

# COMMUNITY NEEDS ASSESSMENT

“An Assessment of the needs of the communities served by Solid Ground, conducted” – October – December 2014.



SOLID GROUND  
COMMUNITY NEEDS ASSESSMENT 2014  
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## Executive Summary

Each year, more than 55,000 King County residents come to Solid Ground to address urgent food, housing and transportation needs, and build skills to overcome poverty and thrive.

Through 40 years of innovation, partnership and action, Solid Ground helped create many of our community's most effective anti-poverty programs, such as our food and hunger programs, legal assistance and our woman's domestic violence housing programs.

Solid Ground plays a vital role in our community's response to poverty. Our broad reach, strong infrastructure and depth of experience make it possible for us to play an important leadership role in addressing urgent needs and emerging trends among vulnerable people throughout King County. Solid Ground serves people who are most vulnerable to the impacts of homelessness, hunger and poverty including women, children, immigrants, seniors, people with disabilities, and domestic violence survivors. Each year, we provide shelter, food, transportation and other basic services for people in need throughout Seattle/King County. The ongoing economic downturn has increased the number of people we serve dramatically. In the last couple of years, Solid Ground went from serving 38,454 people in 2009, to serving over 57,000 people in 2012. In 2013, we served over 58,000 people. At the same time, the funding we receive from government sources continues to decrease.

Solid Ground works to end poverty and undo racism and other oppression that are the root cause of poverty. We believe our community can move beyond poverty and oppression to a place where all people have access to quality housing, nutritious food, equal justice and opportunities to thrive. We know that many of our clients are caught in a demoralizing cycle of despair, isolation and deprivation. We seek to change this by recognizing the dignity and strength of all people as we work to meet basic survival needs and lay the foundation for long term stability. When exiting a Solid Ground program, we intend our clients: 1) have their current crisis lessened or resolved; 2) have the knowledge, resources and skills to deal with future crises and build long term stability; and 3) know that we respect them and believe in their capacity to transform their lives.

This Community Needs Assessment was conducted in 2014 in order to provide baseline data about the state of factors influencing services and programs in the greater Seattle and King County area to help identify service needs and gaps.

The recent recession and the slow post-recession recovery have had a formidable impact on people's ability to meet their basic needs of food, employment, education, housing, health care, transportation and financial stability etc.

Solid Ground remains committed to the hard work of ending poverty. To accomplish this priority work, we have identified as a Community Action Agency (CAA) a number of challenges, identified in this report.

## SOLID GROUND CAPACITY CHALLENGES

1. Unified Agency Strategy
  - a. Leadership development
    - Broadening Leadership in Agency**
    - Strategic Planning - continuing agency synergy**
  - b. Community Input
    - Community Inclusionary Service and Program Designs**
    - Community Advisory Committee - Reactivation**
  - c. Data
    - Development of Relevant and Consistent Program/Service and organization level data collection and reporting system.**
    - Formal development of data guided or data informed decision making processes**
  
2. Acquisition of Resources
  - a. Funding Development
    - Funding Development Strategies & Plan Update**
  - b. Staffing And Volunteers
    - Greater Incorporation of Youth and Older segments**
  - c. Partnerships
    - Funders, Community Organizations and Integrations into new service segments**

## Leadership Development

### Broadening Leadership in the Agency

Solid Ground Leadership is in the second year of a post-reorganization and is still in the process of developing leadership synergy under the new structure. Functional Leadership Teams are utilized as a platform for cross-agency discussion, planning, input and recommendations on issues affecting more than one department. These teams also provide opportunities for leadership and professional development for staff at all levels of the organization. While many teams are thriving and been active for many months, several Functional Leadership Teams are still in their initial phases of scope and work agenda development and team storming and norming processes. Leadership re-design included further depth and operational oversight functions at the Vice President of Strategy level and this position has just been filled. The orientation and infusion of this critical staff and leader will further affect leadership team dynamics and bring additional expertise to integrate. Developing a practice and inculcating a culture of performance management beginning with directors and managers remains a priority.

## Strategic Planning - Continuing Agency Synergy

In 2015, Solid Ground will engage in strategic planning using 1) the Community Needs Assessment, 2) the 2014 year of reflection of Solid Ground's 40 years of services, and 3) the program and departmental survey assessments of 2012-2013 as significant inputs. Clear vision and deliberate action steps work to develop momentum and an understanding of course and pace. Headed into 2015 and the organizational strategic planning process, we will make a concerted effort to develop these critical structural supports, to properly weigh and measure current program and service provision resource demands and any new scope of services newly developed as it relates to the whole mission alignment to Solid Ground. Specifically action plans as related to housing development and asset management and our three service areas of focus we think should be increased; youth education services (YES), healthcare access and financial empowerment and education will be developed to guide our work.

## Community Input

### Community Inclusionary Service and Program Designs

Solid Ground continues to develop tools and processes to both engage with and hear from the community as to 1) how Solid Ground is meeting community need, 2) What factors and issues are impacting community members and creating potential barriers to successful living and 3) how Solid Ground could respond through services, advocacy or support to address those unmet needs.

Solid Ground obtains client inputs regarding program and services in a variety of ways; quality of service surveys, specific adhoc focus groups related to program and service delivery, design, and adaptation to meet changing needs. These include listening sessions with individuals, and families suffering from poverty, oppressions and those receiving public benefits.

Also, in order to ensure that lawmakers make better decisions related to the economic security of people living with low-incomes in our state, we believe they must frequently hear from actual residents faced with these challenges. Through our Statewide Poverty Action Network (SPAN), we provide the following leadership development opportunities:

- **Grassroots Organizing & Advocacy Training** We continued to organize people with low incomes in Washington—training them to become effective advocates, and making it easy for them to communicate with legislators through Members in Action nights, online action alerts, phone banks, rallies, and lobby days in Olympia. Since July 2013, we have conducted over 50 advocacy trainings, engaging over 200 people. Many of these advocacy trainings and organizing opportunities were a result of strategic partnerships with organizations like Mercy Housing, University of Washington, the Village of Hope, Career Bridge, and the other programs and departments at Solid Ground.

As part of our 39 county campaign, we continued to collect and curate more stories from every county across our state. We are launching the 39 County project page on our website. We will launch a dedicated web page for our members' stories by 2015. Through the website, we aim to create a space for people living with low incomes to directly create the narrative, as well as archive the history, of the real impact of poverty in our communities.

- **Listening Sessions:** Through our Listening Session campaign we traveled across the state gathering input and experience from people living on low incomes. In 2014, we held Listening Sessions in Seattle, Spokane, Kent, Everett, Pasco, and Tacoma. We will expand the use of the listening sessions approach as part of the strategic plan to outreach and “in-reach” communities of color and high service need.

### Community Advisory Committee - Reactivation

Solid Ground remains committed to the reactivation, internal staff support and integration of a community advisory committee in 2015. Data and demographic changes reflected in this report highlight an opportunity to discuss potential youth representation and advisory input going forward as well as youth leadership development opportunities.

## Data

### Development of Relevant and Consistent Program/Service and organization level data collection and reporting system

Solid Ground in 2013 completed the purchase of the Apricot Software system developed by CTK to enable the new design and implementation of an organization wide consistent database. The new database and management reporting and compliance tool will merge, replace and or improve over a dozen existing program level developed systems. Solid Ground is dedicated to the movement to a more data guided method of management and program assessment. The new system will be implemented in 2015-2016.

### Formal development of data guided or data informed decision making processes

It is expected that the new data systems design will include more consistent and complete level of data collection, more intentionally focused on client need, key services and program outcomes. Consolidation of multiple manual data collection processes and offline tracking methods will increase efficiency by decreasing staff time and data collection errors helping data quality and decreasing agency overhead.

## Funding Development

### Funding Development Strategies and Plan Update

Solid Ground continues to be heavily reliant upon public funding to a degree such that it brings both a level of funding stability and yet some program inflexibility. These insights

were identifies in the Solid Ground's 2013, 18 Month Resource Development Fundraising Plan, which implemented goals to increase private funding sources. In 2015 we will continue to examine outcomes related to these goals and update action steps accordingly during its strategic planning process.

Resources to meet client and community demand is the most challenging issue for all organizations in social service. These resources include; staffing, facilities, partnerships, in-kinds supports and volunteers and stipend labor. Also, funder trends are moving away from funding actual staff functions necessary to providing critical services. Very few funders now are willing to participate fully in the cost of organizational infrastructure or administration.

### Greater Incorporation of Youth and Older Segments

Labor continues to be the highest costs for direct services and as with many organizations, Solid Ground continually seeks experience based employment (Stipend based) and volunteerism labor forces to reduce costs, develop social service experienced community labor forces and maximize services. As the population of retirees in our community rises, with the baby boomers (1946-1964) they can continue to work, volunteer, mentor and serve on boards. Solid Ground has the opportunity to examine as part of its strategic planning process roles at the organization that deepen ways elders can participate in our Mission. Solid Ground is the host agency for the Retired Senior Volunteer Program (RSVP) which supports our senior community members with volunteer opportunities. Further potential youth volunteer opportunities also serve to deepen youth experience and access to vital life and job skills development.

Solid Ground's Volunteerism Program has in recent years begun to develop strategies to both increase volunteer numbers, enhance the volunteer experience and also improve awareness and strategies that correlate volunteer interactions with Solid Ground and potential translation of that volunteer into a donor or other type of fundraising supporter of the organization. These efforts will need to be supported and encouraged going forward if Solid Ground is to further develop service labor resources and cultivate donor ship and community group partnering.

### Funders, Community Organizations and Integrations into new service segments

While Solid Ground has made it a distinct goal to increase supports from other than the public sector such as; individual donors, corporations, foundations and community organizations the development/cultivation of these and new relations and the deepening of their investments in Solid Ground takes time.

As Solid Ground, through its strategic planning processes solidifies its existing service and program goals and objectives particular focus will be made to map out funding sources and relationship efforts to support revenue generation at all levels with further coordination of operational leadership and the Resource Development team or department. Solid Ground has used a method to identify the two critical components outside the agency that impact

our services and meeting the needs (address the challenges) of both 1) the community at large and 2) those of the individuals we serve. Based on the environmental scan of our community (Seattle/King County, WA), assessing our clients feedback and taking into consideration regional, State and National trends, we have identified the key factors and challenges our work seeks to address:

### COMMUNITY/*Population* CAPACITY CHALLENGES - King County/Seattle

- a. Racial and Economic Inequity/*Economic and social injustice*
- b. Lack of Affordable Housing/*Housing Barriers*
- c. Lack of Educational Attainment and Opportunities/*Income and advancement*
- d. Lack of Living Wage Jobs/*access to jobs and employment services*
- e. Food Insecurity and lack of Nutritional Education/*food access and hunger*
- f. Health Care and Service Access/*health conditions and disabilities*

### SOLID GROUND RESPONSES to the above identified challenges:

#### a. Racial and Economic Inequity/*Economic & Social Injustice*

In 2013 the wealth of white households in the US was 13 times the median wealth of African American households and more than 10 times the wealth of Latino households. While poverty increased across all communities in Washington this year, families of color felt this increase most intensely. In our state, people of color are much more likely to live in poverty than whites, with 25% of African Americans, 27.1% of Latinos, 26.4% of American Indians and Alaska Natives, 16.5% of Native Hawaiians and Pacific Islanders, 12.1% of Asians, and 16.9% of mixed race households living below the Federal Poverty Line (FPL), compared to only 10.4% of white households. The Cost of Living Index reports that in King County the overall index average of 143, with a higher cost than the national average of 100 in all basic needs categories; Housing (213), Health (119), Transportation (109), Grocery (108) and Miscellaneous/Utilities (110).

#### Solid Ground's Response

As an Anti-poverty organization, Solid Ground works to eliminate racial and economic inequity in both its organizational design and service delivery methods, and by empowering the community and individuals through advocacy and self-advocacy skill building programming in all core services.

Solid Ground was active on the City of Seattle Mayor's Income Inequality Advisory Committee whose recommendations led to the enactment of the highest municipal minimum wage in the United States. Solid Ground remains active in a leadership capacity on both the City and County equity initiatives.

### **b. Lack of Affordable Housing/*Housing Barriers***

Throughout King County we are experiencing an affordable rental housing shortage crisis. Both the City of Seattle and King County have developed initiatives and funding strategies to produce new affordable housing units. King County reported it is just 57% (5,424 units) towards its goal of funding 9,500 new housing units for formerly homeless residents by 2015. However, in the region over 78,000 people have moved to the metro area but only 24,845 new housing inventory units have been added. Significant transportation costs and stress exist for those who are unable to live in or near Seattle yet are dependent upon Seattle for employment and essential human and health services. Vacancy rates overall in King County was 6.1% in November 2014 but some neighborhoods in the City of Seattle are experiencing less than 2%. According to the Office of the Mayor, these vacancy rates are supported by rising rental housing rates being experienced in the City of Seattle where the average rental costs of a 1 bedroom unit is \$1,412 and where the very low income households (with less than \$26,250 annual wage) have 62% experiencing housing cost burden. In total, an estimated 15 to 20% of ALL Seattle households are currently severely cost burdened.

#### **Solid Ground's Response**

Solid Ground applies multiple strategies to address housing affordability which includes 1) Housing provision and Residential programs, 2) Other interventions intended to assist families in quickly exiting homelessness such as Rapid Re-Housing and Shelter Diversion 3) Engagement with Landlords and the private housing market to increase housing options for families and individuals with barriers to obtaining housing, 4) Advocacy, locally, regionally and with state governmental leaders and organizations.

Overall Solid Ground is an advocate for fair and affordable housing, we work with partners like the Washington State Low Income Housing Alliance to adopt legislation that will reduce barriers to housing and improve access to affordable housing in WA. This includes advocating for issues such as fair tenant screening, supporting the Housing Trust Fund, and protecting tenants from housing discrimination.

As a housing developer, Solid Ground continues to evolve its Sand Point Housing Campus at Magnuson Park in northeast Seattle to meet the needs of the community and formerly homeless populations in need of housing options, programs and services moving into the next decade. Currently Solid Ground's Sand Point Housing Campus Project provides transitional and permanent housing for 112 formerly homeless families and 117 single adults, including over 250 to 280 children. We recognize both the profound responsibility we have to these individuals and families, as well as the extraordinary opportunity this situation presents to make an impact on ending generational poverty.

We offer a wide array of housing and support services for formerly homeless families including emergency shelter, tenant counseling and education, service-enriched permanent housing, and much more. Some of our key accomplishments include: 1) Providing interim housing and comprehensive support for over 5,000 households each year through Family Shelter, Broadview Emergency Shelter & Transitional Housing, Sand Point Family Housing, Santos Place and JourneyHome programs; 2) creating effective programming to help homeless families identify housing options and quickly obtain permanent housing; 3) joining local funders and partners in redefining rapid re-housing services and engaging in new models of services such as Shelter Diversion to explore ways of supporting families in quickly exiting homelessness.

Going into our 2015 Strategic Planning process, Solid Ground will 1) examine its current role as a housing provider and an owner of housing properties to develop future housing strategies in both programming supports and potential housing development as key participant in the regions housing system to end homelessness, 2) continue to enhance residential services depth and dosage regarding access and referral to ancillary services for our housing clients, 3) provide critical financial empowerment and legal assistance and other services addressing barriers to housing stability and 4) strengthen advocacy efforts with department programs.

Solid Ground continues to see legal supports under our Family Assistance program as critical (*use of CSBG funds*) to addressing both housing barriers and health care access supports to strengthen client success and stabilization.

Solid Ground will continue *to use CSBG funding* to support its domestic violence shelter, housing and services programming with added emphasis expansion of supports for child trauma informed care modeling.

### c. Lack of educational attainment and opportunities/*Income & Advancement*

The on-time graduation rate for high school students in King County was 77.4% in 2008, 76% in 2011 and 75.4% in 2012. The on-time graduation rate for students who are Native American, Latino, African-American, and Pacific Islander are significantly lower. The social and economic costs of delay or dropping out can be high: a dropout is more than 8 times as likely to be incarcerated as a person with at least a high school diploma – and is also more likely to earn less, contributes to the economy at a lower rate, and/or to rely on governmental assistance.

### Solid Ground's Response

Solid Ground has a desire to expand services and supports to youth living in our properties so that every youth “will be on the path to successfully graduate from high school ready for college, or ready for a career.” – Solid Ground must research further, age population specific needs and survey youth onsite to guide and drive goals and objectives in this program and service development effort prior to

determining further organizational efforts. Initial funding for a program development plan has been secured from private funds and will be coordinated with the agency strategic plan in 2015.

#### d. Lack of living wage jobs/*Access to jobs and employment services*

As of December 2014, the number of reported unemployed people in King County totaled 94,050 (6.8%) as significant decrease from 2009 figures of 8.5% and 2008 figures of 3.6%. However, even though we are experiencing economic growth, only a small proportion of our service population is benefiting. In a recent report on the job markets for King and Snohomish Counties there have been and estimated 45,000 new jobs created however, most are in the engineering, technology and transportation sectors. The top 20 percent the income scale of households are seeing their incomes rise while middle and lower segments are losing ground. Along with growing income inequity, we are seeing an increased poverty rate.

#### Solid Ground's Response

Solid Ground currently works with partnering agencies to connect and refer residents and clients to work force and employment opportunities, training and job readiness programs. Solid Ground will examine potential partnership expansions for both education and employment referral services through its housing counseling and stabilization services and other residential housing support partners for both youth adult employment supports.

#### e. Food Insecurity and lack of Nutritional Education/*Food Access and Hunger*

In the US in 2012, over 21.6% of ALL children (0 to 17) experienced food insecurity, but for those below the poverty line the rate was 45.8%. Of those in poverty White households reported 16.9% while Black households were 31.5% and Hispanic Households were 28.7%.

Tied to education, households experiencing food insecurity, led by a parent or guardian with less than a high school education was 41.3%, while those lead by a parent or guardian with some college reported 26.7%.

Related to household structure those households with married couples experienced food insecurity at a rate of 14.5% while those households lead by an only female-headed parent was 38%.

Of Adults who report that food money for their family often does not last, 38% are Hispanic, 21% are Black and 7% are White (*Communities Count Report 2013*)

In the Seattle/Tacoma/Bellevue metropolitan area, 23.92% of low-income residents (below 300% or the Poverty Line) ages 50 and over have marginal food insecurity, 12.42% have some food insecurity and 4.33 % have very low food security.

### Solid Ground's Response

Solid Ground continues to see increased need in providing health, fresh food and other food resources to the community, supported by increased use of farm growing programs, and overall food bank use in the 27 food banks within the City of Seattle. Particular growth in those over 55 is of significance. Solid Ground *will use CSBG funds* to support overall food security programming for vulnerable populations and also to increase urban agricultural education and nutrition education moving forward in it child and youth programming and assisting low income families to budget and cook nutritional meals.

#### f. Health Care Access and Health Services/*Health conditions & disabilities*

Today, one in six King County residents between the ages 18 and 64 – or **217,300 people** – are uninsured (2011 American Community Survey, U.S. Census). This marks a 3% increase in uninsured people since 2008. Moreover, the ethnic breakdown of those uninsured in King County reveals gross inequities:

- People who live in south King County cities are more likely to be uninsured. For example, adults in Des Moines are seven to eight times more likely to be uninsured than adults in Mercer Island or Sammamish. (2009-2011 American Community Survey, U.S. Census and [www.kingcounty.gov/healthservices/health/partnerships/HealthReform.aspx](http://www.kingcounty.gov/healthservices/health/partnerships/HealthReform.aspx)).
- Hispanic/Latinos are nearly four times as likely and Black/African Americans more than twice as likely to be uninsured as Whites. In addition, 18.2% of adult males are uninsured, compared to 14% of adult females (2009-2011 American Community Survey, U.S. Census).

### Solid Ground's Response

In response, Solid Ground uses its resources and expertise to connect those in need with this newly available affordable or free health care coverage. Much of this outreach, education and referral work will take place through our Family Assistance program utilizing their knowledge of Medicaid law and their connections throughout the legal aid and social services communities.

As we enter our 5<sup>th</sup> decade of services to this community, Solid Ground will continue to serve Seattle/King County and to advocate on behalf of the low-income residents of Washington State through innovation, partnership and action.

## Agency Overview and Resources

Solid Ground is one of the largest CAP agencies in Washington State. With annual revenues in excess of \$25 million dollars and over 275 employees its organizational structure exceeds most other social service providers in the region.

Solid Ground has a dedicated and diverse workforce that is its greatest asset. Our 275 employees are comprised of the following groups: Direct service staff, ACCESS drivers, Administrative support and Management. Many of our staff have at least a four year degree (i.e. BA), though our hiring processes weigh life experience, not just formal education, in order to find talented workers who have not had the privilege of attaining higher education. Many of our staff hold advanced degrees in social work, law, and other relevant fields.

The primary reason people come to work for Solid Ground is our shared belief in a world beyond poverty where all people have equitable access to the fruits and benefits of our society. In addition, staff are motivated and attracted by the agency's commitment to understanding and addressing racism and other oppressions as root causes of poverty.

Increasingly, the agency has strived to have our workforce look like our client population, which means increasing the percentage of staff of color.

The majority of Solid Ground employees are represented by three labor unions, the largest of which are ATU, representing our drivers, and OPEIU, representing most of our direct service and administrative staff.

Direct service staff are trained in de-escalation, trauma-informed care and other best practices. ACCESS drivers receive extensive safety training and must obtain Commercial Drivers Licenses.

Solid Ground is the owner of the following:

- 27,000 square-foot Headquarters in north Seattle
- 31-unit housing building in central Seattle
- four-unit transitional housing in Fremont area of Seattle
- five-bedroom single family home for shelter in West Seattle
- Three buildings, housing youth programs operated by other nonprofit service providers, in northeast Seattle
- Solid Ground's subsidiary is a general partner in three limited partnerships, owning: 7 low income affordable housing buildings, including 175 residential units in total and one community building Solid Ground also leases the following:
  - Transportation complex in the South Park area of Seattle
  - 14 scattered site emergency shelter units across Seattle

Solid Ground has approximately 200 Microsoft Windows workstations in seven buildings across Seattle. The buildings (with one exception) are all connected via VPN over Comcast Business high-

speed cable; the connection at our headquarters building is Comcast fiber-optic. The network is Windows Active Directory 2008, with twelve servers for functions like domain control, file storage, remote access, backup, etc. One server is dedicated to our financial software, Sage 300 ERP (formerly ACCPAC); another is dedicated to our HR software, Sage HRMS (formerly Abra). Email is provided by Microsoft Office 365 in the cloud; other cloud-based services include Blackbaud Raiser's Edge (donor management) and ClientTrack (client management). The seventh building, which houses our Transportation group, is connected to King County Metro's network, though the workstations are ours, and they are connected to our Office 365 email system.

Solid Ground is relatively unique in the range of its program service offerings, and while there are other Community Action Agencies providing basic needs services, there are no other agencies in the region that compete with Solid Ground across a both comprehensive but broad range of program funding areas.

## HISTORY

Solid Ground was founded in 1974 by community leaders and concerned citizens of one of Seattle's then most economically devastated neighborhoods, Fremont. Originally called the Fremont Public Association, our services – emergency food bank, clothing bank, and employment program – reflected the desperate needs and determined response of a mobilized and committed neighborhood. As the scope and severity of homelessness and poverty have increased over the years, so too has our reach to the greater community and our range of services. Now based in Seattle's Wallingford neighborhood, our 26 programs and services help more than **55,000 individuals each year** to overcome poverty and build better futures throughout the City of Seattle, King County and beyond.

## SERVICE AREA AND SERVICES & PROGRAMS

- **RESIDENTIAL SERVICES** - service-enriched emergency shelter, transitional and permanent housing, for homeless individuals and families.
- **STABILIZATION SERVICES** - mortgage default counseling, financial skills training, tenant counseling and financial assistance to prevent homelessness for families and individuals at high risk of displacement, and to rapidly rehouse families experiencing homelessness.
- **HUNGER & FOOD RESOURCE SERVICES** - grow and provide fresh organic produce to Seattle food banks; teach people living on low incomes how to grow their own produce; provide instruction on nutritious cooking as well as physical fitness to support healthier lives and help people overcome food insecurity.
- **LEGAL SERVICES** - free legal representation to help vulnerable people access our state's safety net of basic health and social service programs.
- **TRANSPORTATION SERVICES** - door-to-door paratransit for people who cannot access the fixed-route public transit system and shuttle service for people who live in or access human services in the downtown core.
- **ADVOCACY** - engage low-income people in the political process to change policies and procedures that impact their lives.

## BOARD GOVERNANCE

As a Community Action Agency, Solid Ground aims to reflect the community in which it serves. As such, we strive for a Board (called a Tripartate board) composed of 1/3 low income or their representatives, 1/3 elected officials or their representatives, and 1/3 community members. In addition we seek to obtain the views of our clients through an Advisory Council made up of people with similar situations to our clients, surveys of current and past clients, and a quasi-Board for our advocacy program, Statewide Poverty Action Network.

Board Composition is as of October 16<sup>th</sup> 2014 (and unchanged at date of approval) as follows:

Number of Members: **19**

Tripartate Status: Elected Officials **21%**, Low-Income Representatives **32%** and Community Members **47%**

Racial Composition: Caucasian **63%**, Hispanic/Latino **6%**, African American **19%** and Asian/Pacific Islander **13%**

The Board of Directors has seven standing committees: Executive, Advocacy, Finance, Board Development, Resource Development and Endowment, Personnel, and Housing and Capital Projects. The composition of each committee is described below. The Board Chair appoints both the chairs and the individual board members serving on these committees. The Workers' Council and the Executive Director each appoint one staff representative to the all the committees except the Executive Committee.

## AGENCY LEADERSHIP STRUCTURES

### Strategic Leadership Team

- Provides core strategic, budget and policy leadership for the agency
- Establish annual agency strategic goals, subject to CEO and Board approval
- Provides input to CEO, COSO & Finance Director on budget priorities, and reviews proposed new programs or program expansion, consistent with agency policy
- Manages overall agency communications strategy and policies
- Reviews and provides input to CEO and HR Director on all modification to agency HR policies or compensation practice.

Senior leadership periodically establish mission, vision, and values through an extensive strategic planning process. This includes environmental scan and input from all levels of the organization, from staff to Board. Senior leaders deploy this leadership system through communication at All Staff meetings, internal and external newsletters, and other communication within and outside the

organization. The mission, vision and values are listed on our website, in our annual report, and in our strategic plan. Senior leaders of the organization are expected to uphold these principles in all actions for Solid Ground.

Senior leaders demonstrate their commitment to legal and ethical behavior by establishing and/or following policies such as the Conflict of Interest policy, Procurement policies, computer use, payroll and other organizational policies. There is an expectation of legal and ethical behavior from the most senior leaders. There are controls in place such as separation of duties, approval of contracts, invoices, and protections such as client complaint and whistleblower procedures, and review of materials by the Board and outside entities.

Senior leaders spend time working on creating a sustainable organization. This includes making strategic decisions about programs based on achievement of the community need as well as sustainable sources of funding. Leaders throughout the organization spend time with the community including funders, partners, suppliers, and sister organizations, keeping up with trends and influencing the creation of laws policy which affects our industry and clients. Monitoring of achievement of program goals is reviewed by every program several times per year, as well as budget monitoring by senior leadership on a quarterly basis. Innovation and risk taking are encouraged in ways that fit within our mission and resources, and funds can be made available to allow innovation to occur.

### **Leadership Advisory Committees**

Functional Leadership Teams (FLT) provide a platform for cross-agency discussion, planning, input and recommendations on issues affecting more than one department. These teams also provide opportunities for leadership and professional development for staff at all levels of the organization. FLT's operate in a spirit of transparency and meeting minutes, decisions and working documents are all maintained on the Solid Ground Public Network accessible by all employees. FLT's are listed below with a brief description of their core scope of work area.

#### **➤ ARI Steering Committee**

- The ARI Steering Committee meets between ARC meetings to plan the agendas for these larger meetings. In addition, the Steering Committee is a forum for preliminary conversation about issues/ideas which may need to be taken to the full ARC for a larger discussion.
- Co-ordinates, in association with COSO & CEO, planning and implementation of agency ARI priorities and activities.

#### **➤ Resource Development Team**

- Evaluates funding opportunities and their impact on programs
  - Budget v. Non-budget
  - Capital Needs
  - Public v. Private
- Coordinates donor outreach opportunities

- Individual, corporate and foundation
- In-kind donors
- Volunteers
- Identifies new funding sources
- Evaluates funding impacts of new initiatives
- Work with Communications Team to understand appropriate donor communications.

➤ **Communications Team**

The Communications Team is an intra-agency group that provides institutional support and guidance to Solid Ground's internal and external communications effort. The Team will meet once a month to:

- Support communications staff and others in developing, implementing and staying accountable to the agency's communications work plan.
- Serve as a sounding board for specific communications strategies and tactics.
- Help raise awareness at all levels of the agency about the ways in which communications efforts support our mission and vision.

➤ **Youth Education & Development Coordination Committee**

- Identify and assess agency education and youth development programs & activities
- Develop & maintain agency-wide youth education & development strategy.
- Review & advise agency education & youth development collaborations or partnerships

➤ **Advocacy & Public Policy**

- Set endorsement and sign-on procedure/protocol/levels
- Decide when endorsement requests go to Board and when this can act as endorsing body
- Review/make recommendations on endorsement requests and level of priority (election and policy)
- Provide leadership on agency advocacy priorities
- Oversee inventory of Solid Ground advocacy activities
- Develop strategies to engage Solid Ground staff and clients in advocacy activities

➤ **Outreach**

Assess the current outreach efforts across the agency to improve internal and external communication about agency resources to the community and to better improve the coordination of these efforts across programs.

- Define the role/responsibility of the Leadership Team
- Assess current outreach activities by Department

- Review/make recommendations on the work plan for a more coordinated approach to outreach services at Solid Ground
- Support the priorities and guiding principles of Solid Ground's strategic plan.

➤ **Financial Empowerment**

To continue the work started by the Financial Fitness Boot Camp staff to integrate Financial Empowerment into social service delivery at Solid Ground and adopt an agency commitment to the Financial Empowerment approach to ending poverty.

- Define the role/responsibility of the Leadership Team
- Familiarize the Team with the objectives of the past and current CFED Learning Cluster focused on integrating financial empowerment.
- Review/make recommendations on the work plan for integrating Financial Empowerment into services at Solid Ground,
- Support the priorities and guiding principles of financial empowerment work,
- Develop strategies for engaging other Solid Ground staff, programs and departments in financial empowerment work.

➤ **Language Access**

- Ensure our services are accessible to non-English-speaking and limited-English-speaking people;
- Ensure staff have the tools, resources and training needed to deliver services;
- Development of agency-wide policy and procedures regarding language access.

➤ **Emergency Preparedness**

The Solid Ground Emergency/Safety Committee exists to plan, prepare and be ready to execute steps to ensure the safety of Solid Ground property residents and staff members at all sites in the event of a natural disaster, such as an earthquake. Emergency preparation protocol would also be followed in the event of a fire, explosion, or other non-natural disaster. The committee will work to support all Solid Ground sites in emergency planning.

The Solid Ground Emergency/Safety Committee also is responsible for maintaining the safety of clients, visitors, guests and the staff members of Solid Ground at the agency's headquarters building. This includes personal safety training and agency responses to incidents ranging from working with volatile or distressed individuals to an incident where weapons are, or may be, involved.

**Community Advisory Group/Outreach:**

Solid Ground's methods and means to garner our community input, insights and vast experience has been in a transformative process of the last several years. During our last community needs assessment and related strategic planning process completed in 2011 Solid Ground had developed

community advisory group that many members served on the taskforce(s) performing these tasks and their subsequent approval.

In 2012 Solid Ground underwent a management and organization structural change. During this time the staff resource supports for the CAC was realigned and the committee went dormant while other Solid Ground program forms of client feedback were increased while the management reconfiguration was completed. In 2013, Solid Ground finished its reorganization which included the refined development of the Anti-Racism Initiative (ARI) Manager position, separation of the data systems implementation from the VP of Strategy and the elevation of the community engagement strategies to direct reporting to the VP of Strategy position.

In 2014, sadly during the initial implementation timeline on hiring efforts for both the ARI Manager and the Strategic Information Systems Manager, our then Chief Operations and Strategy Officer (COSO) died suddenly. Solid Ground has been thoughtfully filling these three open positions with the SISM hired in October 2014, and the VP of Strategy (former COSO) to be on boarded in January 2015. We anticipate the hiring of the ARI Manager by the 2<sup>nd</sup> Quarter of 2015.

As such, Solid Ground is in the process of recruitment for an Anti-Racism Initiative (ARI) Manager. This Anti-Racism Program Manager is responsible for implementing plans, activities and events designed to undo institutional racism at Solid Ground and in the broader community. The Anti-Racism Program Manager facilitates organizational learning, develops systems, activities, and events to foster a learning environment. Leads and coordinates various staff committees and acts as liaison to Senior Leadership and staff. Specifically, the ARI Manager performs outreach as follows:

- Develop and maintain ongoing working relationships with other anti-racism groups in the community to facilitate Solid Ground's support of these organizing efforts. Plan and implement community forums designed to educate the public about institutional racism. Serve as Solid Ground's representative to various anti-racism groups; including giving presentations at conferences, workshops and meetings;
- Strengthen Solid Ground's connection and accountability to its clients and the communities it serves. Recruit and coordinate the agency's Community Advisory Council and related client/community input and feedback activities (such as tracking client feedback forms). Provide input to the agency's community needs assessment process.

## MISSION, VISION & VALUES

**MISSION:** Solid Ground works to end poverty and undo racism and other oppressions that are root causes of poverty.

**VISION:** Solid Ground believes our community can move beyond poverty and oppression to a place where all people have access to quality housing, nutritious food, equal justice and opportunities to thrive.

**VALUES:** Solid Ground is committed to working with compassion, integrity, accountability, creativity and an anti-oppression approach to end homelessness, hunger, inequality and other barriers to social justice. We value collaboration and leadership from the communities we serve.

## Purpose of the Community Needs Assessment (CNA)

What is a Community Needs Assessment and what is included in developing it? Our CNA requires both an internal and external scan of the current environment and conditions in which Solid Ground performs programs and services to meet the intentions of the federal CSBG Act and to perform then an informed strategic planning process in order to address community unmet needs and where resources and funding assets should come to bare to address these needs going forward. It is intended to guide the direction of the organizations actions and intentions moving forward for up to the next 5 years.

Federal based requirements – Under the CSBG Act a Community Action Agency (CAA) is required to perform a community needs assessment (CNA) within every 5 years as a minimum. Solid Ground's last approved CNA was completed in July 2009. We have until the end of this year to complete as agreed to with the Washington State Department of Commerce.

Current federal legislation being developed has changes proposed to this structure to shorten the process and require the CNA at a minimum of every three years. Solid Ground has in 2014 established a full time position to support the multiple elements of data systems implementation and collections, community needs assessment and strategic planning functions to ensure it can develop and maintain consistent and thoughtful processes to develop these guiding tools and to meet these to be implemented shortened timelines of service and performance review.

### WHAT ARE SOME OF ITS GOALS?

- To provide a current snapshot of real and perceived needs and issues facing the eligible people, families and communities served and to establish a baseline for future data comparisons.
- To identify resources and gaps in the organizations service area and scopes of service focus
- To set the stage for enhanced community collaborations and partnerships and to avoid duplication of services.
- To enable Solid Ground to prioritize areas of concern.
- To aid in strategic planning, including the evaluation of success of Solid Ground in achieving its mission.
- To meet the requirements of Solid Ground's many funding sources.

## Methodology

Aspects of Solid Ground's condensed community needs assessment process;

- Identify the parties responsible for the process;

On October 15, 2014 Solid Ground hired a full time Strategic Information Systems Manager (SISM). This is a management level position that will be responsible for the planning and implementation of agency strategic information gathering and analysis systems and for implementation of agency-wide strategic project initiatives in areas related to new program planning and development. The position will work with agency leadership (Board,

President/CEO, Vice President of Strategy and Programs, and Strategic Leadership Team, to identify strategic information needs and oversee planning and implementation of specific projects to address those needs including but not limited to implementation of an agency-wide information database, strategic environmental scan, *community needs assessment*, and development of strategic initiatives.

The SISM will plan and implement the CNA process and coordinate both internal and external data gathering, interviews and document development.

- Develop action steps and external stakeholders to be included in the assessment process;

As a result of the above pre-scope analysis, a presentation to the Strategic Leadership Team (SLT) on November 11th was given outlining the action steps, project internal and external scan needs and staff impacted.

- Prepare a timeline for the process; Implementation as follows:

The CNA document is due to the WA State Department of Commerce by December 31st, 2014. The SLT will review and refine the draft report during its December 23<sup>rd</sup> meeting and revised final draft will be approved.

- Set-up internal assigned individuals to complete the following;

The SISM and department leads are reviewing and assessing both internal and client based feedback throughout the development of the areas of concern/recommendations for strategic planning.

- Identify and prioritize community issues:

The SISM along with program director and administrative leaders will examine the existing external data and internal program and client feedback to develop prioritized community driven needs. This CNA report will be used by the SLT and the Board of Directors in the strategic planning functions in 2015.

- Identify continuous process improvement action steps – Solid Ground has obtained a VISTA position beginning in February 2015 which will assist the SISM in both a quality review of the produced CNA and the development of a formal, CNA performance process and system to be used going forward at Solid Ground. These efforts will be done in conjunction with supporting the 2015 Solid Ground Strategic Planning process so to add in real time identified additional steps and or coverage of community outreach or participation functions.

## Demographics

### Households

**National:** according to the US 2010 Census.

Total Households	115,226,802
Family Households	76,595,548
Non-Family Households	38,631,254
Average Size	2.61
Married	51.40%
Married with Children	32.53%
Single with Children	16.88%

Local Area:

**King County:**

Total Households	796,555
Family Households	466,381
Non-Family Households	330,174
Average Size	2.39
Married	50.97%
Married with Children	36.28%
Single with Children	13.04%

**Seattle:**

Total Households	285,476
Family Households	123,994
Non-Family Households	161,482
Average Size	2.06
Married	41.03%
Married with Children	32.55%
Single with Children	12.10%

Note: As this report was being edited the Seattle Times published an article, Monday, December 29<sup>th</sup> 2014, “Married – with Children: Seattle Tops List with its Nuclear Families”. The article identifies that today, 70 percent of the roughly 100,000 children under 18 live with two married parents. This is jump of 6 percent since 2000 and amongst the top 50 cities in the United States, Seattle ranks highest in percentage of children in married couple households. This recognizes all marriages in the survey. Children in married households in Seattle leaped in 2013 to 14.16% from just 12.5% in 2000 while nationally the trend has been declining.

## Race and Ethnicity

### National

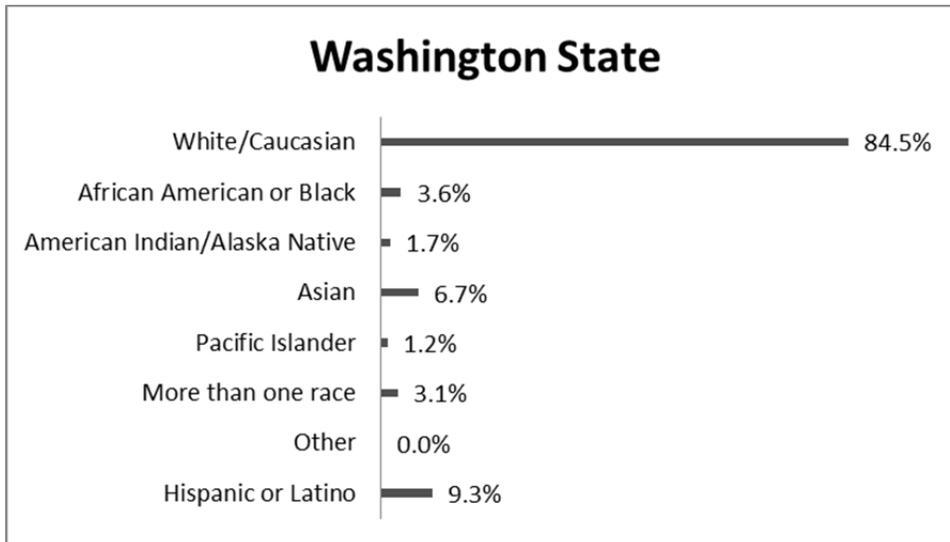
Reported in 2010, of the some 97.75% of people in the United States (308,745,538) that identified themselves as One Race were as follows:

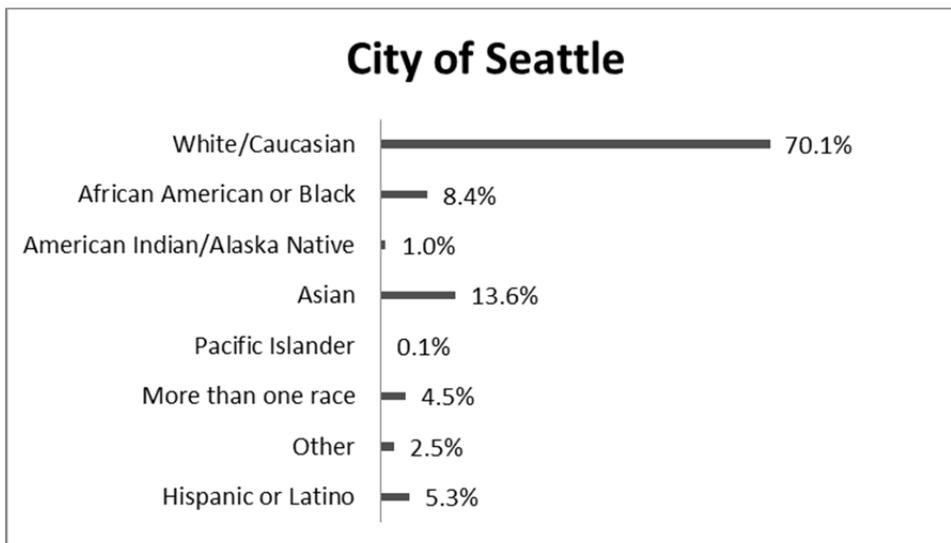
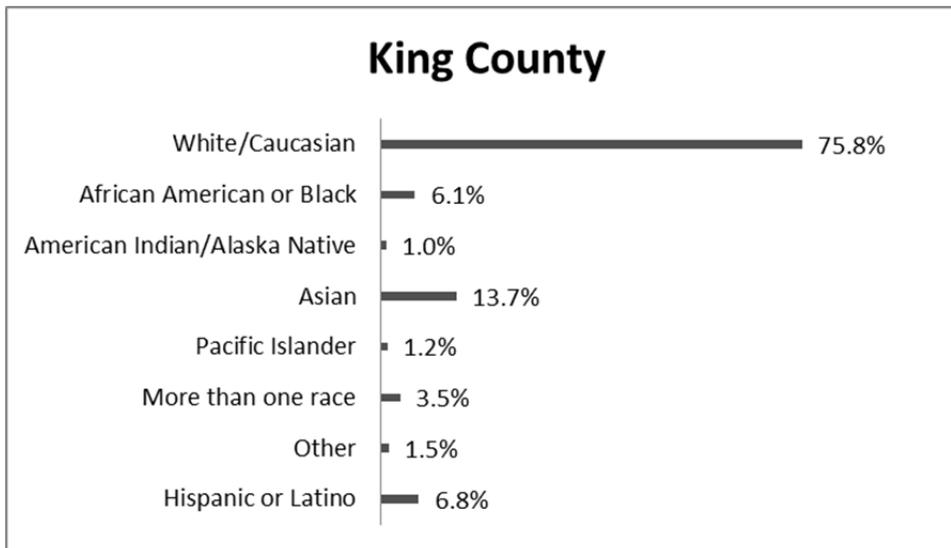
White/Caucasian	78.36%
African American or Black	13.04%
American Indian/Alaska Native	1.2%
Asian	4.91%
Pacific Islander	.02%
Other	.22%

Those that identified as more than one race was 2.25%

Of those identifying 13.3% were from Hispanic or Latino origin.

Locally:





#### **HIGHLIGHTED RACE/ETHNICITY SHIFT:**

Before 2040 (25 years), the greater Seattle Metro Area total population will be more than half people of color. The Latino, Asian and Pacific Islander populations are increasing nation-wide. The Black population is increasing a slightly in the western region as well. This is the picture for the overall population, but is especially interesting is the population of young people and its impacts on education, access to opportunity and employment and income generation.

**Children of color already make up 50% of the age group children under 6 in King County.** In less than 20 years, these children will be our working-age population. We hope that these children will have the tools they need to fully participate in the workforce and community and to be thriving successful adults. Impacts on service systems and language access support services should be examined and their family supportive services needs more fully developed.

## Language

King County's population is growing and is diversifying at a rapid rate in both race and ethnicity. There are more than 170 different languages spoken in King County. King County government and the City of Seattle both have recently devoted additional resources to language access initiatives to support its human services programs in affordable housing, public health and medical access services to support this every expanding diverse community.

Solid Ground's Language Access Program use is a strong indicator of the local area language needs and in 2014 we have seen an increased use with over 448 (costing \$19,310) individual assistance encounters. The top five languages translation and interpretation services were used to access services were **(in order of frequency)**:

Spanish, Tigrinya, Arabic, Somali and Amharic

Other languages included; Russian, Vietnamese, French, Farsi, Mandarin, Cambodian, Lao, Korean and Oromo.

These services spanned clients using multiple programs at Solid Ground with significant use in our housing programs, housing stabilization and tenant counseling services and our food education and farm programs.

## Age and Population

### National

Census data for 2010 states the total population of United States at 308,745,538 and current 2013 data (est.) shows an increase to 316,128,839\* (**up 2.34%**). Using the 2010 United States population summary reports the following age breakdown is as follows:

Male	49.8%
Female	50.2%
Under 18	74,181,467*
18 to 64	194,296,087
65 and older	40,267,984
85 and older	5,493,433

\*2013 estimates show a decrease in those Under 18 of .88% while other population ranges show growth;

18 to 64 - up 1.79%  
 Over 65 - up 9.93%  
 Over 85 – up 9.06%

King County

Census data for 2010 states the total population of King County at 1,940,777 and current 2013 data (est.) shows an increase to 2,007,574 (**up 5.9%**). Using the 2012 American Community Survey the following age breakdown is as follows:

Male	49.9%
Female	50.1%
Under 18	413,411
18 to 64	1,314,098
65 and older	213,268

\*Largest segment of age growth is over 65 and specifically over 85 *see highlight below under Elderly.*

City of Seattle

Census data for 2012 states the total population of City of Seattle at 594,197 (with 13.2% living below poverty) and current 2013 data (est.) shows an increase to 617,466. Using the 2012 American Community Survey the following age breakdown is as follows:

Male	49.67%
Female	50.32%
Under 18	92,468
18 to 64	436,027
65 and older	65,702

Children and Youth

US Census reports that the total population of children (Under 18) decreased slightly based on changes in the Census 2010 reported figures and the estimated 2013 numbers as all other populations rose. In 2010, total population by race was 74.1M of which 73.8% were White, 15.2% Black, 4.7% Asian, 1.6% American Indian and .3% were Pacific Islander. The number reporting as Hispanic ethnicity was 23.2% and those identifying as more than one race was 4.5%.

Across the country, children are more likely to live in poverty than adults, and children of color are much more likely to live in poverty than their white counterparts.

The Federal Interagency Forum on Child and Family Statistics issued “At a Glance for 2014: American’s Children – Key National Indicators of Well Being” and summarized the following data.

Children under 17 living in poverty is steady at 22% with at least 73% living in a household with one parent employed year round and full time. However, a steady 22% live in households experiencing food insecurity.

In recent years, due to the Affordable Care Act (ACA) children ages 0 to 17 are 91.1% covered under a health insurance plan at some time during the year. However, due to changing public or societal beliefs/views we are seeing a decline in the number of children receiving immunizations – 81% in 2010, 78% in 2011 and 76% in 2012. And over 88% of children 0 to 17 have seen a dentist in the last year.

Overall, other indicators of economic distress are demonstrated by school survey responses, for instance in 2012 school age children reported increases in experiencing housing problems; shelter/rent burden, crowding and or physically inadequate housing and or inhabitable conditions, 46% in 2012 up from 45% in 2011 and 42% in 2010.

### **Washington State:**

In Washington, 41% of African American children, 14% of Asian children, 33% of Latino children, and 19% of mixed race children live in poverty, compared with 13% of white children.<sup>1</sup>

### **Birth to 5:**

As stated the racial and ethnic diversity of the United States is rapidly changing and its best seen in birth rates and demographic changes in children's school and social service data. Nationally, by 2040 it is estimated that over nearly 33 percent of children Under 18 will identify as Hispanic and over half of all births will be children of color. As stated, the King County data already shows that we are ahead of this trending shift with over half of children Under 6, in King County are of color in 2014.

Currently, care for children is still a significant challenge in an ever pressuring economic society. Children ages 0 to 4, with employed mothers, whose primary care is a relative is still 49% while children ages 3-6 not yet in kindergarten but in a center-based care arrangement is over 61% nationwide.

Children born to adolescent mothers (14 to 17) in down as well as children reported to be experiencing maltreatment as reported by state agencies for all children under age 5.

Under early education initiatives increases have been reported in parental pre-school development with over 83% of parents reporting they read to their children two to three times a week for pre-kindergarten ages 3 to 5.

### **Children and Youth age 6 to 17:**

It is said that as go the youth in our society, there goes society. There are many statistics related to youth on the national level; education, health factors, suicide rates etc... The follow were considered relevant towards Solid Ground's interests in developing increased support for youth towards educational attainment and life skill development towards career preparation in our service area.

### **Seattle/King County:**

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<sup>1</sup> Kids Count Data Center, found at: <http://datacenter.kidscount.org/data/tables/44-children-in-poverty-by-race-and-ethnicity?loc=49&loct=2#detailed/2/49/false/36,868,867,133,38/10,11,9,12,1,13,185/324,323>

Risk and Protective factors in the social environment influence the way children develop. In a recent survey of 8<sup>th</sup> graders in several King County districts in 2008-2009 school year, concerned risk and protective factors, 33% reported a low commitment to school, 12% reported early initiation of drug use above the national rates, and only 26% reported favorable attitudes among peers towards anti-social behavior.

The on-time graduation rate for high school students in King County were 77.4% in 2008, 76% in 2011 and 75.4% in 2012. The social costs of delay or dropping out can be high: a dropout is more than 8 times as likely to be incarcerated as a person with at least a high school diploma – and is also more likely to earn less, contributes to the economy at a lower rate, and/or to rely on governmental assistance.

National statistics state that in during this Great Recession (2008-?) more youth ages 16 to 19 were either both employed and enrolled in school OR employed but not enrolled in school. These rates have risen for both girls and particularly youth of color. Local data is not compiled for King County however, given the population Solid Ground serves these youth experiencing the need to produce income at a young age is estimated higher than the national data.

## Migrant and Refugees

King County has long been a hub for immigrants and refugees. Since 1984, King County has received the fifth largest number of refugees in the United States. In 2010, 1,894 new refugees arrived in King County. Because of the complex international refugee resettlement system, refugees often come in waves. While migration from the former Soviet Union has decreased in recent years, since 2006, we have seen a sharp spike in migrants from Near/East Asia, particularly Bhutan and Burma. From January to June 2010, Iraqis represented the majority of refugees screened by Seattle-King County Public Health. In addition to newly arriving refugees, many immigrants relocate to King County in order to join others from their ethnic group. These new residents often face enormous challenges as they integrate into American society. Their hurdles can include past trauma, language barriers, isolation, poverty, and disability.

Currently, more than one in five King County residents (23%) identifies as foreign-born. This demonstrates an increasing trend from 17 percent in 2005. Between 2005 and 2009, 42,035 new foreign-born residents moved to King County. The largest share of these residents emigrated from Asia.

## The Working Poor - Needy Families

**Washington State:**

As of June 2014, there were a reported 96,506 total recipients of assistances through the Temporary Assistance to Needy Families (TANF) federal funds coordinated through Washington State. Of those, some 41,883 were families and represented 66,397 children.

Solid Ground keep apprised of those vulnerable populations often the working poor and issues impacting their success through its affiliated support of the Statewide Poverty Action Network (SPAN). SPAN tracks the current political and policy environment regarding this vital funding termed the “safety net” for the working poor; TANF, HEN and ABD federal and state supplemental assistance programs.

The SPAN’s Save the Safety Net Campaign is to prevent the elimination of safety net services for tens of thousands of vulnerable people living with low incomes throughout Washington State. Great progress was made toward this goal in 2013 and 2014, and Solid Ground has hope that the days of deep budget cuts to safety net programs may be behind us. While the Washington State legislature did not raise new revenue or make large investments in education, the safety net, or transportation this past year, they also did not make any substantial cuts to these critical services.

**HIGHLIGHTED CONDITIONS - Save the Safety Net Campaign priorities are as follows:**

- **Restore Temporary Assistance to Needy Families (TANF) cuts and Reform TANF Policy:** In both the 2013 and 2014 Legislative Sessions, current TANF benefits were maintained, and the program was spared new cuts to grants and reductions in lifetime limits. The TANF grant amount acts as the income eligibility limit. This means that because the TANF grant is just \$478 per month for a family of three, only families with a monthly income of \$956 (\$478 times two) or less are eligible to receive assistance. When the grant amount decreased by 15% in 2011, previously eligible families no longer qualified for assistance, even as increasing numbers of families fell into poverty.

One consequence of dropping previously so many families from TANF assistance was a “savings”—we are calling it an underspend—in the program. These “savings” were mostly transferred into the state general fund. This spring however, for the first time, a small portion of the underspend, \$5.87 million, was reinvested back into TANF programming. This investment was for WorkFirst program updates, incentive payments, home visitation programs for TANF families with newborns, and increased funding for work study through local community and technical colleges.

SPAN efforts continue to reform the program and are currently partnering with the Washington State Budget & Policy Center to advocate for evidence-based improvements to the education and training components of TANF/WorkFirst.

- **Preserve and strengthen Housing and Essential Needs (HEN) and Aged, Blind, and Disabled (ABD) programs:** HEN and ABD provide critical lifelines of support to nearly 30,000 extremely low-income, elderly immigrants, and disabled adults who are unable to work. These programs ensure that people in our communities who experience a severe injury, mental illness, or reach advanced age are able to survive. During the past two legislative sessions,

major cuts to ABD or HEN programs were prevented. While there were some cuts to the funding in 2014, those cuts are anticipated to be offset by other resources in the state budget.

- **Ensure access to health care:** Poverty Action has been actively involved in the expansion of federal Medicaid programs and the adoption of the Affordable Care Act in Washington State. During the 2013 Legislative Session, we successfully helped advocate for the state to expand Medicaid. Because of these efforts, approximately 250,000 people with low incomes had access to federal health care coverage at the beginning of 2014. The state also saved \$1.3 billion because the federal government will cover 100% of the costs for the first two years. Poverty Action also succeeded in our efforts to restore Medicaid Adult Dental program. With this restoration, adults with low-incomes can now visit the dentist for preventative care, cavities, root canals, and other dental services. By restoring Adult Dental in 2013, everyone below 133% of the federal poverty level automatically became eligible to receive this coverage when Medicaid expanded in early 2014. Throughout the summer and fall, we worked with Solid Ground's direct services to reach out to those in our community who are eligible to let them know about changes and how to enroll in their newly expanded health care coverage.

## Elderly

### **HIGHLIGHTED AGE SHIFT:**

The Seattle/King County area is on course for a major demographic shift as trends indicate a rapid increase in its age 65 and over population. According to the Office of Financial Management and the Census, senior residents older adults in King County increased by about 29,000 (16 %), from 2000 to 2010. Currently, an estimated 11.8 % of the population is now 65 years or older. Moreover, it is predicated that by 2020, 18 – 20% of the population will be 65 or older.

This dramatic shift increases the need for food delivery, transportation, and companionship support services as well as overall community program services not senior specific but to which impact seniors. These critical programs all allow seniors to preserve their independence reduce their isolation and maintain social contact with friends and neighbors.

Many face more barriers to stability including poverty, food scarcity, as well as language and cultural barriers. Consider the following:

- 1) The population of older adults in King County is increasingly diverse in terms of race, ethnicity and immigration status, with a significant number of individuals who have limited or no English skills;
- 2) 8.6 percent of residents age 65 and older live in poverty and rising. On average, Native Americans, African Americans, Asian/Pacific Islanders, and Hispanic/Latinos fare considerably worse than the average for King County, and far worse than White Non-Hispanic residents rates between 14.6-18.8%.

Older Adults, particularly those over 85, are more likely to have chronic illnesses, and disabilities, and to be frailer than younger populations. Access to resources and services is challenging for

seniors in King County due to several factors including: limited public transit options, concerns about safety, challenging bus schedules and connections to destinations. As the senior population increases, so will the challenges provide age-appropriate transportation options. Are we creating elder friendly housing, services and programs?

King County is home to over 300,000 older adults, up 30% since 2000. By 2025 the number is expected to exceed 513,000 with nearly 1 in 4 county residents age 65 or older. The number of people age 85 doubled since 2000 and is expected to double again by 2025. Of those 60 and older 19% of the population are people of color, 12% Asian.

Here and nationally, older adults are at the greatest risk of suicide. In 2009 the suicide rate in King County topped rates from each of the previous nine years and older adults are disproportionately represented.

## Disabled

Washington State's January 2012 DSHS report stated that over 2.2M residents received DSHS services in the following disability programs:

- **Vocational Rehabilitation Services** – DVR serves those individuals who want to work but who have difficulty with employment due to physical, sensory, cognitive or mental disability.
- **Developmental Disabilities Services** – provides support services and opportunities for personal growth and development for persons with disabilities due to mental retardation, epilepsy, cerebral palsy, autism, or other neurological conditions.
- **Ageing and Adult Care** – DSHS serves older adults and people with functional disabilities 18 years and older with services in daily living.
- **Mental Health Services** – DSHS administers psychiatric treatment for adults and children with severe, chronic or acute mental illnesses, and alcohol and substance abuse related services.

Thirty-six percent of King County's older adults are people with disabilities. The most current estimate from the 2012 American Community Survey is that 185,234 people with disabilities reside in King County, or about 9.3% of the total population. This figure is not directly comparable to the percentage in 2006, due to changes in the way people with disabilities have been counted in the American Community Survey.

Solid Ground has specific services supports, referral relationships and housing supports for many persons with disabilities. As our service populations continue to focus on housing those disabled resource needs will likely grow as well.

## Economy and Income

### National Impacts:

In 2013 the wealth of white households in the United States was 13 times the median wealth of African American households and more than 10 times the wealth of Latino households.<sup>2</sup> While national economic indicators show recovery in general, they are not strong indicators of our region. The Pacific Northwest and more specifically Seattle/King County and the Portland/Vancouver markets are experiencing increased growth and recovery related to jobs, sales and retail markets.

Overall decreased cost regarding utilities and gas prices are helping to support low-income and mid-income residents to offset rising housing and commuting costs.

### Washington State:

Poverty is on the rise in Washington. Our state was one of just three states that saw poverty rise between 2012 and 2013 (the others are New Jersey and New Mexico). **In Washington, one in seven people (14.1 percent) live below the poverty line.**<sup>3</sup> This is up from 13.5 percent in 2012.

While poverty increased across all communities in Washington this year, families of color felt this increase most intensely. In our state, people of color are much more likely to live in poverty than whites, with 25% of African Americans, 27.1% of Latinos, 26.4% of American Indians and Alaska Natives, 16.5% of Native Hawaiians and Pacific Islanders, 12.1% of Asians, and 16.9% of mixed race households living below the Federal Poverty Line (FPL), compared to only 10.4% of white households.<sup>4</sup>

In Washington State, African American household wealth, which includes assets such as property, stocks, 401Ks, and other savings, is just 6% of white household wealth. Similarly, Latino household wealth is just 7% of white wealth.<sup>5</sup>

### Seattle/King County:

The 2014 Community Impact Report, issued by United Way of King County, states the following:

Seattle and King County are experiencing strong economic growth and low unemployment. That means things are looking up for many people in our community, including non-profits and some of the people we serve. However a lot of our job growth is in the lower-paying service sector and housing costs are extremely high. The cost of housing is increasing, and income disparities are great. This is a big challenge to community goals of getting all kids ready for school, ending hunger and ending homelessness.

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<sup>2</sup> Wealth inequality has widened along racial, ethnic lines since end of Great Recession, Rakesh Kochhar and Richard Fry, Pew Research Center. Found at: <http://www.pewresearch.org/fact-tank/2014/12/12/racial-wealth-gaps-great-recession/>

<sup>3</sup> For a family of three, the poverty line is defined as earning less than \$19,530 per year.

<sup>4</sup> Percent of Population in Washington State Living Below 100% PFL, By Race Ethnicity 2013. Source: 2013 5-year ACS data, B17020 tables by race and ethnicity

<sup>5</sup> Budget & Policy analysis of 2011 US Census Survey of Income and Program Participation (SIPP)

Even though we are experiencing economic growth, only a small portion of our population is benefiting. The households at the top 20 % of the income scale are seeing their incomes grow while the middle and lower segments are losing ground. Along with growing income inequality, we see an increasing poverty rate, making it more difficult for families to meet their basic needs and provide an environment that supports healthy development and academic achievement for children.

Between the richest and the poorest: Only 9% of White households live below the Federal Poverty line, compared to 35% of Black Households, 26% of Hispanic households and 22% of American Indian/Alaska Native households. Moreover, the median income of White households is almost double that of Black households.

### **HIGHLIGHTED Local Income Dynamics**

In June 2014, The City of Seattle enacted legislation to increase the minimum wage to be paid to employees working in Seattle. The law is effective beginning 1 April 2015 and will be phased-in over three – seven years depending upon the size of the employer and whether the employer contributes to the employees' health-care costs or if the employee receives tips in the course of their employment (guaranteed Minimum Compensation). The City of Seattle is still in the rule-making process with regulations not expected until 1<sup>st</sup> Quarter 2015.

On 1 April 2015, as an employer with 500 or fewer employees, the Minimum Wage paid by Solid Ground must be at least \$10.00 and the Minimum Compensation must be at least \$11.00. The Minimum Wage will increase each year until \$17.25 by 1 January 2024 and will then increase annually based upon CPI. The Minimum Compensation also increase each year until it reaches \$15.75 by 1 January 2020.

Solid Ground does not have any employees who will be affected by this new law until possibly 1 January 2019 when the Minimum Wage to be paid is \$12.00. Currently, Solid Ground has only two employees making less than \$15.00 per hour (\$11.91 and \$12.37 respectively). Additionally, one department of Solid Ground hires employees at the rate of \$13.33 as a six-month training wage with their hourly wage increasing to greater than \$15.00 when successfully exiting the training period.

Solid Ground was a leader in the effort to increase the minimum wage for City of Seattle employees and Solid Ground is firmly committed to the equity goals of the City of Seattle. Solid Ground will adjust its wage structures to comply with the Minimum Wage law as needed during the phase-in period of 1 April 2015 – 1 January 2024. An immediate fiscal impact to Solid Ground is de-minimis. Adjusting the various wage structures in anticipation of the increasing minimum wage (and Minimum Compensation) could have a greater impact as there will be pressure to also increase other employees' wages in order to maintain compensation differences based upon seniority and job skill (avoid wage compression). We forecast these indirect costs could become an issue in 2021 - 2022 when the Minimum Wage to be paid reaches \$15.75 exceeding the wage to be paid for several of the lowest current grades at Solid Ground.

## **Housing/Inventory Trends**

## National Homeowner level trends:

### Homes/Affordable Housing Markets

The US homeownership rate declined for the ninth consecutive year in 2013. According to the Housing Vacancy Survey (HVS), the national rate stood at 65.1 percent—its lowest reading since 1995. But even though the number of owners was still falling last year, the decline was the smallest posted since 2008. Home owned housing inventory is still 82 percent single resident occupancy with remaining inventory as follows; 7% mobile homes/manufactured homes, 5% condo/co-op homes, and remaining 6% multi-plex home ownership.

In a recently published economic study, dated June 26, 2014, called 'The State of the Nation's Housing 2014 (The Joint Center for Housing of Harvard University), states that "Indeed, many of the conditions holding the owner-occupied housing market back continue to improve. Steady employment growth will give more potential homeowners the ability to buy, while rising home values will encourage more households to act on that ability before prices climb even further. The share of distressed homeowners is also on the decline, reducing the number of households forced to move out of homeownership. (This of course is regionally impacted by economic growth recovery, and the Pacific Northwest Region is experiencing positive economic growth above the national average.) Many of tomorrow's younger households will be minorities. By 2025, minorities will make up 36 percent of all US households and 46 percent of those aged 25–34, thus accounting for nearly half of the typical first-time homebuyer market. Since minority households tend to have lower incomes and wealth than white households, their demand for owner-occupied housing will depend in large measure on the availability of mortgage financing that accommodates their limited resources.

Meanwhile, the aging of the baby-boom generation over the next decade will lift the number of households aged 65 and over by some 10.7 million. Many of these households will choose to make improvements and modifications to their current homes so that they can age in place, while others will seek out new housing options geared toward seniors."

Falling incomes are also taking their toll. Between 2007 and 2012, real median household incomes dropped 8 percent among 25–34 year olds and 7 percent among 35–44 year olds. *For the past two decades, homeownership rates for both of these age groups have closely tracked changes in incomes, rising through the 1990s before turning down in the middle of the 2000s.*

However, the economic recovery may have advanced enough to allow growth to resume, with 2012 incomes edging up 1.2 percent among workers aged 35–44 and dipping just 0.3 percent among those aged 25–34.

In addition, many would-be homebuyers may be burdened by student loan debt. Between 2001 and 2010, the share of households aged 25–34 with student loan debt soared from 26 percent to 39 percent, with the median amount rising from \$10,000 to \$15,000 in real terms. Within this group, the share with at least \$50,000 in student debt more than tripled from 5 percent to 16 percent. For these borrowers, the need to pay off these outsized loans will likely delay any move to homeownership.

Based on the traditional affordability standard (housing costs of no more than 30 percent of income), more than a third of US households live in housing that exceeds their means. Indeed, the share of cost-burdened households rose steadily from 29.6 percent in 2001 to a record 37.2 percent in 2010, before retreating to 35.3 percent in 2012.

On the homeowner side, the share with cost burdens crested in 2008 at 30.4 percent, up 6 percentage points from 2001. The share then held steady for several years before edging down in 2011. Much of this improvement reflects the fact that many owners were able to refinance their mortgages at much lower interest rates. More important, though, the number of owners with mortgages fell by 2.7 million in 2007–12 as the foreclosure crisis progressed, matching the drop in the number of mortgaged owners with cost burdens. Moreover, even after two years of declines, the share of cost-burdened homeowners stands well above levels at the start of the last decade.

### Seattle/King County:

The housing markets in Seattle and throughout King County continue to exhibit strong recovery from the recessionary lows of 2008 – 2010. Housing markets within our service areas have experienced increased sales as a trend and also rises in both financial rates and home pricing. Our service area is as a region is ahead of both the national and state trends on market recovery.

Our mortgage assistance programs continues to see the ramifications of the foreclosure crisis and like the nation, an increase in home owners with cost burdens. Solid Ground has experienced a steady use of their services with the level of complexity impacting families with special characteristics; multigenerational family members in living spaces, larger families, and those whose foreclosure processes have progressed due to lack of education and or unique circumstances requiring a degree of system understanding and or legal representation supports.

Also, Solid Ground in 2014 assumed statewide program support for the Reverse Mortgage Education services it provides to those eligible older home owners seeking to potentially use the program. Again, as our local population ages and is estimated to desire to “age in place” and not leave their residence, these client numbers are estimated to rise.

## Rental Housing

### National Rental trends:

According to The Joint Center for Housing Studies of Harvard University, the collapse of the housing market was a key factor in the genesis of the Great Recession, and its painfully slow rebound is one of the major impediments to the broader economic recovery. Even so, the rental sector bounced back relatively quickly both because demand has been so strong and because it was less caught up in the lending excesses that fueled the housing bubble. By a variety of measures, the rental sector has been strengthening for several years, starting with the downturn in vacancy rates in 2010. Rents picked up in 2011 as markets tightened. With these gains, the financial performance of rental properties also improved, with net operating income and property values making up much of the ground lost during the downturn.

Rental housing has always provided a broad choice of homes for people at all phases of life. The recent economic turmoil underscored the many advantages of renting and raised the barriers to homeownership, sparking a surge in demand that has buoyed rental markets across the country. But significant erosion in renter incomes over the past decade has pushed the number of households paying excessive shares of income for housing to record levels. Assistance efforts have failed to keep pace with this escalating need, undermining the nation's longstanding goal of ensuring decent and affordable housing for all.

Reversing the long uptrend in homeownership, American households have increasingly turned to the rental market for their housing. From 31 percent in 2004, the renter share of all US households climbed to 35 percent in 2012, bringing the total number to 43 million by early 2013.

A confluence of factors drove this increase. The enormous wave of foreclosures that swept the nation after 2008 certainly played a role, displacing millions of homeowners. The economic upheaval of the Great Recession also contributed, with high rates of sustained unemployment straining household budgets and preventing would-be buyers from purchasing homes. Meanwhile, the experience of the last few years highlighted the many risks of homeownership, including the potential loss of wealth from falling home values, the high costs of relocating, and the financial and personal havoc caused by foreclosure. All in all, recent conditions have brought renewed appreciation for the benefits of renting, including the greater ease of moving, the ability to choose housing that better fits the family budget, and the freedom from responsibility for home maintenance.

Households of all but the oldest age groups have joined in the shift toward renting. The largest increase in share is among households in their 30s, up by at least 9 percentage points over an eight-year span. But shares of households across all five-year age groups between 25 and 54 also rose by at least 6 percentage points. In fact, the jump in rental rates for most age groups was well above the 4.0 percent overall rise, reflecting how the movement of the population into older age groups (when owning is more prevalent) stemmed some of the drop in homeownership.

With these widespread increases in the shares opting to rent, the 2000s marked the strongest decade of growth in renter households over the past half-century. After a modest rise early in the decade, the number of renter households soared after 2005, boosting average annual growth to more than 500,000. Although estimates from the two key Census Bureau sources for 2010–13 differ widely, they both indicate that renter household growth continued at a torrid pace—rising at double the rate of recent decades.

The future pace of growth will depend largely on how the share of households that rent evolves. This in turn depends primarily on economic factors such as changes in house hold incomes, the direction of prices and rents, and the availability and terms of mortgage finance. But given the ongoing recovery in the homeowner market and the fact that renters rates for households aged 30–64 are at their highest in the last 30 years, further increases in renter share are likely to be small and growth in the number of renters is likely to slow.

The Joint Center for Housing Studies has estimated renter household growth over the next decade applying current homeownership rates to recent household projections—in essence isolating the contribution of demographic forces from changes in renters rates. Depending on the pace of

immigration, the number of renter households is likely to increase by between 4.0 million and 4.7 million in 2013–23. While a considerable slowdown from the current rate, growth would still outstrip increases in both the 1960s and 1990s. These projections would of course understate renter household growth if renting becomes more popular over the next decade and overstate growth if homeownership rates rebound.

Against the backdrop of the rental market recovery, declining renter incomes continue to add to longstanding affordability pressures. Already up sharply before the recession began, the share of cost-burdened renters took a turn for the worse after 2007. As a result, the share of renters paying more than 30 percent of income for housing, the traditional measure of affordability, rose 12 percentage points over the decade, reaching 50 percent in 2010. Much of the increase was among renters facing severe burdens (paying more than half of income for rent), boosting their share nearly 8 percentage points to 27 percent. These levels were unimaginable just a decade ago, when the fact that the severely cost burdened share was nearly 20 percent was already cause for serious concern.

In 2011, the last year for which detailed information is available, both the overall share of renters with cost burdens and the share with severe burdens moved up by about half a percentage point. These increases expanded the ranks of cost burdened renters to 20.6 million, including 11.3 million that pay more than half their incomes for housing. Initial estimates for 2012 indicate the number of cost-burdened households again increased to a record 21.1 million. Although the share of cost-burdened renters receded slightly, this modest improvement occurred only because the number of higher income renters rose sharply. Housing cost burdens are nearly ubiquitous among lowest income renters. An astounding 83 percent of renters with incomes of less than \$15,000 were housing cost burdened in 2011, including a dismal 71 percent with severe burdens. But the largest increases in shares in 2001–11 were for moderate income renters, up 11 percentage points among those with incomes of \$30,000–44,999 and 9 percentage points among those with incomes of \$45,000–74,999.

### **Seattle/King County:**

While King County and the City of Seattle have made great strides to promote and fund affordable rental housing the overall market is falling behind the pace of those in need. In 2012, King County's Annual Report Out stated that against its goal to fund formerly homeless housing units of 9,500 by 2015 it was currently funding 5,424 units (57%) and continuing to develop partnerships in housing. The City of Seattle has passed an ordinance (April 2015 effective date) requiring private landlords to both register rental properties and to maintain such units to acceptable outline conditions for health and safety. These efforts are aimed to ensure affordable housing options continue with available inventories. Current average rental costs in King County are \$970 for a 1 bedroom, \$1,183 for a 2 bedroom and \$1,743 for a 3 bedroom, with rates higher in the City of Seattle; \$990 for a studio/1bedroom, \$1,410 for a 2 bedroom and \$1,910 for a 3 bedroom.

In King County renters make up 38.48% of the population. Vacancy rates overall in King County was 6.1% in November 2014 but some neighborhoods in the City of Seattle are experiencing less than 2%. According to the Office of the Mayor, these vacancy rates are supported by rising rental housing rates being experienced in the City of Seattle where the average rental costs of a 1 bedroom

unit is \$1,412 and where the very low income households (with less than \$26,250 annual wage) has 62% experiencing housing cost burden. In total, an estimated 15 to 20% of ALL Seattle households are currently severely cost burdened.

### **HIGHLIGHT: Rental Housing Keys: Housing Stability:**

As part of King County's commitment to making homelessness a "rare, brief, and one-time occurrence," we designed services at Solid Ground to help our community address immediate crises while building a foundation for long-term stability with a priority of housing stability. Our aim is to build the skills that prevent homelessness and break the cycle of poverty-related crises. These services range from mortgage and tenant counseling/education, financial empowerment, life skills coaching, and connecting people to technology and legal resources. We seek to address housing stability through outcomes including: increased knowledge of renters' rights and tools to assert those rights, increased knowledge of the foreclosure process and prevention of foreclosure through modification and/or mediation, increased access to home equity for seniors, improved credit and reduced debt, decreased use of costly financial services such as predatory loans, increased financial stability through increased financial management skills and access to mainstream resources that help reduce expenses.

## Employment

### **National:**

Unemployment trends have showed progress with declining rates; 10.2% (2011), 9.0% (2012) and 8.5% by March 2013 with October 2014 rates down to 5.8%.

### **Current Status:**

Unemployment rates decreased in 41 states and the District of Columbia in November 2014, according to the Bureau of Labor Statistics. Three states saw increases in unemployment for the month, while rates in six states and Puerto Rico remained unchanged.

Compared to a year ago, unemployment is down in 43 states, D.C., and Puerto Rico. Four states saw higher unemployment over the year, while rates are unchanged in three states. The national unemployment rate for November was a steady 5.8 percent.

### **Washington State:**

Unemployment trends have showed progress with declining rates; 9.7 (2011), 9.2% (2012) and 8.7% by March 2013.

The unemployment rates for Washington State were at 6.2% for November 2014.

### **Seattle/King County:**

October 2014 King County unemployment rates had dropped below 5.1% with a number of cities experiencing under 5.0%; Kent, Bothell, Seattle, Renton, Bellevue, Kirkland, Redmond, Sammamish

and Issaquah. As of December 2013, the number of reported unemployed people in King County totaled 94,050 (6.8%) as significant decrease from 2009 figures of 8.5% and 2008 figures of 3.6%.

However, even though we are experiencing economic growth at greater than the national level, only a small proportion of our service population is benefiting. The top 20 percent the income scale of households are seeing their incomes rise while middle and lower segments are losing ground. Along with growing income inequity, we are seeing an increased poverty rate. Client populations face multiple barriers to employment and career development.

## Poverty Indicators; Regional Initiatives & Efforts on Poverty

### Homelessness/Housing Services

The Seattle/King County region continues to see a rise in the number of homeless despite great efforts and advances in the coordinated efforts of both governmental and private/nonprofit sector organizations. Coupled with the increasing cost of living challenges and housing short falls, the region continues to experience a taxed homeless services support system.

Solid Ground is a part of a vital network of community agencies striving to address a broad range of community needs. Thus, we create and participate in coalitions, as well as partner with over 450 strong organizations, residential sites, coalitions with the goal of ending poverty.

Specifically related to housing and service partnerships we work through the King County. Key housing provision partners include King County Housing Authority, Seattle Housing Authority, Capital Hill Housing and Plymouth Housing and the other landlords working within the Family Connections Partnership.

Key resource and referral partnerships include Child Care Resources, Kids Plus, Career Connections, YWCA Employment programs, Family Assistance (Solid Ground Program), Financial Fitness Boot Camp (Solid Ground Program), Veterans Services, DSHS, community legal aid, and Financial Empowerment Centers. We also partner with the Landlord Liaison Project (LLP) to maximize the support and services for the client in their efforts to obtain permanent housing.

Solid Ground participates in collaborative efforts such as the King Co. Committee to End Homelessness, Mayor's Partnership for Homeless People, Homeless Advisory Group, and Seattle/King Co. Human Service Coalition to shape policies that benefit homeless residents.

Solid Ground's Shelter Diversion program was launched in early 2014 through the Shelter Diversion Pilot Project funded by Building Changes and the City of Seattle in partnership with the Committee to End Homelessness.

Conversion Initiative – King County, SHA and other funding source (UWKC, City of Seattle, Gates Foundation) – Solid Ground is in cohort 1 and thus one of the founding first five agencies of transitional housing. Solid Ground will be in process of converting 26 (possibly 27) currently from transitional family housing with case management services to Permanent Supportive Housing with intensive supports during 2015 and 2016. This conversion will continue to require Solid Ground to increase both access services and on campus service partnerships to ensure support service quality for high needs families currently not being able to be housed due to their complex and comprehensive service support needs. Current waiting list times for chronic families is above the average in the Family Housing Connections (FHC) system because of a lack of housing with intensive services programming.

Solid Ground has been serving the community for 40 years and has over 30 years of experience in addressing homelessness among families throughout Seattle and King County. We offer a wide

array of housing and support services for homeless families including emergency shelter, tenant counseling and education, service-enriched permanent housing, and much more. Some of our key accomplishments include: 1) Providing interim housing and comprehensive support for over 10,000 families each year through Family Shelter, Broadview Emergency Shelter & Transitional Housing, Sand Point Family Housing, Santos Place and JourneyHome programs; 2) creating effective programming to help homeless families identify housing options and quickly obtain permanent housing; 3) joining local funders and partners in redefining rapid re-housing services and engaging in new models of services such as Shelter Diversion to explore ways of supporting families in quickly exiting homelessness.

As an anti-poverty agency, Solid Ground recognizes that poverty and racism are integrally related. Many of the barriers our clients face are a direct result of institutional racism: housing discrimination, benefits denied to immigrants, predatory lending, language barriers, etc. Solid Ground is committed to addressing institutional racism in our organization and in our community. Strategies that we have in place to meet the cultural and linguistic needs of our clients include:

- **Client-centered Services:** Solid Ground takes a client-centered approach to service delivery. We partner with the family, working with them to develop a plan to address barriers to housing stability. Our work with families is strength-based, developing action steps and goals that focus on the core competencies of a family.
- **Respect:** Solid Ground is committed to working with compassion, integrity, accountability, and respect for both our clients and community partners. As such, we value collaboration and leadership from the communities we serve. Solid Ground's Client Advisory Board is made up of former clients who help inform and evaluate agency policies and practices. We respect and value the knowledge and experience our former clients offer. Our services are designed to respect the uniqueness of diverse cultures. As such our board and staff reflect the populations we serve.
- **On-going Cultural Competency Training:** Solid Ground offers multiple cultural competency trainings each year including Undoing Institutionalized Racism (participation is required of all Solid Ground employees), How to Work with an Interpreter, Cultural Competency—Working with Colleagues/Clients, Courageous Conversations, Internalized Racial Oppression, Colors Communications Styles, White Privilege, White Privilege for Supervisors/Managers, Identifying Racist Moments, and Race and Class.
- **Welcoming Environment:** Solid Ground strives to create non-threatening meeting and service areas that are welcoming to clients from all ethnic backgrounds. We recognize how difficult it is to need and ask for help. Through posters, displays and art that reflect varied cultures, as well as a welcoming staff, it is our goal to help clients feel more comfortable as they seek our help.
- **Language Access Policies:** All Solid Ground clients have access to interpretation services at no cost. Solid Ground has a language access policy that addresses the increasing and changing needs of ELL clients. We are committed to removing language as a barrier to

services through translated materials as well as in-house and contracted interpretation services.

Currently Solid Ground's Sand Point Project provides **transitional and permanent housing** for 112 formerly homeless families and 117 single adults, including over 250 to 280 children. **We recognize both the profound responsibility we have to these individuals and families, as well as the extraordinary opportunity this situation presents to make an impact on generational poverty.**

The individuals and families served at Sand Point are both homeless and previously homeless with multiple barriers to obtaining and maintaining housing, including poor rental history, underemployment, former substance abuse, criminal history, and mental health issues.

Among families at Sand Point: 1) all are at or below 30% of median income at program entry, 2) 65-70% are people of color, 3) approximately 30% percent are refugees or immigrants, 4) 40% have a history of domestic violence, 5) approximately 30% experience language and cultural barriers, and 6) a majority consist of single mothers with multiple children.

Specifically, Solid Ground's housing programs includes:

- **Sand Point Family Housing** offering **27** transitional housing units for homeless families with children under 18. Families receive safe, secure housing with case management and support services for up to two years. Roughly **40** families including **90** children are served each year.
- **Brettler Family Place I** offering **51** non-time-limited, service enriched housing units for formerly homeless families with children under 18. More than 120 children are now in residence. Families receive onsite supportive case management services, resources and referrals. We offer classes for both children and adults focusing on employment, increasing education, English language skills, parenting, and financial fitness.
- **Brettler Family Place II**, scheduled for completion in early December, will be offering **21** non-time-limited housing units for formerly homeless families.
- **Santos Place** providing **41** transitional housing units for single homeless men and women, including veterans and adults with disabilities—of which three are ADA-accessible units. Residents receive case management and support services for up to two years.
- **Phyllis Gutierrez Kenney Place**, which will offer **33** units of permanent housing with supportive services for single individuals, was completed in May 2104. Located across the street from Santos Place, the program will provide case management, access to resources, and community connections for formerly homeless men and women.

Solid Ground recognizes that providing a physical space to call home is just one part of helping individuals and families who are homeless achieve housing stability. In order to truly achieve stability, individuals and families need to address the underlying causes for their homelessness. This requires support services that are tailored to their specific barriers and needs. Toward that end, in addition to providing safe housing and case management services for homeless families and individuals, Sand Point provides:

- A supportive and encouraging environment, where low-income people can develop a strong sense of community and address the issues that led to their becoming homeless.

- An on-site Community Service and Resource Center, featuring an array of supportive and educational programming and activities.
- A stunning natural environment that offers respite, healing and support to people working to regain solid ground.
- Connections to Solid Ground's 26 programs and services.
- A nation-wide model for using surplus military facilities to help end homelessness.

**Our Family Shelter program provides short-term emergency housing** to very low-income homeless families with children in need of immediate crisis intervention and housing stabilization. These families struggle with multiple barriers to obtaining and maintaining housing- including lack of viable employment to pay rent, poor credit, multiple evictions and housing debt- and are also dealing with mental health issues, medical conditions, substance abuse, criminal histories, and language and cultural barriers which limit their ability to find appropriate affordable housing. Our residents come in many shapes and sizes: single parents; large, multi-generational, extended families, couples with children and pregnant single women. Our shelter stays are temporary but non-time limited with an ideal of 90 days or less, but more often, are extended to 120 days or more.

**Our Broadview Emergency Shelter is a facility-based enhanced shelter program** for homeless families with children headed by single mothers including extended and non-traditional families, families with teen-aged male children and adult single women who are working to reunify with children.

The population served is characterized as episodically and transitionally homeless families, presenting multiple barriers to stable housing including: low-income (91% of families at Broadview earn less than 30% of the area median income), language barriers, histories of drug/alcohol, complicated immigration issues, criminal histories, mental and physical illnesses, among others. Over 68% of Broadview clients are children, most of whom are under six years of age. All of our clients are homeless. **Generally more than 95% of the families served are domestic violence (DV) survivors.**

The Broadview Emergency Shelter Program provides intensive, comprehensive case management; specialized children's and DV programming; culturally appropriate services for immigrant and refugee populations and comprehensive coordinated services targeted to support families in crisis.

The goal is to provide safe and secure emergency housing, 24 hour crisis intervention, comprehensive case management, support and referral services for homeless women and children to stabilize the family and to move them to more stable housing programs.

Broadview's Transitional Housing program is a facility-based Transitional Assistance Program for homeless families with children headed by a single person, including extended families and families with teen-aged children, located in a secure four-story apartment building. The population served is primarily characterized as episodically homeless families presenting multiple barriers to stable housing that need time, intense case management, and supports to enable them to secure permanent housing and establish independent lives.

JourneyHome serves one- and two-parent families with dependent children who meet the HUD definition of homelessness and have incomes at or below 50% of the Area Median Income. The

program specifically targets families in King County who are homeless and residing in emergency shelter or are living in the street or other place not meant for human habitation. Seventy-three percent of the adults entering the program have income of less than \$1000 a month. Of adults entering the program 27% have no income. Participating families have a variety of service needs. Over 30% of households served included women and children fleeing domestic violence, 16% of adults suffer from mental health issues, 10% report having a history of substance abuse, and nearly 30% of all households served in the last year have physical or cognitive disabilities and/or chronic health conditions.

Solid Ground's Shelter Diversion program was launched in early 2014 through the Shelter Diversion Pilot Project funded by Building Changes and the City of Seattle in partnership with the Committee to End Homelessness. The goal of the program is to assist families in King County who are literally homeless, living on the street or other place not meant for human habitation, in identifying housing solutions to avoid a shelter stay while quickly identifying a safe and stable place to live. Families are identified for the program when seeking shelter by calling 211, the first step to accessing the coordinated entry system, Family Housing Connection. The Diversion program is designed to work with families at the initial stages of homelessness to determine if they have any alternatives to shelter. Because of this, the current circumstances for the families at enrollment vary including living on the street, staying in their car, living in tents, living with a different friend or family member every night, et cetera.

Solid Ground's broad reach, strong infrastructure and depth of experience make us a leader the fight against poverty in King County. Our clients do not experience poverty as a single focus issue, so we don't work that way either. Our programs run the gambit from housing to transportation, which allows us to layer our services and increase the capacity of any one program to meet our clients' needs holistically.

Our highest priority is to mitigate the indignities and injustices that people in poverty endure. Many of our clients are caught in a demoralizing cycle of despair, isolation and deprivation. We seek to change this by recognizing the dignity and strength of all people as we work meet basic survival needs and lay the foundation for long term stability. **When exiting a Solid Ground program, we intend that our clients: 1) have their current crisis lessened or resolved; 2) have the knowledge, resources and skills to deal with future crises and build long term stability; and 3) know that we respect them and believe in their capacity to transform their lives.**

It is not enough to focus only on crises. Our programs are designed to help families gain the essential skills and resources needed in order to build better lives. We do this by: 1) promoting self-advocacy and providing the education, tools, and resources necessary for marginalized families to effectively advocate for themselves; 2) creating individualized Action Plans with housing clients to outline specific steps that help lead to self-sufficiency, such as registering for school, enrolling in job training, etc.; and 3) educating households about financial health including money management, predatory lending prevention, and more.

We are also committed to both direct service and advocacy, where most agencies do one or another. Our advocacy efforts, informed by our clients' actual struggles, seek to make a long-term impact on the issues that perpetuate homelessness, hunger and other consequences of poverty.

## Health Factors

### Healthcare Insurance and Service Access

Under the Affordable Care Act, **all Americans are guaranteed access to health insurance coverage as of January, 2014**. In King County alone it is estimated that 183,800 low-income residents will be eligible for health insurance at no cost through Washington State's expanded Medicaid program, Washington Apple Health. For the majority of the clients we serve, this has the potential to be life changing—and for some truly life-**saving**. The key, however, is ensuring that those in need are aware of the new health care laws and how to enroll in an affordable health care plan. Sadly, those who need affordable health insurance coverage the most will have the most difficulty accessing it. January 1, 2014 shows great promise for many if, and only if, barriers preventing access are broken down. This has presented us with a unique opportunity to secure critical health coverage for our clients.

Today, one in six King County residents between the ages 18 and 64 – or **217,300 people** – are uninsured (2011 American Community Survey, U.S. Census). This marks a 3% increase in uninsured people since 2008. Moreover, the ethnic breakdown of those uninsured in King County reveals gross inequities:

- People who live in south King County cities are more likely to be uninsured. For example, adults in Des Moines are seven to eight times more likely to be uninsured than adults in Mercer Island or Sammamish. (2009-2011 American Community Survey, U.S. Census and [www.kingcounty.gov/healthservices/health/partnerships/HealthReform.aspx](http://www.kingcounty.gov/healthservices/health/partnerships/HealthReform.aspx)).
- Hispanic/Latinos are nearly four times as likely and Black/African Americans more than twice as likely to be uninsured as Whites. In addition, 18.2% of adult males are uninsured, compared to 14% of adult females (2009-2011 American Community Survey, U.S. Census).

**Broad Support Advocacy:** Poverty Action has been actively involved as well in the expansion of federal Medicaid programs and the adoption of the Affordable Care Act in Washington State. During the 2013 Legislative Session, we successfully helped advocate for the state to expand Medicaid. Because of these efforts, approximately 250,000 people with low incomes had access to federal health care coverage at the beginning of 2014. The state also saved \$1.3 billion because the federal government will cover 100% of the costs for the first two years. Poverty Action also succeeded in our efforts to restore Medicaid Adult Dental program. With this restoration, adults with low-incomes can now visit the dentist for preventative care, cavities, root canals, and other dental services. By restoring Adult Dental in 2013, everyone below 133% of the federal poverty level automatically became eligible to receive this coverage when Medicaid expanded in early 2014. Throughout the summer and fall, we worked with Solid Ground's direct services to reach out to those in our community who are eligible to let them know about changes and how to enroll in their newly expanded health care coverage.

### **Our Response: Family Assistance Health Care Coverage Educational Outreach**

In response to this opportunity, Solid Ground is prepared to use its resources and expertise to connect those in need with this newly available health care coverage. Much of this work will take place through our Family Assistance program due to their knowledge of Medicaid law and their

connections throughout the legal aid and social services communities. Our overriding goal is to meet the increasing needs of our clients in the most efficient and effective manner possible. To do so, Family Assistance staff has already identified some of the barriers that our clients may experience when trying to access free or low-cost health care coverage and has developed several strategies to address them.

- **Language Access:** Limited English proficiency in many of the populations we serve is a major barrier to understanding and obtaining health care coverage. While we already provide our services to clients in any language needed through the use of interpreters, we would like to increase outreach in limited English communities and translate more of our vital documents and informational materials into more languages.

Solid Ground is committed to working with our community's immigrant and refugee populations, helping them understand their eligibility within the Affordable Care Act, which is very complex. Solid Ground strives to ensure that language is not a barrier to accessing our services by providing interpretation and translation at no cost to our clients. Currently Solid Ground has 13 employees who serve as interpreters for the agency in Spanish, Cantonese, Russian, Somali, ASL, Swahili, Kutchi, Gujarati, Urdu, Vietnamese, Khmer, Tagalog and Mandarin. Our two Russian interpreters are also certified translators. When Solid Ground is not able to meet the language needs of clients internally; external contracted service providers are utilized.

In addition, our Language Access Team meets several times a year to improve upon the agency's ability to meet the language access needs of our program participants, including drafting policies and procedures to remove barriers to services. All Solid Ground employees are required to know how to access interpretation and translation services provided both internally by designated bilingual employees and externally by our contracted service providers to meet the language needs of our clients. A Language Access Resource Guide provides information to employees on contracted qualified agencies or individuals who offer translation and interpretation services.

Solid Ground also offers multiple cultural competency trainings to employees each year including Undoing Institutionalized Racism (required for all Solid Ground employees and Board members), How to Work with an Interpreter, Cultural Competency—Working with Colleagues/Clients, Courageous Conversations, Internalized Racial Oppression, Colors Communications Styles, White Privilege, White Privilege for Supervisors/Managers, Identifying Racist Moments, and Race and Class.

- **Transportation Barriers:** Most of the clients we serve live in south King County and rely on public transportation. The location of our office in Seattle's Wallingford neighborhood makes access difficult for many clients. We have responded to this reality by using office space made available by the Multi-Service Center in Federal Way for client meetings. In addition, we conduct outreach events at the Multi-Service Center in Kent and Federal Way the Compass Center, and the Downtown Emergency Service Center (DESC) in downtown Seattle. Our outreach at the Compass Center and DESC are specifically geared towards reaching the homeless population, as this population has particularly high barriers to attaining legal services.

- **Access to computers and phones**
- **Assistance with navigating administering agencies**

## Our Strategy

Solid Ground's implementation plan for educational outreach around the new healthcare coverage will include:

- **Presentations:** Family Assistance will accept at least 36 presentation invitations from community partners or client communities over the next year. Community partners in King County will include: homeless shelters, transitional housing programs, social service agencies, and 2-1-1, as well as social workers who are working in health care.
- **Information Sessions:** Family Assistance will conduct information sessions for Solid Ground Case Managers, representing over 1,500 potentially eligible individuals, around healthcare enrollment and eligibility.
- Direct client representation
- Social Media/Blog/Website
- Creation of self-help materials

## A Success Story

A single mother of three came to our office after having had her cash benefits terminated the previous month when DSHS ruled that she did not meet any of the exceptions to extend cash benefits past the 60 month time limit. After conducting the intake it was clear to us that she was eligible for a time limit extension (TLE) because she met the criteria under two separate extension categories: (1) she was dealing with extreme family violence and (2) she was disabled and, therefore, likely eligible for SSI. We attacked the case from several fronts. First, we requested a hearing on her behalf; second, we had her reapply for TANF and accompanied her to the TLE extension review meeting with DSHS. Because we attended the interview with the client, DSHS was forced to process her case thoroughly and as a result found her eligible for a TANF TLE. We ended up having to go to hearing on the issue of retroactive cash benefits for the 4 months she was without benefits. We received a favorable hearing decision and the client was awarded \$2500 in cash by DSHS to repay her for lost benefits. Over the course of the case, this client was found eligible for SSI-proof that DSHS had incorrectly ruled her not disabled. If we had not intervened in this case, this client would have lost her housing and her family. She has been so grateful for our services that she has started speaking out in advocacy forums hosted and supported by the Statewide Poverty Action Network (SPAN).

Solid Ground has extensive expertise and experience in working with individuals and families who are reliant on safety net services. We have the knowledge of and familiarity with working to break down the many barriers that prevent access to support services including language, lack of mobility, unemployment, disenfranchisement, etc. Furthermore, our long-standing presence within low-income communities enables our programs to connect with those most in need of the new health care coverage.

## Domestic Violence Stats

### National Statistics

- On average, **24 people per minute are victims of rape, physical violence or stalking by an intimate partner** in the United States — more than 12 million women and men over the course of a year. (Source: [http://www.cdc.gov/violenceprevention/pdf/ipv\\_factsheet2012-a.pdf](http://www.cdc.gov/violenceprevention/pdf/ipv_factsheet2012-a.pdf)).
- Nearly **3 in 10 women (29%) and 1 in 10 men (10%) in the US** have experienced rape, physical violence and/or stalking by a partner and report a related impact on their functioning. (Source: [http://www.cdc.gov/violenceprevention/pdf/ipv\\_factsheet2012-a.pdf](http://www.cdc.gov/violenceprevention/pdf/ipv_factsheet2012-a.pdf)).
- Women living in low-income households are at heightened risk of domestic violence. (Source: Heron SL. Risk factors for victimization of intimate partner violence. In Mitchell C, Anglin D, eds. *Intimate Partner Violence: A Health-Based Perspective*. New York, New York: Oxford University Press; 2009:105-13).
- A few studies that followed women over time suggest that poverty increases the risk for domestic violence, and domestic violence increases risk for poverty.<sup>11</sup> Women's education levels are not consistently linked with domestic violence risk. (Source: Goodman LA, Smyth KF, Borges AM, Singer R. *When crises collide: How intimate partner violence and poverty intersect to shape women's mental health and coping?* *Trauma, Violence & Abuse* 2009; 10:306-29)
- 30 to 60% of perpetrators of intimate partner violence also abuse children in the household. (Source: <https://www.ncjrs.gov/pdffiles1/nij/grants/213503.pdf>).
- Witnessing violence between one's parents or caretakers is the strongest risk factor of transmitting violent behavior from one generation to the next. (*Break the Cycle*. (2006). *Startling Statistics*. [http://www.breakthecycle.org/html%20files/I\\_4a\\_startstatis.htm](http://www.breakthecycle.org/html%20files/I_4a_startstatis.htm)).
- Boys who witness domestic violence are twice as likely to abuse their own partners and children when they become adults. (Strauss, Gelles, and Smith, "Physical Violence in American Families: Risk Factors and Adaptations to Violence" in *8,145 Families*. Transaction Publishers (1990).

### State Statistics

- Washington 2011 BRFSS data suggest that both for women and for men and women combined, higher income and having graduated from college were associated with less risk of domestic violence injury compared to those with less income or education. (Source: *Washington State Behavioral Risk Factor Surveillance System (BRFSS) Data: 2011 Olympia, Washington: Washington State Department of Health, under federal cooperative agreement number U58/SO000047; data prepared by Washington State Department of Health Office of Non-Infectious Conditions Epidemiology*).
- The Washington State 2011 Behavioral Risk Factor Surveillance System (BRFSS) survey found that 14% ( $\pm 1\%$ ) of Washington adults reported experiencing domestic physical violence at some point in their life; 11% ( $\pm 1\%$ ) reported injuries from that violence; and 2% ( $\pm 1\%$ ) reported such violence in the past year.
- A recent study on recidivism trends of DV offenders in Washington State found that when compared to non-DV offenders, DV offenders in Washington are more likely to have a criminal history, have more violent and assault charges, and be classified as higher risk to reoffend. This study also found that DV offenders have higher rates of recidivism than non-

domestic violence offenders. (*“Recidivism Trends of Domestic Violence Offenders in Washington State,” Washington State Institute for Public Policy, August 2013*).

- Domestic Violence offenses made up 53.0% of all Crimes Against Persons.
- There were a total of 32,442 domestic violence incidents reported; 6,735 of these incidents were violation of protection/no contact order.
- In the State of Washington in 2013:
- A case of forcible rape occurred every 6.2 hours
- A case of forcible Sex Offense occurred every 3.8 hours

(Source: *National Incident-Based Reporting System (NIBRS) submissions and monthly Summary Uniform Crime Reporting (UCR) by Washington State law enforcement agencies*, <http://www.waspc.org/assets/CJIS/crime%20in%20washington%202013.pdf>, 2013).

### King County Statistics

- ❖ One of three homicides in King County is a domestic violence crime, and an estimated 50,000 incidents of domestic violence are reported each year throughout the state. As many as 60,000 children in King County are exposed to domestic violence in their homes. (Source: *King County Office of the Prosecuting Attorney, dansatterberg.com/issues/domestic-violence*).
- ❖ One in three girls and one in five boys will be sexually assaulted by the time they are 16 years old.
- ❖ Almost one third of all rape survivors develop Post-Traumatic Stress Disorder sometime during their lives.
- ❖ 84% of all sexual assaults are committed by an acquaintance of the victim.
- ❖ Child and/or adult history of sexual and physical abuse frequently appear to be the first experience in a sequence that leads to homelessness for women and men.
- ❖ Estimate of the total annual cost of mental health care for victims of attempted or completed rape is \$863 million. Estimate of the same costs for adult survivors of child sexual abuse is \$2.1 billion.
- ❖ Male victims of sexual assault experience the same reactions as women, as well as increased sense of vulnerability, damaged self-image, and emotional distancing. Because of the cultural belief that men should be capable of defending themselves, males often blame themselves for the attack.

(Source: *King County Sexual Assault Resource Center*, [http://www.kcsarc.org/sites/default/files/Resources%20-%20End%20the%20Silence\\_0.pdf](http://www.kcsarc.org/sites/default/files/Resources%20-%20End%20the%20Silence_0.pdf)). \* Though the organization is county-wide I am not certain that these statistics are county-wide.

### Seattle Statistics

In Seattle, DV-related aggravated assaults have increased by 60% from 2009 to 2012 while other aggravated assaults have declined by 2% during that same time. (Source: *2013 Washington Statewide NIBRS Profile*).

### **Mental Health and Clinical Staffing**

During the 2014 Legislative Session, SPAN was able to build on the success of 2013 by assisting with advocacy to increase funding for mental health services. This year, legislators increased mental health funding by \$20.7 million, including \$7.6 million for inpatient beds and outpatient services in communities of color or to those with low incomes.

Part of these efforts is grounded in the prevalence and incidents Solid Ground and its partnering agencies see of mental health issues in the populations we serve. Solid Ground provides housing supports, housing counseling and stabilization services to many persons currently or formerly homeless who are experiencing trauma, and instability leading to challenges in successful living.

Broadview Emergency Shelter and Transitional Housing Program is the cornerstone of service for women and children escaping domestic violence, supporting over 350 homeless women and their children each year as they begin to recover, address barriers to financial stability, and make concrete plans for a safe and healthy future. Broadview's recognizes the trauma that homeless families and survivors of dv have experienced and the great life changes they must make to maintain long-term stability and independence. Our primary goals are to help homeless women and children heal from the trauma of displacement and abuse, address the issues and problems that led to their homelessness, develop a strong support system, and secure permanent housing. Moreover, through a partnership with the City of Seattle, Broadview offers mental health counseling and trauma-informed care to children living in our facility. Our domestic violence housing plus model has been participating in a public health children's support pilot that trains case managers, child advocates and our community partners on the federal best practice trauma informed care approach based on ACES research.

As a part of this initiative the City is providing ACES best practice training and collaborative staff cross training in a public health model approach.

Over the course of 2015 and 2016, we propose to replicate proven, best-practices for onsite health services and programs employed by our Broadview Emergency Shelter and Transitional Housing Program to our entire housing services system. By using Broadview as our model, we will be efficient and effective in our work to enhance and improve access to critical health services, specifically mental health for our current and previously homeless and high barrier residents. This comprehensive health and resident wellness program will be the capstone to our efforts to create a housing (homes) and services (supports) model that allows residents to thrive and overcome poverty. Solid Ground has secured funds that will support project coordination, technical assistance and staff time dedicated to identifying, developing and maintaining key partnerships to facilitate onsite health services for residents and to develop a model for individual resident wellness plans to be implemented by Mid-2015.

## Education

### National:

In attempts to address increasing achievement gaps in K-12 education systems throughout the United States, the federal Department of Education enacted in 2009 the Common Core Standards with specific education attainment outcomes for language, math and science, history and the arts. These standards were to be adopted and implemented at the state level fully by 2017-2018 school years.

### Washington State:

As required by the federal DOE, the Office of the Superintendent of Public Instruction (OSPI) as required by RCW 28A.655.070 has established an implementation plan for the Common Core Standards in Washington State. This plan phases in the required subject areas over the next three school year cycles. In the 2014-2015 school year school districts must implement the Common Core Standards for both English/Language Arts and Math. These changing standards are placing increased burdens on both district resources and children and families trying to meet the new educational requirements. Also, as identified in King County our level of diversity is growing faster than the national rate impacting non-English speakers to a greater degree.

Data from Washington State's Kindergarten readiness measure (2013). Only 40% of entering Kindergarteners have all the characteristics they need to be successful in school. We need this to be closer to 100%. We need to look at the Hispanic (28%), Asian (44%), Pacific Islander (33%) and Limited English (26%) percentages here. Remembering the growth populations are Asian/Pacific Islander (up to 18% in 2040 from 8% in 2010) and Hispanic (up to 21% in 2040 from 9% in 2010). In addition, we need to focus on limited English speaking children if we want to achieve higher overall readiness. Domains measured: Social Emotional, Physical, Language, Cognitive, Literacy, and Math.

### Seattle/King County:

These disparities persist throughout the academic career. Graduation rates for King County were 84% among White students, followed by 82% Asian, but amongst low-income students the average rate was 64% with Black students at 65%, Hispanic 60%, Pacific Islander 55% and lowest were American Indians at 52%. The overall graduation rate is affected by disparities. Research shows that both race and income play independent roles in education results. We also know that early intervention has the best chance for improving these outcomes, but that disadvantages exist throughout these kids' lives.

Also of educated residents in King County over the age of 25, over 315,000 were born outside King County in Washington State and nearly half a million were born in other states. Also, another 250,000 were born outside the United States. These residents represent an importation of talent into the region economically and is considered an indicator of poor current educational outcomes in the region.

## Food Insecurity and Nutrition

In the US in 2012, over 21.6% of ALL children (0 to 17) experienced food insecurity, but for those below the poverty line the rate was 45.8%. Of those in poverty White households reported 16.9% while Black households were 31.5% and Hispanic Households were 28.7%.

Tied to education, households lead by a parent or guardian with less than a high school education was 41.3%, while those lead by a parent or guardian with some college reported 26.7%.

Related to household structure those households with married couples experienced food insecurity at a rate of 14.5% while those households lead by an only female-headed parent was 38%.

Of Adults who report that food money for their family often does not last, 38% are Hispanic, 21% are Black and 7% are White (*Communities Count Report 2013*)

In the Seattle/Tacoma/Bellevue metropolitan area, 23.92% of low-income residents (below 300% or the Poverty Line) ages 50 and over have marginal food insecurity, 12.42% have some food insecurity and 4.33 % have very low food security.

### **Solid Ground does and extensive amount of work in this area using a multileveled set of strategies:**

Building on over 30 years of experience working with the City of Seattle, Food Resources staffs and provides technical assistance to the Seattle Food Committee (SFC), a coalition of 29 food banks in the City of Seattle, and it's Executive Committee, through activities that include:

Coordination and hosting of monthly meetings for both the SFC and Executive Committee (22 annual meetings in total), which bring relevant information to the 29 food banks each with their own connection to neighborhoods and groups of people in need.

Each year, Food Resources distributes over seven million pounds of food to 21 food banks throughout Seattle. These deliveries are imperative to Seattle food banks that may struggle otherwise to get food from the warehouses to their food banks.

Food Resources provides staffing support of the Bulk Buy committee to help Seattle food banks identify and acquire priority food items in bulk quantities, thereby maximizing buying power and enabling food banks to distribute substantially more food to families in need and to use their individual resources for other pressing expenses. In conjunction with Food Lifeline staff and the Bulk Buy committee, we coordinate the purchase of over \$740,000 of fresh produce, protein, and dairy for food banks annually.

The aim of the Solid Ground's Food and Hunger Resource work is to prevent and mitigate the damaging impacts of hunger and malnutrition by increasing access to and knowledge of nutritious, healthy food. We propose to do this through a series of efforts, including:

**Increasing Food Access:** We fill critical gaps in the emergency food system by providing fresh, local organic food, as well as food specifically for babies and toddlers. Through our two farms in South Seattle and our relationship with P-Patch program, we either directly grow and donate, or

coordinate the donation of, 50,000 pounds of fresh produce to Seattle food banks and meal programs. While we encourage and educate about breastfeeding, we also buy infant formula at bulk prices and redistribute it to Seattle food banks free of charge for families that need to use it. In addition, we distribute Toddler Bags, full of nutritious foods such as whole grain cereal, peanut butter, and 100% fruit juice. Our services provide much needed relief to parents with young children who cannot meet the basic needs for the healthy development of their family.

An important avenue of increasing access to fresh food is to educate local residents on growing their own food and on healthy eating, especially for families with low incomes by distributing plant starts, seeds, and gardening information. We also provide hand-on opportunities at the farms for individuals and families as well as run several experiential educational programs on our farms specifically for children. For those living in poverty, a large part of their experience is ruled by the feeling of helplessness, and the dignity that emerges from self-sufficiency and education is invaluable. **By increased emphasis on urban agricultural education and trainings Solid Ground is moving forward in the empowerment of individuals and families to control their own food supply and quality through life skills development.**

**Nutrition Education:** We develop and deliver at least 380 distinct, age-appropriate lesson plans, 45-60 minutes in length, designed specifically to increase knowledge of, familiarity with, and preference for healthy foods at three elementary schools and two afterschool programs. These lessons are taught in the classroom as well as outdoors, with approximately 300 having in-depth, hands-on lessons at Marra Farm. We also deliver health education to students' families by hosting Health and Family Nights at partner schools.

**Healthy Cooking Education and Skill Building:** The majorities of our cooking classes are in community spaces and are a six-week series based on curriculum created to meet the needs of particular groups, such as parents, teens, and families with children aged 7-12. Every lesson includes components of food safety, nutrition, and budgeting. Participants also receive a bag of groceries to take home after each class to practice the recipes and skills covered in the lesson. We also provide different models of cooking classes within schools and on our farms that range from events for families to hands-on work that supplements a particular educational piece mentioned above.

We have established specific events and strategies that increase family and community involvement, as we know that it reinforces the connection that youth and their families build with food (from growing to eating), each other, and their community. Examples include, but are not limited to, activities on the farm, such as South Park Saturdays and Community Kitchens, which specifically target family involvement. We also create and support our partners in hosting "Family Resource Fairs" that invite parents with low-incomes facing food insecurity to learn about resources from nutrition to free home inspections for mold create healthy outcomes for their children. In our partner schools, we design our lessons so that children can take home what they've learned, and we hold cooking classes where families come in and the children demonstrate what they have learned. We also host specialized serieses of cooking classes for families, parents, teens (many of how are single mothers), and families with children ages 7-12. In doing so, we hope to both support specific needs of this group and make it accessible to their families.

## Transportation

King County's estimated 2011 population of 1,969,722 was sufficient to rank as the 14<sup>th</sup> most populous county in the United States. The population has continued to grow recently, with the Washington State Office of Financial Management estimating the current population as of April, 2014 to be 2,017,250. In addition to individuals residing in urban, suburban, and rural areas of the county, others traveling in King County who may utilize specialized transportation services include temporary visitors such as tourists, as well as individuals residing nearby who must travel to King County to access the medical care and other services which tend to be concentrated in the urban areas of the region.

In 2006, about 10% of the population in King County was 65 years of age or older. At that time, this percentage was expected to increase to 15% by 2025. In fact, after growing at roughly the same rate as the total population for several years, the senior population of King County was estimated to have increased to 11.6% in 2012 and approximately 11.9% in 2013 indicating that, as predicted, the senior population may now be growing faster than the general population.

The most current estimate from the 2012 American Community Survey is that 185,234 people with disabilities reside in King County, or about 9.3% of the total population. This figure is not directly comparable to the percentage in 2006, due to changes in the way people with disabilities have been counted in the American Community Survey.

Puget Sound Regional Council estimates that 23% of the population of King County is low-income (defined as having a household income less than 200% of federal poverty level). This figure provides an estimate of the population for whom income is likely to create a mobility challenge.

Veterans and people with limited English proficiency have been identified by the Coalition as additional groups with unique mobility challenges. Currently, there are approximately 120,204 Veterans residing in King County, or about 6% of the total population.

Numbering over 205,000, people with limited English proficiency, defined by the American Community Survey as those who speak English "less than very well," comprise about 10.2% of the total population. These two groups may increase in the future due to Veterans returning from conflicts in Iraq and Afghanistan, and a continued influx of immigrants and refugees settling in King County.

Finally, in 2012, households having no vehicles available for personal use made up 9.6% of all households in King County. This compares with 6% of households reported in the 2006 plan, which relied on data from the 2000 Census.

### Needs and Gaps:

People with mobility challenges require a transportation system that is understandable, affordable, safe, and appropriate; the system must work for them. Education and training resources are needed for individuals to have the understanding to navigate the system. These resources must be culturally and linguistically appropriate and relevant to the specific needs of the population. Understanding a

system in which trips require multiple modes, as well as transfers across geographic boundaries or between service providers, will require services to be simple, legible, complimentary, and coordinated. In some cases, individuals may require financial assistance in order to afford transportation.

Safety and security are among the most frequently mentioned issues of importance to transportation users. Additional promotion of safety through training and information is needed. Investments in physical infrastructure such as upgrades to sidewalks and other infrastructure improvements may create a safer environment for individuals traveling to and from transit stops and their final destinations. Where mode conflicts are unavoidable, care should be taken to avoid safety hazards such as pedestrian/vehicle conflicts.

Finally, in order to be appropriate for diverse riders, services must be flexible enough to accommodate their needs. For example, many special needs populations have an increased need to transport supplies and equipment, including everyday items such as groceries, as well as medical supplies, mobility devices, and other specialized equipment. Travel with family members, attendants, or service animals is a necessity for many.

### **Emerging Issues and Trends:**

1. Funding challenges are leading to service cuts. Organizational consolidation creates transportation challenges as service providers' satellite locations close. Opportunities: Pursue new funding strategies and alternative service delivery. Innovations in service delivery could include new transit modes, better utilization of private-sector services, carshare, bikeshare, and various models utilizing volunteer drivers.
2. Infrastructure is insufficient and deteriorating, contributing to increased congestion. Lack of funding options has led to an increased reliance on user fees such as fares and tolls, which creates an additional cost barrier. Opportunities: Identify new funding for maintenance and repair, coordinate our work with Transportation Demand Management efforts, explore fee exemptions/reductions for special needs populations.
3. Increased need due to demographic changes, including seniors aging in place and an expected increase of individuals with low vision or hearing loss, returning veterans, continued influx of immigrant and refugees, and millennials delaying driving or choosing not to drive. Opportunity: Develop specialized approaches to target outreach to specific populations.
4. Technological innovation holds promise to close gaps, but could create others. Opportunity: Promote inclusive technologies and innovations that increase access. Examples include mobile-app based Transportation Network Companies, transit user apps, data interoperability systems, and assistive technologies such as driverless cars.
5. Increasing understanding of the importance of equity and social justice in transportation policy. Opportunity: Coordinate our efforts with equity and social justice initiatives.
6. The cost of living in core areas well served by transit is increasing and low-income households are being displaced to suburban and rural areas. Opportunity: Continue to emphasize the importance of geographic equity and develop projects to address issues and challenges in suburban and rural areas.
7. Our awareness of our vulnerabilities to natural or man-made disasters is increasing. Opportunity: Coordinate with on-going emergency management efforts focused on inclusion of vulnerable populations.

## **King County Metro Low-Income Fare Options Advisory Committee Report (Date: June, 2013)**

### Summary:

The Low-Income Fare Options Advisory Committee convened in 2013 to consider options for adopting a low-income bus fare. The low-income fare has been designed to assist transit dependent populations and work in tandem with other programs supporting those groups. The committee report primarily focuses on those who are mobility challenged due to financial constraints.

### Insights:

- 27% of riders on Metro make under \$35,000 per year.
- 480,000 people in King County (24.4% of total county population) live at 200% of the Federal Poverty Level.
- Over the past 40 years, the cost of riding public transit has tripled for low-wage workers.

### **Solid Ground Transportation (SGT):**

SGT programs include King County Metro Access, the Free Downtown Circulator and the Program Shuttle. We currently provide approximately 28% of the paratransit service in King County, serving over 300,000 riders each year. Access ridership and demand continues to remain steady year-over-year. The Free Downtown Circulator provides over 300 free rides daily to people living on low incomes and those who access health and human services in the downtown area. Circulator ridership continues to grow approx. 20% each year. The Program Shuttle provides transportation to special events for Solid Ground programs and communities in the King County area.

## **Legal Barriers**

Per the Office of Civil Legal Aid in Washington State:

- More than three quarters of all low income households experience at least one important civil legal problem each year. Unfortunately, nearly nine in ten do not get the legal help they need to solve their problems.
- Many civil legal problems involve fundamental issues such as personal and family safety, housing, shelter and security, access to governmental services and the like. Women and children experience more civil legal needs than others. Domestic violence survivors have the highest number of needs of any segment of the low income population.

With the areas unemployment rate at 6.1% coupled with the area's limited affordable housing inventory the need for assistance is at an all-time high. Compounding the need is the increase in our area's ELL population. Language and cultural barriers are significant deterrents for families trying to access resources and services.

Under the Affordable Care Act, **all Americans are guaranteed access to health insurance coverage as of January, 2014.** In King County alone it is estimated that 183,800 low-income residents will be eligible for health insurance at no cost through Washington State's expanded Medicaid program, Washington Apple Health. For the majority of the clients we serve, this has the potential to be life changing—and for some truly life-**saving**. The key, however, is ensuring that those in need are aware of the new health care laws and how to enroll in an affordable health care plan. Sadly, those who need affordable health insurance coverage the most will have the most difficulty accessing it. January 1, 2014 shows great promise for many if, and only if, barriers preventing access are broken down. This has presented us with a unique opportunity to secure critical health coverage for our clients.

Today, one in six King County residents between the ages 18 and 64 – or **217,300 people** – are uninsured (2011 American Community Survey, U.S. Census). This marks a 3% increase in uninsured people since 2008. Moreover, the ethnic breakdown of those uninsured in King County reveals gross inequities:

- People who live in south King County cities are more likely to be uninsured. For example, adults in Des Moines are seven to eight times more likely to be uninsured than adults in Mercer Island or Sammamish. (2009-2011 American Community Survey, U.S. Census and [www.kingcounty.gov/healthservices/health/partnerships/HealthReform.aspx](http://www.kingcounty.gov/healthservices/health/partnerships/HealthReform.aspx)).
- Hispanic/Latinos are nearly four times as likely and Black/African Americans more than twice as likely to be uninsured as Whites. In addition, 18.2% of adult males are uninsured, compared to 14% of adult females (2009-2011 American Community Survey, U.S. Census).

**Solid Ground's Family Assistance** program, as part of Washington State's Alliance for Equal Justice, provides critical civil legal aid services to people living on no or very low income. We provide direct legal representation, advice and counsel, and information and referral to single adults and families who have had their state public assistance benefits- i.e. cash, food, medical, housing assistance and/or work supports such as childcare assistance unfairly denied, terminated or reduced by the Department of Social and Health Services (DSHS) or Health Care Authority (HCA).

Beginning in 2014, Family Assistance has expanded its work to include educational outreach on the major changes in health care brought on by the implementation of the Affordable Care Act (ACA) in Washington State. . Family Assistance is staffed by three full-time attorneys with expertise in poverty and public benefits law. With the added support of law student interns and volunteer attorneys, we are able to provide representation to roughly 900 people each year. Family Assistance reaches clients through regular outreach events at food banks, shelters and other social service agencies in the region and provides community education and training for social service providers and other legal aid advocates and agencies

Through the following civil legal aid community network, Solid Ground sees an ever increasing need for expanded services to support these existing challenges and now new City of Seattle, King County and National Executive Order initiatives and citizen rights issues that will impact local social service and housing access.

1. Alliance for Equal Justice: This is a statewide group, consisting of 40 separate civil legal aid organizations. With guidance from the Office of Civil Legal Aid, Legal Foundation of Washington and the Campaign for Equal Justice, Alliance members coordinate services to maximize our resources and limit duplication of effort.
2. King County Regional Planning Committee: All members of the Alliance who are located in King County are part of this group. There are quarterly meetings where each program gives updates and announcements so that we are all current on the work being done in King County. We also discuss new and upcoming challenges and strategize on how best to address them.
3. Benefits Advocates of King County: All attorneys who practice state public benefits law in King County are part of this group. We meet monthly to discuss cases and systemic trends. On a quarterly basis we meet with the DSHS Regional Administrator and other DSHS leadership staff to get updates on benefit program rules and policy and to share our perspective on how agency actions are affecting our clients. We get a lot of great systems work done here.
4. Economic Services Project: This is a group of legal aid staff from across the state who practice state public benefits law. We meet quarterly and tightly coordinate our efforts so that we are all working together on statewide legal aid priorities. Family Assistance participates in several ESP workgroups:
  - A. Disability Work Group: consists of attorneys and other advocates from across the state who practice state disability law.
  - B. Medical Assistance Work Group: consists of attorneys and other advocates from across the state who work on health care access.
  - C. ACA Call Center Work Group: consists of attorneys and other advocates from around the state who are working together to improve the health benefit exchange call center. We are currently focused on making sure the training call center representative receive is adequate.

## Capacity of Solid Ground

### **CONTEXT: Community Availability and Access to Resources**

Solid Ground knows that it does not provide services within a vacuum, but instead is an integrated partner within the community with multitudes of service organizations including 5 close CAA designated agencies in the Seattle/King County area (*See Appendix A1 for summary of them and their services/service areas*). Many of these CAA partners work with Solid Ground at the community level, program area level or on a service by service basis. We agree to continuously strengthen our interagency referral processes in order to intentionally reinforce a safety net based social support system for people in the community to access and essentially be assessed and referred to where they can find assistance whenever possible. Solid Ground continues its commitment to these community level coordination efforts.

As stated, Solid Ground is a deep partner within the broader King County, Regional and State communities working with some 400+ partnering agencies and social groups as well as our direct representations on various taskforce groups guiding implementation of housing development, landlord policy and housing service models.

That said, how can Solid Ground continue to deliver quality services to an ever growing need base in our community with limited and ever limiting funding resources? Through these initial examinations of both external information (data and trends) of clients and communities, and our internal resource allocations and brain trust – there is evidence for continual process improvements within Solid Ground that will drive efficiencies, program design and quality and in the end our abilities to focus the resources we have towards shifting demographic populations, communities of continued disadvantage and yet also retain our best resources – our staff.

These internal highlights were derived from meetings with leadership staff, program managers and added to Solid Ground’s existing administrative priorities and initiatives.

### **SOLID GROUND CAPACITY CHALLENGES**

1. Unified Agency Strategy
  - a. Leadership development
    - Broadening Leadership in Agency**
    - Strategic Planning - continuing agency synergy**
  - b. Community Input
    - Community Inclusionary Service and Program Designs**
    - Community Advisory Committee - Reactivation**
  - c. Data
    - Development of Relevant and Consistent Program/Service and organization level data collection and reporting system.**

### **Formal development of data guided or data informed decision making processes**

2. Acquisition of Resources
  - a. Funding Development
    - Funding Development Strategies & Plan Update**
  - b. Staffing And Volunteers
    - Greater Incorporation of Youth and Older segments**
  - c. Partnerships
    - Funders, Community Organizations and Integrations into new service segments**

## Leadership Development

### Broadening Leadership in the Agency

Solid Ground Leadership is in the second year of a post-reorganization and is still in the process of developing leadership synergy under the new structure. Functional Leadership Teams are utilized as a platform for cross-agency discussion, planning, input and recommendations on issues affecting more than one department. These teams also provide opportunities for leadership and professional development for staff at all levels of the organization. While many teams are thriving and been active for many months, several Functional Leadership Teams are still in their initial phases of scope and work agenda development and team storming and norming processes. Leadership re-design included further depth and operational oversight functions at the Vice President of Strategy level and this position has just been filled and the orientation and infusion of this critical staff and leader will further affect leadership team dynamics and bring additional expertise to integrate. Developing a practice and culture of performance management beginning with directors and managers remains a priority.

### Strategic Planning - Continuing Agency Synergy

In 2015, Solid Ground will engage in strategic planning using the Community Needs Assessment, the 2014 year of reflection of Solid Ground's 40 years of services, and the program and departmental survey assessments of 2012-2013 as significant inputs. Clear vision and deliberate action steps always work to develop momentum and an understanding of course and pace. Headed into 2015 and the organizational strategic planning process, we will make a concerted effort to develop these critical structural supports, to properly weigh and measure current program and service provision resource demands and any new scope of services newly developed as it relates to the whole mission alignment to Solid Ground. Specifically action plans as related to housing development and asset management and our three service areas of focus we think should be increased; youth education services (YES), healthcare access and financial empowerment and education will be developed to guide our work.

## Community Input

### Community Inclusionary Service and Program Designs

Solid Ground continues to develop tools and processes to both engage with and hear from the community as to 1) how Solid Ground is meeting community need, 2) What factors and issues are impacting community members and creating potential barriers to successful living and 3) how Solid Ground could respond through services, advocacy or support to address those unmet needs.

Solid Ground obtains client inputs regarding program and services in a variety of ways; quality of service surveys, specific adhoc focus groups related to program and service delivery, design, and adaptation to meet changing needs.

Also, in order to ensure that lawmakers make better decisions related to the economic security of people living with low-incomes in our state, we believe they must frequently hear from actual residents faced with these challenges. Through our Statewide Poverty Action Network (SPAN), we provide the following leadership development opportunities:

- **Grassroots Organizing & Advocacy Training** We continued to organize people with low incomes in Washington—training them to become effective advocates, and making it easy for them to communicate with legislators through Members in Action nights, online action alerts, phone banks, rallies, and lobby days in Olympia. Since July 2013, we have conducted over 50 advocacy trainings, engaging over 200 people. Many of these advocacy trainings and organizing opportunities were a result of strategic partnerships with organizations like Mercy Housing, University of Washington, the Village of Hope, Career Bridge, and the other programs and departments at Solid Ground.

As part of our 39 county campaign, we continued to collect and curate more stories from every county across our state. We are launching the 39 County project page on our website. We will launch a dedicated web page for our members' stories by 2015. Through the website, we aim to create a space for people living with low incomes to directly create the narrative, as well as archive the history, of the real impact of poverty in our communities.

- **Listening Sessions:** Through our Listening Session campaign we traveled across the state gathering input and experience from people living on low incomes. This past year we held Listening Sessions in Seattle, Spokane, Kent, Everett, Pasco, and Tacoma.

### Community Advisory Committee - Reactivation

Solid Ground remains committed to the reactivation, internal staff support and integration of a community advisory committee in 2015. Data and demographic changes reflected in

this report highlight an opportunity to discuss potential youth representation and advisory input going forward as well as youth leadership development opportunities.

## Data

### Development of Relevant and Consistent Program/Service and organization level data collection and reporting system

Solid Ground in 2013 completed the purchase of the Apricot Software system developed by CTK to enable the new design and implementation of an organization wide consistent database. The new database and management reporting and compliance tool will merge, replace and or improve some over a dozen existing program level developed systems. Solid Ground is dedicated to the movement to a more data guided method of management and program assessment. The new system will be implemented in 2015-2016.

### Formal development of data guided or data informed decision making processes

It is expected that the new data systems design will include more consistent and complete level of data collection, more intentionally focused on client need, key services and program outcomes. Consolidation of multiple manual data collection processes and offline tracking methods will increase efficiency by decreasing staff time and data collection errors helping data quality and decreasing agency overhead.

## Funding Development

### Funding Development Strategies and Plan Update

Solid Ground continues to be heavily reliant upon public funding to a degree such that it brings both a level of funding stability and yet some program inflexibility. These insights were identifies in the Solid Ground's 2013, 18 Month Resource Development Fundraising Plan, which implemented goals to increase private funding sources, will continue to examine outcomes related to these goals and update action steps accordingly during its strategic planning process.

Resources to meet demand is the most challenging issue for all organizations in social service. These resources include; staffing, facilities, partnerships, in-kinds supports and volunteers and stipend labor. Also, funder trends are moving away from funding actual staff functions necessary to providing critical services and few funders now are willing to participate fully in the cost of organizational infrastructure or administration.

### Greater Incorporation of Youth and Older Segments

Labor continues to be the highest costs for direct services and as with many organizations, Solid Ground continually seeks experience based employment (Stipend based) and volunteerism labor forces to reduce costs, develop social service experienced community

labor forces and maximize services. As the population of retirees in our community rises with the baby boomers (1946-1964) continue to work, volunteer, mentor and serve on boards, Solid Ground has the opportunity to examine as part of its strategic planning process roles at the organization that deepen ways to participate in our Mission. Solid Ground is the host agency for the Retired Senior Volunteer Program (RSVP) which supports our senior community members with volunteer opportunities. Further potential youth volunteer opportunities also serve to deepen youth experience and access to vital life and job skills development.

Solid Ground's Volunteerism Program has in recent years begun to develop strategies to both increase volunteer numbers, enhance the volunteer experience and also improve awareness and strategies that correlate volunteer interactions with Solid Ground and potential translation of that volunteer into a donor or other type of fundraising supporter of the organization. These efforts will need to be supported and encouraged going forward if Solid Ground is to further develop service labor resources and cultivate donor ship and community group partnering.

### Funders, Community Organizations and Integrations into new service segments

While Solid Ground has made it a distinct goal to increase supports from other sources such as; individual donors, corporations, foundations and community organizations the development/cultivation of these and new relations and the deepening of their investments in Solid Ground takes time.

As Solid Ground, through its strategic planning processes solidifies its existing service and program goals and objectives particular focus will be made to map out funding sources and relationship efforts to support revenue generation at all levels with further coordination of operational leadership and the Resource Development team or department.

Solid Ground has used a method to identify the two critical components outside the agency that impact our services and meeting the needs (address the challenges) of both 1) the community at large and 2) those of the individuals we serve. Based on the environmental scan of our community (Seattle/King County, WA), assessing our clients feedback and taking into consideration regional, State and National trends, we have identified the key factors and challenges our work seeks to address:

### COMMUNITY/*Population* CAPACITY CHALLENGES - King County/Seattle

- g. Racial and Economic Inequity/*Economic and social injustice*
- h. Lack of Affordable Housing/*Housing Barriers*
- i. Lack of Educational Attainment and Opportunities/*Income and advancement*
- j. Lack of Living Wage Jobs/*access to jobs and employment services*
- k. Food Insecurity and lack of Nutritional Education/*food access and hunger*
- l. Health Care and Service Access/*health conditions and disabilities*

**SOLID GROUND RESPONSES to the above identified challenges:****a. Racial and Economic Inequity/*Economic & Social Injustice***

In 2013 the wealth of white households in the US was 13 times the median wealth of African American households and more than 10 times the wealth of Latino households. While poverty increased across all communities in Washington this year, families of color felt this increase most intensely. In our state, people of color are much more likely to live in poverty than whites, with 25% of African Americans, 27.1% of Latinos, 26.4% of American Indians and Alaska Natives, 16.5% of Native Hawaiians and Pacific Islanders, 12.1% of Asians, and 16.9% of mixed race households living below the Federal Poverty Line (FPL), compared to only 10.4% of white households. The Cost of Living Index reports that in King County the overall index average of 143, with a higher cost than the national average of 100 in all basic needs categories; Housing (213), Health (119), Transportation (109), Grocery (108) and Miscellaneous/Utilities (110).

**Solid Ground's Response**

As an Anti-poverty organization, Solid Ground works to eliminate racial and economic inequity in both its organizational design and service delivery methods, and by empowering the community and individuals through advocacy and self-advocacy skill building programming in all core services.

**b. Lack of Affordable Housing/*Housing barriers***

Throughout King County we are experiencing an affordable rental housing shortage crisis. Both the City of Seattle and King County have developed initiatives and funding strategies to produce affordable housing units. King County reported it is just 57% (5,424 units) towards its goal of funding 9,500 new housing units for formerly homeless residents by 2015. However, in the region over 78,000 people have moved to the metro area but only 24,845 new housing inventory units have been added. Significant transportation costs and stress exist for those who are unable to live in or near Seattle yet are dependent upon Seattle for employment and essential human and health services. Vacancy rates overall in King County was 6.1% in November 2014 but some neighborhoods in the City of Seattle are experiencing less than 2%. According to the Office of the Mayor, these vacancy rates are supported by rising rental housing rates being experienced in the City of Seattle where the average rental costs of a 1 bedroom unit is \$1,412 and where the very low income households (with less than \$26,250 annual wage) has 62% experiencing housing cost burden. In total, an estimated 15 to 20% of ALL Seattle households are currently severely cost burdened.

**Solid Ground's Response**

Solid Ground applies multiple strategies to address housing affordability which includes 1) Housing provision and Residential programs, 2) Other interventions intended to assist families in quickly exiting homelessness such as Rapid Re-Housing and Shelter Diversion 3) Engagement with Landlords and the private housing market to increase housing options for families and individuals with barriers to obtaining housing, 4) Advocacy.

Overall Solid Ground is an advocate for fair and affordable housing, we work with partners like the Washington State Low Income Housing Alliance to adopt legislation that will reduce barriers to housing and improve access to affordable housing in WA. This includes advocating for issues such as fair tenant screening, supporting the Housing Trust Fund, and protecting tenants from housing discrimination.

As a housing developer, Solid Ground continues to evolve its Sand Point Housing Campus at Magnuson Park in northeast Seattle to meet the needs of the community and formerly homeless populations in need of housing options, programs and services moving into the next decade. Currently Solid Ground's Sand Point Housing Campus Project provides transitional and permanent housing for 112 formerly homeless families and 117 single adults, including over 250 to 280 children. We recognize both the profound responsibility we have to these individuals and families, as well as the extraordinary opportunity this situation presents to make an impact on ending generational poverty.

We offer a wide array of housing and support services for formerly homeless families including emergency shelter, tenant counseling and education, service-enriched permanent housing, and much more. Some of our key accomplishments include: 1) Providing interim housing and comprehensive support for over 5,000 households each year through Family Shelter, Broadview Emergency Shelter & Transitional Housing, Sand Point Family Housing, Santos Place and JourneyHome programs; 2) creating effective programming to help homeless families identify housing options and quickly obtain permanent housing; 3) joining local funders and partners in redefining rapid re-housing services and engaging in new models of services such as Shelter Diversion to explore ways of supporting families in quickly exiting homelessness.

Going into our 2015 Strategic Planning process, Solid Ground will 1) examine its current role as a housing provider and an owner of housing properties to develop future housing strategies in both programing supports and potential housing development as key participant in the regions housing system to end homelessness, 2) continue to enhance residential services depth and dosage regarding access and referral to ancillary services for our housing clients, 3) provide critical financial empowerment and legal assistance and other services addressing barriers to housing stability and 4) strengthen advocacy efforts with department programs.

Solid Ground continues to see legal supports under our Family Assistance program as critical (*use of CSBG funds*) to addressing both housing barriers and health care access supports to strengthen client success and stabilization.

Solid Ground will continue *to use CSBG funding* to support its domestic violence shelter, housing and services programming with added emphasis expansion of supports for child trauma informed care modeling.

### c. Lack of educational attainment and opportunities/*Income & Advancement*

The on-time graduation rate for high school students in King County was 77.4% in 2008, 76% in 2011 and 75.4% in 2012. The on-time graduation rate for students who are Native American, Latino, African-American, and Pacific Islander are significantly lower. The social and economic costs of delay or dropping out can be high: a dropout is more than 8 times as likely to be incarcerated as a person with at least a high school diploma – and is also more likely to earn less, contributes to the economy at a lower rate, and/or to rely on governmental assistance.

#### Solid Ground's Response

Solid Ground has a desire to expand services and supports to youth living in our properties so that every youth “will be on the path to successfully graduate from high school ready for college, or ready for a career.” – Solid Ground must research further, age population specific needs and survey youth onsite to guide and drive goals and objectives in this program and service development effort prior to determining further organizational efforts. Initial funding for a program development plan has been secured from private funds and will be coordinated with the agency strategic plan in 2015.

### d. Lack of living wage jobs/*Access to jobs and employment services*

As of December 2014, the number of reported unemployed people in King County totaled 94,050 (6.8%) as significant decrease from 2009 figures of 8.5% and 2008 figures of 3.6%. However, even though we are experiencing economic growth, only a small proportion of our service population is benefiting. In a recent report on the job markets for King and Snohomish Counties there have been and estimated 45,000 new jobs created however, most are in the engineering, technology and transportation sectors. The top 20 percent the income scale of households are seeing their incomes rise while middle and lower segments are losing ground. Along with growing income inequity, we are seeing an increased poverty rate.

#### Solid Ground's Response

Solid Ground currently works with partnering agencies to connect and refer residents and clients to work force and employment opportunities, training and job readiness programs. Solid Ground will examine potential partnership expansions for

both education and employment referral services through its housing counseling and stabilization services and other residential housing support partners for both youth and adult employment supports.

#### e. Food Insecurity and lack of Nutritional Education/*Food Access and Hunger*

In the US in 2012, over 21.6% of ALL children (0 to 17) experienced food insecurity, but for those below the poverty line the rate was 45.8%. Of those in poverty White households reported 16.9% while Black households were 31.5% and Hispanic Households were 28.7%.

Tied to education, households experiencing food insecurity, led by a parent or guardian with less than a high school education was 41.3%, while those lead by a parent or guardian with some college reported 26.7%.

Related to household structure those households with married couples experienced food insecurity at a rate of 14.5% while those households lead by an only female-headed parent was 38%.

Of Adults who report that food money for their family often does not last, 38% are Hispanic, 21% are Black and 7% are White (*Communities Count Report 2013*)

In the Seattle/Tacoma/Bellevue metropolitan area, 23.92% of low-income residents (below 300% or the Poverty Line) ages 50 and over have marginal food insecurity, 12.42% have some food insecurity and 4.33 % have very low food security.

#### Solid Ground's Response

Solid Ground continues to see increased need in providing health, fresh food and other food resources to the community, supported by increased use of farm growing programs, and overall food bank use in the 27 food banks within the City of Seattle. Particular growth in those over 55 is of significance. Solid Ground *will use CSBG funds* to support overall food security programming for vulnerable populations and also to increase urban agricultural education and nutrition education moving forward in it child and youth programming and assisting low income families to budget and cook nutritional meals.

#### f. Health Care Access and Health Services/*Health conditions & disabilities*

Today, one in six King County residents between the ages 18 and 64 – or **217,300 people** – are uninsured (2011 American Community Survey, U.S. Census). This marks a 3% increase in uninsured people since 2008. Moreover, the ethnic breakdown of those uninsured in King County reveals gross inequities:

- People who live in south King County cities are more likely to be uninsured. For example, adults in Des Moines are seven to eight times more likely to be uninsured than adults in Mercer Island or Sammamish. (2009-2011 American Community

Survey, U.S. Census and  
[www.kingcounty.gov/healthservices/health/partnerships/HealthReform.aspx](http://www.kingcounty.gov/healthservices/health/partnerships/HealthReform.aspx)).

- Hispanic/Latinos are nearly four times as likely and Black/African Americans more than twice as likely to be uninsured as Whites. In addition, 18.2% of adult males are uninsured, compared to 14% of adult females (2009-2011 American Community Survey, U.S. Census).

### Solid Ground's Response

In response, Solid Ground uses its resources and expertise to connect those in need with this newly available affordable or free health care coverage. Much of this outreach, education and referral work will take place through our Family Assistance program utilizing their knowledge of Medicaid law and their connections throughout the legal aid and social services communities.

As we enter our 5<sup>th</sup> decade of services to this community, Solid Ground will continue to serve through innovation, partnership and action.

## Other CAA in the geographic area - who they serve.

### Community Action Agencies

#### El Centro de la Raza

[elcentrodelaraza.org](http://elcentrodelaraza.org)

**Mission:** As an organization grounded in the Latino community, our mission is to build unity across all racial and economic sectors, to organize, empower, and defend our most vulnerable and marginalized populations and to bring justice, dignity, equality, and freedom to all the peoples of the world.

#### Services and Programs:

**Child and Youth Programs-** seek to address the immediate needs of the children and youth in our community as well as to prepare them for their futures.

Programs include: Jose Marti Child Development Center for children ages 1 - 4; Luis Alfonso Velasquez After School Program providing mentoring and tutoring for students ages 5 - 12; College Readiness program, cultivating low-income Latino youth for higher education and future success by tutoring and education around college process; Parent Involvement in Education, educating parents and their families about how to navigate school system in order to support their children; Seattle Youth Violence Prevention program, providing resources, support and alternatives for youth who are at high risk of perpetuating or being victimized by violence; and Hope for Youth Civil Rights History, Hip Hop and Poetry Classes, providing Chicano/Latino and other communities of color with accurate history, civil rights, poetry and service-learning classes to various middle and high schools.

**Human and Emergency Services -** seek to address immediate aspects of human suffering such as hunger, healthcare and homelessness, our Frances Martinez Community Service Center provides diverse, bilingual human and emergency services.

Programs include Enhanced Outreach to Women Veterans & Veterans of Color; Crisis Advocacy; Senior Nutrition & Wellness; BEBES Infant Mortality Prevention; Comadres Women's Group, supporting Latina women; Homeless Assistance, providing comprehensive housing assistance to homeless Latino/a families with dependent children, generally limited English proficient and/or immigrants, who are presented with multiple barriers to stable housing; Food Bank; "La Cocina Popular" Latino Hot Meal; and subsidizes participant premiums in the Washington State Basic Healthcare Plan (offered in Tacoma).

**Education and Skill Building -** seeks to promote self-sufficiency and empowerment through bilingual education and skill building initiatives.

Programs include: Employment Assistance; free bilingual Tax Preparation Program; Financial Literacy training; Asset Building, enrolling participants in Individual Development Accounts (IDA); Life Skills & Job Readiness Education; ESL Classes; and Bilingual Legal Clinic, providing free, monthly bilingual orientation and consultation on various legal matters.

**Community and Building Development** - El Centro believes that only through civic involvement, grassroots organizing, and political and social activism will our community be able to effectively address the profound contradictions facing our world. We unite communities of all races, genders, ages and classes to fight for civil and human rights both locally and globally.

Programs include: Low-Income & Transitional Housing; Immigration & Civil Rights Advocacy, providing advocacy and coalition building surrounding civil rights, human rights and immigration rights; Volunteerism, providing community, high school and college students opportunities to fulfill service-learning hours for graduation; Social Justice & Cultural Events; Community Space to rent for meetings and special events; Commercial & Tenant Space; and Economic Development, expanding property to meet community needs.

**Budget:** \$5,697,052

**Locations:** El Centro de la Raza is located in the historic Beacon Hill School building El Centro de la Raza (2524 16th Avenue South, Seattle, WA 98144 (206) 957-4634). We have a variety of spaces that can accommodate meetings and trainings, classes, workshops as well as private events or parties. Our rooms have professional amenities while also maintaining the spirit and culture of our community based organization.

**Service area:** El Centro de la Raza is located on Beacon Hill in Seattle. We provide Basic Healthcare Plan enrollment services in Tacoma, which serves participants in MLK, Pierce, Snohomish, Skagit, Whatcom, Clark, Thurston, and Grays Harbor counties. The majority of our participants come from the Seattle and Martin Luther King, Jr. County area.

**Staffing level:** 109 staff members

**History:** This Is Our Story

The fall of 1972 was not the “best of times” for Seattle, the Northwest, the United States or the world at large. Seattle was struggling with the “Boeing bust,” the area’s worst recession since the 1930’s. The deep racial divide as well as the nightmarish war in Vietnam were tearing apart the soul of our nation. At one point, some anonymous “carpenters” made national news by erecting a creative and elegant billboard along a main highway reading, “Will the last person leaving Seattle, please turn off the lights?” (Accompanied by a sketch of a bare light bulb and a dangling string.)

As fall came, the days shortened, the rains arrived and the air cooled into one of Seattle’s coldest winters on record.

A regressive governmental decision demonstrated how the lines between international, national and local issues could easily become one. A “War on Poverty” centerpiece program, barely after the highly-touted “WAR” had begun, was abruptly defunded, sparking an issue that led to the creation of “El Centro de la Raza.”

About seventy Latino students and ten staff of the Chicano: English and Adult Basic Education Program at the Duwamish branch of the incipient South Seattle Community College found themselves without an educational home.

**The First Big, Bold Step**

At about 8:00am on October 11, 1972, a three person delegation was greeted by the facilities manager of the Seattle Public School District who was showing a decaying, dilapidated facility to representatives of “some” organization interested in renting or buying the abandoned three story elementary school building located in the middle of the one square block.

As the lock clicked open, the leader of the delegation slipped the lock out of the mechanism and placed it in his pocket confusing the custodian who said nothing.

Thus began a now over 40-year historic journey as core staff, students and their families nervously and silently walked from behind bushes and parked cars through the open door.

The occupation of the abandoned Beacon Hill School located on the crest ten minutes from the heart of downtown Seattle had begun. At that moment Beacon Hill School ceased to exist and El Centro de la Raza was born.

**The Context**

This incident mirrored the countless political and social demonstrations and tenor of the previous decade and had intensified in 1968 with the assassination of Dr. Martin Luther King Jr. (following his short but magnificent two decades of struggle for racial equality).

**The following year, Alcatraz Island in San Francisco Bay was occupied.**

In 1970, Fort Lawton, a surplus military facility in Seattle, was occupied by Indian people seeking the restoration of their treaty rights including salmon fishing and land based rights. Large farmworker strikes were occurring in California and in the Yakima Valley of Washington State. Asian residents in Seattle’s “Chinatown” adjoining the Beacon Hill neighborhood were fighting the gentrification of the area by repeatedly hitting the streets.

Most university campuses in the state, nation and the world were experiencing mass demonstrations and occupations against the Vietnam War. The entire nation was stunned by the military killings of protesting students at Jackson State and Kent State Universities under the Presidential watch of the infamous Richard Nixon.

Those who led the peaceful occupation of the crumbling Beacon Hill School had participated in many of these activities and had experienced the power of joining efforts across racial and class barriers.

**El Centro De La Raza: Center For People Of All Races**

From the beginning, those of us who occupied and began to transform the old elementary school were joined by hundreds of previous movement allies of all races and economic sectors who were clear and trusted with our decision. Like the surrounding neighborhood, and Seattle as a whole, we represented the rainbow of humanity.

So, although the founding of El Centro de la Raza was sparked by Latinos and acquired a Spanish name, it began, and remains, “The Center for the People of All Races.” It is “home” for all people who are interested in continuing the struggle for a better world by serving, educating, defending and organizing each other and our people to build the “beloved community” as envisioned by King,

Bolivar, Zapata, Ghandi, Martí, Joe Hill, Mother Teresa, Ho Chi Minh, Emma Tenayuca, Che, Black Elk, Geronimo, and thousands of others of our heroes and martyrs.

Since the beginning El Centro de la Raza has provided a gathering place for Seattle's otherwise dispersed...and in 1972, largely invisible Latino community and welcomes all individuals with open arms.

### **Defining Moments**

We who peacefully occupied the Beacon Hill School created a "beloved community," without running water and heat, as negotiations took place with the City of Seattle and Seattle Public Schools. As a result of months of official "inaction" it became necessary to occupy the seats and Chambers of the Seattle City Council to underscore our determination to develop an authentic grassroots and truly democratic community center on the site.

One of the key debates raged around the most appropriate location for a Latino center. We were convinced that the Beacon Hill site was the most appropriate because of its centralized location, availability, and potential for expansion and development.

The final approval from Mayor Wes Uhlman to secure the facility came only after the peaceful occupation of his office and subsequent arrest of El Centro de la Raza leaders. The three-month occupation, in one of Seattle's coldest winters, resulted in a five year lease of the building at \$1 a year.

### **Now What?**

After the victory, reality set in and those of us who had endured and organized for three difficult months realized that the real work had just begun.

For almost four decades, people's sweat, tears, songs, study, sacrifice, and creativity have built and now own lock stock, and barrel, and with all due modesty, one of the most uncompromising and productive community-based organizations in the nation.

Citing only two of the countless international, national, state, and local awards, El Centro de la Raza is probably the only organization in the world to hold, on the one hand, the Nicaraguan "10th Anniversary Medal of the Sandinista Revolution" (1989), and the "Thousand Points of Light" award (1991) from the George Bush Sr. White House (Given that these two governments were deadly enemies. Between those two awards lies a remarkable story).

### **The Mission-- The Vision**

El Centro de la Raza has sought to serve and empower all whom we reach to learn from each other and unite our energies in the noble struggle for basic social change. The provision of a wide range of survival services alone is only a temporary relief for deep societal wounds; it does not address the roots of poverty, discrimination, alienation and despair.

El Centro de la Raza strives to use social, cultural, educational, economic and civic activities as vehicles to bring together peoples of all races and refuses to separate our nation's economic model from the historic tragedy of racism, poverty, and war. Our organization tries to combine a strong sense of self-worth and connectedness to one's family and culture with active participation in community affairs. Our collective self-governance has developed an extensive network-locally,

nationally and internationally-to join diverse peoples, with common problems, in search of effective and just solutions.

### **We Will Never Give In To Injustice**

We all know it is a difficult struggle. The organization squarely confronts problems of racism, sexism and other forms of inequality that have bedeviled the world for centuries. These problems were created over many generations and only the progressive march of history will solve them.

El Centro de la Raza's dedication to solving them by building a sense of community is best expressed in the words of the first of our 12 Principles; all of which speak to the autonomy and to a global agenda and which have guided us with clarity and success through a tumultuous era of history.

“To share, disburse and distribute our services, resources, knowledge and skills to our participants, community, visitors and broader human family with all due dignity for their individuality, needs and condition. To do so creatively with warmth, cultural sensitivity, fairness, enthusiasm, compassion, honesty, optimism, patience and humility in all areas of work.”

## Hopelink

[www.hope-link.org](http://www.hope-link.org)

**Mission:** Hopelink is one of 30 community action agencies in Washington State and over 1,000 in the nation. Washington State Community Action Partners (WSCAP) works to build healthy communities and eliminate poverty through a unified network of Community Action Agencies across Washington State.

### **Services & Programs:**

Hopelink offers an integrated array of programs that enable families in crisis to make progress toward and achieve self-sufficiency.

### **Food**

Hopelink's five centers each offer food banks, plus food deliveries to elderly and disabled individuals who are homebound. Related programs include education and seasonal activities. Hopelink also offers an Emergency Feeding Service, which delivers bags of food to schools, religious institutions, and community centers to provide to families in need.

### **Housing**

Eviction prevention support can help families avoid homelessness. Our Emergency Family Shelter provides a temporary home base for homeless families. Hopelink Transitional Housing offers up to two years of housing and ongoing case-management support. The First Month's Rent program helps families get started in more permanent homes.

### **Family Development**

The Family Development Program works with families at risk of homelessness, to help the family stay in their home and move from crisis to self-sufficiency. Family Development Specialists work one-on-one with the family, helping them assess their strengths, connect with community resources, and set and meet goals.

### **Adult Education**

Hopelink's Adult Education Department is committed to providing a diverse selection of educational services to clients which meet their needs, build self-sufficiency and a habit of lifelong learning. The Adult Education programs address literacy and lifelong learning.

### **Financial Education**

Money Smart classes educate individuals with the tools and skills necessary to be financially stable. Students will build knowledge, develop confidence, learn how to effectively use banks, and manage money.

### **Transportation**

Access to services can make the difference between being homebound and isolated, or healthy and active. Hopelink's Transportation Brokerage provides an essential link to the community for King County residents on Medicaid assistance, and to low income families and children. Our drivers and dispatchers also provide all of the Metro DART service in King County.

**Energy Assistance**

The Low Income Home Energy Assistance Program (LIHEAP) and Puget Sound Energy Home Energy Lifeline Program (PSE HELP) assist with the high cost of heating and energy bills.

**Emergency Financial Assistance**

On a case-by-case basis, Hopelink can often help with those costs which might make the difference between a family going hungry or homeless, and the family surviving. In addition, we can often help with rent and other emergency needs that "fall through the cracks" of other available assistance. To apply for assistance, contact the Hopelink center nearest you.

**Outcomes:**

In 2012-- 2,653,853 pounds of food were distributed to 15,082 people through a Hopelink food bank; 34,803 meals were distributed through a Hopelink Emergency Food Bags; 6,945 children received a gift through a Hopelink Holiday Gift Room; 11,612 people were served by Hopelink's energy programs, with 1,250 emergency appointments for those whose heat was about to be turned off, totaling \$3,151,013 to help keep the lights and heat on for families and seniors; 162 households were provided 3,350 hours of case management through Hopelink's Family Development Program; 598 students were served by Hopelink's Adult Education Program; Of the 136 students enrolled in our GED program, 41 earned their GED certificate and another 20 have made significant progress; 410 adults studied English as a Second Language to improve their communication skills. 165 adults were served by Hopelink's Employment Program, with 38% obtaining a job or improving their employment situation; 90 families found a safe place to stay through Hopelink's Shelter Program for a total of 18,432 nights. 88% of them ultimately achieved greater housing stability; 115 families stayed in Hopelink Transitional Housing for a total of 74,138 nights; 75% of these clients ultimately achieved permanent housing; Of 37 households served in Hopelink permanent housing, 10 households went on to other permanent housing and 26 continued at Hopelink, maintaining housing stability and receiving family support services; 37,875 people received 1,216,050 rides through Hopelink's medical transportation services, getting people to medical appointments; 69,320 people were transported 1,036,707 miles through Hopelink's Dial-a-Ride Transit Program, serving clients throughout King County, getting them to school, work, and other essential services.

**2012 Budget:**

Operating Support & Revenue \$58,352,667

Operating Expenses \$58,824,129

**Locations:**Bellevue Foodbank and Emergency Services

14812 Main St.

Bellevue, WA 98007

Phone: 425.943.7555

Kirkland/Northshore Foodbank and Emergency Services

11011 120th Ave. NE

Kirkland, WA 98033

Phone: 425.889.7880

Redmond Administration Office

10675 Willows Road Northeast

Willows Creek Corporate Center

Suite 275  
Redmond, WA 98052  
Phone: 425.869.6000

Redmond Foodbank and Emergency Services

16725 Cleveland St  
Redmond, WA 98052  
Phone: 425-882-0241

Shoreline Foodbank and Emergency Services

15809 Westminster Way N.  
Shoreline, WA 98133  
Phone: 206.440.7300

Sno-Valley Foodbank and Emergency Services

31957 E. Commercial St.  
Carnation, WA 98014  
Phone: 425.333.4163

**Area of service:**

**BELLEVUE**

98004, 98005, 98006, 98007, 98008, 98009, 98015, 98039, 98040, 98056, 98059 - Newcastle City limits only

**KIRKLAND / NORTHSORE**

98033, 98034, 98011, 98012, 98021, 98028, 98072, 98077

**REDMOND**

98052, 98053, 98073, 98074  
(Financial Assistance only 98027, 98029, 98075)

**SHORELINE**

98133, 98155, 98160, 98177, all north of 145<sup>th</sup>

**SNO-VALLEY**

98014, 98019, 98024, 98045, 98050 - north of I-90, 98065, 98068 Snoqualmie Pass within King County, 98224, 98288, 98294

**DUVALL**

Hopelink also offers limited service in Duvall.

**Staffing Level:** approximately 275

**History:** Since 1971, Hopelink has provided comprehensive social services to at-risk families and individuals throughout Washington State's north and east King County region. The Hopelink approach – promoting self-sufficiency to create lasting personal and community change – has helped move tens of thousands of people from vulnerability and crisis to independence and stability. The agency has broadened its focus through the years from emergency intervention to include the longer term support needed by at-risk families and individuals to make lasting change. Today, Hopelink provides a full array of critical social services through more than 35 different programs.

## Centerstone

<http://center-stone.org/>

**Mission:** Centerstone is dedicated to helping people help themselves and each other as they move from poverty to self-sufficiency through programs and advocacy. We seek to create a healthy, thriving world free of poverty. Our organization values excellence, compassion, responsiveness, innovation, resiliency, and diversity.

### Services & Programs:

**Energy Assistance** - Our program helps families manage the rising costs associated with residential heating by:

- Offering financial assistance to pay home heating bills and energy conservation education to minimize future home heating costs.
- Providing grants ranging from \$25 to \$1,000 to income-eligible applicants.
- Servicing and repairing home heating systems.
- Repairing broken windows.
- Cleaning chimneys.

**Other Energy Services- Home Heating Repair Services** - program to get financial assistance for:

- Routine maintenance and cleaning for furnaces, heat pumps and electric baseboards.
- Minor repairs for heating systems
- Major repairs for heating systems

Grants of up to \$5,000 may be awarded for heating system repair. Grants are made based on the condition and needs of your heating system at the time of inspection. Centerstone works with trusted local contractors to inspect repair or replace your heating system to ensure the highest quality of service for any work done on your home.

**Housing Assistance** - We offer financial assistance to help with eviction prevention to reduce homelessness and stabilize housing situations for our clients.

**Food Assistance** - Our Food Assistance program provides over 40,000 bags of food to Seattle residents per year:

- Centerstone's food bank provides nutritious food and grocery items to people in need.
- Our home delivery service brings food to homebound individuals, seniors, and people with disabilities, and families with infants.

Last year (2013) Centerstone's Food Bank provided over 52,000 bags of food to Seattle residents. Items available in our Food Bank include fresh produce, meat, dairy items, bread, canned and nonperishable goods, and non-grocery items (shampoo, toothpaste, paper towels, etc.). Formula and baby supplies may also be available. Some food items are provided by the federal government

and available only for people who live within 98102, 98112, and 98122. Please bring a picture ID, utility or medical bill, or other printed document to verify your address.

Our Food Bank provides a home delivery service for elderly and verifiably homebound individuals. In order to receive this service, you must live within 98112, 98122 or 98102. If you or someone you know would benefit from having a food bag delivered one day per week, please call (206) 812-4970 to be placed on the list.

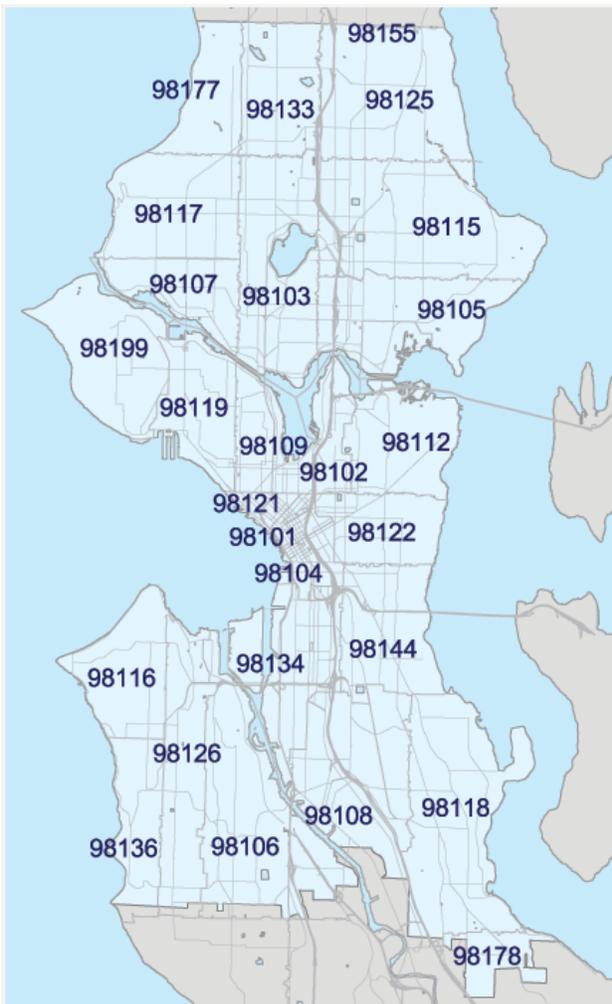
**Financial Education** - Centerstone's Financial Education program provides education and financial coaching to promote positive financial habits. Participants learn about banking, personal finances, and budgeting to help stretch their dollars further and reduce debt.

*Centerstone's Financial Coaching Program has been canceled for the upcoming 2015 program season. Financial Education programming is currently on hold until further notice.*

**Budget:** \$6,853,568

**Location:** 722 18<sup>th</sup> Ave., Seattle, WA 98122 (206) 812-4940

**Service Area:**



**Staffing Level: 27**

**History:** For 50 years, Centerstone has provided essential human services to meet the needs of Seattle's residents in need. Centerstone, formerly CAMP, is one of Washington's oldest and most respected community organizations founded in the era of the Economic Opportunity Act of 1964. In 1979, we joined the Washington State Community Action Program, a network of 31 agencies in 39 counties that has partnered together to improve the lives of low-income people throughout the state. Today Centerstone's programs and services help over 30,000 people a year through our food bank, energy assistance program, housing assistance program, and financial education program. Centerstone has a rich history serving the diverse populations that live in the city of Seattle. Our clients span dozens of ethnicities and include a large segment of refugees and immigrants, as well as the elderly and disabled. We focus on the poorest individuals and families that are struggling to survive, most of whom live at 150% of federal poverty level and below. Our programs provide immediate financial relief to our clients, with special attention given to emergency situations such as power shutoff and eviction.

We are constantly growing and evolving as an organization to ensure our programs and services meet the needs of the community. Periodically we complete a city-wide Community Needs Assessment survey to measure the effectiveness of our program offerings and assess future needs. These survey results helped us to align our strategic plan to the services most valued by the residents of Seattle. At the same time, we work closely with the Washington State Community Action Partnership to identify statewide issues as well as social and economic trends so that we can respond to the most critical issues impacting the poor.

## Multiservice Center

[www.multi-servicecenter.com](http://www.multi-servicecenter.com)

**Mission:** Helping people achieve greater independence and discover the power of their choices.

### **Services & Programs:**

Multi-Service Center offers integrated support and resources that help individuals and families move from crisis and poverty to greater self-sufficiency.

### **Stabilized Housing**

Stable housing is central to self-reliance. Multi-Service Center offers family shelter, transitional housing for individuals and families, permanent-supportive housing and permanent low-income housing. Preventing homelessness is key to our program. We offer rent assistance for several South King County cities.

### **Educational Programs**

Education is critical to building strong, stable futures. Youth and adults can earn their General Education Development (GED) certificate, as well as learn English as a Second Language, through small-sized classes and one-on-one tutoring. For adults who need help with literacy and other basics, our Adult Basic Education program is tailored to each student's specific need.

### **Employment Assistance**

Job skills training, leadership development, career exploration and job search skills are offered for both youth and adults. At-risk youth may also qualify for paid internships in local organizations and businesses to help them build on-the-job skills to prepare them for more promising futures.

### **Energy Assistance**

We help to keep the heat on for families and individuals. Last year, 10,624 households representing 34,120 people received one-time assistance with their heating bills to get them past a financially difficult time.

### **Financial Management Classes**

People can get help with basic financial management and budgeting through ongoing classes and one-on-one coaching.

### **Food Bank**

When people need help to keep their families fed, they turn to MSC's Federal Way Food Bank. More than 16,000 individuals used the food bank last year for supplemental and emergency food.

### **Youth Services**

With one-on-one support and proven resources, our youth programs help at-risk youth and young people turn their lives around and take the critical steps toward a self-sufficient future.

### **Clothing Bank**

Residents of South King County can shop for free from the wide selection of gently used clothes and shoes, donated by members of the community.

**Advocacy for Residents of Long-Term Care Facilities**

Trained, certified volunteer ombudsmen advocate on behalf of elderly and disabled residents of long-term care facilities across Washington through our Long-Term Care Ombudsman Program.

**Employer Services**

Multi-Service Center offers business owners customized help with employee training, recruitment and retention.

**Outcomes:**

Helping people achieve greater independence and discover the power of their choices.

8,310 households\* received assistance with energy bills

764 people received assistance with their education and employment goals

15,972 people used the food and clothing banks

3,182 seniors and disabled individuals in long-term care received advocacy

2,334 people found housing assistance through MSC's housing programs

=47,850

**Budget:** \$12,643,581

**Location:**

Headquarters in Federal Way:

Physical Address:

1200 S. 336th

Federal Way, WA 98003

Kent Office:

515 W. Harrison Street, Suite 205

Kent, WA 98032

Phone: 253.854.4406

Fax: 253.854.1550

WA Relay: 711

Burien Office:

203 SW 153rd Street

Burien, WA 98166

**Service Area:**

Algona, Auburn, Black Diamond, Burien, Covington, Des Moines, Enumclaw, Federal Way, Issaquah, Kent, Maple Valley, Newcastle, Normandy Park, Pacific, Renton, SeaTac, Seattle, Tukwila, Vashon

\*Unincorporated areas of South King County

\*Multi-Service Center also operates housing in some areas of Pierce County

**Staffing Level:** 75

**History: The History of Multi-Service Center**

Few human services organizations existed in South King County in the 1960s and early 1970s. Those that did were scattered across a wide geographic area, making it difficult for people in need to access help. Several Federal Way residents created a solution.

Their vision was a kind of one-stop umbrella organization that would house multiple services in one place. Fueled by a grant from the Seattle King County Economic Opportunity Board they formed the South King County Multi-Service Center (now called Multi-Service Center), which opened its doors in August 1971 to low-income families.

Multi-Service Center (MSC) was one of many grassroots agencies called Community Action Agencies that arose throughout the country during the decade after President Lynden Johnson declared “War on Poverty.” Multi-Service Center is one of nearly 1,000 designated Community Action Agencies (CAA) providing real solutions to poverty at the local level.

With this mission in mind, Multi-Service Center aimed to help people become as self-sufficient as possible, and offered services that met community needs as they arose. In the early days local residents could receive food stamps, credit counseling, child care, medical and dental services, education, employment security and counseling. Two years later, the agency started a public transportation service for the elderly and disabled (later called Dial-A-Ride).

***Establishing Community Presence***

In 1979, the Multi-Service Center received a federal contract to offer home energy assistance, helping 232 households that first year keep their heat on in the coldest of months. That same year, MSC also added services to address domestic violence.

When homelessness increased in the 1980s, Multi-Service Center leased motel rooms to offer emergency shelter to families in crisis. However, it didn’t take long before staff learned that providing only a roof over one’s head was not enough to foster independence. Adding case management support and accountability proved to be more successful at building stability. Additionally, the agency continued to develop more “wrap-around services” by adding an adult education component to programming.

Remaining open and flexible to other program opportunities as they presented themselves, the agency was awarded a contract in 1989, to operate the statewide Long-Term Care Ombudsman Program when it was first privatized by the State Legislature. Tasked with ensuring the rights and dignity of elderly and disabled adults living in long-term care facilities across Washington, the program fit snugly within MSC’s mission to empower people, particularly those without resources to act on their behalf. The Long-Term Care Ombudsman program has successfully operated out of MSC since that time.

Late in the decade and into the 1990s, MSC committed more fully to housing individuals and families, first by leasing 15 former military houses in Kent for emergency family shelter, and then by starting a transitional housing program in downtown Kent. The agency also began to lease additional low-income housing units.

In 1994, MSC's domestic violence program opened its own shelter and stepped out from under the agency umbrella to form its own independent agency. Now known as DAWN (Domestic Abuse Women's Network), it is still a successful program today.

### ***Stabilizing the Agency Leads to More Growth***

Financially floundering in 1995, and on the verge of collapse, Multi-Service Center hired a new executive director, Dini Duclos, whose first order of business was to extricate the agency from debt. Dial-A-Ride, which had grown so popular that demand exceeded funding, was returned to King County Metro (still in service today as Access). Freed from that financial burden, MSC began a capital campaign to purchase and renovate the former Federal Way Elks building. Today, this building serves as Multi-Service Center's headquarters.

Around this time, increased numbers of people turned to MSC's Federal Way Food Bank for help to feed their families. Fortunately, the addition of the agency's new onsite warehouse built a few years earlier allowed storage space for an increased supply of food. However, it became increasingly apparent that this spike in need revealed a need for additional services, particularly jobs and housing, to stem the growth of poverty.

MSC followed with an adult employment program that helped participants improve their job skills and find steady employment. Over the years the agency honed its employment program so that it has become a model replicated by other agencies. Employment assistance now extends to at-risk youth participants as well.

With sustainable housing particularly difficult to find in the late 1990s as Puget Sound real estate prices escalated, Multi-Service Center increased its affordable housing commitment. First, the agency purchased more transitional and permanent housing for individuals and families, and then followed with the construction of three apartment complexes for seniors of low to moderate incomes. Now with more than 500 units of housing in its portfolio, Multi-Service Center remains a leader in bringing affordable housing options to both South King and Pierce Counties.

### ***Looking Toward the Future***

With more than 40 years' experience working with individuals who strive to make lasting change in their lives, Multi-Service Center continues to offer fresh and innovative resources that help people increase their self-sufficiency and stability. With programs in employment training (including paid internships), financial management, education, energy assistance, housing, food, clothing and advocacy for the elderly and disabled, Multi-Service Center remains committed to helping people become fully productive members of the community.

The more than 200 organizations and businesses that partner and collaborate with MSC not only extend the agency's reach in the community, but also bolster MSC's fulltime staff of 75 employees and its cadre of several hundred volunteers. Together, these partnerships allow nearly 60,000 people a year to receive the help they need to build pathways out of poverty.

Today, Multi-Service Center looks to the future from a position of financial health, with a new \$3 million program services building in Federal Way, plus additional offices in Kent and Burien. Longtime CEO Dini Duclos retired December 2011, leaving a fiscally strong agency with a solid

reputation for meeting and exceeding outcomes while making a valuable impact on the communities it serves.

## Neighborhood House

[www.nhwa.org](http://www.nhwa.org)

**Mission:** to help diverse communities of people with limited resources attain their goals for self-sufficiency, financial independence, health and community building.

At the core of our mission is the alleviation of poverty in our community, especially the large public housing communities in Seattle and King County. We want to lift children out of poverty. We want them to be healthy and ready to be successful in school and life. We want these children grow up in safe and supportive homes and neighborhoods. We want to lift families out of poverty by creating opportunities for economic self-sufficiency and asset building. We want seniors to live healthy, independent lives with respect and dignity, surrounded by friends and a supportive community. We want to build strong and vibrant communities where everyone feels an attachment to their neighbors and neighborhood, where they work together to solve problems and celebrate their cultural diversity.

And finally, we want to create a greener, more sustainable community where low income families live in neighborhoods that are free of pollution and buffered from rising energy costs.

### **Services & Programs:**

#### **COMMUNITY HEALTH**

Strong communities start with healthy individuals. Our grassroots efforts are based in the neighborhoods we serve and are designed in tandem with community members to address issues such as HIV-AIDS, substance abuse and obesity.

#### **Preventing HIV and AIDS**

In 2010, Neighborhood House's Project HANDLE was awarded a five-year grant from the Centers for Disease Control (CDC) to reduce and prevent the transmission of HIV. We provide free HIV prevention education as well as counseling, testing and referrals.

#### **Curbing underage drinking and drug use**

Neighborhood House is part of the SE Seattle Prevention Education & Action for Community Empowerment (PEACE) Coalition which strives to reduce and prevent youth substance abuse and violence in SE Seattle. The coalition works towards a mission of educating, empowering, and mobilizing Southeast Seattle to ensure kids are safe, happy, and healthy so they can learn.

#### **Advocating via Community Coalitions**

Much of Neighborhood House's substance abuse prevention and HIV work is guided by the Community Advisory Coalition. This coalition of South Seattle community members also coordinates activities including underage drinking prevention town halls, parent and youth prevention classes, and media campaigns.

#### **Helping students navigate the healthcare system**

In partnership with International Community Health Services, Neighborhood House's multilingual Patient Navigators work at the Seattle World Schools' School Based Health Center. Our staff

provides patient navigation services to immigrant and refugee students and their families in their native languages.

### **Integrating Care**

Funded by the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services, Substance Abuse Mental Health Services, Project HANDLE@Navos takes a holistic approach to patient care. A collaboration among Neighborhood House, Navos, and Public Health – Seattle & King County, Project HANDLE@Navos integrates substance abuse and mental health treatment; HIV counseling, testing and medical care; hepatitis screening, testing and vaccination; and prevention services all under one roof at Navos.

### **Being Active Together**

Building on the findings and successes of a grant funded by the National Institutes of Health, Neighborhood House's Be Active Together (BAT) program is currently partnering with Seattle Parks & Recreation to pilot efforts that make their services more accessible and affordable to low income and immigrant and refugee communities

### **EARLY CHILDHOOD EDUCATION**

We offer a full range of early-childhood education programs for low-income families with young children (from birth to 5 years old). We also serve pregnant mothers as they await the arrival of their new child. Our Early Childhood Education program provides diverse, culturally-appropriate services to all enrolled families, many of whom are recent refugees and immigrants.

### **Head Start: Classroom excellence, lifetime success**

For over 35 years, Neighborhood House has provided high-quality preschool education to children ages 3 to 5. Our Head Start classrooms help children achieve success by combining excellent teaching with cultural sensitivity. Children participate in a well-rounded preschool program that includes literacy activities and social and emotional experiences to foster healthy development. With four different sites throughout the Seattle area, Neighborhood House Head Start is conveniently located for our clients.

### **Step Ahead Preschool: A new pathway to academic success**

Beginning in 2012, Neighborhood House launched its Step Ahead preschool program at our High Point Center in West Seattle. Working in partnership with the City of Seattle, we offer a high-quality preschool education for children ages 3 and 4 years old, preparing them for kindergarten and beyond. Eligible families live within the City of Seattle and meet income guidelines based on family size. Parents of Step Ahead children are enrolled in educational/job training programs, ensuring that two generations are better prepared for excellence in the future.

### **Early Head Start: Support for the whole family**

Our Early Head Start Program serves low-income families with children from birth to age 3 (as well as expectant parents) who live in or near any of Seattle Housing Authority's family communities. Early Head Start is staffed by well-trained professionals who provide support and encouragement through weekly home visits. Home-based activities include parenting education and the sharing of child development information, emphasizing activities and strategies that can be replicated by the families themselves. Family support services as well as mental wellness and support for children with disabilities are important program components. Families are also offered group socialization

opportunities twice a month.

**Parent-Child Home Program: Research-driven literacy support**

Neighborhood House provides home-based services to children between 2 and 3 years old using a research-proven model called the Parent-Child Home Program. This program prepares young children for school success by increasing language and literacy skills, enhancing social-emotional development and strengthening the parent-child relationship.

**EMPLOYMENT AND ADULT EDUCATION**

We help people find and keep meaningful employment at livable wages. For some, this means earning their first paycheck in the United States and taking their first step toward self-sufficiency. For others, it means finding a much better job. Our programs and services include:

**Birch Creek Career Center: Job services in South King County**

Our multiservice career center is located in the Birch Creek public-housing community in Kent, and is operated in partnership with the King County Housing Authority. Our center is home to a comprehensive array of services, including wraparound employment case management, technology classes and an open computer lab, on-site college course, citizenship and ESL classes, and family and social services case management programs. We also link individuals and families to community resources, including WorkSource programs.

**Foundations for Work/Basic Food Employment & Training**

We provide wraparound employment case management for individuals and families in King County experiencing unemployment or underemployment and housing instability. Our clients receive vocational training and support services, including food and transportation assistance.

**Pathways to success for refugees and immigrants**

Our Refugee and Immigrant Assistance, Limited English Proficiency (RIA LEP) Pathways program offers two tracks for our clients to find the right job to meet their needs. For those who would like to improve their English skills, we offer an intensive ESL class focused on workplace communication and job readiness skills to aid in their job search. Others can access a job search-focused model. Both tracks include wraparound employment case management and assistance. The RIA LEP Pathways program is offered at two locations: Wiley Center in White Center and Birch Creek Career Center in Kent.

**Health Care Career Pathways**

For those looking for a career in the medical field, our Health Care Career Pathways provides comprehensive college-based assistance for those seeking or enrolled in long-term health care training at are community colleges and vocational schools, including South Seattle, Central Seattle, North Seattle, Shoreline and Highline Community Colleges, and the Seattle Vocational Institute. Our clients receive case management and employment assistance in partnership with Seattle Jobs Initiative, as well as funding for vocational training and other support services.

**WorkSource-based Employment program**

For individuals facing barriers to employment, we offer employment case management services based in WorkSource sites throughout King County. Our program provides funding for vocational training and support services.

**Working for Housing Stability**

Our innovative Working for Housing Stability program allows us to offer both employment and housing assistance to unemployed or underemployed individuals and families who are homeless or in imminent danger of losing their housing. By partnering with our Foundations for Work program, we provide wraparound employment case management and support services, while also offering homelessness prevention and rapid rehousing services for people who are at risk of becoming homeless.

**Family and Social Services** We offer support, encouragement and resources to families with the goal of helping them build self-sufficiency and meaningful involvement in their communities.

**Case management services: Support for Seattle's newest families**

Our bilingual case managers work one-on-one with individuals, helping them to understand their new country and to address the challenges they may face due to economic disadvantage and language barriers.

**Citizenship services: Reaching the goal of a lifetime**

We offer bilingual assistance to individuals seeking U.S. citizenship. We help candidates fill out required forms and prepare for the citizenship test. For students who need extra test preparation, we also offer citizenship-oriented ESL classes.

**Senior services: Helping our elders remain independent**

We work with seniors in Seattle and South King County so that they can live independently for as long as possible. This includes connecting those in need with senior services, chore services and utility assistance.

**Helpline: One call can make a difference**

Helpline is staffed by knowledgeable, caring operators who direct callers to emergency social services. We provide food bags, baby clothes, rent and utility assistance and make referrals to other agencies as needed.

**Community building: Reaching out to connect neighbors**

We sponsor regular community events that bring neighbors together to socialize, learn new things and create a caring, connected neighborhood.

**HOUSING STABILITY**

Our housing and employment teams combine forces so that families can secure housing and employment, empowering them to achieve independence. We assist clients by instilling in them a sense of resiliency and confidence to successfully navigate housing systems on the path toward achieving self-sufficiency.

**Homelessness Prevention**

Neighborhood House focuses on coaching people toward finding their own solutions and provides one-time rental and move-in assistance, landlord mediation, housing location, job training, placement and retention, and financial counseling. Our clients include those who live in the city of Seattle and are in danger of being evicted or are at risk of losing their utilities.

**Shelter Diversion**

Neighborhood House's Shelter Diversion program helps those who are homeless turn temporary arrangements, such as living with family members, into more permanent solutions. Eligibility determination for the Diversion program is made by King County 2-1-1, which makes referrals to Neighborhood House directly.

**Rapid Re-Housing**

Our Rapid Re-Housing program empowers homeless individuals to move into housing and equips them with financial savvy and the skills needed to assume future rent responsibilities. The Homelessness Intervention Project is designed for people who are able to meet regularly with case managers to discuss job prospects and temporary housing options.

**Youth Education** We help low-income youth build successful futures by offering essential academic and social support. We also work with parents, helping them understand how to be effective advocates for their children.

**Youth tutoring and resource centers: Paving the way for academic success**

At our youth tutoring and resource centers, young people are motivated and challenged to reach their potential as students, individuals and community members. The centers offer positive learning environments for youth aged 6 to 18, with a focus on improving academic performance.

**Substance abuse prevention programs: Helping kids stay on the right track**

We work with youth, schools and neighborhoods to reduce harmful behavior and improve the environments in which our youth live and thrive to keep them drug and alcohol free.

**School and family partnerships: Strengthening bonds to promote education**

Understanding that parents act as a child's first teacher, we organize family nights and community workshops at local schools. These events improve parents' ability to communicate with school personnel and track their children's progress. We work specifically with parents who are new to this country and have limited English-speaking ability.

**College and Career Preparation: A different path, a strong future**

Our staff work with students in South King County who have left the traditional classroom, helping them set and achieve goals for graduation, career and beyond. Drawing on their skills and interests, we place them in internships and paying jobs, assist them in accessing post-secondary education options, and help them succeed.

**BRIDGE.start: Building Relationships, Integrating Diversity, Guiding Empowerment**

School-based case managers work directly with youth in Seattle middle schools. A positive youth development framework helps keep high-risk nine- to 14-year-olds free of drug and criminal involvement.

**Youth Leadership**

We help to build leadership in our youth through skill-building activities and project-based learning experiences. Staff engage students in experiential learning and reflection, helping them to recognize their influence on their communities.

**Budget:** \$13,830,330

**Neighborhood House locations and service areas:**

**Family and Social Services centers.** At our Family and Social Services centers, conveniently located within public housing communities across Seattle and King County, clients can access Neighborhood House's comprehensive and culturally appropriate services. We offer everything from case management to transportation.

**Birch Creek Career Center**

13111 SE 274th St.  
Suite 226  
Kent, WA 98030  
253-277-1667  
253-236-5482 (fax)

**High Point**

6400 Sylvan Way SW  
Seattle, WA 98126  
206-588-4900  
206-588-4901 (fax)

**Lee House at New Holly**

7315 39th Ave. S.  
Seattle, WA 98118  
206-760-3601  
206-760-3602 (fax)

**Rainier Vista**

4410 29th Ave. S.  
Seattle, WA 98108  
206-461-4568  
206-461-6954 (fax)

**Wiley Center at Greenbridge**

9800 8th Ave. S.W.  
Seattle, WA 98106  
206-461-4554  
206-767-7671 (fax)

**Yesler Terrace**

905 Spruce Street  
First floor  
Seattle, WA 98104  
206-461-4522  
206-461-8478 (fax)

**Early Childhood Education centers**

For decades, Neighborhood House has provided free, high-quality Head Start preschool for children aged 3 to 5. Our Head Start classrooms are located in four convenient sites. Our Early Head Start program, headquartered at the New Holly community, offers home-based support and education for expectant mothers, families and children from birth to age 3. Our Parent-Child Home Program at Rainier Vista and Yesler Terrace provides home-based instruction for children aged 2 to 3, preparing them for school success by increasing language and literacy skills.

**High Point Early Childhood Center**

6400 Sylvan Way SW  
Seattle, WA 98126  
206-588-4900

**New Holly Early Childhood Center**

7054 32nd Ave. S.  
Suite 107  
Seattle, WA 98118  
206-760-9330  
206-721-9608 (fax)

**Rainier Vista**

4410 29th Ave. S.  
Seattle, WA 98108  
206-461-4568

**Tukwila**

14900 Interurban Ave. S.  
Suite 203  
Tukwila, WA 98168  
206-923-6700

206-461-6954 (fax)

206-923-6701 (fax)

**Yesler Terrace Early Childhood Center**

Epstein Opportunity Center  
 120 Eighth Avenue  
 Seattle, WA 98104  
 (206) 264-4997

**Youth Tutoring and Resource centers**

Our tutoring centers help youth develop the academic skills they need to succeed. We are located in public housing communities and schools in South King County.

**Burndale**

1044 18th Street NE  
 Auburn, WA 98002  
 253-833-1168  
 253-736-6686 (fax)

**Firwood Circle**

313 37th St. SE  
 Auburn, WA 98002  
 253-397-4680  
 253-397-4680 (fax)

**Seola Gardens**

11215 5th Ave SW  
 Seattle, WA 98146  
 206-466-5807  
 206-466-5807 (fax)

**Epstein building: Family Support, Administration and The Voice**

The Jesse Epstein building, located in Yesler Terrace, is home to our Early Childhood Education family support staff, administrative offices and The Voice. The Voice is a monthly newspaper distributed to public housing residents in Seattle and King County, social service providers, politicians and those interested in issues surrounding low-income populations.

**Epstein**

905 Spruce St.  
 Suite 200  
 Seattle, WA 98104  
 206-461-8430  
 206-461-3857 (fax)

**Satellite locations**

Neighborhood House employment specialists are also conveniently located in offices managed by partner agencies throughout King County. We offer job search and career development assistance, specializing in serving people new to this country.

**Highline Medical Center**

16251 Sylvester Rd SW  
 Burien, WA 98166  
 206-778-0307

**Shoreline Community College**

16101 Greenwood Ave. N.  
 Shoreline, WA 98133  
 206-730-3715 or 206-546-5882

**South Seattle College WorkSource**

Robert Smith Building #79  
6000 16th Ave S.W.  
Seattle, WA 98106-1499

**Worksource South Seattle**

**Community College** (view map)  
6000 16th Ave. S.W.  
Seattle, WA 98106  
206-764-5304  
206-764-7932 (fax)

**Financial Empowerment centers**

Financial Empowerment centers provide free, professional, one-on-one financial education, counseling, and coaching to help people to become financially stable.

**North Seattle College** (view map)

9600 College Way N.  
OCE&E Building, 1st Floor  
Seattle, WA 98103

**Rainier Vista** (view map)

(HUB Center)  
4431 Martin Luther King Jr Way S.  
Seattle, WA 98108

**Solid Ground**

1501 N. 45th Street  
Seattle, WA 98103

**South Seattle College WorkSource**

Robert Smith Building #79  
6000 16th Ave S.W.  
Seattle, WA 98106-1499

**South Seattle College WorkSource**

**Georgetown** (view map)  
6737 Corson Ave S.  
Building B, Room 124  
Seattle, WA 98108

**Wiley Center, Greenbridge**

9800 8th Ave S.W.  
Seattle, WA 98106

**Staffing Level:** 213**History:**

1906: An auspicious beginning

Neighborhood House was founded in 1906 by the National Council of Jewish Women, Seattle Section, to provide services to Jewish immigrants coming to Seattle from Turkey, Greece and other European countries. Settlement House, as it was then called, was led by Mrs. Bailey Gatzert, whose husband had been both mayor of Seattle and a founder of the Seattle Chamber of Commerce. The first services to be offered by Settlement House included a religious school and a sewing class.

1916: A new home

Within a few years, demand for Settlement House's rapidly expanding services, which now included language and citizenship classes, music education and medical treatment, had grown so fast that larger facilities were needed. Thus, on October 29, 1916, Settlement House made the first of many major transitions, moving into new headquarters: a two-story house at 18th Avenue South and South Main Street. The new Settlement House included classrooms, a library, a club room and a ballroom.

According to a 1916 report by The Jewish Voice newspaper, the new building was a "handsome colonial structure of three stories of red brick and white pillars with an imposing marble entrance."

It was also, according to the same report, "a monument to women's energy." Amidst all this change and excitement, in 1917, Settlement House was renamed the Educational Center.

#### 1922: The Community Fund

The Educational Center flourished, and in 1922 became a charter member of the Community Fund, forerunner of today's United Way. By 1929, The Educational Center was providing services to nearly 1,400 people per week.

#### 1935: The lean years

The Educational Center couldn't escape the chilling effects of the Depression. By the middle of the 30s, one of its most popular services, the Baby Clinic, was shut down. But the Educational Center continued to provide desperately needed services and a welcome social outlet to families in the area. Many former clients remember attending Boy Scout meetings and dances at the center, which served as the hub of the neighborhood.

#### 1948: A new beginning

By the late 40s, one could no longer describe the agency's wide-ranging menu of services as simply "educational." Thus, on January 1, 1948, the Educational Center became Neighborhood House. The year brought other changes as well. Though the agency had always been a truly multicultural space, its leadership had yet to diversify. Now the agency invited "representatives of non-Jewish groups from the immediate neighborhood and general community" to serve on the Board of Directors. Not long after, the agency passed out of the hands of the Council of Jewish Women.

#### 1956: The modern era

In August of 1956, Neighborhood House stepped out on its own, incorporating as an independent nonprofit agency. Soon after, the new agency entered into an agreement with the Seattle Housing Authority that secured building space for Neighborhood House at SHA's Yesler Terrace housing community. The agreement marked the beginning of a unique relationship: no other housing authority in the country had brought a multi-service agency into a public housing community to serve residents. Neighborhood House would go on to open service centers in public housing communities all over King County.

#### 1960-1970: Time of expansion

With the passage of "Great Society" legislation in the mid-60s, Neighborhood House was able to expand services throughout King County, opening one of the first Head Start preschools in the country. The agency also started its transportation program, providing door-to-door service for low-income people and those with disabilities.

#### 1981: A strong foundation

By the 80s, Neighborhood House was a nationally-recognized leader among service providers. Its Head Start program was flourishing, and the agency was publishing a widely-read newspaper for public housing residents and low-income individuals. The Voice continues to provide timely news in several languages today.

#### 1995: Neighborhood House serves new wave of immigrants

In the 90s, a wave of immigrants from East Africa fleeing war and famine arrive in the United States, additional staff members were hired from various East African language groups to meet the growing refugee population. By the end of 1997, more than half of Neighborhood House's staff

spoke a language other than English and the agency was serving more than 7,000 public housing residents each year.

2006: Celebrating 100 years of service

Neighborhood House turned 100 in 2006. The agency's program areas, Family & Social Services, Early Childhood Education, Employment and Adult Education, Youth Education and Community Health are thriving. Our diverse and talented staff allows the agency to be remarkably responsive to community needs. Even today, Neighborhood House stands ready to help yet another generation achieve their hopes and dreams.