GLOBAL GIVING
Equipping Guatemalan girls to shape their own destinies

ECONOMIC OPPORTUNITY
Innovative healthcare apprenticeships

POWERING CHANGE
In depth with Sooz McGill and Dan Regis

SEATTLE FOUNDATION
Committed to Equity and Opportunity

Seattle Foundation’s role is to create greater equity and opportunity in all aspects of a healthy community. To advance this ideal, we work every day with our philanthropic and community partners, uniting passion and discipline to create lasting change.

Stay Connected: Subscribe to our blog at seattlefoundation.org/blog
In this issue of Heart & Science, we focus on economic opportunity and global giving, two compelling, timely topics. Economic opportunity is especially important in ensuring that financial prosperity and security reaches all of our region’s residents, communities and businesses. Our focus on global giving speaks to our special attention on how the health of our local community is inextricably tied to the health and vibrancy of our global community.

To highlight economic opportunity, we feature an innovative medical apprenticeship program. Apprenticeships are a way to create bridges for our students and young adults to find the education, training and employment that helps them build a bright, sustainable future here.

In this issue you will also read about our region’s strong commitment to address global challenges like gender inequality. We explore ways that Seattle is connected to helping those abroad, through a program in rural Guatemala that is equipping girls to drive change in their own communities, and a school for young leaders in Rwanda.

As the Seattle region’s community foundation, we value our philanthropists’ broad-ranging definitions of what ‘community’ means to them. From those who work locally, to others who see themselves as citizens of the world, Seattle Foundation supports a full spectrum of philanthropists.

Enjoy this issue of Heart & Science, which takes you on a journey about the power of economic opportunity and how Seattle’s role in the world is central to who we are.

In partnership,
Tony Mestres, President & CEO

Callahan said these philanthropists are a critical part of a new civil society sector in the wake of declining governmental spending. But he asks whether they may have too much influence in the future, with few checks or counterbalances. Callahan says one way for philanthropists to be more responsive rather than prescriptive is to better listen to communities and to consider participatory grantmaking.

The Bezos family, including Amazon founder Jeff Bezos and his parents, Jackie and Mike, gave $35 million to Fred Hutchinson Cancer Research Center to fund research on new ways to fight cancer. This tops a previous gift of $20 million to the Hutch in 2014 from the Bezos family.

Microsoft co-founder and philanthropist Paul Allen made a $30 million gift to fund a shelter and service center for homeless individuals that will be operated by Mercy Housing Northwest. The City of Seattle is also contributing $5 million.

Amazon announced that it will build a homeless shelter in one of its new towers, donating 47,000 square feet of space to house more than 200 people. The facility will open in 2020 and be operated by Mary’s Place. Amazon has not specified the value of its donation, but says it is “tens of millions of dollars.”
CLOSE LOOK
Giving in Washington state
2012-2014

Total giving by 2,047 funders to 4,856 organizations:

$1 Billion

Median Grant:

$5,000

Number of Grants:

19,267

Change in giving between 2012 and 2014:

△ +60%

GIVEBIG SNAPSHOT

Seattle Foundation’s GiveBIG - the third largest giving day in the country - raised $19 million in 2017. That brings the total raised through GiveBIG to nearly $100 million over its seven years. This 2017 total includes online donations, realized matching gifts, employer matching funds and Dollars for Change, which awarded additional gifts of $2,500 each to 150 nonprofits through a computer-generated selection process, with a strong focus on small and medium-sized organizations. A record 1,701 nonprofits participated and the average gift amount was $154. Arts and culture organizations received the largest share of donations.

Source: Philanthropy Northwest
Bledia Toroc is a graduate of the Women’s Justice Initiative program to empower girls in rural Guatemala to shape their own destinies.
In a remote pueblo in Patzún, Guatemala, 13-year-old Bledia Toroc walks through tall corn stalks on a muddy path as a heavy fog and misty rain settles on the green hills towering over her. In much of Guatemala and in Patzún, where Bledia lives with her parents and eight siblings, attending primary school can feel like a goal very far out of reach for a girl like Bledia. For many girls, schooling and working outside the home past adolescence is the exception, not the rule. Girls who are able to attend school until graduation are breaking the mold that shapes the destiny of many young Mayan girls, who often drop out of school to help support their families financially, or marry young to start their own families. Bledia is defying convention by not being married and aspiring to return to school and earn an independent income. Two of her sisters are married or in a civil union at ages 14 and 20, the latter with a four-month-old baby. Her mother was just 14 and her father 16 when they began their own family. Statistics are working against young girls like Bledia in Guatemala. Out of every 14 girls who start school, only one will make it to high school, and only a quarter of those will stay in school past age 16. This reality is exacerbated for indigenous women, with only 39 percent of Mayan women being literate, compared to 77 percent of non-indigenous women.
Early marriage or unions (known as informal coupling) are an especially urgent issue. Until 2015, the minimum age for marriage in Guatemala was just 14 for girls, and the tradition of young couples living together or marrying early is still ubiquitous. The consequences for girls who marry early are vast and life-changing: girls drop out of school; often become victims of physical and sexual abuse; suffer from health complications due to multiple pregnancies at early ages; and face some of the highest maternal mortality rates not only in Latin America, but in the world.

Fortunately for young girls like Bledia, organizations including the Women’s Justice Initiative (WJI) are working tirelessly to connect with and empower young girls, encouraging self-discovery and building their capacity to shape their communities.

In 2016, Bledia was one of 30 girls from her community of Chuiquel, Patzún, who participated in a WJI training and leadership program. First piloted in six communities in 2015, the program seeks to prevent or delay early marriage for Mayan girls. Over the last two years, 335 girls from nine rural communities, including Bledia, graduated from this successful program. WJI uses a methodology based on the Population Council’s Abriendo Oportunidades (Opening Opportunities) model that makes critical investments in young girls to help them navigate the transition into adolescence.

"Gender inequality is not a cultural issue because it depends on the education we are given at home. I am a woman and I am Mayan, and I am opposed to early marriage."

- Elvia Raquec
WJI engages with community leaders and teaches girls about their rights as well as their leadership role within their community.

Centering girls at the heart of the program puts them in the driver’s seat for their own future. WJI also meaningfully connects projects, like embroidery, to their Mayan culture and symbolism. “When I started attending the workshops, they gave me my own huipil [a hand-woven blouse worn by indigenous women] and taught me how to embroider one myself, just like my friends had been taught! Besides sewing, we learned about healthy relationships and the importance of waiting until we feel ready to get married,” Bledia said.

As an alumna, she continues to meet monthly with her peers and share the lessons she learned about healthy relationships, self-worth and women’s rights with others in her community.

After living and working in Guatemala for several years, Katharine Flatley, an attorney from Connecticut, founded WJI in 2011 to address gender inequality and violence against women and girls in indigenous communities. In 2013 WJI began providing free legal assistance to indigenous women, and built successful partnerships with entities responsible for handling cases of gender-based violence, including local government agencies, community leaders and the national police. WJI has grown rapidly and now works in 22 indigenous communities throughout Patzún, serving more than 7,000 individuals. From gender-based violence prevention, to rights education, legal services and support in securing land titles, WJI is bridging the gap between Guatemalan laws and policies and how they are unevenly implemented in rural communities, if at all.

Besides Flatley, the organization is run and led entirely by indigenous women from the communities they serve. Elvia Raquez, who oversees WJI’s programs and workshops for young women, said there is much pressure from the community and families for girls to follow a traditional path. So WJI’s staff reminds them they are still children who have the right to enjoy childhood, as well as to attend school and choose when to marry.
Through its programs, taught in Kaqchiquel, the predominant Mayan language in Patzún, WJI emphasizes the importance of self-love, or Wajö’wï (vah-joh vi), and the search for inner strength, Wu chuq’a’uch q’a (woo chootch-kah), to help girls overcome societal pressures. WJI also works to involve the community, including local government officials, to help ensure these programs and changes are sustainable in the long run.

WJI leaders share their work with Communal Councils, which establish local policies, and explain to other leaders and parents that the community benefits from girls who are empowered through education, skills and opportunity. The Councils have begun to recognize the depth of the problem regarding early marriages, their direct impact on girls’ futures, and in turn, their entire communities. "Gender inequality is not a cultural issue because it depends on the education we are given at home. I am a woman and I am Mayan, and I am opposed to early marriage," explained Raquec. "It was a constant struggle. I managed to overcome many obstacles, and to convince my dad to let me go to school. Then I became an example within the community and my family because I was able to achieve something that most girls could not."

Sandra Cocón, who oversees the educational component of their Girls’ Education, Rights and Leadership program, drew upon her own personal experience to develop the curriculum. Cocón saw how challenging life was for her own mother, who married when she was a child. She also witnessed negative treatment of women by her male relatives and was determined not to repeat this gender discrimination in her own life.

"I married at the age of 24 and found a husband who is the antithesis of everything in society that was harming me as a young woman," she said. "I felt terrible when my uncles or grandparents treated me differently because I am a woman. My husband is an example for other men in the community."

The Adolescent Girls program begins with a focus on self-esteem and concludes with the girls developing a ‘life plan,’ a guide they can use to identify paths to pursue their goals. With all of these new tools, girls begin to hear their own voices and speak up for their rights and dreams.

WJI is seeing results, both for the girls and the wider community. Now the Communal Councils provide spaces where participants can meet, and they refer young women to the program.

Bledia has her eyes set on making long-lasting changes in her community.

"I want to get back to school to keep developing my own leadership in the community. I have grown up in poverty and I believe that waiting to get married is not only best for me personally, but will allow me to do more with my life, contribute to my family and allow me to reach my goals for my future," shared Bledia.

Then, reveling in the joys of childhood, Bledia skipped off to join her friends playing in the courtyard.

Seattle International Foundation, Seattle Foundation’s global affiliate, supports Women’s Justice Initiative through its Central America & Mexico Youth Fund (CAMY Fund). WJI is also supported by Pangea Giving, a Seattle-based giving circle that supports global grassroots organizations to improve well-being in their communities.

To learn more, visit www.womens-justice.org, www.camyfund.org or www.pangeagiving.org
EMPOWERING WOMEN WORLDWIDE

There are 869 MILLION girls and young women ages 10 to 24 in the world, of whom roughly nine out of 10 live in developing countries.

Annually, 15 million girls are married before the age of 18, which can result in denied rights and lack of access to health, education and safety.

Each additional year of schooling can increase a woman's earnings by 10% to 20%.

While women make up about 43% of the agricultural labor force globally, less than 20% are landholders.

In countries where women have rights and opportunities to own land, child malnutrition rates drop by an average of 60%.

INVESTING IN WOMEN AND GIRLS SUPPORTS HUMAN RIGHTS, REDUCES POVERTY AND AIDS SUSTAINABLE ECONOMIC GROWTH AND GLOBAL DEVELOPMENT.

SUPPORTING ORGANIZATIONS THAT STRATEGICALLY PARTNER WITH AND INVEST IN WOMEN AND GIRLS HELPS EMPOWER THOSE WHO SHOULDER A DISPROPORTIONATE BURDEN OF GLOBAL POVERTY.

INVESTING IN WOMEN AND GIRLS SUPPORTS HUMAN RIGHTS, REDUCES POVERTY AND AIDS SUSTAINABLE ECONOMIC GROWTH AND GLOBAL DEVELOPMENT.

Supporting organizations that strategically partner with and invest in women and girls helps empower those who shoulder a disproportionate burden of global poverty.

Annually, 15 million girls are married before the age of 18, which can result in denied rights and lack of access to health, education, and safety.

There are 869 MILLION girls and young women ages 10 to 24 in the world, of whom roughly nine out of ten live in developing countries.

Each additional year of schooling can increase a woman’s earnings by 10% to 20%.

In countries where women have rights and opportunities to own land, child malnutrition rates drop by an average of 60%.

While women make up about 43% of the agricultural labor force globally, less than 20% are landholders.


SEATTLE-BASED ORGANIZATIONS WORKING TO EMPOWER WOMEN & GIRLS WORLDWIDE

**Sahar**

Sahar creates education opportunities in Afghanistan that empower and inspire children and their families to build peaceful, just, and life-affirming communities.

**One by One**

One by One aims to end obstetric fistula and improve the lives of women and girls suffering from this childbirth injury through direct medical intervention and community-based outreach.

**Splash**

Splash works to ensure access to clean water, sanitation, and hygiene by working with local schools to teach Menstrual Hygiene Management and innovative sanitation solutions to girls.

**Global Partnerships**

Global Partnerships expands opportunity for women living in poverty by focusing investments on health, microentrepreneurship, green technology, and rural livelihoods.

**Landesa**

Landesa helps empower women and girls, and reduces poverty and conflict through advocacy for policies that ensure rural women and men have secure rights to land.

**Rwanda Girls Initiative**

Rwanda Girls Initiative’s upper-secondary boarding school for girls, the most socioeconomically diverse in Rwanda, prepares its students to pursue post-secondary education and succeed in university.

**Splash**

Splash works to ensure access to clean water, sanitation, and hygiene by working with local schools to teach Menstrual Hygiene Management and innovative sanitation solutions to girls.

**Global Partnerships**

Global Partnerships expands opportunity for women living in poverty by focusing investments on health, microentrepreneurship, green technology, and rural livelihoods.

**Landesa**

Landesa helps empower women and girls, and reduces poverty and conflict through advocacy for policies that ensure rural women and men have secure rights to land.

**Rwanda Girls Initiative**

Rwanda Girls Initiative’s upper-secondary boarding school for girls, the most socioeconomically diverse in Rwanda, prepares its students to pursue post-secondary education and succeed in university.
Co-founding a school for girls lacking opportunities more than 7,600 miles away was not an obvious path for Suzanne “Soozi” Sinegal McGill. But developing the Rwanda Girls Initiative (RGI) was born from her own family’s example of giving back. “I grew up with two parents who continue to be dedicated to their community. They have always shown that we have a responsibility, [that we are] connected to the smaller community around us and also the greater community.”

McGill attributes that sense of responsibility for the wider world in part to her father’s Catholic background. During early childhood her family lived a very modest life, while still emphasizing giving to others. “When times changed due to my dad’s hard work, along with luck and chance, we were able to do a lot more, but with a sense that it is a great privilege and responsibility to give back,” she said. “That is where the heart [of charitable giving] comes from for me and my family.”
Along with her business partner and friend, Shalisan “Shal” Foster, McGill was drawn to Rwanda partly through that country’s critical efforts to rebuild and redefine a national identity after the horrific genocide of the early 1990s. “We had the kernel of an idea to support education as the foundation of all other development. We felt that educating a population to build their own solutions and create capacity is, at the end of the day, what is going to create change,” McGill said.

McGill and Foster spent months visiting with communities in Rwanda, listening to stories and hearing Rwandans identify critical needs and visions for the future of their country. “There was so much that we didn’t know. Many people who have far more experience gave us the advice: 'If you want a sense of ownership on the ground and sustainability, there has to be collaboration with people.' Our initial ignorance served us well, because we recognized that we weren’t experts. It required us to be very good listeners to determine the needs,” McGill said.

This fact-finding ultimately led to the founding of the Rwanda Girls Initiative (RGI) and the Gashora Girls Academy, a secondary school that provides an innovative, world-class education to high school-aged girls who face barriers to schooling. Many of RGI’s graduates are attending universities in the United States, with the goal of returning to Rwanda to invest in their communities. McGill says gender parity is a defining element of all economic development in Rwanda, so empowering girls is key to reaching the country’s development goals. “Though our first graduating class are only juniors in college, the girls are absolutely changing the world around them,” she said.

As McGill’s and Foster’s passion for this project grew, their community in the Pacific Northwest responded with support and expertise. Many of their donors give through Seattle Foundation, which administers and connects engaged philanthropists like McGill with targeted strategies that increase equity and opportunity.

“Kim Wright [Director of Family Philanthropy] has been an incredible resource for us, advising on how to be more sustainable and efficient, how to reach out more effectively and how to cultivate more donors. She has helped us think through strategic challenges and provided many resources that I would not have had access to if I just had a family foundation set up somewhere,” said McGill.

The ties between McGill’s Seattle community and her work in Rwanda have strengthened over the years. “I look at our world today as so deeply interconnected. What happens far away from here has a really direct impact here. Everyone being lifted up leads to a safer and more prosperous world for all of us,” she said.

In 2011, Rwanda Girls Initiative opened the Gashora Girls Academy of Science and Technology, an upper-secondary boarding school an hour away from the capital, Kigali, to increase educational opportunities for girls in Rwanda. Students and teachers work collaboratively to ensure that the 270 students develop the knowledge and skills they need to succeed in life.

To learn more, visit rwandagirlsinitiative.org
Q. How do you describe your role as a philanthropic adviser?
A. I often use the term “matchmaker” to describe my role. I match people who are generous and passionate about our community with causes they care about. I match philanthropists with the organizations that are effectively addressing those needs in our community right now.

Q. What are philanthropists seeking when they approach you for philanthropic advising?
A. Relationships and trust building. One of the things that can stop a good philanthropic plan has to do with relationships: trust and communication. Building strong relationships in the community and among the family is key. This is a primary role where philanthropic advisers add value. It’s important to ask the philanthropists who they would consult before implementing any significant planning strategy, and then to bring those people to the table.
At Seattle Foundation, we are working to invest money in the community effectively. Since we want resources in the Greater Seattle region to make our community more equitable for all, we want to remove barriers and help philanthropists make really transformational gifts. We know that philanthropists have a greater likelihood of meeting their impact and generosity potential when they get to know the leadership and staff at an organization, which builds trust on both sides.

Q. **What is the value that a philanthropist receives from working with you and your team?**

A. People always ask us to recommend organizations to invest in. What we end up suggesting is a new way of thinking, by providing more context to the broader issue, identifying their personal values and passions, and then looking into community organizations that are effectively delivering on their mission.

People want to jump in and make those grants yesterday. We are harnessing that enthusiasm and also reminding philanthropists, “Go slow to be effective.”

Q. **What motivates you personally to do this work?**

A. Relationships. After you work with someone and get to know them over time, you build more trust and understanding and you can go places with them that you might not have been able to previously. For example, I have conversations about end-of-life giving with philanthropists. We bring in their family, their kids, their grandkids, and have some conversations that are based around philanthropy but really create a sense of openness and vulnerability.

Q. **How do you engage philanthropists in systems improvement and reinvention?**

A. When speaking with philanthropists, we listen far more than we speak. The onramp to giving is often what pulls at your heartstrings. And this is where giving to direct services — which means funding immediate interventions like food for the hungry or housing for someone right now — comes in. I ask philanthropists why they think people become homeless, and I offer perspectives on preventing homelessness. Prevention leads to dipping your toe into supporting domestic violence services, affordable housing, and mental health — some of the root causes of housing instability. Funding education for sustainable jobs is another way to prevent homelessness. This kind of system reinvention is a key way that Seattle Foundation is working to create more equity and opportunity throughout our community.
Annali Solorio’s dreams of higher education stalled when she became pregnant at an early age and had to work while raising her daughter. After her child entered school, Solorio began working at the Yakima Valley Farmworkers Clinic, a member of the Washington Association of Community & Migrant Health Centers (WACMHC).

When her supervisors approached her with an opportunity to enter an apprenticeship program to become a medical assistant, she was thrilled.

“I didn’t have to pay anything. It was amazing. I knew that I did want to one day become a medical assistant, but going back to school and [taking out] student loans was not an option at the moment. I was grateful for the opportunity,” Solorio said.

The idea of an apprenticeship conjures up archaic images of a medieval blacksmith learning a trade and carrying on an age old tradition of craftsmanship.

But apprenticeships are being reinvented for today’s employers and workforce. SkillUp Washington, a workforce funders collaborative created by Seattle Foundation in 2007, is helping reignite the practice of apprenticeship in career paths not historically associated with the practice, including healthcare.
“Apprenticeship is so much more than building and manufacturing; it is applicable across industries,” says Susan Crane, executive director of SkillUp Washington.

“Apprenticeship is the oldest form of education and job training in the world,” Crane said. “This hands-on approach to education translates into real differences in the skills and capacity of apprenticeship graduates in the workplace.”

Medical assistants work with patients by asking questions about their health conditions, taking vitals and doing procedures such as blood draws, vaccinations and wound care. Medical assistants work with doctors across a wide range of specialties, from emergency services to dermatology, and assist with patients of all ages, on a variety of medical cases.

The Medical Assistant Apprenticeship program, the first of its kind in Washington state, was created to fill a need in the healthcare industry. Currently, 18 employers are participating in the program statewide and there are more than 100 apprentices enrolled. Two major King County healthcare providers, Sea Mar Community Health Centers and Overlake Hospital, will offer the program to their employees, beginning this summer.

Working with community partners, and aided by funding and assistance from SkillUp, WACMHC created and built its apprenticeship model. The program, which offers free medical assistant training and certification to low-income individuals, also received generous support the following year from a JP Morgan Chase Foundation grant awarded to SkillUp.

“This hands-on approach to education translates into real differences in the skills and capacity of apprenticeship graduates in the workplace.”

- Susan Crane
High demand for medical assistants has led to bidding wars by hospitals and clinics over qualified candidates and is fueling expansion of the program. WACHMC is using a U.S. Department of Labor grant to expand the program, developing tracks for recent high school graduates and engaging tribal clinics as employers. Additionally, through a new affiliation with South Seattle College, those completing the medical assistant apprenticeship will receive college credits that help them get a head start on more advanced healthcare occupations, like nursing.

Formed as a nonprofit in 1985, WACMHC advocates on behalf of low-income, uninsured and underserved populations whose medical needs are often met by community health centers. WACMHC provides programs and services to Washington’s 28 community health centers, migrant health centers and urban Indian health programs. These health centers serve nearly one million Washington residents with preventive and primary healthcare at over 250 sites across the state.

Abigail Blue, former deputy director of operations at WACMHC, says one goal of the program is for graduates to reflect the local community. Seventy percent of graduates from the 12-month apprenticeship are Latina women living in underserved areas of Eastern Washington. Many of them are single mothers who live in multigenerational households and face financial, geographic or familial barriers to attending a traditional college. The program enables them to get a debt-free education while still working full time to support their families. Blue said patients value interaction with medical assistants who understand their culture and community. "Someone who is bilingual or multilingual understands the experiential reference points of that community. They are an incredibly valuable asset to organizations," Blue said.

"I feel like I’m more valuable and I do more for the clinic now that I don’t have a limited scope of practice."

- Annali Solorio
Blue added, “The student feels valued, it builds deeper trust and gives them a sense of being of service to the communities they come from. It is empowering.”

SkillUp works with WACMHC and the Service Employees International Union’s (SEIU 775NW) Training Fund to identify high-quality candidates for the program who are already employed in lower wage, healthcare-related positions such as homecare work. Many of them work in community clinics in Eastern Washington, like Solorio, who said the apprenticeship changed her life.

"They promoted me, they gave me a raise and they changed my title. And now I can do vaccines and give medications,” she said. "I feel like I’m more valuable and I do more for the clinic now that I don’t have a limited scope of practice."

The Medical Assistant Apprenticeship program not only provides career path employment and advancement for healthcare workers, but it does so at far less cost to the industry.

Blue said employers often pay for the training in exchange for a two-year contract. The program has an impressive 99 percent retention rate compared with the usual industry turnover of 40 percent for those within five years on the job. "It is incredibly cheap compared to private or public education," she said. "It is a huge return on investment because you are not spending money on recruitment, replacement and training."

Apprentices receive mentoring on the job, as well as online classes, regular contact with instructors and hands-on skill days with instructors and fellow students. According to Blue, the program’s graduates function at a high level on the job immediately because they are trained in a clinical setting and can work at the top of their licenses.

Angelica Roque, another apprenticeship graduate, was working full time while attempting to complete a conventional nursing program one course at a time when she entered the program. A mother of two young children, she would wake up hours before them to complete her assignments.

Roque now trains other medical assistants who come from community college programs. She takes pride in serving as a mentor. "I get to train them, to show them what I have learned, so that they can learn too," she said.

In an environment where living-wage opportunities and jobs are scarce, Solorio and Roque credit the apprenticeship program and certification with helping them advance to the next step in their careers.

Both are now applying to competitive nursing programs and said their medical assistant credentials have made them attractive candidates.

"I am considering becoming a surgical technician. It is a very competitive program. I think they only choose ten students a year," Solorio said. "My application has a better chance of getting in because I have this experience as a medical assistant. I am so grateful for this program."

To learn more about the program, visit: wacmhc.org/inreach

To learn more about SkillUp Washington, visit: skillupwa.org
HEALTHCARE IS A KEY INDUSTRY IN KING COUNTY

11% of all jobs are healthcare related in King County.

GROWTH IN THE HEALTHCARE SECTOR IS PROJECTED TO OUTPACE OTHER INDUSTRIES, AND THERE IS AN INCREASED DEMAND FOR MEDICAL ASSISTANTS.

Projected average annual growth rate for healthcare jobs in King County, 2014-2019: 2%

Projected gap in workers trained for healthcare related jobs vs. demand in Washington state: 36,941

Projected average annual growth rate for medical assistant jobs in King County, 2014-2019: 1.8%

Projected gap in workers trained for medical assistant jobs vs. demand in Washington state: 814

WAGE RANGE

MEDIAN HOURLY Medical Assistants
$17.27

WASHINGTON CAREER BRIDGE

AVERAGE PER YEAR Medical Assistants
$36,400

The Medical Assistant Apprenticeship program highlights the approach of the Seattle Region Partnership (SRP), a new effort to close the gap between employers’ needs for qualified workers and homegrown talent seeking living-wage jobs. A collaborative effort led by Seattle Foundation, the Seattle Metropolitan Chamber of Commerce, King County and City of Seattle, SRP works with employers, the public sector and philanthropists to identify high-demand career pathways and connect local people to the training necessary to be successful in those fields.

At SRP convenings, local hospitals and healthcare employers continue to highlight their need for medical assistants. Programs like Washington Association of Community & Migrant Health Centers Medical Assistant Apprenticeship is a great example of the kind of pipeline program SRP seeks to support and expand.

For Dan Regis, the philosophy underpinning all of his philanthropic giving is the old adage about teaching a man to fish. "It is all about jobs," Regis says. "You can't give people jobs with dead ends, but jobs that they are excited about." His family foundation, the Regis Community Fund, primarily supports three programs that provide low-income students with the training and education to enter into living wage, career path jobs: Year Up, Technology Access Foundation and BankWork$.

Regis is a third generation Italian-American and the second college graduate in his family. "The distinguishing feature of my life was to have a college degree. Historically, immigration causes a lot of distress for the first generation. The second generation gets a toehold and the third really gets a bite of the apple," Regis said. "I thought we could do something to accelerate that progression. I wanted to take a rung out of that process."

Regis supports programs that provide participants with stable and meaningful work and ultimately prevent housing instability, food insecurity and other issues that require expensive interventions. "I became convinced that if we could get people the skills necessary to make a living wage, that would be enough."

Regis was introduced to the founder of BankWork$, Les Biller, by his Seattle Foundation philanthropic advisor, Allison Parker. BankWork$ is a free, eight-
week program that prepares people from low-income and minority communities with the skills and training needed for entry-level jobs in the finance and customer service industries. Biller launched the program in Los Angeles and approached Seattle Foundation to bring BankWork$ to King County.

Initially, Regis said he had concerns that bank teller jobs don’t provide a living wage, but he was impressed with Biller’s passion and the program’s successful graduation rates. So he agreed to support BankWork$’ launch in the Seattle area. “There is an inherent nobility in having a good job and doing your best,” Regis says.

Knowing about his passion, Parker introduced Regis to Biller. But Regis didn’t become a full believer until he attended a BankWork$ graduation ceremony and met several graduates of the program. He recounts hearing the story of a young mother in an abusive relationship who was living in transitional housing and receiving multiple social services when she entered the BankWork$ program. She slowly worked her way from part-time employment as a bank teller to a position as a full-time lead teller, and has recently become a personal banker. This graduate is fully supporting her family toward a far better future.

“It was the most moving story; there wasn’t a dry eye in the place,” Regis said. “She is just rocking and rolling.”

Since it started in Greater Seattle in 2011, through 2016, BankWork$ has produced 547 graduates, with 80 percent of them securing jobs in banking. The successful workforce development program continues to grow and change lives.

ABOUT BANKWORK$: BankWork$ is a free, eight-week program offered in eight cities that trains low-income adults for careers in the financial services industry. Founded in 2006 in Los Angeles, the program has more than 1,000 graduates working in financial services across the country and has a job placement rate of 72 percent. In King County, the program is delivered through YMCA Seattle|King|Snohomish.

For more information, visit bankworks.org
We know our city is growing  
Seattle, this beautiful biosphere,  
And growth, yes, is inevitable  
The brilliance of the work that lies ahead  
Is that we each have a choice in how we grow better  
How we understand the resources that we all share in our community  
How we siphon, and advocate,  
And how we nourish our shared soil so that all can stretch to their fullest  
Will we be tangled, or braided?  
Will we be simply reactive, or will we catalyze with courage?  
What are we brave enough to pull out by the root?  
We have the honor to design better, to educate better,  
To invest better, to be led better.  
Are we ready for new leaves  
Are we ready for the flourishing  
Are we ready to grow towards a future where all of us can truly bloom

#TRUEWORDS

Hollis Wong-Wear is a musician, songwriter, teaching artist, poet, producer and activist, and friend of Seattle Foundation, who splits her time between Seattle and Los Angeles.
Put family at the heart of your giving.

Philanthropy is a powerful way to bring family together around the shared values of generosity and community. Seattle Foundation provides customized philanthropic advising and community insights that enable your family philanthropy to be a powerful and effective way to build ties across generations and invest in meaningful community impact.

CONTACT KIM WRIGHT, DIRECTOR OF FAMILY PHILANTHROPY, 206.515.2136 OR EMAIL, K.WRIGHT@SEATTLEFOUNDATION.ORG.