



## Communities of Opportunity Update

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Communities of Opportunity was launched in March 2014 in partnership between Seattle Foundation and King County. It is one of four initiatives aligned with King County's Accountable Community of Health. The Communities of Opportunity initiative is:

- Designed with the ambitious goal of creating greater health, social, economic, and racial equity in King County so that all people thrive and prosper.
- Based on identifying the locations with the greatest inequities in health, housing and economic opportunity measures. Where you live within the County is strongly tied to your chances of living well and thriving, despite King County average measures being relatively high. For example:
  - Average life expectancy can be 10 years shorter in neighborhoods just a few miles away.
  - Average household income in one neighborhood can be \$100,000 less than one nearby.
  - Poverty rates can range from 6% to 54% by neighborhood and smoking from 5% to 20%.
- Designed to maximize positive impact by using cross-sector partnerships to co-design strategies with community leaders, and by catalyzing public and private resources to underinvested neighborhoods.
- Working on policy and systems change strategies side by side with place-based strategies to improve health, housing, economic opportunity and community cohesion indicators.

In October 2014, 12 **policy and systems change** grants were awarded to community based organizations working to address inequities. In April 2016, a second wave of grants was made to 18 organizations working on reducing the county's inequities related to health, housing, economic opportunity and community connections.

In February 2015, **place-based** investments were made to local cross-sector partnerships in the Rainier Valley area of Seattle (HomeSight), SeaTac and Tukwila (Global to Local), and the White Center/North Highline unincorporated area (White Center Community Development Association). Monthly co-design meetings with 50/50 representation of local "context" experts and institutional "content" experts are developing strategies and evaluation indicators for each site, and for all COO sites overall. Deep collaborative work with cross-sector partnerships in these sites is shedding light on the underlying structural barriers that many neighborhoods in the county experience. These findings will inform future policy and systems investments. The place-based work is a five-year investment of at least \$2.5 million.

In November 2015, the Best Starts for Kids levy passed and this funding source will support COO.

A 16-member Governance Group oversees the initiative and all work rolls up into an overall Results Based Accountability evaluation framework available at: [www.kingcounty.gov/coo](http://www.kingcounty.gov/coo).

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## Data, Demographics and Assets

Population Measures	Lowest ranked	Highest ranked
Life expectancy	74 years	87 years

### Health, broadly defined:

Adverse childhood experiences	20%	9%
Frequent mental distress	14%	4%
Smoking	20%	5%
Obesity	33%	14%
Diabetes	13%	5%
Preventable hospitalizations	1.0%	0.4%

### Housing:

Poor housing condition	8%	0%
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### Economic opportunity:

Income below 200% poverty	54%	6%
Unemployment	13%	3%

## Community Assets

**Rainier Valley, population 41,350:** Active business association, a community with deep cultural roots and a mosaic of immigrant communities, 59 languages, ethnic community centers, residents aim to prosper in place, youth initiatives.

**White Center, population 17,760:** Engaged resident leaders, institutional partnerships in place, ethnically & culturally diverse community with a well-supported community development association, vibrant multi-ethnic business district, two Hope VI communities, three parks, affordable housing.

**SeaTac & Tukwila, population 46,321:** Diverse community, 70 languages, Food Innovation Network in place to create entrepreneurial and employment opportunities, residents interested in catering, food processing, baking, food trucks and urban farming.

**Auburn and Skyway:** Planning grants awarded.

