2019 Annual Report













Opportunity Council is your local Community Action Agency.

Working together with our supporters and partner organizations, we take the lead in organizing whatever is needed to address local emerging needs and build stronger communities. We serve people in Island, San Juan and Whatcom counties, and have expanded some services into Skagit and Snohomish counties.

For more information about this work, please visit our website www.oppco.org



OUR MISSION

Opportunity Council helps people improve their lives through education, support, and direct assistance while advocating for just and equitable communities.

THE COMMUNITY ACTION PROMISE

Community Action changes people's lives, embodies the spirit of hope, improves communities, and makes America a better place to live. We care about the entire community and are dedicated to helping people help themselves and each other.



Greg Winter, Executive Director

Message from Executive Director

Last year, Opportunity Council helped empower thousands of people to improve their lives, to achieve their goals, and to create a brighter future for their children. We also advocated for policies and resources to increase access to safety net programs and to advance equity in our communities.

All of the work that we do is in partnership with you, our supporters, donors, and allied organizations. Your support and encouragement inspires us to continue to innovate on behalf of the people we serve.

Thank you for that inspiration!

We also draw inspiration from the families and individuals we serve.

As you look at this 2019 Annual Report, I hope you will be inspired by the magnitude of the number of families and individuals we served. More importantly, behind those numbers are unique stories of trauma and healing, tragedy and resilience, despair and hope. Learning their stories inspires all of us to do more.

And there is so much more to do! While we are proud of what we accomplished last year, we are eager to achieve even more in 2020 and beyond. I am convinced that with your continuing support, we can help more seniors stay warm next winter, more families secure safe housing, more working parents find high quality child care, more people access enough nutritious food to eat, and more people feel hopeful for the future.

Thank you for inspiring us to step up to those challenges, and for providing the resources to make these goals achievable.

Greg Winter,
Executive Director

PS: If you haven't already, please join us on Facebook, make a donation or volunteer this month in recognition of "Community Action Month." Everything you do to support this work truly helps create a better community of all of us.

Making an Impact

Thank you for making an impact.

As your local community action agency, the Opportunity Council is proud to work in partnership with you to offer services that help everyone reach their full potential and make our community stronger.

OUR SERVICES



Helping Kids Thrive

Programs include Head Start/ECEAP, Early Head Start, SEAS, Emergency Child Care vouchers, Early Support for Infants & Toddlers.



Increasing Financial & Job Skills

Programs include tax assistance, employment services, financial education, Asset Building, Weatherization and tech training, Early Achiever program.



Providing a Warm, Safe Home

Programs include Housing, Energy Assistance grants, Weatherization and Home Improvement, Conservation Education, Chore, Community Energy Challenge.



Access to Food, Information & Referrals

Programs include Basic Food Assistance, Maple Alley Inn, Community Resource Centers.

OUR PARTNERS



Partners & Advocates Leverage Impact

Volunteers, donors, advocates and partners create a safe and healthy community for everyone.

OUR SUPPORTERS



Your Support Makes This Possible

Donors, funders and supporters help us all realize our vision of a safe, just and thriving community.



Helping Kids Thrive

Every parent wants the best for their child.

Parents are engaged in early learning programs to help their children succeed in school. Child care providers, educators, parents, and families participate in Opportunity Council programs that promote high quality early learning programs and support child development.

STATS

478 Children

prepared to start school ready to learn after attending Head Start and Early Childhood Education and Assistance Program.

41 Children

stayed in a safe, appropriate child care setting thanks to emergency child care vouchers for families with low incomes.

568 Children ate healthy meals and snacks at their child care each month.

460 Child care providers

received support and resources to offer high-quality services.

91 Young families participated in Early Head Start to support development during the child's first few years of life.

1,011 Children with special needs connected with a medical provider through SEAS (Single Entry Access to Services) and accessed resources for housing, food, insurance and other needs.

Baby Play

SPOTLIGHT

New kitchen for preschool program

In 2019 the Opportunity Council discontinued a long-term lease for a kitchen used to prepare meals for 450 children in the early learning programs. The OC made this change after the kitchen owner fired a staff person based on sexual orientation.

It was a challenge to find and fund another suitable kitchen but thanks to overwhelming support from the community, the agency was able to find another location.

"Thanks to the many individual donors and funders who supported the decision we made to live our values, the funds are there to build-out our new kitchen," said Greg Winter in an agency announcement. Major funders included Peace Health and Glasser Foundation, WA Dept. of Commerce and the Office of Head Start.

The OC also appreciated Lynden and Bellingham school districts for providing temporary kitchen facilities, giving the agency time to find a suitable, permanent kitchen.







Increased Financial & Job Skills

Job and budget skills boost individual potential, increase stability.

When people increase their employment and financial skills, they increase their ability to fully realize their potential and contribute to their community. Families and individuals are moving toward financial stability through supportive-employment programs, financial classes, coaching on budgeting, renter education, and savings.

STATS

448 Trainees

gained skills through Building Performance Center trainings throughout Washington State and beyond.

91 People attended classes to improve their budgeting skills.

186 People completed tax returns with tax assistance or calls.

213 People

gained job skills and work experience so they could improve their financial situation.



SPOTLIGHT

Financial Literacy

Opportunity Council provided financial literacy courses in 2019 that helped people gain skills and information about budgeting, spending and saving, and landlord-tenant rights and responsibilities.

People in Whatcom County attended OC's F.L.A.R.E. course (Financial Literacy and Renter Education) and people in Island County Service Center attended \$wellness (financial wellness). Three of the people who participated in the three-hour \$wellness class transitioned from homelessness to home ownership.

"We appreciate being able to see how much this information makes a difference. The tools and resources people gain are truly life changing," said Lisa Clark, OC Island County director. "One of things people tell us is this class helps them learn things they have never heard or thought about. People have a real thirst for knowledge."

OC's Building Performance Center conducts trainings and home performance certification at their training facility located in Bellingham. In 2019 the BPC was recertified by the Interstate Renewable Energy Council. Programs from Washington, Idaho, North Dakota, Alaska, and Nevada came to the BPC for training and certification. BPC helped coordinate regional and national conferences and engaged with state and national organizations promoting safe and energy efficient housing for low-income families. The quality of BPC's work is underscored with the growing number of requests for trainings and technical services.





Providing a Warm, Safe Home

We all need a home.

A safe, healthy, and affordable home is essential to a family's well-being and the cornerstone of stability. As housing costs continue to increase, Opportunity Council worked to develop affordable housing, offer eviction prevention, and keep homes warm and safe.

STATS

141 Households

learned how to conserve energy so they could cut costs and stay warm through the Energy Conservation Education program.

8,391 Energy assistance grants helped keep the heat and lights on for people in Island, San

Juan and Whatcom counties.

73 Households

completed energy upgrades through the Community Energy Challenge.

8 Homes

were weatherized to improve comfort and affordability.

44 Home repair projects ensured home safety and durability.

937 Households

were able to get or maintain housing in 2019, in Whatcom, Island and San Juan counties.

579 People

people who are experiencing homelessness are contacted quarterly (on average) by the Whatcom Homeless Outreach Team (HOT).

SPOTLIGHT

Cold-weather shelter

Opportunity Council played a role in developing two cold-weather shelter programs in Whatcom County in 2019.

The Women's Winter Weather Shelter, located in a building at the City of Bellingham's Civic Field complex, offered 40 guests a warm place to shower and sleep. This service was a response to the growing community need. The Lighthouse Mission's Shelter has been exceeding capacity and the numbers kept increasing as winter approached.

In addition, the OC's Volunteer Center worked with the Whatcom County Health Department to recruit "on call" volunteers for a severe weather shelter project that operated as needed starting in November. This project involved four churches which opened when temperatures dropped below 28°F or 1" of snow is forecasted or on the ground.

"The Volunteer Center often gets inquiries from individuals who want to help people experiencing homelessness during the winter months and these shelter projects are a great way for the community to step up as a very real support during the coldest time of the year," said Summer Starr, Coordinator for the Volunteer Center of Whatcom County.







Access Food, Information & Referrals

Access to basic services is key to meeting our needs.

Community resources and referral centers provide a safe, respectful place where anyone can go to get help meeting their basic needs. One key service is helping people access nourishing food and support the well-being of families, children and aging neighbors.

STATS

4,000 People accessed services and information at:

- Bellingham office
- Oak Harbor office
- East Whatcom Regional Resource Center (EWRRC) in Kendall
- Resource centers on Lopez, Orcas and San Juan islands

230 households accessed the food they needed by enrolling in the Basic Food Assistance program.

20 vendors

participated in Island County's 6th Annual Veteran Resource Fair in May earning positive feedback from both vendors and attendees.

hot, nutritious meals were served at Maple Alley Inn to families, seniors, veterans,

and anyone who was hungry.



SPOTLIGHT

Improving access to services

The Opportunity Council expanded Energy Assistance program outreach and services to local Tribal communities in 2019.

Staff began offering energy assistance services one day a week at the Lummi Nation Commodities office. An energy intake specialist conducted energy assistance appointments and made referrals to other agency programs.

Once a month staff were onsite at Nooksack Indian Tribe Social Service. Nooksack Tribal members were able to schedule ahead through the energy phone line or walk in for a meeting with an intake specialist on the first Monday of the month.





Partners & Advocates Leverage Impact

You play a key role.

As volunteers, donors, advocates and partners, you create a safe and healthy community for everyone. Opportunity Council is proud to work with a long list of partners, both organizations and individuals, who make a real impact in the community.

STATS

336 Volunteers provided 13,697 hours

to support Opportunity Council programs and services, including hot meals, chore clients, and transportation to medical appointments.

192 older residents

were able to find housing through a new partnership program, Generations Housing Project. The OC developed GHP with a grant from the Chuckanut Health Foundation to help homeless seniors rent a room in "Host Homes" and match roommates with other seniors.

In August

the Island County Service Center was recognized as a leading Partner in Education (PIE) contributor. Staff participate in multiple events with students throughout the academic year.

In October,

the Opportunity Council began managing the Access to Baby & Child Dentistry (ABC Dental) service, previously managed by the Whatcom Alliance for Health Advancement (WAHA) which closed this year. OC's early learning staff worked to increased outreach to families and took steps to bring more dentists into the program.

Through the new Governor's Opportunity for Supportive Housing (GOSH) program,

OC's Community Services staff worked in partnership with caregivers, mental health providers, peers, and family members to support people re-entering the community from Western State Hospital.

SPOTLIGHT

Recognizing Landlords

Opportunity Council regularly meets with property managers and landlords in Island and Whatcom counties to thank them for their partnership is supporting housing needs in our community.

In September, the OC launched a Landlord Appreciation Brunch to honor corporate and private landlords in Whatcom County who have helped provide housing for people.

Landlords were recognized for working with the Opportunity Council to provide over 100 new units of affordable housing as well as maintaining nearly 200 units of housing through the use of tenant-landlord mediation.

Gary Dolin, Senior Social Worker with Dept of Veterans Affairs, spoke at the event and commented how important this is to have community partners.

"The impact of this support is phenomenal," said Dolin. "By working together we help solve one of the most serious social dilemmas in our society. No one should be without a roof over his head and the growing number of people who are homeless is increasing faster than we can keep up with. This is a community problem, and not a Veteran problem."



Board and Staff Leadership

Our team is committed to our mission.

The experience, knowledge, and commitment of Opportunity Council staff and board members contribute to solutions that address issues our community cares about. Our tripartite board represents policy makers, people who use our services, and diverse community sectors.

The agency has over 300 employees who work to bring services to people in Whatcom, Island, and San Juan counties with some programs serving Skagit and Snohomish counties.





Board of directors & agency directors

OC Board of Directors

President: Steve Jones
Vice President: Rick Hughes
Secretary: Rebecca Boonstra
Treasurer: Paul Stermer
Past President: Mamie Lackie
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Hannah Stone, Barry Buchanan

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Thomas Boucher

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Executive Director: Greg Winter

Associate Director: Sheri Emerson
Island County Director: Lisa Clark
Chief Financial Officer: David Foreman
Community Services Director: Debbie Paton
Early Learning and Family Services Director: David Webster
Whatcom Homeless Service Center Director: Teri Bryant

Home Improvement Director: Ross Quigley Energy Project Director: Shawn Collins

Housing Development and Property Management Director: Wendy Lawrence

Human Resource Director: Pamela Wheeler

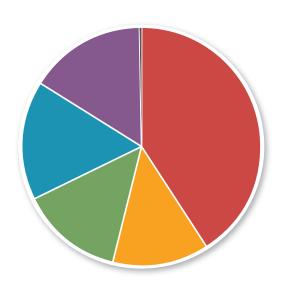
Financials

A well-planned budget meets our needs today and plans for the future.

To do this work effectively requires careful planning and adequate financial resources for the civic, social and economic well-being of our communities.

2019 Revenue

Federal	\$14,595,060
State	\$4,625,113
Local Government	\$4,975,739
Fee for Service	\$ 5,737,705
Donations & Foundation Grants	\$5,545,885
● Interest & Other Income	\$94,175
Total Revenues	\$35,573,677

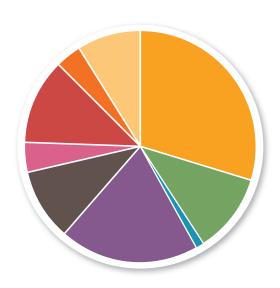


2019 Expenses

Revenue in Excess of Expenditures

Early Learning & Family Services	\$10,538,524
Weatherization and Home Repair	\$3,846,641
Energy Policy	\$397,420
Housing Services	\$6,902,815
Housing Enterprise	\$3,495,971
Community Services	\$ 1,467,181
Energy Assistance	\$4,152,313
Other Supporting Services	\$1,261,199
Administrative	\$3,122,721
Total Expenditures	\$35,184,785

\$388,892*



*Includes board designated reserves, net revenue from fee-for-service and social enterprise activities, grants designated for capital projects, and restricted donations carried forward to support programs in 2019.



Donors, funders, volunteers and supporters equip us to help realize our vision of a safe, just and thriving community.

Opportunity Council staff is proud to work in partnership with supporters and partner organizations to address local emerging needs and build stronger communities.

INDIVIDUALS

\$500+

Dr. Ione Adams and Mr. Erik Senuty Debbie Ahl and Bill Ziels Jo Ann Albers Dr. Philip and Judith Andress Jr John Baker and Carol Walton Kirsten Barron and Steve Brinn Ron and Cynthia Bauleke Ann Beck Eric Benson Teresa and Leo Bodensteiner Leslie Boswell and PJ McGuire Scott Bowefield Dr. Robin and Yuki Caldwell Corey and Janet Chaplin Joann Collinge Carol and Dennis Comeau Judy and Dale Cosgrove Ian Crawford David and Jayme Curley John and Carolyn Decker Gary Dolin and Martha Vernier-Dolin Sheri and Jim Emerson Pam Englett **Dudley Evenson** Dr. Marcus Fairbanks and Ms. Cathy Fairbanks Tim and Leslie Farris David Finet and Vicki Lippiatt Anthony and Elizabeth Finfrock Dale and Robin Geleynse Stephen Gockley and Ellen Posel Michael and Leslie Guelker-Cone Margaret Hardiman

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Kathy Veterane and Robert Bates

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Scott Wheeler Amanda White and Greg Winter

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\$100 - \$499

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Edoh Amiran and Veronica Wisniewski

Peter Arneil

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Jonathan Martin

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Hughes, Rick

Intellitonic

Hilltop Restaurant

Innovations, Inc.

IMCO General Construction Inc.



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Island County

231 SE Barrington Ave. Suite 100, Oak Harbor, WA 98277 360-679-6577 | 800-317-5427

Building Performance Center

3406 Redwood Ave. Bellingham, WA 98225 360-734-5121

East Whatcom Regional Resource Center

8251 Kendall Rd. Maple Falls, WA 98226

www.oppco.org