



July 30, 2020

## Centering Equity in Economic Recovery



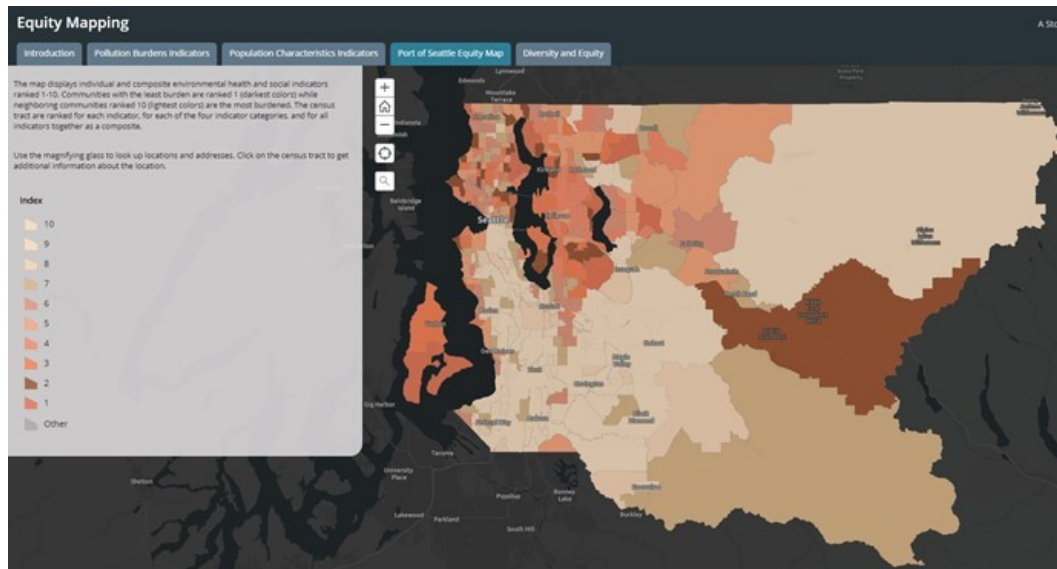
The COVID-19 pandemic is an unprecedented public health emergency affecting everyone around our country, but, like other large-scale crises, its impact has not been equal. The same communities suffer the most — Black, Indigenous, and people of color; women; immigrants; and people living on low incomes. At the Port, we are using our resources and influence to change this. We are centering equity in our economic recovery efforts — by using data to inform

decisions, supporting communities that are most impacted, and directing funding to community based organizations — so that communities of color are not left behind.

During the COVID-19 pandemic, youth of color (from ages 16 to 24) have one of the highest rates of unemployment claims per capita in King County. So the [Port of Seattle Commission designated \\$1.5 million to fund five local non-profits](#) who will provide summer employment and training opportunities for 220 youth — predominately youth of color and low-income youth — who have been adversely affected by the COVID-19 pandemic. This [Initiative offers youth the opportunity](#) to explore career interests, develop work-readiness skills, and strengthen civic and leadership abilities in Port-related industries.

Additionally, the 2020 grant cycle of the South King County Fund will award \$1.5 million to projects serving near-airport communities most deeply impacted by the current economic crisis. We developed an [Equity Index](#), which provides a geographic representation of how areas experience environmental pollutants and various socioeconomic factors (e.g. housing cost, transportation, livable wage jobs, etc.), to help us prioritize where these resources will be distributed. Starting July 31, we are accepting applications for the 2020 grant cycle.

- [Learn more and apply](#) through September 30 for grants.



Despite our current economic, health, and racial justice crises, the Port [maintains its commitment](#) to identifying and dismantling structural barriers to ensure that historically oppressed communities, particularly communities of color, have access to the resources they need to thrive. Together, we will get through these trying times. And, if we center the needs of those most impacted by these crises, we will emerge with a deeper understanding of why our social justice efforts are so critical and with stronger conviction to keep them driving forward.

In closing, please remember the words of the inspirational and visionary civil rights champion John Lewis, may he rest in power.

*“Do not get lost in a sea of despair. Be hopeful, be optimistic. Our struggle is not the struggle of a day, a week, a month, or a year, it is the struggle of a lifetime. Never, ever be afraid to make some noise and get in good trouble, necessary trouble.” – John Lewis*

In solidarity,

**Bookda Gheisar**

Senior Director, Office of Equity, Diversity, and Inclusion

P.S. This will be the last newsletter you receive unless you opt into the [Equity, Diversity, and Inclusion Newsletter](#). Subscribe now to stay up to date on the Port’s equity work in our region.

## Centering Equity and Taking Action

- The Port created [core principles](#) to guide our economic recovery framework, so that we are mindful of how some in our community have borne a much more difficult burden during this crisis, and are actively looking for ways to include those hit hardest in our recovery efforts
- The [Port Commission established a Task Force on Port Policing and Civil Rights](#), which will lead a comprehensive assessment of the Port Police Department. The intent of the task force is to ensure alignment with the highest national standards and best practices related to policing, and to develop recommendations for action. The Task Force is expected to submit its first report on progress and any recommendations for immediate actions to the commission and executive director by **October 31** of this year, along with a final report and final recommendations by **July 31, 2021**
- On July 14, the Port Commission passed a [2021-2023 Strategic Plan for Workforce Development](#), which uniquely supports the economic region's recovery by connecting Port-related employers to a pipeline of talented workers. This strategic plan will help our partners connect to the next generation's most innovative and engaged employees while expanding the platform for equitable economic growth in our region
- [Port employees are addressing racism](#) head on by learning about the complex history of systemic racism in our country so that individuals and institutions, like the Port, learn to undo it
- [Read the Port of Seattle's Equity Statement and Vision](#), and learn more about how the Office of Equity, Diversity, and Inclusion is working to normalize, organize, and operationalize equity at the Port

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### Port of Seattle Commission

Stephanie Bowman | Ryan Calkins | Sam Cho | Fred Felleman | Peter Steinbrueck

**Executive Director:** Stephen P. Metruck

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