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December 2020

Leading an Equitable Recovery



Dear Friends,

Throughout the year, I shared news about the Port's commitment to becoming a more equitable, anti-racist organization, and I highlighted several ways — big and small — the Port made advances towards that goal. Central to this work is a set of core anti-racist principles that the Office of Equity, Diversity, and Inclusion uses to inform the Port's work and recovery efforts. As we close out 2020, I am excited to share a recent example of how we are putting several of those principles into action — centering the needs of the communities most impacted by COVID-19 and the corresponding economic recession; supporting BIPOC-led, community-based organizations; and directing resources to the most impacted communities.

South King County Fund

The Port of Seattle established the [South King County Fund](#) in 2018 to develop equity-based partnerships and provide resources and support in historically underserved, ethnically, and culturally diverse near-airport communities. The fund initially addressed airport noise, environmental health, and sustainability. But after engaging multicultural stakeholders in South King County, it was clear that economic development was a priority for these communities. In April 2020, the Commission added "Economic Development" as an approved use of the fund, responding directly to this feedback and the needs of communities most impacted by the pandemic.



In July, the first funding cycle of the [South King County Fund](#) officially launched. For a two-month period, Port staff conducted community outreach, held information sessions, and advertised the fund, encouraging community-based organizations to apply. Beginning in September, a panel of three Port employees from different departments (Aviation, External Relations, and the Office of Equity, Diversity, and Inclusion) and two community advisors reviewed 27 proposals totaling \$2.475 million. I am very grateful for the work, commitment, and expertise of this panel, and I want to give a special thanks to these two community advisors.

Ruel Olanday

Ruel is a resident from Burien who has worked directly in social services, instruction, and philanthropy (at United Way of King County). Through his work, he has prioritized support for Black, Indigenous, and people of color, with an emphasis on immigrants and non-native English speakers.

Abdirahman Hashi

Abdirahman is a former SEA Airport employee now working at King County. He has over ten years of experience in workforce development within South King County's historically underserved communities and represents the immigrant community.

After an intensive evaluation process that included oral presentations from every applicant, review of written proposals, and consensus discussion, the panel advanced a list of 10 projects for Commission approval. On Tuesday, December 15, the Port Commission approved the panel's recommendation to provide [nearly \\$1 million in economic recovery grants to 10 nonprofit organizations](#). Check out the full [Commission presentation](#).

Seven of these organizations are BIPOC-led, and all 10 will conduct economic recovery programs in communities hardest hit by COVID-19 — with a focus on serving communities of color and immigrant communities— and create an employment pipeline for the next generation of workers in Port-related industries. During the next year, these 10 incredible organizations will serve almost 500 adults

and over 150 youth.

- African Chamber of Commerce — PNW
- African Community Housing & Development
- Asian Counseling and Referral Service
- Businesses Ending Slavery and Trafficking
- CARES of Washington
- Chief Seattle Club
- El Centro de la Raza
- Partners in Employment
- Puget Sound Welcome Back Center
- Washington Maritime Blue

We are honored and excited to work with the following organizations. As a difficult and challenging year draws to a close, please join me in celebrating this bright spot and congratulating these organizations.

In Unity,



Bookda Gheisar

Senior Director, Office of Equity, Diversity, and Inclusion

Centering Equity and Taking Action

Tourism Marketing Support Program

The Port Commission announced its sixth annual Tourism Marketing Support Program, which will provide \$200,000 in matching dollars to local communities and non-profit organizations across the state of Washington, with a goal of spending \$50,000 of those funds to address equity, diversity, and inclusion. The program provides matching support of up to \$10,000 to non-profit destination marketing organizations (DMO's), attractions, cities, tribal organizations and Chambers of Commerce to effectively market their destination to non-resident visitors.

- [Apply until February 5, 2021 at 2:00 p.m.](#)

Opportunity Youth Initiative

[This program concluded at the end of November.](#) The \$1.5 million investment in the community provided nearly 200 youth with paid learning opportunities designed to build skills to succeed in the workplace, create learning opportunities that connect young people to a long-term career path in a port-related industry, strengthen community, and support young people and their families during the COVID-19 pandemic.

Disadvantaged Business Enterprises

The Port addresses economic inequity by expanding opportunities for socially and economically disadvantaged businesses. One way the Port grows these opportunities is through its Disadvantaged Business Enterprise (DBE) Program, which helps ensure that certified socially and economically disadvantaged businesses have equal opportunity to compete for federally funded airport projects.

- [Learn more about DBEs and one contractor.](#)

Transgender Remembrance Day

On November 20, the Port of Seattle's Transgender Inclusivity Committee held an event to honor and remember the victims of violence against transgender people in the United States.

- [Read about the event and reactions from Port employees.](#)

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