

We, the undersigned, are writing in solidarity with Ubax Gardheere and Boting (Bo) Zhang and their stated grave concerns with the City of Seattle and their experiences as Equitable Development Initiative (EDI) staff. We demand that the City of Seattle and the Office of Planning and Community Development (OPCD) publicly examine the harm they have and continue to perpetuate upon Black, Indigenous and People of Color (BIPOC) staff and EDI-funded community organizations. It's time for accountability.

As community stakeholders and EDI Board members, we have experienced the troubling dynamic and divisions sewn between community and City initiatives claiming to center equitable development and anti-displacement work.

We have witnessed the emotional labor required of EDI staff, valued for their deep ties to community, but directed to lead this program in a way that has perpetuated inequities for those it purports to serve. The City of Seattle, OPCD, and the EDI must do better by BIPOC staff and community organizations.

EDI was formed by and for the community. Through the Race and Social Equity Taskforce (RSET) and the South Communities Organizing for Racial & Regional Equity coalition (SouthCORE), BIPOC-led community organizations successfully called on the City of Seattle to staff, resource and fund community-driven, equitable development. Since the formation of EDI, we have continued to champion it by protecting its existing funding and winning new dedicated funding last year as part of JumpStart. While we are invested in EDI's success, we need assurance that our community members who serve as employees of EDI do so without harm to themselves as individuals or in their ability to advance this important work on behalf of our communities.

At times, we have failed to speak up. As partners in this work, we commit to examining our own instances of gatekeeping and giving in to a harmful, divisive process rather than challenging the status quo. Our intention has always been to build power so that we can share it amongst our communities - inclusive of those not at the decision-making table.

We will consider the larger, systemic and political issues raised and will follow up with concrete demands so that all such matters do not continue to get swept under the rug.

EDI Board:

- Lindsay Goes Behind
- Cassie Chinn
- Gregory Davis
- Cesar Garcia
- Regina Mae
- Quynh Pham
- Côté Soerens
- Yordanos Teferi
- Abdirahman Yussuf

Community Stakeholders:

- African Community Housing and Development
- Africatown
- Black & Tan Hall
- Blackdot
- Byrd Barr Place
- Cham Refugees Community
- Chief Seattle Club
- Cultivate South Park
- Dominican Association of Washington State
- The Equity Alliance of Washington
- Ethiopian Community in Seattle
- Friends of Little Saigon
- Khmer Community of Seattle King County
- Lake City Collective
- Langston Center
- Multicultural Community Coalition
- Na'ah Illahee Fund
- Puget Sound Sage
- Queer the Land
- Race and Social Equity Taskforce
- Rainier Beach Action Coalition
- RVC
- SCIDpda
- Sustainable Seattle

- Tenants Union of WA
- Wing Luke Museum of the Asian Pacific American Experience
- We Become
- West African Community Council
- White Center Community Development Association