



## YEAR 1 LEARNINGS

Launched in 2021, the Fund for Inclusive Recovery (FIR) aims to raise \$50 million over a five-year period to meet the critical needs of communities most impacted by the long-term health, economic, and societal effects of the COVID-19 pandemic.

The purpose of the FIR grants is to support community power and base building approaches, creating the necessary foundation for meaningful systems and policy change.

FIR is a pooled fund, guided by a Community Advisory Group. In April of 2022, **FIR allocated \$12.6 million in investments to 21 BIPOC organizations, movements, and communities** for its first year of grantmaking.

To ensure that we are supporting grantee partners with integrity and centering their voices, Seattle Foundation provides annual opportunities for grantees to share progress and challenges to help better meet community needs now, and in the years to come.

### GRANTEE PARTNERS

- Alphabet Alliance of Color
- Casa Latina
- CHOOSE 180
- Collective Justice
- Community Health Board Coalition
- Equitable Recovery and Reconciliation Alliance
- Families of Color Seattle
- Partnership between Indian American Community Services, Eastside for All and Muslim Community Network Association
- Native Action Network
- OneAmerica
- Open Doors for Multicultural Families
- Pacific Islander Community Association of Washington
- Rainier Beach Action Coalition
- Skyway Coalition
- Southeast Seattle Education Coalition
- Surge Reproductive Justice
- United Indians of All Tribes Foundation
- UTOPIA Washington
- Voices of Tomorrow
- West African Community Council
- White Center Community Development Association

### Learning Indicators

In May of 2023, grantee partners shared progress and challenges on a set of seven learning indicators to provide greater context on their FIR-related work to date:

- 1 Increase internal operations and capacity
- 2 Deepen relationships through partnerships and coalitions
- 3 Expand base of engaged community members
- 4 Develop new leaders in the community
- 5 Create new programs and improve existing programs
- 6 Conduct community-led research efforts
- 7 Create and advance policies



Alphabet Alliance of Color

Learning indicators were developed by the anticipated work and overall outcomes noted by grantees during the application process. It is our hope that this throughline of reporting allows grantees to share updates in ways most meaningful to their organization's work.

Grantees had the option to share progress via a written report or through a video conversation with Seattle Foundation staff. Five grantees completed their reporting verbally and 15 organizations submitted written reports.

## Findings Across Learning Indicators

1

Increase internal  
operations and  
capacity

**There is power in capacity.** When organizations expand their capacity, more can be accomplished in sustainable ways.

Grantee partners strengthened their internal health and capacity through intentional hiring and onboarding of staff and consultants, investing in the professional development of staff, creating structures to manage finances, and building engaging websites to better tell the story of organizational impact.

2

Deepen  
relationships  
through  
partnerships and  
coalitions

**There is power in trusting relationships.** Trust and organic relationships are foundational to partnership and coalition work.

Rather than work in isolation, grantee partners deepened their relationships with individual organizations and in coalitions. They continue to center trust, recognizing opportunities for collaboration that come out of a shared vision and goals, and dedicating staff time to new and existing partnerships.

3

Expand base  
of engaged  
community  
members

**There is power in safe, welcoming spaces.** Collaborating, organizing, and working toward community priorities requires accessibility and inclusivity.

Grantee partners are moving at the speed of trust as they created structures to engage and reengage with community members. They are utilizing a variety of engagement strategies to account for the diversity of their base, creating safe spaces for participation, and providing a broad spectrum of participation opportunities to inform policy.

*We're thinking about accessibility and the ways that we can organize without having to physically show up – can you email, call, or join a virtual meeting. We want different ways that people can plug in and see their role. – Collective Justice*

4

Develop new  
leaders in the  
community

**There is power in community champions paving the way forward.** Community members are stepping into their leadership as they advocate for the priorities and issues that they care most about.

Grantee partners focused on investing in the leadership of community members by ensuring that community members are advocating for priorities that they care about most, building collective processes for shared language, analysis and strategy, and continuously evolving leadership development efforts based on community feedback.



*It's super important for us to make sure that young people are the ones who are leading the work – that their voices are the ones that are pushing this format. We don't want to speak for them or tell them what their needs are.*

**– CHOOSE 180**



**There is power in reflection and iteration.** Ongoing evaluation of programmatic efforts is important to expand what works, remove what doesn't, and create anew to best meet community needs.

Grantee partners reflected on their programmatic efforts to understand what's working and not working. Post-evaluation, they incorporated feedback to improve existing programs and develop new programs where they saw a need in their community.



**There is power in research rooted in community.** Involving community in the entirety of the research process creates a new sense of ownership of the data and research outcomes.

Grantee partners continued to use community-led and centered research strategies, including interviews, focus groups, and surveys to gather data in support of community priorities. They are also building the skillset to conduct research in-house rather than outsourcing to consulting firms and external researchers.



**There is power in a strong foundation.** Ensuring a shared baseline of understanding and narrative is essential to successfully creating and deploying a policy agenda that represents the needs, interests, and concerns of the collective.

Grantee partners laid the groundwork for more in-depth policy and advocacy efforts by getting clarity on policy priorities, ensuring staff and community members understand policy processes and can speak to community priorities, and building relationships with key decision makers and legislators.



UTOPIA WA



UTOPIA WA

Photo Credit (left and right) : Michael B. Maine

## Challenges and Barriers Across Indicators

Grantee partners shared several barriers to meeting their goals including:

- **Community members often struggle to meet their basic needs** and grantee partners are examining strategies for greater stability (providing food, rent support, childcare, etc.) to allow greater capacity for active engagement.
- Grantee partners **face unrealistic timelines and expectations for work** that don't account for the time needed to build trust, deepen relationships, and heal from decades of disinvestment and harm.
- Grantee partners need to **better educate legislators and policy makers who lack an understanding around community-led and centered solutions and their potential impact**. This requires capacity, research, and effective communications in order to garner political support.
- Grantee partners noted a **shifting funding landscape with fewer funding opportunities and multi-year commitments**, causing organizations to make changes to their programming and work.

*Due to decades of disinvestment and constantly being pitted against each other there are deep fractures between BIPOC organizing groups and communities that need the investment of significant time, energy, and resources to address, repair, and heal.*

- Equitable Recovery and Reconciliation Alliance

## SNAPSHOTS of Success

- Alphabet Alliance of Color added four connection sessions for their mentorship program, providing almost double the time for mentee/mentor connection.
- Casa Latina trained 35 staff members in online tools for record keeping and collaboration.
- Choose 180 supported 13 youth participants as they engaged with 25+ lawmakers on the issues most salient for them on Youth Advocacy Day.
- Community Health Board Coalition hosted two legislative 101 series for best practices for advocating and adopted and supported three new legislative bills.
- Native Action Network launched a statewide leadership survey for Native women and received 600 responses.
- Surge Reproductive Justice expanded from one leadership cohort to three.
- UTOPIA WA held 32 outreach events and reached 524 sex workers as part of their cohort and coalition building work.

## Moving Forward ►►►

We consistently heard that our grantee partners are operating in a world that requires a relentless pace of work. Through our investments we are giving multi-year support, allowing for community partners to slow down, gather, heal, think expansively and creatively, and build toward something new.

Moving forward, Seattle Foundation is committed to the following practices:

- We will remain adaptive and responsive to the needs of our grantee partners, recognizing that there may be setbacks or detours along the way that cause shifts in the work.
- We will show up honestly and transparently in our communications about funding and reporting, ensuring greater clarity about what our grantee partners can expect from the Fund for Inclusive Recovery.
- We will uplift and celebrate the wins, both big and small, while also recognizing that the pace of change often takes years or decades.
- We will have bold conversations with our peers in philanthropy about where we should let go and where we can embrace a new way of showing up alongside our nonprofit partners.

The work accomplished across the FIR grantee partner cohort calls for celebration. It also calls for so much more. As we continue to build a community of support to meet our \$50 million goal, we hope you will join us in this effort.

To learn more and give, visit [Fund for Inclusive Recovery](https://www.seattlefoundation.org) at [www.seattlefoundation.org](https://www.seattlefoundation.org).