

Host and mentor information

- 1. Contact Information:**
Puget Sound Partnership (Partnership)
Olympia, WA
Website [linked here](#).
- 2. Mentor Information:**
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Fellowship project options

We are proposing the following two projects for the 2024 Keystone Fellow. The Partnership will encourage the 2024 Keystone Fellow to engage in additional learning, professional development, and networking opportunities. Please also note that the Partnership will take an adaptive management approach to the fellowship to ensure that the content and structure of the fellowship responds to interests and desired experiences that are not listed below.

- 1) Building Connections Between Transportation Funds and Communities:** Collaboration with the transportation sector is critical to ecosystem and salmon recovery. The Partnership has a new team in the agency that works to reduce the barriers and increase access for Tribes and partners to receive recovery funding. A fellow working on this project would have an opportunity to work in coordination with the Community Engagement Coordinator and the Strategic Funding Team to lead outreach and help build connections that:
 - Support Tribes and local partners on transportation and recovery related funding opportunities;
 - Bridge projects between transportation and recovery partners;
 - Explore institutional barriers to funding; and
 - Investigate how to improve the funding mechanisms.**Skills Gained:** Fostering relationships with Tribes and local coalitions, analyzing funding mechanisms, outreach.
Project Lead: Bebhinn Gilbert (Restoration and Transportation Funding Strategist)
- 2) Exploring Barriers to Recovery Funding:** The concept of “match” funds for funding opportunities has been a voiced barrier to access funds. Recently, many funding programs and opportunities have pivoted away from a match model, but many have not. A fellow could lead a case study review and report that would lead to exploring, understanding, and communicating why and how programs have moved away from a match model. The fellow would also highlight the reasons why some programs have kept the match model and further explore the barriers to accessing funds using an environmental justice lens. The fellow would have an opportunity to connect with Tribal and local project sponsors to learn more about this topic and gain critical insights for the project.
Skills Gained: Fostering relationships with Tribes and local partners, analyzing funding mechanisms, outreach.
Project Lead: Jessica Reynolds (Funding Barriers Strategist)

Networking, professional development, and mentorship

As an organization that works with hundreds of partners throughout the region, fellows at the Puget Sound Partnership have great networking opportunities through interactions with multiple teams and participation in various technical work groups and conferences. The Partnership is considered a backbone agency, which means we bring a lot of focus and intention around collaboration with our partners. This provides fellows with numerous opportunities to grow their network with federal, state, and local governments, nonprofits, consultants, Tribes, and community members.

Our agency has started to roll out a policy of meeting one day a week in the office with other colleagues in our Seattle, Tacoma, or Olympia locations. Fellows will have an opportunity to experience in-person office life and the flexibility of 80% remote working. You will also be invited to participate in working groups at the Partnership such as the Human Dimensions Working Group and the Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion Working Group, depending on your interests. You will be able to take advantage of some State training courses including government to government (learning about Tribes and respectful engagement) and a host of other training courses that could help bolster needed skills for this fellowship and professional growth. The Partnership can help you find [affinity or resource groups](#) within the state family.

Your primary mentor will be Signe Lindquist, Community Engagement Coordinator on the Partnership's Equity and Environmental Justice Team. Signe is leading the Partnership's body of work as it relates to community engagement. She supports multiple teams across the Agency to develop and implement community engagement plans as they work to build relationships with community-based organizations (CBOs) and overburdened communities. This work helps the Partnership achieve its goal of continuing to diversify participation in Puget Sound recovery and understand the priorities, needs, and perspectives of environmental justice communities in the Puget Sound region. Signe is excited to support a fellow's career journey and to coordinate with the project leads to offer full support to the fellow.

The project leads are outlined in the project descriptions and are members of the Partnership's Strategic Funding Team (SFT). This team was established in 2023 to accelerate Puget Sound ecosystem and salmon recovery by mobilizing funding, particularly through new federal funding opportunities. The SFT assists Tribes and local partners in responding to rapid funding availability that supports the implementation of the Action Agenda and Salmon Recovery Plan. The SFT goal is to support the efforts of the recovery community to plan and act across sectors and geographies to align transportation, land use, habitat restoration and protection, agriculture, climate change mitigation, flood hazard reduction, and stormwater infrastructure, achieving a multi-benefit approach. On restoration and transportation, the Partnership works to build on the traditional overlap and strengthen the alignment between transportation and Puget Sound ecosystem and salmon recovery. Our aim is to unite the recovery and transportation sectors throughout partnerships, planning, and implementation of projects, to create Sound Safe Infrastructure.

The project options allow opportunities to collaborate across many teams in the agency.

Keystone Alignment Statement

The Partnership is committed to incorporating diversity, equity, and inclusion (DEI) in meaningful and intentional ways into its internal operations, engagement, programming, and products. We believe that incorporating DEI into our work furthers the recovery and health of the Puget Sound, in addition to cultivating respectful, culturally competent, and high performing staff. This focus on equity is important to understand and enable the Partnership to address environmental justice in the process of developing the Action Agenda and our many external programs.

Since 2021, the Partnership has developed and grown our Equity and Environmental Justice (EEJ) Team. This team works to effectively implement and support equity and environmental justice across and in partnership with communities, Tribes, agencies, and in Puget Sound recovery efforts. As part of the Partnership's multi-benefit approach to Puget Sound recovery, the Partnership recognizes and strives to undo environmental racism and injustice within the Puget Sound region. The EEJ Program cultivates accountability, builds relationships, advances education, and guides and advises on plans, policies, and actions within the Partnership and across the Puget Sound recovery network.

The passage of the Healthy Environment for All (HEAL) Act (SB 5141) in 2021 identifies the Partnership as one of seven agencies across the state mandated to develop policies and programs most directly impactful to environmental justice. HEAL further establishes environmental justice obligations for the Partnership, including requirements to participate in the state's Environmental Justice Council and interagency workgroup, develop and implement community engagement and tribal consultation frameworks, incorporate environmental justice into implementation plans and budget development processes, and reporting on impacts and outcomes of environmental justice. The fellow will be working in alignment with guidance provided to our organization as part of our mandate under the HEAL Act.

Additionally, the full agency acknowledges the importance and need for all Teams and our staff to support, grow, and weave in DEI and EJ into our work. This can be seen through various ways including training opportunities for staff, supporting the internal DEI Working Group, hosting weekly informal discussion sessions (EquiTea), and weaving equity and inclusion into our products and processes.

Equity and environmental justice work is a continual journey and so there are plenty of opportunities to participate and help advance efforts in our agency and work and support our fellow's growth. Additional Agency DEI and EJ Links:

- [Agency HEAL Act webpage](#)
- [Pro-Equity and Anti-Racism \(PEAR\) statement](#)
- [Draft Agency Community Engagement guidelines \(in response to the HEAL Act\)](#)
- [Agency HEAL Act Implementation webpage](#)