



# City of Seattle Boards & Commissions Notice of Appointment

**Appointee Name:** *Sophia Benalfew*

**Board or Commission Name:** *Equitable Development Initiative Advisory Board*

**Position Title:** *Member*

Appointment       Reappointment      \*Term of Position: *3/1/2025 to 2/29/2028*

*Serving partial term (eligible for full terms thereafter)*

**Appointing Authority:**  City Council     Mayor     Other: *EDI Board*

**City Council Confirmation Required?**       Yes       No

**Residential Neighborhood:** *Rainier Beach*

**Appointee brief overview:**

Sophia is an Ethiopian American born and raised in Ethiopia. She moved to the US in 2013 when she was transferred to the Head Quarters of Oxfam America in Boston. Sophia currently resides in Seattle and works for Ethiopian Community in Seattle (ECS) as the Executive Director. Since she joined ECS in 2019, ECS has grown to support more community members, especially providing critical support to underserved communities in a pandemic.

Before she joined ECS, Sophia worked for Oxfam and CARE in different capacities. While working for Oxfam, Sophia was a lead for a global program named R4 Rural Resilience based in Addis Ababa, Ethiopia and later on in Boston, Massachusetts. The program, implemented in four countries in Africa, has now become a major component of World Food Program’s Climate Risk Management Approach.

With CARE, Sophia worked as a senior Technical Advisor on Climate Change and Resilience. As a member of the Climate Change & Resilience Platform, Sophia supported the design and implementation of various programs in Africa, Asia and Latin America.

Sophia believes in community-based approach to development. According to her, the secret in designing and implementing sustainable and equitable programs is to recognize the wealth of knowledge in communities served and partner with them. Programs that respond to real needs of communities, implemented in a way that they believe is best and with meaningful feedback loops bring about sustainable changes regardless of their size.

<p><b>Appointing Authority Signature:</b></p> <p><i>Tiffany Kelly-Gray</i></p> <p><a href="#">Tiffany Kelly-Gray (05/26/2026 17:13:08 PDT)</a></p> <p><b>Date Signed:</b></p>	<p><b>Appointing Authority Printed Name and Title:</b></p> <p>Tiffany Kelly-Gray Co-Chair EDI Advisory Board</p>
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*\*For most boards and commissions, the term begin and end date is fixed and tied to the position and not the appointment date.*

## **Leader Non-Profit Organization**

An experienced manager of development programs and non-profit organizations. Experienced in managing teams to achieve collective goals. Lead program design with stakeholders and communities. Rich experience in establishing and managing win-win partnerships.

## **EXPERIENCE**

### **Ethiopian Community in Seattle, Seattle, WA Executive Director**

July 2019 to present

Provide leadership to enable staff and stakeholders work towards achieving the vision and mission of the organization. Represent the organization to external stakeholders and establish networks to advance mission.

- Provides strategic leadership within the COVID-19 pandemic enabling the organization support its community access resources and adhere to safety precautions.
- Designed a three- year strategy in consultation with the board and the community the organization serves.
- Raised more than \$2,000,000 in a year from public and private sources ensuring the organization has the resources to implement its goals.

### **CARE, Atlanta, GA Senior Technical Advisor, Climate Change and Resilience**

September 2017 – April 2019

Provide technical assistance in proposal development and ensure adequate resources are included in project budgets. Design new concepts and proposals for new donors based on CARE's unique experience, especially its strength in putting women and girls at the center of its programming.

- Designed a resource development strategy for CARE for Climate Change and Resilience Programming.
- Established and managed strategic partnerships with other organizations leading to opportunities for resource mobilization.

### **Oxfam America, Boston, MA Global Manager, R4 Rural Resilience Initiative**

September 2013 – September 2017

Led the R4 Rural Resilience Initiative, a program that provides integrated risk management solutions for vulnerable farmers in Ethiopia, Senegal, Malawi and Zambia. Provided technical and management support to program teams on proposal development, report writing, planning and budgeting.

- In collaboration with WFP (a strategic partner of Oxfam), led the resource mobilization effort for the program, that enabled its global expansion to reach more than 30,000 vulnerable households.
- Effectively raised visibility of the success of the R4 program globally through externally faced quarterly reports and speaking roles in expert panels leading to its winning the Climate Change and Business Awards in 2016 under the category of Financing: Climate Change and Resilience.

**Oxfam America**, Addis Ababa, Ethiopia

**October 2010 – September 2013**

**Rural Resilience Initiative (R4) Coordinator**

Headed the successful operation of the Rural Resilience Program to reach more than 15,000 households (from 250) through coordination and management of relationship between multiple stakeholders at local, regional and international levels. Built and managed partnerships with private and public stakeholders to ensure effective implementation and sustainability of the program.

- Successfully managed the R4 program leading to strategic partnership with WFP (World Food Program) opening up opportunities for global growth.
- Successfully managed the R4 program leading to its recognition and award for its innovative role in Africa's development by Rockefeller Foundation.

**Nyala Insurance S.C.**, Addis Ababa, Ethiopia

**May 1996 – September 2010**

**Executive officer, Marketing and Customer Services**, September 2008 – September 2010

Managed and Coordinated 18 branches of the Company with 90 plus staff and annual sales of more than 8 million USD. Directly supervised branch managers providing direction through goal setting, performance review and coaching.

- Successfully organized marketing campaigns on March 8 to recognize the relatively lower motor accidents caused by women resulting in increased retention rates.
- Led collaboration with IFPRI to co-design weather securities to insure rain dependent farmers in Africa. The proposal won an Innovation Fund in Paris as one of the 20 finalists from among 800 applicants leading to recognition of Nyala Insurance globally as a pioneer in agriculture insurance in Ethiopia.

**Deputy General Manager, Underwriting and Product Development**, March 2007 – September 2008

Negotiated reinsurance terms with different international reinsurers and brokers including Swiss Re, Munich Re and AON. Assess and rate large corporate risks. Opened new lines of business in response to customer demand.

- Organized loss assessors to identify PML (Probable Maximum Loss) of large properties leading to saving of thousands of dollars of premiums which was ceded unnecessarily to reinsurers.

**Protection Executive, Corporate Service Center**, January 2005 – February 2007

- Designed and implemented marketing strategy of the service centre focusing marketing efforts on strategically selected industries leading to doubling sales volume in two years.

## **EDUCATION**

**Bachelor of Arts in Management and Public Administration**, Addis Ababa University, Addis Ababa, Ethiopia

**Diploma in General Insurance**, Chartered Insurance Institute, London, United Kingdom

# EQUITABLE DEVELOPMENT INITIATIVE ADVISORY BOARD

13 Members: Pursuant to Ordinance 126173, all members subject to City Council confirmation, with 3-year terms.

- 3 City Council-appointed
- 3 Mayor-appointed
- 7 Other Appointing Authority-appointed: EDI Board

## Roster as of June 2026

Position Number	Position Title	Appointee Name	Term Begin Date	Term End Date	*Term Number	Appointed By
1	Member	Amira Beasley	3/1/2025	2/29/2028	1	Mayor
2	Member	Stephanie Lachman	3/1/2026	2/28/2029	1	Mayor
3	Member	Juan C. Rodriguez	3/1/2025	2/29/2028	2	Mayor
4	Member	Ernesto Oliva	3/1/2025	2/29/2028	1	City Council
5	Member	Fynnieceko Glover Jr.	3/1/2026	2/28/2029	2	City Council
6	Member	Eric Alipio	3/1/2024	2/28/2027	1	City Council
7	Member	E.N. West	3/1/2025	2/29/2028	1	Board
8	Member	Jamie Madden	3/1/2024	2/28/2027	2	Board
9	Member	Tiffany Kelly-Gray	3/1/2026	2/28/2029	2	Board
10	Member	Diana Paredes	3/1/2025	2/29/2028	2	Board
11	Member	Eliana Horn	3/1/2026	2/28/2029	2	Board
12	Member	Vacant	3/1/2026	2/28/2029		Board
13	Member	Sophia Benalfew	3/1/2025	2/29/2028	2	Board

## Self-identified diversity chart

Appointing Authority	Male	Female	Transgender	Non-Binary	N/A	Asian	Black/African American	American Indian/Alaska Native	White/non-Hispanic	Hispanic/Latinx	Pacific Islander	Middle Eastern	Multi-racial	N/A
Mayor	1	2					1		1				1	
Council	2		1	1				1	1	1				
Other	2	4	2	1			5		1	1				
Total	5	6	3	2			6	1	3	2			1	

## City Council districts represented

Council District	District 1	District 2	District 3	District 4	District 5	District 6	District 7	N/A
Total	1	5	3			1	2	

\*P is for partial initial term. Appointee is eligible for full terms thereafter.