

# Communities of Opportunity 2018 Baseline Evaluation Summary

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## Evaluation Team

### **BDS Planning & Urban Design**

*Evaluation Team Lead*  
Brian Douglas Scott, PhD  
Valerie Tran, MPH, MUP  
Ben Han, MCP  
Dan Lokic, MCRP

### **Urban Design 4 Health (UD4H)**

*Quantitative Analysis Lead*  
Eric Fox, MScP  
Jim Chapman, MSCE  
Larry Frank, PhD, AICP  
Nicole Alfonsin, MPH, WELL AP

### **ChangeLab Solutions**

*Qualitative Analysis Lead*  
Saneta deVuono-powell, JD, MCP  
Jessica Nguyen, MPH, MCP  
Tina Yuen, MPH, MCP  
Lex Carlsson  
Jessie Wesley

### **Jackie St. Louis, MSC, LMHC & Nissana Nov, MSW**

*Community Engagement Leads*

### **HealthxDesign**

*Strategic Advisor*  
Rupal Sanghvi, MPH

## **COO Partners**

Africatown: Replanting Roots,  
Rebuilding Community\*  
All In for Washington  
Alphabet Alliance of Color  
Casa Latina\*  
Chief Seattle Club\*  
Church Council of Greater  
Seattle\*  
Civil Survival Project\*  
Communities in Action\*  
Community Justice Project\*  
Comunidad Latina de Vashon  
Organizamos  
Congolese Integration Network\*  
EmPower\*  
Federal Way Youth Action  
Team\*  
FEEST\*  
Friends of Little Saigon\*

Global to Local\*  
Got Green  
Greater Seattle Business  
Association\*  
Homesight\*  
Hopelink\*  
Ingersoll Gender Center  
Kent Community Development  
Collaborative  
Open Doors for Multi-Cultural  
Families\*  
Para Los Ninos de Highline\*  
Partner in Employment\*  
Puget Sound Sage\*  
Rainier Beach Action Coalition\*  
Rainier Valley Place-Based  
Partners\*  
Seattle Indian Health Board\*  
Seattle Urban Native Nonprofits\*

Snoqualmie Valley Supportive  
Community for All\*  
Somali Family Safety Task Force  
Somali Health Board\*  
South King County Discipline  
Coalition  
Statewide Poverty Action  
Network\*  
Tenants Union of Washington\*  
The Transgender Economic  
Empowerment Coalition  
Washington Bus Education Fund  
Washington Dream Coalition  
Washington Indian Civil Rights  
Commission\*  
White Center CDA\*  
White Center Place-Based  
Partners\*  
Yesler Community Collaborative

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**Acknowledgements (Continued)**

**Evaluation Advisory Group**

Patrice Thomas, Rainier Beach Action Coalition (RBAC)  
Meron Kasahun, Homesight  
Marcy Bowers, Statewide Poverty Action Coalition  
Ginger Kwan, Open Doors for Multicultural Families  
Elaine Albertson, White Center Community  
Development Association  
Jessica Ramirez, Puget Sound Sage  
AJ McClure, Global to Local

**Governance Group**

Adam Taylor  
Alison Mendiola  
Andrea Estes  
Deanna Dawson  
Gordon McHenry Jr  
Jenn Ramirez Robson  
Lydia Assefa-Dawson  
Marguerite Ro  
Marty Jackson  
Michael Brown  
Nate Smith  
Paola Maranan  
Sili Savusa  
Tony To  
Ubox Gardheere

**King County Assessment, Policy Development and Evaluation Staff**

Lin Song  
Nadine Chan  
Kristin Moore  
Amy Laurent

Jihan Rashid, Somali Health Board  
Julian Graef, Hopelink  
Dao Tran, White Center Community Development  
Association  
Eli Coffin, GSBA  
Faduma Ahmed, HomeSight  
Jenn Ramirez Robson, King County Housing Authority,  
COO Governance Group  
Diana Paredes, The Seattle Foundation, COO Staff

**COO Staff**

Aaron Robertson  
Alice Ito  
Amanda Kay  
Andréa Akita  
Blishda Lacet  
Cheryl Markham  
Cristina González  
Dan Bernard  
Diana Paredes  
Dionne Foster  
Kalayaan Domingo  
Kim Tippens  
Kirsten Wysen  
Sharon Bogan

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## I. Overview

Communities of Opportunity (COO) is a unique collaboration between government, philanthropy, and community working together to **create greater racial, economic and health equity that enables all people in King County to thrive and prosper**. COO does this by tapping into existing community expertise and leadership to advance policies that support community priorities; integrate equity into policies at all levels; and expand representation of cultural communities by stepping into leadership roles.

To evaluate its progress, COO asked its evaluation team<sup>1</sup> to investigate the following overarching question: *to what extent and in what ways have the initiative's cross-cutting strategies strengthened community connections and increased equity (by race, place, and income) in housing, health, and economic conditions?* More specifically, COO seeks to understand how much they are doing, how well they are doing it, and if anybody is better off.

This 2018 COO evaluation is a baseline analysis of existing conditions and early efforts and was conducted from January to December 2018. The evaluation includes responses and input to reporting forms, interviews, and focus groups from 26 policy & systems change partners, three original place-based partners, and five place-based and cultural community partners (one of those five participated through a focus group only). The data reported on in this evaluation represent partner efforts and activities occurring in an 11-month period in 2018, and include data collected from January to November 2018. These data include reporting forms, focus groups, and interviews.

This evaluation provides a foundation for future analysis of COO's impacts over time. Over the course of the year, the evaluation team worked directly with the COO governance group, an evaluation advisory group, community partners, and COO program staff. Throughout this iterative process, the evaluation team identified and developed the evaluation plan and resulting measures used to evaluate the progress and early outcomes of the COO initiative. The evaluation team also shared findings back to the community partners to further affirm the findings and gather additional input on their work in communities.

### Background on Communities of Opportunity

Communities of Opportunity (COO) used data collected by Public Health — Seattle & King County and the King County Department of Community and Human Services to identify areas in the region that have the greatest inequity. In King County, where you live, how much you make, and the color of your skin are significant predictors of your life experience and your chances of living well and thriving. While average measures of quality of life, social, and health factors are among the highest in the country, these averages mask differences by place, race and income.

To address these inequities, in 2014, King County partnered with Seattle Foundation to develop COO, a new public-private partnership to address economic and racial inequities through **place-based work** and **systemic change**.

Today, COO has expanded to a multi-million-dollar initiative that now includes support through Best Starts for Kids, a King County initiative building strength and resilience in kids, families and communities.

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<sup>1</sup> The COO Evaluation Team includes BDS Planning & Urban Design, Urban Design 4 Health, ChangeLab Solutions, HealthxDesign, Jackie St. Louis and Nissana Nov.

## II. Communities of Opportunity Evaluation

To evaluate its progress, COO asked the overarching question *to what extent and in what ways have the initiative’s cross-cutting strategies strengthened community connections and increased equity (by race, place, and income) in housing, health, and economic conditions?* More specifically, COO aims to understand *how much they are doing, how well they are doing it, and if anybody is better off.*

In January 2018, COO partnered with a multi-disciplinary evaluation team to conduct a baseline evaluation. This mixed-methods evaluation established baseline measures as a starting point to track future progress and to inform how COO continues to do its work in service to communities around King County.

In order to answer COO’s primary evaluation question, the evaluation team worked closely with community partners over the past year to refine more detailed evaluation questions, identify relevant measures, and interpret the evaluation findings. The following table shows the five questions that drove the evaluation and the measures that the evaluation team developed. A priority for this evaluation was to have community partners actively participate in shaping the evaluation and its measures so that the findings could be useful to advancing their own objectives. A summary of answers to the evaluation questions is at the end of this document.

Proposed Evaluation Questions		Theory of Change			Result Area				Results Based Accountability		
		Place-Based & Cultural Community	Policy & Systems Change	Learning Community	Health	Housing	Economic Opportunity	Community Connections	How Much Did We Do?	How Well Did We Do It?	Is anyone better off?
1	What is the current state of <b>equity</b> in housing, health, economic opportunity and community connections?	√	√		√	√	√	√	√		√
2	What <b>forces</b> are driving or blocking progress towards partner goals? How do partners respond?	√	√	√	√	√	√	√		√	
3	How are <b>policies and systems</b> changing over time?	√	√	√	√	√	√	√			√
4	How is the <b>partner community</b> changing? <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>Awareness</b> of problems &amp; potential solutions?</li> <li>• <b>Willingness</b> to act on policies and systems?</li> <li>• <b>Capacity</b> to act on policies and systems?</li> </ul>	√	√	√	√	√	√	√		√	
5	What is <b>COO’s contribution</b> ? <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>Whom and how many</b> people COO is reaching?  <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>Capacity</b> of networks &amp; coalitions?</li> </ul> </li> <li>• <b>Impact on equity</b> in the areas of housing, health, economic opportunity, and community connections?</li> </ul>	√	√	√	√	√	√	√	√	√	√

## III. Measures

The evaluation team designed and implemented mixed-methods evaluation for which primary and secondary data analysis was conducted to better understand county-wide conditions and

community-level issues, actions, and perceptions. More specifically, the data were gathered through existing population-level data sources as well as new primary data sources including community partner reporting forms, focus groups, and key informant interviews. *See the Evaluation Methods Section for detailed information on the Methods.* Through an iterative process with COO leadership and partners, the evaluation team identified measures that could demonstrate initiative-wide success and progress in areas that matter most to partners.

There were six criteria for selecting measures:

- 1) Alignment with COO strategies and result areas
- 2) Applicable to multiple COO partners and result areas
- 3) Supported by literature and established evaluations
- 4) Primary or secondary data that exist or can be acquired
- 5) Identified by COO partners as important
- 6) Associations between measures at the partner and population level.

#### **A. Population-level measures**

Through an iterative process with COO leadership and partners, the evaluation team identified population-level indicators that were relevant to the four COO result areas. While partners may not have an immediate or direct impact on these indicators, these were identified as ones that COO partners have a basis for contributing to, in order to foster progress on a population-wide level. The population-level indicators are as follows, *and a summary of population-level indicators is provided in the Population-Level Findings document:*

- Socio-economic indicators
  - Income
  - Educational attainment
  - Linguistic isolation
- Economic opportunity indicators
  - Residents earning less than a living wage
  - Transgender poverty
  - Access to jobs on transit within 30 minutes
  - Household income spent on housing and transportation
  - Low automobile mobility
- Housing indicators
  - Mortgage amount to borrower income
  - Assessed total housing value of single-family dwellings
  - Households receiving housing assistance
  - Renter eviction
  - Homelessness among transgender people
- Health indicators
  - Access to sources of healthy food
  - Fair or poor general health status

- Diabetes prevalence
- Psychological distress among transgender people
- Utilitarian walkability index

### **B. COO and Partner-level measures**

Through an iterative process with COO leadership and partners, the evaluation team identified measures that could demonstrate initiative-wide success and progress in areas that matter to partners. The following partner-level measures were also intended to help COO understand how much it did, how well they did it, and if anyone is better off. *A summary of the responses to these questions is provided in the Partner-Level Findings document.*

- *How much partners are doing (counts are COO-wide)*
  - Number of local residents attending and participating in seminars, trainings, workshops or events
  - Number of people participating in community engagement, service and civic participation, including volunteering, mentoring and community organizing
  - Number of new leadership roles by local residents
  - Number of organizational relationships developed that directly support goal achievement
  - Any other relevant counts emerging from reporting forms
- *How well they are doing it (common successes and challenges are COO-wide)*
  - Primary and secondary barriers to goal achievement
  - Primary and secondary factors supporting goal achievement
  - Effectiveness of coalitions (progress toward their self-identified goals)
  - Number of policies and systems activities in progress
- *Is anyone better off (COO-wide: partners' self-described early outcomes showing how partner communities say they are changing)*
  - Perception that solutions are being developed to overcome barriers to housing, health, economic opportunity, community connections and related policy & systems change objectives
  - Perceptions that primary concerns are being addressed through local government decisions and policy priorities
  - Perceived access to shops, goods and services, recreational amenities, community spaces and affordable health care
  - Resident perception of community stability and cohesion

#### **IV. Population-Level Findings**

Population-level data confirm that COO investments continue to maintain the geographic alignment necessary to address economic, housing, health and racial disparities exist across the King County region, especially in the South Region where a majority of COO place-based partner populations are located. COO communities are home to a higher concentration of communities of color. In these communities, residents experience greater linguistic isolation and have disproportionately lower incomes compared to other parts of King County. Population-level data show that these communities experience multiple disparities, compared to King County, across a number of population health and social indicators. The indicators reported on as part of this evaluation reflect the extent to which COO communities experience disparities in health outcomes, access to jobs via transit, access to sources of healthy food, access to home ownership opportunities, and housing stability.

In addition to housing, health, and economic disparities by location, the data show stark disparities by race and ethnicity compared to white populations in King County. For example, tracts populated predominantly by people of color reported higher rates of fair to poor general health and greater prevalence of diabetes compared to those with a predominantly White population. In the South King County Region, where there is a high concentration of people of color, there is more limited access to healthy food and generally lower walkability (which can impact physical activity levels). This creates a risk of unhealthy lifestyles and a greater risk for chronic diseases. In fact, the South King County Region had a greater percentage of the population reporting fair to poor health and a greater prevalence of diabetes among adults, especially for tracts that were predominantly people of color.

COO investments in communities are supporting partners in their responses to these disparities by mobilizing residents, forming partnerships and coalitions, developing culturally-relevant programming and services, and driving policy and systems change. Details of these efforts are described below in the Partner-Level Findings.

There is much work still to be done in reversing the systemic inequities faced by people of color in the region, but by focusing resources by race and place, COO is helping to change these trends and increase equity in the communities most in need. COO investments in communities are supporting partners in their response to these disparities by mobilizing residents, forming partnerships and coalitions, developing culturally-relevant programming and services, and driving policy and systems change.

## **V. COO and Partner-Level Findings**

The data reported on in this evaluation represent partner efforts and activities occurring in an 11-month period in 2018, and include data collected from January to November 2018. Partner reporting forms included information from January to September 2018; interviews and focus groups went on through November 2018. These data include reporting forms, focus groups, and interviews. According to partner data, for partners funded in 2018, COO-funded initiatives are producing considerable activity, with notable community response, and promising initial outcomes.

### **A. How much did COO and partners do?**

Since its launch in 2014, COO has invested over \$15 million in community partners, including place-based and cultural communities, policy & systems change efforts, a learning community and this evaluation. The data reported on in this evaluation represent partner efforts and activities occurring in an **11-month period from January to November 2018**. In this time period from January to November 2018, it is estimated that COO partners received \$6 million. This amount went to the three original place-based partnerships, six new partnerships place-based and cultural communities, and 26 policy and systems change partners (16 project level and 10 capacity level grants). The six new place-based and cultural community partnerships were beginning their start-up phase.

Partner reports on progress and activities for January to September 2018 indicate that during this period, policy and systems change partners (26 responded) and place-based and cultural community partners (7 responded) engaged nearly **33,000 community members** across more than **200 activities hosted or led by COO-funded partners**, and supported more than **260 community leaders** who have taken on different roles in support of their communities. These leaders took on advocacy, community liaison, workgroup/board, school leadership, youth leadership, mentorship, and elected official roles in their communities.

COO funding increased partners' ability to engage in longer-term efforts to increase equity in the areas of health, housing, economic opportunity, and community connections. Within these four result areas, partners led and participated in a wide range of efforts from **direct services, to educational programming, to advocacy, to directly influencing policy and systems change**. The following are examples of what partners did within each of the four result areas and are intended to be illustrative of the range of efforts that COO partners took on.

### ***What did partners do related to health?***

Among partners working on health, efforts revolved around **expanding access to public health resources and opportunities**. They did this through increasing access to resources and infrastructure via community health workers, implementing food access programs and commercial kitchen space, and transforming vacant land into food and education sites. Partners developed and implemented health-focused programming and education via nutrition education programs,

organizing around food justice and neighborhood public safety. Lastly, they engaged in policy work by sitting on commissions to influence planning and strategy for the statewide healthcare improvement act.

### ***What did partners do related to housing?***

Among partners working on housing, efforts revolved around **supporting equitable development and access to housing**. Partners did this through organizing and advocacy around equitable development and anti-displacement, with efforts including community testimony, coalition building around community priorities, influencing design guidelines, and supporting the development of community-owned facilities. They also implemented programming and advocated for greater access to housing and housing stability, with efforts including direct homeless and housing services, advocating for culturally-responsive practices for the Coordinated Entry system, and making council recommendations to combat housing inequality.

### ***What did partners do related to economic opportunity?***

Among partners working on economic opportunity, **efforts revolved around supporting community-ownership and local economic development**. Partners did this through supporting community ownership and real estate development, for example by securing the land for Othello Square which will provide opportunities for retail, housing, education and business for the community. Partners also focused on education and workforce development, with efforts including empowerment of undocumented graduates, establishing a Community Economic Development Incubator to build connections with employers, train providers, and communities of color, supporting residents through job-readiness programs, and supporting small businesses in building financial capacity. Lastly, partners worked on policy and advocacy, with efforts including coalitions working toward tuition-free college in Seattle and advocating for funding the Working Families Tax Rebate.

### ***What did partners do related to community connections?***

Among partners working on community connections, efforts revolved around **supporting community infrastructure and driving community priorities**. Partners did this through identifying community priorities, often through regular community outreach, listening sessions and focus groups. They also built community infrastructure and increased capacity through facilitated conversations and planning processes and hiring paid community organizers. They also supported relationships among community members and partners, especially within schools and within underrepresented communities to build momentum for creating alliances and pushing policy and systems change.

#### ***B. How well did COO and partners do it?***

Partners noted that **relationship building is the foundation for systems change**, and COO intentionally supports partners by investing in community connections and relationship building. In doing so, COO has supported more than **415 partnerships**, resulting in a vast network of

organizational and community connections. In the partner reporting form, we asked *which organizations the partners are working with*, if those partnerships were new or existing, and about the nature or the partnership.

The following themes emerged, each with successes and challenges: resources and capacity; relationships; coalitions; leadership; policy change; and systems change. These findings give insights into how well these efforts are going, where further work needs to be done, and how COO can guide or support partners in the future.

**THEME: RESOURCES AND CAPACITY (THINGS THAT ENABLE OR HINDER STAFF OR ORGANIZATIONS TO DO THEIR WORK)**

Partners commonly identified **adequate and flexible funding**, the ability to **allocate funding and resources to partner organizations**, and the ability to **hire new staff** as being central to their successes. Partner responses indicate a focus on **individual burn-out** at various organizations and **difficulty of continuing on** with work.

*Success*

- Ability to **hire or increase staff capacity**
  - Partners are able to deepen and broaden work by engaging with more diverse, under-represented groups, training community leaders, providing more services, engaging in long-term organizational planning, and conducting more robust data collection and evaluation efforts
- Ability to **raise additional money** to serve the organization and community

*Challenge*

- Lack of **funding to provide direct services**
- Lack of **funding for long-term organizational investments**
  - Challenges in balancing **immediate needs** of their communities and addressing longer-term needs such as **strategic planning and policy change**

**THEME: RELATIONSHIPS (PARTNERSHIPS THAT WERE NEWLY FORMED OR STRENGTHENED WITH OTHER ORGANIZATIONS AND/OR INDIVIDUALS)**

Partner responses indicate a focus on **power dynamics** and **time it takes to develop authentic relationships**.

*Successes*

- **Relationships have enhanced partners effectiveness and reach** in their work
  - Relationships are an important tactic for policy and systems work. Even a single relationship can help partners address multiple objectives and priorities.
- **Relationships with government staff and officials** have furthered partners' policy activities

- There is an explicit desire for more meaningful support from elected officials and government staff

### Challenges

- **Differences in values and cultures** on individual and institutional levels can be barriers to sustained organizational relationships
  - Differences in resource dynamics between organizations can be an obstacle for partnering, such as differences in availability of **infrastructure, funding, size, and reach of organization**. This can make it difficult to operationalize partnerships, take immediate actions, and pursue long-term planning together.
  - Differences in organizations can also present barriers: **differences in class, privilege or in values and approaches to carrying out the work** (i.e., some organizations may be more hierarchical than others and/or have different processes or procedures for working, and compromising for different values would harm the work)
- **Time required to build relationships** can constrain partner capacity
  - Partners do not always have adequate funding or staff capacity to dedicate toward building and sustaining relationships

### **THEME: COALITION BUILDING (LOOKS AT PARTNERS' LEVEL OF INVOLVEMENT IN COALITIONS AND HOW PARTICIPATION HELPS TO ADVANCE THEIR GOALS)**

**Coalition building** is a common tactic used by partners serving youth and specific cultural groups. Youth and cultural communities are historically marginalized groups. They have had to build coalitions and work in collaboration to create change. For these groups, coalition building is essential to their survival and success.

Partner responses indicate a common focus on **competition among organizations** and **funding constraints** that make it hard for groups to work together and **pit groups against each other**. However, partners commonly spoke of the value of **coalition building and co-creating work and agendas with communities**.

### Successes

- **Co-creating** work and agendas in collaboration with community members and stakeholders
- Strategizing **insider and outsider approaches** through coalitions
  - Insider approaches are direct forms of engagement, such as **relationship building and one-on-one meetings** or conversations. Outsider approaches are more indirect, such as influencing decision-makers through **public education, media, or protests**
- **Enhancing capacity** by partnering with state or national coalitions that are mission- and

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values-aligned

- Building coalitions in **conjunction with faith-based organizations**.
  - Communities of color, immigrant, and refugee communities often **gather around and have leadership from faith-based organizations**. Communities where faith-based organizations are thriving and working in collaboration with other organizations have had success in mobilizing communities for action.
- Engaging communities in **grassroots advocacy**
- Securing **meetings with elected officials** and providing **public testimony**

### Challenges

- Tension regarding **voice, decision-making, and power differentials** among organizations
- **Limited capacity** (especially among smaller partner organizations) to participate in coalitions and **be proactive while other immediate work is calling**
- **Intervening too late**, when decisions have already been made
- Managing **divergent resources and operating styles** among different groups within coalitions

### THEME: LEADERSHIP (HOW PARTNERS SUPPORT RESIDENTS IN PURSUING LEADERSHIP ROLES IN THEIR COMMUNITIES)

Partner responses indicate a focus on **community leaders stepping up** and **being active in making change**. Leadership development from within communities is important and powerful. Communities recognize the importance of cultivating leaders with shared cultural and situational experiences. Communities want and seek leaders that come from their own communities, understand the plight of their members, and have established relationships with stakeholders.

### Successes:

- Many of the members of coalitions are **from the communities that they represent**.
- **Leadership in many roles**: youth leadership, workgroups and boards, mentorship, school leadership, advocacy, organizing, community liaison

### Challenges:

- Leadership **turnover and burn-out**
  - Partner organizations are **under-staffed or under-resourced** (for example, only having a part-time community organizer) and sometimes rely on community leaders and volunteers to sustain the work
- Community members are often **stretched too thin** for leadership roles.
  - Community members and partners are sometimes asked to serve multiple committees or leadership roles in **addition to their other professional or personal commitments**, and without being compensated

**THEME: POLICY CHANGE (PROGRESS MADE ON MOVING ISSUES ALONG THE STAGES OF POLICY DEVELOPMENT TO ADOPTION AND IMPLEMENTATION)**

Partner responses indicate a common focus on **power building practices in communities** and the **effort required** for policy and systems change.

*Successes*

- **Long-term relationships** with inside advocates, allies within government, and elected officials
- **Creating more seats at the decision-making table**, participation on task forces, and opportunities for input

*Challenges*

- **Compromises required** by the political process resulting in policies that communities do not want or need
  - Partners described having to **scale back or make compromises on their proposed policies in order to reach consensus** in getting them adopted. Each legislative session they work to make **incremental progress** on new policies or revisit old policies that did not pass or need amendments.
- **Limited funding and timeframes** for policies, budget commitments
- Challenging **budgetary processes**
- Governments **not prioritizing community agendas**

**THEME: SYSTEMS CHANGE (PROGRESS MADE ON CHANGING ORGANIZATIONAL AND INSTITUTIONAL STRUCTURES AND PROCESSES)**

Partner responses indicate a common focus on developing **structures within organizations** (internal) and **organizational relationships** (external).

*Success*

- Forming coalitions to **strengthen impact and data sharing**
  - Partners were able to gain a **deeper understanding of community** needs, successes, and lift up community voices through storytelling, surveys, listening sessions, focus groups, and community forums
- Pursuing **internal strategic planning** for long-term systems change, helping them to be more proactive than reactive in their work

*Challenge*

- **Limited staff capacity** to participate in high volume of coalitions, committees, and groups
- **Funding for partnerships** frequently does not exist, but is critical for systems change

### ***C. Is anybody better off?***

This 2018 COO evaluation is a baseline analysis of existing conditions and early efforts. It looks at both partner-level and population-level data to provide a foundation for future analysis of COO's impacts over time. At baseline, it is **too early to know if population-level changes are being made**. In the early-stage evaluation, however, several themes emerged about partners' internal and external successes as described below. There is also considerable activity and community mobilizing happening around the four result areas, which is subsequently described.

#### *Internal Successes*

- **Leveraged data for action**  
Partners have greater capacity to collect and share data, allowing for more nuanced and effective storytelling that can drive institutional change.
- **Increased staff capacity**  
Partners have been able to sustain or hire new staff, enabling organizations to deepen or diversify their efforts.

#### *External Successes*

- **Developed new leaders**  
Partners have supported community members in pursuing leadership positions in their communities, increasing representation in decision-making processes.
- **Diversified engagement**  
Partners have engaged with more diverse and under-represented communities and key-decision makers, building power to influence change.

Among the four result areas, there are **early indications of partner activity and progress** being made toward being better off. There are **persistent barriers and challenges that communities face** in achieving systemic change and equity. **It is too soon to draw conclusions on long-term impact of partner-level efforts.**

**Health:** There is considerable partner activity and community leadership development for the purpose of creating and increasing access to local health-related resources, and implementing health and nutrition programming and education. There is policy activity and movement toward more equitable statewide health policies. Persistent barriers to health and equity include differences in language and culture, limited access to transportation, and navigation of healthcare systems.

**Housing:** There is considerable partner activity, increased mobilization and collaboration between communities and elected officials around equitable development and preventing further displacement. There is movement toward community-owned facilities including affordable housing and business/office space for communities. Persistent threats to housing and neighborhood

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stability include displacement and evictions, leading to more geographic dispersion of cultural communities.

**Economic Opportunity:** There is considerable partner activity and community participation in education and workforce development for the purpose of job-readiness, broadening career options, and increasing small business opportunities. There is movement on community-owned real estate development which is integral to local economic opportunity. Limited community and organizational capacity, institutional racism, and societal oppression remain barriers to developing strategies for economic opportunity.

**Community Connections:** There is remarkable movement in developing new and strengthening existing relationships within and across communities and with elected officials and government staff. With these relationships, community priorities are being identified, information and resources are being shared, community infrastructure and capacity are increasing, and more community members are being mobilized to advocate to elected officials and decision-makers. Persistent barriers to community connections include lack of funding and investment in relationship building, which is essential for affecting policy and systems change.

## **VI. Conclusion**

This 2018 baseline evaluation is primarily to provide a foundation for future analysis of COO's impacts over time. There is much work still to be done in reversing the systemic inequities faced by people of color in the region. By focusing resources by race and place, COO is helping to change these trends and increase equity in the communities disproportionately burdened by the systemic inequities.

COO funding is increasing partners' ability to engage in longer-term planning and efforts to increase equity in the four areas of health, housing, economic opportunity, and community connections. Partners built working relationships across their communities and with elected officials and government staff to respond to the inequities they face in their communities.

During the 11-month 2018 evaluation period, COO invested about \$6 million toward community partners, including newly funded organizations that are just in their start-up phase. In 2018, COO supported the engagement of 33,000 community members across more than 200 events and activities led by community partners. Additionally, COO supported partners in pursuing a wide range of efforts to increase equity across the four result areas, including providing direct services, to educational programming, to advocacy, to directly influencing policy change.

Partners reported that relationship building is the foundation of systems change, and that COO is making a major impact by intentionally investing in community connections and relationship building. COO funding supported more than 415 partnerships, strengthening a vast network of organizational and community connections. Partners are experiencing common successes and challenges related to resources and capacity; relationships; coalitions; leadership; policy change; and systems change.

At baseline, it is too early to know if population-level changes are being made or to draw conclusions on long-term impact of partner-level efforts. In the early-stage evaluation, however, several themes emerged about partners' internal and external successes. Internal successes included leveraging data for action and increasing staff capacity. External successes include developing new leaders and diversified engagement of communities. As demonstrated through partner reporting forms, interviews, and focus groups, COO-funded initiatives are producing considerable activity, with notable community response, and promising initial outcomes that should be followed as the initiative continues.

The 2018 COO Evaluation identified several cross-cutting successes from COO's investments, as well as specific findings related to Results Based Accountability factors and specific evaluation questions.

The following answers to the Results-Based Accountability questions are from the 2018 Evaluation and include data collected from January 2018 to November 2018 through reporting forms, interviews, and focus groups. Responses came from most partners with currently active COO grants, including place-based and cultural community partners, and policy & systems change partners.

## **Results Based Accountability Questions:**

### **How much did we do?**

In January – September 2018, COO invested approximately **\$6 million** in place-based, cultural community, and policy & systems change partners. These partners reached **32,880 community members** through **213 capacity-building and/or community events**. COO partners also supported **264 individuals in leadership roles** throughout their communities. Through deliberate relationship building, partners built collective power, broadened their reach, shared resources, and pushed policy and systems change. COO partners identified **417 partnerships** that support their goals, including 221 from place-based and cultural community partners and 196 from policy & systems change partners.

The majority of policy and systems change efforts in the evaluation period were focused around developing relationships with new and unlikely partners, as well as strengthening organizational relationships. Additionally, within the four result areas (health, housing, economic opportunity, and community connections), partners engaged in a wide range of efforts from direct services, to educational programming, to advocacy, and to directly influencing policy and systems change.

### **How well did we do it?**

The most common *factors supporting partner success* were: **relationships** with other organizations and community members; having **adequate and flexible funding**; and the **skills of current staff and additional staff members** (hired with COO funding). Other drivers of success included transparency and trust with partners; obtaining support from community leaders, lifting up community priorities; and being faithful to organizational values.

The most common *factors hindering success* were the **inability to hire or retain staff** and **limited capacity to build relationships**. Other barriers included empowering community members for policy change; funding; negative public perceptions of homelessness; institutional racism; and the complex processes involved with this work.

### **Is anybody better off?**

COO-funded initiatives are producing considerable activity, including **community leadership, mobilization and collaboration** with elected officials, **workforce development**, and improving

**access to resources** and community infrastructure. There are *promising initial outcomes* and successes including **relationship building**, **resource sharing**, work toward **local and statewide policies**, development of **community-owned facilities**, and **community advocacy**, all of which should be tracked as the initiative continues. *Persistent barriers* to this work remain and include **limited access to resources** due to differences in language, culture, and transportation; **threats of displacement** and evictions; **limited organizational capacity**; **limited investment in relationship-building**; and **institutional racism**. At baseline, it is too early to know if population-level changes are being made or to draw conclusions on long-term impacts of partner-level efforts.

### **Specific Evaluation Questions:**

#### **What is the current state of equity in housing, health, economic opportunity and community connections?**

Population-level data show that COO is based on the knowledge that economic, housing, health and racial **disparities exist across the King County region**, especially in the South Region where a majority of COO place-based partner populations are located. COO communities are home to a higher concentration of communities of color. In COO communities, residents experience greater **linguistic isolation** and have disproportionately **lower incomes** compared to other parts of King County. Population-level data show that COO communities experience **multiple disparities**, compared to King County, across a number of population health and social indicators. The indicators measured as part of this evaluation show that COO communities experience disparities in **health outcomes**, access to **jobs via transit**, access to sources of **healthy food**, access to **home ownership** opportunities, and **housing stability**.

COO investments in communities are supporting partners in their responses to these disparities by mobilizing residents, forming partnerships and coalitions, developing culturally-relevant programming and services, and driving policy and systems change.

#### **What forces are driving or blocking progress toward partner goals? How do partners respond?**

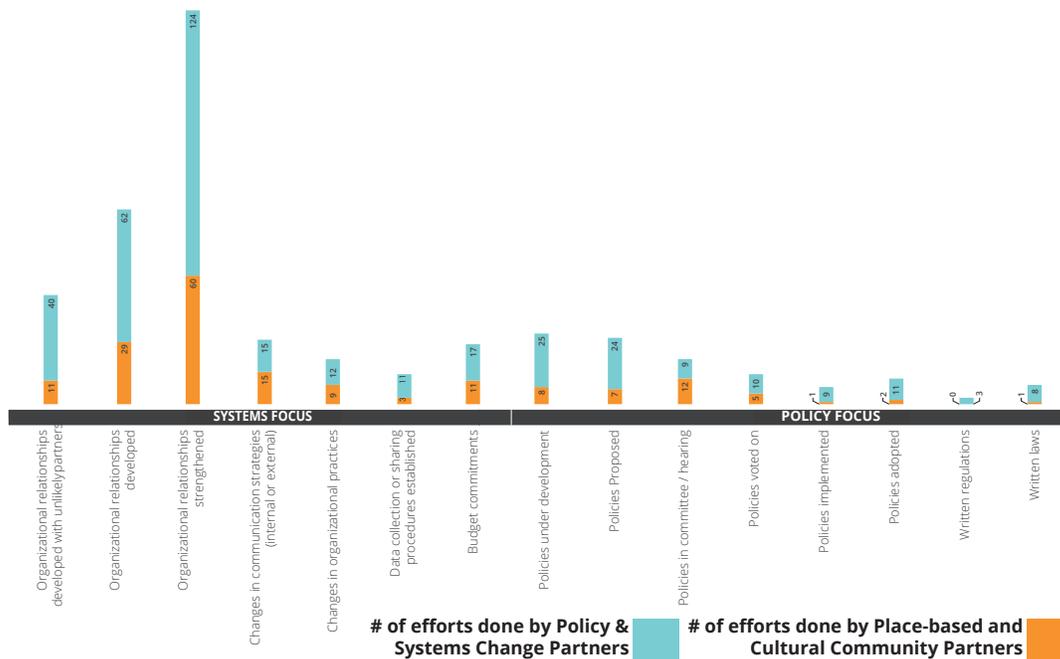
The most common factors *supporting success* were: **relationships** with other organizations and community members; having **adequate and flexible funding**; and the **skills of current and new staff**. Other drivers of success included transparency and trust with partners; obtaining support from community leaders, lifting up community voices; and being faithful to their own organizational values.

The most common factors *hindering success* were the ability to **hire or retain staff** and building **relationships**. Other barriers included empowering community members for policy change; funding; negative public perceptions of homelessness; institutional racism; and the complex process involved with doing their work.

## How are policies and systems changing over time?

Partners are taking on *policy and systems change efforts* ranging from developing and strengthening **partnerships**, to securing **budget commitments**, to **adopting policies** and **writing laws**. As shown in the image below, the majority of partner activity in 2018 was focused on systems change, in particular in the area of developing relationships with new and unlikely partners and strengthening organizational relationships. Partners indicated that the relationships were foundational to subsequent policy and systems change, so it is understandable that the majority of the efforts in the baseline year were related to relationship building. Partners should be tracked in subsequent years to explore other developments along the policy and systems change spectrum.

### POLICY & SYSTEMS CHANGE EFFORTS



## How is the partner community changing? (awareness of problems & potential solutions; willingness to act on policies & systems; capacity to act on policies and systems)

A large part of partners' work in community connections was in **identifying, communicating, and acting on community priorities** both within communities and with decision-makers. Through **organizational partnerships and coalitions**, partners were able to coordinate around priorities; implement local priorities in alignment with county strategies, mobilize constituents quickly; and cultivate allies for future endeavors beyond current priorities. Partners most commonly talked

about how grassroots advocacy was an effective strategy for getting local government to respond to their primary concerns.

### **What is COO's contribution?**

*Whom and how many is COO reaching?*

COO is reaching diverse and often under-represented geographic and cultural communities. These communities are generally located in the South King County region. The cultural communities include **people of color, Native Americans, immigrants and refugees, LGBTQ+ individuals, people of low income, people with disabilities, youth and young adults**, as well as government staff and elected officials. In 2018, partners reached **32,880 community members** through **213 capacity building events** (i.e. courses, workshops, trainings, and seminars) and community events (i.e. volunteering, community organizing, celebrations, and mentoring). Partners also supported **264 residents in leadership positions**.

*Capacity of networks and coalitions?*

Through deliberate relationship building, partners built collective power, broadened their reach, shared resources, and pushed for policy and systems change. COO partners identified **416 organizational partnerships** that support achieving their goals. Coalitions enabled partners to coordinate around priorities; implement local priorities in alignment with county strategies; mobilize constituents quickly; and cultivate allies for future endeavors.

*Impact on equity in the areas of housing, health, economic opportunity, and community connections?*

At baseline, it is too early to know if population-level changes are being made or to draw conclusions on long-term impacts of partner-level efforts. We do know that there is considerable partner activity and community response among the four result areas:

- **Health:** There is considerable partner activity and leadership development for increasing *access to local health-related resources* and implementing *health and nutrition programming* and education. There is policy activity and movement toward more equitable *statewide health policies*. Persistent barriers to health equity include differences in language and culture, limited access to transportation, and navigation of healthcare systems.
- **Economic opportunity:** There is considerable *partner activity* and community participation in education and workforce development toward *job-readiness*, which broadens career options, and increases small business opportunities. There is movement on *community-owned real estate* development which is integral to local economic opportunity. *Persistent barriers* to developing strategies for economic opportunity include *limited community and organizational capacity, institutional racism, and societal oppression*.
- **Housing:** There is considerable *partner activity*, increased mobilization and collaboration between communities and elected officials around *equitable development* and *preventing further displacement*. There is movement toward *community-owned facilities* including affordable housing and business/office space for communities. *Persistent threats* to housing

and neighborhood stability include *displacement and evictions*, leading to more *geographic dispersion* of cultural communities.

- **Community connections:** There is *remarkable movement in developing new and strengthening existing relationships* within and across communities and with elected officials and government staff. With these relationships, community priorities are being identified, information and resources are being shared, community infrastructure and capacity are increasing, and more community members are being mobilized to advocate to elected officials and decision-makers. *Persistent barriers* to community connections include *lack of funding* and investment in relationship building, which is essential for affecting policy and systems change.