



COMMUNITIES OF OPPORTUNITY

# LEADING THE TRANSFORMATION OF KING COUNTY

Through community-driven partnerships, we are creating greater racial, economic, and health equity that enables all people in King County to thrive and prosper.

# TRANSFORMING

what it means to create health and well-being for all people

Communities of Opportunity is a growing movement of partners who believe every community can be a healthy, thriving community—and that equity and racial justice are both necessary and achievable.

Being housed, healthy, employed, and connected to one's community are basic human needs. Yet from neighborhood to neighborhood, access to these essentials vary widely. Race, income, and zip code are major predictors of how healthy we are and even how long we will live.

Low-income communities and communities of color regularly experience institutional racism in the form of decisions being made for them, and of having their voices, priorities, and strengths disregarded. Communities of Opportunity believes the most meaningful, just, and sustainable solutions are generated in partnership with communities—who know what they need to be healthy and thrive.

**Communities of Opportunity is dedicated to overturning these disparities and creating a vibrant, equitable King County where everyone thrives regardless of race or place.**



Rainier Beach Action Coalition, photo by Marcela Gara

# OUR APPROACH

For too long, communities have been subject to outsiders focusing on their “deficits,” while a rich tapestry of strengths, talents, and solutions has largely been ignored. The strengths of communities and their power to own and shape their futures are central to Communities of Opportunity.

**Communities of Opportunity is an inclusive table where community members and leaders, organizations, and institutions share power, voice, and resources.**

We’re setting a course for positive change throughout the county by:

- Establishing community-based priorities
- Tapping into existing community expertise and leadership
- Strengthening community capacity for advocacy and to take on local challenges
- Systematizing a collaborative approach between communities and institutions
- Shaping policies to promote equity and positively impact our communities
- Bringing new resources into communities

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*“Communities of Opportunity isn’t just about bringing new resources to the areas where they are most needed—it’s also about tapping into existing community assets, and strengthening the capacity of communities to proactively tackle these new challenges.”*

**DEANNA DAWSON, EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR, SOUND CITIES ASSOCIATION**





Photo courtesy of Global to Local

# OUR WORK

Through an extensive, community-led planning process, we defined four intersecting priority areas:

- 1. Quality affordable housing for all**—Preservation and development of affordable housing that is in close proximity to transit, jobs, and education.
- 2. The right to be healthy**—Access to healthy, affordable food and safe places outside to be physically active, especially for our youth.
- 3. Increased economic opportunity**—Workforce development that includes local hires, support of new local businesses, and inclusion of our youth.
- 4. Strengthened connections to the community**—Increased civic participation and engagement, cultural preservation, and access to safe public spaces.

*"This new process of empowering local communities to identify their priorities, which exist at the intersection of health, housing and economic opportunity will bring positive changes to places throughout King County that have struggled for much too long."*

**GORDON MCHENRY JR., PRESIDENT AND CEO OF SOLID GROUND**





Photo courtesy of Global to Local

# Work occurs through policy and systems change and on the ground.

## **Policies and systems play an essential role in equity.**

Affordable housing, local employment, and quality education should be attainable regardless of our race, ethnicity, income, or where we live. Yet our institutions and policies shape who has access to wealth, health, and prosperity.

Communities of Opportunity partners are working to dismantle the persistent racial injustice within our systems by:

- Building community capacity to carry out coordinated advocacy efforts
- Integrating equity into policies at all levels: neighborhood, organizational, city, county, and state
- Advocating for policies that support community priorities and needs
- Expanding representation of cultural communities by stepping into leadership and political roles



Photo courtesy of Homesight

### **Community partnerships and power are central.**

The work of three place-based partnerships is leading the direction of this initiative. What these communities test and build upon will be shared across King County.

- **Rainier Valley** community partners are focusing on shared ownership models to prevent displacement of historic cultural communities and to increase economic security.
- **White Center** is anchoring multi-cultural businesses and partnerships in the community to prevent displacement of residents.
- **SeaTac/Tukwila** community partners have established the Food Innovation Network, focusing on expanding economic opportunities and promoting health, particularly through healthy food.

*“The vision of COO is possible when we are able to build relationships based on trust for the work of this community. We have partners that listen to what our community is saying and let that voice be the most critical part of their work here in White Center.”*

**—SILI SAVUSA, RESIDENT AND EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR OF  
WHITE CENTER COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT ASSOCIATION**

# OUR EARLY MOMENTUM

When communities have voice and power in the decisions that impact their communities, and express it through civic engagement and leadership, it leads to broader community and policy changes that assure racial, health, and economic equity.



**White Center Community Development Association surveyed the majority-immigrant community about its priorities and shared the results** with local organizations, schools, and businesses. They heard that housing and health matter: Habitat for Humanity is pursuing funding to support home improvements, and schools are now offering more culturally relevant food.

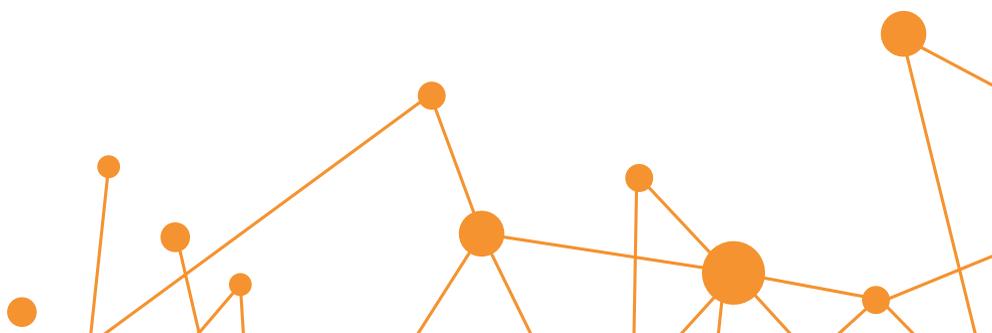
In South Auburn, an area with one of the county's fastest growing Latino populations, **community members sent a clear message to the mayor and city council: Improving health and food insecurity requires addressing jobs, income, and the scarcity of healthy food.** This represented the views of 678 people surveyed about food insecurity by Washington Community Action Network.

Dozens of individuals from **vital yet under-represented communities are now serving on public boards and commissions throughout King County.** A rigorous six-month training on public board involvement led by the Community Leadership Institute prepared them to be strong voices for their respective communities.

**A coalition** of Ethiopian organizations, community members, and service providers **is filling the gap in services for Ethiopian immigrants.** This coalition is connecting individuals with needed support, including housing with stable families and services from community-based organizations.

**Rainier Valley residents created a model for how to build racial and social equity into transit-oriented development** so that residents and businesses are not further displaced as an area grows. They secured a Graham Street light rail stop for their community. Now they are creating a community-led, equitable development plan for the surrounding neighborhood once the station is built.

Representing the cultural communities of Capitol Hill, Central District, and the Chinatown-International District, the **Yesler Community Collaborative moved Seattle to apply a race and social justice lens to future neighborhood development.** The Collaborative aligned community members around a shared vision for strengthening and preserving their historic presence in these neighborhoods, and led advocacy efforts to achieve it.





# Join us in **GROWING THE MOVEMENT**

What started in 2014 as an idea has grown to more than 100 organizations partnering together, with the voices of hundreds of community members guiding the way.

We are residents, communities, decision-makers, and funders working in deep partnership to advance racial, health, and economic equity across the county. In the coming years, we'll grow our web of organizations, people, and relationships to:

- **Expand the number of places and cultural communities** that are engaged in Communities of Opportunity.
- **Invest in more partners** working to create policies that reverse inequity and contribute to long-term systems change.
- **Accelerate change through a learning network** where communities incubate, exchange, and realize their ideas.
- **Build the capacity of all Communities of Opportunity partners** through technical assistance, training, and deep conversations—we all have something to teach and learn.

**Contact us to learn how you can engage in the movement.**

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# THERE IS POWER IN PARTNERSHIP

African Americans Reach & Teach  
Ministry  
African Diaspora of Washington State  
Asian Counseling & Referral Services  
Ballmer Group  
Bill & Melinda Gates Foundation  
Black Dollar Days  
Boys & Girls Clubs of King County  
Business Impact NW  
Capitol Hill Housing  
Catholic Community Services  
Center for Inclusive Entrepreneurship  
Center for the Study of Social Policy  
Centerstone  
Children's Alliance  
Chinese Information and Referral  
Service  
Church Council of Greater Seattle  
City of SeaTac  
City of Seattle  
City of Tukwila  
Clear Impact  
Coalition of Immigrants and Refugees  
and Communities of Color  
Coalition of Refugees from Burma  
Colectiva Legal del Pueblo  
Craft3  
Duwamish River Cleanup Coalition  
El Centro de la Raza  
Emerald City Bible Fellowship  
Enterprise Community Partners  
Entre Hermanos  
Eritrian Association of Greater Seattle

**power**

Ethiopian Community in Seattle  
Fair Work Center  
Federal Reserve Bank of San Francisco,  
Community Development  
Feet First  
Food Empowerment Education and  
Sustainability Team  
Food Innovation Network  
Forterra  
Friends of Little Saigon  
Friends of the Rainier Beach Urban  
Farm and Wetlands  
Futurewise  
Global to Local  
Got Green!  
Habitat for Humanity Seattle-King  
County  
HealthPoint  
Healthy King County Coalition  
Healthy Othello Safer through  
Environmental Design  
Highline College: StartZone and Urban  
Agriculture  
HomeSight  
Horn of Africa Services  
Housing Development Consortium of  
Seattle-King County  
Impact Capital  
InterIm CDA  
International Rescue Committee  
King County  
King County Housing Authority

**equity**

**learning**

Latino Community Fund  
LGBTQ Allyship  
Living Cities  
Living Well Kent  
Mercy Housing Northwest  
MLK Business Association  
Mother Africa  
Multicultural Community Center  
On Board Othello  
OneAmerica  
Open Doors for Multicultural Families  
Othello Neighborhood Farm Stand  
Othello Park Alliance  
Othello Station Community Advisory Team  
Pacific Hospital Preservation & Development Authority  
Para los Niños  
Partner in Employment  
PATH  
Project Feast  
Public Defender Association  
Puentes  
Puget Sound Sage  
Pyramid Communications  
Rainier Beach Action Coalition  
Rainier Beach Community Club  
Rainier Beach Merchants Association  
Rainier Valley Chamber of Commerce  
Rainier Valley Community Development Fund  
Rainier Valley Corps  
Refugee Federation Service Center  
Regional Equity Network  
Seattle Chinatown International District PDA  
Seattle Foundation  
Seattle Housing Authority  
Seattle Indian Health Board

**engagement**

**leadership**

Seattle Tilth  
Seattle Youth Violence Prevention Initiative  
Skyway Solutions  
Solid Ground  
Somali Community Services  
Somali Youth and Family Club  
Sound Cities Association  
South Communities Organizing for Racial Equity  
South King Council of Human Services  
South Park Information and Resource Center  
SouthEast Effective Development (SEED)  
Southeast Economic Opportunity Center  
Southwest Youth and Family Services  
Tenants Union of Washington State  
The Mockingbird Society  
Transportation Choices Coalition  
Trusted Advocates  
UNITE HERE Local 8  
Urban Family Center  
Urban Impact  
Urban Institute  
Ventures  
Vietnamese Friendship Association  
Washington Community Action Network Education & Development Fund  
Washington Immigrant Solidarity Network  
Washington Indian Civil Rights Commission  
White Center Community Development Association  
White Center Food Bank  
YES Foundation  
Yesler Community Collaborative  
YMCA, Snoqualmie Valley  
YWCA

# FUNDING FOR COMMUNITIES OF OPPORTUNITY

Communities of Opportunity was catalyzed by private philanthropy and government uniting with each other and with communities to address inequity.

Communities of Opportunity is supported by Seattle Foundation and by King County with the Best Starts for Kids Levy. Since Communities of Opportunity's launch in 2014, \$6.8 million in collective investments have been made to communities and coalitions, accelerating community-driven improvement.



SEATTLE  
FOUNDATION



**King County**