



2021 Annual Report

Mural by Perri Rhoden
Cover photography by Nona Raybern



Seattle
Office for Civil Rights



Our Vision

A city of liberated people where communities historically impacted by racism, oppression, and colonization hold power and thrive.

Our Mission

To end structural racism and discrimination through accountable community relationships and anti-racist organizing, policy development, and civil rights enforcement.

Our Values

Authenticity in working towards racial equity and practicing and applying principles of anti-racism: Move collectively and purposefully in the direction of racial equity. Share planning and decision-making power with organized anti-racist communities of color. Ensure engagement with communities most impacted by institutional racism.

Community-led solutions and accountable community relationships: Acknowledge and work to repair City government's role in causing harm to communities most impacted by its policies and practices. Consistently ensure high levels of community input, participations, and leadership in policy development, execution, and implementation.

Integrity: Operate with consistency, accountability, and in alignment with our stated values. Be transparent in making information available to the public, and both internal and external communities.

Collaboration: Work and regularly communicate across functional areas, such as Policy, Enforcement, and RSJI divisions and work together with the communities most impacted by City policies and practices.

Thoughtful planning: Take into account historical harms and impacts in working to achieve our goals. Responsibly maximize resources. Analyze and strategically navigate power to develop support across stakeholders.

Message from the Directors



Mariko Lockhart, currently serving as Deputy Director for the Department of Early Education & Learning.

Hello friends,

The past couple of years have been a blur of COVID-influenced changes on our everyday lives and profound impacts of the racial reckoning after the murder of George Floyd. We did not have the time to pause and reflect in annual reports until now, so this one will cover 2019 – 2021.

In 2019, the last year we were still working in person, the Racial Equity Toolkit report on the question of SOCR's independence was completed. City Council launched the process in 2018 to address SOCR's long-term struggle to sustain its independent voice in the City of Seattle. The report highlighted important findings and challenges that illuminate the unique role of SOCR in the City's ecosystem and offered substantive recommendations. The steps to addressing these issues continue into 2022.

In 2020, the COVID-19 pandemic tested SOCR's ability to fulfill our roles and dominated our activities in both our work and personal lives. RSJI trainings, technical help, and the annual RSJI Summit which center on in-person interactions were forced to transition online.

We lost some of the ways we forge human connection but gained a surprising ability to scale and offer greater accessibility in these online formats.

We tackled the tension between equality embedded in civil rights laws and equity that is at the heart of our mission by launching new restorative practices to address discrimination complaints, such as pre-charge mediation and compliance letters as alternatives to investigations.

Like other departments, we made tangible adaptations and concessions resulting from COVID, but we were perhaps most deeply affected by the collective pain felt across the city and nation manifested in the protests and movement for Black Lives in 2020. The historic and current structural and systemic racism became impossible to ignore and gave voice to City employees of color, especially Black employees who saw a broadening acknowledgment and recognition of struggles and treatment they had been voicing for years. And they looked to SOCR for support, to hold space for pain and processing, to uplift the struggle, and to push back on the City's treatment of protesters. This became the core of our experience over these past three years.

In 2021, amid the evolving pandemic, we continued to enhance our services to external and internal communities. A personally fulfilling accomplishment was the launch of the Racial Equity Research site and Racial Equity Actions platform.

As I move on from my role at SOCR, I am so proud of this brilliant and passionate team and the work they continue to do every day. I am confident that under the leadership of incoming Director Derrick Wheeler-Smith, they will continue to have a profound impact on communities who are farthest from opportunity and most affected by discrimination and injustice.

In solidarity,

Mariko Lockhart



Interim Director Derrick Wheeler-Smith.

Hello Everyone,

I am honored and excited to take on this role as Director of the Seattle Office for Civil Rights! This incredible opportunity speaks to my passions, skillset, and the guiding principle that all people, especially those historically impacted by racism, should have equitable access and opportunity to thrive. Over the last 20 years, I have dedicated my personal and professional talents toward leading community organizing efforts, school districts, post-secondary institutions, government, and NGOs in leadership efforts that transform systems into racially conscious and socially just environments. Such a transformation nurtures the limitless potential of all individuals, empowering them to live their most powerful and impactful lives.

Driven by SOCR's commitment to end structural racism and discrimination through accountable community relationships and anti-racist organizing, policy development, and civil rights enforcement, I am eager to build upon the momentum SOCR has created the last year – from the Participatory Budgeting process to innovative advancements in Civil Rights Enforcement, from our Policy development and to our work internally with the City through RSJI. I pledge to keep you informed of our progress and growth as we work toward achieving SOCR's strategic priorities for 2023 and beyond. As I meet with staff, there is a renewed vigor to exceed expectations and find innovative ways to support the residents and partners of the City of Seattle.

I'm grateful for all the support I have received as I step into leading this team. The collective knowledge and strength they have has never been more critical to fulfilling the vision and the mission of SOCR. I'm confident that together we will thrive! I look forward to working with you to give every person who lives and works in Seattle every chance, every day.

With Gratitude,

Derrick Wheeler-Smith

2019

Retrospective

In 2018, the City of Seattle applied a Racial Equity Toolkit (RET) to the unique position of the Seattle Office for Civil Rights' agency in the City of Seattle. The RET gave us a series of actionable recommendations. We are still applying many today. The RET showed us that people in Seattle did not understand what our department did, due to a lack of community outreach and engagement and staff ability and gave us new opportunities to do better.

Though we faced staffing challenges in 2019, we learned lessons on how to listen to and elevate community voices, and meet community needs to address discrimination, racism, and other systemic harms that affect marginalized communities. Community voices asked us for a way to resolve disputes without the need for an investigation. Seattle City Council granted us a temporary mediator and temporary outreach position, which we used to begin development of a more community-centered approach to our work.

A case backlog in our Civil Rights Enforcement Division affected our services to people and businesses, so we understood that one of our priorities needed to focus on clearing the backlog. Though the year presented added challenges, we found opportunity to partner with the Office of Labor Standards for outreach with Domestic Workers. We also began enforcement of Seattle's First-in-Time provisions and continued enforcement of the Seattle Fair Chance Housing Ordinance, after the Washington State Supreme Court upheld the ordinance. We conducted 116 Fair Chance Housing tests and 60 tests focused on racial bias to show behaviors that may otherwise remain hidden.

Our Policy division continued to lift the voices of those most affected by racism and other forms of oppression and got to work figuring out strategies to commit to communities through financial investments, as well as developing policies that amplified community power and access. In 2019, we launched the Collaborative Grant Making (CGM) Method. The CGM method (adapted from the Social Justice Fund) allows for a democratic community-led process to make funding decisions. This process will decide the investment of \$1 million dollars into community organizations and coalitions that will develop alternatives to and address the harms created by incarceration, policing, and other parts of the criminal legal system.

2019 also saw the launch of the Community Preference guidance, which aims to affirmatively further fair housing, address displacement, and foster and sustain inclusive communities by allowing housing developments to prioritize certain applicants when leasing or selling units in communities at high risk of displacement.

Through a collaborative effort between our Policy and Enforcement Divisions, we were able to pass the Closed Captioning in Places of Public Accommodations Ordinance, increasing access for all community members in public areas throughout Seattle.

The Race & Social Justice Initiative (RSJI) expanded the use of Racial Equity Toolkits (RETs) across the City of Seattle, embedding racial equity in many City programs. During the year, RSJI supported several RETs by the Finance and Administrative Services (FAS) department, as well as an RET by the Department of Neighborhoods (DON) for development in the Chinatown-International District. The Council also issued a Statement of Legislative Intent to require application of an RET on the City's Comprehensive Plan with RSJI's support.

RSJI rounded out the year by partnering with the Seattle Department of Human Resources (SDHR) and the Seattle Office of Arts & Culture (ARTS) to host the 2019 RSJI Summit. City employees met at Seattle Center for two days of mindfulness, wellness, and workforce equity seminars.

Commissions in 2019



The Seattle Disability Commission worked with SOCR Policy Division and presented Closed Captioning in places of public accommodation, which passed legislation on April 9.

The Seattle Human Rights Commission presented Human Rights Day Event: Amplifying Missing and Murdered Indigenous People's Voices with a panel of Indigenous voices and sharing their stories.

The Seattle LGBTQ Commission led advocacy support on behalf of Seattle Roller Derby leagues to improve accessibility within Seattle Parks and Recreation facilities.

The Seattle Women's Commission partnered with organizations to call attention to the history of Denim Day and to wear jeans with a purpose, support survivors, and offer education on what sexual assault is all about and why we recognize it annually.

2020

Retrospective

If 2019 provided us with the opportunity for transformational change, then 2020 provided us with a year of challenges that sought to interrupt and redefine our ideas of normality and justice.

The COVID-19 pandemic erupted in March 2020, and we found ourselves meeting multiple roadblocks. Then, in May 2020, the world watched as a Minneapolis police officer murdered George Floyd, leading to a worldwide movement for racial reckoning, racial justice, and Black lives. Moving through a pandemic while navigating these racial injustices tested our resilience. We needed to learn how to prioritize our mental health and physical well-being in this new world. Nevertheless, we persevered.

Though our Operations team worked hard to pivot us towards a teleworking world, the process involved growing pains and adjustments with technology gaps and onboarding struggles. Our administrative specialists met every challenge to smoothly transition our customer service operations as the conduit between the needs of the staff, the needs of the public, and the available resources from the City.

Our Enforcement team adapted by creating webinars for Renting in Seattle in partnership with Seattle Department of Construction and Inspections and launched an online bias reporting tool for community members. We implemented amendments to the Fair Chance Housing and Evictions Ordinance, which laid out protections for the use of eviction history in housing. We completed 207 Fair Chance Housing tests and partnered with Restaurant Opportunity Centers United (ROC) to produce The Great Service Divide, a report which included employment testing data on racial disparities in hiring in the service industry.

We also implemented new strategies such as pre-charge mediation and increased compliance letters. Though the case backlog had yet to clear, our Investigators continued to focus on delivering high quality work product and customer service. They helped settle 25% of our cases, resulting in positive outcomes for parties.

Our Policy division worked harder than ever to ensure our work elevated and invested in communities who have been most harmed by the criminal legal system, racism, and other forms of oppression. The Division awarded the \$1 million dollars in the Collaborative Grant Making method. The selected grantees helped to create a community-owned and self-sustaining "collective network" that creates ability for

community members to define and build safety for themselves, explore alternatives to incarceration and policing, and/or propose transformative approaches to community crises, including the COVID-19 pandemic.

In collaboration with the Human Services Department (HSD), our Policy team also helped develop and release the Reentry/Rerooting Indigenous Healing request for proposal. This funding opportunity aimed to support the belonging and cultural connection necessary for healthy and successful integration from incarceration and came from recommendations proposed by the City of Seattle's Reentry Workgroup. 2020 also saw the launch of the Division's "Community Task Force on the Criminal Legal System," which met to supply recommendations for reform efforts targeted at institutions within the municipal criminal legal system in Seattle.

RSJI faced unprecedented challenges during the COVID-19 pandemic but continued to serve the City of Seattle. The City's Rapid Response program conducted a Racial Equity Toolkit (RET) to ensure the inclusion of Black, Indigenous, and people of color (BIPOC) community members. Inside the City, RSJI racial equity trainings moved to a virtual format. Two groups of employees received more intensive anti-racism education as part of The Shape of Trust and Key Leaders cohorts. At the end of the year, the 2020 RSJI Summit brought City employees together for a virtual gathering during a time of disconnect.

In the aftermath of the murder of George Floyd, RSJI supported the Citywide Change Team Co-Leads as they organized for transformational change. The Co-Leads wrote a letter to the Mayor, lifting community demands and met with City Council to advocate for more ongoing communication between the Council and Change Teams. This organizing was one of many parts that led to the creation of the City's Participatory Budgeting program in 2021.

Commissions in 2020

The Seattle Disability Commission and the Seattle LGBTQ Commission held a virtual panel on community advocates with issues about LGBTQ+ folks with disabilities.

The Seattle Human Rights Commission produced an online video series on human trafficking in Seattle to enable more informed policymaking and created another video series on the Black experience in Seattle which culminated in Human Rights Day 2020.

The Seattle LGBTQ Commission collaborated with the Seattle Alphabet Alliance of Color (AAoC) to hold the 1st Annual Alphabet Institute Open House.

The Seattle Women's Commission presented a virtual event during Domestic Violence Awareness month with a panel of community leaders sharing information about their work.

Investigations

After more than two years, our Civil Rights Enforcement team cleared the backlog of cases thanks to the leadership of our Civil Rights Investigations Manager and a team of dedicated Investigators. The Enforcement division came together with a shared goal of clearing the backlog of cases that started in 2019. The team of current and past Investigators showed thoughtful planning in effective case management and commitment to strong customer service principles. Our Civil Rights Investigations Manager gave structure, support, training, and mentorship to the Investigations team.

The Investigations team received support from the Civil Rights Strategic Advisor who refined intake processes to increase

efficiency, while making room for more community-centered options for our customers. Our Testing Program Manager increased use of compliance letters to bring businesses into compliance with our laws to address discriminatory practices. Our Mediator helped parties resolve complaints prior to investigation to better meet the needs of people. Administrative staff supplied excellent customer service by answering questions from the public about the services we provide.

Our team committed to a different way of listening to people and businesses. We have a long way to go and will learn from our greatest teachers – those we serve.

Case Investigations

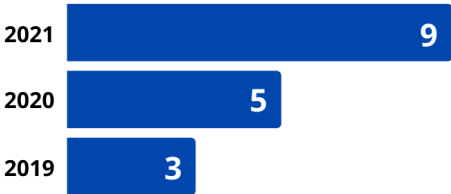
Our investigators handle receiving, investigating, and resolving complaints from people who believe they experience discrimination or a violation of civil rights law.

In 2021, there were nearly **twice as many cases** (83% increase) where we found evidence of discrimination (reasonable cause findings) compared to previous years.

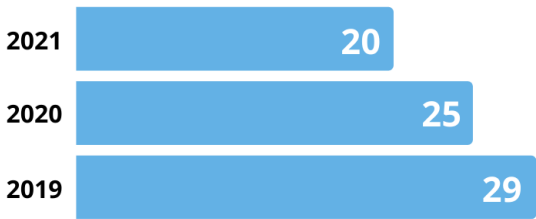
Settlements provide parties an opportunity to resolve claims on their own terms with the help of Investigators. In 2021, the **settlement rate was 20%**. Additionally, our Investigators helped charging parties obtain **\$64,280 in monetary awards**.



Reasonable Cause Rate by Percentage



Settlement Rate by Percentage



Case Highlights

A worker came to our office alleging she had been retaliated against and terminated after she reported sexual harassment to her employer. Our Investigator helped the parties reach resolution over a period of two months. The employer agreed to pay the worker \$15,000 to settle the claim.

A tenant (African American) alleged her housing providers subjected her to different debt collection practices compared to non-African American tenants. Our Investigator facilitated an agreement between the parties. The housing providers forgave the \$4,551.99 debt, provided the tenant with a “debt paid in full” letter, attended fair housing training, and posted an Equal Housing Opportunity poster.

A worker contacted our office alleging she experienced sexual harassment in the form of repeated, unwelcome touching by her General Manager in the workplace. Our Investigator helped the parties reach an agreement where the employer paid the worker \$5,000 and agreed to refrain from negatively influencing job references.

Civil Rights Enforcement Highlights

Community Outreach and Engagement

In late 2021, we hired a Community Engagement Specialist to get out into diverse communities to listen, answer questions, and inform people of our services. During the pandemic, we are updating our website, streamlining print materials, and creating online forms of engagement. We look forward to a future where we can physically meet people.

Training and Technical Assistance

We provide training and technical help to support compliance with our laws. In 2021, our Testing Program Manager gave **75 technical assistance contacts** to businesses, City Departments, and community organizations on civil rights laws. We conducted 8 civil rights training sessions and developed Renting in Seattle resources with the Seattle Department of Construction and Inspections. Additionally, we engaged groups like Rental Housing Association to supply technical help on first-in-time provisions.

Citywide Accessibility in Programs, Services, and Facilities

The City of Seattle must follow Title VI of the Civil Rights Act of 1964, which prohibits discrimination based on race, color, or national origin in any program or activity that receives federal funds.

In 2021, we refreshed our Title VI website and added information and complaint forms in English, Amharic, Spanish, Korean, Vietnamese, Chinese, and Somali. Our Enforcement Director worked with City Departments to create a new **Title VI training for City employees**. City Departments that receive federal funds and those responsible for monitoring and following Title VI required these accommodations. It was well-received, and many City Departments took part in creating content. We also created a SharePoint for City Departments to share Title VI resources and stay up to date on everything they need to know to follow the law.



Mediation

We heard community voices calling for alternatives to the investigation process. Our plan to integrate restorative principles that better meets the needs of those most affected by racism includes offering mediation services. A core principle of our process meets people where they are at and empowers them to define what their mediation looks like. People choose to mediate virtually, by phone, by text message, or by email. Our Mediator also incorporates coaching strategies in consultation with parties to give guidance on handling conflicts on their own in the future.

Preliminary data for 2021 shows parties **reached an agreement 89% of the time** when they agreed to mediate a pre-charge inquiry.

A housing applicant came to our office alleging violations of first-in-time. The applicant was self-employed, and the parties were working on how to verify income. Before that was complete, the housing provider chose another applicant. Our Mediator met with the parties in private online sessions on separate days. Parties exchanged meaningful information about communication, implicit biases, and race. The housing provider agreed to improve processes and refunded the application fee. The applicant withdrew the inquiry prior to investigation.

A job applicant contacted our office alleging an employer asked an illegal question about sexual orientation after the interview ended. The employer hoped to foster communication and resolve the case. The applicant did not want to see or speak with the employer. They worked with our Mediator in private meetings and by email. The employer paid \$500 in charitable contributions and \$1,500 to the applicant. The applicant agreed not to disparage the employer on social media. We resolved the case without need for investigation.

Testing

Testing is a method used to research in “secret shopper” or undercover scenarios to reveal facts or behaviors that would otherwise be difficult to see. The testing program strives to find and address bias and discriminatory practices in housing in partnership with community organizations such as CAIR-WA and through the work of trained testers. Testing can show subtle discriminatory practices that are difficult to report. With this information, we work with housing providers to provide resources, training, and other help to bring them into compliance with our laws.

Addressing Bias and Discrimination in Housing

In 2020, the testing program adjusted our testing methods to continue the work under COVID-19 restrictions. This adjustment continued throughout 2021, with testing performed by phone, email, and online. Under the leadership of the Testing Program Manager and the aid of two graduate interns, the testing program conducted **232 tests focused on compliance** with Seattle’s Fair Chance Housing and Eviction Records ordinance. A part of this law restricts the use of criminal history in rental housing. We found many housing providers did not fully understand whether an individual’s criminal history would negatively affect their ability for housing approval. The 2021 results also showed that negative stigmas about individuals with criminal histories remained. Many housing providers also still provided application screening practices and standards that were prohibited under the Fair Chance Housing law.

Examples of prohibited practices and standards seen in 2021 Fair Chance Housing tests:

- The housing provider says they would consider criminal history, could result in different conditions such as an increased deposit, or could result in an application denial.
- The housing provider says that the impact of a criminal history depends on how long ago or what it was for, or questions about the type of crime or when it occurred.

We issued **87 letters to housing providers** for violations and the opportunity for more resources and training. 53% of the letters sent were compliance letters, which provide the housing provider with the opportunity to come into compliance with the law. 47% of the letters offered technical help, such as training.



For the last three years, we have partnered with the national organization **Restaurant Opportunities Centers United (ROC)**. Through this partnership, we tested Seattle restaurants focusing on racial bias in the hiring process. In 2020, ROC released a report that included the testing data, *The Great Service Divide: Occupational Segregation, Inequality, and the Promise of a Living Wage in the Seattle Restaurant Industry*. In 2021, we continued our partnership with ROC and supported the production and launch of a video, *Paying Tribute to Seattle 'High Road' Restaurant Owners*, which centered on Seattle-area restaurant owners and workers speaking about their experiences, practices, and challenges in addressing equity in the Seattle restaurant industry.

Policy Work

The Seattle Office for Civil Rights has one of the most proficient policy development teams in the City. Our work supports community-driven solutions to push race and social justice to the forefront of every conversation to bring equity to the City of Seattle. This work includes research, community engagement and partnerships, policy development, and building awareness around key issues like gender justice, criminal justice equity, discrimination protections, and equity in housing access.

We helped develop and launch SOCR’s newest division, the Community Investments division. We began to experience an increase in community investment centered projects within the work that we do. This included the City placing a \$30 million Participatory Budgeting process into our hands, funded by City Council from a \$100 million fund earmarked by Mayor Jenny Durkan after community groups demanded investments into BIPOC communities during the protests for Black lives in the summer of 2020. To meet the demands of these new community funding projects, we realized we needed to approach the work holistically and create a new division that could center every part of these projects for these methods to thrive.

Throughout 2021, we continued to support the people most affected by the pandemic and the accompanying changes to the economy, housing access, and the fevered conversations around safety and the use of incarceration to address poverty.

In 2021, the Policy Division drafted legislation that passed into law by City Council expanding Seattle’s protected classes to include citizenship and immigration status, as well as including the definition of “race” in consistency with the Washington Law Against Discrimination, which includes traits based on a person’s race (i.e., hairstyles). Expanding the scope of protections in the City’s laws allows SOCR to enforce discrimination based on these new protected classes.

Gender Justice Project



The **Gender Justice Project (GJP)** is a City of Seattle effort to create an inclusive workplace and city. We seek to end gender and race-based inequities in the City workforce and in City policies, programs, and service delivery. The project envisions a city where a person's gender, gender identity, and race will no longer decide the ability to earn a living wage, access to housing, or the ability to achieve healthy life outcomes. We promote civic engagement and community participation in local government through strengthening stakeholder relationships and lending ability to local government and policy making to advance policies that support gender justice for all.

We began uplifting the **Alphabet Alliance of Color (AAoC) Policy and Research Committee** by using AAoC's community led research project as the basis for using a community driven policy agenda within the City of Seattle. AAoC hopes to increase safety, wealth, and improve the quality of life for Queer and Trans BIPOC communities in Seattle through more accountable and transparent relationships with the City, using the GJP as a conduit.

We launched the Gender Justice Project Advisory Group, a place where City workers come together and share space as transgender, gender nonconforming (TGNC), and Black, Indigenous, people of color (BIPOC). Workers lend their abilities to the group and share information, resources, and strategize on how the City can better address gender oppression in the workplace, as well as in the broader community while still centering race.

From 2019-2021, we worked with community partners, the LGBTQ Commission, and HSD staff to address discriminatory barriers to shelter services experienced by unhoused queer and trans people in Seattle. This work was in direct response to SLI 1517-A-2, a statement of legislative intent that HSD provide guidelines for homelessness service provision to the LGBTQ community. Our body of work culminated in an action plan to address gaps in contract language, data collection, service provision, and policy guidelines for City funded agencies. We are currently working with the new King County Regional Homelessness Authority to preserve this work that started through years of advocacy from local transgender communities.

Community Task Force on Criminal Legal System Realignment



The Criminal Legal System project advances the City of Seattle's commitment to end youth incarceration and the use of jail to address poverty. The project elevates and amplifies community driven solutions developed by those with direct experience of the harm of the criminal legal system.

The Seattle Office for Civil Rights (SOCR) and Seattle City Council Central Staff gathered the Community Task Force on Criminal Legal System Realignment (Task Force) from September 2020 through May 2021 to give recommendations for reform efforts targeted at institutions within the municipal criminal legal system in the City of Seattle. The Task Force had community members affected by the criminal legal system (CLS) in the Seattle and King County region, including the police, jail, courts, and probation systems.

Principles of anti-racism, disability justice, gender justice, and, most importantly, accountability to Black, Indigenous, and People of Color communities disproportionately affected by the CLS guided the Task Force through this work.

The City considered developing recommendations to guide policy changes in the criminal legal system within Seattle as the primary goal of the Task Force. This included reducing as much harm as possible and preventing people from ending up in the system to begin with.

The recommendations from the Task Force included:

- Do not rely on the CLS to address behaviors arising from unmet needs or behavioral health crises.
- Address the root causes of CLS engagement.

Our Policy work included collaborating with King County and successfully advancing \$16 million in criminal legal system funds to support community-based housing and supports, resulting in one of the largest divestments in CLS funds. Rather than funding for jail beds, revenue from Seattle's 2020 and 2021 reduced use of jail population will divest from the jail budget and go towards community-based health and housing programs that promote upstream safety and health.

- Evaluate diversion programs for their ability to cause harm. Prioritize non-CLS responses over the expansion of diversion programs.
- Electronic Home Monitoring (EHM) should not be used as an alternative to incarceration.
- Create a workgroup of community experts and stakeholders to build alternatives to incarceration that address misdemeanor domestic violence.
- Learn from the disability justice movement: End the practice of coercive mental health treatment & the criminalization of people with disabilities.
- Create a Just Transition for current CLS workers to transition into jobs that do not cause harm and serve a social good.
- Avoid the use of data-driven and algorithm-based decision-making tools in the CLS.

Community Investments

The Community Investments division in SOCR came about from community driven solutions that asked the City for some new approaches. Our new division focuses on investing in community and supports the development, implementation, and management of participatory budgeting and collaborative grant-making. We look to make systemic impacts through community partnerships and innovative City investments that lead to institutional transformation in the way the City budgets and invests in Black, Indigenous, and People of Color (BIPOC) communities.

We develop Requests for Proposals, contract with organizations, oversee the evaluation of the process, and make recommendations to the Mayor and City Council on the continuous improvement of the City’s participatory budgeting process.

2021 Racial Equity Fund

Seattle City Council approved funding in SOCR’s budget for grants to Seattle’s community-based organizations to support the base-building and leadership development work of the Black Power EPICenter. SOCR has a budgeted amount of \$60,000 in funds available in 2022.

2021 Collective Network: Community Alternatives to Incarceration and Policing

For the 2021 Collective Network fund, we sought proposals from organizations and coalitions that supported creating alternatives to and addressed the harm created by the carceral state. Additionally, we uplifted the need for organizations that understood the connections between anti-Black racism and other forms of oppression experienced in Black communities, such as patriarchy that targets Black women of trans and non-trans experience, as well as Black transgender people.

Applicants committed to building solidarity with people of all genders within Black communities. With \$1 million in funding available, the Rating Panel for the 2021 Collective Network chose to fund two proposals: The “Black Trans Sovereignty: Our Origins & HxStories of Medicine” proposal of \$500,000 sent by Liberation Medicine School

The “Black trans-led organization capacity building & indirect intervention of carceral systems experienced by Black trans and gender diverse communities in WA State” proposal of \$500,000 sent by Lavender Rights Project.

Participatory Budgeting



In June 2021, the City of Seattle put the development of a request for proposal (RFP) for the Participatory Budgeting process into our department. Participatory budgeting (PB) is a democratic process, where communities and members of the public decide how to spend public funding. PB allows those usually left out from budgetary conversations to have a voice in the process. A request for proposal is a document that announces and describes a project and then invites people to send a proposal or plan that meets the projects' needs.

The funding for our Participatory Budgeting process comes out of a \$100 million fund to invest in BIPOC community from Mayor Jenny Durkan and Seattle City Council. The City created this PB program to uplift investments for community safety and reinvest in Black communities, who have experienced harm from lack of investment.

We asked for applications from organizations and coalitions to give administrative and consulting services to help the City in planning and developing an approximately \$28 million Participatory Budgeting program. The group who handles the program will run it in line with the vision of the “Black Brilliance Research Project Report’s (BBRP) Participatory Budgeting Roadmap.”

With \$28 million of the City's budget distributed for this participatory budgeting process, this will be one of the largest participatory budget projects in the nation.



The Seattle Race and Social Justice Initiative (RSJI) is a citywide effort to end institutionalized racism and race-based disparities in City government.

RSJI builds on the work of the civil rights movement and the ongoing efforts of individuals and groups in Seattle to confront racism. The Initiative's long-term goal is to change the underlying system that creates race-based disparities in our community and to achieve racial equity.



Racial Equity Research

In 2020, SOCR received community feedback calling for more transparent use of race and social justice data, as well as better coordination between City departments. We decided to develop new web resources that address these concerns. With support from the City's Innovation Advisory Council, those resources were released in 2021.

The Racial Equity Research website makes the City's data more accessible. The site currently includes seven topics: Poverty, Racial Demographics, Food Insecurity, Health Disparities, Community Wealth, Housing Affordability, and Youth Mental Health and Wellness.

Each topic page includes:

- Basic information about a racial equity issue.
- An interactive data dashboard.
- An interactive chart showing the root causes of an issue.
- Community stories.
- Links to community organizations in Seattle.

Along with the Racial Equity Research resource, RSJI published a City Racial Equity Actions database.

Every year, City of Seattle departments use data to create Racial Equity Plans to guide their work. The database allows users to view summaries of Racial Equity Plans, including their strategies and outcomes. This resource makes the City's racial equity work more transparent and helps departments collaborate.

RSJI, the Seattle IT Digital Engagement Team, and the Seattle IT Digital Workflows team led the development of these new resources for the community.



The RSJI Summit set the tone for 2021. For the first time ever, we held the Summit and Martin Luther King Jr. Unity Day together in early January. This allowed us to center the stories of Black people, the work of Black leaders, and demands made by Black communities since the pandemic began.

RSJI is rooted in the power of grassroots movements that center the people most harmed by systemic racism. During the 2021 Summit, City employees and community members united to move the City of Seattle towards being an inclusive, anti-racist institution.

The goals of the Summit were to:

- Deepen relationships by spotlighting grassroots organizing.
- Align our racial justice work with grassroots anti-racist movements.
- Develop citywide organizing strategies in support of race and social justice work.

Summit attendees enjoyed four days of activities inspired by the activism of Black and Indigenous community voices. Each day began with a grounding by community storytellers.

Events included:

- The first annual Black Directors Forum.
- A workshop on racial caucusing practices.
- A roundtable on Collaborative Grantmaking.

During these events, attendees developed strategies for managing the trauma and burnout that often accompany anti-racism work.



In the fall of 2021, RSJI published "The Shape of Trust Video Facilitation Guide," a tool for anti-racist change in the workplace. The guide uses arts and mindfulness to create organizational cultures rooted in well-being and belonging.

The project began in 2017, when SOCR, the Seattle Department of Human Resources, and the Seattle Office of Arts & Culture reached out to artist Sara Porkalob to discuss how arts can support institutional change.

Porkalob developed a script capturing the experiences of BIPOC women who worked at the City. Their stories contain struggle, resilience, and transformation. Seasoned actors brought the stories to life during performances for more than 1,250 people.

Those performances are the heart of The Shape of Trust. After hosting a training series in 2020, RSJI began developing the Facilitation Guide, with discussion questions inspired by the performances. The guide also includes ten detailed activities that users can adapt for their own needs.

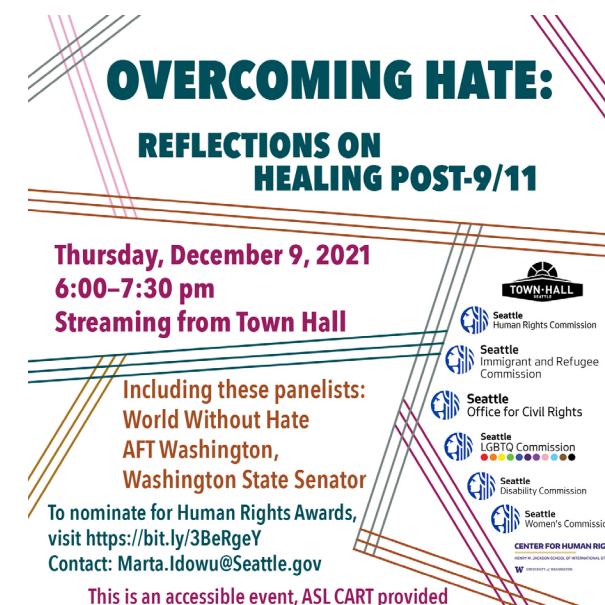
The Shape of Trust is inspired by years of racial equity organizing by BIPOC women within the City of Seattle. They are among the most affected by racism, sexism, and other forms of oppression. The finished guide also includes contributions from artists, cultural organizers, and healers, and many more people from all walks of life.

Commissions

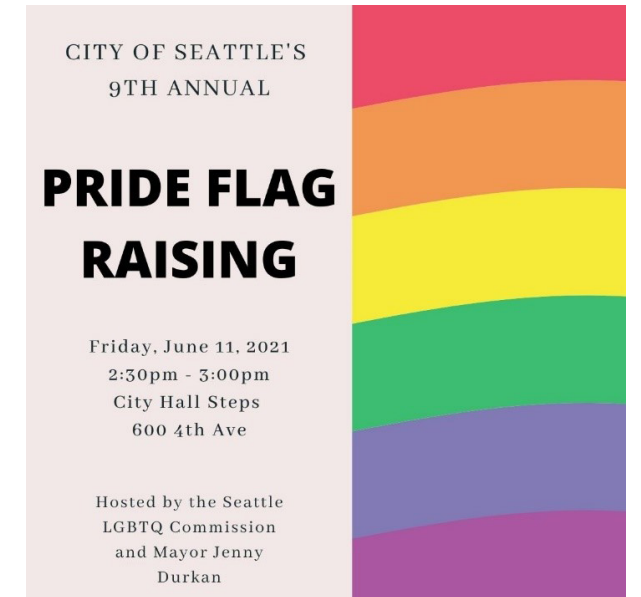
The COVID-19 pandemic and the civil unrest following 2020 caused a difficult start for 2021. For the Commissions, it slowed down their partnerships between the Mayor's office and City Council. However, the end of 2021 brought new hope and renewed purpose with an increase in recruitment opportunities and collaboration with the City to advocate for their communities.



The Seattle Disability Commission held their 8th Annual Inclusion Jubilee in October. The event highlighted five individuals in the disability community, including Kenny Salvini, Ashley Cowan D'Ambrosio, Molly Neher, Hannah Wilson, and WeWork 1201 3rd Ave building. The Commission also updated and passed through legislation to change their name from the Seattle Commission for People with DisAbilities to the Seattle Disability Commission.



The Seattle Human Rights Commission held its annual Human Rights Day event, Overcoming Hate: Reflections on Healing Post 9/11. This virtual event commemorated the 73rd anniversary of the United Nations' Universal Declaration of Human Rights, adopted on December 10, 1948. Honoring the 20th anniversary of 9/11, panelists came together to share their experiences of direct backlash of the attacks, including discrimination, Islamophobia, and hate. The event gave time for participants to reflect on the impacts of 9/11, to unite, and celebrate resilience.



The Seattle LGBTQ Commission, in partnership with Mayor Jenny Durkan, held the annual Pride Flag Raising and celebration at City Hall. Commissioners also advocated and urged for justice on a national and federal level to help the plight of the LGBTQ+ community within Ghana when Ghanaian police arrested and detained 21 Ghanaian LGBTQ+ activists. While in jail, they faced inhumane treatment because of their LGBTQ+ identities.



The Seattle Women's Commission presented its annual Domestic Violence Prevention Month event in October, focusing on gathering a panel from the community to share their stories and the ways in which they are advocating for equitable policies and programs that prevent violence against women and gender nonconforming people. The panelists shared their current work and ways to collaborate with the City and other community stakeholders to move this work forward.



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