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December 2024

## Introducing the OEDI Team



Dear Friends,

Earlier this year, we celebrated the five-year anniversary of the creation of the Port's Office of Equity, Diversity, and Inclusion (OEDI). During the past five years, the Port has made great strides in advancing opportunities for near-airport communities, transforming our organizational culture, and prioritizing equity as both a value and a critical part of our operations. From the [South King County Community Impact Fund](#) to the [Equity in Budgeting Playbook](#) to the [enhancement of career pathways](#) in port-related industries, there is a considerable amount for us all to celebrate and build upon. Check out our annual reports for more examples of our work — [2020](#), [2021](#), [2022](#), [2023](#).

Of course, there is much more work to be done, but none of this progress would have been realized if not for the hard work, passion, and dedication of the OEDI team. What started as a department of just one has blossomed into a team of 13 highly capable, experienced equity and workforce development practitioners. As the need and mandate for OEDI's work has grown, so has our team, including the additional of several new team members within the past year. Without further ado, it is my privilege and honor to introduce you to the entire OEDI team!

**Alberto J. Rodríguez** (he/él) joined the Port last November as the Environmental Justice Program Manager. He has 21 years of experience doing research and implementing environmental conservation, restoration, and climate resilience projects in Honduras, Guatemala, and the United States. Throughout his professional career in the U.S., he's always used a racial equity lens to center the voices and needs of those most affected by environmental injustice and inequities. In his spare time, Alberto enjoys traveling, scuba diving, hiking, live music, dancing, and watching movies.



Joining the team in May as the new Workforce Development Director, **Anna Pavlik** (she/her) is tasked with increasing access to Port-related high-wage careers for structurally excluded communities and supporting the incredible workforce development team. She started her career as a community organizer, has worked extensively in career counseling, and has managed job training grants at the local Workforce Development Council. Anna comes to us from the City of Seattle, where she spent the last 11 years working with many partners to transform the construction industry to

prioritize racial and gender equity, using public infrastructure investments as the lever (called Priority Hire).



As the Assistant to the Senior Director of OEDI, **Bushra Zaman** (she/her) provides logistics, scheduling, and budgeting support, and program coordination. By helping to build the foundations of the department, Bushra is involved in the incredible work that goes into making real change happen daily at the Port. Outside of the Port, Bushra's passion is baking, which her friends and family benefit from! She also loves travel. Bushra's parents are from Bangladesh, and while she grew up in the U.S., she loves going to Bangladesh to visit extended family and learn more about her roots.



**Carl Hugle** (he/him) is a Workforce Development Program Manager and Data Analyst. Carl works on initiatives to promote equitable access to economic opportunities and ensure a diverse and inclusive workforce in the regional construction industry. Before his work at the Port, he served nearly 21 years in the U.S. Army; much of that time was spent managing the Army's workforce entry and career placement campaigns in Southern California, New England, and Washington. He served three year-long tours in Iraq and earned 11 Army Commendation Medals before retiring as a senior

noncommissioned officer.

**Cathy Vue** (she/her) is OEDI's Community Investment Program Manager, operating the South King County Community Impact Fund, which works directly with community-based organizations in South King County to increase access and awareness of Port-industry jobs. Cathy's background is in public health, and she has worked closely with refugee and immigrant communities for most of her professional career. She is passionate about equitable access to health and





wealth for all, and outside of work, she enjoys spending time with family and friends over good food and music.



**Crystal Dome** (she/her) serves as the Workforce Development Budget and Contract Specialist, supporting the Workforce Development team with their invoicing and contract needs. Crystal has a solid background in business, finance, and operations management. Previously, she owned a business that partnered with small businesses and WMBEs to help them scale and become profitable. Outside work, Crystal loves spending time with her family and enjoys travel, food, music, and art. She continues to support and work with small businesses.



Originally from Oklahoma City, **Darrell Thomas** (he/him) is our Training and Engagement Program Manager, leading our team's efforts to normalize equity. Darrell runs our EDI training program and works to advance a culture of belonging and inclusion. Motivated by his commitment to social justice, Darrell has had a multifaceted career, holding positions in the justice system, tribal government, and school systems. His expertise lies in fostering inclusive environments and promoting social equity within organizations. Darrell finds joy in creating memorable experiences with his family,

traveling, maintaining an active lifestyle, and continuously expanding his knowledge of business, economics, investing, and communication.



A social worker by education, **Jay Doran** (he/him) is our EDI Policy and Communications Program Manager. In this role, Jay executes OEDI's internal and external communications strategies, develops and implements Commission policies and internal policies, and supports teams across the Port in embedding equity into their operations. With nearly 15 years of experience in race and social justice work, Jay has held organizing, communications, and policy positions during his career. Outside of work, Jay enjoys science fiction, biking, and playing video games with his kiddo.

**Leslie Horton** (she/her) is a Workforce Development Program Manager and Data Analyst, specializing in aviation. In her role, Leslie supports the creation of aviation-related career pathways for near-Port communities that have been structurally excluded from these opportunities. Prior to coming to the Port of Seattle, Leslie worked for more than 20 years in the King County social services continuum of care; she specialized in serving youth and young adults experiencing homelessness and/or juvenile justice involvement, and in providing



workforce development opportunities to this population. Outside of work, Leslie is a Seattle-based mixed-media artist who owns and operates her own small arts business.



**Nohemi Morones** (she/her) is the EDI Metrics and Evaluation Program Assistant, focusing on leveraging our EDI data to build and execute solutions that allow the team to measure and quantify the impact of our work. Nohemi has held roles in the nonprofit, private, and public sectors during her career. Most recently, she worked at T-Mobile as a Program Manager for EDI Analytics. She is currently continuing her studies by pursuing a master's degree in Data Science at the University of Washington!



The newest member of our team, **Robert Brown III** (he/him) is the Workforce Development Program Manager and Data Analyst for Maritime and Green Jobs. Robert oversees the design, implementation, and management of training programs that prepare individuals for careers in the maritime and green sectors. With over five years of workforce development experience, Robert works to ensure maritime and green career awareness and training is relatable, digestible, and accessible to an array of diverse audiences. In his free time, Robert is a community mentor and an avid sports fan, and he

enjoys outings with his family and dog, Rocky.



As our EDI Systems Change Program Manager, **Tania Park** (she/her) works with employees across the Port to embed equity into our operations and mindset, and she tracks the progress we make toward our equity goals, ensuring both transparency and accountability. For more than 15 years, Tania has worked across the nonprofit and government sectors, with a through line of community and connection. She is grateful for those who have taught and challenged her to improve and aims to champion progress in every step of her journey. Things that bring her joy include hearing belly

giggles from her kiddos, spending time on rock walls, and sharing delicious meals with good company.

Individually, we all have a wealth of skills and experience, and together, we are inimitable and unmatched. I am excited about the road ahead, the possibilities for progress, and our capacity to achieve great things.

Please don't be a stranger. Reach out with questions and opportunities to partner. Together we are stronger.



In Unity,



**Bookda Gheisar**

Senior Director, Office of Equity, Diversity, and Inclusion

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## Centering Equity and Taking Action

### Maritime Blue and Port Sign MOU to Accelerate Sustainable Blue Economy



The Port of Seattle and Washington Maritime Blue renewed a Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) continuing their long-standing collaboration on maritime innovation and environmental stewardship. Building on years of successful partnership, this renewed MOU will further the development and growth of new maritime businesses working to advance innovative approaches to solving some of the Port and our region's most pressing problems. This partnership also advances maritime businesses in a global marketplace, creates living wage jobs, and supports an innovative hub to reinforce Washington's position as a leader in maritime innovation and sustainability.

[Learn more →](#)

## Port Commission Initiates Study on Requiring Health Care Benefits for SEA Airport Workers



On December 10, the Port of Seattle Commission directed Port staff to examine how enhanced health care benefits for nongovernment SEA workers might contribute to Seattle-Tacoma International Airport's (SEA's) leading position in passenger service and workplace quality. Inspired by a series of roundtable discussions and the work of an Employee Recruitment and Retention Committee, the Port will explore the possibility of implementing health care requirements for the more than 20,000 SEA workers in a two-phase approach.

[Learn more →](#)

## Building a New Bridge to a Critical Airport Career

In September 2024, the Port of Seattle launched its second aviation career training pathway, an Introduction to Ground Support Equipment Mechanic (GSE) course. The course offers a bridge for SEA employees to enter South Seattle College's two-year Diesel and Heavy Equipment Technology training program. It joins the already established Introduction to Aviation Maintenance Technician (AMT) course, which automatically grants admission for those who complete the course in South Seattle College's two-year aircraft maintenance technology program.

[Learn more →](#)



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