



Port of Seattle Commission Equity Policy Directive

**As Adopted
April 11, 2023**

SECTION 1. Purpose.

The Port of Seattle is committed to being a regional and national leader in equity and social justice.

At the Port of Seattle, we center racial equity because of the role that government, as an institution, has and continues to have in perpetuating racial inequities. Racial oppression is foundational to our country's origins; it forms the language and structure for all types of discrimination. Centering racial equity at the Port of Seattle sets a specific, strategic focus that will allow us to develop structural approaches to address all forms of oppression and to advance our inclusion and belonging values as a public agency.

Our vision is to develop a Port that mirrors — throughout its breadth of operations and services and within its leadership structure — the diversity of our community, instills principles of equity in its culture, and ensures a fair and intentional distribution of opportunities with the goal of expanding economic development and quality of life for all.

The purpose of this policy directive is to guide the integration of equity, diversity, inclusion, and belonging into the Port's practices and policies, and to move our work beyond compliance and mandates towards long-term commitment and sustainable systems change. The Port has already taken the critical step of recognizing the need to center equity in the work of the organization. The Port of Seattle Commission has centered equity in several ways, such as: adding a goal to become a model for equity, diversity, inclusion, and belonging to the Century Agenda; creating the first in the nation Port Office of Equity, Diversity, and Inclusion (OEDI); conducting a Port Policing Equity Assessment; adopting the Duwamish Valley Community Benefits Commitment Policy Directive; recognizing Juneteenth as a Port-paid holiday; and passing the 2020 Racial Bias and Equity Motion.

To further this work, this directive will advance equity, diversity, inclusion, and belonging by:

- A. Identifying and eliminating disparities in access to working with and for the Port of Seattle.
- B. Ensuring that all internal and external initiatives, programs, structures, and practices have Equity, Diversity, Inclusion, and Belonging at their core.
- C. Developing leadership accountability for reaching Equity, Diversity, Inclusion, and Belonging goals in our work across the Port and in port-related industries.
- D. Deepening our collective analysis of anti-Black racism in order to improve our policies, programming, and practices to positively impact Black employees and community members.
- E. Strengthening our community partnerships in Port-related work through authentic relationship building and engagement with Port-impacted communities.
- F. Proactively seeking community input to inform and influence decision-making related to Port of Seattle projects, programs, and initiatives.

- G. Working to infuse recommendations from the Port’s Equity Assessment and Women of Color Assessment and any future assessments into practice and policy as well as working towards culture and system shifts to strengthen equity at the Port of Seattle.

SECTION 2. Definitions.

When used in this policy directive, the following words and phrases shall have the meanings given below, unless the context in which they are included clearly indicates otherwise:

“Anti-Black Racism” means policies and practices rooted in institutions and systems that reinforce beliefs, attitudes, prejudice, stereotyping, and/or discrimination towards Black people. While many racial and ethnic groups experience racism or prejudice, the term anti-Black racism underscores the unique experiences of racism for Black people.

“Belonging” means having a meaningful voice and the opportunity to participate in the design of initiatives, programs, and team/cultural norms. At its core, belonging is not just about inclusion, but also about sharing power, access, and opportunities among all groups and individuals within an organization.

"Business Planning Efforts" means portwide strategic planning efforts, executed on a quarterly cadence by all divisions and Centers of Expertise across the organization. Quarterly efforts are as follows: Q1 - Analysis of prior year's performance; Q2 - Strategic Business; Q3 - Budget development; and Q4 - Finalizing Budget, Business Plans and goals for the following year.

“Century Agenda” means the Port’s directional compass that guides the vision of the entire organization.

“Change Team” means a portwide cohort of employees from all departments and lines of business, working to engage all levels of the Port in using a racial equity framework in their daily work, decisions, programming, and policies.

“Department” means any Port of Seattle organizational structure that has a director that reports to a Managing Director who serves on the Executive Leadership Team.

“Economic Development Programs” means occupational job training and placement, job advancement and job retention, pre-apprenticeship training, or occupational education programs associated with port tenants, customers; local economic development programs related to port tenants or port-related economic activities that are sponsored by a port and operated by a nonprofit, private, or public entity; small business development; and other programs as authorized by RCW 53.08.245.

“Equity” means fair treatment, access, opportunity, and advancement for all people while striving to identify and eliminate barriers that have prevented the full participation of historically oppressed communities. Improving equity involves increasing justice and fairness within the procedures and processes of institutions or systems and a fair, intentional distribution of resources.

“EDI” means equity, diversity, and inclusion. “Equity, diversity, and inclusion” and “equity, diversity, inclusion, and belonging” will be used interchangeably to reflect the growing language of equity-focused work to create a culture and environment of belonging.

“Equity Directive Implementation Guide” means the reference guide developed to capture the Port’s emerging equity protocols and processes to operationalize equity motions and directives passed by the Commission. As a guide, it is intended to provide a road map on internal systems changes led by OEDI. The Equity Directive Implementation Guide will be updated at the direction of the Senior Director of OEDI. Updates will be developed in consultation with Change Team members, the Executive Director, Executive Leadership Team (ELT), and the Commission committee responsible for oversight of OEDI.

“Environmental Justice” is the principle that all people and communities have a right to a healthy environment and a right to equal protection and equal enforcement of environmental laws and regulations, and recognizes that vulnerable communities are subjected to disproportionate burdens of pollution.

“Equity in Budgeting” is the integration of an equity lens into the budgeting process and decision-making, including policies, practices, programs, and ultimately, departmental budgets, to develop strategies and actions that reduce inequities, with a particular focus on racial inequities.

“Executive Director’s Protocol on Portwide Goal Establishment and Reporting” refers to protocols issued by the Executive Director’s Office which provide guidance and direction on how all new goals, objectives and reporting requirements that impact a majority of divisions, DOEs or staff will be reviewed and adopted by the Executive Director and the ELT.

“Port Assessments” is in reference to two prior Port assessments: the Equity Assessment and the Women of Color Assessment. In 2021, these two organizational assessments surveyed employee perceptions of the state of equity and conditions for women of color at the Port of Seattle. The findings of each report identify issues and contain recommendations that will move the Port towards its Century Agenda goals and address systemic and/or cultural issues.

“Port-impacted communities” includes both internal and external stakeholders impacted by Port activities. Internal stakeholders include employees, and external stakeholders include small businesses, vendors, contractors, airport workers, and vulnerable communities impacted by port-related activities.

“Port-related industries” means aviation, maritime, construction trades, and green career industries.

“Social Justice” means equal rights and equitable opportunities for all.

“Women or Minority-Owned Business” (WMBE) means a business that is at least 51 percent owned and controlled by women and/or minority (including, but not limited to African Americans, Native Americans, Asians, and Latino) group members.

“Workforce Development” means the composite of strategies and services, including career connected learning, K-12 education, worker and employer training and job matching that help connect and retain workers to careers within the Port and port-related economic activities, and that help ensure area businesses have access to the skilled workforce they need to thrive and grow. RCW 53.08.245(1) provides that “[i]t shall be in the public purpose for all port districts to engage in economic development programs.” RCW 53.08.245(2)(a) provides that such economic development programs may include “[o]ccupational job training and placement, job advancement and job retention, pre-apprenticeship training, or occupational education programs associated with port tenants, customers, and local economic development related to port tenants or port-related economic activities that are sponsored by a port and operated by a nonprofit, private, or public entity.”

SECTION 3. Scope and Applicability.

This directive pertains to all Port of Seattle employees and related business units. Activities to implement this directive must be feasible, under the Port’s legal authority, and within the Port’s policies. Port contractors are outside the scope of this policy directive.

SECTION 4. Responsibilities.

The Executive Director, or delegate, shall engage in the following activities in pursuit of this policy directive:

1. Develop and implement initiatives, programs, practices, and policies to foster and grow a culture of belonging and inclusion within the Port consistent with this policy directive, including but not limited to: contracting, business opportunities for women or minority-owned businesses, workforce development, creating and supporting internal pathways for employees of color and women to advance within the organization to be successful in their work, and other relevant Port directives and activities.
 - a. For additional guidance on implementation of this directive, the Port shall refer to the Equity Policy Directive Implementation Guide and/or consult with OEDI.
2. Use the Port's influence to advance equity as part of the Port’s mission to promote economic development and enhance quality of life via programs and strategies across King County and the region.

SECTION 5. Policy.

As part of the Port's comprehensive Century Agenda Strategic Plan, the Port will strive to "Become a Model for Equity, Diversity, Inclusion." In doing so, the Port will ensure that internal and external initiatives, programs, structures, and practices will be implemented using an equity lens. To achieve this Century Agenda goal, the Executive Director, or designee, shall implement the following structural, operational, and external-facing policies, and develop the Port's environmental justice policies:

A. Structural

1. OEDI shall be a permanent department at the Port of Seattle and reside within Corporate/Central Services.
 - a. The leader of OEDI shall serve on the Port's Executive Leadership Team.
 - b. The mission of OEDI shall be to work with departments to lead and/or support the Port's efforts to advance equity and inclusion across the Port.
2. The Executive Director, or delegate, shall establish and empower a permanent internal Change Team at the Port. The Change Team shall be empowered to collaborate with managers, directors, senior leadership, and other stakeholders to integrate equity and anti-racism practices and advance Port and department EDI goals
3. Change Team activities and methods will be reviewed and approved by the Executive Director or their delegate.
4. In cases where these activities or methods would impact the majority of divisions, departments, or staff, the Change Team or OEDI shall submit plans for these efforts to the Executive Director, delegate, and ELT for review and approval prior to adoption.

B. Operational

1. As part of annual business planning efforts, each Port department shall set its own annual equity, diversity, and inclusion goals, and work towards achieving these goals. The Executive Director, or delegate, shall designate Port staff to assist departments in the creation and revision of their EDI goals. Departmental EDI goals shall be informed by broad engagement of employees across the department, including Port assessments.
 - a. Any equity goal set for a department shall be developed collaboratively with the respective manager or director of that department and reviewed during the business planning period prior to adoption and implementation.
 - b. Any proposed new goals or reporting requirements shall be brought to regularly scheduled business planning meetings, events, or efforts (annually in Q2), to be included into the standard business planning process conducted by all departments.
 - c. Any goal creation by the ED, delegate or Change Team member shall follow the Executive Director's Protocol on Portwide Goal Establishment and Reporting.

2. Progress towards setting and achieving departmental equity goals shall be considered in the annual performance reviews of the Executive Director and members of the ELT.
3. The Port shall use an equity in budgeting toolkit, or equivalent mechanism, in the business planning and budgeting process.
4. The Executive Director, or a delegate, shall:
 - a. Develop a definition for “equity-related resources.” The proposed definition shall be reviewed by the Equity and Workforce Development Committee and considered for adoption by the Commission in public session.
 - b. Calculate and summarize all such equity-related resources in the 2019-2022 Port budgets. These resources shall be calculated as a percent of the total operating budget.
 - c. Propose to the Equity and Workforce Development Committee a structure for communicating and executing a pilot for “equity-related resources” in the 2024 budget. The Proposal shall also be reviewed by the Commission before the adoption of the 2024 budget. The results of this pilot shall be considered for further action.”
5. All Port departments shall utilize trainings and tools created by the Port’s Change Team committees and OEDI to the greatest extent feasible to incorporate equity into their respective programming and strategic planning.
 - a. Change Team members shall work with their manager and respective ELT members to create alignment between training opportunities, tools, and new programs with existing business and strategic planning processes and protocols to the greatest extent possible.
6. OEDI shall support the growth of equity culture and practice among Port employees through training and programming to deepen Port staff understanding, analysis and awareness of systemic and institutionalized racism and anti-Black racism.
 - a. These trainings shall consist, at a minimum, of a mandatory annual racial equity training for all Port employees.
 - b. Individuals in leadership or supervisory roles shall undertake at least one training, orientation, or other learning opportunity to advance a culture of belonging and inclusion per year in addition to the mandatory annual equity training requirement.

C. External

1. The Port, with the approval of the Executive Director and Commission President, will convene cohorts of community advisors as needed to provide opportunities for dialogue to increase equity in Port policies, programs, and initiatives that directly affect advisors’ communities.
 - a. External Relations and OEDI shall increase opportunities for community participation by including language access plans and/or stipends for community

advisory activities as appropriate. The policy for determining how stipends are administered shall be developed and proposed in Q1 2024.

- b. These advisors shall reflect the interests of communities most directly affected by Port operations and programs and shall include representatives from these Port-impacted communities.
2. The Executive Director and the ELT, with support from OEDI, shall identify programs that will undergo a closer review and analysis in order to advance Century Agenda equity goals.
3. The Port shall pursue opportunities and partnerships to expand its portfolio of community-based equity programs and investments that support quality of life, workforce development, and/or economic development enhancements.
4. The Port shall pursue opportunities to partner with other governments to advance equity initiatives. In particular, the Port shall seek opportunities to establish a leadership role in the equity space in our relationships with other ports. This may include sharing lessons learned, equity best practices, and other efforts.

D. Environmental Justice

1. To develop and implement expertise in environmental justice, the Executive Director and OEDI shall:

- a. Coordinate environmental justice efforts between the Port of Seattle Commission, External Relations, Environment and Sustainability staff, and various Port environmental programs.
- b. Convene a stakeholder group including representatives of near-Port communities to discuss environmental justice principles.
- c. Develop a draft set of environmental justice principles informed by this engagement.
- d. Deliver an update to the Commission no later than Q1 of 2024 on the Port's environmental justice work.

SECTION 6. Program Evaluation.

The Executive Director, or a delegate, shall monitor and evaluate progress towards departmental equity goals, equity objectives, and areas of emphasis outlined in the Port's Century Agenda Strategic Plan and resultant from prior Port assessments. This monitoring and evaluation shall include but not be limited to the following:

1. In alignment with the Port's business planning, a report to the Commission on an annual basis, at a minimum including:
 - a. A summary of each department's equity goals and progress made towards achieving these equity goals.
 - b. Identification of the most significant emergent and/or ongoing barriers Port employees face in fairly accessing resources and opportunities at the Port as determined via OEDI and/or HR engagement.
 - c. Identification of continuous process improvement opportunities in contracting with Community Based Organizations. This identification shall be informed by

engagement with community-based organizations, including at least one listening session conducted by OEDI and/or External Relations.

2. Regular portwide data-gathering regarding progress towards equity outcomes and implementing the equity practices identified in Port assessments.
 - a. Any data-gathering or reporting shall follow the *Executive Director's Protocol on Portwide Goal Establishment and Reporting*.
 - b. Progress towards equity outcomes shall be measured by in-depth, qualitative assessments (similar to the 2021 Equity Assessment) every four years, as well as annual quantitative surveys of Port employee sentiment regarding equity progress.
 - c. The results of these annual equity surveys and assessments shall be made public.
 - d. Progress towards implementing equity practices shall be monitored by OEDI staff, who will gather information on the implementation of these practices across the Port.
3. Internal Audit shall conduct an audit of the outcomes of the policy requirements outlined in this directive on a periodic basis.
 - a. Internal Audit shall present the results of this audit to the Audit Committee and refer to the Commission in public session as necessary.
4. The Commission directs the Executive Director, or delegate, to review current and proposed policies for equity impacts and to consult with the Commission to ensure inclusive, open, and fair access by stakeholders in decision processes that impact community.