

For Immediate Release

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10 South King County Organizations Recommended for Nearly \$1 Million in Port Economic Recovery Grants

Community-led partnerships key to expanding equitable recovery

(SEATTLE) – Port of Seattle Commissioners approved a recommendation today to provide nearly \$1 million in economic recovery grants to ten nonprofit organizations serving South King County communities. The grants accelerated the Port’s strategy to lead an equitable recovery in communities that are furthest from opportunity and hardest hit by the impacts of COVID-19.

With ties to all of Washington’s key economic sectors and connections to more than 500 employers operating at our facilities, the Port stands uniquely positioned to help lead an equitable recovery. This first funding cycle of the South King County Fund supports regional economic recovery through projects connected to Port-related industries, including aviation, maritime, construction trades and green jobs.

“COVID-19 caused tremendous economic damage to near-Port communities,” said Commission President Peter Steinbrueck. “We need an equally bold response. Empowering community-led organizations offers a direct and powerful path to ensuring that disproportionately affected and historically underrepresented communities can access and benefit from the Port’s community programs.”

The Port of Seattle established the [South King County Fund](#) in 2018 to develop equity-based partnerships and provide resources and support in historically underserved, ethnically and culturally diverse near-airport communities. The fund initially addressed airport noise, environmental health and sustainability. In response to the devastating impact of COVID-19, the Port Commission added economic development as an additional focus for the South King County Fund.

Community-led organizations will stimulate economic recovery through projects that deliver education and job search assistance, skills-based learning, pre-apprenticeship programs in Port-related industries, habitat restoration and green jobs programs at Port habitat sites.

“These recommendations mark a moment of cultural transformation at the Port,” said Bookda Gheisar, senior director of equity, diversity and inclusion at the Port of Seattle. “Internally in the way we connect our values to our work and externally in the way we connect our community to opportunity. We specifically sought to build equitable partnerships and expand the Port’s economic sphere of influence by partnering with organizations rooted in the communities they serve.”

One of the projects funded was the Chief Seattle Club's Native Works Program, supporting an expansion to a launch a new urban farm in Tukwila, connecting vulnerable urban natives to traditional plant cultivation.

"King County needs Indigenous hands in Indigenous lands to heal relationships between the people who live here and the land," said Lacey Stevenson Warrior, Chief Seattle Club Native Works Manager. "The South King County Fund will ensure that Chief Seattle Club is able to provide these necessary healing spaces for our Native relatives, plant and human alike, as well as giving our vulnerable community members access to economic opportunities. "

The Port will also continue its support for anti-human trafficking through a grant with Businesses Ending Slavery and Trafficking (BEST) through its Safe Jobs Collaborative.

"Our goal is to help human trafficking survivors thrive by becoming financially independent in living wage jobs," said Mar Brettmann, PhD, Executive Director for BEST. "The Safe Jobs Collaborative is grateful to receive a grant from the South King County Fund because jobs must be part of the solution for people to be able to exit a life of exploitation. Even in the best of times, finding a job can be difficult for human trafficking survivors. But COVID-19 has brought one of the greatest challenges for survivors. This grant will help expand employment solutions at a time when human trafficking survivors are extremely vulnerable."

The Port pledged \$10 million dollars in funding with \$1 million available for Economic Recovery grants in 2020 and \$1.5 million available for 2021. The 10 organizations will receive a total of \$982,000 in South King County Fund grants in this first funding cycle of the program.

The awards are contingent upon successful contract negotiations. Learn more about the 10 organizations:

African Chamber of Commerce-PNW will work with highly impacted Black-owned businesses to support them on both technical assistance for compliance with the Clean Truck Program and provide Small Business COVID-19 Recovery and Resiliency Program and Youth and Adults Workshops. This project supports maritime transportation through small-business assistance.

African Community Housing & Development will support the African Diaspora immigrant communities in South King County with a pilot program to provide workforce development in the form of education and job application assistance in technical Port-related industries such as construction and aviation. This project falls under the Port's workforce development authority.

Asian Counseling & Referral Service will partner with UFCW Local 21, which represents workers from Hudson News who have been heavily impacted by the COVID-19 pandemic. They will be connected to ACRS employment case management services for culturally competent job search assistance in port-related industries. This project provides workforce development assistance to aviation retail workers.

Businesses Ending Slavery and Trafficking (BEST) will serve human trafficking survivors and at-risk youth living in the near-airport communities of Burien, Des Moines, Federal Way, Normandy Park, SeaTac, and Tukwila. This project will further economic recovery in South King County by delivering employment readiness training, supporting employers in Port-related industries, and creating paid internships and job opportunities for human trafficking survivors and at-risk youth in Port-related industries.

CARES of Washington support people with disabilities and low incomes to realize their purpose, potential, and strength. The Connect for Success project will support BIPOC communities living around Port of Seattle's facilities to enter and successfully complete pre-apprenticeship programs in Port related industries such as construction, green industries, manufacturing and aerospace. This project falls under the Port's workforce development authority.

Chief Seattle Club's mission is to provide a sacred space to nurture, affirm and renew the spirit of Urban Native people. In December 2020, Chief Seattle Club's trauma-informed indigenous-designed job training program, Native Works, is launching Sovereignty Farm. Sovereignty Farm is a new urban Indian farm located in Tukwila, with green jobs for homeless American Indian/Alaska Native Apprentices. These apprentices will learn about land and water stewardship, garden design and planning, and invasive species removal, preparing them for green jobs at Port habitat sites on the Duwamish River.

El Centro de la Raza will provide extensive outreach, education, and referrals for Latinos and other multi-cultural program participants to relevant pre-apprenticeship programs in port-related industries such as the construction trades in order to obtain permanent employment. This project will focus on communities surrounding the new Federal Way office. This falls under the Port's workforce development authority and will primarily focus on construction industries.

Partners in Employment guarantees the economic security and mentorship to newly arrived refugees and immigrants in South King County. This project will have two tracts, one that provides support services for immigrant job seekers impacted by COVID-19 in the aviation industry, and the other continuing the youth green jobs training program started in the summer of 2020 under the Port's opportunity motion.

Puget Sound Welcome Back Center will prepare 30 internationally educated engineers for jobs in construction related fields near the Port of Seattle. Even though many have college degrees, they lack proper credentials to work in the US in their chosen profession. This project removes those barriers by providing resources in port-related industries, including Test Preparation Courses as part of the licensure process for construction related fields, and Strategic Training and Certifications such as Concrete Field Technician, CAD Training and Construction Management courses.

WA Maritime Blue will operate the Maritime Youth Accelerator Project, which aims to provide culturally relevant skills-based learning to prepare young people for livable-wage jobs in the Maritime field. The project is specifically designed for youth of color and opportunity youth from underserved communities, who have an interest in learning about the maritime sector and in designing/developing an entrepreneurial project. WA Maritime Blue has a mission to carry out the Washington State's Strategy for the Blue Economy delivered by Governor Jay Inslee's Maritime Innovation Advisory Council.

Learn more about [South King County Fund Economic Recovery Grants](#)

South King County Fund Environmental Grants

To address environmental inequities in near-airport communities, the Port launched a new cycle of the South King County Fund, the South King County Fund Environmental Grants Program this October. The funding cycle closed on December 4, 2020. The Environmental Grants Program expands the reach of the successful [Airport Community Ecology \(ACE\) program](#) into more communities that surround the airport and aims to improve the local environment in the near-airport

communities of Burien, Des Moines, Federal Way, Normandy Park, SeaTac, and Tukwila. This round of funding supports activities such as public space improvements, equipment or artwork installations, or neighborhood or environmental stewardship projects.

About the Port of Seattle

Founded in 1911 by a vote of the people as a special purpose government, the Port of Seattle's mission is to promote economic opportunities and quality of life in the region by advancing trade, travel, commerce, and job creation in an equitable, accountable, and environmentally responsible manner.

The Port owns and operates Seattle-Tacoma International Airport (SEA), Fishermen's Terminal — home of the North Pacific fishing fleet — and public marinas. The Port also owns two cruise ship terminals, a grain terminal, real estate assets, and marine cargo terminals through its partnership in the Northwest Seaport Alliance.

Port operations help support nearly 200,000 jobs and \$7 billion in wages throughout the region. Over the next 17 years, the Port's Century Agenda seeks to create an additional 100,000 jobs through economic growth while becoming the nation's leading green and energy-efficient port. Learn more at the [Port's website](#).

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