

## Climate Justice Framework

### Climate Justice Impact Strategy

Seattle Foundation's Climate Justice Impact Strategy works to address the disproportionate impacts of climate change on communities of color and low income communities and centers these frontline communities in efforts to address our changing climate. Everyone has a stake in achieving climate justice and we believe that focusing on those first and worst impacted ensures that we *all* thrive. Our approach is designed with an eye towards long-term systems change and recognition that working towards climate justice requires concurrent activities in mitigation, adaptation, resilience, and leadership.

#### **Mitigation – We must slow carbon pollution with strategies that center equity**

##### *Our Challenge:*

- Communities that contribute the least to carbon pollution are impacted first and worst by climate change; reducing emissions and slowing climate change is crucial to protecting communities.
- Race is the most significant predictor of a person living near contaminated water, air or soil in the United States. In Seattle, 58% of the population that lives within one mile of the Duwamish River Superfund boundary are people of color.
- People of color are disproportionately impacted by the harmful co-pollutants emitted along with carbon pollution (GHG); yet many false solutions for climate do not include strong community co-benefits, including jobs and targeted infrastructure investments, for highly impacted communities.

##### *Our Approach:*

- Support the equitable reduction of carbon pollution, especially efforts that reduce co-pollutant exposure in low-income communities and communities of color and include investments that help low-income consumers adjust to a new low-carbon economy.
- Uplift efforts that consider the impacts and implications of the inequities in land use and zoning in carbon emissions reduction.

#### **Adaptation – We must adjust to current and future changes from the pollution we've already emitted**

##### *Our Challenge:*

- High heat, more volatile and extreme weather, and sea level rise will increasingly impact the well-being of humans. Low-income communities and communities of color are disproportionately at risk to the impacts of climate change due to existing social, economic, and health inequities.

##### *Our Approach:*

- Center communities of color and low income communities in our approaches to protect coastlines, manage sea-level rise, adjust to more high heat days, manage land and forests, plan for reduced water availability, crop resiliency and protect energy and public infrastructure. Support community driven planning and policy development and pilot innovations that reduce current and future vulnerabilities and risks of low income communities and people of color in a changing climate
- Document the vulnerabilities and risks communities of color and low income communities face in a changing climate to inform policy approaches.

## **Resilience – We must build strong, networked communities with the power to shape decisions**

### *Our Challenge:*

- Siloed approaches to mitigation and adaptation can further displacement and/or fail to build long term community capacity to withstand future vulnerabilities to climate change and ability to thrive.
- Due to redlining, and other racist practices in banking and government land use designations, communities of color are more likely to live in areas with high environmental hazards, this is already decreasing both quality of life and lifespan. Further, climate change will exacerbate these impacts unless communities are able to advocate for intersectional solutions that take into account previous policy decisions along with current and expected climate impacts.

### *Our Approach:*

- Build a vision of resilience that goes beyond responding to and withstanding climate impacts in favor of an approach where solutions account for existing racial inequities that will be exacerbated by climate change and build capacity to not just respond but thrive.
  - Build and strengthen community capacity including policy, legal strategy, and research to equip local leaders with tools to lead the climate movement.
  - Support local economic infrastructure. Grow the capacity of community institutions to generate and manage economic activities that advance adaptation, mitigation, and localization of core systems like food and energy.
- Strengthen social ties and deepen practice of democracy and voting necessary to enable action on climate justice.

## **Leadership – We must build the voice and change the narrative, so those most impacted are leading**

### *Our Challenge:*

- People of color support environmental protection at a rate greater than white individuals. However despite strong environmental convictions, people of color face a green ceiling of underrepresentation, making up less than 16% of staff at leading foundations, NGO's and Government Agencies.
- The most prominent messages on climate for decades focused on environmental harms, leaving out human centered impacts, the experiences of communities of color and people with low incomes.

### *Our Approach:*

- Support and build leadership by communities of color and low-income communities in the design and implementation of climate solutions.
- Address the green ceiling within and across sectors, by supporting the formal leadership of people of color.
- Uplift efforts that include formal leadership and oversight by impacted communities as components of critical solutions.
- Ground the stories of climate justice in communities of color and low income communities.

In executing Seattle Foundation's commitment to Climate Justice, Seattle Foundation invests in research, advocacy and policy, convening and coalition building as well as storytelling. We work across sectors in partnership with institutions and philanthropists to realize greater impact together.

We believe a better future is possible and with support in these strategies we can build it together.