



COMMISSION
AGENDA MEMORANDUM

Item No. 11a

BRIEFING ITEM

Date of Meeting May 27, 2025

DATE: May 20, 2025
TO: Stephen P. Metruck, Executive Director
FROM: Anna Pavlik, Director, Workforce Development
SUBJECT: **2024 Workforce Development Annual Report**

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

"Talent is equally distributed; opportunity is not." -Leila Janah

It is well documented that people of color are underrepresented in many living-wage careers in port-related industries. As a significant economic driver in our region, the Port is well-positioned to address inequities in access to living-wage careers. This is why we are investing in workforce development to move people of diverse backgrounds from jobs that simply pay the bills to careers that provide living wages, long-term career progression, and good working conditions. Not only does this work align with our values, but our investment in this work ensures the success and long-term future of port-related industries.

The Workforce Development (WFD) team builds external partnerships with community-based organizations and industry employers to support equitable access to well-paying, port-related careers in maritime, construction, aviation, and green jobs. As port-related industries face employment challenges including an aging workforce, staff shortages, and a lack of awareness about career options, WFD's outreach strategies focus on communities who have not had visibility into these jobs, as well as those who have been disproportionately impacted by the Port's activities—particularly communities of color, immigrants and refugees, youth, women, and low-income communities.

The Port is investing in our region by creating access for people of diverse backgrounds to **move into quality, living-wage careers** in port-related industries. Since 2019, the Port has invested almost \$17M in regional workforce development in the maritime, construction, and aviation industries and the green jobs in each of those industries. Port investments resulted in more than 1,200 people trained in high-demand, living-wage careers like General Carpenter pre-apprenticeship, Aviation Maintenance Technician, and Advanced Logistics. Additionally, more than 3,000 job seekers and employees at Seattle-Tacoma International Airport (SEA) received job readiness and career advancement training like Homeland Security, food handlers, Microsoft Office, and badge training. From 2019 to 2024, over 8,500 people were employed at the airport and in port-related industries thanks to Port investments.

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BACKGROUND

In 2020, the Port of Seattle Commission adopted the Workforce Development Policy Directive (Resolution 3776) to fulfill the Century Agenda's strategic objective of advancing regional workforce development in port-related industries to provide equitable access to quality, living-wage careers. OEDI implements most of this objective by making strategic investments in workforce development with over \$3.6M in workforce development investments in 2024. With collaboration across Port teams and with many community and employer partners, OEDI works to expand the talent pipeline to address labor shortages in both Port of Seattle employment and maritime, aviation, and construction sectors. Building career awareness, offering workforce training, and improving job quality are all primary strategies used by the Port to meet our century agenda goals. This report details the Port's commitments, major initiatives, and progress in addressing inequities that create wealth gaps in our region, highlighting both successes and challenges.

2024 RESULTS

In 2024, the Port of Seattle's workforce development investments resulted in:

- 1,515 job, internship, and apprenticeship placements
- Hourly wage at placement in aviation averaged \$20.65
- Hourly wage for construction placements averaged \$32.67
- 89% of the participants supported by the Port's workforce development efforts were Black, Indigenous, and People of Color (BIPOC)
- 78% of the participants live in low equity areas of King County
- 102 employers hired program participants or provided youth career-connected learning opportunities

Many structurally excluded individuals – such as BIPOC, immigrants and refugees, and women – received training and employment services. In 2024, 89% of those served with Port-funded training and career services were BIPOC, and 41% identified as women. In addition to employers, other important partners in the Port's workforce development efforts included community-based organizations, other public agencies, and the regional workforce development system.

Aviation Sector

In 2024, SEA Airport set a record with over 52.6 million passengers – the forecast is expected to grow further in 2025. This increase in travel means the Port's workforce investments in aviation are more important than ever.

Airport Employment Center

Port Jobs operates the Airport Employment Center and placed people into 1,408 jobs in 2024. This is a decrease of 570 jobs from 2023, but this is attributed to a number of factors including a decrease in hiring across the region and at SEA along with the cybersecurity attack the Port suffered in Fall 2024. Some individuals were hired into multiple positions, with a total of 1,202

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people placed into 1,408 jobs in 2024. Eighty-seven airport employers hired workers via the Airport Employment Center. In addition, 758 airport workers completed 867 trainings.

In 2024, the Airport Employment Center provided services to SEA airport companies to fill open positions and to support community members, SEA employees, and laid-off employees in finding employment and building skills for career advancement. Port Jobs services included:

- A “Hotlist” of job openings at SEA Airport available online and sent weekly to community-based organizations and colleges
- In-person, open interview events in partnership with airport companies at SEA
- In-person and remote job search assistance, including support for recent refugees and immigrants
- Job readiness training, such as Security Identification Display Area (SIDA) badge training preparation to help English language learners obtain the updated SIDA badge
- Free college classes for career pathways and skill building

In addition to Airport Employment Center services, the Port provided dedicated funding which allowed Port Jobs to work intensively with Partner in Employment (PIE), Asian Counseling and Referral Service (ACRS), and Congolese Integration Network (CIN) to deliver pre-employment workforce development services to 90 asylum seekers who sought refuge at the Riverton Park United Methodist Church and were moved to the SeaTac DoubleTree Hotel. With support from Port Jobs and these consortium agencies, 130 asylum seekers completed community intake registrations and received in-person training-related services at Airport Jobs.

2024 Aviation Impact				
Airport Employment Center	2021	2022	2023	2024
Job placements (# of jobs)	1,211	1,479	1,978	1,408
Job placements (# of people)	N/A	1,187	1,594	1,202
Average hourly wage @ placement	\$17.02	\$18.82	\$20.03	\$20.65
Hiring employers	80	82	93	87
Training enrollments (including SIDA support)	247	539	1,093	1,031
Training completions (including SIDA support)	200	573	1,012	867
Aviation Career Pathways: Aviation Maintenance Technician				
Training enrollments	23	18	25	25

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Training completions	17	11	15	21
Aviation Career Pathways: Ground Support Equipment Mechanic				
Training enrollments				12
Training completions				10

Participant demographics: 93% BIPOC (23% Asian, 51% African/African American/Black, 11% Spanish/Hispanic/Latino, 1% American Indian/Alaska Native, 4% Pacific Islander/Native Hawaiian), 7% White, and 3% Other; 58% male, 42% female; 78% from structurally excluded ZIP codes (low or very low on the Port's Equity Index).

Types of jobs: 50% airline operations/passenger support, 23% restaurant operations, 16% janitorial, 6% warehouse/freight, 3% retail operations, 2% security, and 1% skilled trades.

Aviation Career Pathways: Aviation Maintenance Technician (AMT)

The Port of Seattle, Port Jobs, and South Seattle College have partnered since 2021 to offer an Introduction to Aviation Maintenance Technology (AMT) course at SEA. This 12-week college preparatory course exposes participants to the AMT profession and prepares them for the college's two-year FAA-approved AMT program. The 25 participants in 2024 were 84% BIPOC, 32% women, and were primarily airport workers in entry-level jobs such as ramp agents, fuelers, taxi/ride-share drivers, and food service workers. Students gain valuable math and study skills, financial aid support, and a \$1,000 scholarship from Port Jobs' Alaska Airlines-Airport University. Aviation maintenance technician positions are in high demand and can pay salaries over \$85,000.

Aviation Career Pathways: Ground Support Equipment Training Program (GSE)

In 2024, the first cohort of 11 students successfully graduated from the new Ground Support Equipment (GSE) Mechanic training program. This exciting new offering follows the same model as the AMT program, meaning the training takes place on-site at SEA, prioritizes current SEA airport workers, and participants receive training on the GSE mechanic profession, relevant math coursework, and college-prep. Upon completion, participants are eligible to enroll in the two-year GSE mechanic program at South Seattle College. Ground Support Equipment mechanic positions offer annual salaries ranging from \$62,000 – \$80,000.

Construction Trades Sector

In 2024, in partnership with the training programs ANEW, NWCI, Urban League, PACT, and the Ironworkers Local 86 Pre-apprenticeship, 144 community members completed construction pre-apprenticeship training. 73% of those trained were BIPOC and, of those placed, 55% were also BIPOC. The average hourly wage for new workers went up to \$32.67.

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Placements have been stagnant for the past few years – the downturn in the commercial sector is affecting hiring across the construction industry. While regional construction projects and employment are down, the Port anticipates 1,050 workers needed through 2027.

In 2024, we also began our Leadership Development program with ANEW. Construction contractors were consulted to create the curriculum that guides this program to focus on the soft and technical skills needed for leadership roles. We currently have 9 journeypersons and senior apprentices enrolled in the program.

Construction Results

Year	2021	2022	2023	2024
Enrolled	274	209	157	163
Training completions	180	187	138	144
Placements (apprenticeships, trades-related jobs)	101	125	71	72
Hiring employers	42	63	14	10
Hourly wage @ placement	\$25.61	\$23.14	\$32.37	\$32.67

Numbers include those from construction worker outreach, training, and retention jointly funded by the Port of Seattle and the City of Seattle.

Participant demographics: 73% BIPOC (5% Asian, 36% Black/African American, 20% Hispanic/Latino, 2% Native American/Alaskan Native, 4% Native Hawaiian/Pacific Islander, 6% Multi-Race), 25% White, 2% Not reported; 69% men, 29% women; 54% from structurally excluded ZIP codes.

Types of jobs: Electricians, installers/helpers, bricklayers, ironworkers, HVAC technicians, painters, laborers, carpenters, sheet metal workers, and piledrivers.

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Maritime Sector

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 18-24 to gain employment in the maritime industry. Through 2024, the program's cohorts have placed a total of 45 participants into internships— over 80% of interns identified as people of color. YCML has recruited over 20 maritime employers who have provided interns with work experience in shipyards, recreational boating facilities, and on ferries. Interns who successfully completed training earned credentials in Basic Safety Training, Transportation Workers' Identification Cards, and Merchant Mariners Credentials and accrued sea time making them competitive and prepared for full-time employment in entry-level maritime roles.

Youth Maritime Career Launch	2023	2024
Enrollments	40	33
Training Completions	25	28
Placements into Internships	21	24
Hiring Employers	10	9
Hourly Wage at time of placement	\$19.14	21.09

Youth Maritime Career Launch began in 2023. Placements into internships reflects the number of individual participants, each counted only once regardless of the number of internships completed.

Overall enrollment declined from 2023 to 2024 due to a more rigorous vetting process introduced by Washington Maritime Blue and The Urban League. While this reduced the total number of participants, it significantly improved training outcomes, with a higher percentage of interns successfully completing the program. Although there was a slight drop in the number of hiring employers in 2024, many chose to host multiple interns, which helped increase the overall number of internship placements.

Participant demographics: 73% BIPOC (5% Asian, 53% Black/African American, 10% Hispanic/Latino, 5% Native American/Alaskan Native), 28% White; 72% men, 15% women, 13% Non-Binary; 56% from communities considered structurally excluded.

Types of jobs: Electrical installer, deckhand, technician apprentice, Structural fitter and welder helper, marine mammal rehabilitator, general laborer, administrative assistant dockmaster, electrical intern, shipyard laborer, production intern, maritime security, boat shop intern, wiper intern, shipyard assistant.

Maritime High School

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For the 2024 – 2025 school year, 134 students were enrolled, compared to 121 in the previous school year. Among the 2024-2025 student population, 51% identify as white, 49% BIPOC, 27% women, 6% non-binary, and 67% men. For the 11th and 12th grade programs, the school continues to develop and evaluate relationships with education partners that will provide maritime-specific education that will support direct entry to maritime careers and keep a pathway open to a 4-year university. A new partnership with the welding program at Vigor Shipyards through South Seattle College was created to respond to student interest in marine construction.

Green Jobs

Most green jobs are not new occupations; they are existing occupations in construction, manufacturing, transportation, and professional services. Among all port-related sectors, a 2022 Seattle Jobs Initiative report anticipated that electrical and HVAC construction occupations would have the highest green job demand in electricians and HVAC occupations. In 2024, Port-funded pre-apprenticeship training programs trained and placed 28 community members into apprenticeships focusing on clean and renewable energy, including the construction, installation, maintenance, and operation of these systems.

From 2020-2024, the Duwamish Valley Green Jobs program taught participants about the local environment, the ecological history of the Duwamish River, and several environmental restoration methods. In 2024, 87 participants, both youth and adults, exited the program with a deepened sense of connection to environmental restoration efforts in their community and a heightened interest in pursuing Port-related careers. The contract with Dirt Corps for the Duwamish Valley Green Jobs program expired in September 2024, and OEDI and External Relations have revamped the fund, shifting from building career awareness in green jobs to providing career navigation services to connect Duwamish Valley community members to port-related careers.

In addition to last year, the Coalition of Climate Careers (C3) held the second Green Jobs Green Futures Summit. The event, co-sponsored by the Port of Seattle, King County, and City of Seattle, attracted over 400 community members who participated in interactive demonstration stations highlighting career opportunities in the green economy. Looking ahead, C3 will focus on securing long-term, collaborative funding to build a sustainable, inclusive green workforce. By aligning with public and private partners, C3 looks to ensure frontline communities in King County have equitable access to green careers along with the knowledge and resources necessary to transition into the green economy.

MOVING FORWARD

To create transformational change and invest in career development, not just finding people jobs, OEDI recommends that the Port continue:

- Strong partnerships within the Port, with public agency partners, and with our community partners to co-invest, identify community career interests, build career awareness among youth, near-port communities and beyond.

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- Offering a breadth of services from career awareness building to job training to career advancement, which not only helps the Port fill current workforce needs but also helps plan for the future.

OEDI is developing a workforce development strategic plan and anticipates including the following growth opportunities:

- Strategic investments leveraging regional resources, providing tailored services and including clear outcomes
- Strengthening the Port's internal contracting infrastructure
- Build on commitments like the Duwamish Community Benefits Commitment, Priority Hire Order, Muckleshoot and Suquamish MOAs, etc.

Workforce Development and South King County Community Impact Fund staff are working on several contract improvements to ensure our investments create even greater community outcomes, better clarity with our partners, increased program oversight, and more efficient contract management. OEDI completed some improvements in 2024, such as standardized reporting and invoice templates, and continues to make improvements in 2025, such as setting up program monitoring plans and standardized, defined metrics. We will continue to execute all improvements with an equity-informed, community-minded, strengths-based approach to contract management.

The Port has a bold century agenda vision to add 100,000 jobs through economic growth led by the Port, for a total of 300,000 Port-related jobs in the region. To ensure the jobs created can be filled and benefit our communities, more workforce development planning, convening, policy, partnerships, and investments are needed. We have much to be proud of in terms of the commitment made by all port departments, our community impacts, and yet still so much further to go to reach the Port's vision and equitable outcomes for near-port communities.

ATTACHMENTS TO THIS BRIEFING

- (1) Presentation Slides

PREVIOUS COMMISSION ACTIONS OR BRIEFINGS

- (1) March 2025 – The Commission adopted the Duwamish Valley Career Navigator Program
- (2) October 2024 – The Commission extended the Youth Maritime Career Launch Program
- (3) July 2024 - The Commission was briefed on the 2023 WFD Annual Report
- (4) June 2023 – The Commission was briefed on the 2022 WFD Annual Report
- (5) February 2022 – The Commission approved a Youth Career Launch Program
- (6) June 2020 – The Commission adopted the Workforce Development Resolution 3776