2015 - 2021 EVALUATION KEY TAKEAWAYS

Communities of Opportunity (COO) is a community-public-private partnership between King County and the Seattle Foundation that began in 2014 and expanded in 2016 with funding from the Best Starts for Kid tax levy. COO is a Best Starts for Kids investment strategy, fostering community conditions that create equitable opportunities for children, youth, and families. These posters summarize key evaluation findings from 2015 through 2021.

COO’s mission: to create greater racial, health, social, and economic equity in King County through investments in community-driven solutions and partnerships.

COO’S INVESTMENT STRATEGIES:
1. Community Partnerships: COO invested in nine place-based and cultural community partnerships, supporting multi-year collaborative efforts to improve outcomes and opportunities for the communities in King County experiencing the greatest inequities.
2. Systems and Policy Change: Public Health – Seattle & King County in partnership with the Seattle Foundation invested in 107 mostly two-year community-driven efforts to transform systems and policies in ways that advanced equity.
3. Learning Community: COO invested in a community-based approach to capacity building that supports organizations to strengthen community connections and advance community-driven projects.

COO’s Community Power-Building Approach:
To create policy, system, and environmental (PSE) changes, COO supported efforts to build and expand the existing power in communities. COO partners (i.e., agencies participating in one or more COO investment strategy) held community events, educated and mobilized community members, and developed community leaders in efforts to strengthen community power.
TAKEAWAYS & OPPORTUNITIES

What challenges did COO experience?
COVID-19, which emerged roughly halfway through the funding cycle, represented the largest challenge to COO. It required all partners to make changes to their work plan and approach. COO experienced challenges in ensuring that administrative processes like contracting practices aligned with racial and economic equity principles. Finally, some COO partners found the lengthy and detailed evaluation reporting requirements challenging and cumbersome.

TAKEAWAYS
1. Investing in community-driven work that spans multiple strategies and communities can support measurable benefits in equity.
2. Long-term investment in community power-building represents a compelling approach to supporting PSE change.
3. The Learning Community, COO’s investment strategy that supports organizations to build capacity and relationships, is an effective model for how funding agencies can support partners beyond providing financial resources.
4. COO supports future advancements in equity by contributing to changes to the regional funding landscape.

OPPORTUNITIES
1. COO can advance equity by supporting the development and ongoing maintenance of equitable and productive community partnerships.
2. COO leadership, including Governance Group and staff in leadership positions at PHSKC and the Seattle Foundation, can expand the reach and impact of COO by inviting other funders and relevant stakeholders to support the work of COO.
3. COO leadership can advance equity by examining their own internal systems and practices to increase alignment with racial and economic equity principles.
4. COO can advance equity by investing in COO partners’ capacity to build narrative power.
5. COO can advance equity by expanding the scope and reach of the Learning Community and supporting its replication in similar equity initiatives.

The evaluation of COO activities from 2015 - 2021 demonstrated COO’s success in supporting community-driven advances in racial, social, and economic equity. The data illustrate ways that COO partners improved opportunities and lived experiences for many King County residents, and how COO can continue to grow and build on these successes to expand its reach and impact for King County communities moving forward.
COMMUNITY POWER-BUILDING

COO supported partners to strengthen existing power in communities. Partners found the longevity, level, and flexibility of COO’s funding helpful in building this power. Specifically, COO’s multi-year funding at a level high enough to hire staff and flexible enough to cover administrative costs and community power building activities. COO, mostly through the Learning Community, provided opportunities for partners to expand their capacity and community connections to build power. Since 2018, COO partners developed 451 new partnerships, 1,119 new relationships, and 2,095 new leaders.

Community power-building can support policy, systems, and environmental (PSE) changes that advance equity by:

- Community organizing
- Developing community leaders
- Strengthening community connections

COO supported partners to expand their capacity to strengthen existing community power by:

- Providing shared learning opportunities to increase knowledge, skills, and community connections.
- Connecting partners with other relevant groups and institutions.
- Supporting COO partners to make internal organizational changes that increase their capacity to build community power.
- Providing flexible funding that can support community power-building activities that often go unfunded.
- Providing funding at a sufficient level to support change.
- Providing funding that spans multiple years.

COO partners strengthened the existing power of community members and enhanced their ability to engage in PSE change by:

- COO partners strengthened relationships and critical connections.
- COO partners increased community leadership.

ORGANIZATIONS, INITIATIVES & EFFORTS

- Many organizations, groups and partnerships in the COO network have done great work and accomplished major progress for community power building in addition to those listed here.
- A few organizations who contributed to community power building that were highlighted about power building work and outcomes in the full evaluation report:
  - Comunidad Latina de Vashon
  - Open Doors for Multicultural Families
  - Muslim Community & Neighborhood Association
COO partners made gains on several community development and land ownership projects. Led primarily by Community Partnership partners in the Central District, Rainier Valley, and White Center, this work expanded community leadership in the process of developing and stewarding spaces in areas experiencing high levels of gentrification and displacement. These efforts affect all four results areas, creating spaces that can improve access to housing, health, economic opportunities, and community connections.

COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT PROJECTS

Replanting Roots Rebuilding Communities (RRRC) Community Partnership
- Liberty Bank Building
- Fire Station 6
- Central Area Senior Center
- Surplus Sound Transit properties
- Keiro Building
- Africatown Plaza

Rainier Valley COO (RVCoo)
- Othello Square
- Cultural Innovation Center (CIC)
- Graham Street Equitable Transit Oriented Development project

White Center Community Partnership
- White Center’s Community HUB

BUILDING COMMUNITY CAPACITY FOR COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT
- Earl’s Cuts and Styles
- King County Equitable Development Initiative (EDI) program
- Two Learning Circle cohorts (Equitable Development NOW and Community Real Estate Stewardship Team)
- Commercial Affordability Pilot

ORGANIZATIONS, INITIATIVES & EFFORTS
- Africatown Community Land Trust
- City of Seattle Equitable Development Initiative (EDI)
- Community Real Estate Stewardship Team
- Crescent Collaborative Equitable Development NOW
- Graham Street Community Action Team (CAT)
- HomeSight Multicultural Community Coalition (MCC)
- Puget Sound Sage
- Replanting Roots Rebuilding Communities (RRRC) Community Partnership
- Southwest Youth & Family Services
- The White Center Community Development Association (White Center CDA)
**BY SUPPORTING PSE CHANGES RELATED TO HOUSING**

COO partners improved housing opportunities for King County residents by increasing access to affordable housing and minimizing displacement of residents, businesses, and cultural communities. COO partners produced PSE changes that increased tenant protections at the state and local level, funding for and development of affordable housing, and access to culturally responsive housing resources.

**PASSING TENANT PROTECTION POLICIES**

Seattle Foundation-funded SPC partners supported successful efforts to pass city and state legislation that strengthened tenant protections and reduced evictions.

**State-Wide Laws**
- Just Cause Eviction
- Eviction Reform
- Document Recording Fee
- Growth Management Act
- Right to Counsel

**Local Ordinances & Executive Orders**
- Eviction Moratorium Extensions
- Community Preference
- South King County Local Faith Leaders

**FUNDING AND DEVELOPING AFFORDABLE HOUSING**

Seattle Foundation-funded SPC partners secured funds and other resources to advance affordable housing and anti-displacement efforts.

- Redirecting Hotel/Motel tax dollars:
- City of Burien’s Comprehensive Plan
- COVID-19 funding for Native-led agencies
- Strategic Investment Fund Proviso
- State Commerce Department’s multimillion-dollar awards
- ʔałʔał (“Home” in Lushootseed)
- Eastside Local Faith Leaders:
- Seattle Indian Health Board Capital Budget
- Emergency Housing Vouchers
- Multifamily Property Tax Exemption (SB 5287)

**EXPANDING ACCESS TO CULTURALLY RESPONSIVE HOUSING RESOURCES**

COO partners in the Community Partnership and SPC investment strategies expanded access to culturally responsive housing resources in several ways, including by:

- Building and sharing knowledge about culturally specific housing needs.
- Increasing the cultural responsiveness of existing services.
- Increasing the racial and ethnic diversity of housing governing bodies.

**ORGANIZATIONS, INITIATIVES & EFFORTS**

- Chief Seattle Club
- Church Council of Greater Seattle
- Crescent Collaborative
- Health Through Housing (HTH)
- Mary’s Place
- Muslim Community and Neighborhood Association
- Puget Sound Sage
- Seattle Chinatown International District PDA
- Seattle Indian Health Board
- South King County Housing and Homelessness Partnership
- Tenants Union of Washington
- The Coalition to End Urban Indigenous Homelessness
- The Kent Community Development Collaborative
- The Transgender Economic Empowerment Coalition (TEEC)
**BY SUPPORTING PSE CHANGES RELATED TO HEALTH**

COO defines health as access to healthy, affordable food and safe places outside to be physically active, especially for youth. COO partners improved health opportunities in King County using several strategies, including by increasing access to healthy and culturally relevant foods in schools and communities. Partners also improved access to culturally responsive healthcare. Finally, partners improved community health and safety by making PSE changes related to climate action and police reform.

**IMPROVING ACCESS TO HEALTHY & CULTURALLY RELEVANT FOODS**

COO partners and agencies in the Community Partnership and SPC investment strategies took different but complementary approaches to improve communities’ access to healthy and culturally relevant foods.

**Increasing access to healthy & culturally relevant foods**

**In Communities:**
- Spice Bridge
- Farm Stand
- Beach Fresh dinner
- Emergency Food Access System
- Gardening and Healthy Eating Education
- Increased Access to Food Banks
- Give2Grow Garden
- Improved Grocery Store Options
- Food Security Programming

**In Schools:**
- Farm-to-School Purchasing Grant
- Snackbox Program
- School Lunches

**IMPROVING ACCESS TO CULTURALLY RESPONSIVE HEALTHCARE**

COO partners in the Community Partnership and SPC investment strategies improved access to culturally responsive healthcare for several cultural communities in King County.

- Doula Medicaid Reimbursement
- Washington Indian Health Improvement Act
- Indian Behavioral Health Act
- National g88 System
- Gender Affirming Treatment Act
- Tribal public health systems
- Gender “X”
- Latinx families.
- Ancestral Talking Circles
- Healthcare resources for sex workers
- Trans people of color

**IMPROVING COMMUNITY HEALTH & SAFETY**

COO partners in the Community Partnership and SPC strategies used a wide range of strategies to improve communities’ health and safety.

**Environmental Safety Improvements**
- Harmful Police Tactics
- Police De-escalation
- Deadly Force Investigations
- Youth Interrogations
- Public Safety Levy
- Missing and Murdered Indigenous Women and Girls (MMIWG)

**Climate Action**
- Green New Deal
- JumpStart Tax

**ORGANIZATIONS, INITIATIVES & EFFORTS**

- Beet Box
- Choose 180
- Church Council of Greater Seattle
- Comunidad Latina de Vashon
- Dare2Be Project
- FEEST
- Got Green
- HOSTED
- Ingersoll
- Lavender Rights Project
- Northwest Harvest
- Not This Time
- On Board Othello
- Para Los Nin-ös
- Rainier Beach Action Coalition
- Rainier Valley COO Community Partnership
- Replanting Roots
- Rebuilding Communities (RRRC)
- Seattle Indian Health Board
- Surge Reproductive Justice
- the Maternal Coalition
- The SeaTac-Tukwila community partnership
- Urban Food Systems Pact
- UTOPIA
- White Center Food Bank
BY SUPPORTING PSE CHANGES RELATED TO ECONOMIC OPPORTUNITIES

COO defines economic opportunity as workforce development that includes local hires, support of new local businesses, and inclusion of youth.

SMALL BUSINESSES AND ENTREPRENEURS
- Black Dot
- Food Incubator Program and Spice Bridge
- BIPOC Entrepreneur Fellowship Program
- Support for Latino Businesses
- Gender Inclusive Workspaces
- Equitable Recovery & Reconciliation Alliance
- Participatory Budgeting
- International Special Review District

WORKER PROTECTIONS
COO partners led and supported efforts to increase the protection of workers who are often the most impacted by structural inequities.
- Domestic Workers and Day Laborers
- Formerly Incarcerated Workers
- Sex Workers
- Trans Workers

STATE-WIDE DEBT PROTECTIONS AND SUPPORT FOR LOW-INCOME FAMILIES
SPC partners celebrated several successful state-wide legislative campaigns aimed at increasing debt protections and economic supports for low-income families.

Debt Protection Legislation
- Ending Pocket Service for Debt Collection
- Medical Debt Protections

Legislation Supporting Low-Income Families
- Expanded Washington’s Working Families Tax Credit
- TANF Cash Grant Increases
- Easing TANF Sanctions
- Expanding TANF access for families who are homeless
- Easing TANF Time Limit Restrictions
- Child Support Pass-Through Payments
- Updated Economic Assistance Programs
- Prevented Deep Cuts to Washington’s Safety Net
- Home Foreclosure Protections

Funding Supporting Low-Income Families
- King County Promise Program
- Emergency Assistance
- Human Services Funding

WORKFORCE DEVELOPMENT
In addition to providing broader economic opportunities through PSE changes, a few COO partners directly provided workforce development opportunities.
- Workforce development opportunities for young people of color

ORGANIZATIONS, INITIATIVES & EFFORTS
- Black Brilliance Research Project
- Black Dot
- Casa Latina
- Church Council of Greater Seattle
- Civil Survival
- Comunidad Latina de Vashon (CLV)
- Equitable Recovery & Reconciliation Alliance (ERRA)
- FEEST
- Food Innovation Network (FIN)
- Front and Centered
- GSBA
- Interim CDA
- Lavender Rights Project
- Machinist Institute Youth Academy the Youth Restoration Crew
- Partners in Employment
- People’s Economy Lab
- Rainier Beach Action Coalition’s Young Adults Transitioning to Adulthood
- Schools Out Washington
- Skyway Coalition
- Statewide Poverty Action Network (SPAN)
- SURGE
- The Rainier Beach Neighborhood Farm Stand
- The Transgender Economic Empowerment Coalition (TEEC)
- UTOPIA
- Washington Bus Education Fund
- White Center CDA
- YWCA
COO partners in the Community Partnership and SPC investment strategies leveraged COO resources and connections to expand the scope and sustainability of their work, receiving additional funds to build and sustain the momentum for PSE change. COO partners successfully leveraged funds in a few ways. Some partners used COO funds to hire for critical positions that then helped with organizational fundraising and communication efforts. Other partners leveraged the connections they made through COO to build stronger networks and relationships, including with funding agencies. Still others leveraged the way COO increased the visibility, scope, and success of their work to create stronger proposals and applications for future funding. Finally, several partners described how they successfully used COO funds as funding matches in grant applications.

**LEVERAGING FUNDS FOR COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT AND LAND OWNERSHIP EFFORTS**

COO partners leading community development and land ownership efforts demonstrated particular success in leveraging COO resources to secure additional funds and support for their efforts.

- Opportunity Center at Othello Square
- Cultural Innovation Center
- William Grose Center for Cultural Innovation and Enterprise
- White Center Community HUB

**LEVERAGING FUNDS FOR OTHER COO-RELATED EFFORTS**

- COO partners reported leveraging COO resources, connections, and accomplishments to secure funding and support for other bodies of work

**ORGANIZATIONS, INITIATIVES & EFFORTS**

- Africatown Community Land Trust
- Chief Seattle Club
- Comunidad Latina de Vashon
- Homesight
- Hopelink
- HOSTED
- Kent Community Development Collaborative
- Multicultural Community Coalition
- National Coalition to End Urban Indigenous Homelessness
- RBAC
- Replanting Roots Rebuilding Community (RRRC)
- SCFA
- Seattle Indian Health Board
- Seattle Urban Native Nonprofits
- The Graham Street Community Action Team
- White Center CDA
ADD A NOTE TO

CELEBRATE YOUR WORK:
Share your own success, accomplishment or win achieved over the last 7 years of working with COO