

Port of Seattle Equity, Diversity, and Inclusion Organizational Assessment 2021

Port of Seattle

Office of Equity, Diversity, and Inclusion (OEDI)

January 2022

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Welcome Letter

Dear Friends,

In 2019, the Port of Seattle became the first port authority in the country to establish an office of equity. In doing so, our organization made an initial commitment of time and resources to embed equity, diversity, and inclusion into the fabric of the organization. Also, by creating the Office of Equity, Diversity, and Inclusion (OEDI), the Port acknowledged that for too long it has benefited from white-dominant culture and comfortably operated in an unjust, racist society. By failing to acknowledge these inequities, the organization realized that it was playing a role in perpetuating them.

We are committed to doing better for our organization and for the communities we serve. We are committed to becoming an equitable, anti-racist organization. The Port aspires to be an organization that mirrors — throughout its breadth of operations and services and within its leadership structure — the diversity of our community, instills principles of equity in its culture, and ensures a fair and intentional distribution of opportunities with the goal of expanding economic development and quality of life for all. There is much work ahead of us to truly realize this goal. There will continue to be successes and setbacks, and we are in it for the long haul.

This report, and the recommended actions for change that it includes, is a step towards this goal. In the pages that follow, you will read over a year's worth of work to actively advance equity within the Port while building a strong foundation for sustainable change. This report draws on our employees' perceptions and experiences as it relates to our culture, policies, and practices. We have many strengths to build on and many achievements to celebrate. We also have many opportunities for growth and progress.

To address the patterns of disparities and inequities identified by employees, this report puts forward a set of robust recommendations that are both prescriptive and aspirational. Our recommendations include gathering more data and analysis in some cases to identify the specific potential disparities. Any one recommendation by itself may seem insufficient - one piece of a giant puzzle. But together, they complete a picture - a vision for transformational change. Through these recommendations, we will foster a culture of belonging and inclusion; we will build authentic, meaningful relationships with the communities we serve; and we will set a national standard for what a racially equitable government can truly be.

Creating an anti-racist, equitable Port requires commitment and perseverance. We need everyone, Port leadership and staff, community partners, and contractors, to work together to improve our practices and generate lasting, transformative change. Together we will succeed.

In Unity,



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

Acknowledgments

A debt of gratitude is owed to all who contributed to this assessment and report. Equally important is a special thanks to all Port employees who are - in big and small ways - advancing racial equity in our organization, creating a culture of inclusion and belonging, and building bridges with one another in the name of transformational progress.

With the understanding that the full list of acknowledgments and thanks is too long for this report alone, the following individuals and departments deserve specific mention.

Blacks in Government

Business Intelligence team: Michael Drollinger and Bettina Friese

Central Procurement Office: Nora Huey and Sofia Mayo

Consultant to OEDI on this project: Trang Tu

The Change Team (see Appendix B)

Diversity in Contracting team: Mian Rice and Lawrence Coleman

External Relations team: Sally del Fierro, Andy Gregory, Ilays Aden, and Peaches Thomas

Human Resources team: Katie Gerard, Kim DesMarais, Tracy Patterson, Ericka Singh, and Cynthia Alvarez

Legal: Pete Ramels and Ryan Stamper

Office of Equity, Diversity, and Inclusion team: Alison Beason, Jay Doran, Carl Hugle, Luis Navarro, William Walker, Bushra Zaman, and Morayo Kamson

Port of Seattle leadership: Steve Metruck and Commissioner Sam Cho

Strategic Initiatives team: Marin Burnett and Pennie Saum

Executive Summary

The Port of Seattle is committed to working both regionally and nationally to achieve equity and justice for all. The Port recognizes our essential role in building a socially just institution by dismantling the structural barriers that have prevented the full participation of our most marginalized communities.

Since 2017, the Port has stepped up efforts to integrate equity into its work including by creating a standalone Office of Equity, Diversity, and Inclusion (OEDI) in 2019. OEDI's mission is to build capacity across the organization to address institutional oppression and to transform Port policies, practices, and processes. OEDI has used the three-pronged framework outlined in the Port's Equity Strategic Plan to 1) normalize, 2) organize, and 3) operationalize equity Port-wide.

Already, OEDI has made major progress in its first few years of existence, from trainings and assessments focused on improving equity within the Port to shaping the implementation of externally facing efforts like the South King County Fund and the development of the Port's Equity Index. However, there is clearly more work to be done, and so, on October 13, 2020, the Port of Seattle Commission adopted Motion 2020-19, known as the Racial Bias & Equity Motion, "[t]o direct the Executive Director to examine Port operations and policies for sources of racial bias and discrimination and to develop programs and policies eliminating inequity in all aspects of the organization." This document reports back on the tasks contained in the Motion.

The findings and recommendations contained in this report draw on input gathered from several employee engagement efforts – ranging from Port-wide initiatives, such as the 2021 Equity Survey, to focused gatherings to solicit feedback from specific groups of employees, like EDI Assessment Listening Sessions. Each of these efforts is described, along with a summary of the results, in the report and its appendices. OEDI also utilized employee feedback to vet and finalize this report document, ensuring that it accurately reflected the inputs received.

The results of this effort are fifteen key issues grouped into six focus areas.

- Workplace Culture
- Operations and Processes
- Employment
- Equity Capacity Building
- Engaging WMBEs and Small Businesses
- Engaging Impacted Communities

Each of these focus areas represent an opportunity to address concerns and make progress in key areas of Port-wide equity. Furthermore, to ensure that the Port turns issues into action, this report lists 50 clear, tangible next steps that can be implemented beginning in 2022, beyond the steps already taken on each of these fronts. The full report contains additional details on each of these recommended actions, including further discussion of the issues and concerns

raised by Port employees on each topic as well as existing progress to date on the issues identified.

Finally, it is critical to note that this report reflects a synthesis of input and key issues expressed by all employees and drawing from multiple sources of evidence as described above. However, the data also indicate that individual experiences of equity, diversity, and inclusion across the Port vary widely.

Specifically, issues and concerns often fall along ***racial and gender lines***, with some employees indicating satisfaction with the status quo and/or less concern, while others face greater barriers, have comparatively greater concerns, and/or are more negatively impacted by racism and other inequities. The latter groups include Black, Indigenous, and people of color (BIPOC), women, and represented employees. As one employee noted, “It’s a tale of two Ports.”

Black, Indigenous and People of Color. A recurrent pattern was that BIPOC employees, especially Black/African American workers, expressed greater concerns about racism and other inequities, across almost all topical issues, whether hiring or compensation or workplace culture. This was especially evidenced in the qualitative data of the Equity Survey.

Women, with a focus on women of color. Women employees also shared gender-based concerns across several of the employee engagement activities. In the Equity Survey, for example, respondents called for consideration of other aspects of equity besides race, with gender equity mentioned most often.

Represented and off-shift workers. This group of employees expressed unique challenges, including lack of access to professional development opportunities, inadequate support for participation in equity activities from their supervisors, and often not being included in or provided meaningful access to Port-wide equity or professional development activities.

Additionally, ***intersectionality compounds inequities***. For example, women of color, or Black represented workers, expressed even greater barriers and inequities.

Informed by the experiences of these specific groups, this report intentionally strives to recognize these inequities and take a proactive, racial equity centered approach. In the report, this is done by spotlighting perspectives from these groups, and integrating Recommended Actions specific to these groups throughout the Recommendations.

Table of Issues and Recommendations

Fifteen key issues were identified from the various sources of input previously described. These are grouped into six focus areas: Workplace Culture, Operations and Processes, Employment, Equity Capacity Building, Engaging WMBEs and Small Businesses, and Engaging Impacted Communities. These are shown below along with a Summary of Recommended Actions for each issue.

Table 1. Equity Assessment Focus Areas, Key Issues and Summary of Recommended Actions		
Focus Areas	Key Issues	Summary of Recommended Actions
Workplace Culture	1. Inconsistencies in Port-wide vision for and commitment to equity	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. <i>Ongoing racial equity training and development for Port of Seattle’s leadership.</i> 2. <i>Policy Directive to codify equity</i> 3. <i>Continue communication efforts to make information accessible</i> 4. <i>OEDI on-site presence at SEA Airport Office Building (AOB) and maritime locations</i>
	2. Lack of open dialogue about equity and racism	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 5. <i>OEDI continues EDI learning opportunities (e.g., book clubs, caucusing, etc.) to normalize racial equity, including accessible training opportunities for represented and shift employees.</i> 6. <i>Language and Meaning Initiative on how to use language that is equitable and inclusive.</i> 7. <i>Uplift examples of supervisors and employees who are advancing racial equity.</i> 8. <i>Targeted caucuses.</i> 9. <i>Strengthen the Change Team’s impact.</i> 10. <i>Identify and address equity and anti-racism as central to the Port’s Special initiative to address anti-black racism.</i>
	3. Lack of BIPOC representation and voice in decision making	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 11. <i>Each year, ERGs, D&D Council, Change Team, and OEDI review and coordinate annual work plans and priorities including budgeting needs.</i> 12. <i>Develop organizational policies, practices, and mechanisms for participation in decision making tailored to specific groups.</i>

Table 1. Equity Assessment Focus Areas, Key Issues and Summary of Recommended Actions

Focus Areas	Key Issues	Summary of Recommended Actions
		<p>13. Town Hall briefing for new Commissioners to discuss potential collaboration and partnership.</p> <p>14. Set baseline for, track progress on, and publish data on racial and gender diversity in senior level positions and higher.</p>
	<p>4. Lack of safety and a fear of retaliation when reporting racism and discrimination</p>	<p>15. Curriculum and training for supervisors that increases supervisors' comfort with addressing issues of race and gender.</p> <p>16. Training to increase supervisors' awareness of what constitutes retaliation.</p> <p>17. Human Resources to offer training on the fair and consistent application of HR-18 and Code of Conduct policy.</p>
<p>Operations and Processes</p>	<p>5. Unclear discrimination reporting process</p>	<p>18. Workplace Responsibility and Employee Relations continue process improvement and report back in 2022.</p> <p>19. Increase communication and clarity about how Workplace Responsibility and Employee Relations processes work.</p> <p>20. Workplace Responsibility and Employee Relations will publish an annual report.</p> <p>21. Title VI reporting issues will be clarified by OEDI, Legal, and Employee Relations.</p> <p>22. Develop a process for consultants and contractors to report issues of discrimination.</p> <p>23. Additional training for represented workers on reporting discrimination.</p> <p>24. Port-wide dialogue about reporting discrimination and manager accountability.</p>

Table 1. Equity Assessment Focus Areas, Key Issues and Summary of Recommended Actions

Focus Areas	Key Issues	Summary of Recommended Actions
	6. Gaps in critical role of supervisors ¹	<p>25. Executive Director, Commission, Executive Leadership Team lead by example.</p> <p>26. Consistent and on-going messaging from Port leadership to all supervisors about the importance of leaders' accountability to Port values and EDI.</p> <p>27. Foundational EDI training for all new supervisors and additional advanced racial equity training for all supervisors.</p> <p>28. Develop EDI performance goals, competency, and evaluation best practices for all supervisors.</p>
	7. Inconsistent integration of equity in key Port-wide processes	<p>29. Trainings and technical assistance on how to integrate equity into department budgeting processes.</p> <p>30. Training and working group to develop skills, expertise, and capacity on using data with an equity lens.</p> <p>31. Starting in 2022, all departments set annual EDI goals.</p>
Employment	8. Inequities in recruitment, hiring, and qualifications	<p>32. Integrate equity considerations more deeply into the interview and hiring process.</p> <p>33. Develop system to track equity indicators in hiring processes.</p> <p>34. Increase BIPOC representation in leadership positions.</p>
	9. Inequities in compensation	<p>35. Make salary information more accessible and easier to find.</p> <p>36. Additional work on compensation equity: complete Port-wide analysis, establish a definition and philosophy for pay equity, determine potential remediation, and implement a new pay program.</p>

¹ In this report, “supervisors” includes employees with at least one direct report.

Table 1. Equity Assessment Focus Areas, Key Issues and Summary of Recommended Actions

Focus Areas	Key Issues	Summary of Recommended Actions
	10. Barriers to advancement for internal candidates	<p>37. Performance Link goal for all supervisors to provide training and development opportunities to all employees interested in advancing.</p> <p>38. Assess if certain formal education or credentials are needed to perform the essential functions of open jobs.</p> <p>39. Develop system to track promotion of internal candidates.</p> <p>40. Increase staff awareness about the Port’s internal mentorship program.</p> <p>41. Improved supervisor training on how to use coaching and mentoring as a management practice.</p>
Equity Capacity Building	11. Barriers to participation – resources and resistance	<p>42. Expand equity-related training activities.</p> <p>43. Explore the need to create dedicated funding to support employee participation in EDI efforts, especially for represented workers.</p> <p>44. Explore development of a policy to allow and support employee participation in equity learning activities.</p>
Engaging WMBEs and Small Businesses	12. Barriers for WMBEs and small businesses	<p>45. Assessment of barriers for small businesses and WMBEs to contract with the Port.</p> <p>46. Strengthen internal communication and training about contracting processes with WMBEs and small businesses.</p>
	13. Barriers in procurement processes	<p>47. For all new contracts, add provisions for language services, anti-harassment language, and integrate anti-bias video review and discussion in contract evaluation panels.</p> <p>48. Support community partnerships by reducing paperwork, expediting contracts, and creating feedback loops and a dedicated CPO team for CBO engagement.</p>

Table 1. Equity Assessment Focus Areas, Key Issues and Summary of Recommended Actions

Focus Areas	Key Issues	Summary of Recommended Actions
Engaging Impacted Communities	14. Lack of empowered and meaningful ways for external stakeholders to engage with the Port	<p><i>49. Continue work to stand up and operationalize the Community Equity Board.</i></p> <p><i>50. Create processes and best practices for how the Port engages communities.</i></p> <p><i>51. Ongoing training and support to develop employees’ skills to navigate power dynamics, build authentic relationships, and engage communities in inclusive, meaningful ways.</i></p> <p><i>52. Create dedicated funding to support and remove barriers for community engagement.</i></p>
	15. Challenging processes for community-based organizations to contract with the Port	<p><i>53. Continue process and system improvements in Port’s community investment programs.</i></p>

Introduction and Overview

1. History and Background

The Port of Seattle is committed to working both regionally and nationally to achieve equity and justice for all. The Port recognizes our essential role in building a socially just institution by dismantling the structural barriers that have prevented the full participation of our most marginalized communities.

Since 2017, the Port has stepped up efforts to integrate equity into its work including, in 2019, creating its first Office of Equity, Diversity, and Inclusion (OEDI). OEDI's mission is to build capacity across the organization to address institutional oppression and to transform Port policies, practices, and processes. To date, OEDI has led major initiatives to advance equity within the Port of Seattle. Notable accomplishments are highlighted below, organized by the three-pronged framework of the Port's Equity Strategic Plan: normalize, organize, and operationalize equity.

Normalizing Equity

- Deepened employees' understanding about equity and anti-racism through trainings, workshops, and speaker events
- Joined the Government Alliance on Race and Equity (GARE), a national network of governments working to achieve racial equity
- Participated in and organized local and national racial equity efforts, including coordinating an ongoing West Coast Port Partners Meeting to discuss equitable strategies pertaining to COVID-19, budgeting tools, and best practices for advancing equity
- Supported Port employees during the 2020 Black Lives Matter movement and civil unrest, organizing opportunities and providing resources for employees to increase awareness of racial justice and engage in equity work

Organizing for Equity

- Developed the Port's first Equity Strategic Plan in 2020, and updated it in 2021
- Developed and implemented Port-wide policies to integrate equity systemically, including mandatory equity trainings for supervisors and all employees
- In 2020-21, conducted a series of trainings including Change Team Foundational Training, Staff Racial Equity Orientation, and Supervisor Racial Equity Training, with participation by 975 Port employees

- Undertaking or partnering with other departments to conduct major assessments of equity, diversity, and inclusion at the Port, including an EDI Assessment, and Port Police Assessment, Women of Color Assessment
- Laid the groundwork for formation of a first-time Port Community Equity Board to ensure community stakeholders can influence Port decision-making that impacts communities and hold the Port accountable to the public

Operationalizing Equity

- Updated the Port’s Century Agenda by adding a goal for the Port to “Become a Model for Equity, Diversity, and Inclusion.” Through this goal, the Port of Seattle will ensure that equity is at the core of all our work and the principles the Port embodies
- Supported the Port Commission to establish the Equity and Workforce Development (EWFD) Standing Committee in 2020
- Formed a Port-wide Change Team, an all-departmental cross-functional team of employees to lead equity work across the Port
- Supported creation of the Port’s Workforce Development department to lead the Port’s efforts to improve wage equity and career development in Port-related industries for port-impacted communities, communities of color, and low-income communities
- Created and implemented of the South King County Fund Economic Recovery Program and the Opportunity Youth Initiative – two Port programs that are leading an equitable economic recovery in our region, particularly in South Seattle
- Developed core principles for the Port’s COVID-19 economic recovery framework to account for how some in our community have borne a much more difficult burden during the pandemic as the Port is actively working to include those most impacted in its recovery efforts
- Developed the Port’s first Equity Index as a tool for the Port to understand the degree to which different communities experience pollution burdens and social inequities and use that information to direct resources towards the areas of greatest need

2. Purpose and Scope of Report

Port of Seattle Commission Motion. On October 13, 2020, the Port of Seattle Commission adopted Motion 2020-19, known as the Racial Bias & Equity Motion, “To direct the Executive Director to examine Port operations and policies for sources of racial bias and discrimination and to develop programs and policies eliminating inequity in all aspects of the organization.”²

The Motion directed the Port to take: “...additional steps beyond what the OEDI Strategic Plan has set out to achieve by directing the Port to align those policies and procedures which will result in the development of a comprehensive policy. This will establish the Port, locally and nationally, as a leader in this work, illustrating our commitment to act, learn, and progress as an organization that values and centers EDI, accountability, and transparency.”³

Provisions in the Motion directed the Port’s Executive Director, or designee, to complete and report on several key tasks by October 30, 2021. Below is a summary of those tasks. See Appendix A for the full Motion.

1. *Convene Port employees and offer learnings and deeper analysis of anti-Black racism.*
2. *Develop, require, and conduct racial equity and unconscious bias training for Commissioners, the Executive Director, the Executive Leadership Team, supervisors, and employees.*
3. *Establish an internal Change Team with representatives from each division and department within the Port to assess the current state of equity, diversity, and inclusion for all teams. Conduct and report on assessment.*
4. *In addition to the Port-wide assessment conducted by the Change Team, OEDI will review the policies and issues...identified by Port employees as the most challenging barriers to fairly accessing resources and opportunities at the Port: employee development, promotion and compensation; recruitment, hiring, retention, and promotion of Black, Indigenous, and people of color (BIPOC) Port-wide; policies and practices impacting BIPOC contractors and WMBEs, with a particular focus on firms owned by Black descendants; contracting and procurement policies and practices impacting community organizations’ and contractors’ access to Port resources; and other areas identified through OEDI employee engagement.*
5. *Create a Community Advisory Board to ensure the Port is accountable to the public in the integration of equity principles into the Port’s work.*⁴

² Motion 2020-19. Port of Seattle Commission. October 13, 2020.

³ Motion 2020-19. Port of Seattle Commission. October 13, 2020.

⁴ Motion 2020-19. Port of Seattle Commission. October 13, 2020.

Scope of Report. This document reports back on the tasks contained in the Motion. The rest of this Introduction section includes a description of the methodology by which the tasks were completed, issues analyzed, and recommendations developed. It also spotlights three key employee populations that face disproportionate inequities. The main section of the report presents fifteen Key Issues that emerged from the organizational assessment, along with Recommended Actions to address each.

Implementation. Once approved by Port leadership, the Recommended Actions in this report will be translated into implementation actions with associated progress milestones. These will be integrated into OEDI’s 2022 Strategic Plan. OEDI will manage and coordinate implementation by various departments, with an aim to report back to the Port Commission at the end of 2022.

3. Process and Methodology

Stakeholder Input. The findings and recommendations contained in this report drew on input gathered from several employee engagement efforts. These ranged from Port-wide initiatives, such as the Equity Survey, which reached out to all employees, to focused gatherings to solicit feedback from specific groups of employees whose voices have often been under-represented and/or who face unique or additional barriers that warrant intentional targeted outreach. The table below lists all the source reports and documents reviewed. The full report for each is included in the Appendices.

Table 2. Employee Input – Source Reports and Documents	
Source and # of Employees Engaged	Focus of Input
<p>Equity Survey – Quantitative Results</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> 1,306 respondents Port-wide (61 percent of all Port employees) 	<p>Survey Goal: Examine key aspects of the organization that are relevant to advancing diversity, inclusion, and racial equity.</p> <p>Survey topics:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Work Culture Operations and Processes Community Engagement Hiring, Promotions, Compensation and Employee Development Contracting and Use of WMBEs Personal Experiences and Satisfaction
<p>Equity Survey – Qualitative Results</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Sub-set of 505 survey respondents 	<p>Qualitative data came from open-ended questions within Equity Survey on each survey topic.</p>

Table 2. Employee Input – Source Reports and Documents	
Source and # of Employees Engaged	Focus of Input
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> 1,230 total comments 	
<p><i>EDI Assessment Listening Sessions</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> 18 sessions from 7/20/21-9/17/21 283 participants, duplicated 155 participants, unduplicated (49 from Aviation, 17 from Maritime, 85 from Central Services, 8 from EDD) 	Participants examined specific findings from Equity Survey to identify root causes and brainstorm solutions
<p><i>Change Team Formation and Self-Assessment</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> 122 Change Team members (47 sponsors, 75 Core members) 	Ongoing work to create organizational infrastructure for infusing equity into Port-wide operations
<p><i>Equity in Budgeting Department Survey</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Completed by 20 departments in Corporate Division, 24 departments in Aviation Division and 13 departments in Maritime and Economic Development Divisions. 	Survey asking each department if and how they are integrating equity into budgeting processes.
<p><i>Represented Workers Task Force Report</i></p> <p>Input from 2 sources:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Responses to Equity Survey from 393 represented employees responded Meetings with represented employees hosted by OEDI and Strategic Initiatives 	Focused conversations about specific barriers experienced by represented and off-shift workers.
<p><i>Blacks in Government Input and Recommendations</i></p>	Input and recommendations from convening of Blacks in Government Employee Group.
<p><i>Port of Seattle 2020-21 Racial Equity Trainings Final Report</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Change Team Foundational Training: 67 participants, 4 training sessions, 8 training hours, 2 groups 	Write-up of participation in, outputs of and learning outcomes from racial equity trainings in 2020-21

Table 2. Employee Input – Source Reports and Documents	
Source and # of Employees Engaged	Focus of Input
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Staff Racial Equity Orientation: 431 participants, 1 orientation session, 3 orientation hours, 5 groups Supervisor Racial Equity Training: 384 participants, 3 training sessions, 8 training hours, 5 groups 	
<p><i>Black Lives Matter Caucusing Series</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> 7 events from 6/5/2020 – 8/7/2020 1,045 participants (duplicated); 344 participants (unduplicated) 79 participants completed survey 	<p>A series of caucus events in the aftermath of the killing of George Floyd, Ahmaud Arbery and Breonna Taylor, to offer a space for employees to gather, process, reflect and recommit to fighting racism. This report draws on a summary of participation in and outcomes of these sessions, including results of post-session evaluations.</p>
<p><i>Port of Seattle South King County Fund 2020: Economic Recovery Grants Program Cycle 1 Report and Recommendations from Consultants</i></p>	<p>A report from consultants who supported the process of launching the first cycle of the South King County Fund. The report summarizes the implementation of the Fund’s first cycle and provides recommendations for improvements. This report also includes surveys and communication with organizations who attended Q&A sessions to learn more about the Fund.</p>
<p><i>Non-Represented Employees Compensation Program Review</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Over 900 survey responses (90% response rate) 17 focus groups attended by close to 200 employees Group interview/focus group with Port Executive Leadership Team 	<p>Several documents describing the Human Resources Department’s Non-Represented Employees Compensation process and timeline:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Employee Survey Summary (Sept 2021) Focus Group and Employee Survey Comment Themes (Sept 2021) Comp Project Employee Survey and Focus Groups Results Summary (10/1/2021) Comp Program Review Recommendations (ELT Meeting – 10/29/21) Comp Project Pre-Read – Consultant Recommendations (10/29/21)

OEDI analysis of input and development of recommendations. After gathering employee input from the sources listed above, OEDI undertook an analysis of each source of input to surface key themes, issues, and suggestions for potential solutions or actions. OEDI engaged and worked with external consultant Trang Tu to complete an “analysis of analyses,” reviewing across all sources to identify the most prevalent themes, issues and recommendations, and reviewed in concert with the requirements of Motion 2020-19.

In developing the recommendations in this report, OEDI also engaged Port employees and colleagues in several ways. First, OEDI hosted two meetings with Change Team members in early November 2021 and met with two Employee Resource Groups (ERGs) – Blacks in Government, and the Native American Committee – to solicit their review and feedback. Over 200 employees attended sessions and gave input towards the recommendations in this assessment. Second, OEDI consulted with senior employees in key departments including Human Resources, Legal, Diversity in Contracting and the Office of Workplace Responsibility, to share the experience and concerns of Port employees, share draft recommendations developed informed by employees’ experiences, and solicit their feedback. The content of this report reflects the results of both the meta-analysis and consultation with internal stakeholders.

OEDI and Strategic Initiatives’ Collaboration. EDI and Continuous Process Improvement (CPI), which is led by the Strategic Initiatives department, are two of the most important executive priorities for the organization. Throughout the past year, OEDI and Strategic Initiatives have partnered closely to implement the elements of the Racial Bias and Equity Motion, especially the Equity Survey, EDI Assessment Listening Sessions, Change Team, and Represented Workers Task Force.

The advancement of EDI and CPI are critical to the success of the Port. Both efforts align with and contribute to the goals of the Port’s Century agenda, especially Goal 5 (Become a Model of Equity, Diversity, and Inclusion) and Goal 6 (Become a Highly Effective Public Agency). Additionally, when we center and invest in EDI and CPI, we create and sustain a culture of inclusion, belonging, and learning. All levels of the organization – from individual contributors and frontline workers to supervisors to the ELT and Commission – gain more clarity, direction, and purpose. Through EDI and CPI, we can address specific concerns voiced by employees through recent assessments and survey, especially reports of BIPOC employees being undervalued, departments failing to evaluate their work in terms of equity, employees lacking the knowledge and understanding of how EDI and CPI are relevant to their work, and the challenge of fully integrating represented and shift workers into the programming and culture of the organization. The goals and visions for EDI and CPI are similar and intersecting. Integrating these efforts will enable the Port of Seattle to create a diverse culture of equity, inclusion and problem solving.

With this in mind, OEDI and Strategic Initiatives will continue to partner and collaborate to advance EDI and CPI within the organization, and these two departments will work closely to support the implementation of the Recommended Actions detailed in this report.

4. Spotlight: Barriers and Inequities for Specific Groups

This report reflects a synthesis of input and key issues expressed by all employees, drawing from multiple sources of evidence as described in the previous section. However, the data also indicate that individual experiences of equity, diversity and inclusion vary widely.

Specifically, concerns often fall along *racial and gender lines*, with some employees being less concerned or satisfied with the status quo, while others have greater concerns, and/or are more negatively impacted by racism and other inequities. The latter include BIPOC, female and represented employees. As one employee noted, “It’s a tale of two Ports.”

Black, Indigenous and People of Color (BIPOC). A recurrent pattern was that BIPOC employees, especially Black/African American workers, expressed greater concerns about racial and other inequities, across almost all topical issues, whether hiring or compensation or workplace culture. This was especially evidenced in comments to the Equity Survey. Through an effort of Blacks in Government, Black employees in particular shared feedback and recommendations about pay equity, training and development, barriers in access to contracting for Black businesses, Port policies and procedures, accountability for equity and inclusion, and issues of representation.

Women, with a focus on women of color. Female employees also shared gender-based concerns. In the Equity Survey, for example, respondents called for consideration of other aspects of equity besides race, with gender equity mentioned most often. This was also more likely to be voiced by female respondents compared to male respondents, which was also the case for many other issues in the survey.

Represented and off-shift workers. A third group with additional barriers is represented and off-shift workers. Both the Equity Survey and OEDI Listening Sessions I heard this group of employees express unique challenges including lack of access to professional development, inadequate support from supervisors for participation in equity activities, and often not being included in or provided meaningful access to Port-wide equity or professional development activities. Their recommendations included: organizing meeting opportunities with accessible locations and times, expanding equity training requirements for all represented workers, and holding their supervisors more accountable for supporting their participation in equity activities.

Additionally, *intersectionality compounds inequities*. For example, women of color, or black represented workers, face even greater barriers. This is part of the motivation for a Women of Color assessment OEDI is currently undertaking to examine some of these intersectional patterns of disparity. To date, 131 female employees of color, accounting for nearly half of all female employees of color at the Port, have registered to be part of the assessment.

Informed by learning from these specific groups, this report intentionally strives to recognize these inequities, avoid being race-blind or gender-blind, and takes a pro-active, pro-equity approach. In the report, this is done by spotlighting perspectives from these groups, and integrating Recommended Actions specific to these groups.

Key Issues and Recommended Actions

Fifteen key issues were identified from the input previously described, grouped into six areas: Workplace Culture, Operations and Processes, Employment, Equity Capacity Building, Engaging WMBEs and Small Businesses, and Engaging Impacted Communities.

Table 3. Equity Assessment Focus Areas and Key Issues	
Focus Areas	Key Issues
Workplace Culture	1. Inconsistencies in Port-wide vision for and commitment to equity
	2. Lack of open dialogue about equity and racism
	3. Lack of BIPOC representation and voice in decision making
	4. Lack of safety and a fear of retaliation when reporting racism and discrimination
Operations and Processes	5. Unclear discrimination reporting process
	6. Gaps in critical role of supervisors ⁵
	7. Inconsistent integration of equity in key Port-wide processes
Employment	8. Inequities in recruitment, hiring, and qualifications
	9. Inequities in compensation
	10. Barriers to advancement for internal candidates
Equity Capacity Building	11. Barriers to participation – resources and resistance
Engaging WMBEs and Small Businesses	12. Barriers for WMBEs and small businesses
	13. Barriers in procurement processes
Engaging Impacted Communities	14. Lack of empowered and meaningful ways for external stakeholders to engage with the Port
	15. Challenging processes for community-based organizations to contract with the Port

For each of the fifteen Key Issues, the following section reports on and summarizes: 1. Key Concerns and Input, 2. Progress to Date, and 3. Recommended Actions. Throughout, the report also highlights intersections with race and gender where there are unique concerns, disproportionate impacts, and/or need for targeted solutions.

⁵ In this report, “supervisors” includes employees with at least one direct report.

Focus Area: Workplace Culture

Issue 1. Inconsistencies in Port-wide vision for and commitment to equity

Key Concerns and Input

Employees responding to the Port's 2021 Equity Survey shared a range of views on the Port's overall commitment to equity. Among those who added comments, nearly 80 characterized the Port's work on equity in **positive terms**, while an additional 90 gave a more **mixed view, recognizing efforts while also acknowledging more work needs to be done**. A smaller number of comments said that **inequities persist at the Port, especially due to an entrenched white male power structure**.⁶

Comments about **Port leadership championing equity were also mixed**. Employees cited Port leaders communicating openly, setting examples, focusing on systemic changes, and creating space for employees to be involved. Others expressed needs for leadership to continue voicing commitments, encouraging employee participation, and ensuring dialogue leads to actual results.⁷

Employees voiced similar comments from the Port's Black Lives Matter Caucusing series, where participants said the Port's goals and vision for EDI are inspiring and ambitious, that leadership support for advancing equity has been critical to creating momentum and energy for change, and that this needs to be sustained.⁸

Integration of equity into day-to-day operations across Port departments remains a work in progress. Most respondents to the Equity Survey who commented on this issue affirmed this need, with a prevailing theme that **there are variations across departments in how much EDI is prioritized**. Factors cited include lack of information and knowledge on how to integrate equity into the work, attitude, and willingness of supervisor(s) and/or other team members, and for some employees, the

⁶ *Port of Seattle Equity Survey Analysis of Qualitative Data*. Prepared by Tu Consulting for the Office of Equity, Diversity and Inclusion. August 2021.

⁷ Ibid.

⁸ *Summary Report on Black Lives Matter Caucusing Series*. Hosted by the Port of Seattle Office of Equity, Diversity and Inclusion. June - August 2020.

belief that equity considerations are not relevant for their areas of work. Several comments also said it is important to translate dialogue, language, and policy into concrete actions and changes.⁹

Additionally, **only 30.9 percent of respondents agreed or strongly agreed that their work-related projects and/or assignments are periodically evaluated in terms of their impact on racial equity.** Employees cited numerous reasons for this, including budgeting and resources, fear, lack of BIPOC representation in leadership, organizational structure, and lack of training and skills.¹⁰

Finally, EDI Assessment Listening Sessions, hosted by OEDI from July through September 2021, surfaced other input related to transparency and the **need to better publicize EDI efforts, department EDI goals, and all Port employee's salary information.**¹¹

Progress to Date

Building leadership and champions for racial equity. Recognizing the long-term effort required to integrate equity into all aspects of Port operations, OEDI has put in significant and sustained effort to create a strong foundation for this work. Over the past year, OEDI led the creation of a Port-wide Change Team, in collaboration with all Port departments.

Mandated in September 2020 by the Port Commission's Racial Bias and Equity Motion, the Change Team is a Port-wide cohort of employees from all departments, teams, and leadership levels. Their mission is to engage all levels of the Port in using an equity framework in their daily work and decisions. The Change Team is working to fulfill this mission by working with leadership to develop Port-wide equity goals and working within their respective teams to develop Department-specific equity goals.

Members of the Change Team include sponsors who are directors from each department who provide institutional sponsorship and accountability, and Core Members, who are nominated by Department directors to serve on the team. Members learn to use a systemic and structural lens to inform creative changes to policies and procedures; develop a shared understanding and

⁹ *Port of Seattle Equity Survey Analysis of Quantitative Data.* Prepared by Business Intelligence Unit for Office of Equity, Diversity and Inclusion. June 2021.

¹⁰ *EDI Assessment Listening Sessions Report.* Port of Seattle Office of Equity, Diversity and Inclusion. July - September 2021. *Port of Seattle Equity Survey Analysis of Qualitative Data.* Prepared by Tu Consulting for Office of Equity, Diversity and Inclusion. August 2021.

¹¹ *EDI Assessment Listening Sessions Report.* Port of Seattle Office of Equity, Diversity and Inclusion. July - September 2021.

vision of equity at the Port and champion that vision; and have the responsibility to continue to deepen their learning and the learning of their department/team around issues of equity, racism, and social justice.

During the first six months of the Change Team, Core Members participated in monthly, in-depth racial equity trainings that taught them foundational terminology and concepts, root cause analysis skills, and tools to evaluate the effectiveness of programs in terms of racial equity impact. After completing their training, Core Members were asked to evaluate their ability to advance racial equity. Results (below) indicate positive impact in their knowledge and capacity to lead integration of equity Port-wide.

Summary of Change Team Self-Assessment Results

- Core Members are growing and pushing themselves to become racial equity champions within the organization.
- Core Members recognize that racial equity is a process and learning is ongoing.
- Core Members are developing abilities to address racism at both interpersonal and institutional levels.
- Core Members are developing abilities to identify patterns of racial disparities (i.e., racial inequities).
- The trainings provided to Core Members have been effective at growing their skills, analysis, and confidence to do racial equity work.¹²

For additional details about the progress of the Change Team’s work, see Appendix F.

Strengthening skills and knowledge about racial equity. 882 Port employees participated in racial equity training during the past year, gaining greater knowledge and skills about how to integrate equity into daily operations. In post-training evaluations, participants said that they:

- Gained specific strategies to address racial bias,
- Connected to ideas for individual application of racial equity concepts, and

¹² *Change Team Formation and Self-Assessment Report*. OEDI. September 2021. *Change Team Self-Assessment Data*. Compiled by OEDI. March 2021.

- Wished to seek greater institutional and structural changes.¹³

Additional Progress. During 2020 and 2021, the Port also accomplished the following: established Juneteenth as a Port-paid holiday; refreshed organizational values to include anti-racism and equity; updated the Port’s Century Agenda to include a goal to “Become a Model of Equity, Diversity, and Inclusion”; passed a Racial Bias and Equity Motion directing OEDI to conduct a Port-wide EDI Assessment; instituted an Indigenous land acknowledgment at the beginning of all public Commission meetings; and produced consistent and ongoing equity-focused communication (internal and external) from the highest levels of the organization (Executive Director and Commission).

With regards to communication about EDI efforts, the Office of Equity, Diversity, and Inclusion implements multiple tools including sharing information on the OEDI webpage and Compass, sending monthly updates internally to employees and externally to community stakeholders, publishing annual reports and conducting annual planning, and hosting quarterly OEDI Town Halls.

Building a sustainable commitment to racial equity. In 2021, multiple existing policies were revised with the support of OEDI and Port employee input. Among these were: HR policies for recruitment, hiring, and code of conduct; Port-wide processes for annual budgeting; and Title VI reporting and planning.

In 2021, new policies were passed to require an assessment of all Port policing practices, and an Equity motion was passed, mandating this organizational assessment and requiring an annual report in future years from all departments.

Recommended Actions

1. ***Commit to ongoing racial equity training and development for Port of Seattle’s leadership.*** (Lead: ELT)
2. ***Port Commission adopts first time Policy Directive to codify equity*** in every aspect of the organization and to build long term sustainable efforts towards organizational transformation. (Lead: Commission and OEDI)

¹³ Port of Seattle 2020-21 Racial Equity Trainings Report. Equity Matters. October 2021.

3. ***Continue communication efforts to make information accessible*** to all stakeholders, including responding to information needs of specific groups like represented and off-shift workers and people without computers (ongoing). OEDI develops new communication materials for employees around the Port to use (such as posters, calendars, placards). (Lead: OEDI)
4. ***OEDI institutes a consistent on-site presence at SEA Airport Office Building (AOB) and maritime locations*** to meet with employees, build relationships with departments in Aviation and Maritime, and improve communication about the Port's EDI efforts. (Lead: OEDI)

Focus Area: Workplace Culture

Issue 2. Lack of open dialogue about equity and racism

Key Concerns and Input

On the topic of workplace culture, employee feedback surfaced needs for improvement in encouraging safe space for open dialogue about equity and racism. The Port Equity Survey data showed that: 71.8 percent of respondents agreed or strongly agreed that BIPOC identities and expressions are respected through words and actions; 66.8 percent of respondents agreed or strongly agreed that leaders encourage and facilitate open dialogue about racial/ethnic issues; and 57.6 percent of respondents agreed or strongly agreed that they feel comfortable talking openly about issues related to diversity, equity, and inclusion at the Port of Seattle.¹⁴

Over 285 survey comments about workplace culture provided additional insight, especially from employees of color, who expressed specific concerns including:

- ***Fear of backlash and discomfort discussing a sensitive topic like race,*** and
- ***The work environment is not welcoming to all cultures,*** including employees of color, who reported experiencing disrespect and racism.¹⁵

Progress to Date

- The Port's ERGs have focused their events more on systems change by offering learning opportunities, presentations, and panel discussions on racial equity.

¹⁴ *Port of Seattle Equity Survey Analysis of Quantitative Data.* Prepared by Business Intelligence Unit for Office of Equity, Diversity and Inclusion. June 2021.

¹⁵ *Port of Seattle Equity Survey Analysis of Qualitative Data.* Prepared by Tu Consulting for Office of Equity, Diversity and Inclusion. August 2021.

- OEDI has offered book clubs; podcast clubs; caucuses on racial equity; quarterly OEDI town halls; the creation and integration of Equity Moments in team meetings across the organization; and other ongoing opportunities for employees to learn and engage. In 2021, more than 1,110 employees (duplicate count) participated in OEDI’s programming.
- In the aftermath of the killings of George Floyd, Breonna Taylor, and Ahmaud Arbery, from June through August of 2020, OEDI hosted a seven-part Black Lives Matter Caucusing Series. The purpose of this series was to support employees in processing, reflecting, sharing feedback on, and brainstorming how the Port can combat racism in its own work. In 2021, OEDI received an Award of Excellence from the American Association of Port Authorities for this work. Evaluation surveys from these sessions indicated that participants gained:
 - More tools and language for talking about race and racism,
 - A better understanding of how participants could personally help combat and dismantle systemic racism, and
 - The opportunity to strategize with coworkers about how to transform the Port into an anti-racist organization.¹⁶
- In 2021, OEDI offered multiple racial equity trainings tailored to the Change Team, supervisors, and Port employees as a whole. Outcomes of these trainings across all three groups of participants included:
 - “Deeper understanding of and connection to foundational racial equity concepts and tools,”
 - A greater “sense of hope and community” on racial equity, which was particularly voiced by employees of color, and
 - Stronger “connection to employee’s individual responsibility to advance racial equity.”¹⁷
- Throughout 2020 and 2021, the Port Executive Director began dedicating a portion of his Port-wide emails to “Equity Resources,” providing employees with reading materials, videos, and articles to help employees learn, expand their understanding and analysis of impacts of COVID-19, and create more awareness about the importance of anti-racism and equity.

¹⁶ *Summary Report on Black Lives Matter Caucusing Series*. Hosted by the Port of Seattle Office of Equity, Diversity and Inclusion. June - August 2020.

¹⁷ *Port of Seattle 2020-21 Racial Equity Trainings Report*. Equity Matters. October 2021.

- As a result of these collective activities, employees (especially white employees) are increasing their understanding of why we lead our work with racial equity.

Recommended Actions

5. ***Expand learning opportunities (e.g., book clubs, caucusing, etc.) for all employees to normalize racial equity*** and create a culture of learning and belonging. OEDI and Strategic Initiatives will work closely with Aviation, Maritime, and the Change Team to offer and facilitate ***accessible, inclusive EDI training and learning opportunities for represented and shift employees.*** (Lead: OEDI)
6. Create a ***Language and Meaning Initiative that will provide training on understanding the racial and historical context for certain terminology and how to use language that is equitable and inclusive.*** Segments of this training will also be included in trainings for all supervisors. (Lead: OEDI)
7. OEDI and the Change Team ***identify and implement creative ways to uplift examples of supervisors and employees who are advancing racial equity,*** modeling inclusiveness, and creating a culture of belonging and learning. (Lead: OEDI)
8. ***OEDI leads targeted caucuses*** including:
 - An anti-racist white caucus designed for white employees to collectively learn and support one another in being effective allies to employees of color in our efforts to create racial equity.
 - Multiracial and racial caucus spaces to strengthen racial equity analysis, unity, and community building emerging from 2020-21 trainings.¹⁸ (Lead: OEDI)
9. Build on the success of the foundational year of the Change Team to ***strengthen the Change Team's impact*** on the organization (Lead: OEDI). This could include:
 - Case study labs for Change Team members to learn more about institutional and structural racial equity change models

¹⁸ Port of Seattle 2020-21 Racial Equity Trainings Report. Equity Matters. October 2021.

- Creating a Change Team committee to function as racial equity facilitators, coaches, and influencers
- Roundtable sessions with the ELT to build awareness and understanding of equity and racism
- Setting a goal to close the racialized gap for one specific workplace outcome, as detailed in a department equity plan¹⁹

10. ***Port leadership continues to identify and address equity and anti-racism as central to the Port's Special initiative to address anti-black racism.*** (Lead: ELT)

¹⁹ Port of Seattle 2020-21 Racial Equity Trainings Report. Equity Matters. October 2021.

Focus Area: Workplace Culture

Issue 3. Lack of BIPOC representation and voice in decision making

Key Concerns and Input

The **need for greater racial and gender diversity within departments and across the Port** was voiced in numerous employee engagement efforts. **In particular, the need for more BIPOC representation at the highest levels** – in upper management, executive leadership, and Port Commission roles – was a recurrent theme. This input came out of the Port’s Equity Survey, EDI Assessment Listening Sessions, and from Blacks in Government.²⁰

The **lack of BIPOC voice in decision making was also a major concern** raised across multiple sources. Only 58.6 percent of respondents to the Port’s Equity Survey agreed or strongly agreed that the opinions of BIPOC are sought out, valued, and fully considered when making decisions.²¹ And almost all comments on this topic expressed concerns, including BIPOC employees’ input not being heard and/or valued, especially at the highest levels of decision making and particularly for people who are less proficient in English; and when they do participate, being tokenized. Respondents of color had disproportionately more concerns about this issue – both in the qualitative and quantitative data of the Equity Survey.²²

In the EDI Assessment Listening Sessions, employees underscored the **need for the Executive Leadership Team to regularly hear directly from BIPOC employees**, and Black employees, through Blacks in Government, also expressed the need for Black and Brown employees to have a voice in reviewing, creating, and deciding policies.²³

Port employees identified some of the root causes of this including: lack of BIPOC representation in Port leadership; untrained, apathetic, and/or unsupportive supervisors; lack of opportunities for input and advancement for BIPOC employees; racial bias;

²⁰ Ibid. *EDI Assessment Listening Sessions Report*. Port of Seattle Office of Equity, Diversity and Inclusion. July - September 2021. *Port of Seattle Equity Survey Analysis of Qualitative Data*. Prepared by Tu Consulting for Office of Equity, Diversity and Inclusion. August 2021.

²¹ *Port of Seattle Equity Survey Analysis of Quantitative Data*. Prepared by Business Intelligence Unit for Office of Equity, Diversity and Inclusion. June 2021.

²² *Port of Seattle Equity Survey Analysis of Qualitative Data*. Prepared by Tu Consulting for Office of Equity, Diversity and Inclusion. August 2021.

²³ “*What do Blacks In Government need the Port of Seattle to focus on in combatting racial discriminations?*” Session Notes. Blacks in Government Employee Group. June 2021.

and structural barriers. These underscore the inter-related nature of many of the issues raised in this report and the need for holistic actions to create long-term, lasting transformation.²⁴ structural barriers. These underscore the inter-related nature of many of the issues raised in this report and the need for holistic actions to create long-term, lasting transformation.²⁵

Progress to Date

- ERGs have reported to OEDI that in recent years their ability to voice concerns, identify inequities, propose policy changes, and celebrate diversity has been more impactful.
- OEDI and steering committee of employees (predominantly women of color) began conducting an assessment of the experiences, treatment, compensation, and advancement of women of color at the Port through a survey, individual interviews, and focus group discussions. This one-of-kind assessment was commissioned by the Port’s Executive Director after Blacks in Government and Women’s Initiative Network collaborated to host a panel event about intersectionality and the experiences of women of color at the Port. The results of this assessment will be presented to Port leadership and staff in early 2022, and the recommendations from that assessment will be incorporated into the implementation plan of this report’s recommendations.
- The Change Team is working with their respective departments to create department-specific EDI goals for 2022. Department-specific EDI goals will be integrated into the annual business planning process.
- Participants in the past year’s racial equity trainings, in post-training evaluations, expressed that they felt:
 - More empowered to “speak up and do something,”
 - Connected to more “collective power to influence areas such as data analysis, contracting, relationship building, management role and identifying root causes,” and
 - A greater “sense of hope and community” about racial equity at the Port.²⁶

²⁴ *EDI Assessment Listening Sessions Report*. Port of Seattle Office of Equity, Diversity and Inclusion. July - September 2021.

²⁵ *EDI Assessment Listening Sessions Report*. Port of Seattle Office of Equity, Diversity and Inclusion. July - September 2021.

²⁶ *Port of Seattle 2020-21 Racial Equity Trainings Report*. Equity Matters. October 2021.

Recommended Actions

11. ***Each year, ERGs, D&D Council, Change Team, and OEDI review and coordinate annual work plans and priorities including budgeting needs.*** These groups ***then engage the ELT in an Annual RoundTable*** to discuss priorities, needs, and ELT involvement. ***ELT and OEDI will explore additional opportunities to expand ERGs' involvement and voice in policy development.*** (Lead: OEDI)
12. ***Develop organizational policies, practices, and mechanisms for participation in decision making tailored to specific groups*** including indigenous, employees of color and women of color.²⁷ (Lead: OEDI, ELT)
13. OEDI, Change Team, and ERGs offer a ***Town Hall briefing for new Commissioners to discuss potential collaboration and partnership.*** (Lead: OEDI)
14. ***Set baseline for increasing racial diversity in senior level positions and above beginning January of 2022.*** Human Resources ***track progress*** through infographics with the ability to filter data through multiple filters (e.g., racial and gender diversity of director-level positions) and publish this data quarterly. Include in this report the number of BIPOC employees promoted internally and new BIPOC employees in leadership positions. ***Publish racial and gender diversity demographics of Port employees by grade and*** organizational level. (Lead: HR)

²⁷ Port of Seattle 2020-21 Racial Equity Trainings Report. Equity Matters. October 2021.

Focus Area: Workplace Culture

Issue 4. Lack of safety and a fear of retaliation when reporting racism and discrimination

Key Concerns and Input

As identified in multiple sources, the culture of the Port is such that **employees feel unsafe reporting racism and discrimination**, especially due to fear of retaliation. The Equity Survey showed that only 50.7 percent of respondents agreed or strongly agreed that they are satisfied that any conflicts at the Port of Seattle related to diversity, equity and inclusion issues would be addressed appropriately. Additionally, when employees were asked if they would communicate with their supervisor or a person in leadership if they or someone else were experiencing racial/ethnic discrimination at the Port of Seattle, **BIPOC employees, especially Black and Native American employees, were significantly less likely to report discrimination than white employees.** Participants in the Black Lives Matter Caucusing Series shared that employees experience the process of reporting discrimination, bias or inappropriate behavior as lacking transparency and follow-through.²⁸ This suggests that BIPOC employees do not trust the Port's ability to address discrimination and/or fear there will be negative consequences for reporting it.²⁹

The survey comments emphasized the concerns on this issue. Of 108 comments about it, 100 were negative. Prevalent thoughts included: employees not feeling safe reporting discrimination, lack of confidence in the organization's ability to effectively address concerns, and the difficulty of raising issues to supervisors in situations where the supervisor is the source of concern. Further, this concern was disproportionately expressed by BIPOC and women employees.³⁰

Progress to Date

- Anti-Racism and Equity values: In June, after an 8-month process following a retreat session for all ELT members which included a full day of discussions about racial equity, the Port refreshed its organization-wide values to include Anti-Racism and Equity as a core value. The organization describes this value as "We commit to dismantling institutional racism and

²⁸ *Summary Report on Black Lives Matter Caucusing Series*. Hosted by the Port of Seattle Office of Equity, Diversity and Inclusion. June - August 2020.

²⁹ *Port of Seattle Equity Survey Analysis of Quantitative Data*. Prepared by Business Intelligence Unit for Office of Equity, Diversity and Inclusion. June 2021.

³⁰ *Port of Seattle Equity Survey Analysis of Qualitative Data*. Prepared by Tu Consulting for Office of Equity, Diversity and Inclusion. August 2021.

ensuring equitable opportunities for all.” In the coming months after announcing the values refresh, several members of the Executive Leadership Team communicated about the importance of the values, including why anti-racism and equity are critical for them personally and for our organization.

- Increased communication and collaboration between OEDI, Workplace Responsibility, and Employee Relations to direct concerns to the appropriate processes.

Recommended Actions

15. ***Build a curriculum and training for supervisors in 2022 that increases supervisors’ comfort with addressing issues of race and gender.*** (Lead: OEDI, HR)
16. Deliver ***training to increase supervisors’ awareness of what constitutes retaliation and how it is received by employees.*** (Lead: HR and Legal)
17. ***Human Resources to offer training on the fair and consistent application of HR-18 and Code of Conduct policy,*** get feedback from equity champions in the organization, educate managers about their responsibility. (Lead: HR and Legal)

Focus Area: Operations and Processes

Issue 5. Unclear discrimination reporting process

Key Concerns and Input

While the culture of the Port is such that employees feel a lack of safety and a fear of retaliation when reporting racism and discrimination (as described above in Issue 4), there are also issues related to the discrimination reporting process itself.

As described in Issue 4, not only do employees feel unsafe using the Port’s reporting process, but the data from the Equity Survey illustrates that there is ***not widespread clarity and knowledge across the Port about how complaint investigation processes work***, including the role of supervisors in a complaint.³¹ There is also a lack of confidence in the organization’s ability to effectively handle issues related to racism and discrimination, and these sentiments are overwhelmingly represented by employees of color, suggesting that the reporting process does not work as well for employees of color as it does for white employees.

Additionally, in the EDI Assessment Listening Sessions, employees called for fuller investigation of discrimination claims with compensation for injured parties. Blacks in Government called for specific criteria when investigating complaints about racism.³²

Progress to Date

Workplace Responsibility and Employee Relations have been engaged with Strategic Initiatives to assess processes and consider system and process improvements.

Recommended Actions

³¹ *Port of Seattle Equity Survey Analysis of Qualitative Data*. Prepared by Tu Consulting for Office of Equity, Diversity and Inclusion. August 2021.

³² *EDI Assessment Listening Sessions Report*. Port of Seattle Office of Equity, Diversity and Inclusion. July - September 2021. “*What do Blacks In Government need the Port of Seattle to focus on in combatting racial discriminations?*” Session Notes. Blacks in Government Employee Group. June 2021.

18. **Workplace Responsibility and Employee Relations continue their process improvement and hold a Town Hall Report Back about systems improvement to all Port employees in 2022.** (Lead: Workplace Responsibility and Employee Relations)
19. **Increase internal communication and clarity about how Workplace Responsibility and Employee Relations processes work** and increase employee knowledge about what the roles of each team are, how they operate, and possible outcomes. (Lead: Workplace Responsibility and Employee Relations)
20. Workplace Responsibility and Employee Relations **publish an annual report** detailing the number of cases, outcomes, follow-ups, demographics, etc. (Lead: Workplace Responsibility and Employee Relations)
21. **Title VI reporting issues will be clarified** in partnership among OEDI, Legal, and External Relations. (Lead: OEDI, Legal, and External Relations)
22. In collaboration with CPO, **develop a process for consultants and contractors to report issues of discrimination.** (Lead: Workplace Responsibility and Employee Relations)
23. **Represented workers receive more training to understand when and where to report issues of discrimination** to increase accountability of all managers for following through. (Lead: Workplace Responsibility and Employee Relations)
24. **Increase deliberate dialogue Port-wide about the critical nature of reporting issues of discrimination and improving our culture reflective of our values.** (Lead: ELT, Workplace Responsibility, Employee Relations)

Focus Area: Operations and Processes

Issue 6. Gaps in critical role of supervisors³³

Key Concerns and Input

Supervisors, which in this report are defined as employees with at least one direct report, play a critical and varied role in advancing equity and anti-racism in the organization. Related to the issue of reporting discrimination, ***supervisors heavily influence a culture where employees feel unsafe reporting instance of discrimination. Many respondents to the Equity Survey said it is difficult to raise issues to supervisors in situations where the supervisor is the source of concern. Others noted the important role of supervisors in determining whether departments' work is informed by EDI considerations.*** Some described challenges of department leaders who do not believe in equity efforts, while others said they feel unable to voice concerns about racism or discrimination, especially if the supervisor is the source of concern. Respondents of color and women had a disproportionate share of comments compared to their overall participation in the survey. Additionally, some supervisors expressed needs for more support, resources, information, and capacity building to advance equity in their teams.³⁴

OEDI held Listening Sessions on this topic, which also surfaced concerns including:

- Lack of direction and guidelines for integrating EDI into work
- Lack of support for EDI efforts from some supervisors
- Lack of accountability and consequences when a supervisor says or does something problematic
- Employees fear retaliation if they raise equity-related issues³⁵

Listening Session participants also brainstormed potential solutions:

³³ In this report, “supervisors” includes employees with at least one direct report.

³⁴ *Port of Seattle Equity Survey Analysis of Qualitative Data*. Prepared by Tu Consulting for Office of Equity, Diversity and Inclusion. August 2021.

³⁵ *EDI Assessment Listening Sessions Report*. Port of Seattle Office of Equity, Diversity and Inclusion. July - September 2021.

- Include EDI competency in job evaluations for all supervisors, and, in performance evaluations, define how progress is measured.
- In hiring new supervisors, require potential hires to demonstrate commitment to EDI by including EDI interview questions.
- Hold quarterly orientations, with a panel of current supervisors training new supervisors on the role of EDI at the Port and expectations for supervisors in advancing these efforts.
- To ensure accountability of supervisors: continue to require EDI training annually; require EDI Performance Link goals for all supervisors and include in Development, Behaviors, and Essential Functions; require EDI goals at the department-level and hold supervisors accountable to meeting those goals.
- Make department demographic data publicly visible to increase accountability for supervisors to diversify their teams.
- Promote 360 performance evaluations for supervisors in order to receive deeper and broader evaluations of supervisors.
- Provide more time and space for supervisors to develop skills, such as through a community of learning for supervisors.³⁶

Represented workers also expressed concerns about support from supervisors, especially the lack of encouraging open dialogue about racial issues, participation in OEDI programming, and professional development.³⁷ Blacks in Government also called for more training for mid-level supervisors and expressed the need to stop protecting racist supervisors and employees.³⁸

Progress to Date

- Eight hours of racial equity training mandated for all supervisors in 2021. Supervisors who took the training indicated in their evaluations that they:
 - Gained specific strategies and approaches to address racial bias,

³⁶ Ibid.

³⁷ *Employee Listening Session with Represented Workers*. Port of Seattle Office of Equity, Diversity and Inclusion. August 2021.

³⁸ *“What do Blacks In Government need the Port of Seattle to focus on in combatting racial discriminations?”* Session Notes. Blacks in Government Employee Group. June 2021.

- “Connected to their role as supervisors in fostering a racial justice learning culture,” and
- Would like to gain more individual application ideas, including how to engage reluctant co-workers.³⁹
- In June 2022, the Port refreshed its organization-wide values to include Anti-Racism and Equity as a core value. The organization describes this value as, “We commit to dismantling institutional racism and ensuring equitable opportunities for all.” In the coming months after announcing the values refresh, several members of the Executive Leadership Team communicated about the importance of the values, including why anti-racism and equity are critical for them personally and for our organization.
- Every quarter, the Executive Director hosts a town hall event for all employees to learn about ongoing organizational efforts and to ask questions of the Executive Leadership Team. An update on the Port’s EDI work is always included in these events. The Senior Director of OEDI is given time on the agenda to share about progress, upcoming events, and to answer questions.

Recommended Actions

25. ***Executive Director, Commission, Executive Leadership Team lead by example*** in living the values of the Port. OEDI and Human Resources highlight these examples. (Lead: Executive Director, Commission, ELT)
26. ***Consistent and on-going messaging from Executive Director, Commission, Executive Leadership Team to all supervisors about the importance of leader’s accountability*** to Port values and Equity, Diversity, and Inclusion. (Lead: Executive Director, Commission, ELT)
27. ***Continue to offer the foundational 8-hour course for all new supervisors entering the Port in 2022.*** OEDI provides an ***additional 8 to 10 hours of required advanced racial equity training for all supervisors.*** After completion of the training, OEDI will host ***coaching and mentoring for supervisors*** to develop the skills learned in the training, and supervisors will be asked to sign a commitment/pledge asserting that they have completed the training and will implement the newly learned skills. As recommended from the 2021 supervisor training evaluations, specific topics or modules could include:

³⁹ Port of Seattle 2020-21 Racial Equity Trainings Report. Equity Matters. October 2021.

- Offering follow-up opportunities to engage reluctant co-workers
- Designing supervisors' roles and responsibilities to support sense of belonging by and retention of employees of color (informed by upcoming Women of Color Assessment)⁴⁰ (Lead: OEDI)

28. OEDI and Human Resources develop the following (Lead: HR, OEDI):

- ***A measurable EDI Performance Link goal for all supervisors***
- ***An EDI competency integrated into all supervisor job evaluations*** and job postings
- ***Research best practices for evaluating supervisors*** for future implementation

⁴⁰ Port of Seattle 2020-21 Racial Equity Trainings Report. Equity Matters. October 2021.

Focus Area: Operations and Processes

Issue 7. Inconsistent integration of equity in key Port-wide processes

Key Concerns and Input

Fundamental to advancing equity across the Port is to integrate equity into Port-wide processes. Two key areas for this are 1) budgeting and 2) research. Department budgeting processes is a priority for the Port’s equity work, with ongoing efforts across the organization, but ***there is much variation across departments in whether and how equity is budgeted for internally***. A September 2021 Port-wide survey on Equity in Budgeting found:

- Seventy percent of Port departments (37 of 53) considered the impact on EDI of programs and activities in their 2022 baseline budgets.
- Sixty percent of Port departments (32 of 53) said there are specific areas or programs they would like to add to their 2022 budget to advance equity considerations.
- Eighty-seven percent of Port departments (46 of 53) said their department would benefit from additional training in how to include consideration of equity in their budgeting process.

For departments that use an equity lens in their budget, the most common activities center on equity in procurement, vending, and contractors; equity in recruitment, hiring, and compensation policies and practices; employee training and education; work with external stakeholders such as through outreach or grant funding; and day-to-day operations such as ensuring accessibility.

The survey also identified several ***challenges and areas for potential improvement***:

- Many departments expressed the ***need for training on budgeting with an equity lens***, how to determine scope and budget for equity activities of various size and complexity, and what questions to ask when budgeting for equity.

- **Some departments said they wish to continue increasing equity in current activities** such as diversifying employees, expanding linguistically and culturally competent outreach, increasing equitable grant funding, and engaging more WMBE contractors.
- **Some departments do not feel they can use their baseline budget for work with external stakeholders** or communities.

The second area, **research, is a critical function** frequently undertaken in service to Port operations, whether to assess needs, formulate policies, or design programs, but is often not examined from an equity lens. **Yet, white culture dominance is embedded in much of traditional research**, including in data collection, analytical methods, or reporting and presentation. As such, it presents a significant opportunity to advance equity.

Examples of inequities in research methods that can lead to decentering, marginalizing or erasing populations of color include: using majority responses where whites/white males are the dominant voice as the norm around which analysis of other groups is centered, requiring minimum sample sizes, not disaggregating, not addressing intersectionality of identities, not contextualizing for specific communities or cultures when inferring or making meaning of data, and inadequate threading of translated input into the analysis process.

Conducting research with a pro-equity approach requires intentionality and reconciling equitable approaches with traditional methods and/or deviating from the latter when rigid adherence to them perpetuates racial inequity.

Progress to Date

Equity in Budgeting: Among departments surveyed in 2021 below are examples of what has been done.

Training, Hiring, and Compensation. Training to develop a discrimination-free work environment, equitable access to the tools and software needed, advertising to reach a broader diverse audience, conducting periodic salary equity reviews, funding for green job development in near-Port communities, providing maritime career experiences to under-represented communities, promoting job to diverse audience with an inclusive hiring panel.

External Outreach and Engagement. Duwamish Valley Community Equity program, Port 101, Boat Tours, Crisis Coordinator supporting homelessness and mental health crisis, joint promotional projects with our airlines’ partners, public outreach, and water quality improvements to underserved communities, distribute funds to BIPOC tourism stakeholders.

Procurements & Contracts. Increase the percentage of dollars spent with WMBE and SBE firms, use WMBEs for goods and services where possible

Operations. Accessibility for passengers with functional needs, wheelchair accessible vehicles, accessible languages, Interfaith Prayer and Meditation Room⁴¹

Integrating equity into research:

- OEDI encouraged key staff from the Port to sign up for and attend a course from Stanford Social Innovation Review on applying an equity lens to data collection and reporting.
- Human Resources, Strategic Initiatives, and OEDI are currently working with the Government Alliance for Racial Equity (GARE) to host a training on data and equity in 2022.
- OEDI reported on findings of the equity survey both from a quantitative and qualitative perspective and educated employees and departments about the use of each method.
- OEDI completed and launched the Port’s new Equity Index. The Equity Index is a cutting-edge, interactive map that displays a visual representation of social and environmental disparities in King County. Using 21 indicators within four categories, the Equity Index illustrates the degree to which different communities experience pollution burdens and social inequities. The Port is using the index as a tool to help us direct resources (e.g., South King County Fund) to the communities and areas of greatest need. The tool is available to all Port staff and the public.

Recommended Actions

⁴¹ *Equity in Budgeting Tool 2022 Survey Data.* Port of Seattle. September 2021. *Equity in Budgeting Survey Results* PowerPoint Presentation. Prepared by Meredith Fishkin, David Kleiber and Nancy Vuong. Port of Seattle. October 2021.

29. ***OEDI and Budgeting Change Team will continue to grow and deepen budgeting with equity tools at the Port and provide Port-wide trainings, 1-on-1 technical assistance, and cross-department information sharing on how to integrate equity into budgeting. (Lead: OEDI and Budgeting Change Team)***
30. ***OEDI, HR, and Strategic Initiatives to offer training in 2022 on the use of data and equity and to host a working group for staff who use data to increase skill, expertise, and capacity in using data with an equity lens. (Lead: OEDI and HR)***
31. ***Ensure that the Port's mission, policies, and procedures reflect an ongoing commitment to an organizational culture of inclusion and belonging. Starting in 2022, all departments, with support from OEDI and Change Team, set and work towards annual department-specific EDI goals.*** The timing of these goals will be aligned with the budgeting process, ED priorities, and other strategic planning efforts to align as much as possible all efforts. The goals and progress towards meeting them will be shared in the annual report back to the Commission. (Lead: OEDI and Change Team)
- In the first quarter of every year, the Change Team will lead their respective departments in an equity SWOT analysis. The results of that analysis will inform department-specific EDI goals.
 - In the second quarter of every year, Change Team members will be involved in their department's annual business planning process to ensure that EDI goals are set.

Focus Area: Employment

Issue 8. Inequities in recruitment, hiring, and qualifications

Key Concerns and Input

Port employees shared perspectives and concerns about a range of issues connected to jobs and employment. ***One key issue is about recruitment, hiring, and qualifications.***

Regarding the role of racial equity in hiring decisions, ***59.5 percent of respondents in the Port's Equity Survey agreed or strongly agreed that in addition to hiring the best qualified candidates, racial equity should be considered in the hiring process.*** At the same time, ***among 105 respondents who added comments about qualifications for hiring, 85 stated that hiring decisions should be based primarily or solely on who is most qualified and/or performance, not race.*** A small number of comments said racial considerations should be part of hiring decisions due to structural/systemic and historic inequities that have created disadvantages for some groups.⁴²

Another significant issue in hiring is that candidates of color are disproportionately ineligible for certain jobs in comparison to white candidates, because they do not meet the education requirement, even though the educational requirement may not be essential to the functions of the job. A candidate's work or life experience may be more relevant than formal education to perform the functions of the job. Because white people graduate from high school, college, and advanced programs at disproportionately higher rates than BIPOC, this creates a pattern of disadvantage for BIPOC job seekers.⁴³ ***In general, comments about racial inequities in recruitment and hiring were more likely to come from employees of color and women.***

⁴² *Port of Seattle Equity Survey Analysis of Quantitative Data.* Prepared by Business Intelligence Unit for Office of Equity, Diversity and Inclusion. June 2021.
Port of Seattle Equity Survey Analysis of Qualitative Data. Prepared by Tu Consulting for Office of Equity, Diversity and Inclusion. August 2021.

⁴³ Port of Seattle Office of Equity, Diversity and Inclusion.

The Equity Survey found that 54 percent of respondents agreed or strongly agreed that they are aware of efforts to share job announcements with racially and ethnically diverse professional networks, while 62.4 percent of respondents agreed or strongly agreed that they are aware of efforts to partner with Human Resources to advertise open jobs widely.⁴⁴

Additional comments about recruitment and hiring came through survey comments, the EDI Assessment Listening Sessions, the Black Lives Matter Caucus Series, and Blacks in Government.⁴⁵ ***Ideas for improving recruitment included:***

- Expanding and diversifying job candidate pools through mentorship programs specifically for BIPOC employees
- Engaging with schools to ensure students know about job opportunities at the Port and in Port-related industries
- Expanding outreach in BIPOC communities
- Expanding the definition of “qualifications” to include relevant lived experience in addition to or in lieu of formal education
- Posting new positions internally first and/or prioritizing internal hires and promotions
- Working to eliminate racial biases in the hiring process by requiring racially diverse hiring panels and requiring hiring panels to watch the bias video and conduct an in-depth discussion about it.

⁴⁴ *Port of Seattle Equity Survey Analysis of Quantitative Data*. Prepared by Business Intelligence Unit for Office of Equity, Diversity and Inclusion. June 2021.

⁴⁵ *EDI Assessment Listening Sessions Report*. Port of Seattle Office of Equity, Diversity and Inclusion. July - September 2021. *Port of Seattle Equity Survey Analysis of Qualitative Data*. Prepared by Tu Consulting for Office of Equity, Diversity and Inclusion. August 2021. “*What do Blacks in Government need the Port of Seattle to focus on in combatting racial discriminations?*” Session Notes. Blacks in Government Employee Group. June 2021. *Summary Report on Black Lives Matter Caucusing Series*. Hosted by the Port of Seattle Office of Equity, Diversity and Inclusion. June - August 2020.

Progress to Date

- The Port’s Human Resources Department began a three-year Program Review of non-represented Compensation that involved a survey in 2021 completed by over 900 employees along with focus groups that included close to 200 participants. This effort shaped HR’s approach to addressing key concerns, which is guided by three concepts: Equity, Transparency, and Simplicity, under which a guiding principle is to “Support building a culture of inclusion, belonging and equity.”⁴⁶ This project will continue with an internal and external market research for each position in the next two years.
- The Port’s Human Resources Department currently takes steps to prioritize internal candidates for hiring by offering flexibility on minimum qualifications, adding a development component to the job posting, and offering opportunities for interviews.
- In 2021, for many backfill position requests, Human Resources examined and adjusted, as appropriate, position requirements before posting. Human Resources also started adding in substitutes for educational requirements where appropriate.
- Human Resources’ Talent Acquisition Policy (HR-8) was updated in 2021 with broad engagement and socialization of the policy with Port employees. This policy advances equity in the recruitment process by utilizing a variety of advertising sources, partnering with Port-wide employee resource groups, community, and external resources, and requesting the direct assistance of the hiring department to identify additional advertising outlets to create a pipeline of diverse applicants.

Recommended Actions

32. Human Resources Department, in collaboration with OEDI, ***integrate equity considerations more deeply into the interview and hiring process*** (LEAD: HR):
- Ensure ***racial and gender diversity on all interview panels, by including specific diversity targets*** with employee engagement and share across the Port.
 - ***All job announcements include a statement on diversity, equity, and inclusion*** and share Port Values.

⁴⁶ Compensation Program Review Recommendations to ELT. Port of Seattle Human Resources Department. October 29, 2021.

- **Enhance recruitment process to more effectively reach BIPOC candidates**, address barriers, and reach beyond traditional outlets and networks. Develop a top list of languages, ethnic communities, and media channels in communities of color to do outreach to with the help of the ERGs, D&D Council, and OEDI. Consider using testimonials and videos to tell the stories of current BIPOC employees.
- **Include at least one question about EDI in all interviews.** The question should require the applicant to demonstrate their understanding of EDI and its applicability to the job.
- **Require interview panels to watch anti-bias video, and, as an interview panel, engage in a discussion** about the video.
- Create a **committee** of D&D Council and Change Team **to make themselves available to serve on hiring panels and offer support in the hiring processes.**
- Replicate the successes and partnership between Human Resources and Maritime Division in 2021 across the Port: Executive accountability, broader outreach for advertising postings for jobs, system to ensure diverse panels for all interviews, tracking panelists anti-bias video viewing and learning, adding equity questions, systematically examining educational requirements.

33. OEDI to work with the Change Team to **develop and implement a system for tracking equity indicators implemented for all hiring panels and processes in 2022.** A final report to be presented to commission in December of 2022. (LEAD: OEDI, Change Team)

34. **Increase BIPOC representation in leadership positions.** For leadership positions that become available and open in 2022, revisit all competencies and requirements in job evaluations to ensure that the minimum qualifications accurately reflect the skills and training needed for the position, barriers for BIPOC applicants are reviewed and assessed, and to ensure that EDI is included in the job evaluation. (Lead: HR)

Focus Area: Employment

Issue 9. Inequities in compensation

Key Concerns and Input

Compensation equity is a significant issue of concern expressed by Port employees, particularly by employees of color and women. Among respondents to the Equity Survey, only 51.5 percent agreed or strongly agreed that employee pay is fair and equitable for people with the same or similar jobs who have the same or similar qualifications regardless of race/ethnicity, gender, age, or other diversity characteristics. Employees of color, in comparison to white employees, do not agree that compensation is fair and equitable. Overall, only 56.3 percent of employees agreed or strongly agreed that they understand the Port's compensation structure.⁴⁷ ***This theme was echoed in the Human Resources Department's recent Compensation Program Review, which found that women and people of color believe that jobs held mostly by women are undervalued, that women must continually prove themselves, and that women and women of color are underpaid.***⁴⁸

Many survey comments expressed frustration about compensation inequities both within and across departments as well as by race and gender. This view also emerged from the Port's Black Lives Matter Caucusing Series, where participants expressed a strong perception that there are significant disparities in how people with the same position are paid, particularly BIPOC employees.⁴⁹ ***Other concerns related to pay equity included job classifications/evaluations being outdated, subjective, and not matching pay levels; and pay being tied to seniority rather than performance.***⁵⁰

Blacks in Government suggests promoting Black and Brown employees to similar locations on pay brackets and pay distributions as their white counterparts, while participants in the EDI Assessment Listening Sessions called for more benefits for minimum/low

⁴⁷ *Port of Seattle Equity Survey Analysis of Quantitative Data*. Prepared by Business Intelligence Unit for Office of Equity, Diversity and Inclusion. June 2021.

⁴⁸ Non-represented Employees Compensation Program Review: Focus Group and Employee Survey Comment Themes. Port of Seattle Human Resources Department. September 2021.

⁴⁹ *Summary Report on Black Lives Matter Caucusing Series*. Hosted by the Port of Seattle Office of Equity, Diversity and Inclusion. June - August 2020.

⁵⁰ *Port of Seattle Equity Survey Analysis of Qualitative Data*. Prepared by Tu Consulting for Office of Equity, Diversity and Inclusion. August 2021.

wage and frontline workers, and scholarships specifically for women of color, as well as daycare services.⁵¹ Respondents to the Compensation Program Review asked for system changes that prevent pay inequities, and a pay equity analysis with results shared transparently.⁵² Compensation Program Review asked for system changes that prevent pay inequities, and a pay equity analysis with results shared transparently.⁵³

Progress to Date

As noted in the previous section, the Port’s Human Resources department recently completed a Program Review of Compensation that includes a survey completed by over 900 employees along with focus groups that included close to 200 participants. This effort marks a milestone in responding to employee concerns about compensation equity and builds a foundation for further and deeper assessment of compensation in 2022.⁵⁴

OEDI collaborated with a Steering Committee to launch an assessment of the experiences and barriers of women of color at the Port of Seattle. The findings of this assessment will be presented in February of 2022.

Recommended Actions

35. Human Resources Department ***makes salary information accessible and transparent.*** (Lead: HR)

36. Human Resources Department, informed by findings from its Compensation Program Review, implements the following Action related to compensation equity:

- Develop a ***pay equity definition and philosophy that reflects the Port’s values***

⁵¹ “What do Blacks In Government need the Port of Seattle to focus on in combatting racial discriminations?” Session Notes. Blacks in Government Employee Group. June 2021.

⁵² Non-represented Employees Compensation Program Review: Focus Group and Employee Survey Comment Themes. Port of Seattle Human Resources Department. September 2021.

⁵³ Non-represented Employees Compensation Program Review: Focus Group and Employee Survey Comment Themes. Port of Seattle Human Resources Department. September 2021.

⁵⁴ Compensation Program Review Recommendations to ELT. Port of Seattle Human Resources Department. October 29, 2021.

- Design ***and complete a Port-wide pay equity analysis***
- Determine ***potential remediation strategies***, including special budget for equity adjustments⁵⁵
- Human Resources Department will ***design and implement a new pay program*** based on the findings of the assessment as well as the findings of the Women of Color assessment. (Lead: HR)

⁵⁵ Compensation Program Review Recommendations to ELT. Port of Seattle Human Resources Department. October 29, 2021.

Focus Area: Employment

Issue 10. Barriers to advancement for internal candidates

Key Concerns and Input

Employees gave input on several issues related to **job advancement**. Comments from the Equity survey were almost all expressions of concern (78 of 80 comments). The **most frequent issue cited was favoritism of white males in promotion decisions**, including longstanding “good old boys’ networks” that create barriers for employees of color outside of those networks. Another issue noted was the **perception that external hiring is often prioritized over internal promotions**.⁵⁶

The EDI Assessment Listening Sessions and Black Lives Matter Caucus Series echoed similar sentiments: that in comparison to women and employees of color, white men receive unfair and unearned advantages with regards to job advancement and promotions. Session participants also identified root causes of this inequity including lack of accountability, cultural norms, and white supremacy in the workplace.⁵⁷

The Equity Survey found that 62.8 percent of respondents agreed or strongly agreed that an internal talent pipeline with diverse participants would help to increase BIPOC representation in leadership positions. Additionally, 55.7 percent of respondents agreed or strongly agreed that in addition to focusing on the selection of the best qualified candidate, racial equity should be involved in the promotion process to ensure diverse representation in leadership positions.⁵⁸

Blacks in Government also cited the need to:

- Focus on the advancement of Black employees

⁵⁶ *Port of Seattle Equity Survey Analysis of Qualitative Data*. Prepared by Tu Consulting for Office of Equity, Diversity and Inclusion. August 2021.

⁵⁷ *EDI Assessment Listening Sessions Report*. Port of Seattle Office of Equity, Diversity and Inclusion. July - September 2021. *Summary Report on Black Lives Matter Caucusing Series*. Hosted by the Port of Seattle Office of Equity, Diversity and Inclusion. June - August 2020.

⁵⁸ *Port of Seattle Equity Survey Analysis of Quantitative Data*. Prepared by Business Intelligence Unit for Office of Equity, Diversity and Inclusion. June 2021.

- Internally post budgeted, unfilled positions (and their job evaluations) that are not yet open but will be in the future so that potential internal candidates can plan, prep, and set goals for advancement
- Attach job evaluations to individual P-Links, because most employees do not have the original job evaluations for their positions and do not know how to get a copy of it
- Create employee and executive shadowing opportunities.⁵⁹

Respondents to the Compensation Program Review called for eliminating bias and favoritism in job performance evaluations and annual pay increases, instead using objective, measurable factors to measure performance.⁶⁰

Related to advancement for internal candidates, ***a lack of time is a significant barrier for many employees' professional development.*** The Equity Survey found that 76.0 percent of respondents agreed or strongly agreed that they are encouraged to develop themselves professionally through trainings, PortAbility, or other learning opportunities, but only 51.5 percent of respondents agreed or strongly agreed that they have time in their schedule to pursue professional development opportunities that are of interest to them.⁶¹

The survey also illustrated that in comparison to non-represented employees, represented employees are less encouraged to develop professionally. Among these comments, white respondents were a smaller share of these concerns compared with the survey overall, while respondents of color from several racial groups and women were overrepresented.⁶²

Progress to Date

- Human Resources currently takes steps to prioritize internal candidates by offering flexibility on minimum qualifications, adding a development component to the job posting, and offering opportunities for interviews.

⁵⁹ "What do Blacks In Government need the Port of Seattle to focus on in combating racial discriminations?" Session Notes. Blacks in Government Employee Group. June 2021.

⁶⁰ Non-represented Employees Compensation Program Review: Focus Group and Employee Survey Comment Themes. Port of Seattle Human Resources Department. September 2021.

⁶¹ *Port of Seattle Equity Survey Analysis of Quantitative Data.* Prepared by Business Intelligence Unit for Office of Equity, Diversity and Inclusion. June 2021.

⁶² *Port of Seattle Equity Survey Analysis of Qualitative Data.* Prepared by Tu Consulting for Office of Equity, Diversity and Inclusion. August 2021.

- Human Resources operates an internal mentorship and internship program to develop the skills and professional experiences of employees who are seeking to advance in the organization.
- A team in Human Resources is currently analyzing data about internal promotions to better understand the patterns of who applies and who advances within the organization.

Recommended Actions

37. Develop a ***Performance Link goal for all supervisors to provide training and development opportunities to all employees interested in advancing.*** (Lead: HR)
38. To increase job accessibility, ***assess, before posting a position, if certain formal education or credentials are needed to perform the essential functions of the jobs,*** and, when possible, include development language into the job requirements. (Lead: HR)
39. Human Resources to ***develop a system for tracking the promotion of internal candidates.*** The results will be shared widely in internal and external communications, highlighting stories about employees who have been promoted. (Lead: OEDI, HR, External Relations)
40. Increase staff awareness about ***the Port's internal mentorship program.*** (Lead: HR)
41. In 2022, Human Resources is ***improving its supervisor training*** to teach supervisors how to use coaching and mentoring as a management practice. (Lead: HR)

Focus Area: Equity Capacity Building

Issue 11. Barriers to participation - resources and resistance

Key Concerns and Input

With the creation of the Office of Equity, Diversity, and Inclusion (OEDI) in 2018-19, the Port has significantly expanded its focus on advancing equity across the organization. OEDI leads this work and continues to organize and host an array of activities and initiatives to support the integration of equity into the Port's work. In this context, the ***Equity Survey found that 74.5 percent of respondents agreed or strongly agreed that participation in OEDI programs to normalize racial equity (e.g., Book Clubs, Racial Caucuses) is encouraged.***⁶³ Additionally, participants in the Black Lives Matter Caucusing Series said they view EDI work as valuable and central to improving operations and culture at the Port.⁶⁴

At the same time, ***employees also provided feedback on how to further improve this work.*** Among Equity Survey respondents who commented on this topic, ***the most prevalent issue was lack of time to participate in equity activities.*** Some survey takers felt there is too much equity activity, while others said there is lack of support or encouragement from their department leaders to participate. There were also numerous positive comments about equity efforts.⁶⁵

The issue of time constraints was also echoed in the EDI Assessment Listening Sessions, where participants reinforced the need to continue efforts to train, educate, and normalize equity within the Port, while also asking that more time and funding for training be made available for all employees to take EDI training and participate in EDI learning activities.⁶⁶

Similar sentiments were expressed in targeted meetings with ***represented workers, who voiced unique needs specific to the nature of their work shifts and job demands.*** These issues included the need for more support from supervisors, effective

⁶³ *Port of Seattle Equity Survey Analysis of Quantitative Data.* Prepared by Business Intelligence Unit for Office of Equity, Diversity and Inclusion. June 2021.

⁶⁴ *Summary Report on Black Lives Matter Caucusing Series.* Hosted by the Port of Seattle Office of Equity, Diversity and Inclusion. June - August 2020.

⁶⁵ *Port of Seattle Equity Survey Analysis of Qualitative Data.* Prepared by Tu Consulting for Office of Equity, Diversity and Inclusion. August 2021.

⁶⁶ *EDI Assessment Listening Sessions Report.* Port of Seattle Office of Equity, Diversity and Inclusion. July - September 2021.

advertising of activities, accessible scheduling of activities, and dedicated funding to enable their participation (specifically for shift coverage and overtime).⁶⁷

Represented workers shared recommendations for how to address these needs including adding requirements for EDI training and engagement into collective bargaining agreements with labor unions, establishing mandatory equity goals for all departments, and setting EDI goals for all employees, including supervisors.⁶⁸

Additionally, there are concerns from employees about the work itself. For example, the Equity Survey included a critical mass of comments that the Port’s emphasis on racial equity and people of color has created ***discomfort, marginalization, and at times, claims of reverse discrimination against white employees***. These comments were disproportionately expressed by white respondents compared to their representation in the survey responses overall.

Some respondents also expressed the need to increase employee participation in equity activities to better reach those who have been more reluctant or less willing to participate. Others suggested that the Port should focus on a ***“colorblind” approach of treating all people equally***, instead of a racial equity approach that seeks to address inequities for specific groups.⁶⁹ With regards to this suggestion, it should be noted that ***this is not a viable option***, and more education needs to be done to help employees understand why. ***The Port leads its equity work with a focus on race because colorblind approaches only further contribute to patterns of racial disparity and reinforce discrimination and bias.***

In particular, Blacks in Government and represented workers have recommended ensuring and/or expanding mandatory equity training for all employees. Represented workers, in Aviation in particular, have also discussed bolstering equity by integrating it into Continuous Process Improvement work, which many departments in Aviation are already familiar with and receive support from Strategic Initiatives to implement.⁷⁰

Progress to Date

⁶⁷ *Employee Listening Session with Represented Workers*. Port of Seattle Office of Equity, Diversity and Inclusion. August 2021.

⁶⁸ *Employee Listening Session with Represented Workers*. Port of Seattle Office of Equity, Diversity and Inclusion. August 2021.

⁶⁹ Port of Seattle Equity Survey Analysis of Qualitative Data. Prepared by Tu Consulting for Office of Equity, Diversity and Inclusion. August 2021.

⁷⁰ “What do Blacks In Government need the Port of Seattle to focus on in combatting racial discriminations?” Session Notes. Blacks in Government Employee Group. June 2021. Employee Listening Session with Represented Workers. Port of Seattle Office of Equity, Diversity and Inclusion. August 2021.

Addressing the lack of willingness or resistance to participating in racial equity efforts will be long-term work. To date, OEDI and its partners have tackled this in multiple ways.

- With the creation of the Change Team, every department is required to have one Sponsor and at least one Core Member to serve on the Change Team to lead their respective department in advancing and embedding equity into programs and day-to-day operations.
- OEDI and Strategic Initiatives have actively worked to identify creative ways to offer racial equity trainings and other programming to represented and off shift workers.
- OEDI and Human Resources offer coaching and support to leaders on how to manage diverse teams and create a culture of belonging.
- Executive Director town halls always included the Senior Director of OEDI to communicate about the progress and critical nature of EDI work.
- Executive Director email updates to all employees include an Equity Resources section to communicate the importance of EDI for the Port's work.
- All ELT members, Executive Director, and Commissioners attended 8 hours of mandatory racial equity trainings. This group also engaged in a process of refreshing the Port's values, which now include anti-racism and equity.
- Racial equity training has included:
 - Eight hours of racial equity training mandated for all supervisors in 2021. In the past year, 384 supervisors participated in trainings across three sessions totaling eight hours. All participants found the trainings useful or very useful; 91 percent met their goals, and 92 percent were satisfied or extremely satisfied.

- Three hours of racial equity training mandated for all front-line workers and individual contributors. In the past year, trainings included participation by 431 employees in a three-hour foundational training. Of these, 91 percent found the training useful or very useful, 88 percent met their goals, and 90 percent were satisfied or extremely satisfied.⁷¹
- Outcomes of the training as reported in post-training evaluations indicated some progress in addressing this issue. Participant outcomes included:
 - Deeper understanding of foundational racial equity concepts and tools,
 - Greater sense of “individual responsibility to play a role in normalizing and impacting racial equity”,
 - And desire to further deepen understanding and apply knowledge gained to their work and to advance structure and institutional change at the Port. ⁷²

Recommended Actions

42. *Expand equity training activities.* (Lead: OEDI)

- Starting in 2022, OEDI will offer a four-hour foundational racial equity training for all Port employees (in 2021 this was a mandatory three-hour course). OEDI and Labor Relations will gain support for represented workers to participate.
- In 2022, OEDI will add capacity and presence in the Aviation Division and provide in-person trainings when and where possible.
- In 2022, OEDI will develop and facilitate: 1) train-the-trainers training for Change Team members so that they can co-facilitate racial equity trainings and learning opportunities, 2) advanced supervisors training, and 3) opportunities for mentoring for employees to learn together and receive more individualized support in practicing skills.
- Implement recommendations from 2021 trainings to:

⁷¹ Port of Seattle 2020-21 Racial Equity Trainings Report. Equity Matters. October 2021.

⁷² Port of Seattle 2020-21 Racial Equity Trainings Report. Equity Matters. October 2021.

- Deepen understanding of racial concepts, such as by adding sessions on settler colonization, anti-Blackness, and white allyship
- Develop a standardized racial equity orientation curriculum and facilitator team

43. ***In 2022, explore the need to create dedicated funding (starting in 2023) to support employee participation in EDI efforts, especially represented and shift workers.*** (Lead: OEDI) Funding should cover multiple needs:

- Funding for overtime, especially for represented workers, to ensure work can still be done while they engage in EDI work.
- Funding for necessary time/work (including dedicated work orders) and equipment to access and participate in EDI work.
- Funding for OEDI, Strategic Initiatives, and other employee service-related departments to expand their abilities to serve all shifts and employees.

44. OEDI collaborate with HR to ***explore a policy that allows and supports employee participation in equity learning activities.***
(Lead: OEDI)

Focus Area: Engaging WMBEs and Small Businesses

Issue 12. Barriers for WMBEs and small businesses

Key Concerns and Input

Both internal and external stakeholders affirmed the Port’s efforts in contracting with small and Women and Minority-Owned Businesses (WMBEs), but many have also expressed concerns and identified areas for improvement. Among Equity Survey respondents who work on contracting and use of WMBEs, 64.8 percent agreed or strongly agreed that supplier racial equity and diversity best practices have been implemented and 70.6 percent agreed or strongly agreed that they are aware of and can access a list of WMBEs that can serve as potential business partners. Also, 66.7 percent agreed or strongly agreed that equity goals have been set to assess the efficacy of working with minority and women-owned businesses and 68.4 percent agreed or strongly agreed that a concerted effort is made to procure goods/services from underrepresented suppliers.⁷³

However, the survey also yielded 95 comments about contracting, two-thirds of which described areas needing improvement. These included the ***need to: reduce barriers and create more streamlined processes for BIPOC contractors; address the lack of WMBE availability for certain services; and expand outreach to a broader universe of vendors.*** Employees of color from some racial groups as well as women were a greater share of comments that expressed concerns about contracting.⁷⁴

Employees who participated in both OEDI’s Listening Sessions and Black Lives Matter Caucus Series shared similar concerns about the need to reduce barriers and create a more accessible process by which WMBEs can compete and win Port contracts. They cited some of the root causes of these barriers including unclear or poorly defined commitments regarding WMBEs and the lack of a streamlined outreach process. Additionally, ***time pressures in contracting processes often create “incumbency bias”, where lack of time to onboard new firms leads to more frequent use of firms that have done work for the Port before and with whom departments are more familiar.***

Listening Session participants identified actions to address these concerns that include:

⁷³ *Port of Seattle Equity Survey Analysis of Quantitative Data*. Prepared by Business Intelligence Unit for Office of Equity, Diversity and Inclusion. June 2021.

⁷⁴ *Port of Seattle Equity Survey Analysis of Qualitative Data*. Prepared by Tu Consulting for Office of Equity, Diversity and Inclusion. August 2021.

- Increasing support for WMBEs by educating WMBEs on Port practices, creating an onboarding process for new WMBEs, and providing continuous lines of support for WMBEs
- Diversifying firms and contracts by expanding outreach to WMBEs, incentivizing Prime contractors to select new WMBE subcontractors, and researching existing BIPOC non-profits in the area and how the Port can support them
- Increasing internal training and understanding of the contracting process by defining WMBEs’ commitments and goals clearly to make external communication effective and providing department trainings for WMBE outreach and services.⁷⁵
- Blacks in Government also called for investing in resources to eliminate barriers for Black businesses to do business with the Port, including funding and partnering with incubator agents and bridge resources.⁷⁶

Progress to Date

In 2018, the Port Commission passed a policy directive establishing the Port’s Diversity in Contracting Department to advance equity and address WMBE contracting disparities. The directive also set five-year (2018-2023) benchmark goals: to triple the number of WMBEs doing business with the Port (118 to 354) and to increase to 15% the amount spent on WMBE contracts.

To help the Port fulfill these WMBE goals, Diversity in Contracting has developed and administered internal WMBE training for Port employees and project managers, and external training and outreach to encourage and support WMBEs’ ability to do business with the Port (such as PortGen and WMBE & Small Businesses Accelerator). Since 2016, the Port’s WMBE utilization - led by Diversity in Contracting’s efforts - has increased from 5.3% to 11.2% and from 118 firms to 281 firms.

Recommended Actions

⁷⁵ *EDI Assessment Listening Sessions Report*. Port of Seattle Office of Equity, Diversity and Inclusion. July - September 2021. *Summary Report on Black Lives Matter Caucusing Series*. Hosted by the Port of Seattle Office of Equity, Diversity and Inclusion. June - August 2020.

⁷⁶ “*What do Blacks In Government need the Port of Seattle to focus on in combating racial discriminations?*” Session Notes. Blacks in Government Employee Group. June 2021.

45. Diversity in Contracting to complete an ***assessment of barriers for WMBEs and small businesses*** to enter contracts with the Port, as included in the Port Commission Equity Motion of 2020. Diversity in Contracting will report back about the findings and recommendations of this assessment to the full Commission in 2022. (Lead: Diversity in Contracting)
46. Diversity in Contracting will ***strengthen internal communication and training about the contracting and outreach processes for WMBEs.*** (Lead: Diversity in Contracting)

Focus Area: Engaging WMBEs and Small Businesses

Issue 13. Barriers in procurement processes

Key Concerns and Input

In addition to addressing specific barriers faced by WMBEs and small businesses, as discussed above, many employees expressed the need to improve the procurement process for all businesses and community-based organizations that contract with the Port.

Listening Session participants brainstormed actions to address these concerns that include:

- Increasing internal training and understanding of the contracting processes
- Challenges for new organizations to understand the Port and to enter into contracts with the Port
- Complex contracting process that is time consuming
- Requiring anti-bias training for evaluation panels
- Simplifying processes and paperwork.⁷⁷

Progress to Date

- Central Procurement Office (CPO) has begun to address bias and discrimination with evaluation panels, similar to how Human Resources has started a process with hiring panels.
- CPO has taken steps to reduce contracting paperwork and improve the procurement process, including by hiring a Senior Manager to lead a team focused on process improvement, strategic partnerships, and program analysis.

⁷⁷ EDI Assessment Listening Sessions Report. Port of Seattle Office of Equity, Diversity and Inclusion. July - September 2021. *Summary Report on Black Lives Matter Caucusing Series*. Hosted by the Port of Seattle Office of Equity, Diversity and Inclusion. June - August 2020.

- CPO has created a dedicated group of staff who are receiving training and skills to specifically work with and address the unique needs of small, community-based partners.

Recommended Actions

47. *Develop and include the following in new and future Port contracts and contracting processes.* (Lead: CPO)

- Businesses and contractors are asked to ***assess the need for translation and interpretation services*** in their pricing and contract and when appropriate address this in their scope of work.
- Similar to the Acceptable Workplace Agreement and Culture of Care language in service agreement contracts, ***CPO will develop anti-harassment language and an accountability process*** to be included in future contracts.
- Prior to reviewing, rating, and selecting proposals, ***all contract evaluation panels will be required to watch an anti-bias video and engage in a discussion about how to identify biases and account for them.*** CPO will consider additional training to recognize and address unconscious and implicit bias in contracting processes.

48. *Support for Community partnerships.* CPO will work closely with OEDI and External Relations to help improve processes for community-based organizations.

- Continue the existing and ongoing work of ***South King County Fund in revising contract language and reducing paperwork to make contracting more accessible and understandable.***
- ***Expedite the execution of contracts and amendments.***
- ***Develop an accessible way for Port employees and non-profit partners to provide feedback to CPO to identify opportunities for process improvement.*** This may include an annual or semi-annual meeting with non-profit partners.
- Continue the existing and ongoing work of ***creating a dedicated group of CPO employees who are trained regarding specific needs for flexibility, timely response, and seeking mutual understanding when working with non-profit/community-based organizations.***

Focus Area: Engaging Impacted Communities

Issue 14. Lack of empowered and meaningful ways for external stakeholders to engage with the Port

Key Concerns and Input

Port employees have ***mixed assessments on the inclusion and role of external stakeholders in the Port's work and decision-making, particularly for communities of color and BIPOC-led organizations.***

Positive aspects of this issue were reflected in the Equity Survey, in which 69.4 percent of respondents who engaged with communities and external stakeholders agreed or strongly agreed that BIPOC-led organizations are treated with respect, dignity and are encouraged to engage as full partners involved in decision-making processes when working on Port issues. Additionally, 75.6 percent agreed or strongly agreed that there is an interest in developing and maintaining strong, authentic, mutually respectful relationships with BIPOC organizations in the region. However, ***only 54.3 percent of those respondents agreed or strongly agreed that cultural and linguistic competency is a core component when they do outreach to external communities and only 41.8 percent agreed or strongly agreed that money is allocated for community engagement items such as translations, interpreters, space for community meetings, and compensation of community members for their time.***⁷⁸

Survey comments cited the ***need for more equitable opportunities for all key Port stakeholders to engage meaningfully.***⁷⁹ Port employees defined the problem as a ***lack of meaningful and impactful roles for external stakeholders, including the lack of ability to vote or have formal authority in Port decision-making.*** Respondents also cited the ***need for clearer and more fully developed policies and standards for community engagement and consistency across the Port.*** This was also reinforced in the EDI Assessment Listening Sessions.⁸⁰

⁷⁸ *Port of Seattle Equity Survey Analysis of Quantitative Data.* Prepared by Business Intelligence Unit for Office of Equity, Diversity and Inclusion. June 2021.

⁷⁹ *Port of Seattle Equity Survey Analysis of Quantitative Data.* Prepared by Business Intelligence Unit for Office of Equity, Diversity and Inclusion. June 2021.
Port of Seattle Equity Survey Analysis of Qualitative Data. Prepared by Tu Consulting for Office of Equity, Diversity and Inclusion. August 2021.

⁸⁰ *Port of Seattle Equity Survey Analysis of Qualitative Data.* Prepared by Tu Consulting for Office of Equity, Diversity and Inclusion. August 2021.

Employees who participated in the EDI Assessment Listening Sessions identified underlying causes of this gap including lack of BIPOC representation in leadership, barriers for community partners, and lack of stakeholder analysis.⁸¹

Progress to Date

- OEDI is working to form a Community Equity Board as a formal space to ensure that communities can engage with the Port with power and positionality, and with decision making roles. OEDI has developed a draft concept for the Community Equity Board and hosted several meetings with community stakeholders to solicit their input in shaping the formation of a board. Several community stakeholders have met with the Executive Director and Commission several times to give feedback to help create a meaningful way for the community to have input at the Port.
- Duwamish Valley Community Equity Program continues to grow and serves as models for inclusive, collaborative community engagement and decision-making. A racial equity consultant who was hired to focus on the Duwamish Valley work concluded a year of anti-racist training with the Port Community Action Team and provided recommendations for structural changes.
- The Duwamish River Community Hub was opened to support the Port’s Community Benefits Agreement (Resolution 3767) in the areas of community capacity building, environmental health, and economic prosperity.

Recommended Actions

49. ***Continue work to stand up and operationalize the Community Equity Board*** to create more opportunities and possibilities for community input into decision-making for programmatic and policy decisions and community investments. (Lead: OEDI)
50. ***OEDI, External Relations, and departments that conduct community engagement create processes and best practices for how the Port engages communities.*** (Lead: OEDI and External Relations). These processes will help departments and teams to:
- Identify and define the communities and people who are impacted by decisions, policies, and programs
 - Determine type and level of engagement for a given project (e.g., informing, consulting, collaborating, empowering, etc.)

⁸¹ EDI Assessment Listening Sessions Report. Port of Seattle Office of Equity, Diversity and Inclusion. July - September 2021.

- Identify and address barriers for meaningful community involvement and inclusion

51. ***External Relations will offer support to develop Port employees' skills to navigate power dynamics, build authentic relationships, and engage communities in inclusive, meaningful ways.*** (Lead: External Relations)

52. ***Create dedicated funding to support and remove barriers for community engagement,*** including language assistance and stipends for community advisors. (Lead: External Relations)

Focus Area: Engaging Impacted Communities

Issue 15. Challenging processes for community-based organizations to contract with the Port

Key Concerns and Input

In addition to the overall role and power of external stakeholders in the Port’s work, employees also identified the need to improve contracting with community-based organizations.

Employees noted that the Port’s **community investment programs, such as the South King County Fund, need improvements**. As a recent example, that Fund, which had its first funding cycle in 2020, surfaced several systemic barriers in implementation that present opportunities for improvement. Key challenges include the following, which are further detailed in a separate report.⁸²

- Port’s statutory authority as a special-purpose government, as well as the need to demonstrate “benefit to the Port”, create direct tension with goals for equity-centered and community-centered work.
- Applying existing procurement processes that were designed primarily for larger and/or for-profit companies, is not effective for and responsive to community-based organizations seeking Port funding, especially smaller or newer organizations from underserved communities that are often the stated priority for Port funding and partnerships.
- The two issues above cascade into a myriad of specific barriers and issues in the implementation of funding opportunities like the South King County Fund. These include very long periods of time between fund award and fund disbursement; difficult access to funding information and process, especially by smaller organizations and/or those whose primary language of operation is not English; and complicated steps and requirements in the application process.

Several commenters noted that their departments or units conduct community engagement with an intentional equity lens, citing examples such as the Port’s South King County Fund and Duwamish Valley Community Equity Program. Ideas for improvements included slowing down processes to ensure sufficient time to meaningfully engage impacted communities, requiring project

⁸² Port of Seattle South King County Fund 2020: Economic Recovery Grants Program Cycle 1 Final Report. Aaliyah Gupta and Nanette Fok, South King County Fund Consultants. April 2021.

managers to show evidence of their outreach to underrepresented and impacted communities for contracts, developing an Employee Language Bank, and simplifying procurement processes for community partners, bringing community partners into decision making, and continuing trainings on navigating power dynamics with community partnerships.⁸³

Progress to Date

- South King County Fund completed its first funding cycle in 2020, economic recovery grants and environmental grants supported twenty organizations with a total \$1.5 million. Report from consultants includes recommendations for ongoing and future work. This report includes a survey of all the potential applicants who attended Q&A sessions and made suggestions for systems improvements at the Port.
- The Maritime Sustainability Team, Maritime Environment and Sustainability Environmental Justice Workgroup, External Relations Team, and Office of Equity, Diversity, and Inclusion partnered to create a Community Engagement Playbook to guide the implementation of the Northwest Ports Clean Air Strategy and the Maritime Climate and Air Action Plan. This playbook outlines six steps that can be used at the beginning of a project to design an equitable engagement plan. The Port’s Maritime Environmental and Sustainability department is using this tool to help their department make equitable and inclusive decisions about how, when, and who to engage on different projects.
- External Relations and OEDI have incorporated a role for community advisors in the procurement and selection process for community capacity building consultants and SKCF grant awards.
- Starting in 2020, the Port began working with a team of multi-cultural community liaisons in support of the South King County Fund Environmental Grants program. The team represents the rich diversity of cultures in South King County. Trusted community members work with the Port team to develop application and outreach materials and conduct outreach with their communities. This work has resulted in a 43% award rate to BIPOC groups in the first round of Environmental Grants.

Recommended Actions

⁸³ EDI Assessment Listening Sessions Report. Port of Seattle Office of Equity, Diversity and Inclusion. July - September 2021.

53. Continue process and system improvements in Port's community investment programs. Recommendations below are drawn from the Report on the South King County Fund's First Funding Cycle:⁸⁴ (Lead: OEDI and External Relations)

- Empower community advisors in funding panels to have voting roles, not just advising roles.
- Engage community stakeholders meaningfully throughout a processor to make improvements to existing processes by capturing lessons learned, build long-term trust-based relationships, and put in place organizational infrastructure to sustain that work over time.
- Make all steps in the process more accessible for small organizations and businesses. These could include: modifying funding structure to support smaller grants/scopes of work; offering multi-year funding; making all information and communication tools more streamlined, easy to understand, and culturally and linguistically accessible; allowing technical assistance to be offered to grant applicants; and improving VendorConnect.
- Significantly reduce the amount of time to negotiate scopes of work/contracts and to disburse funds. Continue to identify and address equity and anti-racism as central to the Port's Special initiative to address anti-black racism in all community outreach efforts.

⁸⁴ Port of Seattle South King County Fund 2020: Economic Recovery Grants Program Cycle 1 Final Report. Aaliyah Gupta and Nanette Fok, South King County Fund Consultants. April 2021.

Appendices

- Appendix A. Port of Seattle Motion 2020-10, Racial Bias and Equity Motion
- Appendix B. Port of Seattle Change Team Members
- Appendix C. Equity Survey Quantitative Analysis Report
- Appendix D. Equity Survey Qualitative Analysis Report
- Appendix E. EDI Assessment Listening Sessions Report
- Appendix F. Change Team Formation and Self-Assessment Report
- Appendix G. Equity in Budgeting Department Survey Results and PowerPoint Summary
- Appendix H. Represented Workers Task Force Report
- Appendix I. Blacks in Government Input and Recommendations
- Appendix J. Port of Seattle 2020-21 Racial Equity Trainings Final Report
- Appendix K. Black Lives Matter Caucusing Series
- Appendix L. Port of Seattle South King County Fund 2020: Economic Recovery Grants Program Cycle 1 Report and Recommendations from Consultants
- Appendix M. Non-represented Employees Compensation Program Review
- Appendix N. Definitions