

## **Summary of South King County Community Impact Fund** *Evaluation Findings and Recommendations*

### **Background**

The South King County Community Impact Fund (SKCCIF) was created in 2018 to provide funding to non-profit organizations that support environmental health, sustainability, and economic recovery, primarily in near-airport communities. The program has been successful in advancing its goals and, as we near the completion of the fund's initial investment of \$10 million, the Port hired Contacto Consulting in November 2022 to evaluate what has worked and areas for improvement to support future decision making. This provides a high-level overview of their findings and recommendations from a combination of community and Port staff engagement.

The consultant's assessment included literature and internal document review, examination of similar funds at other ports across the country, an online survey to community partners, a visioning session with community members, and in-depth qualitative interviews with 25 key internal and external constituents. Participants included applicants (funded and non-funded), community reviewers, consultants, Port Commissioners, ELT members and staff. The consultant's review focused on four areas:

- Current state. Is there clarity about the intent of SKCCIF?
- Reaching communities. How can SKCCIF improve its connections with target communities?
- Equity. How can SKCCIF make the process more accessible and equitable?
- Vision. What could the future of the SKCCIF look like?

### **SKCCIF Mission, Vision, and Goals**

**Mission:** The Port removes systemic barriers and enhances the quality of life for structurally excluded communities. We do so by increasing access to living wage jobs in Port-related industries, improving public spaces, and investing in community-led projects.

**Vision:** The SKCCIF is a model for partnerships that address structural inequities, creates thriving communities, and advances equity for all.

#### **Goals:**

- Invest in near-airport cities to enhance livability, improve green spaces, and restore urban forests.
- Support development of skills, experience, and education to secure living wage jobs at the Port and to develop the next generation of workers in Port-related industries.
- Foster economic development pathways that provide training and assistance and help small and women and minority owned businesses to fully compete for Port contracts.
- Advance equity, diversity and inclusion in Port programs and community investments.

**Results of the first four years of funding:**

**Economic Recovery Program (Cycle 1 through Cycle 3)**

Projects Funded	28
Apprenticeship and Pre-Apprenticeship Placements	239* <b>Aviation:</b> Nucor, Boyd Corp, Three Sigma, Hill Aero, <b>Maritime:</b> Seattle Goodwill Youth Maritime, Pacific Yacht Mgmt., Vigor, Center for Wooden Boats, UW Ocean Labs <b>Construction:</b> ANEW, PACT (pre-apprentice construction training) <b>Green Jobs:</b> Shere Solar Energy, Youth Build
Internship Placements	130* <b>Maritime:</b> Port of Seattle Maritime, Youth Maritime Accelerator, Launch 206, Seattle Parks and Recreation, Basta Boatlifts <b>Aviation:</b> American Structures & Design, Automatic Products, Renton Coil & Spring, Aero-Plastics and Out of the Box Manufacturing <b>Construction:</b> Pacific Steel Group
Job Placements	528* <b>Aviation:</b> VIP Hospitality, HMSHost, Discovery Health, TransWest, McGee Air Services. Delta and Alaska Airlines <b>Maritime:</b> Harbor Freight, SSA Marine, Tote Marine, Mid Sound Fisheries, WA Conservation Corps. <b>Construction:</b> Sunset Rebar, Riverside Steele, R&D Masonry
Business Partners	52* HMSHost, Discovery Health, TransWest, McGee Air Services. Delta and Alaska Airlines, Worldwide Flight Services, Prime Flight Aviation Services, Concessions International; SCIS Air Security; FedEx; ABM – Aviation; Terminal Spa Getaway, McGee Air Services, Keller Meyers Janitorial, Mid Sound fisheries, Basta Boatlifts, Machinist institute,
Starting salary	\$19.06-\$34.00 per hour
Dollars Awarded	\$5,235,970

\*Cycle 3 projects started in June 2023, and are not included in these totals.

**Environmental Program (Cycle 1 through Cycle 3)**

Projects Funded	37
Trees Planted	664*
Total Volunteer Hours	3,420*
Total Education and Training Hours	3,020*
Total Dollars Awarded	\$930,717

\*Cycle 3 projects will complete their six-month progress reports in November 2023, therefore their improvements are not included in these totals.

<b>Program Area</b>	<b>Funds allocated to date</b>
Economic Recovery	\$ 5,235,970
Environmental	\$ 930,717
WMBE /Small Business	\$ 760,000
Capacity Building	\$ 400,000
<b>Total funds allocated</b>	<b>\$ 7,326,686</b>
Cycle 4 funds available	\$ 2,739,715

**Accomplishments, Findings, and Recommendations:**

**Key Accomplishments:**

- Introducing community-based organizations to the Port and its operations while increasing support and capacity building for small grassroots organizations.
- Make the application process more accessible (multiple languages) and consolidate content into one form.
- Allow organizations to submit a proposal in their language of preference.
- Offer a “first time applicant” workshop and multiple community information sessions to increase participation.
- Supported multiple organizations to develop new workforce and job training programs and increasing the opportunities for community organizations to expand their services for people living in South King County.
- Introducing many new communities and organizations to the Port and its operations who had no [previous relationship to the organization while increasing support and capacity building for small grassroots community organizations.
- Offering multi-year (up to 3 years) funding to allow for community organizations sustainable income streams to better carry out their scope of work and mission in their communities.
- Changing policy at the state level that mandated contracts with community organizations required a financial match from 3:1 to 2:1.
- Allowing community members to review project applications throughout the entire approval process.
- Releasing 25% of the yearly funding will be provided within 30 days of the start of contract to enable community organizations to ramp up projects more quickly.
- Consistent RFP schedules for the Economic Recovery and Environmental grants to provide more access to community partners.

**Findings and Recommendations for the future:** While we made significant progress since the launch of the fund five years ago, we heard from community members and partners about their recommendations for the future fund's future.

**1. Increase opportunities to collaborate with community partners in South King County.**

- Incorporate feedback from the program's ecosystem (i.e., community organizations, program participants, young people, cities, potential employees, vendors, neighbors, customers, employers, other funders) about how the Port's investments advance the environmental and economic opportunity goals of their communities.
- Provide multilingual and multicultural capacity building support to diverse near-airport communities to strengthen community partnerships within SKCCIF activities. This includes: community reviewers, liaisons, and project applicants.
- Collaborate with other funders to pool resources and provide more comprehensive support to participants, particularly for smaller CBOs.

*"We need to look at, from an equity perspective, how are we helping smaller CBOs grow by providing them these financial resources. They may not have the perfect grant application to begin with, but the work they're trying to do is solid."* – Port of Seattle staff member

**2. Improve program accessibility by creating authentic pathways for community engagement and by nurturing partnerships with aligned stakeholders.**

- Increase the number of community reviewers on each cycle, grant them voting rights and clarify their role and Port expectations.
- Leverage the Port's investment in historically under-resourced communities.
- Explore an expanded definition of Port-related jobs.

*"I wish that there was more of an emphasis on partnerships. Because there are a lot of small, teeny tiny nonprofits who couldn't really apply for the Fund because they wouldn't have all the help they would need to fulfill the grant. But if they partnered with other organizations that would be really beneficial for both organizations, not just from a volunteer standpoint but also a monetary standpoint."* – Community member

**3. Continue to track impact, develop metrics for success and more effectively tell our story of our success via -paid, earned and social media.**

- Increase coordination with other Port-related community engagement efforts supporting Workforce Development, Economic Development and Environment and Sustainability

- Create a story bank of qualitative data from funded partners to promote the community impact of their projects.
- Track quantitative metrics such as the number of jobs created, people trained, volunteer hours, trees planted to demonstrate the investments in the community.
- Utilize the Port's Equity Index to invest in community-driven solutions.

*"The Fund needs to create some ecosystem around conversations on who's got funding, what impact it had in the community, what communities were impacted."* Community member

*"Having a way to showcase us and others working in the apprenticeship community is something that their employer partners can utilize."* – Community member

#### **4. Simplify the application process to increase the diversity of applicant pool.**

- Continue to make the application process more accessible through multiple languages and a simple one-page application form.
- Allow organizations to submit a proposal in their language of preference.
- Continue offering a "first time applicant" workshop and multiple community information sessions to increase participation.

*"Would love to see more organizations come to the table: provide more resources, provide a level of support needed in order for new organizations to be able to meet Port requirements."* - Community member

#### **5. Implement equitable contracting practices that put community organizations on a path to success.**

- Maintain offering the initial investment of 25% of the annual funding will be provided within 30 days of a signed contract.
- Continue offering technical assistance in different languages or have interpreters if in-language training is not possible.
- Maintain the multi-year funding approach to allow more flexibility for CBOs.

*"Focus on training and education about what the Port does to meet and provide folks with the ability to give us better applications. We need education around what we can and can't do, and within the scope of that, how can we be more impactful."* - Community member

*"The Port is using a very large procurement for relatively small amounts of money in the Port scale of revenue. The way they are asking all of us to apply, and the steps and the time that has to be spent is actually more labor and cost intensive for the amount of funding that is. And there are steps in the process that potentially, especially if you're a smaller organization and you serve a very local area, you may have to actually contract out someone to help you with writing, with the accounting or other*

*aspects of the Port requirements. It would be useful if there was a different process that the Port could use within their system.” –Community member*