



**Supporting
Love, Family,
& Connection in
All Forms**



SEATTLE
COALITION FOR
**Family &
Relationship
Equity**

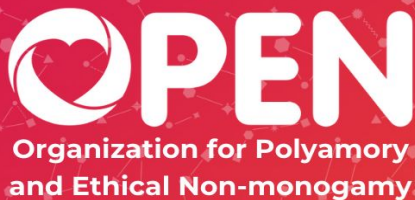
SCFRE Washington Non-Discrimination Ordinance Presentation

Introducing SCFRE



SEATTLE COALITION FOR
Family & Relationship Equity

In partnership with



The Seattle Coalition for Family & Relationship Equity (SCFRE) works to secure legal safeguards against discrimination for individuals in diverse relationships such as polyamory, ethical non-monogamy, and other alternative relationship and household structures while fostering awareness, understanding, and acceptance of their place within our communities. Through advocacy, education, and outreach, we aim to ensure that businesses, government services, and community organizations embrace the full spectrum of chosen family and domestic mutual care networks, promoting diversity and inclusion for all.

Agenda

- Mission & Goals of SCFRE
- Opportunities for Inclusion
- Why Washington?
- How We Expand Rights
- SCFRE's Draft Non-Discrimination Ordinances for Seattle, Olympia, & Tacoma
- FAQ



What Does SCFRE Do?

SCFRE is committed to **transforming** societal perceptions and legal frameworks to **embrace** and **protect** polyamorous domestic partnerships and other diverse family and relationship structures. Our purpose is rooted in the following specific objectives:

- Advance Legal Recognition & Anti-Discrimination Measures
- Educational Initiatives & Public Advocacy
- Community Outreach and Support
- Partnerships for Change

SCFRE strives to create a more **inclusive, equitable** society where all forms of families and relationships are **acknowledged** and **protected**.



Photo: [The Urbanist](#)

What Are the Current Challenges?

Common areas where polyam and ENM individuals experience discrimination:

- Child custody disputes
- Employment discrimination
- Housing discrimination
- Adultery & bigamy laws
- Geographic variability of legal protections

Who is impacted?

- Multi-partner households & ENM relationships
- Co-parents, multi-generational & extra-nuclear family members
- Individuals & households receiving public benefits
- Domestic mutual care networks spanning multiple physical dwellings
- Members of the 2SLGBTQIA+ & BIPOC communities



SCFRE's Current Issues & Advocacy



Photo: [@polyamproud](#)

- **Anti-Discrimination Ordinances:** Clarify the legal standing of multiple partners living in the same household and also include those partners who maintain separate housing arrangements.
- **Legal Parenthood Reforms:** Expand the rights of adoption and legal parenthood to multiple partners to ensure that non-biological parents have access to custody, visitation, and decision-making regarding any children for whom they act as a de facto parent.
- **Expand Domestic Partnerships:** Extend domestic partnership status to include multi-partner relationships, making it easier for such households to receive equal legal treatment and access to services and benefits as existing domestic partnerships.

Why Washington?

- The **Washington Law Against Discrimination (WLAD)** established the “right to be free from discrimination because of race, creed, color, national origin, citizenship or immigration status, sex, honorably discharged veteran or military status, sexual orientation, or the presence of any sensory, mental, or physical disability or the use of a trained dog guide or service animal by a person with a disability...” as a fundamental civil right.
- The **Uniform Parentage Act** recognizes de facto parentage for those who have established a parent-child relationship with a minor.
- The **Domestic Violence Protection Act** expanded the definition of “household” and “family or household members” to include persons who have lived together and also intimate partners who live separately.

- **1973** - Seattle bans discrimination against sexual orientation in employment
- **1975** - Washington repeals its anti-sodomy law
- **1975** - Seattle bans discrimination against sexual orientation in housing
- **1983** - King County Council adds protections for sexual orientation in housing
- **1986** - Seattle adds gender identity and expression to its non-discrimination ordinances
- **2004** - King County Superior Court holds that the prohibition of same-sex marriage is unconstitutional
- **2006** - Washington expands sexual orientation and gender expression to WLAD
- **2007** - Washington establishes state-registered domestic partnerships for same-sex couples
- **2012** - Marriage equality for same-sex couples established in Washington
- **2018** - Uniform Parentage Act & Domestic Violence Protection Act updated

Recent Local Protections in Washington



- Legislation protecting members of certain marginalized or targeted groups at the local and state level is now more important than ever after *Skrmetti*.
- Similar resolutions were passed in Olympia, Shoreline, and Tacoma leading up to the passage of Seattle's ordinance.

The City of Seattle recognizes the rights of all people, including:

- 2SLGBTQIA+ individuals, and seeks to provide a safe and welcoming environment for those who reside in, work in, or visit the City.
- The City unequivocally supports the rights of individuals to seek, obtain, provide, or facilitate reproductive health care services and gender-affirming treatment that is legal in Washington State.

The City of Olympia affirms that individuals have the right:

- "to define what gender and family means to them; including but not limited to... structuring a family unit that works best for them, and sharing LGBTQIA2S+ positive values with their children"

Milestones for Acceptance

2011 - BC Supreme Court distinguishes polyamory as a valid and legal form of relationship structure

2018 - NL Supreme Court recognizes 3 adults in a polyamorous relationship as co-parents

2020 - Somerville, MA passes an ordinance recognizing polyamorous domestic partnerships

2021 - BC Supreme Court notes a “gap” in provincial law failed to recognize that family relationships may involve more than two individuals in a monogamous relationship

2021 - Cambridge, MA passes an ordinance recognizing polyamorous domestic partnerships

2024 - Oakland, CA and Berkeley, CA pass ordinances recognizing polyamorous domestic partnerships and establishing legal protections against discrimination

IN THE SUPREME COURT OF BRITISH COLUMBIA

Citation: *Reference re: Section 293 of the Criminal Code of Canada*,
2011 BCSC 1588 Date: 20111123

3 adults in polyamorous relationship declared legal parents by N. L. court

In the *St. ...*
Polyamorous Families Now Have Legal Protections in This Massachusetts City
Somerville's city council – the first of their kind in the country – are aimed at recognizing the rights of non-traditional families.

B.C. judge orders second mother declared a third parent to child of polyamorous trio

'Gap' in provincial law prevented women

Berkeley law extends legal protections to polyamorous people and non-nuclear families

A new ordinance bans discrimination against people on the basis of relationship or family structure.

By Ally Markovich
May 22, 2024, 4:39 p.m.



How We Expand Rights

Proposed Draft City of Seattle Ordinance¹

ORDINANCE PROHIBITING DISCRIMINATION IN REAL ESTATE TRANSACTIONS, EMPLOYMENT, AND IN THE PROVISION OF GOODS, FACILITIES, AND SERVICES BY ANY BUSINESS, THE CITY, OR CITY FUNDED ENTITY, ON THE BASIS OF EXCLUDING THOSE IN DIVERSE FAMILY AND RELATIONSHIP STRUCTURES

WHEREAS, the City of Seattle (“City”) recognizes the diverse composition of its citizenry and values its people, including the diverse composition of families and intimate relationships; and

WHEREAS, the City recognizes that diverse family structures, including relationship structures involving more than two adults engaged in a loving and consensual relationship, are becoming increasingly common; and

WHEREAS, people in interpersonal relationships between two or more adult individuals that involve romantic, physical, emotional, and/or familial intimacy face discrimination in many aspects of public life due to prejudicial misunderstandings related to the validity and moral fitness of such relationships; and

WHEREAS, single parents and people who identify as asexual and/or aromantic also face discrimination in many aspects of public life; and



HARVARD LAW SCHOOL
LGBTQ+ Advocacy Clinic



- Establish legal definitions of “intimate personal relationship” and “family and relationship structure” to include ethically non-monogamous, polyamorous, queer platonic, and other aro/ace types of relationships and chosen family structures, including multi-generational and care-focused domestic models.
- Include “family and relationship structure” as priority areas of focus for the Seattle Office for Civil Rights and the Seattle Human Rights Commission.
- Prohibit discrimination based on “family and relationship structure” in staffing and employment at the City of Seattle and other public corporations, along with inclusion in Seattle’s affirmative action policy.
- Add “parental status” for protection where missing in parts of SMC.
- Make use of existing protections in the Seattle Municipal Code to include “family and relationship status” as a protected category under:
 - employment, housing, & public accommodations, and
 - prohibition of bias in the delivery of public services.

Broadening the Definition of Inclusion

"Discrimination," "discriminate," and/or "discriminatory act" means any act, by itself or as part of a practice, that is intended to or results in different treatment or differentiates between or among individuals or groups of individuals by reason of race, color, age, sex, marital status, parental status, **family and relationship structure**, sexual orientation, gender identity, genetic information, political ideology, creed, religion, ancestry, caste, national origin, citizenship or immigration status, honorably discharged veteran or military status, an individual's actual, potential, perceived, or alleged pregnancy outcomes, or the presence of any disability.

"Intimate personal relationship" means an interpersonal relationship, other than a marital relationship, between two or more adult individuals that involves romantic, physical, or emotional intimacy. This includes multi-partner/multi-parent families and relationships, step families, multi-generational households, diverse family structures, consensually non-monogamous relationships, and consensual sexual and/or intimate relationships, including asexual and aromantic relationships.

"Family and relationship structure" means the actual or perceived involvement, or lack thereof, of an individual in an intimate personal relationship or relationships, other than a marital relationship. It includes an individual's actual or perceived affinity, or lack thereof, for any given type of intimate personal relationship, other than a marital relationship, regardless of whether the individual is currently in any intimate personal relationship(s).



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Thank you!

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FAQs

What is SCFRE and what are its main objectives?

Our objectives include:

- **Advocating for legal protection and recognition** of diverse family and relationship structures.
- **Providing educational resources** on the legitimacy and rights of diverse families and non-conventional relationship patterns.
- **Promoting anti-discrimination and anti-harassment policies** to ensure inclusion for those in all family and relationship types.
- **Creating community partnerships** to support systemic change in family and relationship law and policy.
- **Championing racial justice, intersectionality, and decolonization** in all our advocacy efforts.

Our advocacy is focused on:

- **Legal recognition** of polyamorous relationships, so that multiple partners can access the same **rights** and **protections** as monogamous couples.
- **Challenging definitions of family** that exclude non-conventional families from benefits such as **healthcare equity, family leave, and inheritance rights**.
- **Promoting understanding and inclusion** for families and relationships of all types, so they are not marginalized or stigmatized by society.

Through these efforts, SCFRE strives to create a more **inclusive, equitable society** where all forms of families and relationships are **acknowledged** and **protected**.

What does SCFRE mean by “diverse family and relationships”?

SCFRE supports a broad definition of the family, which includes:

- **Polyamorous families:** Relationships involving multiple consensual, loving partners.
- **Ethically non-monogamous (ENM) relationships:** Partnerships where individuals may have multiple romantic or sexual partners with the full knowledge and consent of everyone involved.
- **Chosen families:** Networks of support and caregiving that may not be based on biological or legal ties but are built around mutual care, including 2SLGBTQIA+ chosen families and queer platonic partnerships (QPPs).

- **Single individuals living alone by choice:** People who choose not to live with a romantic partner or family but still create meaningful networks of care and support.
- **Domestic mutual care networks:** Groups of individuals, often unrelated by blood or legal ties but also including co-parents, who share caregiving responsibilities, emotional support, and resources within a shared household or community.

SCFRE recognizes that these diverse family structures **challenge existing social norms** and, as a result, often **face discrimination**. We work to ensure that all families and relationship types receive **respect, legal recognition, and social acceptance**.

Is SCFRE a 2SLGBTQIA+ rights organization?

Polyamory and ethical non-monogamy (ENM) are by no means exclusive to the 2SLGBTQIA+ community. These relationship patterns are practiced by individuals across a **wide range of sexual orientations, gender identities, and cultural backgrounds**. In fact, roughly **one-third** of respondents to [OPEN's 2024 Community Survey](#) identify as straight or heterosexual. However, there are important connections between the polyamory/ENM community, and 2SLGBTQIA+ advocacy:

1. Shared principles of inclusivity and acceptance
2. Prevalence among 2SLGBTQIA+ individuals
3. Intersection of discrimination and stigma
4. Inclusive family and relationship advocacy

Both 2SLGBTQIA+ individuals and people in polyamorous/ENM relationships often face **societal stigma, legal challenges, and discrimination**. Advocacy for these groups frequently intersects in efforts to **secure equal rights** under the law.

SCFRE works to ensure that all family and relationship structures, whether rooted in 2SLGBTQIA+ identities or other diverse social networks, receive the **recognition and support** they deserve.

Ultimately, polyamory and ENM are relationship structures that transcend specific identities or communities. They are part of the [broader movement](#) to redefine **love, family, and connection** in ways that reflect the **diversity of human relationships**.