

# DECEMBER 2023 ALL-PARTNER CONVENING



Building healthy and resilient  
partnerships and organizations for  
strong movements and communities

*Thursday, December 14,  
10am – 4pm  
Northwest African American Museum*

## Welcome to COO's December All-Partner Convening



Thank you for joining the Communities of Opportunities' **December All-Partner Convening**. This event is intended to create space for the groups, organizations, staff, and leadership that make up the broader COO network for a day of connection, learning, and sharing.

The conversations and workshops of the day were designed to support groups who are working for greater equity, justice and well-being, and elevate the knowledge and wisdom that exists across COO and King County. We hope the day provides inspiration and learning, as well as opportunities for growing connections, relationships and knowledge between and among groups that are building collective, community power and new or alternative models for community health, economic opportunity and thriving, and housing and community development.

Today is an opportunity for groups working in aligned ways to share space, build and strengthen relationships, and collectively reimagine and strategize across the work.

# Intentions for the day:



## CONNECTION:

We hope that today's space offers the space and time to connect with new people and organizations, as well as the opportunity to strengthen ties with the people and groups that you are already in relationship with. We invite you to check out the list of organizations and groups that are in space today and we invite you to formally connect with others in the morning networking space and over lunch. As with our Spring convening with Dr. Robin Wall Kimmerer, we hope that today's agenda facilitates a space that supports a deepening sense of belonging and relationship - with one another as well as with oneself.

## LEARNING:

Inspiration for much of the day's agenda came from Maurice Mitchell's article, "Building Resilient Organizations", as well as subsequent writings from others in conversation with the piece. We designed the day considering how to connect groups to one another - across their projects or programs, as well as to some of lineages of movement and community work that can offer frameworks, learnings, and tools to the work of community groups and leaders today. We hope that the practices, knowledge and tools offered by today's speakers and workshop leaders support the work of attendees in building and strengthening effective and transformative campaigns, organizations, partnerships & coalitions.

“This moment is one of multiple, overlapping crises: a global pandemic, rising authoritarianism, climate emergency, political violence, unprecedented economic inequality, and general precarity all exacerbate interpersonal tension points. Like the rest of society, our movements exist within a general climate of anxiety, despair, and anger without the necessary support to process such massive emotions, individually or in community. *Recognizing the challenging terrain on which we struggle and grow can allow for more compassion for our comrades as well as clarity about the urgent mandate at hand.*”

-Maurice Mitchell,  
*Building Resilient Organizations*

## RESTORATION:

As the year winds down, it is important to take a moment to pause - to take a moment to celebrate the wins and times of joy, as well as reflect on the challenges and the grief experienced over the last year. We hope that the day's conversations and spaces offer opportunities to be supported in healing and restoration, as a counter to the burnout, stress and pressures that can overwhelm. There has been tremendous loss due to COVID, violence, and other harms and structural oppressions - as well as ongoing loss and grievous harms. In addition to building connections and learning, we hope today offers a time for slowness, groundedness, repair and restoration.

# About COO

Communities of Opportunity (COO) is a public-private-community initiative, funded by King County through the Best Starts for Kids levy, and the Seattle Foundation. COO invests in community power building partnerships, organizations, infrastructure, and activities to create greater racial, economic, and health equity so that all children, families, and communities in King County thrive and prosper.

The COO Learning Community strategy provides opportunities to engage in shared learning and to develop and practice innovative solutions. Convenings such as this one, bring people together across sectors, places, organizations, and projects to build & strengthen the relationships, skills, knowledge, and strategies that sustain the critical connections for community power building and systems change.

Learn more at: [www.coopartnerships.org](http://www.coopartnerships.org)



## NORTHWEST AFRICAN AMERICAN MUSEUM

We thank the event, technology and program staff at NAAM for their partnership in supporting today's event. Logistics information for attendees:







Attendees are welcome to explore the art in the Journey Gallery and Community Living Room spaces (please note that these spaces are open to the public during the Convening).

- ◆ Attendees are welcome to utilize the Artist Studio II room during lunch and breaks as a quiet space.
- ◆ Afternoon Breakout Sessions will be held in Artist Studio I, Artist Studio II, and the Legacy Hall rooms.
- ◆ Single stall All-Gender Restrooms are located on the North side of the building.
- ◆ Please connect with a COO staff person if you need support or wayfinding throughout the day.

# December All-Partner Convening



## AGENDA

10:00 – 10:30 AM	Legacy Hall	<b>COFFEE, NETWORKING AND BOOK GIVEAWAYS</b>
10:30 – 11:00 AM	Legacy Hall	<b>WELCOME, LAND ACKNOWLEDGEMENT, AND INTRODUCTIONS</b>
11:00 AM – 12:00 PM	Legacy Hall	<b>KEYNOTE AND CONVERSATION WITH ADRIENNE MAREE BROWN</b>
12:00 – 1:00 PM	Attendees are welcome to stay in the Legacy Room or can bring their lunch to the patio, park or Artist Studio II	<b>LUNCH FROM THAT BROWN GIRL COOKS!</b> Please wait until your table is called to grab lunch. <i>Book sales from Loving Room Books in the Legacy Hall</i>
1:00 – 2:15 PM	Legacy Hall	<b>PANEL CONVERSATION</b> Strengthening Movements of Solidarity, Accountability and Community <b>PANELISTS:</b> Elmer Dixon, Aurora Martin, Ariyah Jané Albert, and Yomara Velez <b>MODERATOR:</b> Sarah Tran
2:15 – 2:30 PM	   <b>BREAK</b>   	

## BREAKOUT SESSIONS

2:30 – 3:30 PM	Track 1: Artist Studio I Track 2: Artist Studio II Track 3: Legacy Hall	<b>TRACK 1: MEDITATION THROUGH SOUND &amp; ART</b> In this session, Nicole Keenan, Transformative Shifts, will guide participants through artistic intention setting and sound meditation.	<b>TRACK 2: COLLABORATION &amp; PARTNERSHIP PEER-LEARNING SPACE</b> Discuss inside and outside strategies to build and sustain relationships that support our ability to drive systemic change. Facilitated by Headwater People.	<b>TRACK 3: DOCUMENTING ORGANIZING LESSONS &amp; REFLECTIONS FOR THE NEW YEAR</b> Conversation with Yomara Velez, Midwest Academy
3:30 – 4:00 PM	Legacy Hall	<b>GROUP REFLECTION &amp; CLOSE WITH MARI SHIBUYA AND HEADWATER PEOPLE</b>		
6:00 – 8:00 PM	William Grose Center (101 23rd Ave S, Seattle, WA 98144)	<b>GUIDED ART-MAKING WORKSHOP WITH MARI SHIBUYA</b> Join us for an evening guided Art-marking workshop with artist Mari Shibuya at the William Grose Center!		

## **PANEL CONVERSATION:**

Strengthening Movements of Solidarity, Accountability and Community with Elmer Dixon, Aurora Martin, Ariyah Jané Albert, and Yomara Velez

This moderated panel conversation will look at the current and historic contexts, learnings, and lineages of movement work and the practices and strategies to sustain organizers and community leaders through burnout and divide-and-conquer tactics, in support of strong movement infrastructure and connections across local and global movements for justice, joy, and power.

## **Breakout Descriptions**

Participants may self-select which session to attend.

### **TRACK 1: MEDITATION THROUGH SOUND & ART**

Workshop with Nicole Keenan | Location: Artist Studio I

In this session, Nicole Keenan (Transformative Shifts), will guide participants through artistic intention setting and sound meditation.

This workshop is intended to support participants develop a practice of ease, balance, healing, and restoration.

### **TRACK 2: COLLABORATION & PARTNERSHIPS PEER-LEARNING SPACE**

Facilitated by Headwater People | Location: Artist Studio II

In this facilitated peer-learning breakout session, explore solutions-oriented strategies for strengthening and sustaining the collaborative work of partnerships and coalitions.

This session will be a facilitated set of participant discussions focused on inside and outside strategies to build and sustain relationships that support a collective ability to drive systemic change.



### **TRACK 3: DOCUMENTING ORGANIZING LESSONS & REFLECTIONS FOR THE NEW YEAR**

Conversation with Yomara Velez, Co-Executive Director of the Midwest Academy | Location: Legacy Hall

Join this participatory conversation on tools, strategies and wins from the work and experiences of the Midwest Academy to grow people power, strong organizations, just systems and policies, and transformed communities.

In this session, Yomara Velez will provide examples from her own organizing work as well as tools and frameworks to guide organizations' strategy.

# Speaker, Panelist and Facilitator Bios



## **adrienne marie brown**

EVENT ROLE: KEYNOTE SPEAKER

INSTAGRAM – @ADRIENNEMAREEBROWN

TWITTER – @ADRIENNEMAREE

adrienne maree brown grows healing ideas in public. Through her writing, which includes short- and long-form fiction, nonfiction, spells, tarot decks and poetry; her music, which includes songwriting, singing and an upcoming immersive musical ritual; and her podcasts, including How to Survive the End of the World, Octavia's Parables and The Emergent Strategy Podcast, adrienne has nurtured Emergent Strategy, Pleasure Activism, Radical Imagination and Transformative Justice as ideas, frameworks, networks and practices for transformation.



## **Matthew Echohawk-Hayashi**

EVENT ROLE: FACILITATOR

TITLE/ORGANIZATION: HEADWATER PEOPLE

Matthew Hayashi is the principal organization development and leadership consultant for Headwater People. He offers organizations a variety of strategic consulting services such as organization design, strategic planning, change management, process improvement, retreat planning and facilitation, and executive coaching. His passion is to help connect groups to the core mission of their work through collaborative and innovative learning and whole organizational health.



## **Sarah Tran**

EVENT ROLE: FACILITATOR

TITLE/ORGANIZATION: SAMA PRAXIS

Sarah is the founder and principal consultant of Sama Praxis where she provides leadership coaching, facilitation, training, and consultation to community organizations, philanthropic foundations, businesses, and government entities committed to advancing racial equity and social justice. Drawing on her roots as a daughter of Vietnamese refugees, a survivor, a former Executive Director, and many years of organizing for a world free of white supremacy and gender-based violence, she is committed to supporting leaders of color as they mobilize their communities and transform systems to support collective liberation. Her loves: Community care, laughing and eating with her Vietnamese and Filipino family, singing, the ocean, and doing all these things while snuggled up with her pups.



## Elmer Dixon

EVENT ROLE: PANELIST

CO-FOUNDER BLACK PANTHER PARTY - SEATTLE

Elmer Dixon was born in Chicago and moved to Seattle at age 7 when his father took a job at Boeing. Dixon grew up in Seattle's Central District, attending Garfield High School. While at Garfield High, Dixon helped organize the school's Black Student Union in 1968. That same year, with his older brother Aaron Dixon, he co-founded the Seattle Chapter of the Black Panther Party. He served the Chapter as its Field Marshall as well as the Breakfast Program Coordinator. When the Seattle Chapter closed its office and some of its core members moved to Oakland in 1972, Elmer, under parole and unable to move to Oakland, stayed in Seattle and reorganized the Chapter. He worked to sustain the Party's breakfast program and health clinic, maintaining the Panther organization until 1976 and some programs into the 1980s. Elmer Dixon now works as a diversity consultant.



## Aurora Martin (she/her/hers)

EVENT ROLE: PANELIST

CO-EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR, CAPACITY BUILDING, FRONT AND CENTERED | LANGUAGES: ENGLISH, TAGALOG

Aurora shares the leadership of Front and Centered, with a focus on supporting the team's capacity building and community engagement efforts. She has been involved in social justice work as a nonprofit lawyer, community organization leader, and creative producer. Aurora brings an eclectic spirit to the Front and Centered team, and looks forward to advancing equity, environmental, and climate justice with our community coalition.



## Ariyah Jané Albert (she/her)

EVENT ROLE: PANELIST

COMMUNITY COUNSELOR, LAVENDER RIGHTS PROJECT

Ariyah Jané Albert (She/Her) is a Black trans woman from Montgomery, Alabama. She has spent the majority of her professional life working in DEI education, public, and community relations. Ariyah has a deep love for equity and supporting local non-profits that are bringing resources and programming to communities that otherwise could not. She was led to Seattle, Washington to pastor a trans saint ministry with the Liberation United Church of Christ; from there, Ariyah began providing direct supportive housing services to marginalized community members. Ariyah is extremely passionate about whole person care and acknowledging the connection between an individual's experiences and their health. She is excited to be joining the Lavender Rights Project and supporting her siblings of Trans, Queer/Gender Non-conforming experience.



## Mari Shibuya (she/they)

EVENT ROLE: GRAPHIC RECORDING AND EVENING ART SESSION FACILITATOR

ARTIST | MURALIST | SCRIBE | FACILITATOR

[www.marishibuya.com/meetmari](http://www.marishibuya.com/meetmari)



## Yomara Velez (she/her)

EVENT ROLE: PANELIST & BREAKOUT SESSION FACILITATOR  
CO-EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR, MIDWEST ACADEMY

Yomara began organizing as a young single mother in the mid-90s, fighting for women on welfare to gain access to higher education.

Yomara spent the first phase of her career organizing in the South Bronx with organizations fighting for educational justice, tenant rights, affordable housing, policing, and environmental justice. In 2002, Yomara founded Sistas on the Rise in the South Bronx. This youth-led, young mother's collective created a new model of organizing grounded in transformative practices. After founding Sistas on the Rise, Yomara moved to Atlanta, Georgia, where she spent 7 years organizing in the South with organizations such as 9to5: National Association of Working Women and the Georgia Latino Alliance for Human Rights.

She served on SisterSong Women of Color Reproductive Justice Collective's board of directors and on the Feminist Health Center's Latinas' Initiative. For the last 10 years, Yomara led organizing initiatives at the National Domestic Workers Alliance, building their chapter structure and managing all of the state organizing campaigns. Specifically, she supported affiliates with organizing campaigns to win domestic workers' bill of rights in states across the country.



## Nicole Keenan

EVENT ROLE: BREAKOUT SESSION FACILITATOR  
TRANSFORMATIVE SHIFTS (NICOLEKEENAN.COM)

I am a researcher, facilitator, sound therapist, and artist working in service of people and planet.

I toured the world as an indie rock musician in 2008 with a band on Hardly Art (a subsidiary of Sub Pop). Later that year I moved to Seattle to work as a program assistant teaching Seattle civil rights history through conversation, film, music, art, and dance. Within a decade I became the executive director of two non-profits in Seattle. I played key roles in passing several policies and implementing programs that improved working conditions for millions of workers and advanced environmental justice principles in Washington state.

In the past decade, I've raised more than 20 million dollars to support organizations that support workers rights, leadership development and training programs, environmental justice, and equitable community development projects. I was recognized by the City of Seattle for my work to advance civil rights and was named one of the 15 people who should run Seattle.

I have a B.A. in Public Policy and Anthropology from William and Mary, and a master's in Social Work from the University of Washington with a focus on community centered integrative practice. I have been a musician for three decades and have spent 15 years learning and practicing meditation, sound healing, intuitive coaching, facilitation, and more.



**This event is  
brought to  
you by:**

COO's *December All-Partner Convening* was produced Sama Praxis, Headwater People, and Cascadia Consulting Group in partnership with the COO Learning Community. Book sales and giveaways in partnership with Loving Room: diaspora books + salon.



HEADWATER PEOPLE

## **CASCADIA CONSULTING GROUP**

[WWW.CASCADIACONSULTING.COM](http://WWW.CASCADIACONSULTING.COM)

We're a women-owned consulting firm, committed to community and grounded in science since 1993.

We are more than 75 dedicated experts and administrators working out of main offices in Seattle, Washington and Oakland, California as well as remote stations across the United States. Offering a broad range of interdisciplinary expertise across environmental, health, and community sectors, Cascadia specializes in using science to shape meaningful, defensible, and durable solutions that governments, organizations, and institutions can own now and into the future. As an environmental consulting firm whose mission is to "inspire and empower communities everywhere to protect and restore our world," we help our clients and their customers develop and implement policies and practices that protect the health of the planet and its people.

## **HEADWATER PEOPLE**

[HEADWATERPEOPLE.COM](http://HEADWATERPEOPLE.COM)

We are a Native-owned and led team that started from community organizing and coalition building. Our team practices are informed by graduate studies in organization development but primarily rooted in the continuity of learned values, techniques, and models that are taught in our own tribes, clans, and families. Our work is centered in honoring each person's authenticity as a part of our shared practice. At the intersection of our unique experiences and beliefs is a shared belief that humans evolve together. We celebrate ourselves, and our presence highlights how versatile leadership is fluid - not just within an individual, but within a group. We believe that the continuity of people and place are longer and wider than the colonial and imperial worldview. Our practice centers the voice of disenfranchised people. This is necessary for systems change.



## LOVING ROOM BOOKS

[WWW.LOVINGROOMBOOKS.COMMUNITY](http://WWW.LOVINGROOMBOOKS.COMMUNITY)

LOVING ROOM: diaspora books + salon is a Black-owned community reading room (bookstore + cultural salon) featuring various genres of literature by Black + African writers for readers of all ages. We curate a selection of new and used reading material from U.S.-born Black authors, as well as African, Caribbean, and other Diaspora writers to be read on-site. We also have a variety of new titles available for purchase. Our collection includes Children's and Young Adult literature, as well as a vast and varied selection of Fiction and Non-Fiction works from Black writers past and present. We aspire to cultivate a space for collective Black ancestral healing and transformation through a commitment to Black literature and African Diasporic decolonial aesthetics.

Our public programs will include a weekly children's story hour, youth read-aloud, and young writers' club, while our monthly offerings will consist of our teens' book club, grown folks' book club, poetry soirées, film screenings, and more. We seek to cultivate a space of welcome and connection for Black readers of all ages, and to reclaim thriving Black cultural space in the historic Central District.

Remaining present and in alignment with these intentions, we welcome collaboration with Black creatives across all genres— authors, poets, visual artists, musicians, playwrights, and other performance artists.

## NORTHWEST AFRICAN AMERICAN MUSEUM

[WWW.NAAMNW.ORG](http://WWW.NAAMNW.ORG)

The Northwest African American Museum is an anti-racist, pro-equity, affirming gathering place of hope, help, and healing for the entire Northwest region that is building intergenerational cultural wealth.

At the heart of the African American experience in the Northwest is the story of our journey to this region, the establishment of our vibrant community, and the ways in which we have survived. To tell this ever-unfolding story, the Museum's exhibitions and programs feature the visual arts, music, crafts, literature, and history of African Americans in the Northwest. Cognizant of the Black community's continuous evolution, NAAM focuses on African Americans whose route to the new world was through slavery as well as recent immigrants arriving from places such as Somalia, Sudan, and Ethiopia.



## SAMA PRAXIS

[WWW.SAMAPRAXIS.COM](http://WWW.SAMAPRAXIS.COM)

Our mission is to build a just and loving world. At the heart of this is the pursuit of racial justice, as racism creates, compounds, and perpetuates many of the inequities in our society.

We view clients as our partners in this shared purpose. Some partners come from community organizations, others from philanthropy, business, or government, but all are committed to creating healthy communities where every person can access safety, well-being, and the opportunity to thrive and support one another.

Every partner and project is unique. We customize our approach to the assets, challenges, and cultures that make up the landscape of who our partners are and what they are navigating. While each journey begins from a different place, the ultimate destination is the same: A just and loving world of collective well-being, one that our ancestors dreamed of and that we can proudly pass on to future generations.



## THAT BROWN GIRL COOKS!

[WWW.THATBROWNGIRL.COM](http://WWW.THATBROWNGIRL.COM)

Chef Kristi Brown spooned her way through the culinary industry for the past 28 years. Starting at a small café in downtown Seattle, Chef has done just about everything from dishwasher/prep cook to running her own catering business for nearly a decade. From the beginning, her vision was to focus on the art and experience of food through culinary activism. A purpose powered by her mantra, “Everybody’s Gotta Eat!” Chef Kristi builds community through the cultivation of fresh food and fine cooking.

In 2012, Chef Kristi, lovingly referred to as Chef Goddess, re-imagined her business as That Brown Girl Cooks!, a food, culture, and community organization. Simply put, she calls it a “Culinary Collective.” TBGC! explores her inspirations, melds them with her experiences, and brings them back to the communities she serves. Debuting a variety of products, events, pop-ups, classes, and media presence, she engages and inspires community while connecting people with a wholesome and nurturing lifestyle.



## VIA CREATIVES

[WWW.VIACREATIVES.COM](http://WWW.VIACREATIVES.COM)

There is nothing more important to us, nothing more fundamentally human, than telling stories. There is magic in capturing an experience, and an emotion. We’re after that.

We are a group of artists and problem solvers obsessed with the mission of using our skills to bring a vision to life. Writing, directing, filming, editing, and photographing, we do it all so that you can rest easy knowing your story is brought to the world with the attention and care that it deserves.

# Take a note!

We've left the following pages blank for notetaking space throughout today's convening.



A large grid of dotted lines covers the majority of the page, providing a structured space for taking notes. The grid consists of small, uniform squares formed by light brown dotted lines.

