

Item No. 7b attach 4

Meeting Date: July 14, 2020



## OFFICE OF EQUITY, DIVERSITY, AND INCLUSION

WORKFORCE DEVELOPMENT

# 2020 COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT REPORT

The information in this report is based on listening sessions conducted with members of the community who agreed to be involved in strategic planning activities for the Port of Seattle's Workforce Development. This report is intended to provide a high-level analysis of the most prominent themes and issues. While it's not possible to include all the detailed feedback we received, feedback that was relevant to the strategic planning process is presented for the Port's review and consideration.

## PROJECT OVERVIEW

A Workforce Development Policy Directive is scheduled to be presented to the Port Commission for consideration and adoption in July 2020. The new Policy Directive will guide the workforce development efforts of the Port. It will enable the Office of Equity, Diversity, and Inclusion to advance the Port's commitment to workforce development programs and will support targeted efforts that directly benefit communities impacted by Port activities, underrepresented communities, and port-related industries in King County and in Washington State. The Policy Directive will advance the Port's commitment to workforce development and is intended to:

1. Center diversity, equity, and inclusion
2. Create equitable access to economic prosperity
3. Leverage partnerships
4. Ensure a skilled workforce for the port and port-related industries
5. Demonstrate measurable outcomes

As part of the Port's WFD strategic planning process, leadership and staff have conducted extensive outreach to public and nonprofit partners within the community. This community engagement report is a product of months of engagement with workforce development government representatives, community-based organizations, and clients of the workforce development programs funded by the Port of Seattle. Included at the end of this report are definitions of terms such as equity, workforce development, and wraparound services.

---

This report provides a summary of community feedback received from December 2019 - March 2020 about early Workforce Development strategic planning work for the Port of Seattle.

## COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT OVERVIEW

During our early strategic planning we asked partners to tell us what Port of Seattle workforce development programs were working well and what impact these programs have on training a skilled workforce.

We also asked WFD partners to help us identify workforce development needs, opportunities, and challenges so that we can create WFD programs that deliver the best solutions and greatest impact for local communities.

While it is the job of the POS WFD team to recommend strategies for meeting the workforce needs of the region and the Port, we value and rely on the expertise of community partners. These relationships help us understand what is important in different communities and if our strategic planning is accounting for the needs of communities most impacted by structural inequities.

### Engagement Timeline



#### **CBO Listening Sessions**

December 2019–March 2020

Met with community-based organizations who currently have a WFD contract with the POS.



#### **CBO Clients Listening Sessions**

December 2019–March 2020

Met with clients/students of POS-WFD supported programs.



#### **Public Partners Listening Sessions**

January–March 2020

Met with WFD partners from local and regional public/government agencies.



#### **Report Back to Communities**

May–June 2020

## OUR APPROACH WITH COMMUNITIES

### Impact of WFD programs

#### Why we asked for feedback

The WFD Policy Directive outlines the goals to be achieved by the WFD strategic plan.

The overarching goal of the Port's Workforce Development program is to increase equitable access for workers and to increase opportunities for them to acquire the skills and education they need to secure increasingly complex and better compensated jobs.

The Port has supported WFD programs for more than two decades. We must continue to assess the impact of these programs to determine and validate their efficacy in producing the intended results.

The development of the 2021-2023 WFD Strategic Plan will be informed by promising practices and programs the Port has supported that demonstrated measurable impact and can be brought to scale.

#### What we asked

- In your experience with WFD programs, what has worked well?
- What could be better? Is there anything that you would change?
- Do you have specific ideas or suggestions on how to improve the work/programs?

Why not just create a strategic plan then ask for feedback?

During the initial strategic planning process design, the WFD team determined that stakeholder engagement would be essential to develop programs that meet the expressed needs of job seekers while balancing the workforce needs of the Port of Seattle and port-related economic activities. In particular, the WFD team wanted input on how to strengthen the Port's workforce investments from those who develop and implement WFD programs in communities throughout the region.

To leverage the workforce development opportunities provided by the Port of Seattle, we conducted listening sessions not only to gauge the impact of the Port's Workforce Development programs, but also to see if the investments had been allocated in areas that met the needs of job seekers in the region.

## HOW WE REACHED OUT TO STAKEHOLDERS

Port staff created a list of community-based organizations the Port has supported with its funding of workforce development programs. Staff also identified workforce development stakeholders and partners in aviation, maritime, and construction that the Port has collaborated with in the past. To obtain input from a wide variety of stakeholders while performing in-depth analysis and planning in a relatively short period of time, staff organized and convened listening sessions by sector and by role. We held separate listening sessions for community-based organizations whose programs focus on aviation, maritime, and construction. We also held separate listening sessions for job seekers, students, and clients of these organizations in the aviation, maritime, and construction sectors. Additionally, we met with government workforce development representatives.

## WHO WE HEARD FROM

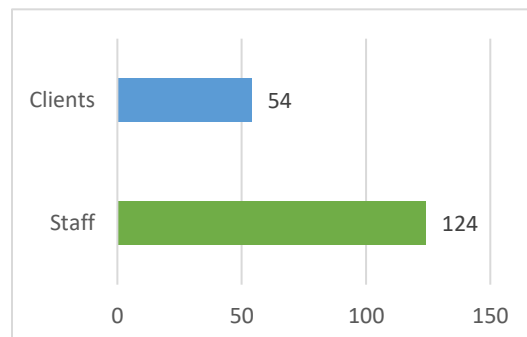
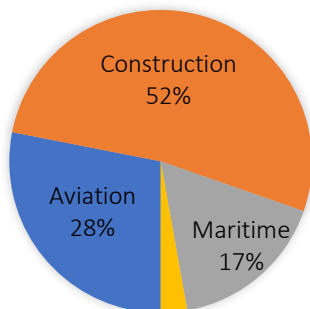
To make sure that we heard from a range of stakeholders, we held 18 listening sessions with 13 different groups of which five were with clients/students of programs that the Port funds.

It was not possible for us to meet with all the organizations that the Port has supported or partnered with; therefore, we met with organizations with which the Port is currently supporting or partnering.

### Stakeholders

1. ANEW
2. Highline Skills Center
3. Youth Maritime Collaborative
4. Museum of Flight
5. Port Jobs
6. Priority Hire Outreach, Training and Retention Partnership
7. Regional Pre-Apprenticeship Collaboration (RPAC)
8. Regional Public Owners
9. Seattle-King County Workforce Development Council
10. Tye High School Internship
11. Urban League
12. Western WA. Apprenticeship Coordinators
13. Washington Alliance for Better Schools

178 PARTICIPANTS



Government  
3%

## SUMMARY OF KEY FINDINGS

It is rare for community engagement to occur during the early stages of a strategic planning process. Typically, community engagement begins after the process is completed. We were pleased with the number of people who participated and were involved in the strategic planning process and by the quality of the responses we received.



Establish a policy of transparency about funding and program performance and eliminate structural barriers to procurement and contracts.



Avoid duplicating efforts by partnering with state and local workforce agencies and boards to offer evidence-based training.



Allow flexible funding that supports wraparound services to address retention and completion challenges.



Conduct more community outreach, specifically to historically underrepresented populations.



Ensure employer readiness to increase retention.



Expand career pathways to targeted in-demand careers.

## Key Findings Recommendations



**Transparency:** Establish a policy of transparency about **funding** and **program** performance.

1. Make information about the flow of workforce funds (agency budgets, plans, RFPs, and awarded contracts) easily available to the public online. This would help providers and partners identify potential opportunities to fund evidence-based workforce development models.
2. Make workforce program performance information easily available to the public and link data across public service systems. This will help individuals exploring opportunities select the program that will work best for them, and thereby drive more job seekers and resources toward the higher-performing, evidence-based programs. Performance data should be presented in a user-friendly manner and broken down by training provider and program of study.



**Procurement Process:** Eliminate structural barriers to procurement and contracts.

1. Make the certification and bidding process less cumbersome.
2. Remove barriers to entry for non-profits and small businesses by reducing insurance and bonding thresholds.
3. Increase the number of contracts available for small businesses including breaking contracts apart into more manageable pieces.
4. Simplify and expedite the contract process.
5. Make faster payments.



**Coordination Across Systems:** Avoid duplicating efforts by partnering with state and local workforce agencies and boards to offer evidence-based training.

1. Support and coordinate policies and programs across the numerous economic and workforce development agencies to ensure a skilled workforce can support business and economic growth in the region.
2. Encourage collaboration between workforce and educational programs at the regional level to align programs with each other and regional labor market needs.



**Wraparound Services:** Allow flexible funding that supports wraparound services to address retention and completion challenges.

1. Allocate funding to incentivize training and education completion where students receive stipends for achieving milestones and or completing a program.
2. To reduce barriers to program completion, provide program funds to pay for transportation, child care, tools, and equipment.
3. Allow funds to be used to support individuals who face challenges early in their job placement (e.g., transportation, childcare, tools, etc.).



**Community Outreach:** Conduct more community outreach, specifically to historically underrepresented populations.

1. Engage in consistent and continuous communication with communities that are underserved.
2. Market the benefits of jobs in port-related industries to targeted populations and engage them in the development of strategies and programs.
3. Establish reliable procedures that provide partners and community members the ability to communicate with WFD staff and maintain regular contact with them.
4. Create a feedback loop between the Port's WFD program and the community.



**Prepare Employers:** Ensure employer readiness to increase retention.

1. Conduct equity, diversity, and inclusion trainings to ensure that they have the cultural competence to work with a diverse workforce.



**Career Pathways:** Expand career pathways to targeted in-demand careers.

1. Increase awareness of key port-related economic activities, jobs, and career pathways.
2. Facilitate industry partner engagement with public and post-secondary education to identify needed skill sets, design relevant curriculum, and enhance the programs.
3. Provide more work-based learning opportunities for students, teachers, and job-seekers.



## Aviation Key Feedback

Overall, we heard that the partnership between Port Jobs, Airport University, and the Port of Seattle has led to increased job opportunities for women and people of color at the airport.

Clients and students indicated the areas they considered to be among the most important are related to:

- Access to free education, materials, computers, and parking;
- Employment support (e.g., help with resumes, cover letters, and interview techniques);
- Job placement; and
- Support with permits.

### Challenges:

- Greater outreach, both in the community and at the airport.
- Additional language capacity at the Airport Employment Center.
- Expansion of Airport University (e.g., more classroom space, additional course offerings, upgraded technology, etc.).
- Additional Airport University scholarships.
- Work supports (e.g., child care, transportation assistance, etc.).
- Greater employer (and union) engagement.

“I was almost giving up on education, but this class gave me direction in life and motivation”

### Opportunities:

- Expand the aviation career pathways to other targeted, in-demand pathway jobs within the aviation and facilities maintenance pathway and other areas (e.g., ground operations, safety and security).
- To achieve greater scale, create employment opportunities at the Port of Seattle.
- Work with Airlines to serve as training agents.

“The program gave me enough skills to apply and interview for jobs at the Port against people that had 20 years of experience.”

## Construction Key Feedback

Overall, we heard that the Priority Hire and construction training and education partnerships between the Port of Seattle, King County, City of Seattle, King County Metro, Sound Transit, and community-based organizations have been instrumental. These partnerships have allowed stakeholders to coordinate workforce development efforts.

Clients and students indicated the areas they considered to be among the most important in the construction programs are related to:

- Employment support (e.g., help with resumes, cover letters, and interview techniques);
- Support with skills training in pre-apprenticeships; and
- Support with work permits and credentials.

“They take us to apprentice programs and give us a feel for what the real world looks like.”

### Challenges:

- Greater community outreach.
- Workforce projections associated with Port priority hire/apprentice utilization, so that programs can align their efforts with projected demand.
- Pre-apprenticeship training program reforms (e.g., increased accessibility of classes in terms of times and location, integration/contextualization of language skills, community college partnerships, etc.).
- Funding for pre-apprenticeship training programs.
- More supportive services, including during apprenticeships (e.g., tools and work clothes, relicensing, transportation, child care, etc.), to help with retention and completion.
- Other retention support (e.g., navigation and mentoring).
- Tracking of results.
- Lack of transparency.
- Contracting takes too long.
- Lack of accountability.

### Opportunities:

- Continue to partner with other regional public owners to develop a pipeline of skilled construction workers to meet current and future needs driven by Port and other public infrastructure projects and broaden access to training and jobs for target populations and priority communities.
- Fully implement the Port’s priority hire policy and program and evaluate its impact.
- Identify opportunities to establish apprenticeships within the Port’s internal workforce.
- Continue funding for construction worker outreach, training, and retention services, with a focus on target populations and priority communities, as part of the effort to develop a pipeline of skilled construction workers.
- Policy: Allow organizations to do screening for jobs—trust the partners.
- Policy: Change educational requirements—this would allow more people of color to qualify for internships

“It doesn’t matter how good we do in the program; the desirable trades have a waiting list.”

## Maritime Key Feedback

Overall, we heard that the Youth Maritime Collaborative (YMC) has been successful in organizing and offering a series of experiential and career connected learning events to K-12 students that introduce youth to maritime careers and career pathways. This multi-agency partnership has allowed stakeholders to coordinate maritime workforce development efforts. YMC partners have developed a resource database of key partners for career connected learning, service learning, field trips, guest speakers, workshops, support/wraparound services, academic support, and career and college navigation. Additionally, YMC has organized and/or attended industry events for maritime employer outreach and recruitment.

Clients and students indicated the areas they considered to be among the most important in the maritime programs are related to:

- Experiential learning;
- Wraparound supports that allow them to participate and learn;
- Service hours credits; and
- Employment readiness support (e.g., help with resumes, cover letters, and interview techniques).

### Challenges

- Community outreach, specifically reaching historically underrepresented populations.
- Increasing the number of maritime internships and providing interns stipends and wraparound supports.
- Active Port engagement and commitment (e.g., using its influence with maritime employers to engage them in the strategy, increase the number of internships, etc.).
- Maritime employer readiness for interns.
- Maritime career connected learning opportunities that span the continuum (e.g., awareness, exploration, preparation, work experience, and skills training and education), and help youth move along the continuum, not just one-time events.
- Employers are not ready for youth, specially youth of color.

“The plan that we wrote together is a start but the one piece that is missing is that wrap-around services and the connective tissue. One good thing that Port Townsend does well, is have a thread of maritime curriculum from K-12. We need opportunities for students to explore before high school and create a beyond plan.”

### Opportunities

- Increase capacity for Youth Maritime Collaborative by collaborating across organizations and creating stronger partnerships with public agencies and industry leaders.
- Conduct landscape analysis of youth serving institutions.
- Build relationships with employers to hire students.

“They are trying really hard to make it appealing, but I’m not interested because it is grunt work.”

## Definitions

**“Career Pathways”** means an integrated collection of programs and services intended to develop community members’ core academic, technical and employability skills; provide them with continuous education, training; and place them in high-demand, high-opportunity jobs and careers.

**“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, 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. The Port of Seattle refers to these as “workforce development programs.”

**“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 some groups. Improving equity involves (1) increasing justice and fairness with the procedures and processes of institutions or systems and (2) a fair, intentional distribution of resources. For example, racial equity considers root causes of inequities and results in the elimination of racism in all policies, practices, attitudes, and cultural messages at the structural, institutional, and individual levels.

**“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 regional 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.

**“Wraparound Services”** means those services and support systems including but not limited to, public transportation assistance, clothing, tools, food assistance, child-care and monetary compensation as allowable by law, regulations and funding sources, that promote access and stronger alignment of workforce, education, vocational rehabilitation, and other human services systems.

-END-