



# THE PORT OF SEATTLE OFFICE OF EQUITY, DIVERSITY, AND INCLUSION 2023 REPORT

The Port of Seattle is committed to living our values and becoming a truly equitable, anti-racist organization. While we are working toward this visionary goal, we cannot ignore the broader context. Our country and community are frequently polarized on issues, making it challenging to find solutions to problems. We are living in a time where creating an inclusive and equitable organization is often met with a mixture of emotions and feelings. Change and progress can be scary.

Our work is difficult, but it is not impossible. It takes patience, commitment, and strength. The pursuit of racial equity requires that we take time to build trusting, transformational relationships, center the voices of people most impacted by the inequities we seek to address, and creatively challenge a business-as-usual mindset.

Our work embodies love and hope — grounded in reality and paired with action. We know that a brighter future for all is possible. As one of the largest economic drivers in our region, the Port is positioned to lead efforts that create greater access, inclusion, and fairness for the communities we serve.

In this 2023 annual report, we share highlights of our efforts to partner with communities, to build a culture of belonging and inclusion within the Port, and to transform policies and practices that advance equity.

**Bookda Gheisar (she/her/hers)**  
Senior Director,  
Office of Equity, Diversity, and Inclusion



# A YEAR IN REVIEW: OFFICE OF EQUITY, DIVERSITY, AND INCLUSION HIGHLIGHTS

- 1 After nearly two years of work and partner engagement, the Port of Seattle Commission passed the [Equity Policy Directive \(EPD\)](#). The EPD is historic legislation that represents the next chapter of equity work for the Port. It integrates equity, diversity, and inclusion into the Port's policies, practices, and programs for years to come, moving us beyond basic compliance towards long-term commitment and sustainable transformation. In short, the EPD creates policy and protocol changes to turn our values of equity, inclusion, and belonging into concrete action steps for all employees to advance our equity goals and vision, mandating how work is performed both internally and externally.
- 2 The Port Commission passed the [Language Access Order](#), making language access a permanent, ongoing commitment in every department and every division. This order set into motion an assessment of current practices (including a review of publicly available documents, resources, signage, websites, social media sites, and forms); the development of a guidance manual for divisions to create language access plans; and a proposal for budgeting resources necessary to implement this policy.
- 3 In June 2023, the Port hosted the third Annual South King County Symposium. More than 150 community members and partners congregated to discuss, share, and strategize about creating pathways to opportunities for environmental sustainability and careers in port-related industries. The symposium featured speakers from many different organizations including Tilth Alliance, King County, and the African Young Dreamers Empowerment Program.
- 4 To publicly share the progress of its work to advance equity across all its work, the Port of Seattle released two interactive dashboards on its website that track the implementation of equity, diversity, and inclusion efforts and the metrics and goals associated with those efforts. The first dashboard, the [Equity, Diversity, Inclusion, and Belonging \(EDIB\) Dashboard](#), monitors the progress of and provides visibility into the steps being taken to create a more equitable and inclusive Port. The second dashboard, the [Equity Spending and Accountability Project \(ESAP\) Dashboard](#), displays the Port's annual "equity spending" investments.
- 5 In 2023, the [South King County Community Impact Fund](#) added 12 new partners to the program, expanding the reach in promoting environmental sustainability and economic recovery in South King County communities. Included among the many highlights of the year was the first all-women of color construction training cohort operated by our partner Latino Civic Alliance. Our partner, Serve Ethiopians Washington, had several participants pass the introduction of the Aviation Maintenance Technician (AMT) class, making them eligible for enrollment in the AMT program in 2024.
- 6 In partnership with South Seattle College and Port Jobs, the Port launched a new workforce development initiative — the Airport Ground Service Equipment (GSE) Training Program. This is a college preparation program, meaning that participants receive an overview of the GSE mechanic profession, relevant math course work, and college-prep and study skills training. Upon completion, participants are eligible to enroll in the two-year GSE mechanic program at South Seattle College. In 2024, the program will convene an employer advisory committee to facilitate pathways for graduates to find full-time employment as GSE mechanics.
- 7 OEDI staff's work is being recognized and our team is growing. Our work was featured in the international Journal of Airport Management (Volume 17, Number 4). The article entitled "Embedding Equity in Airport Operations and Practices: A Case Study" featured lessons learned, strategies, and best practices from OEDI's first four years of operation within the Port of Seattle. We also welcomed to our team the Port's first Environmental Justice Program Manager who will be working closely with staff and community partners.
- 8 For the first time in Port history, all departments are now required, to set annual department-specific equity, diversity, and inclusion goals as part of their annual business planning process. This is a significant milestone as it ensures the Port now has structural accountability for EDI across each tier of the organization: Port-wide, division, department, and individual. In 2023, each department's Change Team members collaborated with their department directors to receive input from department staff, craft goals relevant to their operations, push their department to advance EDI, and ensure equity goals were properly resourced in their 2024 budget.
- 9 Building off the success of previous years, members of the Port's Change Team and the Finance and Budget department created the 2024 edition of the [Equity in Budgeting Playbook](#), which is a tool that all departments are required to use to create their annual budgets. As departments submit budgets for approval, they must demonstrate how they utilized the playbook to guide equity considerations in their budget.
- 10 As part of the 2024 Equity in Budgeting Playbook, members of OEDI, Finance and Budget, and Commission staff created a definition of "equity spending," calculated the Port's equity spending over the last several years and created a pilot project for tracking equity spending going forward. "Equity spending" measures how the organization invests in staff, communities, businesses, projects, and programs that advance equity, diversity, and inclusion. By using this definition to evaluate our budget, we gain a better understanding of how our investments are contributing to our equity goals and can be transparent and accountable about how we are using public resources to advance equity.

## FEATURED PROGRAMS

### YOUTH MARITIME CAREER LAUNCH

Created in 2022 and approved for \$4.1 million over a three-year period, the Youth Maritime Career Launch (YMCL) is a pilot program that partners with community organizations and maritime industry employees to create pathways for young people between the ages of 16-24 to gain employment in the maritime industry. In 2023, the inaugural cohort of the program graduated 37 participants — nearly three-quarters identified as people of color. Ten maritime industry employers were a part of YMCL, providing the participants with work experience in shipyards, recreational boating facilities, and on ferries. The graduates earned credentials in Basic Safety Training, Transportation Workers Identification Card, and Merchant Mariners Credential, making them competitive and qualified to gain full-time employment in entry-level maritime roles.



### SOUTH KING COUNTY COMMUNITY IMPACT FUND

Established in 2019, SKCCIF partners with community-based organizations near the airport to address economic recovery, job training in port-related industries, environmental sustainability and restoration, and capacity-building support for minority-owned business enterprises. Since the start of the program, the Port has invested \$7 million into 65 partner organizations, including 12 community-based organizations that were added to SKCCIF in 2023. In 2023, SKCCIF Economic Recovery partners placed 130 community members in apprenticeship or pre-apprenticeship programs in port-related industries and supported 528 community members in gaining employment in those industries. Salaries for these positions ranged from \$19.05 to \$34 per hour.



### THE PORT OF SEATTLE CHANGE TEAM

In September 2020, OEDI created the Port's Change Team to operationalize our values of equity and anti-racism. The Change Team includes representatives from every Port department who lead efforts to implement equity principles and practices within their respective teams and departments. During 2023, the Change Team finalized [Values in Action: Advancing Equity in Our Work](#) — a guide for employees to embed equity into their work in several areas including budgeting, hiring, data, and community engagement. The Change Team also created the [2024 Equity in Budgeting Playbook](#), which includes the new [Equity Spending tool](#). And for the first time in the Port's history, the Change Team led efforts for all 42 departments to implement department-specific equity goals.



### RACIAL EQUITY TRAINING

Following the Commission's Equity Policy Directive passed in April 2023, all employees are required to complete annual racial equity training. OEDI has two tracks for this requirement. Supervisors must complete six hours of training annually, and frontline individual contributors must complete five hours of training annually. Included in that hourly requirement are two foundational racial equity courses that employees must complete once every three years. In 2023, OEDI offered a total of 51 trainings and workshops, utilizing a combination of external and internal trainers and facilitators focusing on a variety of topics, such as racial equity, intersectionality, transgender equity, combating antisemitism, and addressing implicit bias.





## BY THE NUMBERS

# \$21M

(or 3.4%) of the Port's 2024 operating budget is designated for work, programs, and investments that advance the Port's equity, diversity, and inclusion goals.

# 100k

The Port was the initial investor (and is an ongoing partner) in the Coalition for Climate Careers—a new public-private collaborative dedicated creating to an inclusive, prosperous green workforce

# 1,595

People hired into jobs through the SEA Employment Center

# 538

Community members gained employment in port-related industries through the South King County Community Impact Fund

# 120+

Community members enrolled in Port-funded construction and aviation training programs

# 51

EDI trainings and workshops offered to Port employees

# 42

Port departments set annual equity goals to advance and embed EDI in their work in 2024

# 37

Participants of the inaugural cohort of the Youth Maritime Career Launch