




The Equity Newsletter | February 28, 2022

IN MEMORY OF GEOFFREY "G" DIGGS

On February 21, 2022, the SFMTA experienced the loss of our colleague, Geoffrey “G” Diggs, who worked as the Materials and Supply Chain Manager in the Finance and Information Technology (FIT) Division. G was also a Veteran, having retired from the Air Force as a First Sergeant. The Office of Racial Equity and Belonging (OREB) was deeply appreciative of G’s support in our first year, which included:

- Serving on the Racial Equity Policy Staff Advisory Committee,
- Participating in the 2022 Black History Month staff highlight series, and
- Being featured on the first ever, Black History Month cable car.

In honor of Mr. Diggs, his legacy and commitment to equity, please see G’s Black History Month staff highlights below.





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 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.”

Geoffrey Diggs
Materials and Supply Chain Manager
FIT Division






What does Racial Equity mean to you?

“Racial Equity means equal rights, opportunities, treatment and pay.”

Geoffrey Diggs
Materials and Supply Chain Manager
FIT Division





What do you love about being Black?

“I love everything about it. The culture, pride, creativity and strength.”

Geoffrey Diggs
Materials and Supply Chain Manager
FIT Division



RECAP: EQUITY LAB: MOBILITY JUSTICE FOR BLACK COMMUNITIES

On Tuesday, February 22, 2022, the Office of Racial Equity and Belonging (OREB) launched their first *Equity Lab* training, which is a series on racial equity and mobility justice. More than 200 people attended, including MTA staff, City and County of San Francisco staff and community members. If you missed the event, you can check <https://www.sfmta.com/equity-training> for OREB training archives.

This month's *Equity Lab* theme was *Mobility Justice for Black Communities*. Staff from across the agency served as trainers in the interactive, learning discussion on the impact of anti-Black racism on mobility and transportation. Michael Brown and Josephine Ayankoya of the OREB team co-hosted a robust panel of peer-trainers, including Kimberly Burrus, Rashid Herd, Adrienne Heim, Olivia Bernadel-Huey and Kenya Wheeler.



Attendees were deeply appreciative of the experiences shared by current MTA staff and found the training both meaningful and necessary.

“This panel was a gold mine, and the video should be required viewing for MTA employees....at least! Thank you ALL for your great work!”

“Thank you for keeping this real and allowing us to listen to your voices and learn. This was an excellent session and hopefully, the start of more discussion, action and positive change.”

“We appreciate being invited to this Equity Lab and listening to everyone's experiences. The Civil Service Commission looks forward to working with MTA and DHR in reviewing proposed amendments to hiring policies and procedures, expanding opportunities, equity, and respect in the workplace.”

The Office of Racial Equity and Belonging joins the attendees in expressing gratitude to the many staff who supported the event. *Equity Lab* fulfills mandatory, racial equity training for supervisors, managers and directors, and will continue to be hosted for the MTA workforce.



OFFICE OF RACIAL EQUITY AND BELONGING TRAINING ARCHIVES

One of the many purposes of the [Office of Racial Equity & Belonging \(OREB\) website](#) is to share educational information on racial equity, mobility justice and transportation equity to support ongoing learning and capacity-building. Over time, staff and stakeholders will be able to find all past OREB events and related materials on the [Equity Training section](#) of the OREB website.



Visit [SFMTA.com/Equity](https://www.sfmta.com/Equity) to learn more!

BLACK HISTORY COMMEMORATIVE CABLE CAR RIDE

The Office of Racial Equity and Belonging (OREB) and Transit, Cable Car Division are partnering on the design of a series of racial equity-themed cable cars. This project will include staff connection and volunteer activities to decorate a series of culturally affirming, commemorative exhibits on racial, ethnic, identity, ability and awareness themes.



The first of this series was a Black History Month cable car which highlighted past and present Black staff at MTA. Additionally, the car celebrated Black history and the importance of racial equity within Black communities. On February 15, 2022, a group of 20 staff joined an inaugural ride to commemorate the first Black History Month cable car in the history of the agency. Special guests included SFMTA retirees, David Banbury and Fannie Mae Barnes—the first woman to become a Cable Car Grip.

David Banbury shared, *“It was great to participate in the showcasing of employees and the agency. The contributions of African Americans helped shape the organization, and my own career, too. I had the pleasure of either knowing or working with a lot of the historic figures, and they helped set the stage for a lot of us who have come after them. The people that helped decorate the cars, including myself, have a lot of pride. I hope that there will be more opportunities like this moving forward.”*



During the event, staff had the opportunity connect with each other while exploring the decorative cable car exhibit. As Irella Blackwood (Finance & Information Technology) said, *“The Cable Car Black History event was a great opportunity to see various skills throughout the agency from people of African Descent at one time. After numerous global events and uncertainties, we were able to connect with each other and show the resilience and dedication of Black SFMTA staff.”*

On a few occasions, community members joined MTA staff in joyously dancing to the music. After making stops at Powell & Market, as well as Hyde & Beach, the staff bonding event concluded. Michele Brewster (Security, Investigation & Enforcement) noted, *“The day was unprecedented! I enjoyed immensely. The Office of [Racial Equity & Belonging] afforded SFMTA Black staff, an opportunity of remembrance. [The] cable car highlighted employees from the past and present who have collaborated and contributed to the success of transportation in San Francisco. We enjoyed fraternity, photo ops and an unforgettable ride through the city, all while projecting ecstatic feelings we received from recognition and inclusion. Thank you, Ms. Ayankoya for making this all possible.”*

Be sure to ride the Black History Month cable car before the exhibit ends on Friday, March 4th. Special thanks to the MTA staff and retirees who decorated the first of many racial equity cable cars!

Share Your Input & Get Involved with the Racial Equity Cable Cars

In 2022, the Transit, Cable Car Division and Office of Racial Equity and Belonging will design a series of racial equity, cable cars to commemorate:

- **March** | Women's History Month
- **April** | Middle Eastern Heritage Month
- **May** | Asian and Pacific Islander Heritage Month
- **May** | Cinco de Mayo
- **May** | Carnaval
- **June** | Pride
- **June** | Juneteenth
- **July 26th** | Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) Day
- **September - October** | Latinx Heritage Month
- **October** | Filipino American History Month
- **November** | Native American Heritage Month
- **November 11th** | Veteran's Day
- **November 20th** | Trans Day of Remembrance
- **December 3rd** | International Day of Persons with Disabilities

We are currently taking input to inform the design of cable cars being designed until June. Staff are encouraged to give input by [completing this short survey](#) no later than, **Friday, March 18th**.

If you are interested in volunteering to decorate the Women's History Month or Middle Eastern Heritage Month cable cars, please email Fred Butler (fred.butler@sfmta.com) and CC the OREB team (equity@sfmta.com), ideally by Saturday, March 5th. Decoration shifts will be in the evenings and on weekends.

CELEBRATING BLACK EXCELLENCE AND BLACK HEALTH & WELLNESS

On Wednesday, February 16th, the Black and African American Affinity Group (BAAAG) hosted. This was the 3rd annual Black History Month commemoration hosted by BAAAG, and dozens of staff attended. Given the impact of the Covid pandemic, isolation, police violence, and loss of loved ones on mental health of the workforce, the BAAAG Black History Month event even focused on Black wellness, excellence and health.

Remembering the late Bernard J. Tyson, Chairman and CEO of Kaiser Permanente, the event highlighted how his work as a Black leader in healthcare paved the way for better healthcare, mental health and overall medical services for those in underserved communities and for those who normally would not seek mental health treatment.

The event also highlighted Black and African American trailblazers in the healthcare field, while emphasizing the importance of self-care and mental well-being. The Black and African American Affinity Group was joined by multiple guest speakers, including:

- Le Shun Tyson, RN, MSN, 2022 Doctoral Candidate and sister of Bernard J. Tyson,
- Mayor London Breed, and
- Director Jeff Tumlin.

Congratulations to the Black and African American Affinity Group on another succession Black History Month event!



CALL FOR SPEAKERS: WOMEN'S HISTORY MONTH AND MIDDLE EASTERN HERITAGE MONTH EVENTS

This month, the *How Do You Identify* staff belonging discussion series was launched. In commemoration of Black History Month, the February theme was *Black People Are More Than a Monolith*. The interactive and educational discussions will continue throughout the year, highlighting a variety of different identities. The goal of the discussion series is to talk about identity and equity at a variety of MTA locations, while highlighting the diversity of the MTA workforce.

The Office of Racial Equity and Belonging is looking for speakers to participate in the March and April *How Do You Identify* events, which will commemorate Women’s History Month and Middle Eastern Heritage Month, respectively. If you are interested in being a speaker or want to nominate someone, please email equity@sfmta.com and CC Jeremy.Brooks@sfmta.com by **Friday, March 11th**.

PROTECTED STAFF TIME FOR RACIAL EQUITY AND WORKFORCE DEVELOPMENT PROJECTS

The deadline for the Office of Racial Equity and Belonging Fellowship has been extended to **Friday, March 25th**. The OREB Fellowship is a networking and professional development program for staff across all SFMTA divisions. This 12-month program will provide SFMTA staff with the opportunity to gain verifiable work experience.

Once the cohort is selected, the schedule will be set to accommodate all OREB Fellows. **Staff working swing shifts, OWL shifts and early morning shifts will be accommodated, so anyone interested is encouraged to apply by the March 25th deadline.**



[Staff can submit applications to the OREB Fellows through this online application.](#) The 2022 cohort will be the first of many to support racial equity projects through participation on multidisciplinary teams that represent the diversity of the SFMTA workforce.

CELEBRATING BLACK STAFF AT THE SFMTA



Conzy Marie Jones
Former Secretary II, Contracts and Procurement Team
Finance & Information Technology Division

What does Racial Equity mean to you?

"For me, racial equity means working towards repairing all the harm done to Black, African Americans, those of African Descent, and other non-white ethnic groups, who have been impacted by racism across generations, working towards giving us the same quality of life as White Americans through measurable improvements in income levels, health, life expectancy, educational opportunities, as well as equal employment opportunities."

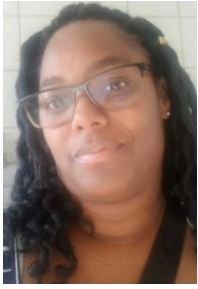


Sabrena Mosley
Transit Operator
Transit, Kirkland Division

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

"I take pride to being an African American woman playing a vital role in helping the City move in its day-to-day operations which can be challenging yet rewarding."

CELEBRATING BLACK STAFF AT THE SFMTA



Charla Rice
Transit Operator
Transit, Woods Division

What do you love about being Black?

"The ability to adapt in any environment and to get along with people from all walks of life is what I love about being Black."



Sherrill Foster
Senior Human Resource
Analyst
Human Resources, Talent
Acquisition, Division
Services Unit

What do you love about being Black?

"Being Black for me is being proud of and loving the rich culture of creators, innovators and visionaries who's shoulders I stand on, NEVER forgetting their sacrifices, and embracing my unique beauty."

SAN FRANCISCO FELLOWSHIP PROGRAM: APPLICATION NOW OPEN!



Applications for the San Francisco Fellows Program are [open](#). The mission of the San Francisco Fellows program is to foster community stewardship by preparing recent college graduates for roles in public service and administration. All people who have had an undergraduate degree conferred within the past 5 years (May 1, 2017 and June 30, 2022) are invited to apply.

Please be sure to circulate the application information to your networks. Margot Reed, from the MTA Human Resources, Workforce Development team shared:

"SF Fellows is one of the fellowship programs that we participate in and serves as a pipeline for recent graduates and first-generation professionals to envision a career in the City and County of San Francisco. Fellows are given the unique experience of being chosen from a highly selective applicant pool, to be placed in their departments of interest and doing work that can help fellows obtain a permanent position with a city department. The fellowship program has allowed MTA to fill niche projects with skilled, focused and energetic project leaders; and to do so, at a competitive salary."

To learn more about the program, visit the [San Francisco Fellowship Program website](#). **Applications will be accepted until March 6, 2022.**

RACIAL EQUITY UPDATES

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