

EQUITABLE DEVELOPMENT INITIATIVE

2025 ANNUAL REPORT

Developed by Seattle's Office of Community Planning and Development

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GRANTEE SPOTLIGHT

ARTE NOIR

at Midtown Commons Central District



Figure 1: Community members surrounding the owner of Arte Noire – Vivian Phillips in the center with co-founder of Wa Na Wari Inye Wokoma leaning into the group on the right.

Arte Noir's physical space serves as a dynamic hub that features a gift shop and a fine art gallery, creating a permanent home for Black art and artists in Seattle's Central District. All products and items in the shop are made by Black creatives who receive 100% of net proceeds from their products and goods sold in the shop.

The mission of Arte Noir celebrates and sustains Black art, artists, and culture by cultivating inclusive spaces, fostering opportunities, and honoring community alongside the diversity and vitality of Black creativity.

The vision of Arte Noir envisions a world where the creativity rooted in the culture of the African diaspora illuminates new possibilities and realities for all. With a deep reverence for community and the soulful power of Black art, we uplift and celebrate the Black artists and innovators.

Letter from the Director

In 2025, our Equitable Development Initiative (EDI) focused on building internal capacity, strengthening technical skills for grantees, and supporting community-led projects as they move from vision to operation. This year marked a period of deep investment – in people, partnerships, and systems – to ensure EDI continues to be a cornerstone of the City’s anti-displacement and community wealthbuilding work for years to come.

Key Milestones Included:

Expanding EDI’s Network of Support and growing our EDI Community of Practice. Through individualized technical assistance and peer-to-peer learning, we helped projects accelerate timelines, strengthen readiness, and build community wealthbuilding strategies rooted in cultural place-keeping.



Figure 2: Director Quirindongo smiling in a blue shirt with a tree in the background.

Launching our 2025 Request for Proposals focused on shovel-ready existing and new projects. More than 100 applicants applied for capacity-building or capital funding this year, demonstrating the growing need for community-owned development in Seattle.

Growing EDI team expertise. This year we continued to hone team skills in development and architecture by adding a real estate development and program implementation role, two Strategic Advisors, a Senior Planning & Development Specialist, and a Real Property Specialist to our team.

Strengthening EDI’s Advisory Board. This year we filled five open Advisory Board positions, bringing in new board members from our community of practice to govern and advise EDI as we shape the next generation of the EDI program.

Awarding nearly \$29 million to 42 organizations.

Celebrating 23 grantees in operations. This year we saw an increase up from 15 the prior year.

This year we also grew in partnership with other City departments. In collaboration with Seattle Department of Construction and Inspection, we facilitated potential permitting pathways for grantees. We worked with the Office of Housing to develop the ADU/DADU pilot program; and with the Office of Economic Development to explore how EDI might better support small businesses. EDI also collaborated with the Office of Housing to align EDI grantees and public benefit services to bolster anti-displacement efforts with affordable housing partners.

Originally born out of the comprehensive planning process in 2015, EDI has continued to align with the City's long-range planning goals by investing in communities of color facing high displacement risk, building on local community assets, promoting transportation mobility and more connected communities, and creating more equitable access to all neighborhoods.

EDI exists because communities had a vision, and insisted the City invest in it. Thank you to every grantee organization and community member who has shaped this work. Your leadership, creativity, and persistence continue to guide EDI forward. We look forward to continuing this journey together.

In community,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Rico Quirindongo', with a stylized flourish at the end.

Rico Quirindongo

GRANTEE SPOTLIGHT

TUBMAN HEALTH CENTER South Seattle



Figure 3: A two-story rectangular building on the corner of a busy intersection. Trees on a sloped street and a pedestrian viewing the building from across the street.

Tubman Health's Center in South Seattle, opening in 2027, will be an anchor for community thriving—a place where care, community, and liberation come together. The architectural design development is now complete, guided by a community design process reaching 24,000 community members. The building's exterior is inspired by Harriet Tubman's shawl and Northwest Indigenous and West African design elements, – reflecting community members' wishes for cultural expression in the Center's physical space and Tubman Health's origins as a Black and Native-founded organization.

“Our communities are creating the future of healthcare with a model rooted in self-determination and relationships. Our Center will be a liberated space that redefines care, grounding it in communal systems of support and initiatives to continue building community wellbeing and power.”

Danisha Jefferson-Abye, Tubman Health

Equitable Development Initiative History and Reflections

A Brief History of EDI

The Equitable Development Initiative (EDI) was created to address growing racial disparities in Seattle, particularly as the City’s rapid growth was putting re-development and displacement pressure on historically marginalized communities, supported by demographic data that revealed enhanced vulnerability to displacement in neighborhoods with historic redlining and disinvestment. This prompted a 2015 revision of the city’s growth strategy to ensure all people, regardless of race or income, could reach their full potential.

In response to the evident risk of displacement faced by historically redlined communities, a collaborative effort between the Department of Planning and Development (now Office of Planning and Community Development), the Office of Civil Rights, the Race and Social Equity Taskforce (RSET), and South Communities Organizing for Racial Equity (South CORE) led to the creation of EDI. This coalition established EDI to invest in community-led real estate projects designed to prevent displacement in Seattle’s most vulnerable neighborhoods.



Figure 4: A group of individuals dancing and clapping at Khmer Community of Seattle King County – Khmer Community Space Project

EDI Funding Sources

The EDI fund was established by the City’s 2016 sale of Civic Square, providing a one-time allocation of \$16 million to support the new program’s first five projects in the four neighborhoods affected by displacement and historic disinvestment (Chinatown-International District, the Central District, Othello and Rainier Beach). In 2018, EDI began receiving funding from the City’s Short-Term Rental Tax (STRT), with the first \$5 Million generated from the tax allocated to EDI. A 2019 sale of the Mercer MegaBlock property in South Lake Union established an additional one-time allocation to EDI. \$10 million was directed to EDI and an additional \$30 million contribution was awarded to grantees via a site acquisition program entitled the Strategic Investment Fund (SIF).

The goal of SIF was to leverage investments to provide multiple community benefits including affordable commercial space, cultural space and childcare facilities.

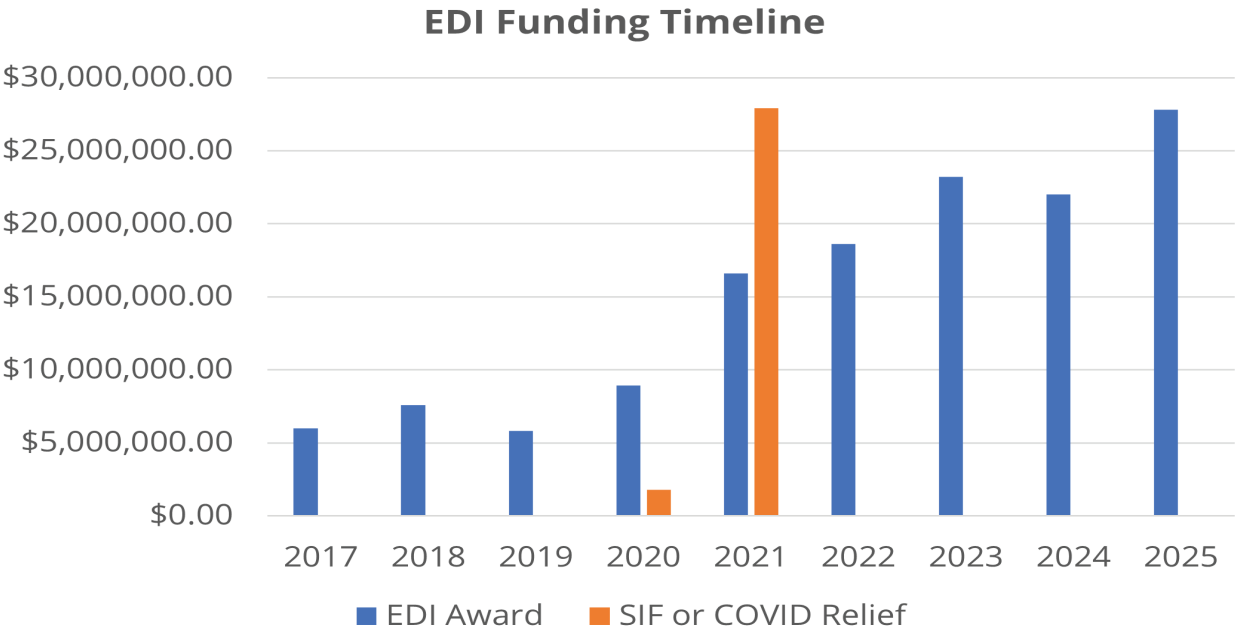


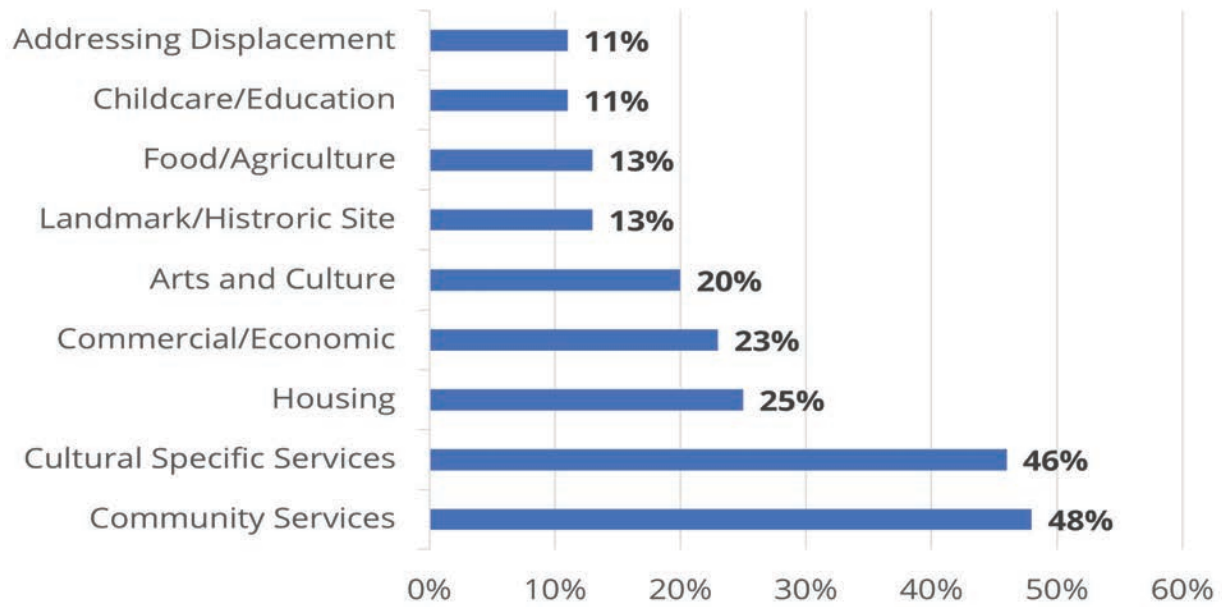
Figure 5: EDI Funding Timeline showing annual funding amounts from 2017 to 2025 for two funding sources. The vertical axis ranges from 0 to 30 million dollars. Blue bars represent EDI Awards: about 6 million in 2017, 7.5 million in 2018, 5.5 million in 2019, 9 million in 2020, 16.5 million in 2021, 18.5 million in 2022, 22.5 million in 2023, 21.5 million in 2024, and 27.5 million in 2025. An orange bar represents SIF or COVID Relief funding: about 1.5 million in 2020 and 27.5 million in 2021.

In 2021 Ordinance 126393 created the JumpStart Payroll Expense Tax (PET) Fund in the City Treasury and spending plan which directed 9% of PET funds to EDI (in 2024 the spending plan was eliminated). Both STRT and PET continue to fund the program, empowering EDI to invest over \$20 million annually in place-based projects led by community-based organizations.

As of 2025, EDI has invested over \$165 million into 84 projects that provide public benefits in workforce development, food access, education, community healthcare supportive services, and cultural programming by enabling organizations to secure commercial and cultural spaces, strengthen their operations, and create lasting impact.

EDI's unique approach has historically focused on early-stage investments in projects that are often too risky for traditional funders, helping these projects get off the ground and achieve long-term sustainability. EDI supports capacity-building efforts, often filling a crucial funding gap, which supports community-based organizations in developing the organizational and project readiness necessary for a successful real estate development project. By doing so, EDI's investments allow community groups to acquire and develop properties without risking their ongoing services or taking on crippling debt. In a real estate market that often drives displacement, EDI levels the playing field, ensuring that community-based organizations can compete and thrive.

Exhibit 2. Respondent Descriptions of Success, Grantee Survey



Source: EDI Grantee Survey, 2024; CAI, 2024

Figure 6: Horizontal bar chart titled “Exhibit 2. Respondent Descriptions of Success, Grantee Survey” showing the percentage of respondents selecting each category. Community Services is highest at 48%, followed by Culturally Specific Services at 46%, Housing at 25%, Commercial/Economic at 23%, Arts and Culture at 20%, Food/Agriculture and Landmark/Historic Site each at 13%, and Addressing Displacement and Childcare/Education each at 11%.

EDI Values

Centering communities most impacted by displacement

We value efforts that focus decision-making processes on structures of community development with clear accountability to impacted community members.

Community-driven strategies

We believe in community self-determination, influence, and leadership. We know that communities are resilient and resourceful, and that tapping into their own collective cultural cornerstones of curbing displacement is key to ownership of initiatives and projects, as well as reducing invisibility.

Broad-based community development

We value organizations that reflect the complexity of community needs such as economic development, affordable housing, cultural development, education, healthcare, food sovereignty, etc.

Acknowledging historic injustices

We value efforts that are explicit about addressing systemic racism and the institutional barriers that exist for communities of color.

Accountability

We support efforts which are most likely to bring improvements to the lives of those impacted by displacement and lack of opportunity. We recognize that affected communities deserve strong, accountable, accessible, transparent, and culturally appropriate solutions that include ongoing oversight of government and other entities to address the negative impacts they have experienced.

Leverage

We support efforts that leverage community resources and support the existing assets available to low-income communities that are not typically recognized or valued in community development processes.

Flexibility and interdependence

We strive to create processes that reduce barriers to participation while providing a fair structure for all communities seeking to participate in the EDI. We recognize that all places and people are interconnected and commit to an approach of collective impact.



Figure 7: Ribbon Cutting for the Washington State Black Legacy Institute by Urban Black Community Development with words by Kateesha Atterberry–March 2025

System Change

EDI funding is intended to advance projects that reimagine the development process in a way that prioritizes long-term benefits and capacity for community members.



Figure 8: Ribbon Cutting for the Washington State Black Legacy Institute by Urban Black Community Development–March 2025

GRANTEE SPOTLIGHT

RAINIER BEACH ACTION COALITION

Rainier Beach



Figure 9: A group of community members outside celebrating the ribbon cutting

Rainier Beach Action Coalition's Food Innovation Center contains the Rainier Beach Food Hub on the first floor - cold storage, washing station and demonstration kitchen. Second floor houses the Growth Center - a restorative practice meeting space, conference room and staff workspaces. Occupancy permit secured in October 2024, facility is fully operational.

"I recall an early question in the EDI movement of then Mayor Ed Murray - "Mr. Mayor, what are you going to do with the proceeds of the property sale across from City Hall?" We did not wait for an answer, we said it should go to anti displacement efforts, supporting BIPOC organizations in acquiring and developing land in their communities". Years later the fact that over \$100 million has been secured for more than 80 projects is a legacy of action we must not let people in this region forget."

Gregory Davis, Board of Directors, Chair, Executive Committee
Managing Strategist

2025 Celebrations

This year, OPCD made great strides toward improving the EDI program to advance projects, to establish a framework for grantee capacity-building, and to prioritize data-informed funding strategies.

2025 was a momentous year for EDI, with notable highlights including:



Figure 10: Agreement Signing with Yusuf Ahmed of Kwanza Preparatory Academy and his son, Jama.

Increased the number of grantee projects in operations from 15 to 23

Closed the funding gap for 12 grantees, ensuring their ability to complete their projects

Disbursed \$17.3 Million to grantees as they advanced their projects to achieve major project milestones

Published the first iteration of the Network of Support, providing grantees with access to 112 consultants and contractors versed in organizational capacity-building, capital project readiness, and capital project delivery.

Introduced technical assistance to EDI funding RFP applicants and grantees

Hired a highly skilled team of consultants to lead **EDI's Strategic Planning process**

Promoted two staff and backfilled their positions

2025 Program Advancements

When EDI was created through community advocacy, the program's directives were to a) fund projects led and owned by communities most impacted by displacement, b) invest early with capacity building and predevelopment to get good ideas off the ground, c) invest in projects that other funders struggled to underwrite due to inability to show leverage, operating history, etc. and were deemed too risky. The approach was to address the history of disinvestment and policies and practices that enforced and entrenched inequities in Black, Indigenous, and People of Color Communities, low-income communities, immigrant and refugee communities, LGBTQIA communities by investing in projects led by those communities.

As the relatively small one-time allocation of \$16 million grew to \$5 million per year and then exploded to over \$20 million annually, EDI was able to grow the number of projects funded and meet the increasing demand for funding – a demand that continues to grow today. EDI intentionally funds a wide range of projects at various stages of development. As more grantees complete projects and become operational, there is much to celebrate. And at the same time, EDI faces pressure to



Figure 11: EDI Award Celebration in January 2025 with EDI grantees including César Garcia of Lake City Collective, Vivian Phillips of Arte Noir at the podium, Director Quirindongo and former Mayor Bruce Harrell

deliver projects more quickly and efficiently. EDI is charged with balancing the desire to efficiently steward public dollars with meeting the directive to invest in community-led solutions.



Figure 12: In conversation with Slayman Appadolo and Sahrudine Apdalhaliem from EDI grantee Cham Refugees Community

Strategic Funding Model

As EDI matures and the program's annual funds stabilize, the program requires a more nuanced approach to funding projects. Developing a strategic funding model and updating EDI's strategic plan will catalyze the evolution of the program. Even as EDI sets its sights into the future, its core values and purpose will persist: **to democratize funding of capital real estate projects led by and for communities are highest risk of being displaced.** This year, EDI began to assess and improve the program's funding and implementation strategy in earnest. Several core challenges were identified:

- Timing of funds
- Rightsizing of Awards
- Project Readiness
- Funding Pipeline
- Transparency, Equity, and Predictability
- Impact

To kick off the update of the Strategic Funding Model, EDI began to research how other public and private funders invest in Equitable Development. As part of this discovery phase, EDI hosted the Seattle Equitable Development Initiative Peer Learning Exchange: In Place, In Practice, In Community – a series of virtual webinar conversations with experts in the field and across the country who are building funding models to support community-led development.

EDI hosted representatives from public funding agencies, CDFIs, community-based nonprofit organizations, and public/private partnerships from across the country in discussions centered on:

Defining Capacity Building and Readiness, Creating Predictability for Projects and Aligning Funders, and Redefining Risk as part of our Racial Equity Mandate

The EDI team is currently completing a series of case studies informed by the Peer Learning Exchange and will advance the re-envisioning of the Strategic Funding model in alignment with strategic planning in 2026.

The intended outcomes of this process are to build support and consensus with City leaders, EDI's Advisory Board, and community of practice, to validate the program's purpose and techniques, and to build the case for a refined funding model that continues to provide vital funding to combat displacement of Seattle's most at-risk communities.



Figure 13: EDI Advisory board members, Byrd Barr staff, and EDI staff posing and laughing. Zahra Hassan, Amira Beasley, Sophia Benalfew, Wendy, Jennell Hicks, Eric Alipio, Karen, Ernesto Oliva, Tagoipah Mathno

Nimble & Adaptive Funding in 2025

While a robust Strategic Funding model process gets underway, EDI continues to adapt in real time to address the acute needs of grantees and their projects. For several months in 2025, EDI's ability to make funding decisions were placed on hold as the City's Executive Office and City Council went through an effort to resolve a significant City-wide budget deficit. EDI's team waited patiently, but not idly, preparing to deploy 2025 funds as soon as they received authorization. That authorization came in August of 2025, which enabled EDI to moved forward with several program advancements.



Figure 14: In conversation EDI grantee representative including Hamdi Abdulle from African Community Housing Development, Keith Tucker from Hip Hop is Green, and Edwin Lindo of Estelita's Library

2025 Funding Cycle & Request for Proposal

With over 100 applicants, this year's 2025 Request for Proposals sought to blend ongoing priorities and strategic fund management. Through a community review process, 33 projects were awarded a total of \$27.8 Million. EDI continued to fund existing projects to close gaps and help projects enter operations. The 2025 RFP also funded new projects for both capacity building and capital. The RFP had 3 distinct funding areas:

Existing EDI grantee projects to:

Accelerate existing EDI funded projects forward towards completion. Projects that demonstrate clear milestones and the ability to become operational by 2027 will be given the highest consideration. When determining award selections and funding amounts, your project will be evaluated by how well your project aligns with the priority to accelerate development or operations.

Build capacity for organizations and projects.

New EDI projects

To support capital and qualifying predevelopment expenses. Priority will be given to projects that are able to demonstrate their ability to enter operation and service provision by the end of 2027 and where EDI funds will complete all fundraising needed. (Maximum four projects).

New EDI Capacity Projects

To support projects in a visioning stage (Maximum four projects at \$75,000 per award)

Emergency Funding

2025 brought economic instability and a fraught socio-political environment that created direct impacts on EDI grantees. Many grantee organizations lost important programming funding due to the gutting of federal sources, forcing them to modify or eliminate programming and reduce their workforce, all while experiencing an increased demand for services. Grantees also experienced cost escalations in their capital projects, expressing concerns to EDI staff about the impacts of rapidly rising costs of construction and volatility around tariffs, as well as threats of unlawful immigration raids on construction sites creating uncertainty around labor availability.

In 2025, EDI supported two grantees with emergency funding to fill urgent resource gaps. Without these funds, the grantees would have been at serious risk of losing other capital funding sources or unable to complete emergency repairs stemming from unforeseen conditions. EDI was able to act in an ad hoc way to mitigate risk for two projects facing real project emergencies and recognized the need to create a policy and process around mitigation funds.



Figure 15: Lake City Collective co-founders César Garcia and Peggy Hernández of Lake City Collective displaying the architectural model of their EDI project

To mitigate cost fluctuations and keep projects from stalling, EDI established an Emergency Funding Policy with the guidance and approval from the Advisory Board. The policy was adopted in November of 2025 and will reserve \$3 million annually for substantiated project emergencies. Funding will be available on a rolling, as-needed basis starting in 2026, as described later in this report.

Staffing and Team Development

The EDI team is committed to serving the community and supporting grantees in developing and delivering their projects. EDI Project Managers are critical to this work, as they facilitate collaboration, help remove barriers, and serve as a vital link between grantees and the communities their projects benefit.

Feedback received from grantees in 2024 emphasized the need for consistent support from Project Managers and highlighted concerns about turnover. In 2025, EDI increased team stabilization by filling critical roles, promoting team members into new roles, and by bringing in support from a term-limited temporary position.

The team is comprised of individuals who not only bring professional experience in community organizing, government, and planning, but who also have the shared lived experiences reflected across EDI's grantee community. This year, the addition of new team members with professional backgrounds in real estate development and transactions, architecture, and capital fundraising, have expanded and refined the team's capacity to sustain momentum, strengthen program delivery, and advance grantee projects with stability and continuity.



Figure 16: Dakota Murray, Mishelle Oun, and Patrice Thomas of the EDI team stick Post-It notes to a wall on the wall while Giulia Pasciuto looks on during the November 2025 mini retreat

Roles on the Team:

Division Director – The purpose of the role is to develop a comprehensive strategy for the program, working with the team to increase scope and impact, provide oversight of the program budget, coordinate with other City departments and external agencies, lead and monitor the EDI funding process and policy goals, increase resources to EDI projects, establish a vision for success and growth of the program.

Strategic Advisor 2 – Community Investment & Funding Manager – The purpose of the role is to manage resource allocation, lead funding strategy, develop risk mitigation policies and provides specific direction in collaboration with legal advisors, and develop and implement EDI's community investments.

Strategic Advisor 2 - Real Estate Development and Program Implementation Manager – New in 2025. The purpose of the role is to lead, develop, and implement key strategies for real estate acquisition, development, and program implementation designed to advance Seattle's anti-displacement and equitable development goals.

Strategic Advisor 1, Project Manager – The purpose of the role is to manage a diverse portfolio of equitable development projects, encompassing capacity building, pre-development, and capital project development contracts, draft contracts, negotiate scopes of work, monitor contract budgets, deliverables, compliance and performance, provide technical assistance to EDI-funded community organizations, provide analysis to inform EDI public policy recommendations.

Planning and Development Senior, Real Property Specialist – New in Q1 2026 – The purpose of the role is to support EDI to prepare to fund real estate and construction transactions. This position supports EDI program managers by completing complex real estate transaction due diligence, assisting in contract development, and in monitoring and compliance.

Planning and Community Development Specialist 1 – New in Q1 2026. – The purpose of the role is to coordinate and support advisory board meetings, manage consultant contracts for the advisory board facilitator and other program-related investments, and provide support to the EDI team's project managers and the finance administrative analyst.

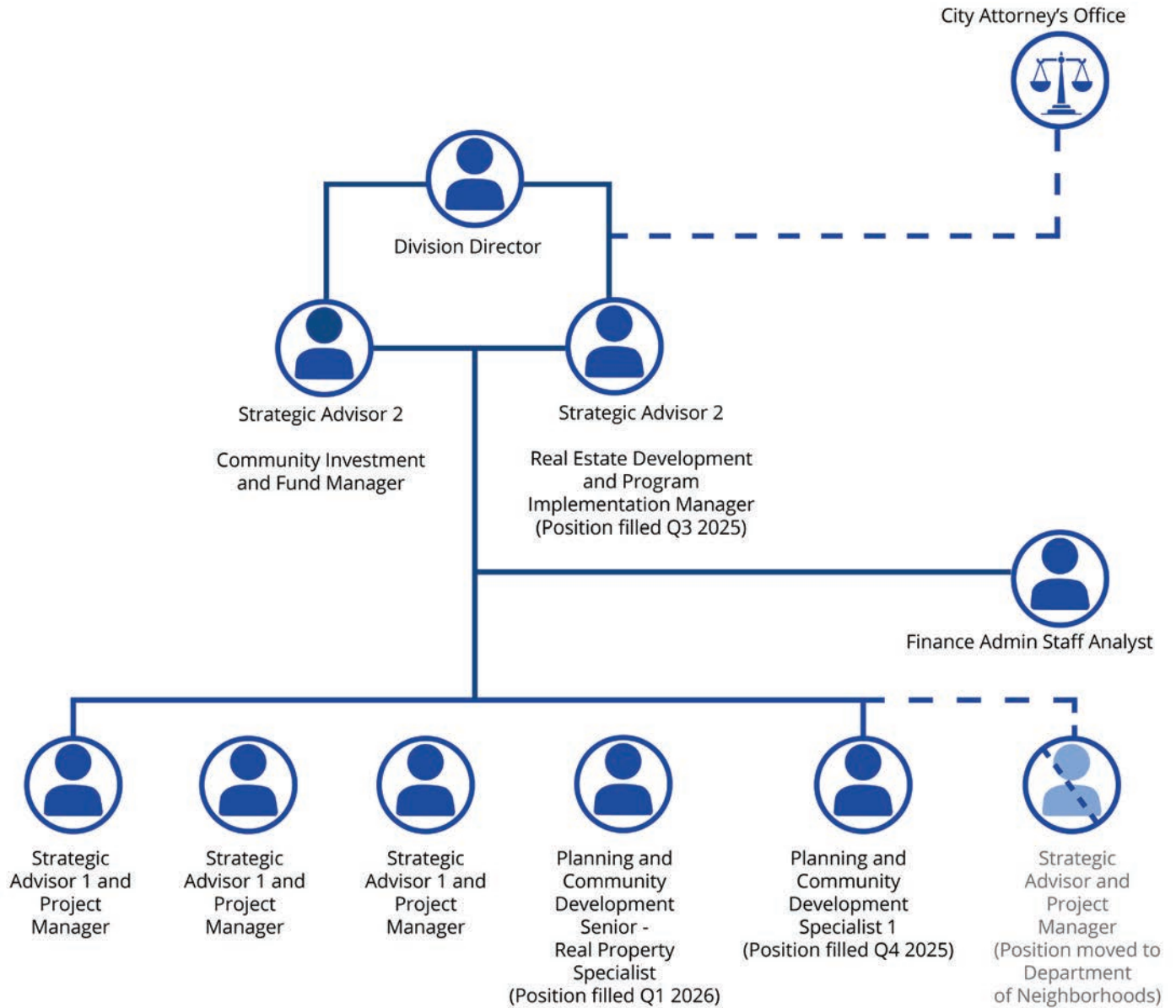


Figure 17: EDI Team Roles Diagram illustrating the relationship the team has with the City Attorney's Office which works closely with the Division Director, Community Investment and Fund Manager and the Real Estate Development and Program Implementation Manager. Additionally, the EDI team works closely with the finance team and their staff analyst. The EDI team further consists of 3 strategic advisor project managers, a planning and community development senior real property specialist and a planning and community development specialist 1. The team had an additional strategic advisor project manager position that was reallocated to the Department of Neighborhoods. This position will not be filled by the EDI team.

Capacity-Building and Project Readiness

Technical Assistance

EDI has historically been an early and patient funder, key factors that set our program apart from other public funders. The advantages to this approach are that early funding to community-based organizations often attracts other funders to their projects, and funding for capacity building supports grantee organizations in becoming project-ready. Real estate development at any scale is typically a multi-year process, and the patience of EDI funding gives grantees the time needed to go through the necessary steps in completing their capital projects. This is especially relevant to EDI, a program that resources grantees representing communities historically excluded from and displaced by traditional development. While this unique approach has its advantages, EDI must go further in supporting our grantees in their journeys to secure community ownership of property and to deliver facilities that will provide long-lasting benefits to communities.



Figure 18: The EDI team stands outside of Africatown Plaza at Midtown in the Central District on the south side of the building conversing in front of the community room. The iconic building resides in the background.

As EDI grantees embark on their projects – especially those doing this work for the first time – having guidance and resources throughout the process is crucial to their success. Through EDI’s 2024 Grantee Snapshot survey, grantees overwhelmingly expressed that technical assistance was a key component to their readiness and ability to advance their projects. Based on this critical feedback, EDI launched its Technical Assistance program for the first time in 2025. By resourcing both the EDI team and grantees with the technical expertise of subject matter experts, EDI will improve grantees’ experience, strengthen their ability to deliver projects, and create a level of predictability in our program and funding.



Figure 19: Co-founders Edwin Lindo and Dr. Estell Williams outside holding a sign of their business Estelita’s Library.

Network of Support

The first major step in EDI's Technical Assistance Program was the establishment of the Network of Support, a vetted list of 112 consultants providing services across several relevant fields and who practice working directly with cultural organizations or cultural facilities for Seattle/King County's historically marginalized communities. In collaboration with 4Culture, EDI launched a competitive process to solicit technical assistance consultants in March of 2025. EDI enlisted a cadre of community partners to evaluate consultant proposals and in June, the first iteration of the Network of Support community of practice was [published](#).

The Network of Support is a resource to grantees, where they can find consultants for hire, that can provide professional services to strengthen the grantee organization's operations and fundraising, or contract with real estate development consultants to support project management, feasibility, legal, or other project technical assistance. Grantees may use their EDI funds or other sources to hire consultants. The Network of Support is also a resource for EDI staff to identify and hire consultants for our Technical Assistance program, described further below.



Figure 20: Hieu and Susanna Tran of EDI grantee Essential Community Housing Organization at Co Lam Pagoda

Funding RFP Technical Assistance

EDI's inaugural Technical Assistance offering supported applicants in creating strong and compelling funding request proposals. EDI contracted with 16 consultants from the Network of Support roster comprising a new Funding RFP Technical Assistance as part of the 2025 RFP, at no cost to applicants. Each consultant could provide two hours of guidance to interested applicants, focused in either project scoping support or in general application support. Approximately 40 prospective applicants took advantage of this opportunity. The feedback and guidance from the technical assistance consultants was also instrumental to the EDI staff, as the team work to improve and expand Funding RFP technical assistance for the 2026 RFP and beyond.



Figure 21: Urban Black Community Development Contract Signing with Kateesha Atterberry and Director Quirindongo

Project Boost

Project Boost was launched in November 2025 with a questionnaire to grantees, gauging their interest and seeking input on their areas of need. More than 30 grantees responded to the questionnaire. In addition, EDI held two Q&A questions and several one-on-one meetings with grantees to craft discrete scopes that will supplement their capacity building or capital project efforts, focusing on issues that have created stagnation in grantees' ability to keep the project moving forward.

Consultants offer targeted guidance, coaching, and technical expertise to help grantees break through barriers related to organizational capacity building, operational readiness, and capital project development. The goal of Project Boost is to strengthen EDI projects and enhance grantees' ability to deliver long-term public benefit services in their facilities.

By the end of 2025, six consultants were engaged to deliver Project Boost. EDI will pair consultants with grantees and kick off Project Boost in Q1 2026. The technical assistance program will run through 2026 and, if effective, may continue into the future.

Project Boost Needs Assessment Questionnaire

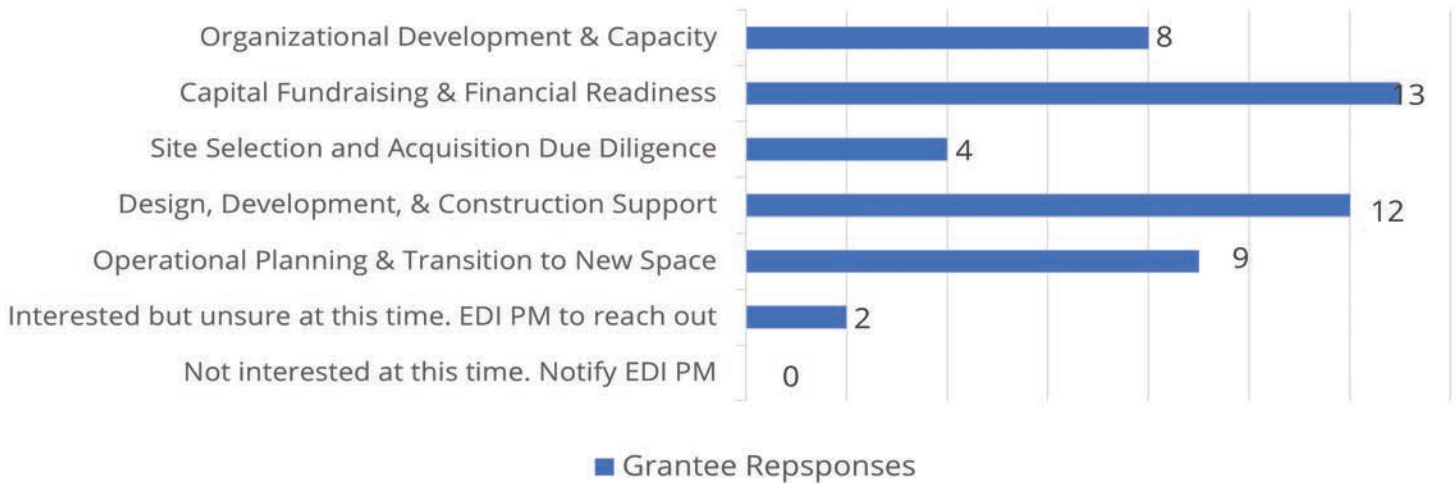


Figure 22: EDI Survey Grantee Survey for Project Boost detailing seven areas of need from the grantees. Eight grantees responded needing assistance with organizational development and capacity, three grantees need assistance with capital fundraising and financial readiness, four grantees need assistance with site selection and acquisition due diligence, twelve grantees need assistance with design, development, and construction support, nine grantees need assistance with operational planning and transition to new space, two grantees are interested and unsure but to have their project manager reach out and no grantees responded as being uninterested.

Process Improvements

Internal Systems & Processes

After funding announcements are made in a given cycle, attention shifts to contracting. Each EDI grantee brings a unique project with specific scoping and due diligence requirements, which can result in lengthy drafting and review periods. To streamline and standardize this process, EDI partnered with the City Attorney's Office (CAO) to develop contract templates, including templates for Capacity Building and Capital projects, as well as a short amendment template for adding funds to existing capital contracts. This amendment template was instrumental in enabling EDI to contract at the pace needed to keep up with grantees as they moved their projects forward in 2025. These tools have increased efficiency, consistency, and clarity, allowing grantees and EDI staff to focus more fully on delivering community-centered projects.

Advisory Board

The Equitable Development Initiative is guided by an Advisory Board consisting of 13 community members, appointed by the Advisory Board, City Council, and the Mayor. The Advisory Board was codified into legislation in 2020, to provide recommendations on funding and programmatic priorities for the EDI program and to elevate the voices and needs of communities that have historically been marginalized by the City's policies.

Advisory Board members serve terms ranging from one-to-three years and may serve up to two terms. Advisory Board members are selected with priority for individuals who represent a geographic region or communities impacted by displacement and historic discriminatory policies and practices, have broad perspectives on community development, and who are committed to the principals of equity and social justice.



Figure 23: Amira Beasley, Jamie Madden, Sophia Benalfew, Stephanie Lachman of the EDI Advisory Board sit and converse at a table during the Retreat January 2026.

In 2025, we recruited, interviewed, and onboarded five new board members to replace vacant positions.

Newly appointed board members in bold

Full board as of July 2025:

Amira Beasley

Diana Paredes

E.N. West*

Eliana Horn

Eric Alipio*

Ernesto Oliva*

Fynniece "Niecko" Glover Jr.

Jamie Madden

Jennell Hicks

John Rodriguez

Sophia Benalfew

Stephanie Lachman*

Tiffany Kelly-Gray



Figure 24: EDI Advisory Board members, Jamie Madden, John Rodriguez, Eliana Horn, Diana Paredes, Amira Beasley, Eric Alipio, and Jennell Hicks sit around a rectangular table conversing at the EDI Advisory Board Retreat in January 2026.

In 2025, the EDI Advisory Board revisited its structure to more effectively support EDI’s many priorities. They consolidated three existing committees to create an External Relations & Board Administration Committee and a Program Implementation & Policy Committee. Advisory Board members selected a committee to join based on their area of expertise or their interest. Each committee began meeting monthly to bring small -group focus and work shopping space to priorities discussed more generally at the monthly full Advisory Board meetings. This updated model has been successful in strengthening the connecting between Board Members and EDI staff and in improving the program.

The Advisory Board committees have generated program recommendations, policy guidance, and amplification of the importance of EDI to City leadership. The Program Implementation & Policy Committee reviewed and provided critical input on the new EDI Emergency Funding policy. They also led the crafting of a letter to City Council in response to their proposed amendments to the Seattle Comprehensive Plan.



Figure 25: EDI Staff Dakota Murray, Tagoipah Mathno sit alongside, EDI Advisory Board members E.N. West and Stephanie Lachman with EDI staff Patrice Thomas at a table smiling and laughing mid conversation during the EDI Advisory Board Retreat in January 2026.

This letter highlighted amendments that support EDI’s official Equity Drivers and urged for adoption of specific amendments. In 2025, the External Relations & Board Administration Committee re-launched an effort to increase EDI visibility through a Storytelling series. This effort will highlight board members, EDI grantees, and other successes of the EDI program. This committee also led the drafting of a letter to the City Council and Mayor’s Office outlining board priorities and advocating for increased investment in community through EDI funding.

With all Advisory Board positions filled and five new members onboarded in late 2025, plus the restructuring of the Committees this year, EDI is poised for a productive and impactful 2026. The Advisory Board will play significant roles in EDI’s strategic planning process, conduct a board retreat, play an important role in City priorities such as the Roots-to-Roofs pilot program, and many other initiatives.



Figure 26: EDI Advisory Board members Jennell Hicks, John Rodriguez, and Eric Alipio sit and review papers on a table at the EDI Advisory Board Retreat in January 2026.

2025 Grantee Community - Milestones and Achievements

Unlike private development, which often limits community engagement to permitting requirements, community leadership and input are central to EDI projects. Addressing displacement pressures requires sustained community engagement throughout the entire development process, from visioning and planning to design and delivery. Though timelines can vary dramatically, it is not out of the ordinary for these once-in-a-generation projects to take 7-10 years from concept to completion, or even longer. The complexity and variability of each site and organization require teams to manage multiple activities, decisions, and phases simultaneously.

Despite the complexity and challenges inherent in real estate development, 2025 was a milestone year for EDI's grantees. Many were able to deploy their EDI 2024 funding awards this year to accelerate toward major project milestones. Others were able to tap into older uncontracted funding awards after proceeding cautiously and earnestly through capacity-building to ensure the readiness of their organization to take on a capital project. Prior to 2025, 15 EDI-funded projects were completed. In 2025, seven more projects were completed with grantees going into operation and commencing public benefits – a 40% increase in completed projects in one year.

The 2025 RFP for funding concluded late in the year, with funding awards announced in December. EDI awarded nine new projects and awarded additional funding to existing projects to advance towards completion. Among the nine new projects, the list includes the first Indigenous community-owned birthing center in the country, an LGBTQ-led auto repair shop and training facility, and a performing arts center in the Central District.

GRANTEE SPOTLIGHT

Heron's Nest & Na'ah Illahee Fund Shared Event



Figure 27: Community members walking away in the background with a smiling and waving man in the foreground.

The work of creating spaces of belonging for Native communities in the City of Seattle is immense, complicated, difficult, and absolutely vital for everyone who lives here now and will live here in the future. For these reasons, it is work that cannot be done by individuals or organizations alone. As an intermediary fund, Na'ah Illahee strives to support and work alongside community-based groups that are leading the way, like Heron's Nest.

We do this primarily by sharing resources, and weaving connections with other individuals and groups to build greater power and synergy. Collaborating with Heron's Nest on sharing their story with audiences who could both benefit from it and, in turn, support it themselves, has been a top highlight of my 2.5 years of work at Na'ah Illahee Fund. That work could not have been led by Na'ah Illahee alone, because it is Heron's Nest that has the story to tell and the land that holds us in community and can teach us reciprocity. A favorite quote/statement from one of the attendees was captured on an outreach poster for the E'lip Tilikim Landback program:

"hi! I am ten years old and I just want to say that sometimes I get scared about the future, but ppl like you guys restore my faith that we will be alright."

Na'ah Illahee Fund

EDI Milestones - By the Numbers

9 New grantees. Total: **84 grantees as of 2025**

\$24.3 million in 2025 funding, total funding \$165 million as of 2025

\$88,652,695 contracted prior to 2025, **\$28,668,757 contracted in 2025.**

Total: \$117,321,452

\$76,343,237 disbursed prior to 2025, **\$17,396,232 disbursed in 2025.** Total:

\$93,739,469

23 total projects completed and in operations including **9 in 2025**

7 of property acquisitions in 2025 (including closeout of final two SIF acquisitions this year)

10 projects in construction

Current Projects

Complete and in operation (Bold and Asterisk indicates completion in 2025)

Africatown Community Land Trust – Midtown Plaza

Arte Noir

Black and Tan Hall

Byrd Barr Place

Chief Seattle Club

Delridge Neighborhood Association – Elevate Youngstown

Duwamish Valley Sustainability Association – Bioenergia Project

El Centro de la Raza – Columbia City*

Empowering Youth & Family Outreach*

Ethiopian Community in Seattle – Ethiopian Village Community Center

FAME-Equity Alliance of Washington - FAME Plaza

Filipino Community of Seattle – Innovation Learning Center

First AME Housing Association – Bryant Manor*

Muslim Housing Services*

Our Hope - Hope Academy

Queer the Land

Rainier Beach Action Coalition – Rainier Beach Community

Empowerment Food Innovation Center*

Refugee and Immigrant Family Center

Shared Space Foundation/Duwamish Tribal Services – Herons Nest

Somali Health Board – Somali Community Cultural Innovation Hub

(interim operations)*

Urban Black Community Development - Washington State Black Legacy

Institute (interim operations)*

West African Community Council – Community Center

Yehaw Indigenous Creatives Collective

Capacity-Building and Project Planning Phase (Including site search)

Africatown Community Land Trust and Community Passageways – Youth Achievement Center
Essential Community Housing Organization – Lotus Village
Duwamish Valley Affordable Housing Coalition
Eritrean Community in Seattle & Vicinity
Fathers and Sons Together
House of Mkeka
Na’ah Illahee Fund
Nehemiah Initiative
Nurturing Roots
Opportunity Center at Othello Square
Duwamish Valley Tribal Services
FAME Equity Alliance of Washington – FAME Plaza
InterIm CDA – Historic Acquisition KYID
Multicultural Community Center
Northwest Tap

Acquisition Completed in 2025

Urban Black Community Development – Washington State Black Legacy Institute
Eritrean Association of Greater Seattle
Estelita’s Library – Freedom Cultural Center
Somali Health Board– Somali Community Cultural Innovation Hub
Frank and Goldyne Green Cultural Land Conservancy Judkins House - Wa Na Wari
Ethiopian Community in Seattle
Frank and Goldyne Green Cultural Land Conservancy
Cham Refugees Community – Po’h Cham Village
Empowering Youth & Families Outreach Childcare
Muslim Housing Services
Frank and Goldyne Green Cultural Land Conservancy Judkins House

Pre-Development, Design & Permitting (Bold and Asterisk indicates phase entered in 2025)

Africatown Community Land Trust – William Grose Center for Cultural Innovation and Enterprise

Eritrean Community in Seattle & Vicinity*

Khmer Community of Seattle-King County

Tubman Center for Health & Freedom

Urban Family Center Association*

Black Star Farmers

Lake City Collective

African Community Housing Development – Seattle International Public Market

Seattle Chinatown International District Preservation and Development Authority – 13th & Fir Placemaking*

ADEFUA – ACAC Preserving African Heritage Project

Central Area Youth Association

Estelita’s Library – Freedom Cultural Center*

Central District Community Preservation and Development

Trans Women of Color Solidarity Network

Queer the Land

Rainier Valley Midwives*

Chief Seattle Club - Northgate

Somali Health Board – Somali Community Cultural Innovation Hub*

Cultivate South Park – El Barrio

Friends of Little Saigon - Landmark Project

Seattle Indian Services Commission – Native Village and Gateway Project*

Nehemiah Initiative

Hillman City Partners – Hillman Hub

Construction

Central Area Senior Center

Hip Hop is Green – Cherry Street Farm & Lab

Cham Refugees Community – Community Center*

United Indians of All Tribes – Daybreak Star

New Hope Community Development Institute*

InterIm CDA – Uncle Bob’s Place / Bush Garden

Kwanza Preparatory Academy – Tayari Learning Center*

Rainier Avenue Radio – Columbia City Theater

Royal Esquire Club*

Wing Luke Museum – Memorial Foundation Heritage House Project*

African Community Land Trust – Midtown Plaza commercial space*

Africatown – William Grose Center for Cultural Innovation and Enterprise

Eritrean Association in Greater Seattle

Rainier Ave Radio Columbia City Theater Project

Newly Funded Community-Led Projects in 2025

Hummingbird Indigenous Family Services – Little Wings Birth Center

Food Resource Network – MLK Commissary Kitchen Project

Auto Repair Transformation

Wing Luke Museum – Eng Family Homestead

Byrd Barr South

Sovereignty Rises

Langston Huges Performing Arts Institute

Goodwill Baptist Affordable Homeownership Project

Cultural Space Agency – Launch Point

GRANTEE SPOTLIGHT

Heron's Nest & Na'ah Illahee Fund Shared Event



Figure 28: Individuals standing at tables in throughout an open space with colorful mosaic and wall art.

“Our success is measured by the relationships and partnerships that we hold. By this measurement the Heron’s Nest project is extremely successful. We were honored to co-host a community event with our partners, Na’ah Illahee Fund and the Duwamish Tribe; joining financial and administrative forces to host an event that served both organizations and our community. We set the table and 23 local organizations represented by 40 people came to it.

This multi-generational group of mostly Indigenous, Black and People of Color joined together to share the stories of their work, make connections and be celebrated. This beautiful day could not have been as rich had we produced it in isolation. The idea of doing this combined resources event was exciting to all of our attendees - that we could change how we view resources and share them by collaborating.”

Heron’s Nest

Future Forward - 2026 & Beyond

EDI will achieve a major milestone in 2026 as the program enters its tenth year of funding community-led development. In 2026, OPCD will bring focus to establishing consistent metrics and reporting cycles to measure impact, sharing the stories of EDI’s grantees and community of practice, and increasing coordination with Office of Housing (OH) on housing-related projects.

Strategic Planning

As the program nears ten years of operation and has scaled from one-time funding and no staff to a more than \$25,000,000 annual funding program with eight full time staff, the need to envision the next 5-10 years of the program is necessary. In Q4 of 2025, EDI launched an RFP for Strategic Planning and formed a panel of five staff and community members to help evaluate and select the best proposal. The panel reviewed 36 proposals, interviewed three highly qualified consultant teams, and ultimately awarded the project to a team comprised of local and national experts to lead the strategic planning process.



Figure 29: A group of community members, EDI grantees, and City staff stand and gather during the EDI 2026 Celebration

Moving into Q1 of 2026, the consultant team will be contracted, and strategic planning will kick off in earnest. The team of consultants will lead a participatory visioning process with grantees, the EDI advisory Board, and impacted communities to shape the next phase of the program. The strategic plan will be shaped by an extensive co-creation process with community partners. At the end of the approximately 18-month process, the strategic plan will guide EDI's investment strategy, direct its use of data to refine and prioritize funding strategies, align goals with the City's other anti-displacement programs and policies, and establish consistent metrics and reporting cycles to measure and communicate impact, over the next 5-10 years.

EDI Community Convenings

2026 will be a year full of intentional gathering with the EDI community in collaboration, relationship-building, and celebration. In addition to strategic planning engagements where EDI community partners will play a central role, EDI will host its first Advisory Board retreat in three years this January. At the retreat, the existing seven board members and five new members will set the Advisory Board's goals for 2026 to discuss their role in strategic planning and to consider ways to support EDI staff and grantees.



Figure 30: Mayor Wilson addresses the crowd at the EDI 2026 Grantee Celebration

Also in January, an EDI Celebration event will take place, inviting EDI grantees, Advisory Board, City leadership, and the community of practice to come together in celebration of EDI's 10-year milestone and to usher in the next 10 years. In Q2, EDI will host a grantee convening, an opportunity for knowledge-sharing and support between grantees, as well as a space to share their experiences with EDI and ways to strengthen EDI's impact.



Figure 31: Quynh Pham on stage at the EDI 2026 Grantee

2026 Annual EDI Funding Request for Proposals

The 2026 RFP will continue to balance advancing existing projects and bringing new projects into the fold. The EDI advisory board will determine priorities in Q1, with an anticipated RFP release by end of Q2. Onboarding a new mayoral administration and aligning with administration priorities may impact funding timeline. As reflected in the EDI Advisory Board's 2025 budget letter, a predictable funding cycle is incredibly important for project success and aligning award announcements prior to the release of the 2027/2028 proposed annual budget and other capital funding applications in the fall.



Figure 32: The courtyard of El Centro de la Raza's mixed use affordable development in Columbia City showing play equipment at the center.

Participatory Budgeting Project | Native Youth: Past, Present, Future – Indigenous Community Center

In 2026, EDI will move forward a project with roots formed in 2020 by the tragic murder George Floyd by Minneapolis police officers. Floyd’s murder was the tipping point to a history of racism oppression, and white supremacy of the systems our government foundations are built upon. This horrific and public tragedy forced people to confront these conditions, including the City of Seattle’s role in perpetuating institutional racism and violence.

These calls led to acknowledging the need to engage groups who are typically under-resourced and left out of decision-making opportunities about their communities. Participatory Budgeting was selected as an approach that both moves critical resources to impacted communities and is designed to maximize the involvement of those communities in the decision-making process.



Figure 33: Community members, partners and staff of EDI Grantee Somali Health Board at the ribbon cutting of the Somali Community & Cultural Innovation Hub

Through the Participatory Budgeting process, the proposal selected was Past, Present, Future: A Native Youth Community Center. This center will serve as a vibrant hub of activity, facilitating connections within the urban-native community, while also extending a warm welcome to individuals from diverse backgrounds. The Center is intended to serve youth and families facing challenges such as redlining, underfunding, food insecurity, climate injustice, data erasure, and disinvestment in community programs and services.

EDI will launch a Request for Qualifications in early 2026 and anticipates awarding a grantee to develop the project before year end.

Housing Equity Fund

EDI will engage in more housing-related programs starting in 2026, collaborating with the Office of Civil Rights (OCR) and the Office of Housing (OH) to develop an Equity Housing Fund focusing on remedying historical injustices for descendants of enslaved Black Americans. This work will begin in earnest after the Office of Civil Rights completes a reparations study, and it is intended to influence OH's allocation of funds as part of a four-year initiative to allocate OH housing funds to a series of reparative investments. The Housing Equity Fund will also incorporate analysis beyond housing investments and will consider a collection of investments around all historical impacts of discrimination touching on culture, community, and commerce.

Roots to Roofs Implementation

In collaboration with the Seattle Department of Construction and Inspections (SDCI) and the Office of Housing, EDI will play a role in the newly formed Roots to Roofs Bonus Pilot Program. The goal of Roots to Roofs is to demonstrate the social benefits of equitable development, including community-serving uses and housing available to a spectrum of household incomes by setting onsite affordability standards and incentives for development of housing and equitable development uses through partnerships between public, private, and community-based organizations. EDI's Advisory Board will be an evaluation and decision-making body in the application of the development bonus pilot program.

IT Database Project

This year, Seattle IT began a pre-scope analysis as the first phase of a comprehensive process to design and implement a database that will play a key role in the management of EDI. Because EDI contracts typically have long lifespans, a technology-based system to support monitoring, track compliance, retain key documents, manage financial processes, and improve project management will strengthen the implementation of EDI funding. The investigative and exploratory phase will be completed in 2026, with database development continuing into 2027. This timeline aligns with the strategic planning process and will create synergy between the development and implementation of the strategic plan.

In Closing

EDI stands on the shoulders of organizations and leaders who have been working to keep communities whole against all odds and without organized resources. Who occupied buildings, practiced mutual aid before that language existed, and built civic infrastructure outside the formal structures of government.

Over ten years ago, community organizations determined to build an accountable partnership with government actors and public servants trying to change systems from inside came together with a bold vision- that repair for past actions and inactions in the growth of our City was possible when communities closest to the issues determine solutions.

After ten years, we have so much to celebrate. We uplift the achievements of the organizations who have taken great risks to deliver transformative projects and secure permanent facilities in service of their communities. We are indebted to the staff, community leaders, former and current board members, allies, and supporters for making this work possible. To the next ten years!



Figure 34: EDI Team at the Office of Planning and Community Development – Back Row: Aj Cari, Whitney Lewis, Tagaipah Mathno, Mishelle Oun. Front Row: Patrice Thomas, Dakota Murray, Giulia Pasciuto

The Office of Planning and Community Development (OPCD) develops policies and plans for an equitable and sustainable future. We partner with neighborhoods, businesses, agencies, and others to bring about positive changes and coordinate investments for our Seattle communities.

The City of Seattle encourages everyone to participate in its programs and activities. For disability accommodations, materials in alternate formats, or accessibility information, please visit seattle.gov/OPCD

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