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May 2021

Investing in Our Community



Dear Friends,

During the past month many of us have welcomed encouraging news about the pandemic – new guidelines about masks, an increase in vaccinations, and a steady decline in deaths and hospitalizations. In many ways, it seems like our country is turning a corner. And yet, many of us are still struggling.

It is no secret that the pandemic has exposed, deepened, and exacerbated existing structural failures and social inequities. Communities of color, women, immigrants, and people living on low incomes have been hit the hardest. As our nation recovers, we must not leave these communities behind.

As a major economic driver in King County, the Port is responsible for supporting our region's most vulnerable and investing in our community's economic recovery. We take this responsibility very seriously, and I'm excited to share what we're doing.

- On May 11, the Port [Commission voted to invest up to \\$2 million](#) to continue the Port's Opportunity Youth Initiative for a second year. The [Opportunity Youth Initiative](#) directs resources to communities experiencing the highest rates of youth unemployment, including underserved communities in South King County. In 2020, 93 percent of the Opportunity Youth Initiative participants identified as BIPOC. The Port will partner with local nonprofits Partner in Employment, Seattle Goodwill, Seattle Parks

Foundation, and Urban League of Metropolitan Seattle to provide youth employment, training, and professional development opportunities.

- Also on May 11, the Port Commission approved more than [\\$10 million over seven years for job placements at SEA](#).
- The Port's [2020 Workforce Development Annual Report](#) highlighted 870 job placements, 210 training completions, 105 youth participating in experiential learning, and retention services and supports for over 100 participants in Port-funded workforce development programs who were placed in jobs in 2019. From 2021 – 2023, the Port plans to invest \$9.4 million in workforce development in aviation, maritime, construction, and green careers.

At the heart of all this work is racial equity. To truly emerge on the other side of this pandemic as a stronger, healthier community, we must focus on addressing economic inequities experienced by Black, Indigenous, and all people of color. By strategically investing in our region's communities that are historically underfunded and by addressing barriers that create disparities for workers of color, all workers benefit. This is how we create an economy where everyone prospers.

In Unity,



Bookda Gheisar
Senior Director, Office of Equity, Diversity, and Inclusion

Centering Equity and Taking Action



BIG Scholarship

Annually, the Port of Seattle chapter of Blacks in Government (BIG) awards two \$1,000 scholarships to college students. Applicants are judged by their academic achievements and community service. Two recipients will be awarded \$1,000 during a virtual online ceremony on June 16, 2021. Applications are due by June 4, 2021. [Learn more about the scholarships and how to apply.](#)

South King County Fund – Office Hours

Want to learn more about the upcoming [South King County Fund Economic Recovery Grant cycle](#)? Senior Data and Policy Analyst Alison Beason is holding office hours from June 1-11 to answer questions about the application and funding process for the program. The next South King County Economic Recovery Grants cycle opens this summer. [Sign up for 30 minutes with Alison](#). Interpreters are available upon request.



Happy Asian American and Native Hawaiian/Pacific Islander Heritage Month!

To celebrate and commemorate the history and contributions of Asian Americans, Native Hawaiians, and Pacific Islanders, the Port's employee resource group held several events during May focusing on the unique and intersectional experiences of Asian women at the Port and the history and lessons learned from Japanese American exclusion and internment.

Additionally, on May 8 at Centennial Park, representatives from all the Port's employee resource groups held a solidarity event to show their shared commitment to one another and to the mutual liberation of all people. Commissioner Sam Cho, Dawn Hunter (Director of Aviation Commercial Management), and Rudy Caluza (Director of Accounting and Financial Reporting) all spoke at the event.

"Saturday [May 8] was small in numbers (25 people), but powerful! The opportunity to stand together with [my coworkers] filled my heart with respect and admiration! I don't know about you, but I left that event beaming with pride! Pride in my work family! Pride in the Port of Seattle."

~ Delmas Whittaker, Fishing Vessels Services Senior Manager and Blacks In Government President

Equitable Economic Recovery

At the Port Commission meeting on May 25, Pamela Banks (City of Seattle Director of Recovery and Equitable Investment and Interim Director of

Office of Economic Development), Chris Green (Assistant Director, WA Department of Commerce), Ashton Allison (Director of Economic Development and Recovery, King County Executive’s Office), and Kate Becker (Creative Economy Director, King County Executive’s Office) presented on current investments and efforts to support equitable economic recovery in our region. [Watch their presentation and check out their materials.](#)



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