative tax which could be small to begin with. We encourage the revenue from the tax to go towards equity programs or affordable housing.
 - Model Legislation: [City of Portland, OR, Ordinance No. 188129](#)
- Explore developing a program to support and provide business development services to worker cooperatives - businesses owned and operated by workers. Worker cooperatives can bring democracy to the workplace and build an inclusive economy in Bellingham that provides well-being for everyone.
 - Model Program: [New York City, NY, Worker Cooperative Business Development Initiative](#)