

OFFICE OF CIVIL RIGHTS, EQUITY & INCLUSION

20

25

ANNUAL REPORT





A year of growth & resilience, **Envisioning the Future**

Welcome to the Office of Civil Rights, Equity & Inclusion's 2025 Annual Report, a showcase of our achievements, progress, and commitment to advancing civil rights, equity and inclusion for Sound Transit employees, passengers and the community.

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Leading with Vision, Driving Transformation

Our vision is that all Sound Transit employees, passengers, and community members feel welcomed, are connected to what they need, and have equitable access to opportunities, programs, and services.

As a regional transit agency that employs and serves diverse and growing communities, we have a duty to recognize and dismantle harmful and pervasive systems of inequity. Sound Transit is proactively working toward becoming an anti-racist agency where equity and racial justice are central to all that we do; resulting in a transit system that is free of racism and where the full inclusion of Black, Indigenous, and other people of color is achieved so that everyone can thrive.

This year's report highlights the Office of Civil Rights, Equity & Inclusion continued work to drive transformative change. We are committed to doing the work necessary to ensure that equity and racial justice are more than organizational values, but a moral imperative that affects every inch of space our agency occupies. CREI is committed to continuing a path forward that is rooted in trust and justice.

I am grateful for Sound Transit's Board of Directors, executive leadership, employees, and community who have partnered with our office and empowered us to continue providing opportunities, education and awareness, advance civil rights, & celebrate the diversity that makes us a great agency and region.

In community,



Daphne D. Cross
Chief Economic Development & Civil Rights Officer



Ensuring access, Equal Opportunity



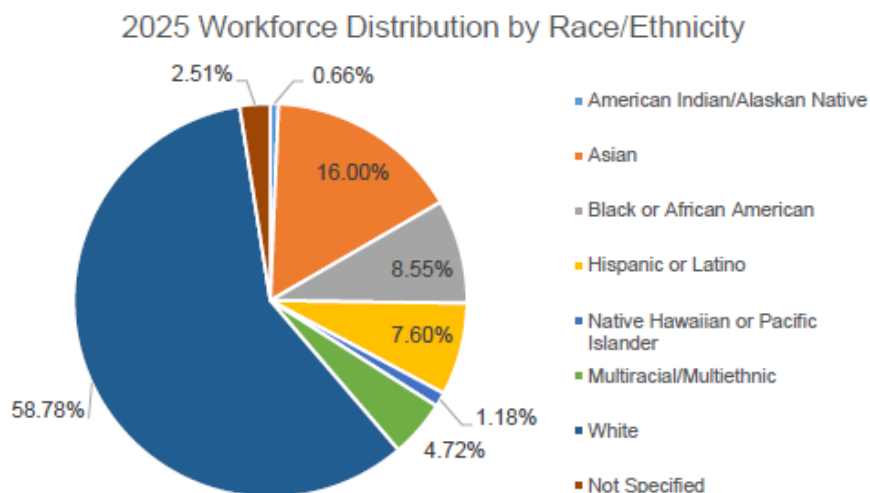
Delve into our civil rights programs, including Equal Employment Opportunity and Title VI.

Equal Employment Opportunity

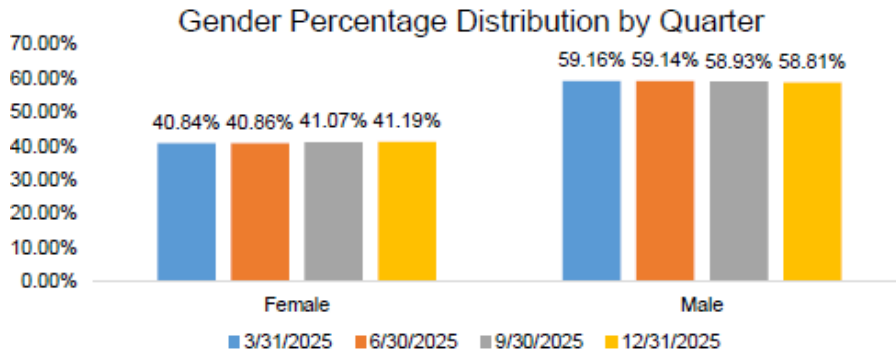
The Equal Employment Opportunity (EEO) program applies to all employment actions, including but not limited to recruitment, hiring, selection for training, promotion, transfer, demotion, layoff, termination, rates of pay, or other forms of compensation and the fair treatment of employees and applicants.

Each year, CREI publishes a semi-annual **Equal Employment Opportunity & Diversity Report** that provides an overall assessment of EEO data for that period. This report includes an overview of Sound Transit’s workforce demographics, EEO goals, an assessment of employment practices and recommendations. The full report is available by request.

Overall workforce demographics remained stable in 2025. Representation of Asian and Black/African American employees is consistent with Service District Area (SDA) population, while Hispanic/Latino employees remain underrepresented compared to the regional labor market. White employees continue to constitute the majority of the workforce, aligning with SDA composition but the results highlight opportunities for expanded outreach.



By the end of 2025, women represented 41.19% of the Sound Transit workforce, reflecting a modest narrowing of the gender gap compared to earlier in the year. Despite this overall improvement, several departments—including Service Delivery Department (SDD), Legal, PAC, and CRE—continue to show pronounced gender disparities that will require focused attention moving forward. Notably, the CEO Office achieved a more balanced gender distribution, demonstrating that meaningful progress is possible with intentional efforts.



CREI will be working in partnership across the agency to prioritize the following Equal Employment Opportunity areas of focus:



Strategic hiring & outreach



Increase self-identification rates



Enhanced hiring process oversight



Gender equity focus



Data modernization



Ongoing monitoring

Title VI

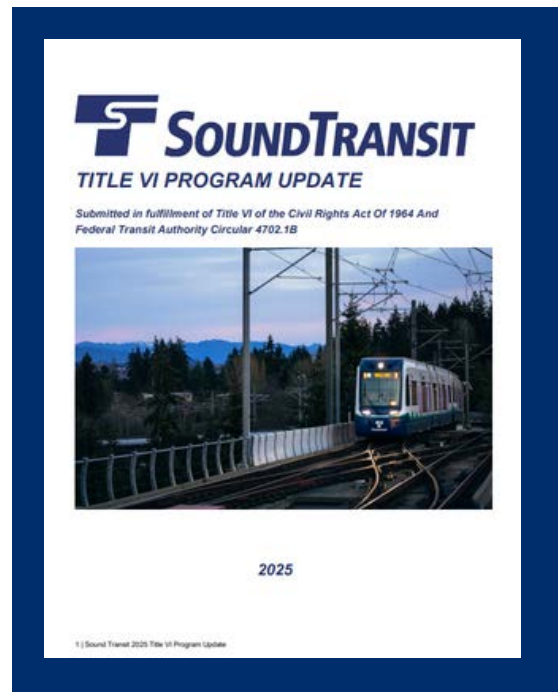
Sound Transit operates its programs and services without regard to race, color or national origin in accordance with Title VI of the Civil Rights Act of 1964.

The intent of Title VI is to remove barriers and conditions that prevent minority and persons with limited English proficiency (LEP) from equal access to public services and programs. The program also addresses barriers for passengers with limited or low-income.

Every three years, Sound Transit is required to submit a Title VI Program Update to the Federal Transit Administration. This plan was prepared to ensure that the level and quality of Sound Transit's services and programs are provided in a nondiscriminatory, safe, reliable and equitable manner.

The [2025 Title VI Program Update](#) can be found on Sound Transit's website and includes the following:

- Title VI Notice of Rights
- Discrimination Complaint Process & Complaints
- Public Participation Plan
- Language Assistance Plan
- Representation of Planning and Advisory Bodies
- 2025 Service Monitoring Report
- Demographic and Service Profiles and Maps
- Title VI Policies
- Service and Fare Equity Analyses
 - East Link Extension
 - Federal Way Link Extension





CREI will be working in partnership across the agency to prioritize the following Title VI areas of focus:



Transit equity focus



Expand language access



Data modernization



Enhance education and awareness

Creating access, Advancing equity

Learn how CREI is strengthening community and connection, and shaping the future of equity at Sound Transit.



Diversity, **Equity** & Inclusion

Sound Transit is committed to long-term transformation: a workplace where equity-based decision-making, inclusive leadership, and accountability are embedded into day-to-day operations, and where the agency's investments deliver not only transit infrastructure but enduring public value for the communities it serves.

Shaping the future of Sound Transit: Change Agents Program

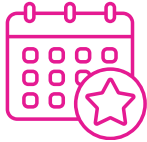
In its inaugural year, the Change Agents program laid the groundwork for embedding equity and anti-racism into how Sound Transit operates and serves the region. A 28-member, cross-agency cohort engaged in rigorous learning on systemic racism, intersectionality, and the everyday dynamics that shape workplace culture and decision-making.

Graduates of the program will be embedded across Sound Transit, carrying this work forward and influencing the agency's culture, projects, and policies ensuring equity is not an initiative, but a sustained way of working.



Strengthening Community & Connection: Employee Resource Groups

In 2025, Sound Transit’s ten Employee Resource Groups (ERGs) continued to serve as vital hubs of connection, learning, and engagement across the agency.



Through 64 events, ERGs created meaningful opportunities for cultural awareness, professional growth, and community connection.



ERGs strengthened Sound Transit’s connection to the community by organizing volunteer efforts across the region.



62 Sound Transit employees served in ERG leadership roles and contributed significant time, care, and expertise to building community, amplifying employee voices and creating moments of shared learning and recognition. This work is made possible because of these leaders.



Embedding Equity Into How Sound Transit Invests: Budget Equity

Sound Transit’s Budget Equity work establishes a consistent, agency-wide approach to ensuring equity is intentionally integrated into budget decisions. By grounding investments into four core equity practices (access, well-being, inclusion, and assets), this framework translates equity commitments into measurable actions, strengthening accountability and aligning resources with community needs and agency priorities.



Over the past year, department leaders engaged in foundational Budget Equity work to align expectations, identify equity priorities, and strengthen how equity is considered in budget development. Through this process, the agency established common language, clearer accountability, and consistent tools to support equity-informed decision-making across departments.

The work has now entered implementation. Budget equity commitments are being finalized and embedded into 2026 budget activities through a structured process that connects funding decisions to defined equity commitments, associated dollar amounts, and measurable performance indicators.

Building Equity Into How We Lead & Serve: CREI Learning & Development

CREI’s Learning and Development work is designed to equip Sound Transit staff with the knowledge, tools, and skills needed to center anti-racist and equitable practices in how the agency operates, makes decisions, and serves the region.

In 2025, CREI focused on establishing a strong foundation for equity learning across the employee lifecycle. The Sound Transit Anti-Racist Training Series (STARTS) curriculum offered core learning experiences—including Recognizing and Disrupting Implicit Bias, The Journey: Inclusion through Education, and Undoing Racism; designed to build awareness and practical understanding.

This work culminated in the December Equity Symposium, Strategies for Effectively Engaging Team Conflict, where participants explored how to navigate tension within diverse teams, address microaggressions, and engage constructively across difference through applied scenarios and dialogue.



Eliminating barriers, Building Capacity



Discover how CREI is leveling the playing field for small and disadvantaged businesses.

Economic Development

CREI champions Sound Transit's commitment to business access and opportunity through the administration of the Disadvantaged Business Enterprise (DBE) Program, Small Business Program, outreach and engagement and capacity building initiatives.

Meeting the Moment

2025 was a year of truly meeting the moment. CREI responded to the changing legal and policy landscape in accordance with the Administration's Executive Orders and the Department of Transportation's interim ruling, all while never losing our focus on centering community. CREI's commitment to maximizing inclusion efforts, ensured that small and disadvantaged business enterprise firms were afforded every opportunity to access Sound Transit procurements.



Disparity Study

This year, CREI contracted with BBC Research & Consulting (BBC) to conduct a disparity study to evaluate whether a person of color (POC)-; woman-; veteran-; and lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender, and queer (LGBTQ)-owned businesses (referred to collectively as diverse businesses for the purposes of the study) have equitable opportunities to participate in Sound Transit’s contracts and procurements.

Results of the Disparity Study will be available in 2026 and will include:

- Recommendations for the DBE Program
- Small Business Goals
- New Emerging and Rising Small Business metrics
- LGBTQBE & Veteran’s Business Metrics
- Draft agency Triennial DBE Goal
- Legal review
- Quantitative and qualitative analyses
- Required element for operating DBE Program as recipient of federal funds



Equity in Infrastructure Pledge (EIP)

In 2025, Sound Transit continued to strengthen our commitment through the Equity in Infrastructure Pledge (EIP). Throughout the year, CREI’s Economic Development team met and collaborated with agency partners nationwide to share and discuss best practices and tools for advancing participation of small, minority owned, woman owned and disadvantaged business enterprises.

Sound Transit has been recognized as a leader in this space and its work in building the “right” team; a coordinated system of experts working toward shared outcomes to close the gaps that have historically limited small business success.



Centering Mentor Protégé Program

CREI is helping small businesses grow and flourish through mentor-protégé programming. Aside from our long-standing support of generating mentor-protégé relationships through the Washington State Department of Transportation (WSDOT) – Sound Transit Mentor-Protégé Program (CBMP), Sound Transit has also leveraged our contracting to generate Mentor-Protégé relationships.

By implementing mentor-protégé requirements in select large-scale procurements Sound Transit is incentivizing its prime contractors to partner with small businesses and help build their capacity to work on government projects.



94 protégés served through the WSDOT/Sound Transit CBMP program through Cohort 7.



15 Mentor Protégé relationships have been directly produced as a result of Sound Transit contracting and we anticipate more in 2026.

Commitment to Community Presence: Renewed Focus on Outreach & Engagement

In alignment with our agency’s commitment to remain attuned to the needs of the business community, the Economic Development division has grown to welcome new team members specifically tasked with leading CREI’s efforts for continued connection and presence with the business community.



In 2025, CREI launched in-person onboarding sessions for 68 businesses at TABOR 100, to share information with new contractors on how to understand and navigate their Sound Transit contracts.



In 2025, CREI launched in-person office hours at the TABOR 100 HUB. During these office hours, vendors could drop in to meet with CREI team members for 1-1 assistance on a variety of topics ranging from working with Sound Transit, to navigating their Sound Transit contract and understanding available resources. 210 hours were provided.



Diversity Oversight Committee

In 2025, CREI welcomed new members to the Diversity Oversight Committee (DOC). The DOC is an advisory committee to the Chief Executive Officer and shall periodically report to the Chief Executive Officer and to the Board regarding Sound Transit’s compliance with the guiding principles for employment and contracting established as established by Sound Transit Board Motion. 17.

The DOC works with Sound Transit as partners to represent the concerns of the community related to contracting and jobs for minoritized communities and thereby facilitate changes that result in a healthier community.

Meet the DOC



Lisa Bogardus,
Chair



Curtis Bennett



Daniel Tappana



Dr. Janice Greene, PhD



Karla Malacon



Leslie Jones



Margaret Gritten



Ollie A. Garrett



Ricardo Ibarra



Sanita Salter

Learn more about the [Diversity Oversight Committee](#)



Gain insights into our strategic direction and upcoming initiatives as we look towards an exciting future.

Envisioning Tomorrow, Our Continued Commitment

Looking ahead

What's on the horizon

In 2026, the Office of Civil Rights, Equity & Inclusion has exciting plans on the horizon and will be focused on going back to basics to build capacity across Sound Transit to operationalize equity in a meaningful and intentional way. In addition to our ongoing commitments, we'd like to highlight the following new initiatives.

Disability Equity

In 2026, CREI will be establishing the strategy and governance for the agency's ADA program. Working in partnership with the Transit Operation's Passenger Accessibility team, together we will work to ensure that Sound Transit is not only positioned to be in compliance, but that we are evolving to meet the needs of our passengers and the community. Future state will move from ADA compliance to disability equity innovation.

Technical Assistance

CREI is launching new contracting-related technical assistance services to support firms interested in doing business with Sound Transit in a prime or subcontracting capacity.

In 2026, Sound Transit will be providing technical assistance in the following areas:

- SCHEDULE A. Government Contracting Consulting & Advisement
- SCHEDULE B. Accounting and Financial Consulting & Advisement
- SCHEDULE C. Business Operations & Business Development Consulting & Advisement – Construction
- SCHEDULE D. Business Operations & Business Development Consulting & Advisement – Non-Construction Including Professional Services
- SCHEDULE E. Bonding & Insurance Consulting & Advisement
- SCHEDULE F. Marketing & Branding Consulting & Advisement

Advancing Equity as a Core Infrastructure



Equity as a core infrastructure

CREI will continue to position equity as a core infrastructure embedded into how decisions are made, resources are allocated, and outcomes are delivered.

By reimagining the agency's anti-racism strategy through an adoption and ownership framework, Sound Transit is shifting from intention to execution, ensuring that equity is operationalized through accessible tools, transparent data, and consistent practices that improve mobility, strengthen community trust, and support equitable outcomes across the region.



Community Restoration

CREI is also deepening its role in community restoration, particularly in historically impacted communities such as the Rainier Valley.

Leading community restoration means moving beyond mitigation and toward sustained partnership—centering community voice, repairing past harms, and aligning transit investments with cultural preservation, economic opportunity, and neighborhood well-being.

Over time, this approach positions Sound Transit not only as a transit provider, but as a long-term partner in restoring trust, opportunity, and community vitality.

Together, these efforts reflect Sound Transit's commitment to long-term transformation: a workplace where equity-based decision-making, inclusive leadership, and accountability are embedded into day-to-day operations, and where the agency's investments deliver not only transit infrastructure but enduring public value for the communities it serves.

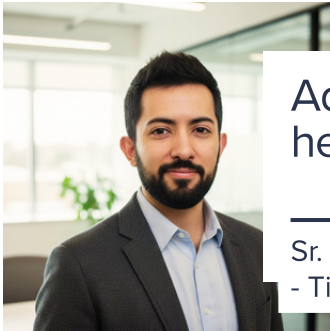


Uniting Talents, Fueling Innovation

Meet our dedicated team who have contributed their expertise, passion, and collaboration to drive our success.



Meet Our Team



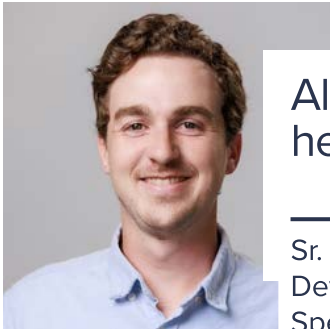
Adrian Mejia,
he/him

Sr. Program Manager
- Title VI



**Alex Amonett
Lopez,** he/him

Deputy Executive
Director - Diversity,
Equity & Inclusion



Alex Stapnes,
he/him

Sr. Economic
Development
Specialist



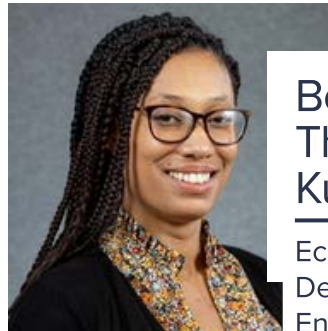
Alison Smith,
she/her

Chief of Staff



**Becky
Thornton,**
she/her

Sr. Program Manager -
Economic
Development
Engagement



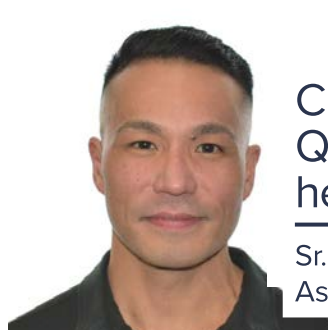
**Boni
Thompson-
Kurke,** she/her

Economic
Development
Engagement Specialist



Carl Green Jr.,
he/him

Director - Civil Rights
Compliance



**Christopher
Quiocho,**
he/him

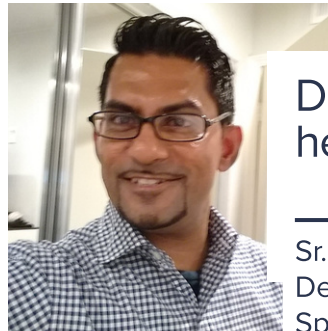
Sr. Executive
Assistant

Meet Our Team



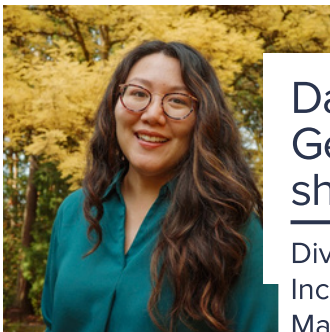
Daphne D. Cross, she/her

Chief Economic Development & Civil Rights Officer



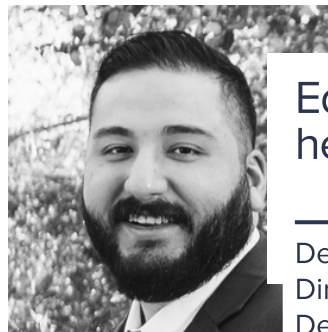
Daren Kumar, he/him

Sr. Economic Development Specialist



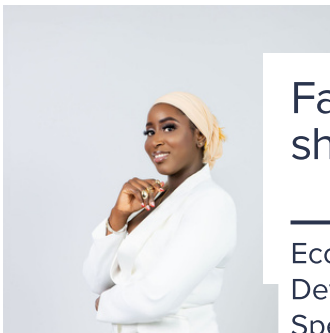
Darlene Germino, she/her

Diversity, Equity & Inclusion Program Manager



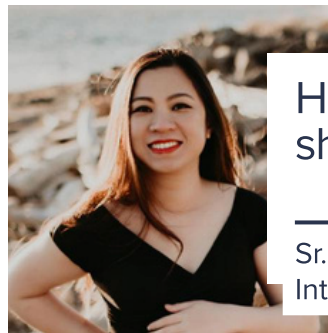
Edson Zavala, he/him

Deputy Executive Director - Economic Development



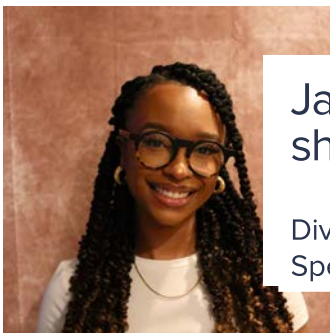
Fatou Saho, she/her

Economic Development Specialist



Han Song, she/her

Sr. Business Intelligence Analyst



Jaeda Ballard, she/her

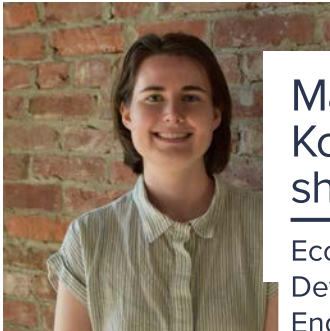
Diversity & Inclusion Specialist



Kevin Gettis, he/him

Sr. Program Manager - EEO

Meet Our Team



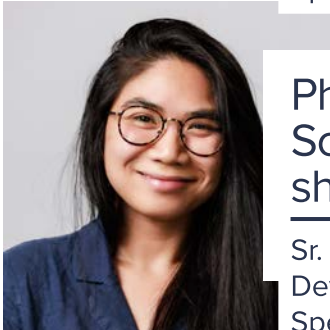
**Mackenzie
Komeshak,
she/her**

Economic
Development
Engagement
Specialist



**Nicky Khai,
she/her**

Administrative
Manager



**Phaeng
Southisombath,
she/her**

Sr. Economic
Development
Specialist



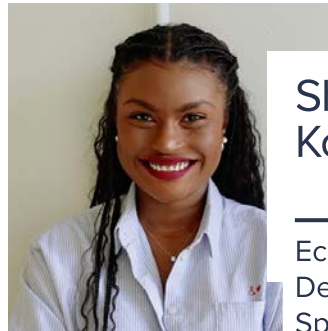
**Renolda Grant,
she/her**

Sr. Project Coordinator
- DEI



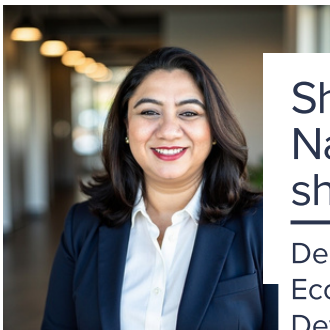
**Shaila
Mullapudi,
she/her**

Sr. Program Manager
- Diversity & Inclusion



**Shannon
Kosen, she/her**

Economic
Development
Specialist



**Shuchi
Nagpal,
she/her**

Deputy Director -
Economic
Development



**Simbi
Ntahobari,
she/her**

Diversity, Equity &
Inclusion Program
Manager

Our Gratitude, Deep Appreciation, and Continued Partnership





 www.soundtransit.org

 civilrights@soundtransit.org

 401 S. Jackson St, Seattle, WA 98104