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June 30, 2020

Black Lives Matter



During the past month, we have confronted the difficult truth that hope and celebration often exist side-by-side with deep pain and grief. As we commemorate the [end of slavery with Juneteenth](#) and [celebrate our LGBTQ+ community during Pride Month](#), we also grieve the deeply racialized and tragic killings of Ahmaud Arbery, Breonna Taylor, and George Floyd. Their deaths are some of the most recent in a long history of unjust systemic racism and violence against African Americans in our country.

In light of these tragic deaths, we are reminded that for too long, many in our region and country, including the Port of Seattle, have benefitted from white-dominant culture and comfortably operated in an unjust, racist society. It is our deep responsibility to recognize our role in perpetuating systems of oppression that allow these injustices to continue. Our nation's wealth and its institutions were built on the backs of enslaved Africans, and yet their ancestors continue to be excluded from fully accessing the rights and privileges our institutions offer.

I am tremendously hopeful for change. At this moment, we have a chance to shape our country into one that is guided by our deepest values. It is up to all of us to build a better community, region, and nation by ensuring that Black lives matter. We must create lasting, transformative change that provides support, care, and opportunity for the most marginalized. By doing so, we all benefit.

Below, you can learn what the Port is doing to support employees and fight systemic racism. We also created a [curated list of anti-racism resources](#) in the form of podcasts, books, articles, and more that you can use to deepen your understanding of

race and oppression in America and build your own anti-racism action plan.

In solidarity,



Bookda Gheisar

Senior Director, Office of Equity, Diversity, and Inclusion

P.S. July's Equity in Action! newsletter will be the last one you receive unless you opt into the [Equity, Diversity, and Inclusion Newsletter](#). Subscribe now to stay up to date on the Port's equity work in our region.

Supporting Black Lives Matter and Taking Action

- The Port enacted [immediate changes to Port of Seattle Police Department](#) protocols regarding hiring practices, commitment to diversity, and use of force. Additionally, the Port Commission introduced a proposal for a comprehensive assessment of police policies and practices and recommendations for reforms. The Commission will convene a public forum on June 30 from 10:30 a.m.-1:30 p.m. to review this proposal and take public comment.
- During the COVID-19 pandemic, people of color between the ages of 16 and 24 have one of the highest numbers of unemployment claims per capita in King County. As such, the Commission designated \$1.5 million to fund five local non-profits who will [provide summer employment and training opportunities](#) for 220 youth, ages 16 to 24, who have been adversely affected by the COVID-19 pandemic.
- On June 19, the Port's Blacks In Government chapter [hosted a live event](#) for Port employees to celebrate Juneteenth. BIG President Delmas Whittaker and Port Commission Chair Peter Steinbrueck appeared on [Urban Forum Northwest with Eddie Rye](#) to continue the conversation and celebration.
- Port Leadership encouraged staff to participate in the [general strike and protests organized by Black Lives Matter on Friday, June 12](#).
- On June 5, over 250 employees from across the Port came together for a community conversation about Black Lives Matter. Employees formed caucus groups to process feelings, build community, and begin a conversation about how the POS can create meaningful, lasting change. We are continuing to hold these conversations as we live out [Port values](#) and work toward our [vision of a more equitable Port](#).

- Port Executive Director Steve Metruck and Commission President Peter Steinbrueck [released a statement](#) on June 1 in support of the protests happening in Seattle and around the world.

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