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# Africatown seeks to put SVI on the table in Olympia

Posted by [Staff](#) / 14 - Feb - 2019

**Africatown seeks to put SVI on the table in Olympia.  
Encouraging all to attend African American Legislative Day**



Monday, February 18th, will mark the annual African American Legislative Day at the State Capital. This is an event where concerned citizens young and old from African American communities across the Evergreen State make the pilgrimage to Olympia and meet with state legislators to bring awareness around situations and legislation that impacts that lives of African Americans. There are often panel discussions comprised of community leaders and lawmakers with the goal of achieving a deeper understanding of community needs and burning issues and as well to enlighten community members as to how the legislative process works.

This year, among the many other issues of importance to the well being of Blacks in Washington State, Africatown Seattle, is seeking to raise awareness around the fate of the Seattle Vocational Institute or SVI. Originally established as Seattle Opportunities Industrial Center, SVI which is located in the Central District on 22nd and Jackson, has for decades been an epicenter of learning in the African American community as thousands of graduates learned trades and job skills that propelled them into the workforce and in many cases SVI was the entrepreneurial spark that inspired many in our community to open their own businesses.

Unfortunately over the past few decades, SVI has been neglected and is in dire need

of repair and renovation. As opposed to Seattle Colleges investing in bringing the building up to current standards and investing in the technology to make SVI competitive in the coming decades, Seattle Colleges has made a decision to release SVI with the hopes that a community based development organization can make better use of the structure. The option that the building could be sold and fall into the hands of developers is also a reality.



SVI is literally considered a legacy educational institution in the Black community of Seattle and the thought of losing SVI has galvanized the community across generations in what has now become a fight to save the building and ensure that it continues its mission of educating those in our community.

Spearheading that fight is the Africatown Community Land Trust, which has stepped in and submitted a plan to Seattle Colleges that outlines a vision of developing SVI into a world-class education, cultural and economic development institution that the African American community is in desperate need of.



**SEATTLE VOCATIONAL  
INSTITUTE**

*One of the Seattle Colleges*

Ultimately, in the Africatown vision of SVI, it would be an anchor institution for a campus including Fire Station Six, Douglass Truth Library, Washington Middle School, Garfield High School, Odessa Brown/Carolyn Downs and Seattle Wood

Construction Center and an institutional epicenter for Africatown Innovation District.

There are other community organizations that as well have a vision for SVI and have also lobbied for approval.

The final decision as to the fate of SVI now lies in the hands of state legislators in Olympia. This is why Africatown is seeking to make their voices heard, literally at the African American Legislative Day event on Monday in Olympia demanding full transparency and a community led process.

Africatown is bringing awareness of A. Philip Randolph Institute providing a free bus departing from Greater Mt. Baker Baptist Church on 24th and Jackson at 6:15am on Monday and returning at 6:00pm later that same evening. Other pickup locations are available. Lunch and snacks will be provided. Africatown is encouraging all that can attend to be present to ensure that lawmakers see the level of commitment the community has to saving SVI and transforming it into an institution equipped to prepare our youth to compete in the global as well as local marketplace.

To register for AALD19 as well as to sign up for the free bus please [click here](#).

### **Get On the Bus!**

#### AM Pickup Locations Time:

#### **Greater Mt Baker Baptist Church 6:15 am**

2425 S Jackson St, Seattle, WA 98144

#### **Grocery Outlet Bargain Market 6:30 am**

11656 68th Ave S, Seattle, WA 98178

#### **Holy Temple Evangelistic Center 6:45 am**

12600 Renton Ave S, Renton, WA 98178

### **Drop-off Location**

Washington State Capital 9:00 am

416 Sid Synder Avenue SW Olympia, WA 98504

us Pickup to return to Seattle meets at the same location as dropped off.

### **Return Pickup Location**

Washington State Capital 3:00 pm

416 Sid Synder Avenue SW Olympia, WA 98504

### **PM Drop-off Locations**

#### **Holy Temple Evangelistic Center**

12600 Renton Ave S, Renton, WA 98178

#### **Grocery Outlet Bargain Market**

11656 68th Ave S, Seattle, WA 98178

#### **Greater Mt Baker Baptist Church 6:00 pm**

2425 S Jackson St, Seattle, WA 98144

