



**COMMISSION  
AGENDA MEMORANDUM**

**Item No.** 11b

**BRIEFING ITEM**

**Date of Meeting** March 26, 2024

**DATE:** March 19, 2024

**TO:** Stephen P. Metruck, Executive Director

**FROM:** Bookda Gheisar, Senior Director, Office of Equity, Diversity, and Inclusion  
Tania Park, Equity, Diversity, and Inclusion System Change Program Manager  
Jay Doran, Equity, Diversity, and Inclusion Policy & Communications Manager

**SUBJECT: 2023 Annual Report for the Office of Equity, Diversity, and Inclusion**

**EXECUTIVE SUMMARY**

In 2019, the Port of Seattle created the Office of Equity, Diversity, and Inclusion (OEDI) as an organizationally cross-cutting department charged with building the Port’s capacity and skills to address institutional racism and other forms of oppression by transforming policies, practices, and culture. OEDI collaborates with departments and employees across the organization towards a vision of creating a truly anti-racist, equitable Port. In 2023, OEDI led efforts to advance key policies and programs that advanced our ability to accomplish this vision.

In 2021, OEDI conducted a comprehensive equity, diversity, and inclusion (EDI) assessment of the Port of Seattle, specifically reviewing workplace culture; operations and processes; hiring, promotions, compensations, and staff development; community engagement; and, contracting and women or minority-owned business enterprises (WMBEs). Also, during 2021, OEDI – at the direction of the Executive Director – contracted with a consultant to assess the experiences and outcomes of women of color in the organization, known as the 2021 Women of Color (WOC) Assessment. The EDI and WOC Assessment generated more than 60 recommendations for organizational changes and improvements to advance equity, diversity, and inclusion. Additionally, in April 2023, the Port of Seattle Commission enacted the Equity Policy Directive – revolutionary legislation that will ensure the organization prioritizes just, inclusive policies and programs internally and externally for years to come. The Equity Policy Directive created structure, operational, and external improvements and requirements that cement equity into the fabric of the organization.

The briefing on March 26, 2024 will provide a summary of key accomplishments of OEDI in 2023, an update on the implementation of the recommendations from the EDI and WOC Assessment, an update on the work and progress of the Change Team, an update on the implementation of the Equity Policy Directive, and a snapshot of OEDI’s work and goals for 2024. Finally, during the briefing, OEDI will highlight the most prominent challenges and barriers to achieving the vision of an anti-racist, equitable Port.

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**BACKGROUND**

Nearly five 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 had comfortably operated in an unjust, racist society that works to the benefit of a few at the expense of many. By failing to acknowledge and actively addressing these inequities, the organization realized that it was playing a role in perpetuating them.

OEDI’s work is informed by the following three strategies:

**STRATEGY 1**

Transform the Port of Seattle by infusing racial equity principles and practices into all aspects of organizational structure, programs, policies, processes, and culture.

**STRATEGY 2**

Support the Port of Seattle to create meaningful engagement with near-Port communities and to provide equitable and tangible benefits to impacted communities of color, immigrant and refugee communities, and low-income communities.

**STRATEGY 3**

Build OEDI’s capacity and expertise to lead, partner, and collaborate on equity change work with external peer agencies – locally and nationally.

The concept of *Normalize, Organize, and Operationalize* undergirds all our work. Normalizing racial equity within an institution means just that – to normalize talking about equity so that over time it becomes an organizational norm and leads to results, such as through modeling and tone setting by leadership, and employee dialogues and learning events. Organizing for equity means building infrastructure and capacity to implement equity practices, such as by creating policy; completing an equity planning process including establishing definitions, vision, and values; and creating or increasing staff capacity to embed equity into their work. Operationalizing equity includes all the elements that allow equity principles to be fully integrated into day-to-day operations, including budgeting with an equity lens, creating accountability mechanisms, and fostering meaningful engagement of both Port staff and the public.

**KEY ACCOMPLISHMENTS**

2023 Highlights	Key Accomplishments
Change Team	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Built cross-functional capacity of employees by engaging and training employees of every department in the Port.</li> </ul>

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Monitored and assisted with the implementation of 2023 department EDI goals.</li> <li>• Led the development of annual department EDI goals for 2024.</li> <li>• Championed EDI within departments through initiatives such as Equity Moments.</li> </ul>
<p>EDI Goals &amp; Assessment Actions</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• At the department-level, the Change Team helped to develop, implement, and track 2023 department EDI goals. Across all departments, approximately 89% of EDI goals were completed in 2023.</li> <li>• Continued progress to implement and track recommendations from the 2021 Equity and Women of Color Assessments. Through 2023, approximately 67% of those recommendations had been implemented.</li> <li>• Conducted three listening sessions with women of color employees to follow-up on the findings of the 2021 Women of Color Assessment. Feedback from these sessions reaffirmed the need to continue to implement the recommendations from the 2021 assessment.</li> <li>• The second annual Belonging &amp; Inclusion Survey was conducted in 2023. The results demonstrated cultural improvement in several areas and also reaffirmed previously documented disparities among employees along the lines of race, gender, sexual orientation, and union representation.</li> </ul>
<p>Equity in Budgeting</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Members of the Port’s Change Team, in partnership with OEDI and Finance and Budget, developed with 2024 Equity In Budgeting Playbook – the third iteration of this tool.</li> <li>• All departments and divisions applied this playbook to the create of their 2024 budgets.</li> <li>• Included in the 2024 playbook, Port staff developed a new way to measure the organization’s investment in equity, know as “equity spending.” Annually, the organization will measure the amount of our operating budget that qualifies as equity spending.</li> </ul>
<p>Racial Equity Training + Engagement</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• OEDI offered a total of 51 trainings and workshops in 2023, including 3 cohorts of Race – the Power of an Illusion, 8 EDI Lunch and Learns, 12 Anti-Oppression Workshops, 22 Racial Equity 101s and 102s, and 6 Supervisors’ Racial Equity 101s and 102s.</li> <li>• Since instituting the annual equity training requirement for all employees, approximately 64% of frontline employees have completed Racial Equity 101, 28% of frontline employees have completed Racial Equity 102, 98% of supervisors have completed Supervisors’ Racial Equity 101, and 61% of supervisors have completed Supervisors’ Racial Equity 102.</li> </ul>

<p>External Engagement</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• In 2023, the South King County Community Impact Fund expanded to include a total of 65 partner organizations, investing nearly \$7M of the total \$10M of the fund.</li> <li>• In 2023, OEDI and External relations conducted an extensive assessment of the Port’s language access work, strengths, and needs, as part the Language Access Motion based by the Commission. The results of the assessment identified the need for several improvements, departments that are high utilizers, and the creation of a Language Access Cohort of departments who will be developing a Language Access Guidance Manual.</li> <li>• Northwest Seaport Alliance – In partnership with the Northwest Seaport Alliance, our office has been supporting a collaborative effort to decarbonize the Gateway. The multi-stakeholder Puget Sound Zero-Emission Truck Collaborative formed in June 2023 to develop a roadmap for transitioning to zero-emission drayage services across the Puget Sound region’s marine cargo terminals no later than 2050. We are committed to supporting a just and equitable transition by working to ensure independent owner/operators are at the decision-making table and guiding what an equitable approach can look like through this design process.</li> </ul>
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**ADDITIONAL BACKGROUND**

None.

**ATTACHMENTS TO THIS BRIEFING**

- (1) OEDI’s 2023 Annual Report
- (2) 2023 Equity, Diversity, and Inclusion Action Progress Report
- (3) Presentation slides

**PREVIOUS COMMISSION ACTIONS OR BRIEFINGS**

March 12, 2024 – The Commission was briefed on the findings and recommendations of the Language Access Assessment per the Language Access Order passed in April 2023. Commission was asked for a two-year extension to complete the remaining items of the Language Access Order.

October 10, 2023 – The Commission was brief on the progress and evaluation of the South King County Community Impact Fund.

April 11, 2023 – The Commission passed the Equity Policy Directive, guiding the integration of equity, diversity, inclusion, and belonging into the Port’s practices and policies, and to move the work beyond compliance and mandates towards long-term commitment and sustainable system.

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- April 11, 2023 – The Commission authorized the Language Access Order (2023-05), directing the Port to develop a language access policy and plan that ensures inclusion of non or limited English speakers, including those who are hard of hearing or deaf, in the use of Port services and facilities; and the port-wide implementation of a plan directing divisions with publicly facing public services to offer language assistance services including translation and/or interpretation.
- February 14, 2023 – The Commission was briefed on the 2022 OEDI Annual Report, including a review of success from 2022 and an overview of goals and work for 2023.
- September 13, 2022 – The Commission was requested to authorize the Executive Director to execute contracts for the 2022/2023 South King County Community Impact Fund (SKCCIF) not to exceed \$3.25M.
- June 28, 2022 – The Commission was requested to (1) determine that a competitive process was not appropriate or cost-effective and exempts the contract from a competitive process consistent with RCW 53.19.020; and (2) the Executive Director executed a contract amendment with Equity Matters to provide expert services for EDI training for supervisors for an increase of \$65,000 for a new contract total of \$264,400; and (3) the Commission authorized the Executive Director to execute a competitive indefinite delivery indefinite quantity (IDIQ) contract, not to exceed \$750,000 during a five year period, to implement a long-term training strategy.
- January 4, 2022 – The Commission was briefed with a summary of key findings and recommendations from the EDI assessment, an update on the work and progress of the Change Team, and an update on the progress of the required racial equity trainings.
- September 14, 2021 – The Commission was briefed on the Equity Index, which was created with the initial intent to equitably guide funding decisions for the South King County Fund, serving as a component of the criteria for applications.
- September 14, 2021 – The Commission was briefed on the Port Policing Assessment Final Report, with a summary of key findings and recommendations for potential Commission or Executive action, as well as proposed plan for implementation over the coming year.
- July 27, 2021 – The Commission was requested to authorize the Executive Director to execute contract agreements and implement the 2021 South King County Fund program in an amount not-to-exceed \$2million.
- May 11, 2021 – The Commission was briefed on the South King County Fund Recommendations. The successful first cycle of South King County Fund (SKCF) was launched in the summer of 2020 with \$250,000 in support for WMBE small business development and \$1million for Economic Recovery Grants and then followed shortly hereafter with \$250,000 for Environmental Grants.
- April 27, 2021 – The Commission was briefed on the Port Policing Assessment Progress Report. At the Commission’s November 17 public meeting, staff presented a progress report of initial findings. The briefing on April 27 provided further status updates, additional recommendations for potential Commission or Executive action, and an updated timeline for completion of assessment.

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December 9, 2020 – The Commission was requested to authorize the Executive Director to execute up to ten (10) contracts through the South King County Economic Recovery Fund, for a combined total not-to-exceed \$981,881.

November 17, 2020 – The Commission was briefed on progress-to-date, initial findings, and potential next steps from 21CP Solutions, the Port’s policing assessment consultant, as well as key stakeholders.

October 13, 2020 – The Commission approved the Racial Bias and Equity Motion.

February 11, 2020 – The Commission was briefed on the 2020 OEDI Strategic Plan. As one of the first activities of OEDI, in the summer and fall of 2019, OEDI leadership develop a strategic plan to guide the office’s work on equity.

January 7, 2020 – The Commission was requested to (1) determine a competitive process is not appropriate or cost-effective and exempt this contract from a competitive process consistent with RCW 53.19.020; and (2) for the Executive Director to execute a contract amendment with Tu Consulting for strategy development planning services for the Office of Equity, Diversity, and Inclusion extending the contract period through October 2020 and increase the amount by \$75,000 for a new total of \$98,625.