



WASHINGTON STATE
**HOUSING FINANCE
COMMISSION**

Opening doors to a better life

www.wshfc.org

Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion Director Opportunity Guide



About Washington State Housing Finance Commission

The Washington State Housing Finance Commission (The Commission) is a market-driven and self-supporting state agency dedicated to increasing housing access and affordability and to expanding the availability of quality community services for the people of Washington. Homelessness and lack of housing affordability are crises that affect many communities across the state. The Commission plays a key role in the solution to these problems by partnering to transform lives, neighborhoods, and communities. For forty years, the Commission has enabled more than 100,000 Washington residents to buy homes and created or preserved more than 110,000 affordable apartments for residents ranging from working families to seniors to the unhoused.

The transformational work of the Commission is organized in several major lines of business:

- **Homeownership** – financing of home loans and downpayment assistance allowing low to moderate-income households to buy homes and build family wealth.
- **Affordable Apartments** – enabling developers to build and/or rehabilitate affordable apartment properties through federal tax credits, tax-exempt bonds, and innovative loan funds.
- **Other Affordable Housing** – supporting small but critical partnerships, such as mobile home parks and Habitat for Humanity, that do not fall within the other funding streams.
- **Community Assets** – overseeing programs such as buying, building, renovating, and refinancing facilities, and providing loans to first-time farmers and ranchers to buy land and equipment.
- **Convening, Leadership, and Advocacy** – supporting/advocating for state and federal laws, policies, and funding that support affordable housing in the state of Washington.

Established in 1983, the Commission is overseen by a board of 13 appointed Commissioners and has approximately 75 staff, most of which operate out of the primary office in downtown Seattle in the central business district. The Commission operates with an annual budget of \$20.6 Million, and impacts state residents through more than \$20 Billion in housing investment.



About Washington State Housing Finance Commission



Transforming the Commission to Focus on Racial Equity

In 2020, the Commission made an intentional commitment to become an antiracist organization, starting with the creation of a staff-led Racial Justice Equity Team (RJET). The purpose of the team was to take long overdue steps to align the Commission's work with equitable and anti-racist values and include the voices and ideas of those who have been silenced and marginalized.

Thanks to the work of RJET, the Commission undertook a variety of foundational steps while simultaneously making progress in key areas of the work (such as overhauling key funding criteria). These foundational steps included adopting a set of racial equity values; hiring a consultant team to help us establish safe-space principles, leadership training, and equitable policies for hiring/promotion and conflict resolution; and increasing awareness and urgency to address the agency's history of institutional racism.

Guiding Principles for Racial Equity

- Challenge White Supremacy
- Address Power and Privilege
- Accountability
- Equitable Engagement
- Humility
- Respect

Subsequently, the Commission launched the planning for its first Racial Equity Strategic Plan. Centering racial equity and antiracist priorities as the Commission's primary goal to promote racially equitable outcomes and transform into an antiracist organization, a three-year racial equity plan will be implemented from 2023 through 2025.

The Commission's racial equity strategic plan supports the agency's intentions to:

- Ensure agency-wide accountability for promoting racial equity in key areas of focus.
- Inspire agency culture changes in favor of desired racial equity outcomes and impact internally and externally.
- Engage external invested parties, collaborators, partners, and beneficiaries in their efforts to maximize the potential for desired impact on the communities they serve.
- Take meaningful steps toward the longer-term goal and ongoing work of aligning all Commission practices and processes with racial equity and antiracist objectives.

One early and critical step is to hire a DEI Director to guide the Commission's next steps. The work will be guided by guiding principles that have been agreed upon in the work of multiple input groups in the past 3 years.

The Opportunity: Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion (DEI) Director



The Commission seeks its first Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion (DEI) Director with strong experience to lead the agency through establishing evidence-based policies, practices, and programs to further transform the culture toward becoming an antiracist organization. As a member of the Commission's leadership team and reporting directly to the Executive Director, the DEI Director provides leadership to all agency initiatives to implement the Commission's racial equity strategic plan. Supporting the Commission's mission, vision, and values, the Director will collaborate with internal and external partners, community leaders, and the state's equity office on key DEI initiatives and promote a culture of inclusivity through strong collaboration with agency leadership and staff.

Partnering with and advising the Executive Management Team (EMT) of 7, the DEI Director will have a significant influence on the development of agency-wide strategies, program development, processes, policies, and practices to realize racial equity. They will work closely with the Human Resource Administrator to ensure consistency in all HR policies, procedures, and practices. Shaping programs and policies that strive to provide all Washingtonians with safe, healthy, and sustainable homes that they can afford will serve as a guiding principle for success. The DEI Director will influence the Commission's work both internally and externally to help ensure that historically underserved and marginalized people will have unprecedented housing opportunities across the entire state.

While some groundwork has been laid, this is a once-in-a-lifetime opportunity for the inaugural DEI Director to affect real progress by leading the agency to the next level as it journeys toward becoming an anti-racist organization. As the racial equity strategic plan is implemented, the Director will recommend a structure to best support the ongoing efforts.

The following areas and objectives will shape the first year for this newly created role. Performance and outcomes will be measured in the following areas:

Performance Objectives

Strategic Leadership, Influence, and Innovation

- Arrive at the Commission ready to embrace, understand, and build a framework to settle into the role and the culture.
- Provide leadership, oversight, and support in the development of Commission-wide DEI strategies, program improvement, and policy innovation to continue to expand the agency's anti-racist culture, systems, and practices.
- Champion the Commission's racial equity strategic plan and collaborate with leadership and program staff to achieve the plan's goals and objectives.
- Serve as a senior advisor, internal consultant, and agency expert to the leadership and staff on ways to operationalize equity, inclusion, and anti-racist practices throughout all Commission programs.
- Increase the agency's ability to serve and become a trusted resource to Washington's BIPOC residents by enhancing the Commission's approach to community engagement, communications, as well as data-gathering.
- Represent the Commission externally as an active member of the Statewide DEI Council; and other statewide work groups that advance DEI for state government.

Capacity Building and Change Management

- Analyze, assess, and advance current practices and policies, ensuring they support the Commission's DEI goals. Lead change where needed.
- Build internal support for DEI initiatives by collaborating with key interested parties and the Executive Management Team to set priorities and create actionable strategies.
- Create a professional environment of trust, support for, and validation of all employees representing the Commission, with a focus on promoting restorative healing and addressing organizational, race-informed trauma in support of BIPOC employees.
- Support the program staff through research and development to ensure the agency's decisions, services, and resources increase equitable access to the residents of Washington, through a racial equity lens.
- Provide guidance, thought leadership, and collaboration with those responsible for staff recruitment, agency-wide training, programs, and services to foster more cohesive and efficient delivery of employee professional development programs, focusing on culturally responsive engagement.



Performance Objectives

Human Resources Partnership and Innovation

- Partner with the Human Resources team to develop new and/or enhance current employee-related policies to ensure alignment with antiracist objectives, racial equity, and workplace belonging; develop impactful diversity and inclusion initiatives and recommend program improvements where needed.
- Develop and monitor strategies to improve recruitment, retention, and career development of BIPOC employees, and create recruiting initiatives targeted to help attract a diverse candidate pool.
- Coordinate with the Communications Director to ensure internal and external communications about the racial equity strategic plan and other equity projects uphold the Commission's equity values.
- Elevate the influence of BIPOC employee voices and identify and recommend agency practices that eliminate barriers and enhance the Commission as an employer of choice.
- Ensure DEI competencies and the Commission's racial equity strategic plan goals are embedded within staff development and training, including onboarding.
- Serve as a resource in organizational culture building and conflict resolution as it relates to DEI-specific topics.



The Qualified Candidate

The Washington State Housing Finance Commission seeks a highly empathetic, influential, and persuasive individual to execute and lead the DEI initiatives at the Commission. The Director must have the ability to work across lines of difference and divergent perspectives with diplomacy and discretion, bringing people together around a shared vision, values, and goals.

The successful candidate will be able to evaluate policies, procedures, and ideas to interrupt systemic racism and provide recommendations for improvement. A straightforward communicator, this individual will be an educator and leader of the Commission team and the community it serves.

Specific Requirements Include:

- Understanding of the historical, social, political, and economic structures that affect the state's current inequity and housing access landscape.
 - Demonstrated success in a change management environment, and proven ability to anticipate upcoming challenges/opportunities and adapt to changing circumstances.
 - Lived or connected experience in working with racially and culturally diverse communities, which can include Black people, Indigenous people, other people of color, LGBTQ+, people with disabilities, and other communities that experience housing inequities, preferred.
 - Strong public speaking skills are required, as well as the ability to convey compelling messages and influence a variety of audiences.
 - Ability to balance a deliberative, thoughtful, and listening approach with the counterbalance of demonstrating action and moving initiatives forward.
- Excellent oral and written communication skills, including the ability to share information, influence/persuade others, and negotiate mutually beneficial outcomes.
 - Expertise with best practices and leading organizational change theories for ensuring a diverse, equitable, and inclusive workplace and facilitating/training the trainer for DEI.
 - Understanding of the Commission's work and the complexity of the multi-family housing space
 - Career track record that shows stability with an organization and capacity to develop and nurture relationships culminating in overall success.
 - Bachelor's degree in social justice, public administration, human resources management, business administration, or another related field required and/or equivalent experience.
 - A minimum of 2 years of work experience with a focus on leading DEI initiatives and commitment to social change.

Don't check off every box in the requirements listed above? Please consider applying anyway! Studies have shown that underrepresented communities — such as women, people of color, LGBTQ, people with disabilities, and immigrants — are less likely to apply for jobs unless they meet every single qualification. Washington State Housing Finance Commission is dedicated to building an inclusive, diverse, equitable, and accessible workplace that fosters a sense of belonging — so if you are excited about this role but your experience doesn't align perfectly with every qualification in the job description, you are encouraged to consider still applying.

How To Apply

This position offers a competitive salary with excellent benefits. Annual salary will range \$120,000-\$137,000 commensurate with experience. Per state policy, as this role is based in Seattle, a 5% King County premium pay will be added. This position offers [benefits from the State of Washington](#), including the State Family and Medical Leave Program (paid) and Deferred Compensation (self-deferred). Relocation assistance may be offered for the right candidate.

The Washington State Housing Finance Commission is committed to providing equal employment, job assignments and promotional opportunities to all qualified applicants and employees. They strive to create a working environment that includes and respects cultural, racial, ethnic, sexual orientation and gender identity diversity. They are committed to providing reasonable accommodation to all staff as needed. Women, black, Indigenous and people of color, persons with disabilities, persons over 40 years of age, all honorably discharged veterans and people of all sexual orientations and gender identities are encouraged to apply.

[APPLY HERE](#)

To ensure confidential tracking of all applicants, no applications will be accepted via email. ALL INQUIRIES WILL BE HELD IN STRICT CONFIDENCE.

Applications with specific Cover Letters will be given priority consideration. All candidate-submitted materials and credentials will be reviewed for consistency and accuracy. Candidates can expect that KEES will verify employment/ academic/ background information both in the screening process and for the finalist(s) in a formal background check.

This search is being managed by Yoo-Jin Hong, Executive Search Manager, and Randi Blasutti, Project Manager, of KEES. Questions may be addressed to rblasutti@kees2success.com.



About KEES

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