



The Equity Newsletter | February 1, 2022

BLACK HISTORY MONTH

Welcome to The Equity Newsletter!

Happy Black History Month and Happy Lunar New Year! This week's newsletter features staff highlights from across the agency as well as a host of exciting upcoming events that will propel us into celebration and commemoration of Black and Asian Pacific Islander peoples.

HAPPY LUNAR NEW YEAR - THE YEAR OF THE TIGER

The holiday follows the moon's cycles and usually begins in late January or early February. This year Lunar New Year begins February 1.

Lunar New Year is one of the biggest holidays celebrated in many Asian communities. Diverse San Franciscan communities including Chinese, Japanese, Korean and Vietnamese people have long celebrated this festive occasion. For many, the Lunar New Year brings a fresh mindset and resolutions for happiness and health. A zodiac animal with specific traits represents each year in the repeating zodiac cycle of 12 years. 2022 is the Year of the Tiger, the third animal in the zodiac. The tiger is considered courageous and adventurous.



Fun Fact: In the lunar calendar, the Vietnamese zodiac and the Chinese zodiac are similar, but the Vietnamese zodiac includes a cat while the Chinese zodiac includes a rabbit.

CELEBRATING BLACK STAFF AT THE SFMTA



Adrienne Heim
Transportation Planner
Livable Streets

What does it mean to be a Black professional in transportation?

“It’s important to me to listen to the communities/stakeholders that I serve. Respond to what they need and be honest about whether we can or cannot respond to their needs. As an agency, we should not only accommodate transportation safety/access/connectivity/affordability, but value people’s time to access places.”



Haja Suleman
Senior Human Resources
Analyst
Human Resources

What does Racial Equity mean to you?

“It means having access and the ability to compete in the workplace and within society. It is being seen for what we can bring rather than the inherent standards that are built on white supremacy.”

ORIGIN OF EVERYTHING: WHY DO WE SAY "AFRICAN AMERICAN"?

As we progress in understanding our relationship to each other and the world, we become increasingly aware of the importance of language. This mode of communication has the power to etch into society shared perspectives and experiences that are complex, contentious and culturally bound.



The video [Origin of Everything: Why Do We Say "African American"?](#) provides a historical analysis of various terms and their functions in identifying experiences and peoples of African descent. Some of these terms include "Africa", "African-American", "Black", "Colored", "Afro-American" and "Black Power". Viewers are introduced to opinions and reasonings for the evolution of these terms while ultimately being brought to the conclusion that language is constantly changing. Language has the power to oppress or empower. Thus, it is critically important to think about how language is used when describing ourselves, our experiences and our relationships with one another.

This video is one of the resources being used to inform our discussion in our two-part event series: *How Do You Identify? Black People Are More Than a Monolith*. We hope you can join this interactive and educational discussion with the SFMTA staff on Black identity and interconnections within the African Diaspora.

HOW DO YOU IDENTIFY? BLACK PEOPLE ARE MORE THAN A MONTHOLITH



The SFMTA Office of Racial Equity and Belonging (OREB) presents *How Do You Identify? Black People Are More Than a Monolith*. This event series will explore the nuances of Blackness through the varying lenses of education, ethnicity and experience. There will be a panel discussion with speakers representing the breadth of our agency's work force. Event logistics are as follows:

Friday, February 4, 2022 from 3PM – 4:30PM
[Microsoft Teams Meeting Link](#)

Friday, February 11, 2022 from 11AM – 12:30PM
Potrero Division, Upper Yard
2500 Mariposa St
San Francisco, CA 94110

Masks will be required.

Here are pre-work materials designed to provoke thoughtful reflection and engagement in preparation for the communal dialogue. Contact equity@sfmta.com for questions.
Hope to see you there!

[CLICK HERE for Pre- Work Materials](#)

The Equity Newsletter is published by the
Office of Racial Equity & Belonging: equity@sfmta.com



CELEBRATING BLACK STAFF AT THE SFMTA



John Wallace
9163 Transit Operator
Kirkland Division

What does Racial Equity Mean to You?

“Racial Equity means the world to me. I truly believe the world will be a better place when it’s truly equal.”



Melvin V. Brown Jr.
Supervising Parts,
Storekeeper Materials
Management FIT Division

What do you love about being Black?

“Being Black is a source of power and community, I believe one for all and all for one.”

BLACK HISTORY FACTS: BAAAG WORD SCRAMBLE!

To celebrate Black History Month the Black African American Affinity Group (BAAAG) created a word scramble of 11 prominent Black figures. The first five people to submit the correct answers to Adrienne Heim, Adrienne.Heim@sfmta.com, will win a special prize.

Name: _____ Date: _____

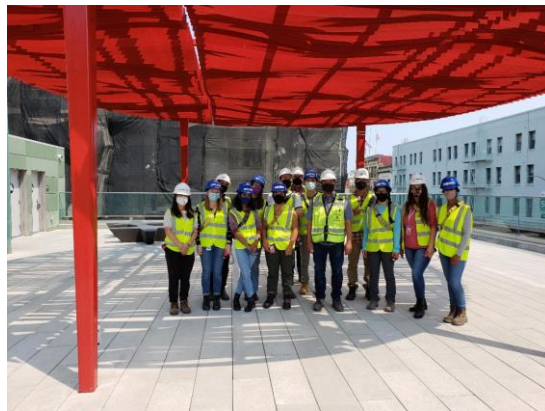
SFMTA BAAAG Black History Month

- 1. VEYELN SLELW _____
- 2. WRAEDN READB _____
- 3. TBCOYTO _____
- 4. IINSDRACTEIM _____
- 5. TEYIQU _____
- 6. EACJIK ONISBNRO _____
- 7. AOSR PKRSA _____
- 8. CVLII SIRGHT _____
- 9. AYMA ENAOLGU _____
- 10. ALKMAA SRIAHR _____
- 11. AISAC OSJONHN _____

- 1. First African American woman to be appointed as a Muni inspector.
- 2. Inventor of the automatic train car coupler.
- 3. To abstain from buying or using.
- 4. To make a distinction in favor of or against a person or thing on the basis of the group.
- 5. The quality of being fair or impartial.
- 6. An American professional baseball player who became the first African American to play in Major League Baseball in the modern era.
- 7. An American civil rights activist best known for her role in the Montgomery bus boycott.
- 8. Rights to personal liberty established by the 13th and 14th Amendments to the U.S. Constitution and certain Congressional acts, especially as applied to an individual or a minority group.
- 9. American poet, memoirist, and civil rights activist. She wrote *I Know Why the Caged Bird Sings*.
- 10. First Black and South Asian American and first woman U.S. Vice President.
- 11. Revolutionized the bicycle frame.

SFMTA COLLEGE SUMMER INTERSHIPS - STEM AND PLANNING FOCUS: APPLICATION DUE FEBRUARY 10TH

The application for the 2022 SFMTA Summer Internship Program is now open! At the SFMTA, we have internships for community college, undergraduate and graduate students aspiring to work as traffic engineers, transportation engineers and transportation planners. We're expecting to hire as many as 45 interns to work on everything from transit service planning and residential parking policy to traffic routing and signal timing.



Interested students can apply via the citywide summer internship site at SFStudentIntern.org. When applying, applicants should mark SFMTA as their first or second choice to make sure we receive their application, and make sure to check their email inbox regularly for follow-up information. The internship is paid, and the application deadline is **February 10, 2022**.

CELEBRATING BLACK STAFF AT THE SFMTA

What do you love about being Black?

I love the inherited ancestral strength that we possess to rise above the challenges we've faced and continue to face. I love all the beautiful shades of melanin that are specific to our peoples. We are like flowers, when planted anywhere, we STAND OUT. I love the traditions we keep by passing down our familial history to us by our great, great, great grandparents (i.e. our dances and colloquialisms)



Kathy L. Broussard
Title VI Complaints and
Training Manager
Regulatory Affairs,
Government Affairs

What does it mean to be a Black professional in transportation?

It means that I worked and fought very hard to get myself into a position where I can be a role model and mentor to other Black and African American employees looking to get into a leadership role. It's important that other Black and African Americans see me so they too, can see themselves being a leader. It means being that much needed Black voice at the table making a difference and changing outcomes, in addition to getting others recognized.

What does Racial Equity mean to you?

I have come to understand that racial equity has always been the barrier that creates the wedge in opportunities such as housing, education, employment, medical care, the justice system, financial institutions and so many other areas. Racial equity means allowing for the same opportunities in all the aforementioned areas (and more) without the interference of racial bias or hate.

"If you can only be tall because someone else is on their knees, then you have a problem." - Toni Morrison



CELEBRATING BLACK STAFF AT THE SFMTA



Geoffrey "G" Diggs
Materials Manager

What does it mean to be a Black professional in transportation?

Being a Black professional in the transportation world can be difficult. Currently, I am one of the few Black managers in the SFMTA. I enjoy my job and love my staff. My staff is the greatest group of hard-working people any manager could ever ask for. I respect and value each and everyone. I have attempted to create an all-inclusive work environment. As for myself, I only seek to be respected, valued, and included. My grandmother would tell me no matter how difficult things are, if you consider it a good situation, you must keep showing up because you are paving the way for someone you don't even know.

UPCOMING EVENTS

The San Francisco Human Rights Commission focuses on Equity at the SFMTA
Thursday, Feb. 10 | 5PM | Meeting access available via the SF HRC's Facebook page

The SFMTA will be presenting on external equity work at the agency at the SF HRC's first February meeting which will be held virtually and streamed live via Facebook.

Equity In The Center
Trainings/ Workshops



Here is a list of trainings and workshops happening in the month of February:

Intersectional Allyship for Racial Justice: A Workshop for White Allies (two-part workshop)

Tues. Feb. 8 | 10AM - 1PM PT **and**
Wed. Feb. 9 | 10AM - 1 PM PT
[Register here.](#)

More than Fragility: A Deep Dive into Understanding & Dismantling Whiteness

Wed. Feb. 23 | 9AM - 12PM PT
[Register here.](#)

BAAAG: Celebrating Black Excellence and Black Health and Wellness

3rd Annual
BLACK History
Month Celebration

This Year's Theme -
Celebrating Black Excellence and Black Health and Wellness

This Year's Virtual Event -
Recognizing and Honoring the late Bernard J. Tyson, former Kaiser Permanente CEO



Hosted by the SFMTA BLACK & African American Affinity Group "BAAAG"



Wednesday, February 16
12 p.m. to 1 p.m.

For event details visit SFMTA.com/BAAAG. Questions? Contact Adrienne Heim, Adrienne.Heim@sfmta.com or 415.646.2564.

Chinese New Year Parade

Saturday, Feb. 19 | 5PM – 8PM
Chinatown, San Francisco



Named one of the top ten Parades in the world by International Festivals & Events Association, the Alaska Airlines Chinese New Year Parade in San Francisco is one of the few remaining night illuminated parades in North America and the biggest parade celebrating the Lunar New Year outside of Asia.

OREB Equity Lab: Transportation Equity & Mobility Justice for Black Communities

Tuesday, Feb. 22
11AM – 1PM
Microsoft Teams

This Equity Lab will highlight the SFMTA workforce in a discussion on transportation equity for Black communities. The interactive discussion will explore promising approaches to advancing racial equity in a series of methods including enforcement, engineering, engagement, planning and diversifying the engineering sector.

This training is intended for all SFMTA staff and Board of Directors, the SFMTA Youth Transportation Advisory Board, as well as the SFMTA's advisory committees, task forces, councils and advisory groups.

City and County of San Francisco staff and community members are welcome and encouraged to attend.

Dumpling Adventure with Kristina Cho

Thursday, Feb. 24 | 6:30PM | SF Asian Art Museum



Kristina Cho is a first-generation Chinese American who grew up in Cleveland, Ohio, and spent a lot of her childhood at her family's Chinese restaurant. As an adult, she moved to San Francisco and found a new home in the Inner Richmond neighborhood. Her food blog, [Eat Cho Food](#), began as a creative outlet that eventually grew to a point where she quit her job in architecture to pursue cooking and recipe development full-time. Kristina's first cookbook, "Mooncakes & Milk Bread," is a joyful celebration of Chinese culture and the bakeries that bring a little sweetness to Chinatowns across the country.

The SFMTA Board of Directors Phase One Racial Equity Action Plan Update

Tuesday, Mar. 1 | 1PM | [Access the meeting via the BOD webpage](#)

On March 1, Racial Equity Officer Josephine Ayankoya will provide the SFMTA Board of Directors with progress updates on the Phase One Racial Equity Action Plan.

All staff are invited and encouraged to attend virtually.

The Equity Newsletter provides key updates regarding the SFMTA Racial Equity Action Plan as well as information about equity work at the agency (including upcoming events, trainings and suggested educational resources) to the SFMTA workforce, Board of Directors and stakeholders.

The Equity Newsletter is published by the
Office of Racial Equity & Belonging: equity@sfmta.com