

Pittsburgh's Civil Rights Agency Is Proud to Support Black Trans Leadership

For Immediate Release
June 14, 2022

Media Contact: Chairperson Tracy Baton; Jam Hammond
Human.relations@pittsburghpa.gov; jam.hammond@pittsburghpa.gov

PITTSBURGH, Pennsylvania – June 28, 2022 will mark the 53rd anniversary of the Stonewall Riots – the protest that finally embodied a LGBTQIA+ civil rights movement that was years in the making. . Today, we celebrate Pride Month in June both to commemorate the event that sparked the movement, and to recognize the need for continued progress toward equal opportunities for LGBTQIA+ people in all elements of life. Pride is a time for LGBTQIA+ people to be free to live their authentic lives without fear of discrimination.

At the City of Pittsburgh's Commission on Human Relations, this Pride Month is also an opportunity to celebrate its trailblazing Executive Director. In January of 2021, absent any gratuitous fanfare, the City of Pittsburgh hired its first openly Black and transⁱ executive director. Eighteen months later, Jam Hammond of the Pittsburgh Commission on Human Relations has managed through an eviction moratorium, a change of administration, and evolving caseloads and workforce. While challenges like these are an expected part of this role, representation of his community is an additional responsibility that he has intentionally chosen.

Hammond identifies as “publicly trans,” a status he decided to personally pursue in March of 2020 while still working as a PghCHR outreach staff member. “I want to wear my trans identity a little bit brighter and give license to anyone who wants to share it,” Hammond writes in a public social media post. Where Hammond had previously identified as openly trans, he defines publicly trans as the next step in his representation of the trans community. “Before, I controlled when I came out and how. Now, I’m giving others control to spread the word. I want other trans people to know not only where I am but also that they can get here, too.”

Hammond is tasked with upholding the Commission's mission, independence, and success even in the face of adversity. Within the first few months of his tenure, Hammond was forced to stand up against reductions of protections under the Crown Act for hair and head coverings, arguing that the changes endangered Black and Trans people. Shortly thereafter, the Commission was designated to administer the Eviction Moratorium without additional funding, which Hammond refused to allow to reduce productivity in civil rights enforcement. Hammond is known at the City for his constant desire and attempts to work across departments to strengthen civil rights for all Pittsburghers.

Commissioners have appreciated Hammond's leadership and genuine, continual optimism about progress for human and civil rights. “Jam has been a true contributor to our staff and to the community,” says recently elected Chairperson Tracy Baton, noting that Hammond also sits on the LGBTQIA+ Commission, an advisory body to the Mayor and City Council. Outgoing Chairperson Liddy Barlow notes, “It is so meaningful that our commissioners and staff reflect the rich diversity of our city. We're excited to have Director Hammond's leadership at this critical time for civil rights.”

Hammond identifies as transmasculine or a transman and uses he/him pronouns. The Pittsburgh Commission on Human Relations is an independent office of the City of Pittsburgh, the only city office empowered to investigate discrimination in employment, housing, public accommodation, and city services.

ⁱ [trans is an umbrella term for the transgender and nonbinary community](#)

