



THE PORT OF SEATTLE EQUITY STATEMENT AND VISION

The Port of Seattle commits to being a leader in regional and national efforts to achieve equity and social justice. We are identifying and dismantling structural barriers to ensure that historically oppressed communities, particularly communities of color, have access to the resources they need to thrive.

Bias and oppression are embedded in our society, systems, and our organization. By failing to acknowledge inequities, we play a role in perpetuating them. We can and must do better. To achieve equitable outcomes for all our communities, we must be accountable for equitable policies that ensure racial, social, environmental, and economic justice are achieved in strategies, practices, and projects.

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

OUR COMMITMENT TO EQUITY

Prosperity and improved quality of life for all are embedded in the Port's public service mission, yet for too long, many in our region, including the Port, have benefitted from white-dominant culture and comfortably operated in an unjust, racist society. We recognize that without greater emphasis on root causes of inequity, our organization will always face an uphill challenge to achieve our mission and the level of equity we desire. We also recognize the negative impact this lack of equity has had on our ability to create a region with shared prosperity.

We refer to equity as the fair treatment, access, opportunities, 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 institutions and systems and ensuring fair and intentional distribution of resources.

To arrive at this understanding of equity and our commitment and vision for this work, we collaborated heavily with Port staff, leadership, and community partners. In addition to studying Port strategy documents, we conducted interviews with the Port Commissioners, the CEO, key staff members, and national and local equity experts who have made progress in transforming the culture of government and private organizations. Finally, we gathered thoughtful input from an all-staff equity survey, more than 200 employees in various Employee Resource Groups, the Diversity & Development Council, and our community partners.

THE OFFICE OF EQUITY, DIVERSITY, AND INCLUSION

Through the development of an organizationally cross-cutting Office of Equity, Diversity, and Inclusion (OEDI), we are building capacity to address institutional oppression within the Port and to transform policies, practices, and processes. OEDI will help the Port improve our ability to shift power structures that give the communities most impacted a seat at the table and power to guide decisions that impact their lives.

We are leading this work with a racial equity lens, because it allows for a specific, strategic focus that can develop structural approaches for all forms of oppression and because racial oppression is so foundational to our country's origin.

OEDI is conducting a variety of foundational initiatives. We lead employee and leadership trainings to improve understanding about equity at the Port, participate in strategic planning to infuse equity in all programs and objectives, and collaborate with the Commission office to embed equitable policies Port-wide. By identifying and addressing the root causes of inequities, the newly formed OEDI will deepen current equity efforts and further catalyze organization-wide, systemic change.



EQUITY IN ACTION



Workforce Development

Workforce Development (WFD) creates and implements strategies and services – including equitable access to employment and training and career connected learning – that connect workers to careers within the Port and port-related economic activities and increase retention. WFD centers equity, diversity, and inclusion by:

- Developing and implementing targeted programs – in partnership with schools, community colleges, businesses, labor, other local governments, and nonprofits – designed for underrepresented and historically marginalized communities;
- Partnering with community-based organizations to educate and build awareness of career pathways tied to port-related economic industries; and,
- Identifying, within each Port division, ways to increase workforce development opportunities for near-port communities.



South King County Fund

Near-airport communities are some of the most diverse in King County, with over 95 different languages spoken. Unfortunately, these communities are also the most historically underserved areas in King County. Recognizing these inequities, the South King County Fund invests in programs and projects in various near-airport communities, helping historically underserved communities most impacted by systematic biases and oppressions. There are several guiding principles that direct distribution of the funds, including but not limited to:

- Prioritizing community input to inform Port funding decisions;
- Supporting Port equity policies and practices;
- Building on established programs and current Port commitments; and,
- Funding programs in South King County areas and near-airport communities.



Community Giving

Our commitment to our community and the surrounding region is core to our work and mission. The Community Giving campaign allows Port employees to donate to eligible 501(c)3 organizations through payroll deductions. Additionally, this provides Port employees with an opportunity to learn more about the needs of our community and local organizations working to address those needs. By giving back to our community and deepening our engagement with partner organizations, the Port is helping to create a thriving, healthy region.



CORE PRINCIPLES

OEDI uses the following principles to embed equity within the Port and create organizational, systemic change.

Integrating Values of Equity and Inclusion

We are committed to working structurally, identifying and dismantling systemic and structural barriers to ensure that historically oppressed communities, particularly communities of color, have access to the resources needed to thrive. To achieve equitable outcomes for all our communities, we must be accountable, transparent, and willing to share information and decision-making power with the people who are impacted by our work.

Prioritizing the Most Vulnerable

In developing policies, practices, and procedures, we are committed to engaging those who are most directly and adversely impacted by our work. For the Port, vulnerable stakeholders are both internal people like employees and external groups like small businesses, vendors, contractors, airport workers, and vulnerable communities.

Ensuring Language and Cultural Competence

When vulnerable communities cannot access timely and accurate information, they often are unable to voice their needs, access public assistance, or follow directives from public agencies. We are committed to making our communications and programs linguistically and culturally accessible.

Supporting Community-Based Organizations

Trusted community-based organizations provide essential direct support to vulnerable communities and are important partners in our work. We are committed to developing relationships built on trust, transparency, and accountability.

LASTING, TRANSFORMATIVE CHANGE

OEDI will foster a transformational and lasting change to the culture of the Port. Those directly and deeply impacted by systemic and institutional discrimination will find opportunities for economic gain, leadership development, and participation in how the Port operates and impacts our communities.

This robust effort to achieve equity at the Port is not only the right thing to do, but it will also strengthen the foundations of economic prosperity for the Port and our region for years to come. To be successful, we need everyone, Port leadership and staff, community partners, and Port of Seattle contractors to work together to improve our practices and generate lasting, transformative change.

CENTURY AGENDA

As part of the Port's comprehensive, strategic plan to guide our work for the next quarter century (2012-2037), our goal is to "Become a Model for Equity, Diversity, and Inclusion." This will be achieved by: eliminating disparities in access to working with and for the Port of Seattle; ensuring that all internal and external programs, structures, and practices have EDI at their core; and, increasing leadership accountability for reaching tangible EDI goals in our work across the Port and in port-related industries.