



# ANNUAL REPORT

## 2020



A COLLABORATIVE APPROACH OF

United Way  
of Snohomish County



“  
NO ONE SHOULD  
BE OKAY WITH  
ANYONE LIVING  
IN POVERTY.  
”

— Bernice A. King



# CORE

## DEAR PARTNER,

Reflecting on 2020, it's hard to find the words. A year truly like no other, we all experienced it differently, riding waves of emotions individually while sharing moments of collective grief, fatigue, resilience, outrage, and above all, hope. Hope that change would come sooner rather than later, that the pandemic would end, and that our children, families, neighbors, and community would be okay. Hope for a future that rejects life the way it was pre-2020 and instead learns from this unique year we went through, and begins again. For our team here at United Way, this year shined a bright spotlight on something we thought we knew about our systems but really, had only scratched the surface.

Our systems are inequitable. Fairness is a façade. Social connections are vital to our well-being. There is no such thing as “normal.” Not being racist is not enough, we must be anti-racist.

This unlearning of well-intended, yet harmful behaviors and mindsets will take time, and is a lifelong journey. This year, United Way of Snohomish County made a recommitment to equity, anti-racism, and our CORE: Creating Open Roads to Equity work to remove barriers that keep families trapped in poverty.

Because poverty itself is not the problem to be solved; it is a symptom of a larger issue. Poverty is the unfortunate trap families fall into through the gaps in our inequitable systems—something 2020 has made abundantly clear. For those already struggling to make ends meet, this pandemic hit hard. COVID-19 emergency funds popped up across the state and country to help bridge the widening gaps of hunger, housing and rental relief, lost wages, and more. But, the economic and social impacts of the pandemic will echo for years to come. And once those relief funds are gone, we will be left with even bigger holes to fill.

The road continues to be long, but there is immeasurable value in expecting that progress will not be linear. Expecting imperfection creates space for humility, shared learning, and growth. We believe in CORE and are excited for the next 3-year partnership with our CORE Collaboratives that started at the beginning of 2021.

Thank you for being on this journey with us.

With gratitude,

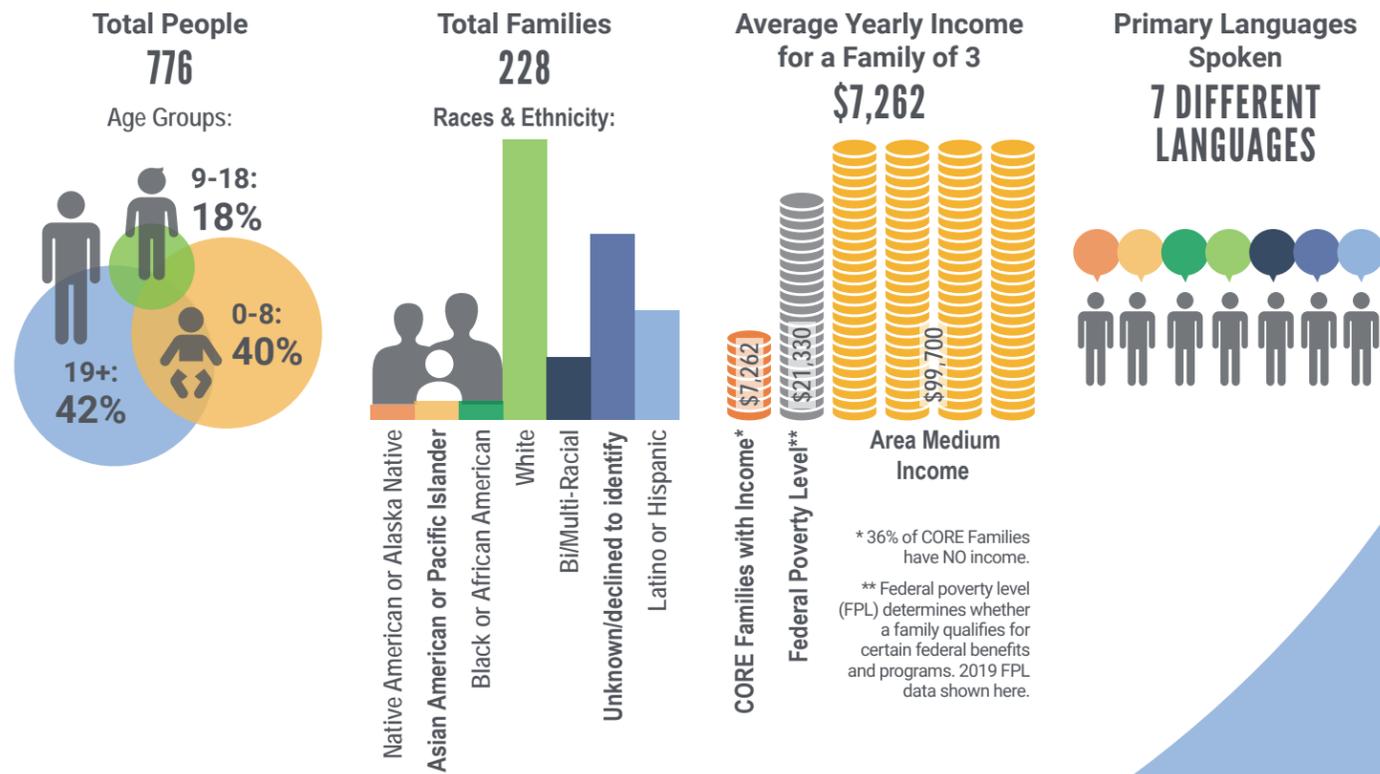
*Your United Way Team*

# (C)REATING

The first three years of CORE: Creating Open Roads to Equity, was about creating structure, establishing new relationships, redefining old ones, and bringing families into a model to create a different kind of collaborative

space together. It has not been without its challenges and will continue to be, but that's part of the beauty of creating things that last; because for something to last, it must evolve. Change is inevitable.

## POPULATIONS SERVED ACROSS COLLABORATIVES 2018-2020



As we enter 2021, evolving the collaborative work includes challenging norms, establishing deeper connections, and celebrating big and small wins along the way. A new three-year investment begins for our five CORE Collaboratives. Each receives a multi-year grant of \$210,000 per year, for a total annual investment of \$1,050,000 into the community.

The needs of both the child and the adults in their lives continue to be at the center of a network of partners working with each family in five focus areas: early childhood education; postsecondary and employment pathways; economic assets like stable housing and savings; health and well-being; and social connections like friends, family, and other support groups for both the child and the adult.

# (O)PEN

Being open is at the heart of the CORE approach—open to new ways of thinking about poverty and expanding mindsets about the ways we show up for families in our community. Systems change, though profoundly impactful, is different from how we traditionally think and behave in the nonprofit sector. At the crux of systems change is shifting mindsets and perspectives—the powerful, deeply held beliefs and assumptions that determine the entire set-up of systems: relationships & connections, power dynamics, resource flows, policies, and practices\*.

Recognizing that we all have room to grow in this area, United Way of Snohomish County invested in a partnership with the Tamarack Institute, a leader in systems change and collaborative work, to train CORE partners in the foundations of systems change. This partnership became a 9-part webinar & workshop series that included coaching sessions for each of the Collaboratives.

United Way is committed to continuing to build the capacity of our collaborative partners through learning, challenging the status quo, and reflecting on the changes our own organization can lead with to put us all on a better path forward.

## SYSTEMS WORK IS NOT A THOUGHT EXPERIMENT—IT'S A CONTINUAL PRACTICE.

— Francois Bonnici

\* From FSG's the Water of Systems Change



# (R)OADS

The complex systems we all navigate are like roads that twist and turn, all of us traveling our own paths to reach different places—our own versions of success. CORE Collaboratives support changes in our systems for families with young children to help navigate these roads and remove the systemic barriers that prevent families from reaching their desired destinations.

A network of more than 100 partners are involved at varying levels to meet the unique needs of families in the five CORE Collaboratives. See the full list of partners at [uwsc.org/collaboratives](http://uwsc.org/collaboratives), learn more about each Collaborative below, and hear families share stories In Their Own Words: [uwsc.org/stories](http://uwsc.org/stories).



Yo los invito a que se unan al programa CORE. No están solos siempre hay alguien quien los ayudará y les dará la mano para encontrar una solución.

[English: I invite anyone to join the CORE program. They are not alone, there is always someone who will help them and lend them a hand to find a solution.]

– Lourdes

## CASINO ROAD ALL FAMILIES ARE READY

**Creating equitable opportunities for all Casino Road families**

The Village, located on Casino Road in South Everett, is the physical hub of Connect Casino Road, the initiative that All Families Are Ready (AFAR) is a part of. The AFAR Collaborative coordinator connects each family to Collaborative partners within Connect Casino Road and broader Snohomish County communities to help achieve goals outlined in the family's plan. Family support services include adult education, parent/caregiver support groups, early childhood education, and small business development.

In order to qualify for the programs, I had to have [my daughter], and because I didn't have her at the time, I didn't qualify for none of the programs out there.

– Ricky

## HOMeward HOUSE

**Nurturing the vital parent-child bond in the face of crisis, treatment, and recovery**

Much of the work towards this goal takes place inside a house in Everett off Broadway. Families have supervised visitation in a single setting, allowing for an environment more conducive to bonding and attachment. Collaborative services are provided onsite, reducing potential barriers to access and include parenting classes, job readiness training, support groups, and mental health support.

**DIRECTION IS MORE IMPORTANT THAN SPEED. MANY ARE GOING NOWHERE FAST. – Unknown**

I felt like I was at a point nobody would help me, but I knew I was about to a point where I was about to break.

– Theresa

## IMPROVING SCHOOL ATTENDANCE FOR FAMILIES IN TRANSITION

**Improving educational outcomes for families experiencing homelessness**

This Collaborative serves families within the Everett Public Schools' boundaries. The process for assisting a student and their family typically begins when a concerned educator identifies a chronically absent\* student experiencing homelessness (\*missing 10% or more of the school year). From there the family is connected with a Child Family Advocate. As a team, the family, Child Family Advocate, and school develop a customized plan so the child is ready for school.

I made \$35 an hour and could not afford my daughter's daycare and my son's daycare, or to take the days off work to take [my daughter] to the hospital. I literally have to make fifty dollars an hour to pay my bills.

– Mandy

## MAKING LIFE WORK

**Helping families experiencing poverty in Stanwood-Camano to become stable and self-sufficient**

A community-based Collaborative serving families in the Stanwood-Camano area, Making Life Work helps ensure children and their families attain early educational success in order to lay the foundation for school and beyond. One of their strategies is pairing families with a community navigator/mentor that works to create a customized plan for each family based on their goals. Support includes monthly workshops, education and employment skill building, and mental health services.

The Collaborative helped me open my eyes as a mom, as a person. It made me want to help and give back so much more than I would have ever thought I could.

– Bethany

## NORTH COUNTIES' COMMUNITY COLLABORATIVE

**Focused on reducing poverty for households with children age 0-8**

This Collaborative is cultivating a community where children and families are connected, healthy, safe, and resilient to break the cycle of intragenerational poverty.

North Counties' Community Collaborative aims to better align services around a 2-Generational approach, reduce barriers for families to access local services, and bring new services to Darrington to support the whole family.



# (E)QUITY

Families cannot escape the traps of poverty without addressing the racial inequities in our systems. In 2020, United Way of Snohomish County recognized where we have been falling short in our equity journey. We still have so much to learn, but now know that to truly change any system, we must recognize that it is impossible for all families to live to their fullest potential if we do not honor and show up for those who are the most marginalized.

## OUR RECOMMITMENT TO EQUITY

We have been committed to equity as an organization, but now see that equity is not enough. Systemic racism creates barriers for Black, Indigenous, and People of Color, upholds all other forms of oppression, and is an injustice to us all. United Way of Snohomish County recommits to centering equity.

We will strive to be anti-racist in all facets of our organization, intentionally disrupt White-dominant culture, and work to create spaces where our staff, board, and partners feel comfortable being their authentic selves. Missteps are to be expected, but we will use them as an opportunity to grow and learn rather than be defensive. We're on this journey with you.

This lifelong work is both individual and collective, and starts with self. We hope you will travel with us and offer these resources as a starting place:



## WATCH

Videos under 20 minutes to broaden your knowledge and understanding of racism.

- 50 States, 50 Different Ways of Teaching America's Past  
[cbsnews.com/news/us-history-how-teaching-americas-past-varies-across-the-country](https://www.cbsnews.com/news/us-history-how-teaching-americas-past-varies-across-the-country)
- How I Learned to Stop Worrying and Love Discussing Race  
[bit.ly/LoveDiscussingRace](https://bit.ly/LoveDiscussingRace)
- Trevor Noah re: George Floyd, Minneapolis Protests, Ahmaud Arbery & Amy Cooper  
[bit.ly/TrevorNoahGeorgeFloyd](https://bit.ly/TrevorNoahGeorgeFloyd)
- Understanding the Racial Wealth Gap  
[bit.ly/RacialWealthGapExplained](https://bit.ly/RacialWealthGapExplained)
- Why 'I'm Not Racist' is Only Half the Story  
[bit.ly/ImNotRacistHalfStory](https://bit.ly/ImNotRacistHalfStory)



## VISIT

Local places to visit, honor, and learn more about Pacific Northwest history and culture.

- Bainbridge Island Japanese American Exclusion Memorial
- Hibulb Cultural Center in Tulalip
- Northwest African American Museum in Seattle
- Sauk-Suiattle Museum & Cultural Center in Darrington
- Sea Mar Museum of Chicano/a/Latino/a Culture in Burien



## LISTEN

Short, long, and series of podcasts on race and racism.

- 1619 podcast (start with first episode)  
[nytimes.com/2020/01/23/podcasts/1619-podcast.html](https://www.nytimes.com/2020/01/23/podcasts/1619-podcast.html)
- All My Relations podcast (any episode)  
[allmyrelationspodcast.com/podcast](https://allmyrelationspodcast.com/podcast)
- How Does Racism Affect Your Health?  
[kvpr.org/post/mary-bassett-how-does-racism-affect-your-health](https://www.kvpr.org/post/mary-bassett-how-does-racism-affect-your-health)
- Seeing White podcast  
[sceneonradio.org/seeing-white](https://sceneonradio.org/seeing-white)
- The Systems that Protect the Police  
[nytimes.com/2020/06/02/podcasts/the-daily/george-floyd-protests.html](https://www.nytimes.com/2020/06/02/podcasts/the-daily/george-floyd-protests.html)



## READ

Books and articles to broaden your perspectives.

- Between the World and Me by Ta-Nehisi Coates (book)
- [Explaining White Privilege To A Broke White Person](#) (article)
- How to be an Anti-Racist by Ibram X. Kendi (book)
- So You Wanna Talk about Race by Ijeoma Oluo (book)
- The Warmth of Other Suns by Isabel Wilkerson (book)

# EQUITY

This list is not at all meant to be comprehensive, but we hope you find at least one new resource that is helpful. More anti-racism resources are available at [uwsc.org/anti-racism-resources](https://uwsc.org/anti-racism-resources).

# THE CORE FUND

In 2019 – 20, United Way of Snohomish County funded five CORE Collaboratives made up of a network of more than 100 community partners, as well as 14 Basic Needs programs.

Seventy percent of our CORE Fund was allocated to CORE Collaborative grants. These grants were awarded to Collaboratives focused on young children (prenatal-age 8) and their families with low income. CORE Collaborative grants are 3-year investments that began in January 2018.

Thirty percent of the CORE Fund was allocated to 18-month Basic Needs grants investments. These grants were awarded to provide basic need services and/or access to services for young children (prenatal to age eight) and their families with low income. Since the launch of CORE in 2018, we have worked closely with our basic needs partners to integrate their programs and services into the collaborative model over time. Today, all five of our CORE Collaboratives include partners who provide important basic needs services.

All funding decisions were made in conjunction with community volunteers who served on various United Way committees.

# FINANCES TO SUPPORT COMMUNITY INVESTMENTS

As an organization, we made an intentional effort to honor our commitments to the CORE Collaboratives, continuing to invest in them fully at \$210,000 per year, per Collaborative despite fundraising challenges due to economic and environmental factors, and COVID-19. The following circumstances affected fiscal year numbers, providing additional available funds that were spent but not raised in 2020:

- Board-approved transfer from reserve funds for technology systems updates
- Residual income from revenue raised in 2018-19 fiscal year
- Passive income from savings

**Donor-Designated Gifts:** Donor-designated gifts are sent to various nonprofit organizations, as directed by the donor. United Way provides this service to donors but does not monitor or oversee the use of these donations.

For fiscal year 2020, our total net assets equaled \$5,475,459.

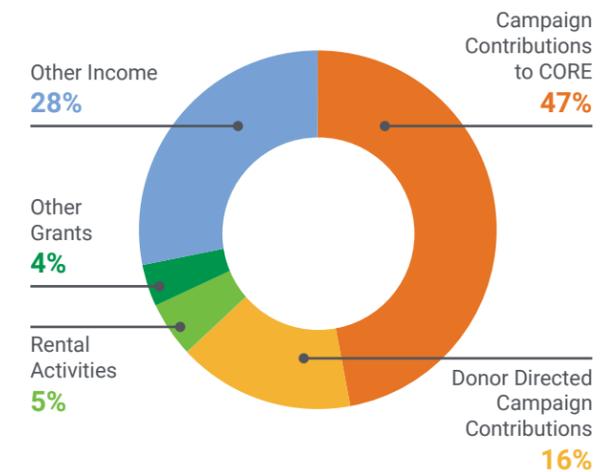
## SOURCES OF REVENUE\*

|                                       |             |
|---------------------------------------|-------------|
| United Way Campaign Revenue           |             |
| Contributions to CORE Fund            | \$1,086,882 |
| Donor directed campaign contributions | \$369,819   |
| Rental activities                     | \$115,980   |
| Other grants                          | \$87,922    |
| Other income                          | \$650,775   |
| Total sources of revenue              | \$2,311,378 |

### \*ADDITIONAL REVENUES

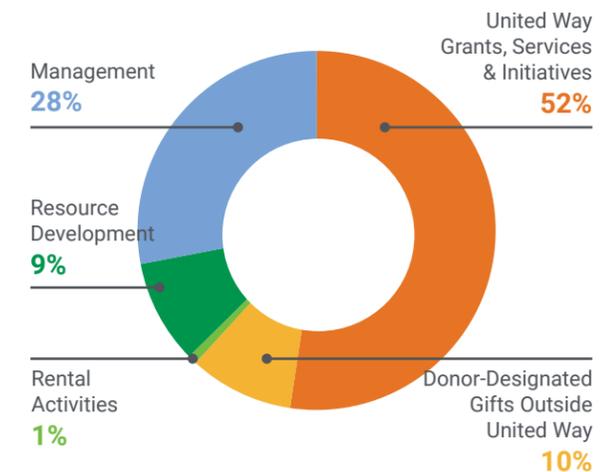
*Not booked as revenue in FY20, but used to balance our budget*

|   |             |
|---|-------------|
| CARES Act Payroll Protection Program                                | \$253,700   |
| Operating Reserve Fund and Information Technology Improvements Fund | \$500,000   |
| Cash Reserves / Multi-Year Pledges                                  | \$1,530,558 |
|   | \$2,284,258 |



## USE OF FUNDS

|   |             |
|---|-------------|
| United Way Campaign Revenue               |             |
| United Way grants, services & initiatives | \$2,406,432 |
| Donor-designated gifts outside United Way | \$433,216   |
| Rental activities                         | \$37,227    |
| Programs & fundraising                    | \$432,103   |
| Management & general                      | \$1,286,658 |
| Total use of funds                        | \$4,595,636 |



# 2020 IMPACT:

# COLLABORATIVES & COVID-19

## UNITED WAY OF SNOHOMISH COUNTY

- Joined a county-wide partnership of local philanthropy, government, and business to create and distribute a rapid response fund for Coronavirus relief. Immediate safety net needs for vulnerable populations were met first, as other funding sources emerged.
- Donated \$25k to the Coronavirus Response Fund hosted by Community Foundation of Snohomish County. CORE Collaboratives each received \$15k from the larger fund.
- Provided prepaid cards to Collaboratives for food and gas, and funds for staff to support CORE families' emerging basic needs.
- Allocated an additional \$25k to Collaboratives for direct basic need relief for families.
- Georgetown Brewing donated to United Ways of the Pacific Northwest to support COVID relief across the state. United Way of Snohomish County received \$40k of relief for restaurant and bar workers in our county that have been impacted by COVID. Thanks to the partnership of Interfaith Family Association, we were able to coordinate a plan that gave families a low barrier way to access this funding.

## CASINO ROAD ALL FAMILIES ARE READY

All Families Are Ready (AFAR) serves children in the Mukilteo School District. AFAR helped ensure all families had phones and computers necessary for online learning. But, even when children had the technology, other barriers emerged in the remote learning system. Families requested digital literacy assistance, from setting up an email account to joining a Zoom meeting, allowing them to support their child and communicate with the school district.

AFAR made a series of bilingual English/Spanish instructional videos for families featuring the Collaborative Coordinator, a trusted part of the community. Originally created for CORE families, the district adopted the videos and sent them to all district families, referenced them in all of district Town Hall meetings, and shared them on social media.

A series of Family Academy video modules is in the works, based on the results of a survey of BIPOC families that the district and AFAR conducted regarding CORE families' experiences and needs.



**39% OF FAMILIES** were more confident in supporting their child's learning in 2020 than 2019—even online.

## HOMEWARD HOUSE

During Covid, the state shifted all child welfare activities online, leaving families in the dependency system with no other option than to visit with their children virtually. Some families already limited to 2-hour visits a couple of times per week with their children were now offered 15-minute visits. Many families facing basic needs crises did not have the phones or computers necessary to join virtual visits, and those who were able to participate were challenged to maintain a strong connection with their children—especially infants—in a virtual environment.

Homeward House supported families with technology needs and Snohomish County Music Project joined virtual visits with families to support meaningful interactions and age-appropriate engagement. This helped families build connection and bond during visits, despite the distance. In mid-July, Homeward House became one of the first visitation sites in the county to reopen and has been available to families as a COVID-safe option for in-person visits.



**28 FAMILIES** provided technology for virtual visits, including phones, computers and internet.

Like all of us, the CORE Collaboratives spent much of 2020 adjusting their work and supporting families through a year of lockdowns, virtual interactions, and social, emotional, and physical challenges no one has ever experienced. Here are the ways each CORE Collaborative responded to the COVID-19 pandemic.

## IMPROVING SCHOOL ATTENDANCE FOR FAMILIES IN TRANSITION

Students experiencing homelessness within Everett Public Schools often miss 10% or more of the school year, and are Improving School Attendance (ISA) Collaborative's focus. High absence rates correlate with long-term negative educational and life outcomes. Lack of stable housing, high family stress levels, and food insecurity are barriers to student attendance and ability to engage in school. In 2020, lack of internet access and adequate devices were added to that list, and "school-at-home" had a different meaning for students whose families are unstably housed.

The school district, one of ISA's main partners, provided hot spots and tablets. The Collaborative created a caregiver support group to build confidence and skills with online schooling and support participation for families unfamiliar with technology. After ISA held a virtual training for school administrators and staff on how to best support students experiencing homelessness, they saw an increase in participation over previous in-person trainings.



**60% PARTICIPATION RATE** from ISA students for the first half of remote school in 2020, compared to 80% for all Everett Public School students.

## MAKING LIFE WORK

Making Life Work (MLW) was in the process of re-orienting their focus and initiatives around community-identified needs when the pandemic hit. As business and school moved to a virtual format, both Collaborative partners and participants had to contend with unreliable internet, particularly on infrastructure-sparse Camano Island. Mentors helped families access reliable internet to participate in Collaborative activities and online school.

Affordable housing and community transit options have been priorities of MLW, and planning is underway to develop a community land trust and a new public transit plan. Mirroring the community-level focus of the MLW Collaborative, programming for participating families has focused on developing their economic assets, including workshops on home loan options, opening savings accounts, and supporting caregiver employment.



**5 VIRTUAL WORKSHOPS** on home loan options, opening savings accounts, and supporting caregiver employment.

## NORTH COUNTIES' COMMUNITY COLLABORATIVE

While the pandemic halted many things, the 2020 census was not one of them. The census determines how federal resources are allocated, so having a high census response rate benefits local communities. In the past, Darrington has had very low census response rates, resulting in limited resource allocation. In 2020, North Counties' Community Collaborative (NCCC) coordinator and Collaborative partner, North County Family Services, were awarded a grant for outreach to increase local census response rates. Another partner, Darrington Family Outreach (DFO), is a group of local caregivers and community members who help provide deeper insight into community challenges, needs, and goals. DFO keeps the Collaborative rooted in the community, and led the community to advocate for itself through encouraging and collecting Census responses. DFO got creative with engagement activities—from launching outdoor pop-up tables throughout town to delivering packets to families who live outside of the town center. The result was a significant increase in census responses.



**INCREASED CENSUS RESPONSE** Darrington Family Outreach took the original census response rate of 18% in June to 51% in September.

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Thomas Yates

James & Serena Yelle

Ronald & Donna Yelle

Steve & Amy Zwaller

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We are grateful to our board, who is dedicated to our CORE work and joined us in 2020 during an already difficult year. Thanks for your support.

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**Derek Baisa**  
Elite Aerospace Group

**Gina Clark**  
Master Builders Association

**Sarah Duncan**  
Adams & Duncan, Inc.

**Chris Eck**  
Human Services  
Executive Council

**Emmett Health**  
Community Transit

**Teresa Johnson**  
IBEW Local 89

**Jim Litz**  
Keysight Technologies, Inc.

**David McCrea**  
McCrea Consulting

**Kathy Moodie**  
The Boeing Company

**Josh O'Connor**  
Sound Publishing, Inc.

**Maria Peña Mercado**  
Mukilteo School District

**Jeff Roe**  
Premera Blue Cross

**Paulina Ruiz**  
Community Volunteer

**Suzanne Sasville**  
Puget Sound Energy

**Rod Sigvartson**  
IAMAW District Lodge 751

**Scott Strand**  
BECU

**Councilmember Shirley Sutton**  
City of Lynnwood

**Mayor Barbara Tolbert**  
City of Arlington

**Dr. Daria Willis**  
Everett Community College

## EX OFFICIO MEMBER

**Lark Kesterke**  
United Way of  
Snohomish County

# MISSION

Through our CORE Collaborative approach, United Way of Snohomish County catalyzes, supports, and invests in groups of partners with shared goals to create more equitable systems for families with young children trapped in poverty.

# VISION

Families in Snohomish County live to their fullest potential for generations to come regardless of race, place, and ability.

# VALUES



## WAYS TO ENGAGE

1 Connect with us on social media:

[facebook.com/unitedwaysnohomish](https://facebook.com/unitedwaysnohomish)

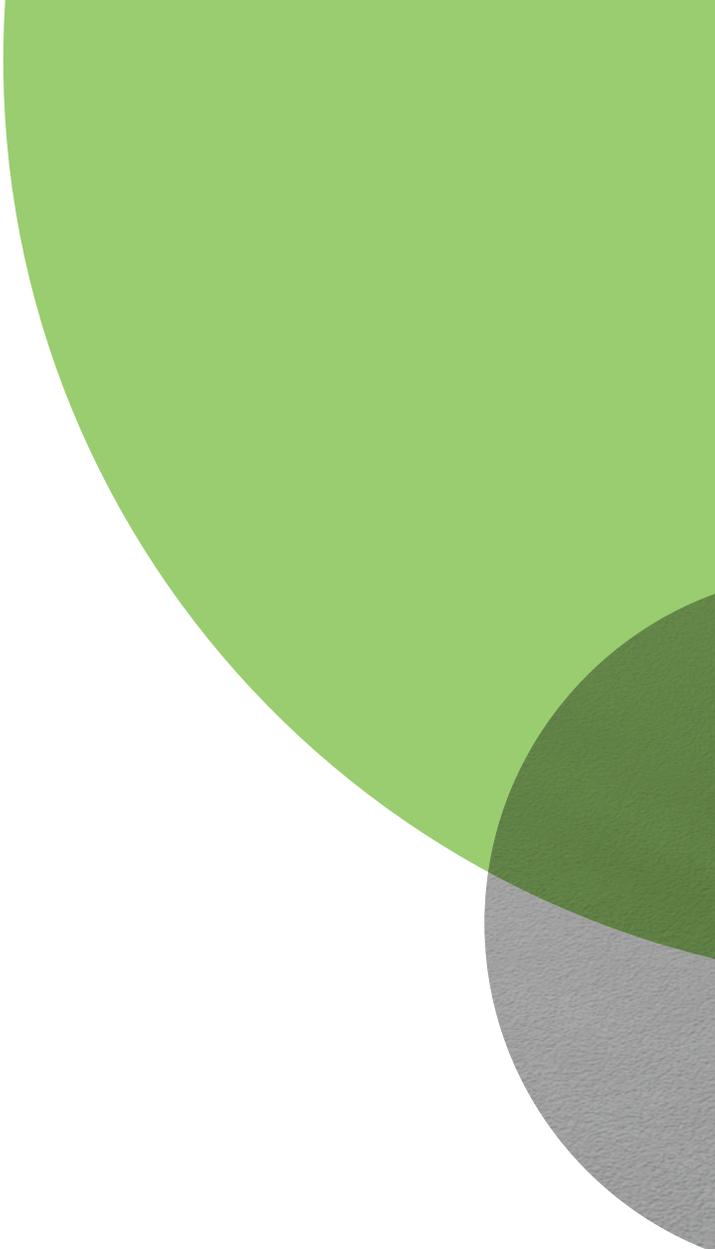
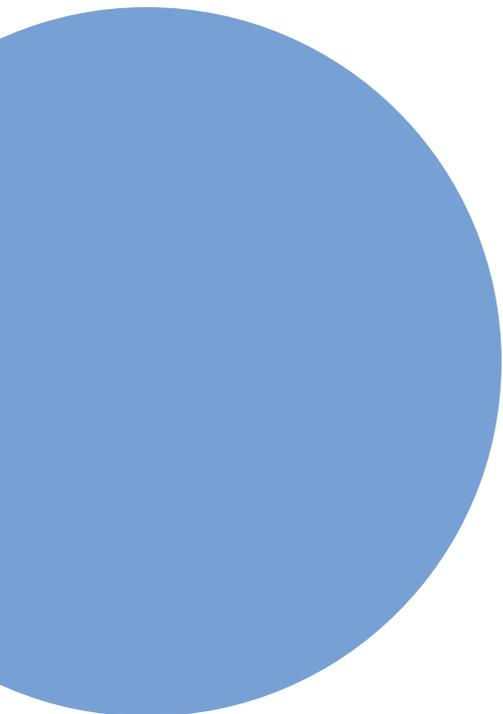
[@unitedwaysnoco](https://instagram.com/unitedwaysnoco)

2 Watch our short animated videos about CORE.

Visit [bit.ly/camitishavideos](https://bit.ly/camitishavideos)

3 Questions?

Email [info@uwsc.org](mailto:info@uwsc.org) or call 425.374.5500.



A COLLABORATIVE  
APPROACH OF



United Way  
of Snohomish County

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

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