



2021 RSJI Highlights

Office of Sustainability & Environment

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Agenda

- **OSE Overview**
- **2021 Accomplishments**
- **Racial Equity Toolkits**
- **Looking forward**



Centered around advancing **Environmental Justice and Sustainability**, OSE is working to:

Implement a **Green New Deal** for Seattle by working with City departments and community to build a **diverse green economy** that invests in and supports overburdened communities.

Reduce carbon pollution and GHG emissions in the buildings and transportation sectors while supporting a **just transition to a clean energy future** for Seattle.

Build healthy and resilient communities that can adapt to the impacts of climate change and have **equitable access** to green spaces and healthy, culturally relevant food.

OSE centers the goals of the Equity & Environment Agenda.

Our racial equity work includes:

ENVIRONMENTAL JUSTICE LEADERSHIP	Creating opportunities for environmental justice communities to shape City policy and be part of the solution through boards, committees, and other engagement.
COMMUNITY INVESTMENTS	Investing in BIPOC-led organizations and businesses who have experienced the most harm.
SERVICE EQUITY	Incorporating service equity into programmatic efforts to reach BIPOC businesses and individuals and mitigate unintended consequences.
POLICY & PLANNING	Identifying opportunities to increase benefit and reduce harm for BIPOC communities and engage in design and implementation.
RACIAL EQUITY LEARNING	Fostering a relational, learning, and supporting culture within our workplace that uses anti-racist principles and values diverse perspectives and experiences.

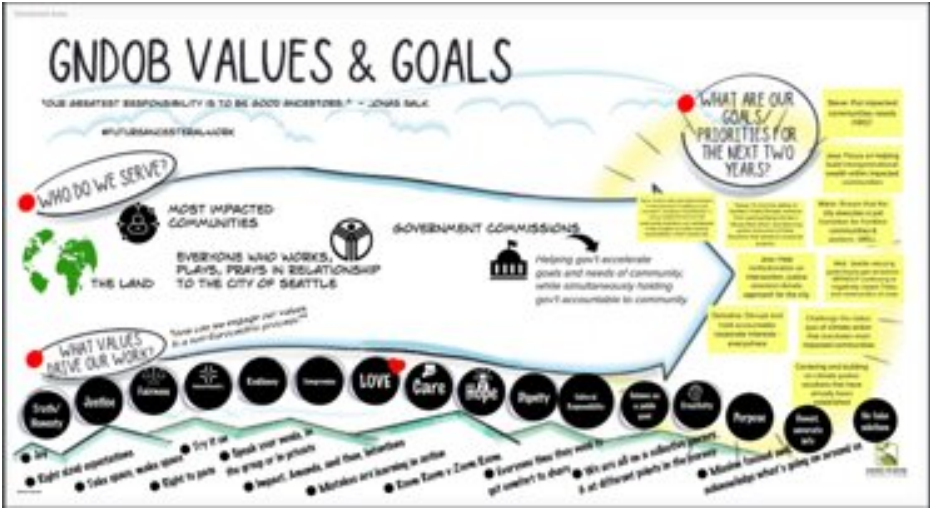


Environmental Justice Leadership

Centering EJ communities to shape City policy

Green New Deal Oversight Board

- Connects frontline communities and City in shaping policy, programs, and investments that reduce climate pollution, create jobs, and advance an equitable transition from fossil fuels by prioritizing communities most harmed by economic, racial, and environmental injustices.



Environmental Justice Committee

- Created food justice principles to shape the Food Action Plan
- Engaged in equitable approaches to road pricing policies.

Sweetened Beverage Tax Community Advisory Board

- Issue SBT investment recommendations to support food justice and early learning action led by and for communities most impacted by economic, health and education inequities.

Environmental Justice Leadership	Community Investments	Service Equity	Policy & Planning	Racial Equity Learning
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Community Investment: Environmental Justice Fund

Investing in solutions within BIPOC communities

In 2021, OSE distributed \$750,000 to community organizations through the Environmental Justice Fund.

- The **Environmental Justice Fund tripled baseline available funding** as a result of recommendations from the Equitable Communities Initiative Task Force, which added \$550,000 to the fund.
- Funding supports 14 projects led by or in deep partnership with communities most affected by environmental issues.

2021 EJ Fund Grantees

- Basilica Bio
- Beacon Hill Council
- Delridge Neighborhood Development Association (DNDA)
- Duwamish Valley Sustainability Association
- International Capoeira Angola Foundation
- Khmer Community of Seattle & King County
- Muslimahs Against Abuse Center
- Raices Verdes
- Serve Ethiopians Washington
- The Backpack Academy
- The Doorway Project
- Sawhorse Revolution
- Wa Na Wari
- Y-WE (Young Women Empowered)

Community Investment: Individuals & Community

Investing in BIPOC communities who experience most harm

- **Wrapped up COVID emergency grocery voucher program**, distributing ~\$25M in benefits to 14,000 people (70% BIPOC) between March 2020-April 2021.
- **Enrolled 12,000 Seattle households to receive \$5.2 million in Fresh Bucks Vouchers** to use at 30 retailers, including 4 BIPOC-owned community grocers.
 - **75% of enrollees are from RSJ priority communities** thanks to our **12 partner community organizations and 7 community health systems** rooted in BIPOC and immigrant/refugee communities.
- **Provided 100% paid oil-to-heat pump conversions for 15 low-income households** in partnership with Office of Housing.
- **Provided internships and learning opportunities** via Benchmarking & Tune-Ups in partnership with South Seattle College.
- **Advanced Duwamish Valley Action Plan priorities** through cross-departmental efforts and investments in affordable housing, access to open space, and community health.



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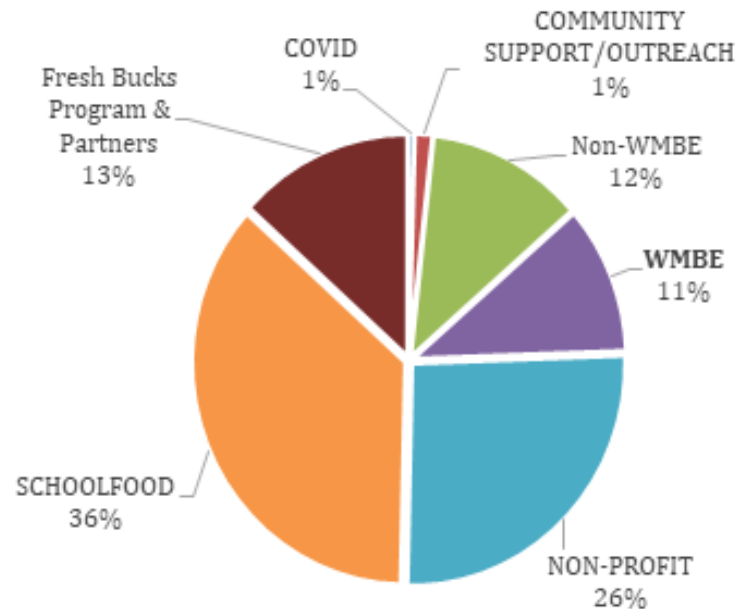


Community Investments: Grants, Contracting, Purchasing

Investing in BIPOC businesses & organizations

- Of reportable expenditures, **11.4% (\$565K)** for **WMBE** (purchasing & contracting) and 36% for healthy school food (orange)
- Large portion of discretionary budget in Consultant category is Environmental Justice (EJ) Fund (in Blue), which provides grants to community-based organizations for EJ projects.
- Continued growth in spending with BIPOC-led orgs or those focused on BIPOC communities.
 - Many are non-profits or are not registered as WMBE firms. These investments (Burgundy and Red) were **\$723,000 (14%)**.
 - Includes Fresh Bucks community-based enrollment partners and providers, local organizations doing in-neighborhood outreach, and businesses/agencies assisting in small business support.

2021 Reportable Expenditures: \$4.3M*



*does not include over \$5 million spent in 2021 on Fresh Bucks benefits for residents



Service Equity

Ensuring programs reach BIPOC businesses & individuals and mitigating unintended consequences

Building and Energy Programs

- **Funded energy improvements** at South Park Neighborhood Center and Neighborcare @ Columbia City
- Prioritized energy regulation outreach and TA in priority neighborhoods (based on OPCD's RSE index) and non-profit owned.
 - Increased **Benchmarking compliance** from 84% to 95%
 - **Helped nine non-profit/CBOs comply with Tune-Ups** and qualify for **City Light incentives**.

Food Policy

- **Transitioned Fresh Bucks paper vouchers to e-benefits** in line with RET recommendations
- **Recruited new retailers** to expand the Fresh Bucks retail network

Stewart Manor Affordable Housing

An energy efficiency and electrification path to carbon neutral



Credit: UW Integrated Design Lab



Policy & Planning

Increasing benefit & reducing harm for BIPOC communities through policy & planning efforts

- **Led with racial equity in the Food Action Plan update process**, including deep engagement with the EJC and other BIPOC food and environmental justice leaders.
- **Identified ways to support** affordable housing and community-serving buildings in decarbonization efforts.
- **Engaged East African drayage truck drivers** to inform the deployment of electric port trucks and a zero-emission freight corridor.



Equitable Road Pricing Work Group

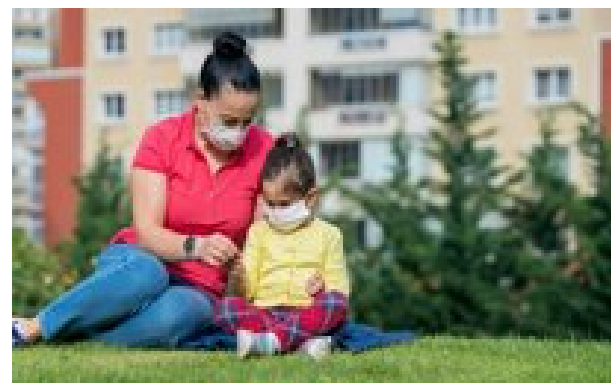
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Policy & Planning: Racial Equity Toolkits

At all stages of policy & program development process —from policy development to user experience.

- 1. Fresh Bucks e-benefits Transition:** Engage with Fresh Bucks customers, retailers, and community-based organizations to support equitable implementation of the Fresh Bucks e-benefits system.
- 2. Road Pricing for Equitable Mobility:** Explore how Road-Pricing Strategies can be used to improve mobility, address climate emissions from transportation, and advance equity.
- 3. Carbon-based Building Performance Standards:** Identify opportunities to maximize benefit to BIPOC communities in the development of this policy, which will cover existing commercial and multifamily buildings 20,000 sq.ft. or larger.
- 4. Seattle Clean Buildings Accelerator:** Technical assistance program to minimize burdens for under-resourced building owners to comply with State energy performance standards and to start reducing emissions.



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Racial Equity Toolkits: Fresh Bucks e-benefits

Racial Equity Outcomes

1. Eliminate racial disparities in access to healthy foods for low-income Hispanic, Black/African American, American Indian/Alaska Native (AIAN), Native Hawaiian Pacific Islander (NHPI) communities and immigrants and refugees, particularly those with language barriers.
2. Assess ways to support Fresh Bucks customers, especially those with limited English proficiency and/or limited technology access, to transition to electronic benefits.



Process

Engaged with key stakeholders to gather information about what will make it easy to use benefits.

- Community-based enrollment partners
- Neighborhood grocers
- Retailers
- Farmers market administrators

Recruited participants from RSJ priority communities to test the beta version of the e-benefits system to identify challenges and pain points.



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Racial Equity Toolkits: Fresh Bucks e-benefits

Key learnings

1. Many benefits to the e-benefits transition:
 - Purchase amount flexibility
 - Quicker and easier transaction at checkout
 - More discreet to use
2. Potential pain points included card activation, adjustment to a new process



What changed as a result

- Created call-in activation line
- Revised testing and training protocol for retailers
- Revised customer communications, including a how-to [video](#) (available in English, Chinese, Somali, Spanish, and Vietnamese)



Racial Equity Toolkits: Building Performance Standards

Racial Equity Outcomes

1. Include equity-focused support services for low-resource building owners to alleviate cost impacts (CBOs, affordable housing, small businesses);
2. Minimize displacement risk and ensure BIPOC communities benefit from healthier living and working spaces
3. Diversify clean energy career opportunities for BIPOC and women.

Process

Stakeholder engagement:

- Community-based organization and non-profit building owners
- Buildings serving community / low-income / BIPOC, cultural anchors, class B&C office,
- Naturally occurring affordable housing
- Affordable housing task force
- Residential and small business tenants
- Equity subject matter experts
- Labor representatives
- Coordination with Emerald Cities to identify inclusive workforce strategies



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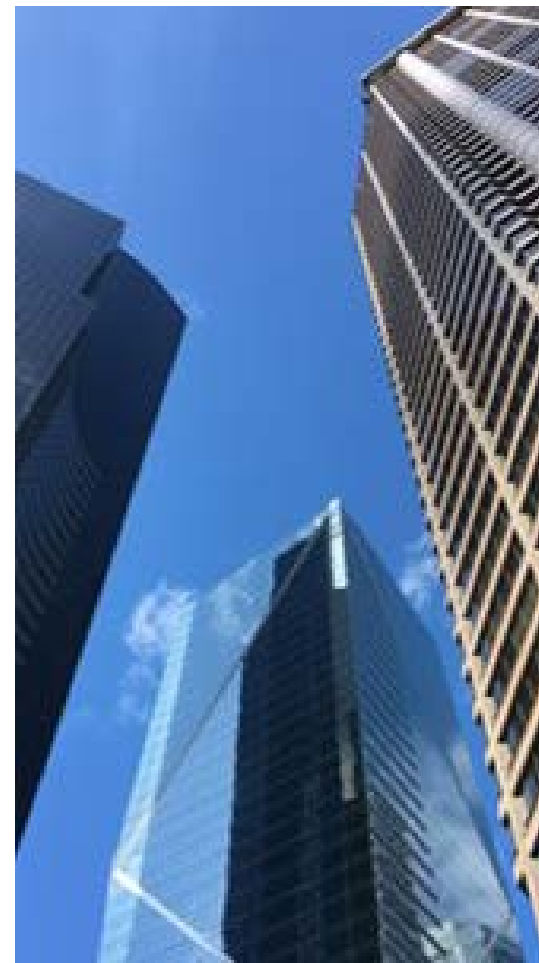
Racial Equity Toolkits: Building Performance Standards

Key learnings

1. Intentional strategies to ensure BIPOC residents are well-positioned to fill new energy service provider jobs.
2. Technical assistance and financial incentives to minimize burden and support capacity to navigate regulations and complete energy upgrades.
3. Policy pathways to mitigate risk of temporary or permanent displacement of BIPOC commercial and residential tenants due to building upgrades.
4. Targeted attention to ensure BIPOC residential and commercial tenants benefit from higher quality, safer, energy-efficient homes and workplaces.

What changed as a result

- **Early Action:**
 - Clean Buildings Accelerator program to provide technical support to under-resourced owners to comply with the current State Clean Buildings Performance Standards, and to try out promising approaches.
- **Underway:**
 - Policy phasing over time by building size, type and with equity considerations.
 - Companion programs and financial incentives to support equity and workforce development
 - Aggressive pursuit of federal and state \$ to support building upgrades



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Racial Equity Learning & Change Team

Fostering a relational, learning, and supportive culture within our workplace that uses anti-racist principles and values diverse perspectives and experiences.

Office-wide

- **Established voluntary, optional caucuses:** Spaces for BIPOC and white staff to unpack the impacts of internalized racism and build a system of understanding and accountability with each other.
- **Building community relationships.** OSE staff participated in volunteer work parties at Black Farmer's Collective farms in Yesler Terrace and Columbia City.

Change Team

- **Centering racial equity in hiring processes.** This is of particular interest to OSE, given the larger issue of underrepresentation of BIPOC within the environmental sector.
- **Budget process.** Given the high community impact of our fiscal investments, Change Team plays a key role in the budget planning process and WMBE spending goal-setting and monitoring.
- **Citywide racial equity team.** Co-leads represent OSE and provide Change Team with updates on city-wide issues for consideration.



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Looking Forward to 2022

Partnering with BIPOC communities to tackle the climate crisis and build sustainable communities by:

- Actioning **Seattle's Green New Deal** in partnership with the Oversight Board and City Team.
- Establishing the **Duwamish Valley Resilience District** to reduce vulnerability to climate impacts, while keeping people and businesses in place.
- **Scaling up equity-leading electrification policies and programs** to ensure that BIPOC and under-resourced residents, building owners, truck drivers, and workers benefit from the clean energy transition now.
- **Expanding the Fresh Bucks retailer network** to serve the diversity of Seattle residents and small businesses.
- Prioritizing BIPOC leadership in the **Food Action Plan update**.
- **Addressing tree canopy cover disparities and urban forest health**, including pilot efforts to green industrial land in the Duwamish Valley



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Questions?

