



AGENDA

**GOVERNANCE GROUP
WORKGROUP SESSION**

March 19, 2021 2:00 – 4:00 p.m.

Zoom: [Click here](#) or use this meeting info: ID 941 7014 6115 and passcode 857611

<u>Time</u>	<u>Agenda Item</u>	<u>Facilitator</u>
2:00	Welcome	<i>Michael Brown</i>
2:03 – 2:15	Equity Moment	
2:15 – 2:20	Best Starts for Kids – Renewal Update	<i>Sheila Capestany</i>
2:20 – 2:50	Follow-up on 3/12 Work Group Questions Program Update: Community Partnerships	<i>Andrea Akita, Blishda Lacet,</i>
2:50 – 3:35	Program Modifications for Levy 2.0 <i>Objectives: Discuss and direct proposed modifications for investment strategies.</i>	<i>Aaron Robertson</i>
3:35– 3:55	COO Strategies & Funding <i>Objectives: Review investment strategy areas and identify questions from Governance Group in preparation for March 19th discussion.</i>	<i>Andrea</i>
11:00	Adjourn	

Governance Group Members

*Lydia Assefa-Dawson
Michael Brown
Vazaskia Crockrell
Deanna Dawson*

*Ubax Gardheere
Matelita Jackson
Paola Maranan
Jenn Ramirez Robson
Yordanos Teferi*

*Marguerite Ro
Sili Savusa
Tony To
AJ McClure*

COMMUNITIES OF OPPORTUNITY GOVERNANCE FOUNDING

RESULTS STATEMENT

Create greater health, social, economic and racial equity in King County so that all people thrive and prosper, regardless of race or place.

GUIDING PRINCIPLES

- Consistently demonstrate the values of equity, respect and partnership.
- Ensure low-income communities and communities of color affected by inequities develop and own the solutions.
- Advocate for and change institutional policies and processes to support equity goals.
- Encourage investments (both funding and in-kind resources) in long-term community capacity building and in systems, policy and practice changes that lead to greater racial and economic equity throughout King County.
- Catalyze alignment of funding streams and partner across issues and sectors to seek preventive strategies that address root causes of today's inequities.
- Be transparent and show how data and community expertise inform initiative strategies.
- Continuously learn, improve and share work publicly.
- Focus on geographic communities with the greatest needs, while simultaneously sharing lessons learned and building relationships across King County – *We are one King County.*

VALUES

We commit to guide Communities of Opportunity using these values:

Equity: work intentionally to eliminate racial, ethnic, socio-economic and geographic disparities in health and well-being

Process Equity: an inclusive, fair and open process

Community Engagement: authentic community engagement that involves listening to and understanding the unique histories of communities

Driven by quantitative and qualitative data: Data will track and report progress, as well as support given for promising and evidence-based practices

Innovation: Recognize that change involves risk and value an adaptive approach that views failure as an important part of the learning process

Governance Group

March 12, 2021

via Zoom

Governance Group Attendees: Michael Brown, Vazaskia Crockrell, Paola Maranan, AJ McClure, Marguerite Ro, Sili Savusa, Yordanos Teferi

Staff: Andrea Akita, Cristina Gonzalez, Whitney Johnson, Blishda Lacet, Jose Camacho Martinez, Aaron Robertson **Guest:** Kris Hermanns

Facilitator: Alessandra Zielinski **Notetaker:** Valerie Garza

Grounding & Equity Moment: In lieu of reading the COO Guiding Principles, members shared what they were grateful for.

Recap: Andrea went over the materials included in the meeting packet along with the timeline for upcoming activities related to Governance Group feedback on the BSK Implementation Plan. There will be opportunity at each point to get more focused and refined on recommendations.

Principles for COO 2.0 - Breakout Session Discussion & Report Out:

GG members reviewed a set of principles in small groups and shared a summary from their small group discussion (link above).

Group 1: The group started off by asking participants to be explicit about white supremacy and white supremacy in the work. Transformation has to be built on undoing and dismantling white supremacy. Keeping in mind that white supremacy protects itself.

- Explore having a principle on community and pushing it out to community
- Be explicit about power and not romantic
- What decisions can be made by community and how to ensure community ownership of solutions
- Expand cross-sector work and engagement of community
- Examine existing power balances (for example private sector versus community)

Lots of discussion around direct services funding and adding nuance in the statement; having an ability to support groups doing direct service to integrate policy and systems lens in ways that builds upon the work of BIPOC organizations and community organizing.

Group 2: The group engaged in a rich dialog and focused on the initial principal. There was a lot of energy around how we need to bring more explicit energy than active energy around the dismantling barriers, and how it looked in practice and learning towards what happened. Variety of audiences within COO, whether that's COO staff, Governance Group, and Seattle Foundation, what are the shared approaches and how do we think through the power dynamics? There are spaces where folks don't know what they don't know, so how do we bring in people and institutions? There were questions around direct service, collaborative thinking, and how do we think about COO not just in a vacuum. What are additional resources, how can they be coordinated and aligned in ways to cover any gaps? How do we move into longer-term approaches? What do we want to accomplish in a few years?

COO Strategies & Funding Discussion:

Andrea reviewed the investment strategy areas in preparation for the workgroup discussion on March 19th. GG members identified questions and curiosities, as request to staff for background information and updates.

- Update on Place-based Cultural Communities for Governance Group

- Overall percentages and distribution of COO funding, including BSK and Seattle Foundation, combined.
- What additional support is needed across that decision-making process?
- What is the reach in terms of communities? Has there been analysis done around gaps staff or community partners are seeing? Where additional funding could be used and where they would want to see it go?
- Suggestion: increase messaging around targeted universalism versus acknowledging all are benefiting within King County through the Learning Community whose work/work products and learnings are open to all.
- The three original Place-based Cultural Communities were made in communities at the lowest 20% of the index -- communities the furthest away from health and wellbeing. Systems and Policy Change work and elevating those learnings – what are the modifications and how does that look? Are those the potential modifications and how do we describe them in the Implementation Plan and RFPs?
- What are we learning from the cohort of Black-led organizations and what would we like to incorporate in the next round?
- Challenge COO to open it up for deeper level engagement with a larger group of partners. Be more transparent and get buy-in sooner rather than later so that the larger and more impactful modifications are not surprises, particularly for long-term partners.

Next Steps:

- Governance Group members will have an opportunity to view and discuss recommendations and provide their responses. Any additional comments on the Theoretical Framework can be sent to Andrea via email. She's also available for phone calls if you want to further discuss. Governance Group will have an opportunity to include any changes the Governance Group would like to propose on what the right composition and membership is for Governance Group in the CYAB report.
- Importance of acknowledging working through conflict. The Governance Group has looked at the policy of engaging in conflict resolution. COO documents and Governance Group have the same language and how we transform conflict. There will be opportunities to chat and be on the same page when we talk about conflict.

Announcements:

- The BLO's grants launched in January. Aaron and Blishda are currently working on engaging and supporting them.
- The Governance Group Retreat is scheduled for Friday, May 7 from 9 am – 2 pm.
- Training: Vision Win Change will introduce COO leadership, staff and consultants to the transformative justice and restorative justice principles. The training will consist of 2 (3-hour) sessions. GG members voted for Monday, May 24th and Wednesday, May 26 as possible training dates.

Implementation Plan, Best Starts 2.0

Place-Based and Cultural Community Partnerships

Recommendations and Program Modifications

1. Direct COO investment to communities where there are the greatest inequities.
 - Prioritize efforts in communities with the lowest 20th percentile of composite index (health and well-being indicators).

Rationale: Opportunity to focus and increase power and capacity of stakeholders achieve better results for their communities. It will take longer for these communities to recovery in a changing environment against powerful systemic forces.

2. Open funding cycle for existing and new partnerships. Create a process to select partnerships, with a priority with specific criteria for funding of current grantees (i.e. achieving momentum, adapting to changing environment).
 - Emphasize environmental change and systems across partnership funding.
 - During the development of the open cycle, extend funding to current grantees for an additional year /first year of the levy.
 - Select partnerships to receive long-term commitment through end of the proposed levy (five years).
 - Provide partnerships the opportunity to limit the number of result areas on which to focus.
 - Consider opportunities for greater alignment with systems & policy change strategy.

Rationale: Provides an opportunity to be responsive to changing environment and organizations. Allows for intention in planning and alignment systems & policy change funding direction. Focus on limited number of result areas increases potential for greater impact over the next levy time frame.

3. Provide funding for partnerships and collaboration, separate from funding for projects.
 - Implement new model(s) for partnership structure, based on results and feedback from the Community of Practice, that supports trust and accountability.
 - Create space and support development of partnerships, collaboration that positively impact conditions in communities.

Rationale: Community partners have asked for more clarity on expectations of COO partnership structure and roles, as well as tools and opportunities for peer to peer learning.

Strategy/Investment Area Description/Overview

COO focuses on geographic and cultural communities in King County that are disproportionately affected by inequities in health and wellbeing outcomes. COO invests in community partnership strategies working to close the gaps in equity outcomes among different places and cultural groups in the County, so that County residents, regardless of where they live, can thrive.

Program characteristics:

- Data determines eligibility for funding, based on COO Health & Wellbeing composite index.
- Partnerships are made up of trusted leaders/organizations that are representative of the specific geographic area, isolated rural communities, and/or cultural community.
- Partnerships identify an organization within their collaborative that serves as the “backbone” or lead organization.
- Partnership is required for funding
- Structure of the partnership includes a ‘backbone’ or ‘lead’ organization. Backbone funding was provided to partnerships as flexible resources to foster cross-sector communication, alignment, and collaboration among partners. The funding also enabled partnership to develop shared goals, mobilize core constituencies, coordinate on mutually reinforcing activities, and align strategies to achieve outcomes.
- Partnerships are expected to focus on all four result areas (Original Places) or three or more result areas (additional Place-Based and Cultural Community Partnerships)
- Multi-year commitment for funding, with potential renewal of funding based on criteria.
- Approach of each community....

There are nine place-based and cultural community partnerships (described briefly on pages ##) that have received funding from COO under this strategy that contribute to better health, safe and affordable housing, economic opportunity, and stronger community connections among its community members

COO CP Investment Sub-Strategy: Original COO Place Based Sites

The three original COO place-based partnership sites were selected through a competitive process in March 2015 and identified in the COO/Best Starts for Kids Implementation Plan. Each geographic community has health and well-being outcome indicators within the lowest 20th percentile of King County, based on COO Composite Index. Sites developed a shared COO Results Based Accountability (RBA) framework and strategy areas for action through a series of co-design meetings with community partners, community members and COO Interim Governance Group members. The three sites have received additional resources through two contract amendments/implementation phases with contracts in place through the end of 2021.

- “Original” Place-Based Partnerships: Rainier Valley, SeaTac-Tukwila, and White Center

COO CP Investment Sub-Strategy: “New” Place-Based and Cultural Communities

COO Place-Based and Cultural Communities Partnerships’ work focuses on solutions driven by geographic/place-based communities and by cultural communities where there are the greatest health and well-being inequities. Each community’s COO index of health and wellbeing indicators scores are in the lowest 40th percentile. In 2018, COO selected three additional place-based partnerships and three cultural community partnerships with initial two-year contracts, that were extended through the end of 2021.

- Seattle Central Area, Kent Community Development Collaborative, and Snoqualmie Valley Supportive Community for All; Comunidad Latina de Vashon, Seattle Urban Native Nonprofits, and the Transgender Economic Empowerment Coalition.

Funding Commitments Date through December 2021¹

	Best Starts – King County	Seattle Foundation	Total
Original Place-Based Site Partnerships ²	\$10,910,616	\$2,253,893	\$13,164,509
Additional Place-Based Partnerships ³	\$3,515,000		\$3,515,000
Additional Cultural Community Partnerships ³	\$3,132,029		\$3,132,029
Total	\$17,557,645	\$2,253,893	\$19,811,538

Summary of Partnership Awards

Original Place Based Partnership Awards: 2015 to 2021	Total Award
<p>Rainier Valley Partnership (HomeSight, HOSTED, Multicultural Community Coalition, On Board Othello, Rainier Beach Action Coalition, South Communities Organizing for Racial/Regional Equity, Puget Sound Sage, The Beet Box)</p> <p><i>The Rainier Valley Partnership includes more than 70 groups working collaboratively in four coalitions. Partners have set priorities to increase access to healthy and locally grown food; reduce crime rates in Rainier Beach; develop a community vision and plans for equitable transit-oriented development; address environmental causes of violent crime; increase access to nutrition and support integration of cultural, education, employment, health, well-being programs and projects.</i></p>	\$ 5,412,539
<p>SeaTac -Tukwila Community Coalition (Global to Local, Congolese Integration Network, Food Innovation Network, Partner in Employment, Somali Health Board, Somali Youth & Family Club)</p> <p><i>SeaTac-Tukwila Community Coalition is focused on empowering communities and developing local leaders around health, housing and economic opportunity and extend more opportunities for community leaders to engage in issues of education, cultural leadership, policy, and systems change and community building. Their work focuses on health and affordable food access, supporting emerging food businesses, workforce development training and support areas, further development of a cultural food hall in the Tukwila Village and the placement of immigrant and refugees in sustainable, living wage jobs.</i></p>	\$ 3,796,068
<p>White Center Partnership (White Center Community Development Association, FEEST, Southwest Youth & Family Services, Trusted Advocates, Village of Hope, Yes! Foundation of White Center, YWCA)</p>	\$ 3,955,902

¹ Funding commitments represent projected funding commitments through December 2021. The figures do not represent expenditures. Seattle Foundation funding began in YEAR. Best Starts funding began in 2017.

² Best Starts Implementation Plan created three categories for funding: Investments in original place-based sites (SeaTac/Tukwila, White Center, Rainier Valley)

³ The Implementation Plan provided for investments to be expanded in additional place-based communities and in cultural community partnerships.

<p><i>The White Center Partnership’s vision for success centers on creating a strong and vibrant community led by voices of residents and families. The goals for White Center include access to healthy food for all residents and community; leadership development of community including youth, ultimately obtaining leadership and decision making roles in systems and institutions; increased capacity for culturally relevant systems reform to better meet the needs of communities of color; strengthening community mobilizing and/or organizing for systems change in housing, health, economic development and community building; and addressing institutionalized racism and removing barriers to allow access to services and supports that communities need by working directly to influence policy change at these respective levels. Partners are working on the development of affordable housing and a community HUB, engaging community in a Healthy Food Roundtable, and addressing employment needs of residents.</i></p>	
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Community Partnerships: Place Based Cultural Communities: 2018 – 2021	Total Award
<p>Kent Community Development Collaborative (Community Network Council, Coalition for Refugees from Burma, Mother Africa, Communities in Schools, Center, Somali Youth and Family Club, Being Empowered Through Supportive Transitions, Centro Rendu/St. Vincent DePaul)</p> <p><i>The Kent Community Development Collaborative (KCDC) focus is improving the overall health and wellbeing of Kent residents most impacted by inequities by increasing their access to culturally responsive healthcare services, increasing economic opportunity for small businesses, and strengthening tenants’ ability to advocate for safe affordable housing. The project also intends to foster civic engagement to build the capacity of residents through a community policy council to advocate for changes they wish to see.</i></p>	<p>\$ 1,155,000</p>
<p>Supportive Community for All (Hopelink, Snoqualmie Valley Community Network, Mt. Si Senior Center, Snoqualmie Valley Food Bank, Encompass)</p> <p><i>A Supportive Community for All will continue its work to strengthen community connections through its inclusive coalition of service providers and key community stakeholders to coordinate human services across the Snoqualmie Valley. Through adaptive leadership facilitation and project management, the SCFA Workgroup and Partner Team are designing a multifaceted Community Services Navigator Program that will create a network of contact points throughout the Snoqualmie Valley. This network will enable community members to more easily access human services. Key components will include hiring a Project Director, use of Julota—an online community interoperability platform, training of King County librarians and school counselors to complete intakes and referrals, improved communications to increase awareness and reduce stigma, and creation of a Multi-Service Center Feasibility Task Force.</i></p>	<p>\$ 1,200,000</p>

<p>Transgender Economic Empowerment Coalition (Ingersoll Gender Center, Greater Seattle Business Administration, UTOPIA Seattle, POCAAN, Gay City, Seattle Counseling Services, Transform Washington, Pride Foundation, Gender Odyssey, Business Impact NW, Ventures NW)</p> <p><i>The Transgender Economic Empowerment Coalition TEEC will focus on implementing their model employment policy with local governments, businesses and organizations. Additionally, TEEC will build a LGBTQ youth advisory group to ensure their policies and programs address the challenges youth are facing. Finally, TEEC will advocate for policies and build programs that both support T/GD people returning from prison to address a lack housing stability in their communities.</i></p>	<p>\$ 1,210,000</p>
<p>Organizamos: Comunidad Latina de Vashon (Latino Community Fund, King County Economic Development, Puentes, Geeking Out Kids of Color)</p> <p><i>Organizamos: Comunidad Latina de Vashon Comunidad Latina de Vashon (fiscally sponsored by the Latino Community Fund) will continue to build partnership capacity and engage the Latinx community of Vashon Island to implement projects that contribute to better health, economic opportunity, and stronger community connections among the Latinx community of Vashon Island.</i></p>	<p>\$ 712,029</p>
<p>Seattle Urban Native Nonprofits (Chief Seattle Club, Duwamish Tribal Services, Longhouse Media, Na’ah Illahee Fund, National Urban Indian Family Coalition, Native Action Network, Native American Women’s Dialogue on Infant Mortality, Northwest Justice Project, Potlatch Fund, Red Eagle Soaring, United Indians of All Tribes Foundation, Urban Native Education Alliance)</p> <p><i>The Potlatch Fund, as the backbone organization, will continue to facilitate the collaborative building process of the Seattle Urban Native Nonprofits (SUNN) Collaborative, which will impact the COO result areas by building the capacity of the partnership through leadership development, training, advocacy, and collective strategic planning. The SUNN will continue to host its monthly meetings to implement their three year strategic plan and will work to inform decision makers on the issues that disproportionately impact Native Communities in King County, and advocate to promote the representation of SUNN members to address policies that impact Native Communities.</i></p>	<p>\$ 1,210,000</p>
<p>Replanting Roots, Rebuilding Community (Umoja PEACE Center, Village Spirit Center/Black Community Impact Alliance, Africatown Center for Education & Innovation, Africatown Central District Preservation & Development Association, Cultural Reconnections, Institute for African Centered Thought)</p> <p><i>The Replanting Roots, Rebuilding Community partnership leverages affordable rental housing development and commercial revitalization efforts to facilitate economic opportunity and fortification of cultural institutions. These cultural hubs are mediums to preserve and restore community connections that contribute to a sense of place and belonging for the Black community rooted in Seattle’s Central District.</i></p>	<p>\$ 1,160,000</p>

Implementation Plan, Best Starts 2.0 Institutional, Systems, and Policy Change

Recommendations and Program Modifications

1. Create multi-year funding to increase grantees' ability to influence systems/policy beyond a single-issue, project or campaign.
 - Consider momentum underway as a starting point for continuing and expanding efforts, prioritizing current grantees (but not automatically renewing funding).
 - Make commitments to support policy leadership within certain communities, lifting up voice and influence, over achievement of specific policy action.
 - Consider how to increase number of grantees working in mutually reinforcing ways.

Rationale: Feedback from stakeholders on need for multi-year commitment; nature of policy/systems change work – it takes a long time. Opportunity to align approach with values.

2. Increase alignment across COO strategies and funding cycles
 - Avoiding running programs on different, separate tracks, with different timelines, with different sets of expectations and outcomes.

Rationale: Feedback from stakeholders, seeking more consistency across programs funded by Best Starts. Potential for greater focus on impact.

3. Create spaces for community stakeholders/grantees to build voice and power.
 - a. Through peer to peer learning
 - b. Relationship building, relational work.
 - c. Sow seeds for collaboration early, building connections and networks. Nourish with long-term funding and support.

Rationale: Positive feedback from grantees. New collaboration, partnerships formed among grantees. Policy Agenda process is an example of an activity/space that produced new networks and partnerships. Designing 'high value' experiences, managing the logistics, outreach and activities is staff intensive.

4. Align and (officially) integrate Best Starts Healthy & Safe Environments with COO's Systems & Policy Change efforts. Healthy & Safe Environments (HSE) is a program within the BSK Sustain the Gain (5-24) Investment Area. Its focus is: on environment, systems, and policy change with COO.

Rationale: Expands COO approach to Best Starts Program; increases COO connection to youth-focused and youth-led systems, policy, environment change. Increases administrative and programmatic efficiencies; enhances collaboration and learning. Increases opportunities for leveraging resources and positively impact communities.

Highlights of Lessons Learned, opportunities for improvement(s) – informing staying the course or modifying our approach

- Flexibility for grantee/partners to shift and adapt to unprecedented change over the last year. COO's ability to meet its grantees where they are is important, especially when we consider how we assess performance, demonstrated success applications or performance. We need to balance flexibility, accountability, and expectations and different approaches are needed if we want to support communities with lived experience.
- Continue learning, adapting, evolving. Be dynamic to make sure the work remains relevant.
- Seattle Foundation and King County alignment and strong partnership. It requires ongoing, careful attention and communication. The partnership has thrived thanks to the financial support and commitment of leadership/staff from both organizations.
- Ability to combine public and private resources across a spectrum of policy and systems change efforts additional funding/funding partners engaged.

Strategy/Investment Area Description/Overview

Sustainable change cannot be achieved without changing the broader structures (institutions, systems, and policies) that created inequities.

COO supports community-engaged or community-led efforts to transform systems and policies for stronger community connections, economic opportunity, better health, and/or housing that will decrease and/or prevent continued inequity in low-income communities and communities of color in King County.

The goals for this funding strategy are to (1) increase the readiness and ability of groups led by communities most affected by inequity across King County, to inform, improve and guide implementation of systems and policies; (2) support community-led efforts well positioned to inform, improve or guide implementation of specific systems and policies that contribute to better community connections, economic opportunity, health, and housing; and (3) increase connection, relationship and partnerships among grantees engaging in systems and policy change work, as well as other COO efforts.

Seattle Foundation has managed the funding of this strategy, including use of public and private philanthropic resources. King County funds are restricted from use in political campaigns or state lobbying. Grantees use private philanthropic funds for policy advocacy activities that are not allowed by public funds.

Program assumptions:

- Efforts are community-based and led by people most impacted by inequity.
- Resources are prioritized to communities where there are the greatest inequities: communities of color, native and indigenous communities, and other marginalized communities; and to organizations working at the intersections of intersections of racial justice and other inequities.
- Systems and policy work take time and is not linear. Efforts are funded across the spectrum of policy change processes.
- Power-building is an emphasized *over work that builds a policy without empowering the community.*
- Efforts are aimed at changes within institutions – policies and practices -- including but not limited to government, regulatory agencies, schools and post-secondary institutions, hospitals and health care delivery systems, and places of employment.

- Grantee efforts must relate to one or more COO result area: housing, health, economic resiliency, community connections.

Systems and Policy Change Funding (2014-2021)¹

Grant Cycle	# of grants awarded	Best Starts -- King County	Seattle Foundation	Total
2014-2016	21		\$ 1,085,000	\$ 1,085,000
2016-2018	18		\$ 1,226,000	\$ 1,226,000
2018-2019	27	\$ 2,987,567	\$ 1,666,460	\$ 4,654,027
2020-2021 ²	19	\$ 3,050,000	\$ 1,250,000	\$ 4,300,000
COVID - Resiliency	16	\$ 1,092,000	\$ 183,000	\$ 1,275,000
Black-led Organizations	7	\$ 750,000	\$ 265,000	\$ 1,015,000
	108	\$ 7,879,567	\$ 5,675,460	\$ 13,555,027

¹ Table 1 includes grant funding only. Additional funding through Systems and policy change supported capacity building and technical assistance.

² This grant cycle indicated that funding may be extended for an additional 12 months – through 2022--, pending funding availability and grant award performance.

Implementation Plan, Best Starts 2.0 Learning Community

Recommendations and Program Modifications

1. Stay the course and implement the plans that we’ve developed.

Rationale: Invested resources and time in gathering feedback, co-designing a capacity building framework that is responsive to community stakeholders’ interests and needs in a rapidly changing environment.

2. Continue to support capacity building, maintaining an emphasizing on investments that are building the strength of COO partners.

Rationale: Activities, offerings are designed in response to needs and interests expressed by community-stakeholders. The intent is focused on funded partners and other organizations/groups working on related and aligned efforts to places, communities, policies, result areas.

3. Continue, build support for community-based research and innovative pilots that build evidence about what factors in the community impact and improve health and well-being – and put that knowledge into action.

Rationale: Learning Community projects, like the community land stewardship learning circle, the Commercial Affordability Pilot, and the COVID19 Storytelling are creating new opportunities to marshal resources and build power within marginalized communities.

4. Determine priority for funding between investments in capacity building and research/pilot projects.

Rationale: Setting priorities directs resources and staff time. Research and pilot projects are typically bigger investments. If we emphasize these, we need to increase resources or limit the number of projects. Capacity Building and convening community stakeholders is staff-intensive and involves communications, marketing, outreach, planning, and logistics to create high-value events, activities, and offerings.

5. Eliminate the “sub strategies” for the Learning Community described in the Implementation Plan. The current Implementation Plan created three sub strategies, with an emphasis on supporting COO partners.

Strategic Innovations to Benefit COO Partners Broadly	15 to 25%
Forums	5 to 10%
Technical Assistance	

Rationale: The Initial categories were conceptual placeholders and not useful ways to organize resources or efforts, as we began co-designing activities. Through research, interviews, group discussions, COO and its

Capacity Building Partners, Communities Rise/Sarah Tran, have received feedback from partners and designed offerings which have redefined how we approach Learning Community activities.

Strategy/Investment Area Description/Overview

The Learning Community supports community to engage in shared learning and practice, and to innovative solutions. Under the Learning Community model, we provide resources to support the following types of experiences and activities:

- Shared Learning: Increasing opportunities to learn across sectors, projects, and activities, advancing skills, knowledge, and strategies to impact COO result areas; building shared analysis to address the root causes of inequities, and creating opportunities to imagine and refine community-driven solutions.
- Critical Connections: Building the relationships, collective vision, and momentum for systemic change across sectors, geographies, and silos.
- Capacity Building: Supporting leadership development, organizational and partnership infrastructure, and sustained civic capacity to actualize equity – policy after policy, issue after issue, year after year.
- Equity Transformations: Creating new tools, models, and conditions to actualize the thriving communities we envision.

Engaging in shared learning with a consistent group over a period of time, is an important strategy to building deep content knowledge, adaptation of skills, and connections to peers that will continue to grow. Working and learning in a cohort, enables leaders, organizations, and partnerships to share ideas and test new concepts, be introduced to new experiences, while putting their skills into practice. The hope and intention are that these relationships will accompany participants as they transition in and out of the learning space and create bonds where peers continue to reach out to one another, work alongside as they practice the learnings in real settings.

COO Cohorts take on opportunities to challenge the dominant frameworks and explore ways to shift them to promote and sustain equitable and thriving communities. In some cases, the cohorts are sharing or developing new tools, such as assessments and curriculums so that this learning does not just stay within the cohort but is available to share with the broader community.

COO’s consultants, Communities Rise & Sarah Tran, were poised to launch a carefully designed framework for actualizing equity in action [framework for actualizing equity](#) in action and implementation plan for activities in 2020. Then, everything changed.

COO’s Capacity Building team shifted its plans for 2020-2021 and began responding to COO partners’ needs as they navigated the COVID pandemic and a racial uprising. This challenging and uncertain environment required us to slow down, listen, and pivot in response to emerging priorities. Many organizations are feeling more confident with the adjustments to virtual spaces and are building this internal capacity while finding creativity and space to test new approaches. We recognize that these virtual transitions are only one component of the complexity that organizations are facing and while we seek to solidify more consistent plans this winter and into 2021, we also aim to maintain flexibility and responsiveness.

Examples of some of the Learning Community activities can be found [in this October 2020 report to Governance Group](#).

Learning Community Funding 2017-2021

Equity Transformations: creating new models, testing piloting	\$ 2,078,840	40%
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Capacity Building	\$ 3,169,647	60%
	\$ 5,248,487	

*shared learning, critical connections occur across all Learning Community activities