



**WESTERN
STATES
CENTER**

Building Belonging:
Organizing our Communities
for Safer Events

INTROS IN CHAT

- Name
- Venue
- Role
- City
- Upcoming Event

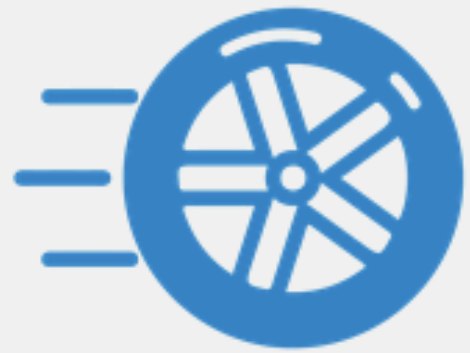
AGENDA

- Introduction to our work
- Key lessons from our resources
- Scenario planning:
 - Large group exercise
 - Small groups
 - Debrief
- How to keep in touch!

Please feel free to use the "Q&A" tab to ask questions/provide comments.

OUR WORK

WSC'S FOUR PILLARS



**Build
Movements**



**Develop
Leaders**



**Shift
Culture**



**Defend
Democracy**



TWO KEY RESOURCES FOR YOUR WORK



PROTECTING PRIDE: AN ORGANIZING GUIDE

PROTECTING PRIDE: A BRIEF HISTORY

2022



Rapid response
partnerships with
Pride organizers in
North Idaho

2023



Protecting Pride
Organizing Guide
development +
release; increased
planning + rapid
response help for
organizers

2024



Scaling up our rapid
response assistance
to reach 20 different
groups in the region

2025

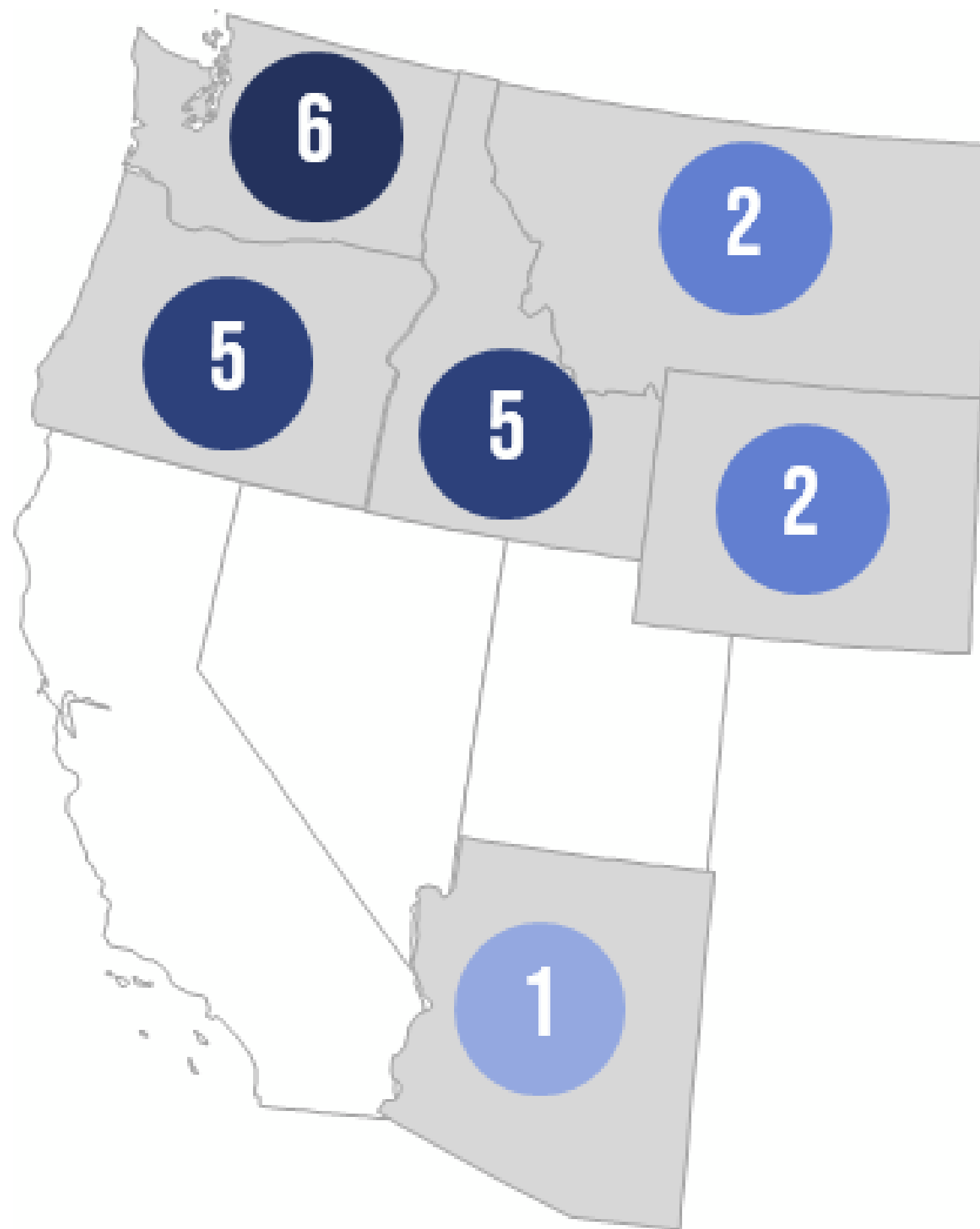


... we'll see!

WE LEARNED

- **People who organize Pride events are a very diverse group**, with varying levels of experience on all the different kinds of work needed to pull off a safe and successful event.
- **Each organizing group brings a unique combination to the table:** knowledge of their own community in addition to personal and professional experience.

2024 SNAPSHOT





KEY STRATEGIES FOR ORGANIZING PRIDE (AND OTHER EVENTS!)

STRATEGIES

- 1 Build partnerships
- 2 Use effective messaging
- 3 Safety planning
- 4 Monitoring
- 5 Year-round engagement

BUILD PARTNERSHIPS

- Involving community orgs, local government, and aligned businesses will strengthen your support
- Keep allies in the loop and strategize on how to handle opposition



MESSAGING

- Keep your messaging positive and focus on how you're planning for success
- Work with community partners to build broad support and excitement for your event



SAFETY PLANNING

- Creating a dedicated safety team is an important first step
- Invest in volunteer training
- Communicate publicly with attendees about how they can contribute to a safe and successful event



MONITORING

- Checking places like X and Telegram can provide insight into what local anti-LGBTQ+ networks are following
- Connect with WSC for monitoring support if threats arise



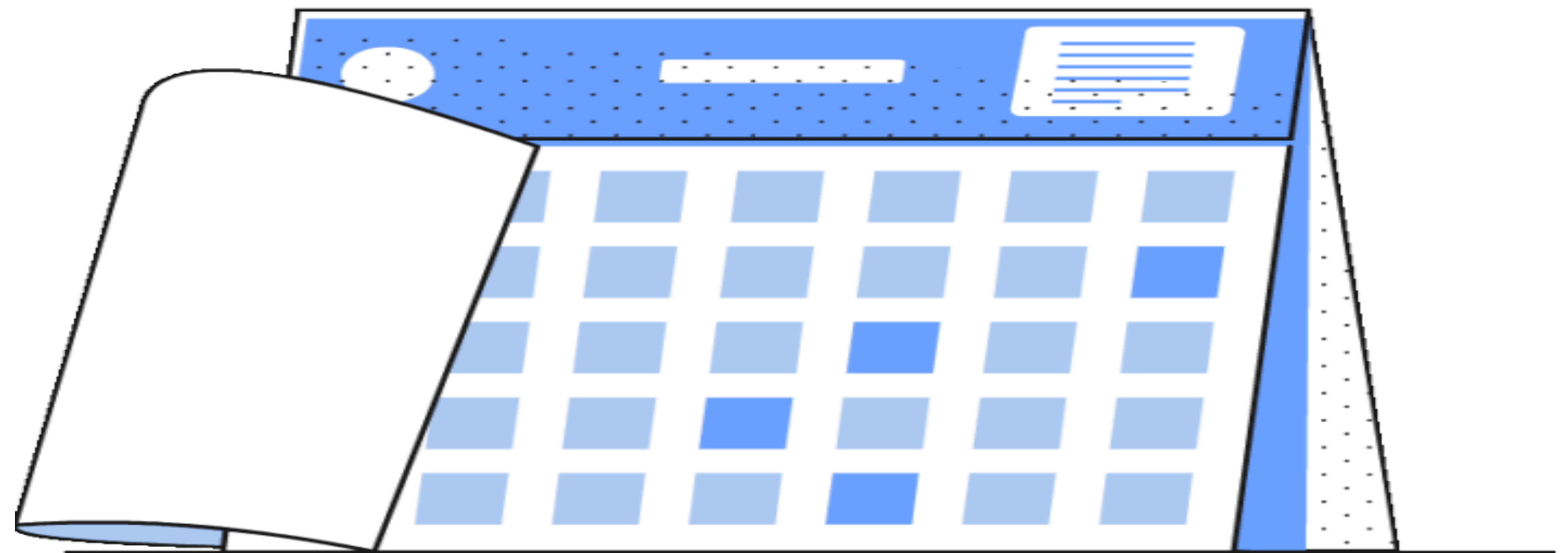
PRESS OUTREACH

- Create a simple Media Toolkit
- Build a local press list (and use it early!)
- Designate a spokesperson and prepare talking points
- Prepare for crisis communications – just in case



YEAR-ROUND ENGAGEMENT

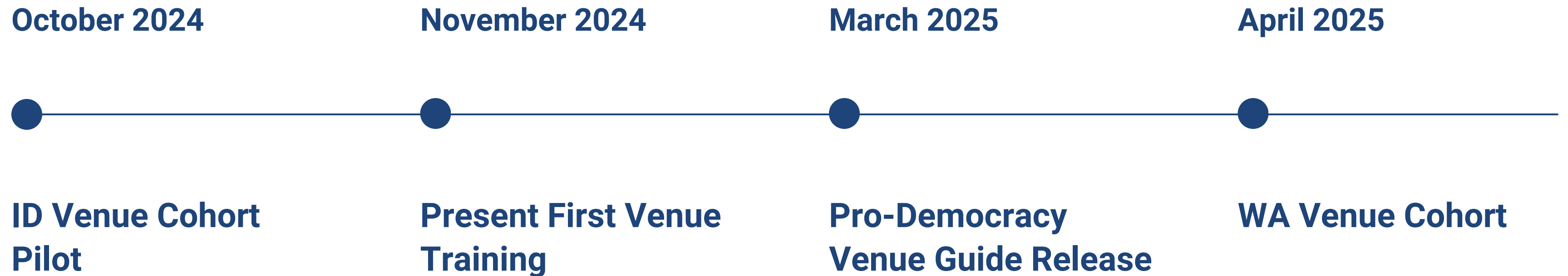
- Pride is more than a day – Keep the momentum going
- Build relationships with partners and allies
- Develop a volunteer pipeline
- Track what is working and what is not
- Stay visible and vocal





SAFEGUARDING ARTS AND CULTURE SPACES

Brief History of our Venue Work



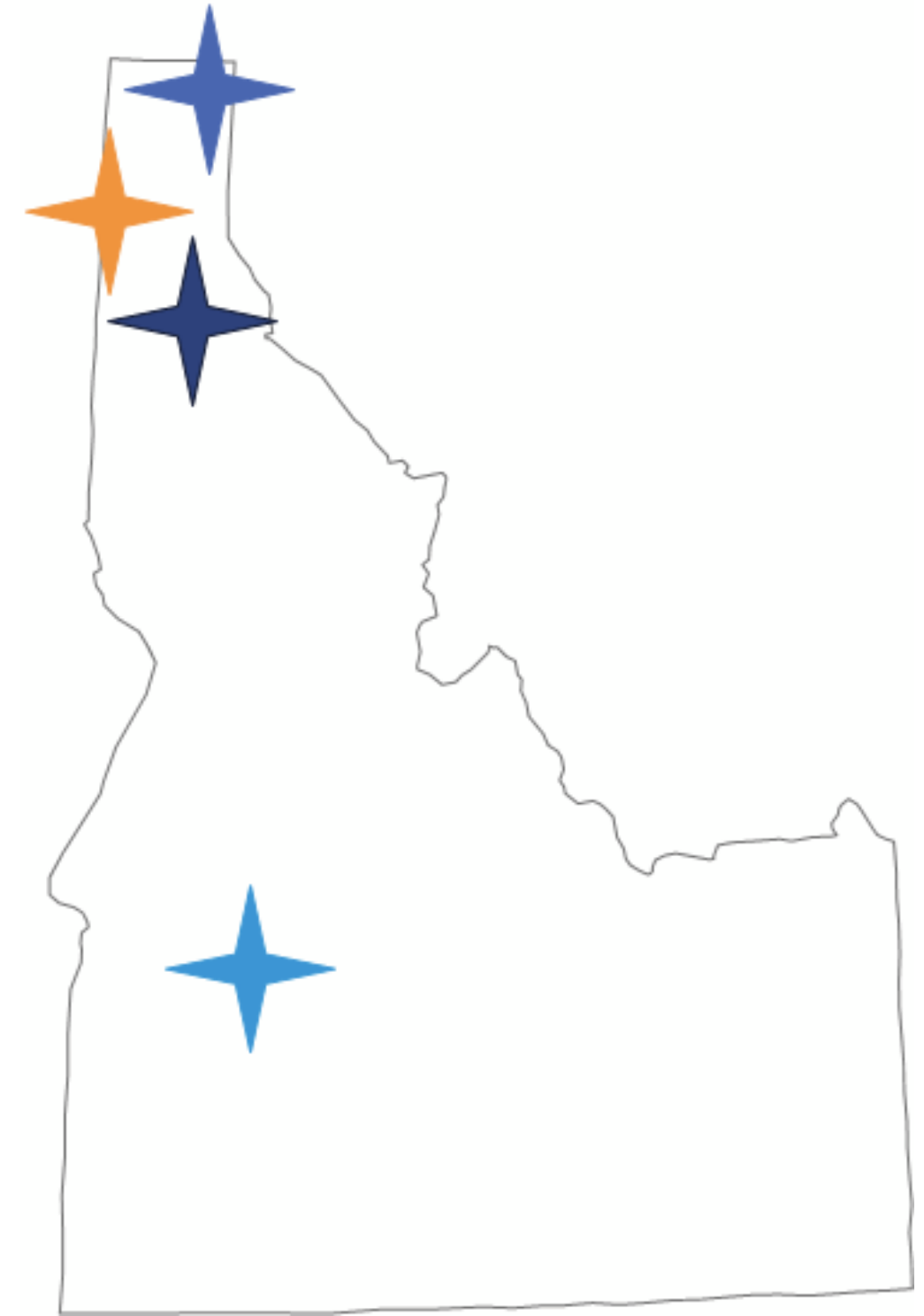
IDAHO COHORT SNAPSHOT

THE PEARL THEATER
BONNERS FERRY

MATCHWOOD BREWING
SANDPOINT

EMERGE ART GALLERY
COEUR D'ALENE

DUCK CLUB, KNOWN FOR
TREEFORT MUSIC FEST
BOISE



WE LEARNED:

- Venues often don't know their **rights to set rules and control their spaces**
- Many event workers have a **good toolbox of practices** to apply (deescalation, show stoppage, 86ing)
- **Proactive policy-setting and staff training** are important for planning effective responses to incidents

Venue Safety Framework



Policy

- Establish clear, written policies for safety + inclusion
- Formalize safety practices + protocols for consistency



Train

- Provide skills + knowledge for stakeholders to uphold policies
- Target resources by audience to avoid overwhelm



Comms

- Your team has expertise in your audiences, voice, + channels
- Apply this knowledge to safety and inclusion messaging.



Respond

- Proactive planning includes prep for responding to harmful incidents
- If your venue/event is targeted, it is NOT your fault + it is NOT deserved



Learn

- Great policies + practices often come out of difficult incidents
- Institutionalize learnings post-incident to build trust + resilience



Proceed

- Gather feedback post-incident while it is still fresh
- Return to normal as quickly as safely possible to reclaim space



SCENARIO TIME!

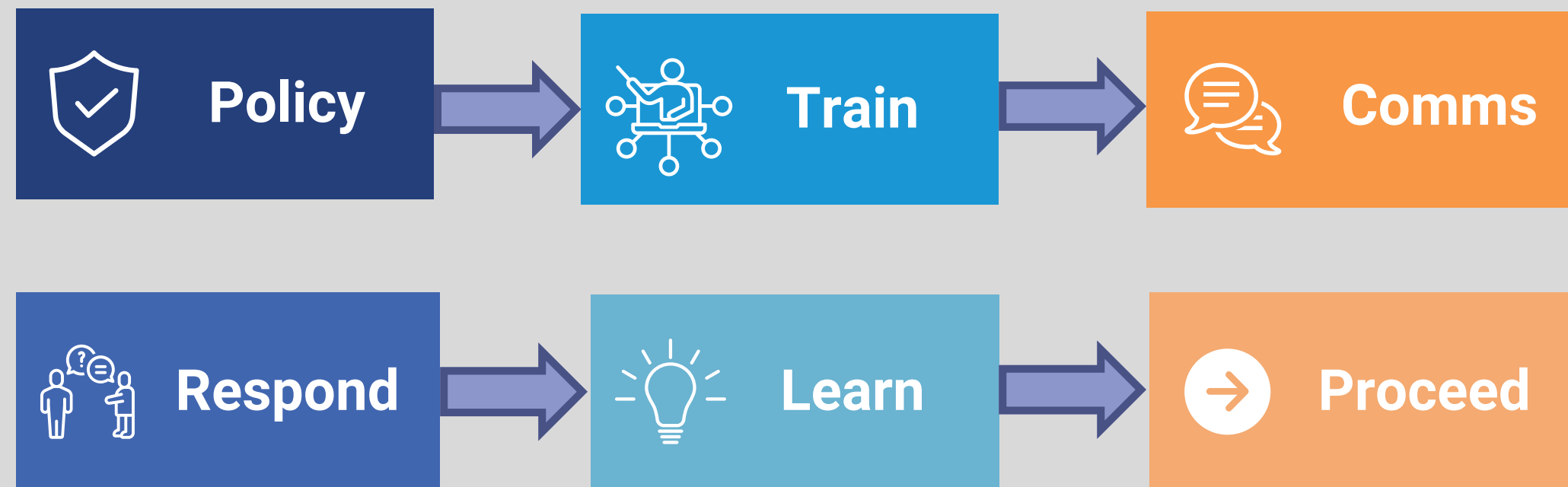
Group Scenario



You are on the event team for a Pride show on a Saturday afternoon at a bandstand in a park.

The local Proud Boys chapter starts talking about your event publicly and privately in the week leading up to the event, both mockingly and insinuating that they could show up to it.

Libs of TikTok then tweets about it 2 days pre-event, tagging a local elected official who has voiced opposition to similar events.



Group Scenario

Event: Pride show on a Saturday afternoon at a park bandstand

T-1week: Local Proud Boys mocking event and insinuating they could show up

T-2days: Libs of TikTok tweets about event, tagging local elected who has opposed similar events



Policy

- Protest management policy
- Threat monitoring + escalation protocol
- Partnership criteria for coordinating w/ safety-focused orgs + observers



Train

- De-escalation skills
- Liaising with police training
- Contacts of safety partners
- Background on groups' tactics and recommended responses



Comms

- Workers: chatter + safety plan
- Public: affirm values, confidence in prep, + how they can contribute to safe/joyful event
- Media: Pre-drafted statement in case of media escalation.



Respond

- Risk assessment 48 hours prior
- Engage community safety partners
- Plan visible+calm event security presence
- Monitor online chatter during the event
- Ensure easy access to exits + signage



Learn

- Post-event check-ins w/ staff, talent, vendors + community leaders to get feedback on safety perceptions + preparedness



Proceed

- Update threat response protocol
- Strengthen partner coordination
- Keep event log for future trainings
- Reclaim joy w/ community messaging affirming belonging

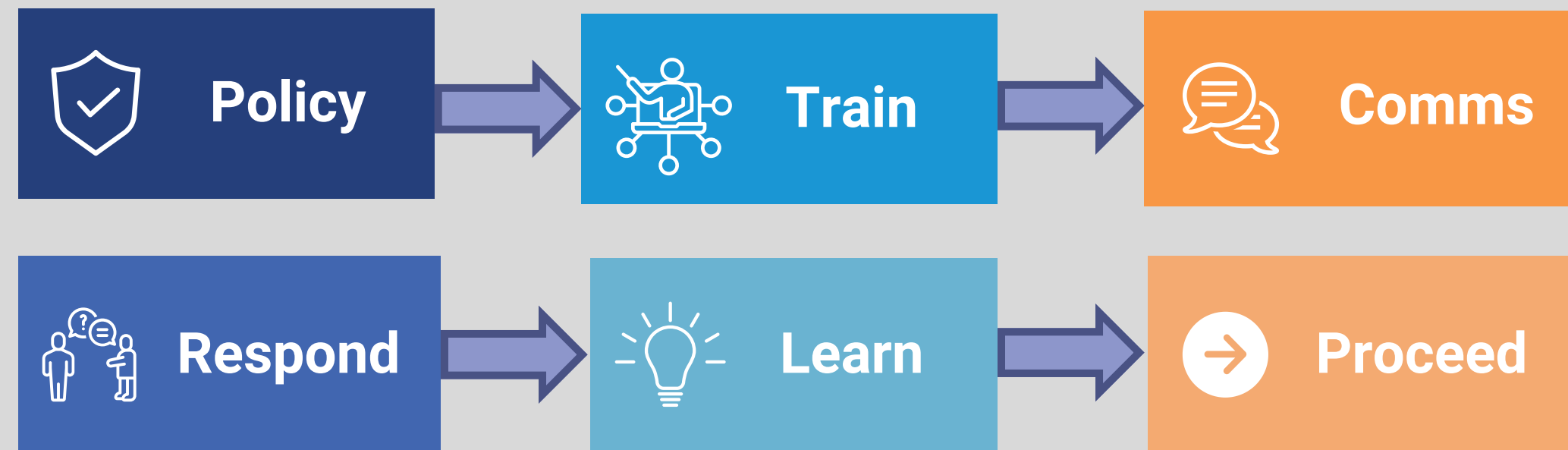
Q & A



Scenario A



For 5 years, your team has provided logistics + promo support for a Juneteenth coalition that hosts a large celebration in a park featuring speeches from local Black leaders. At a prep meeting in March, a faith leader/past event speaker brings up concerns for speakers' safety. Your past Juneteenth events had no negative reactions in person, but a few churches in the pastor's denomination recently received racist hate mail. The pastor also reluctantly shares with your team for the first time that his office got a rambling, hostile voicemail after last year's event. He wants to participate, but wants to know how you will provide additional support to speakers.



Scenario A

Event: large Juneteenth celebration at local park

T-3mos: Leader/speaker shares speaker safety concerns

Context: Pastor got hostile VM post-event last year + fellow pastors got racist hate mail recently



Policy

- Speaker safety + support
- Threat protocol, incl when to call LE
- Role descriptions for safety liaisons
- Sharing mechanism for concerns



Train

- De-escalation skills
- Safety liaisons to support speakers
- Trusted legal + civic partners



Comms

- Share options w/ speakers
- Brief staff/volunteers
- Public: affirm support for Black leaders + Juneteenth values



Respond

- Offer speaker safety options (escorted arrival/departure, green room access, etc)
- Document threats + share w/ partner
- Stay in regular contact w/ faith leader



Learn

- Feedback from speakers: did they feel safe and supported?
- Debrief with event partners on safety protocol strengths and gaps



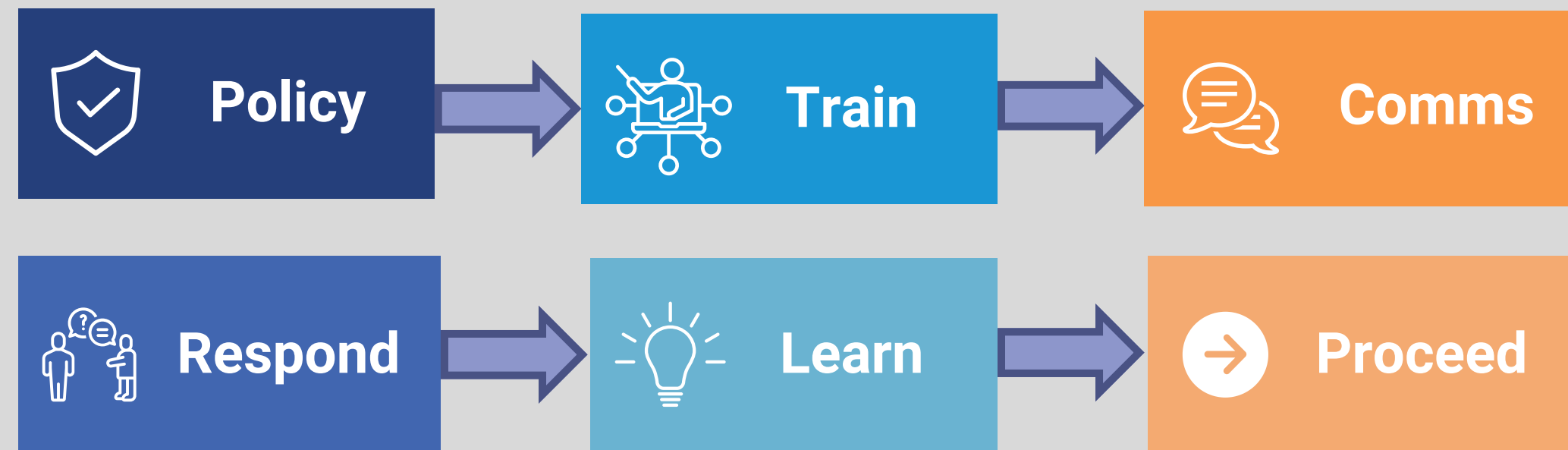
Proceed

- Formalize "Speaker Care" checklist
- Establish early warning systems across partners

Scenario B



Your team hosts a free Saturday summer series at a historic bandstand in your town, featuring local musicians and food trucks. This month, you booked a mariachi band and popular tamale and taco vendors. The Thursday before the event, one of the food vendors is scoping out the venue and calls you. She is shocked to see that traffic signs, utility boxes and the bandstand have fresh stickers on them with slogans like “Immigrants = Invaders” and “Defend America.” Brief research indicates the stickers are likely from the Patriot Front, a group known for this kind of propaganda along with disruptive public marches where their members sometimes engage in violence.



Scenario B

Event: Summer concert series in the park: Mariachi + tamales/taco trucks

T-2days: “Immigrant=Invader” and “Defend America” stickers throughout bandstand area

Context: Patriot Front is likely responsible + is known for disruptive, sometimes violent, marches



Policy

- Hate symbol response protocol (documentation, removal, debrief)
- Pre-event venue inspection checklist
- Threat protocol, incl when to call LE



Train

- Info on groups like Patriot Front (Global Extremist Symbols Database)
- De-escalation skills
- Threat monitoring



Comms

- Workers: brief + talking points
- Public: reaffirm community values in signage + programming
- Coordinate a statement with partners for release as needed



Respond

- Document the stickers
- Remove w/community partners
- Walk-through on event morning
- Have a visible but non-intimidating staff + security presence



Learn

- Vendors/talent: how they felt about your response + their safety
- Vols/attendees: what they noticed + how safe they felt



Proceed

- Update pre-event checklist
- Strengthen cnxs w/ anti-hate orgs
- Train staff/vol on what to do if hate propaganda is found

Q & A





STAY IN TOUCH!

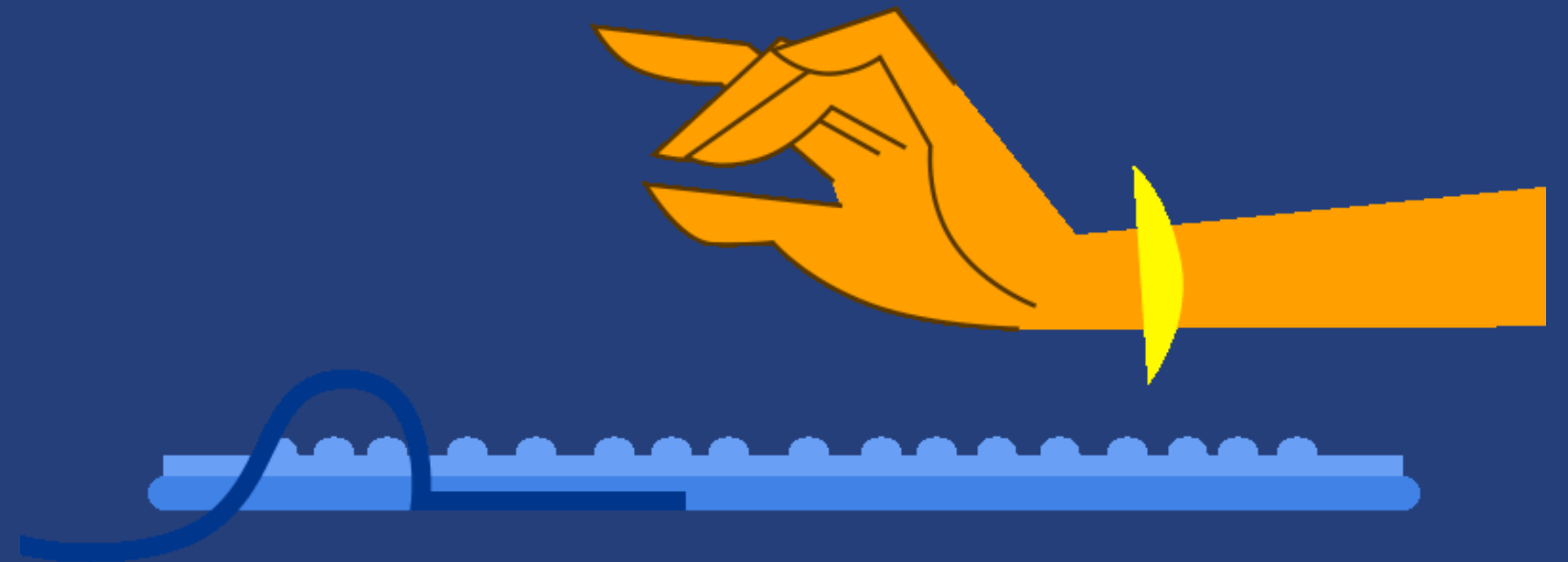
WESTERN STATES CENTER RESOURCES

- Protecting Pride: An Organizing Guide
- Safeguarding Arts and Culture Spaces
- See our other resources and toolkits for related situations



REACH OUT DIRECTLY

- **To reach our whole team:**
info@wscpdx.org
- **To reach the Culture Lab team:**
culturelab@wscpdx.org





THANK YOU!