

2021 ANNUAL REPORT

# OFFICE OF CIVIL RIGHTS, EQUITY & INCLUSION



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# A letter from Chief Diversity, Equity & Inclusion Officer Jonté Robinson

A public transit agency isn't just about the mechanics of building light rail or running bus routes, it's also a critical driver of equity. Our work determines whether people can access the most fundamental needs in life, from jobs and education to groceries and medical care to the interpersonal connections that ensure our mental and emotional wellbeing. 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.

As 2021 brought forth another year of pandemic challenges and racial injustice, Sound Transit has committed to becoming an anti-racist organization, working together to dismantle structural barriers within our agency that have historically oppressed people of color. The road to racial equity is infinite, and there is no "quick fix." This will require introspection, trust-building and accountability.

This year's report highlights 2021 and our progress toward advancing civil rights, equity and inclusion for our employees, passengers and the community, as well as a look ahead into 2022.

We thank our Sound Transit employees and community partners who played an integral role in contributing to and championing this work. We would not be on this journey without you.

In solidarity,



A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Jonté M. Robinson".

Jonté M. Robinson, she/her  
Chief Diversity, Equity & Inclusion Officer



## OUR VISION

*Where all Sound Transit employees, passengers and the community feel welcomed, are connected to what they need, and have equitable access to opportunities, programs and services.*

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## OUR MISSION

*To advance civil rights, equity and inclusion for our employees, passengers and the community.*



*Toka Valu, Federal Way Temporary Art Installation*

# CREI Business Lines

## Inclusive culture

Embracing and celebrating individual and cultural differences and creating an environment where employees can bring their whole selves to work and thrive, free from harassment and discrimination.

## Economic development

Eliminating barriers, creating opportunities and building capacity for underrepresented and women-owned businesses to ensure businesses building our regional transit system represent the communities we serve.

## Equity and social responsibility

Creating equitable access to opportunities, programs and services for all and positively impacting the community through workplace giving, sponsorships and volunteering.

## Our Approach

To advance equity at Sound Transit, we employ three interlocking strategies which form the heart of our theory of change.

### Employees and culture

***Growing a diverse workforce and creating a more inclusive Sound Transit***

We intentionally partner with teams and departments across the agency to build a culture that fosters Sound Transit's value of Inclusion & Respect.

### Capacity building

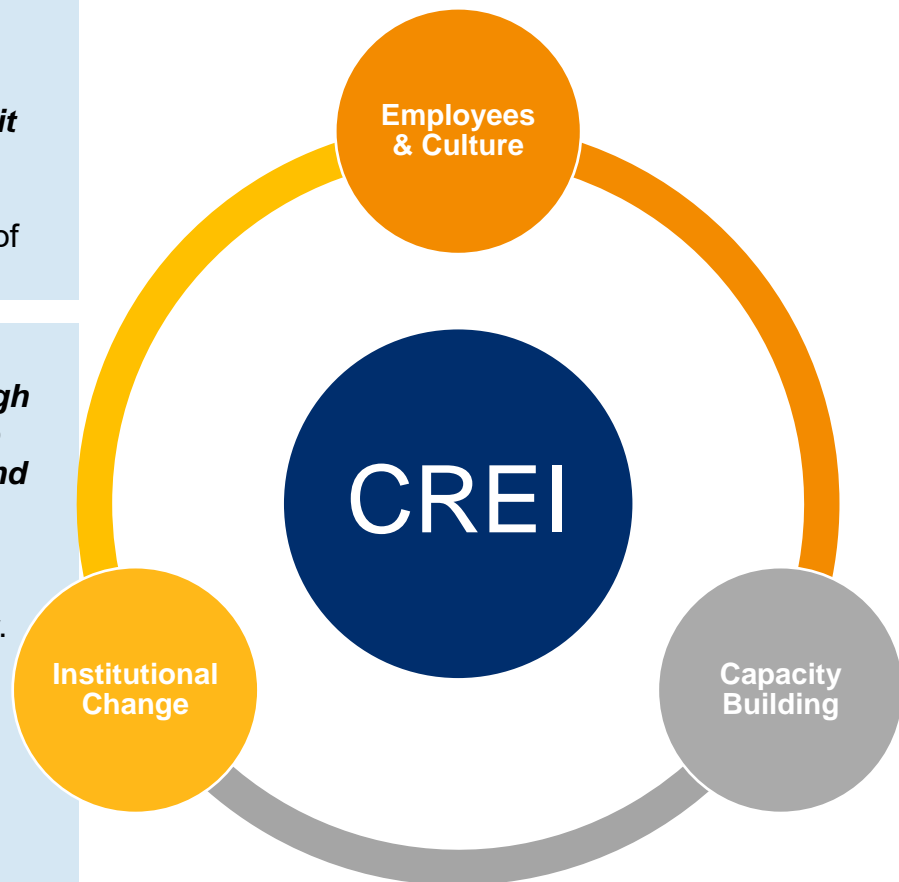
***Building organizational capacity through consulting, network building, inclusive leadership development, workshops and training***

To advance equity at scale, leaders from across Sound Transit must have the tools, skills and capacity to operationalize equity.

### Institutional change

***Developing and implementing institutional change strategies to operationalize equity***

At the institutional level, we focus on programs, policy and institutional strategies to advance equity across the agency.



# Our Journey

Dec 2017

- Office of EEO, Equity & Inclusion established
- Developed EEO Program

2018

- 5 Employee Resource Groups
- Heritage/Cultural Months
- Equity Steering Committee
- K-12 Talent Engagement
- 15% Undoing Institutional Racism Participation

2019

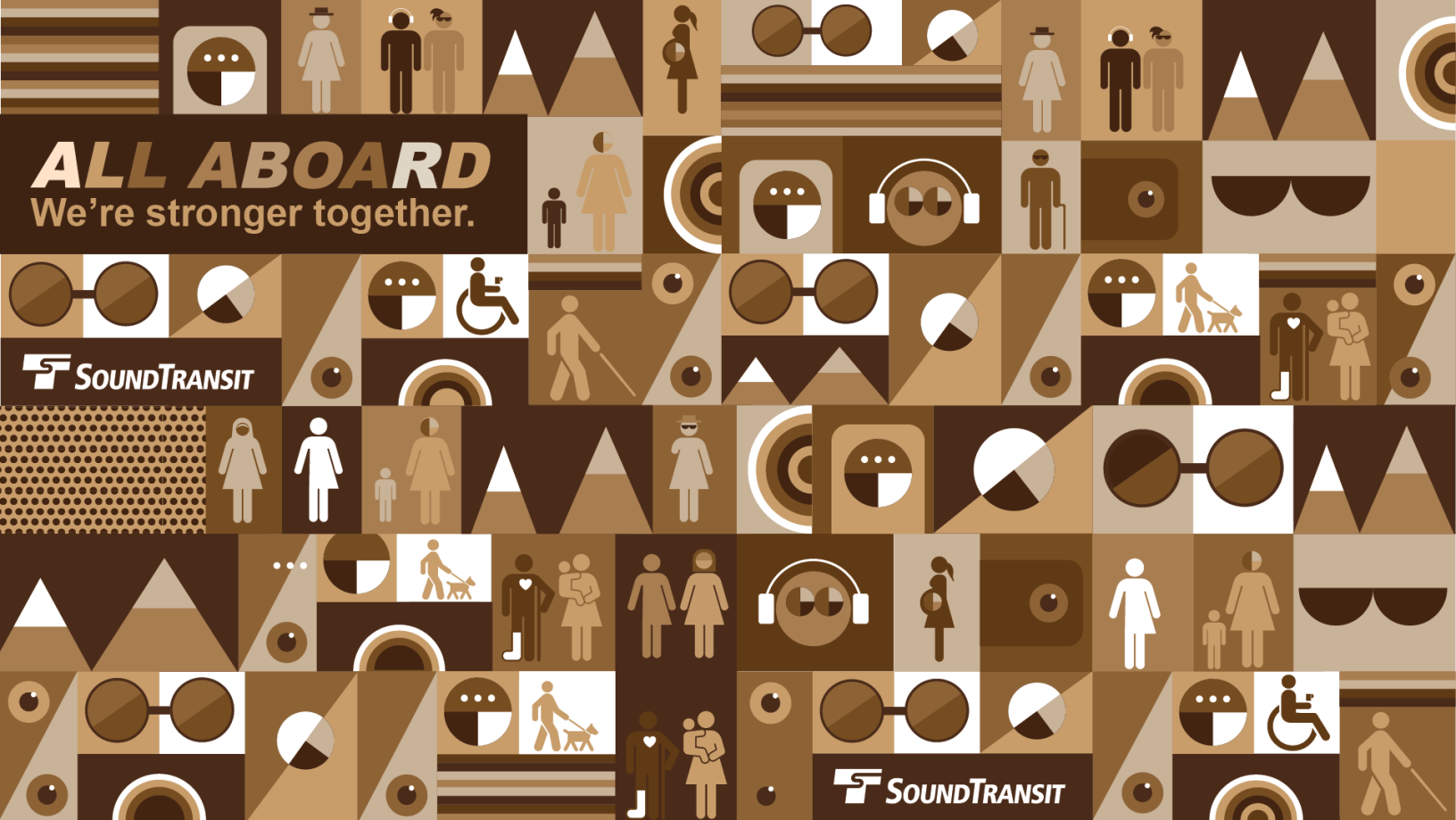
- 3 Employee Resource Networks
- 4 Equity Subcommittees
- First Equity & Inclusion Policy
- Equity embedded in Strategic Plan
- Equity Summit

2020

- Parent & Families ERN
- Disparity Study
- Equity Tools Pilots
- Silent March
- Commitment to becoming Anti-Racist organization
- Agencywide equity commitments

2021

- Diversity, Equity, Inclusion & Culture (DEIC) Goals
- Leadership Accountability Actions & Measures
- Anti-Racist Community ERG
- Anti-Racist strategy employee engagement
- Anti-Racist training workshops (5 cohorts)



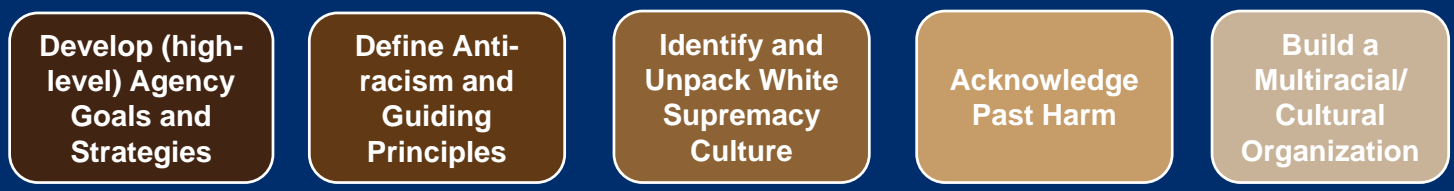
## Becoming an anti-racist organization

In the summer of 2020, Sound Transit CEO Peter Rogoff made the commitment for Sound Transit to become an anti-racist organization. Building off the agency’s Diversity, Equity & Inclusion Strategy, in early 2021 the office of Civil Rights, Equity & Inclusion developed a proposed organizational level five-year Anti-Racist Strategy. CREI presented this proposal to the agency and engaged more than 50% of Sound Transit employees to gather feedback and insights. We finalized the Anti-Racist Strategy in fall 2021 and presented to the Board of Directors in December 2021.

### We envision a Sound Transit where:

- All are empowered, thriving and able to maximize their potential regardless of race.
- We approach all decisions through a racial equity lens.
- We provide excellent service to all passengers without barriers.
- We build a trusting relationship with the community.
- Community members have equitable opportunities to thrive.

### Five-year Framework







# By the Numbers

## Sound Transit Workforce Demographics

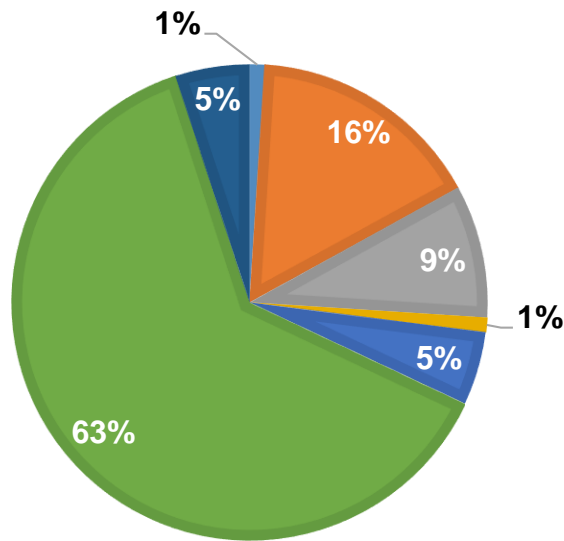


# Workforce Demographics

## ETHNICITY

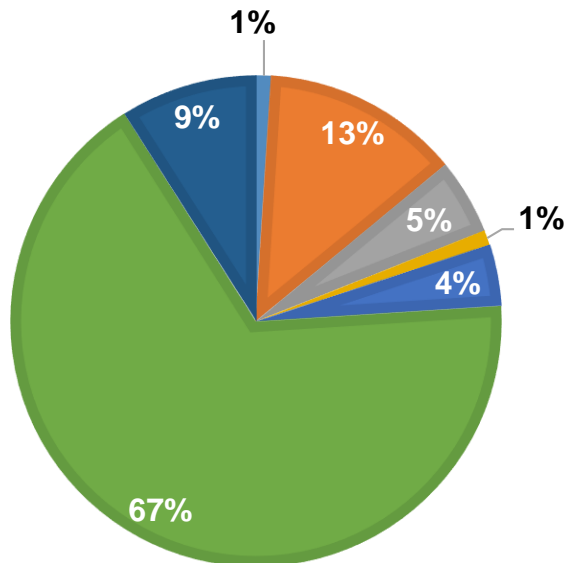
### 2021 ETHNICITY DISTRIBUTION - SOUND TRANSIT

- American Indian/Alaskan Native
- Black or African American
- Two or more races
- Hispanic or Latinx
- Asian
- Native Hawaiian or Other Pacific Islander
- White



### 2021 ETHNICITY DISTRIBUTION - DISTRICT

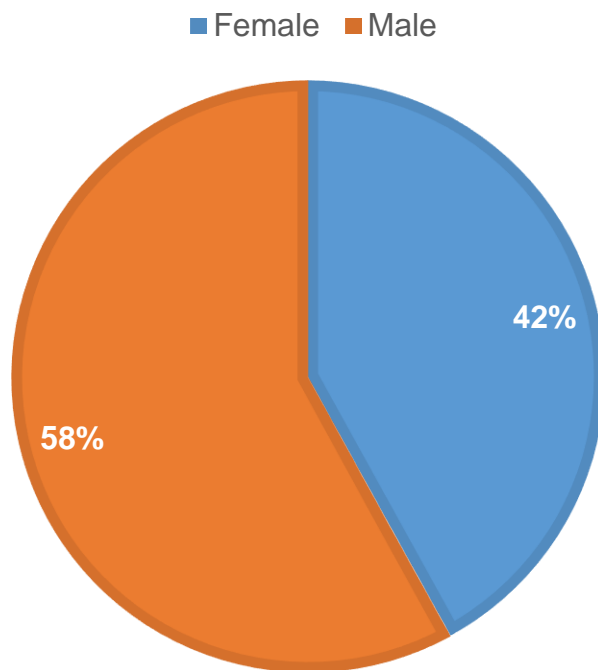
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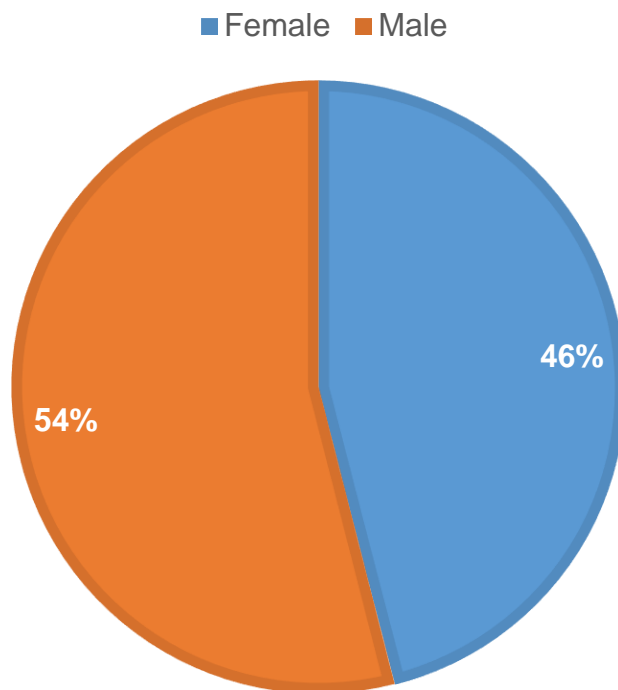
# Workforce Demographics

## GENDER

### 2021 GENDER DISTRIBUTION - SOUND TRANSIT



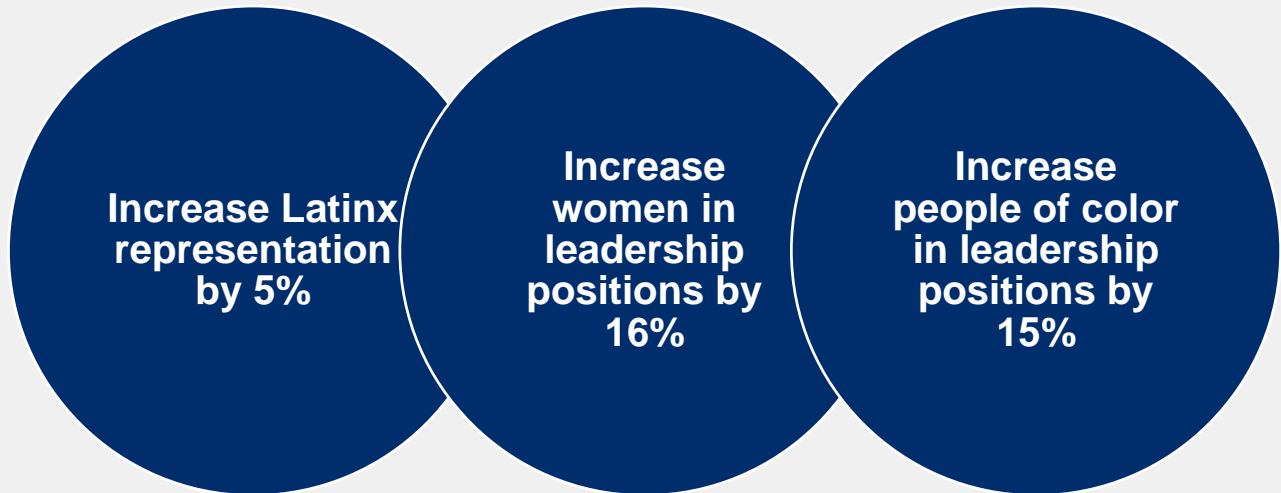
### 2021 GENDER DISTRIBUTION - DISTRICT



# Improving Representation

## Sound Transit Five-Year Hiring Targets

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Improving representation across all levels of leadership at Sound Transit must be a priority. CREI has identified three five-year agency diversity, equity and inclusion hiring targets. These agency hiring targets will be in effect 2021-2026. Additional targets will be set in 2022.





# 2021 Highlights

Employees & Culture

## Equal Employment Opportunity

CREI manages Sound Transit’s EEO Program to ensure the fair treatment of employees. The 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.

The EEO Program refers to a written, detailed, results-oriented set of procedures designed to achieve prompt and full utilization of people within a protected class at all levels and in all parts of the recipient’s workforce, including compensation.

The EEO Program establishes goals by identifying areas of underutilization based on gender and/or race. Sound Transit’s EEO goals through Q4 2021 are noted below:

EEO Code	Category	Female	Male	Ethnicity	2021 Hiring Goal	Obtained
1	Official/ Admin	5	3	White	3 Hispanic or Latinx	67% goal – Did not meet goal
		2	1	Asian		
			1	Black or African American		
			2	Hispanic or Latinx		
2	Professional	6	8	Asian	N/A	
		3	6	Black or African American		
		3	3	Hispanic or Latinx		
		1		Native Hawaiian or Other Pacific Islander		
		2	2	Two or more races		
		17	29	White		
3	Technicians		4	White	N/A	
		1		Hispanic or Latinx		
6	Admin. Support	2	1	Asian	N/A	
			1	Black or African American		
		1		Hispanic or Latinx		
		1		Two or more races		
		4	1	White		
7	Skilled Craft		1	Hispanic or Latinx	1 Hispanic or Latinx & 1 Female	100% goal – Met goal
			1	Asian		
			1	Black or African American		
		1	1	White		
8	Service Maintenance		1	Hispanic or Latinx	1 Hispanic or Latinx, 1 Black, 1 NHOPI, 2 Female	60% goal – Did not meet goal
			1	Black or African American		
				Native Hawaiian or Other Pacific Islander		
		1		Two or more races		
			7	White		



## Equal Employment Opportunity

By the end of 2021, we have made some progress toward 2021 EEO goals:

- EEO Code 1 – Official/Admin: hired 2 Hispanic or Latinx (H/L) with goal to hire 3 H/L individuals' total.
- EEO Code 7 – Skilled Craft: hired 1 H/L and 1 female with goal to hire 1 H/L and 1 female.
- EEO Code 8 – Service Maintenance: hired 1 H/L, 1 Black or African American, 0 NHOPI and 1 female with a goal to hire 1 H/L, 1 Black, 1 NHOPI and 2 females.

### EEO Summary, Recommendations and Trends

An agency wide hiring target has been established to focus on increasing representation of Hispanic and Latinx staff over the next five years. This effort will aid the agency in achieving the unmet EEO goal in EEO Code 1 – Official/Admin, going forward.

The goals for Skilled Craft, Service Maintenance and Technicians are more challenging to achieve since they are small groups with minimal turnover. The Human Resources Business Partners (HRBP) should work closely with the hiring manager to review EEO goals when there is a future hiring opportunity in these job classes. Additionally, the same review should be performed with hiring managers for goal obtainment in Administrative Support, which typically has a broader applicant pool.

Newly established Diversity, Equity, Inclusion & Culture department goal program will help identify areas of underutilization and direct focus to achieving goals in those areas.

New EEO Goals will be established for the period of 2022-2025.



*Tiffany Hammonds, Federal Way Temporary Art Installation*



## Employee-led Groups

ELGs are groups of staff members who have common interests, face common issues, and come together to support each other, build community, share concerns, and identify solutions to further Sound Transit's mission, vision and values.

Sound Transit's ten ELGs are thought partners and create a forum for amplifying employee voices and generating innovative solutions that address issues within our agency and the communities we serve.

## Employee Resource Groups

**BEST** (Blacks Empowering Success in Transit)

**LIT** (Latinx in Transportation)

**Pride** (LGBTQ+ & Allies)

**SPAM** (Sound Transit Pacific Islander Asian American Masterminds)

**WEST** (Women Empowering Sound Transit)

**ARC** (Anti-Racist Community)

## Employee Resource Networks

Diverse Abilities  
Native American & Indigenous  
Parent & Families  
Veterans

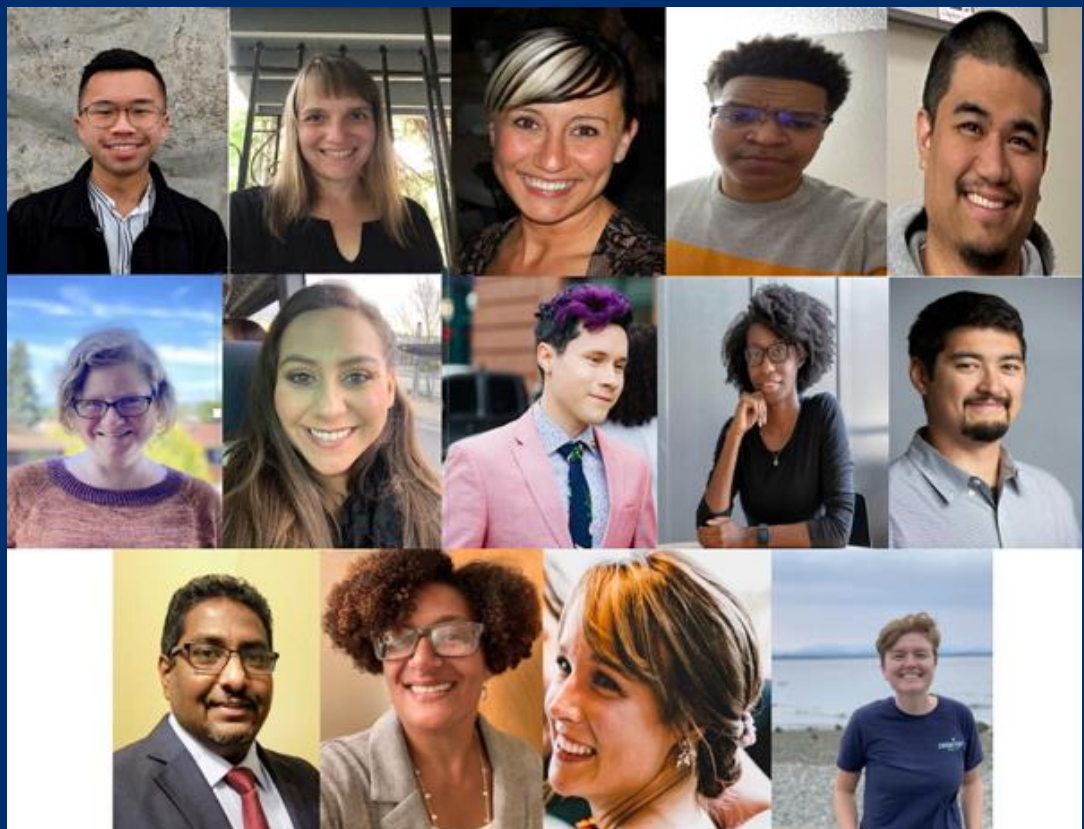
## ELG Highlights

### A new Employee Resource Group, Anti-Racist Community, formed and launched in Q2.

ARC promotes anti-racist institutional and systemic change within Sound Transit. It provides a forum for anti-racist and pro-equity education, action and accountability for all allies. ARC's work is in alignment with and support of CREI, and in partnership with other ELGs.

- Provides an educational forum and space for allies to build understanding, deeper awareness, and skills to combat racism on an individual, agency, and systemic level.
- Offers opportunities to process unconscious patterns of bias and racism in order to move towards anti-racist thoughts and actions.
- Listens to ELGs and partners with them to further equity, justice, and anti-racist actions throughout Sound Transit and the communities we serve.
- Builds a community of allies and accomplices to hold each other accountable, support each other, and identify and provide input for pro-equity and anti-racist actions in our agency and communities.

56 Sound Transit employees held **leadership** positions (16 chairs/vice-chairs and 40 leadership council members)







ELGs hosted 62 events with a focus on building cultural awareness, providing professional and leadership development opportunities and engaging community. 19 of those events were in partnership with a community organization.





# Pass the dish!

Sharing our food & culture



**LATINX HERITAGE MONTH**  
SEPT. 15 – OCT. 15

ELGs continued their participation in Sound Transit's Workplace Giving Program by nominating local non-profit organizations to be featured. Each quarter, Sound Transit highlights non-profit organizations in Pierce, King & Snohomish Counties. Employees are given the opportunity to support in a meaningful way through financial contributions, donations, volunteerism and more.



**WORKPLACE GIVING**





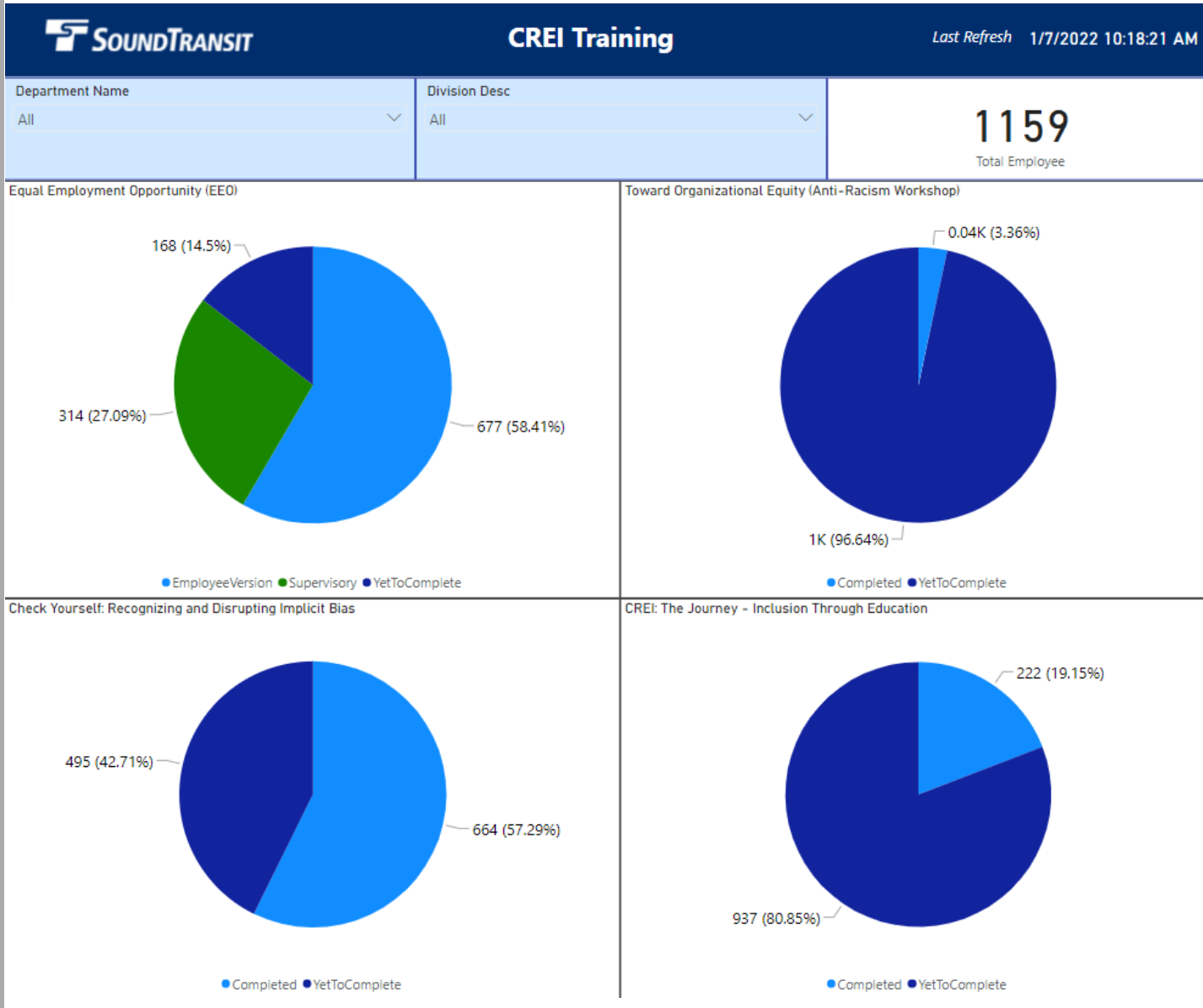
# 2021 Highlights

Building Capacity

# Employee Training

CREI offers four internal professional development opportunities focused on Equal Employment Opportunity policy and process, implicit bias, inclusive leadership and racial equity. These trainings help equip Sound Transit leaders with the tools, skills and capacity to operationalize equity.

- Equal Employment Opportunity (EEO)
- Check Yourself: Recognizing and Disrupting Implicit Bias (e-Learn)
- CREI: The Journey – Inclusion Through Education
- Toward Organizational Equity (Anti-Racism Workshop)



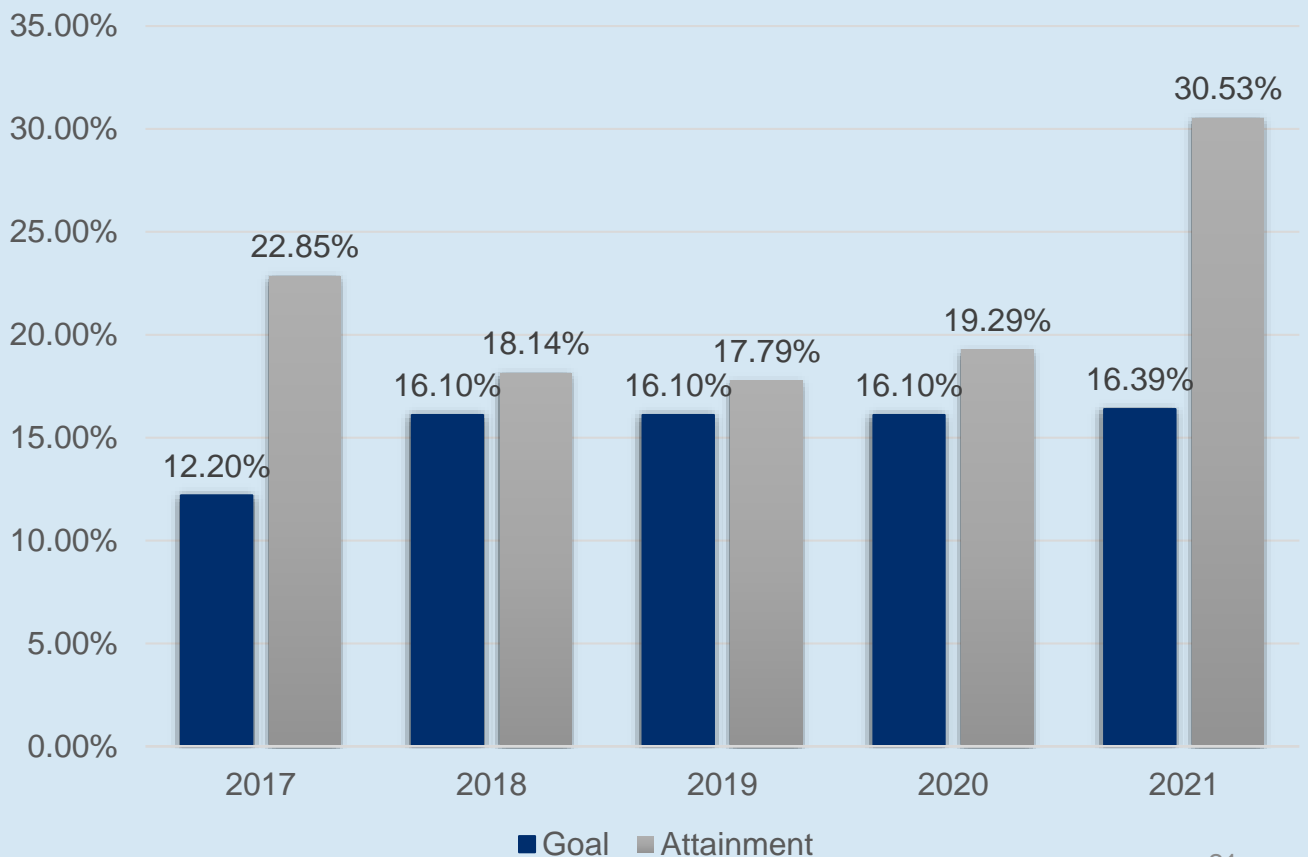


## Leveling the playing field

[Sound Transit's Disadvantaged Business Enterprise and Small Business programs](#) encourage, cultivate and support equal opportunities for firms owned and controlled by socially and economically disadvantaged individuals in accordance with Title 49, Part 26, of the Code of Federal Regulations on Federal Transit Administration-assisted projects.

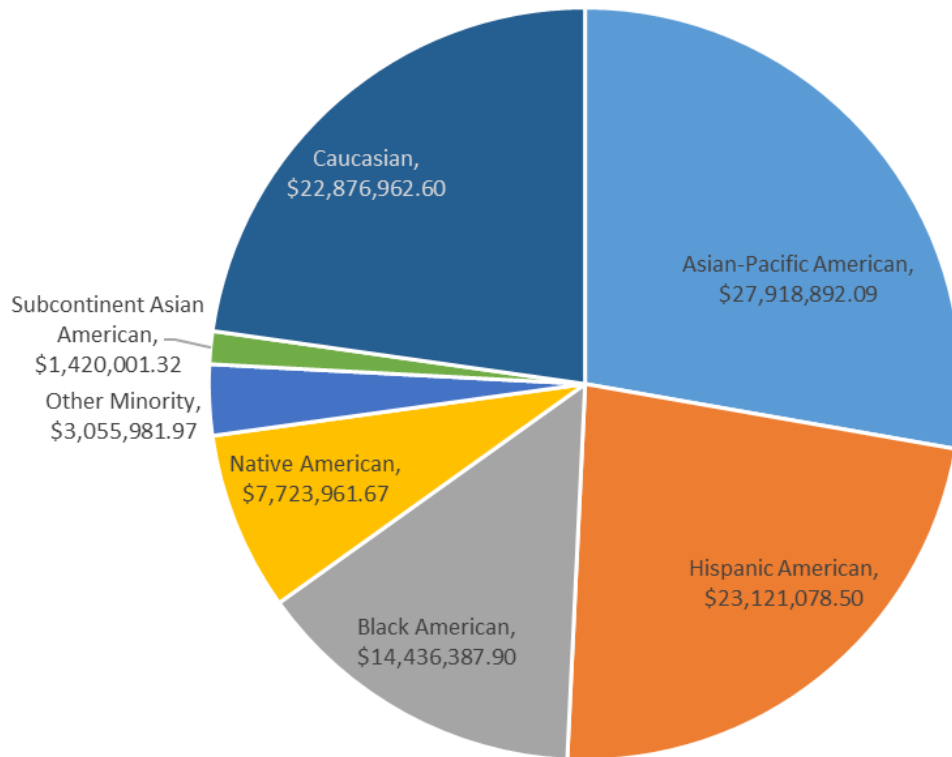


**For the past five years, Sound Transit has exceeded our DBE Goal.**

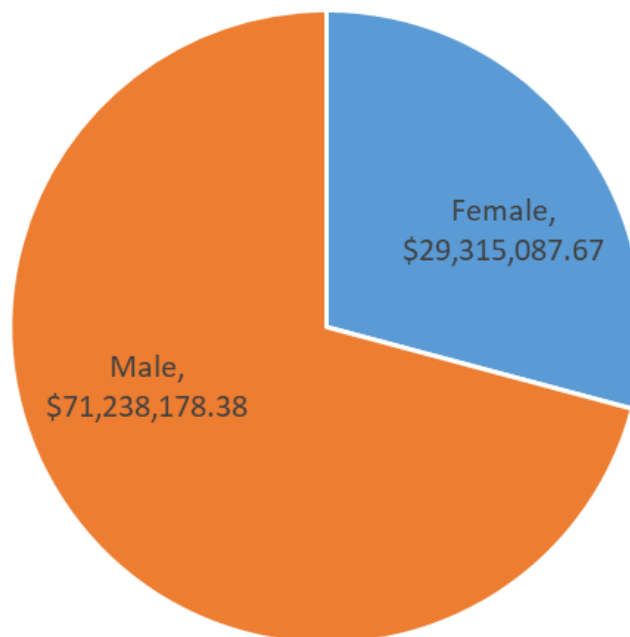


In 2021, CREI managed 105 active contracts with DBE goals, 50 which were federally funded.

### Ethnicity



### Gender





## DBE Technical Assistance

We believe in leveling the playing field for all qualified consultants and contractors. It's our mission to help develop emerging and established DBEs and small businesses so they can successfully compete on Sound Transit contracts.

[Sound Transit's technical assistance program](#) focuses on providing trainings that are meaningful and applicable to our contracts. Our trainings also offer valuable networking to help DBEs and small businesses build their network of associates.

In 2021, Sound Transit partnered with other agencies to provide and participate in five technical assistance trainings and forums. In addition, we continued our partnership with WSDOT for the Capacity Building Mentorship Program which pairs small, minority-, veteran- and women-owned businesses with successful prime contractors and consultants.







# 2021 Highlights

Institutional Change



## Equity Tools

As part of Sound Transit's commitment to operationalize equity, we've developed two equity tools.



*Jasmine Brown, Federal Way Temporary Art Installation*

### Racial Equity Toolkit

In 2019, the Racial Equity Subcommittee, a cross-disciplinary team of ST employees, met over the course of several months to draft the agency's first Racial Equity Toolkit. Designed to be both a product and a process, the RET guides teams through conversation, analysis and practical application of racial equity principles and concepts across a variety of scenarios. By better understanding how systemic and institutional racism intersect with our efforts to build a best-in-class transit system, we can better assess potential negative impacts and advance equity for communities of color as well as other historically excluded groups.

Beginning in fall 2020, three projects and programs piloted the RET, including the early planning phase of the Everett Link Extension, the next generation ORCA program (specific to retail locations), and an analysis of the Northgate service area to inform future marketing and communications efforts. The pilots concluded in July 2021, however, the racial equity analyses for these various projects and programs are still ongoing (with the exception of the Northgate RET which concluded due to resource constraints), with varying completion dates. Based on pilot participant experience and feedback, we made significant revisions and the newest drafts were shared with internal stakeholders. At the end of 2021, we developed an implementation plan and officially published the toolkit in early February 2022.

### Equitable Engagement Tool

In a process similar to the Racial Equity Subcommittee creation, the Equitable Engagement Subcommittee formed in 2019 to establish best practices for conducting public engagement. The focus on equity in our engagement practices is meant to center community voice and ensure the full and meaningful inclusion and representation of populations who have been historically underrepresented, including people of color, low-wealth populations, people with limited English proficiency, people with disabilities, etc.

In addition to providing a definition and guiding principles for equitable engagement, the subcommittee also drafted the first Equitable Engagement Tool which guides users through an equity-centered engagement planning process. The EET was developed as a companion piece to the Racial Equity Toolkit, however, it can also be used as a standalone tool. Like the RET, the EET was piloted over the course of about one year. At the end of 2021, we developed an implementation plan and officially published the tool in early February 2022.





## Title VI Program

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.

The [Title VI Program](#) includes equity analyses for service and fare decisions, also known as Service and Fare Equity analyses. We complete SAFEs to ensure these decisions are made as equitably as possible.



In 2021, Sound Transit's Service & Planning Team (within PEPD), Fares (within Finance) and Community Engagement division (within Communications) collaborated to complete the [Northgate Link Extension SAFE](#). In addition, the Tacoma Hilltop Link Extension SAFE is underway.





 **SOUNDTRANSIT**  *Powering progress*

**Looking Ahead**  
Our continuing commitment

# Looking Ahead

Organizational culture transformation that meaningfully and effectively addresses institutional and systemic racism takes intentionality, accountability and time. We have a long way to go and no finish line, but we're fiercely committed to creating a more equitable and inclusive Sound Transit for all.

In 2022 CREI will continue to build capacity across all business lines to operationalize equity. In addition to our ongoing commitments, our focus in 2022 will include:

- **Anti-racism work**
  - Begin implementation of the 2022 Anti-Racist Strategy work plan & priorities which includes five commitments centered on CEO & Executive support, economic development opportunities, career development, community and accountability.
- **Employees and culture**
  - Continue aligning and collaborating with Human Resources on employee hiring and retention.
  - Develop department-level diversity, equity, inclusion and culture goals.
  - Advance leadership accountability.
- **Building capacity**
  - Launch new Change Agents programs.
  - Enhance training and technical opportunities to prepare DBEs to lead Sound Transit contracts.
  - Host agencywide Equity Summit.
- **Institutional change**
  - Launch the Racial Equity Toolkit and Equitable Engagement Tool.
  - Pilot Budget Equity Tool
  - Develop new agency Anti-Racist Policy.





BEST  
BLACK  
BUSINESS  
LEADERS

LIT  
LITERATURE

PRIDE  
ASSURE

SPAM

WEST  
WOMEN

**CREI**  
Meet the team



# The Team

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**Jonté Robinson**  
(she/her)  
Chief Diversity,  
Equity &  
Inclusion Officer



**Alison Smith**  
(she/her)  
Chief of Staff



**Christopher  
Quioco** (he/him)  
Sr. Executive  
Assistant



**Nicky Khai**  
(she/her)  
Sr. Business  
Analyst



**Han Song**  
(she/her)  
Sr. Data Systems  
Analyst



**Nicole Hill**  
(she/her)  
Deputy Director –  
Equity & Social  
Responsibility



**Simbi Ntahobari**  
(she/her)  
Equity & Inclusion  
Program  
Specialist



# The Team

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**Daphne Cross**  
(she/her)  
Deputy Director –  
Inclusive Culture



**Kevin Gettis**  
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EEO Program  
Specialist



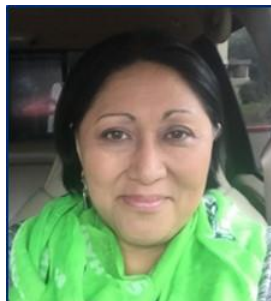
**LaTonya Kadar**  
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**Mick Roberson**  
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# THANK YOU

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*Lauren Linda, Federal Way Temporary Art Installation*

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Civil Rights, Equity & Inclusion