Port
of Seattle®

THE PORT OF SEATTLE
OFFICE OF EQUITY, DIVERSITY, AND INCLUSION 2022 REPORT

Nearly four years ago, the Port of Seattle became the first port authority in the country to establish an office of equity. In doing so, our organization committed 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.

While the Port has committed to becoming an equitable, anti-racist organization, racial equity doesn't happen overnight. It takes time, commitment, and perseverance. In many ways, racial equity is both a process and an outcome. It is about transforming our relationships, culture, and institutions. At times, fighting for racial equity can feel like we're falling uncontrollably, battling the bias, discrimination, and injustice that is deeply imbedded in so many aspects of our lives. Against these forces, we can struggle to find our grip and footing.

It is critical that we take time to celebrate our achievements and victories. Let's take a moment to find our footing, so that we can continue to work toward a more equitable, just future — a future where we prioritize the outcomes and well-being of all people.

In this 2022 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 transforms policies and practices to advance equity.

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

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

1 OEDI and a steering committee of employees finalized the Women of Color Assessment, which focused on the experiences, treatment, compensation, and advancement of women of color at the Port. The results of this assessment were presented to Port staff and shared publicly in March 2022. This work produced 11 recommended changes, which align with the recommendations from the 2021 Equity Assessment, and are aimed at addressing the specific barriers that women of color face in order to create a more inclusive and equitable Port.

2 In March 2022, the Port of Seattle's Workforce Development team hosted a job and resource fair for newly arriving Afghan refugees. More than 250 people attended, and there were 28 employers, six community-based organizations, and three city governments represented at the event. This event engaged Afghan refugees and the greater community in employment and relocation efforts.

3 OEDI and Human Resources partnered to institute new requirements to the Port's hiring process. The changes were recommendations from the 2021 Equity and Women of Color Assessments and are aimed at creating more fairness and less bias within the hiring processes. The following are part of the implemented changes: including the Port's vision for equity on all job postings; diversity of race and gender on all hiring panels; watching and discussing an anti-bias video prior to conducting interviews; removing unnecessary minimum qualifications from a position prior to posting it; and providing direct feedback from the hiring manager to internal candidates who did not get the position.

4 OEDI and the Change Team worked with departments to identify strengths, weaknesses, opportunities, and threats to their team's ability to advance EDI in their work. The information gathered from that process was used to create department-specific EDI goals, which beginning in 2023 are an annual requirement for all departments. The status and progress of these goals will be publicly shared annually to improve transparency and accountability inside and outside of our organization.

5 Building off the success of the 2022 Equity in Budgeting Playbook, members of the Port's Change Team and the Finance and Budget department created a 2023 version of the playbook, which is a tool that assisted departments in applying an equity lens to their 2023 budgets. As departments submitted budgets for approval, they were required to demonstrate how they utilized the playbook to guide equity considerations in their budget.

6 In October 2022, the Port received the American Association of Port Authorities' (AAPA) Lighthouse Award in Information Technology for the creation and use of the Port's Equity Index. This is the second year in a row that the Port has received an AAPA Award for OEDI's work. In 2021, we received an Award of Excellence in the Communications category for the Black Lives Matter Caucusing Series that engaged more than 250 Port employees in the wake of the deeply racialized and tragic killings of Ahmaud Arbery, Breonna Taylor, and George Floyd.

7 In November 2022, the Port Commission approved a $4.75 million-dollar, multi-year authorization to continue construction worker training. Funding will be used to support pre-apprenticeship training and retention services, youth career launch programming in the trades, and leadership development for women and people of color.

8 For the first time in the Port's history, all non-represented employees, including leadership and supervisors, were required to have an annual performance goal measuring their work to advance equity, diversity, and inclusion. This requirement is part of recommendations from the 2021 Equity and Women of Color Assessments, and the goals were tailored for employees based on their role — supervisor, front-line or individual contributor, and Change Team member.

9 OEDI Senior Director and staff were invited to participate in nearly 20 conferences, forums, and community events as presenters, panelists, or keynotes. The events covered a variety of topics (e.g., workforce development, staff engagement in EDI work, communications) and engaged a diversity of people and professionals (e.g., port employees, lawyers, small businesses, community members seeking jobs in port-related industries). These were welcome opportunities to highlight the Port's EDI work, share best practices and successes, and build partnerships to advance racial equity.

10 OEDI 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 community and staff engagement, budgeting tools, and best practices for advancing racial equity within port authorities.

FEATURED PROGRAMS

YOUTH MARITIME CAREER LAUNCH

Created in 2022, YMCL is a pilot program that partners with community organizations and maritime industry employees to train and develop young people between the ages of 16-24. Youth participants are placed in internships that may lead to full-time employment in entry-level maritime roles. The program is approved for $4.1 million over the next three years and places an emphasis on training young women and youth of color.

SOUTH KING COUNTY COMMUNITY IMPACT FUND

In 2022, the Port invested $1.6 million in 30 non-profits and community-based organizations that are serving South King County communities to address economic recovery, job training in port-related industries, environmental sustainability and restoration, and capacity-building support for minority-owned business enterprises. Additionally in 2022, the Port reduced barriers for organizations to participate in this program by creating options for multi-year funding, streamlining the application process, and increasing outreach and technical support. The Port has pledged $10 million dollars in funding between 2020 and 2024.

RACIAL EQUITY TRAINING

In 2020, the Port Commission mandated that all Port employees fulfill an annual racial equity training requirement. For this requirement, employees must complete the Port's foundation racial equity training, and there are two tracks — one for supervisors and one for front-line employees/individual contributors. In 2022, OEDI, with facilitation support from members of the Change Team, conducted 37 foundational racial equity trainings (five of them were specifically designed for supervisors). More than 850 employees, including 237 supervisors, completed at least one of these workshops.

THE PORT OF SEATTLE CHANGE TEAM

Two years ago, OEDI created the Port of Seattle'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. During 2022, the Change Team split into eight committees to developed best practices and guidance on many of the recommendations from the 2021 Equity and Women of Color Assessments. In early 2023, OEDI and the Change Team will release an equity handbook, providing tools, guidance, and support for advancing EDI in several areas including budgeting, hiring, data, and community engagement.

BY THE NUMBERS

1,000+
Employees participated in OEDI's racial equity training, workshops, and learning events

1,219
People hired into jobs through the SEA Employment Center

63
Robust, comprehensive recommendations for creating a more equitable, anti-racist Port as part of the Port's first-ever Equity and Women of Color Assessments

$8.85M
Of multi-year funding to provide low-income youth and youth of color with training, experience, and a potential entry-level job in maritime through the Youth Maritime Career Launch and Construction Worker training and support

100+
Community members secured jobs in the construction industry after graduating from Port-funded construction training programs

30
Community-based organizations received funding, totaling $1.6 million, to support South King County residents with economic recovery, job training, and environmental sustainability

125
Employees made up the inaugural cohort of the Port's Change Team, championing EDI efforts across the Port

1
For the first time in the Port's history, all departments are required to set annual goals for advancing EDI in their work

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