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.

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

Message from Executive Director

Last year, together with you, our donors, partners and clients, we did some extraordinary things.

As a community, we supported one another, found strength in each other, and pitched in. The awful shared experience of this pandemic that caused so much pain, also catalyzed innovations in how we help people improve their lives.

Your support addressed new challenges facing many of our friends and neighbors, including many who had never before thought of asking for assistance. You helped:

- Ensure people had enough food, working in coordination with other food security partners and volunteers who delivered food to homebound seniors and people who could not leave their homes;
- Provide emergency shelter at motels and rental assistance to families and individuals;
- Offer basic human services, such as energy assistance and parenting support, in new locations and new ways to meet “social distancing” requirements;
- Reach people most impacted by COVID, including people of color and people who are disabled;
- Provide child care for children of essential medical staff and first responders through a new Center for Retention and Expansion of Child Care.

In 2020 we also continued to focus on strategic priorities, despite the extreme disruptions that threatened to derail them. The new East Whatcom Regional Resource Center building was completed providing a new home to the Foothills Food Bank. Our OC Island County staff relocated to a new, expanded office. Renovations began on an affordable housing facility in San Juan County and we redeveloped a property in Bellingham that will become a residential treatment program. We also completed construction of our new commercial kitchen for our early learning programs.

Like you, I had hoped that by the time we produced this annual report, COVID would be behind us. Sadly, that is not the case. And that means I’m even more grateful for your ongoing support that makes our community’s continuing response possible. Your generosity, the courage of our staff, and the resilience of the people we serve, STILL makes me hopeful for tomorrow.

With much gratitude,
Greg Winter, Executive Director
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, Child Care Aware.

Leveraging Impact with Partnerships, Trainings
Programs include tax assistance, employment services, financial education, Asset Building, Weatherization and tech training, Early Achievers 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 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, child care providers, and educators participate in Opportunity Council programs that promote high quality early learning programs and support child development.

STATS

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

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

977 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.

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

686 Child care providers received support and resources to offer high-quality services.

SPOTLIGHT

Caring for Kids

When the Covid-19 pandemic closed preschool classrooms, staff found new ways to support families. School buses became delivery trucks, keeping families supplied with food, diapers and hygiene supplies like disinfectants and toilet paper, as well as packets of early learning materials and activities.

Founded in 2020 in partnership with the Bellingham Regional Chamber of Commerce, the Center for the Retention & Expansion of Child Care, N.W. initially intended to address the shortage of childcare options that existed even before the pandemic. The pandemic had other ideas, amplifying the economic challenges of providing care by decreasing enrollment. Instead of supporting new providers, the Center became a lifeline by providing vital grants and support to existing providers in five counties—helping ensure the market didn’t contract further and setting the stage for future expansion.

Staff fill school buses with food, supplies and preschool materials to deliver to families.
Child Care Aware coaches checked in by phone weekly with care providers and helped coordinate emergency supply deliveries.
Partnerships, Buildings & Trainings

*Leveraging impact through partnerships, trainings.

*You play a key role. As volunteers, donors, advocates and partners, you create a safe and healthy community for everyone.*

**STATS**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>285 Trainees</th>
<th>gained skills through Building Performance Center trainings throughout Washington State and beyond.</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>29 People</td>
<td>attended classes to improve their budgeting skills.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>282 People</td>
<td>completed tax returns with tax assistance or calls.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>192 People</td>
<td>gained job skills and work experience so they could improve their financial situation.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>293 Volunteers</td>
<td>provided 7,357 hours to support vital programs and services.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**SPOTLIGHT**

*Building Continued, trainings suspended*

Despite facing supply chain and labor shortages, OC building projects continued, including wrapping up projects like East Whatcom Regional Resource Center’s Building 2 in Kendall as well as starting new projects like renovations at the Harborview Apartments in Friday Harbor, and the “Recovery House” in Bellingham, a supportive housing and treatment facility for people in therapeutic court programs.

Due to COVID-19, the Building Performance Center was unable to host in-home and classroom-based workshops from March to September. Staff quickly pivoted, developing online trainings and successfully conducting 66 certification exams for workers seeking weatherization industry credentials.

*Greg Winter, OC Executive Director, at Recovery House with major donor Mimi Ferlin.*
In partnership with sponsors and community mentors, Project X-it families worked to exit poverty by setting family goals and learning strategies to help with budgeting, education, safety, employment and addressing past debt. To end the cycle of generational poverty, parents and children both take part in education and goal setting.

With financial incentives made possible with a grant through WECU Education First grant and individual donations, graduating families of 2020 earned a combined total of $10,685 in incentives. OC staff and sponsors celebrated the 2020 graduates with a socially-distanced door-to-door delivery of certificates and gifts.
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.

**STATS**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>44 Households</th>
<th>10,776 Energy assistance grants</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>learned how to conserve energy so they could cut costs and stay warm through the Energy Conservation Education program.</td>
<td>helped keep the heat and lights on for people in Island, San Juan and Whatcom counties.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>39 Households</th>
<th>35 Homes</th>
<th>28 Home repair projects</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>completed energy upgrades through the Community Energy Challenge.</td>
<td>were weatherized to improve comfort and affordability.</td>
<td>ensured home safety and durability.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>847 Households</th>
<th>679 People</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>were able to get or maintain housing in 2020, in Whatcom, Island and San Juan counties.</td>
<td>people who are experiencing homelessness are contacted quarterly (on average) by the Whatcom Homeless Outreach Team (HOT).</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

over 1,300 Households were able to stay in their homes with rental assistance. Not just a life raft for individual households, this aid helped prevent of homelessness, reduce foreclosure risk and strengthen the economy.

**SPOTLIGHT**

**Pivoting becomes common**

Housing, home efficiency and repair programs—all services primarily provided in client’s homes or in OC offices—were severely impacted by the pandemic. From Bellingham to Oak Harbor, housing case managers and Energy Assistance staff quickly pivoted to find new ways to serve their clients. Window services and documentation delivery systems were quickly implemented as staff adapted quickly to the new normal of phone appointments and mail delivery.

In-home efficiency and repair programs were suspended from spring to fall. Guided by COVID-19 safety procedures and client needs, Conservation Education Specialists developed new procedures for providing Conservation Education by phone, gathering information to assess household needs, and delivering inventory and supplies.

Homeless Outreach Team member Bob Kumar celebrates with a resident getting keys to a home.
From Bellingham to Oak Harbor, housing case managers and Energy Assistance staff pivoted to find new ways to serve their clients. Window services and delivery systems were implemented as staff adapted quickly to a new way of doing business.
Access to basic services is key to meeting our needs.

Community resources and referral centers provide a safe, respectful place where anyone can get help meeting their basic needs, including nourishing food and support for families, children and aging neighbors.

**Access Food, Information & Referrals**

Over 7,000 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

Nearly 6,000 meals were delivered to people living in quarantine or supportive housing. 413 children ate healthy meals and snacks at their child care each month. 165 households accessed the food they needed by enrolling in the Basic Food Assistance program.

**Ensuring access, no matter what**

In early spring, social distancing requirements closed OC offices to in-person meetings, requiring us to quickly find other ways to serve community members seeking help. In addition to implementing window service and phone appointments, staff tracked how other community services were adapting to the pandemic ensuring clients had the most up-to-date information and referrals possible.

For many, service extended beyond the windows and phone. Island County staff increased street outreach to Veterans, while staff at Maple Alley Inn turned to a home delivery model. No longer able to host large gatherings, staff with the hot meals program instead prepared, packaged and delivered individual meals to people who were isolated and living on extremely limited incomes, including those living in quarantine or in housing with little or no ability to cook and prepare meals.

Maple Alley Inn staff package and deliver meals during Covid.
Community volunteers deliver

Thanks to numerous volunteers, isolated and vulnerable community members still had access to food throughout 2020, through a successful partnership with the Bellingham Food Bank. Every Friday, a remarkable group of community members delivered nearly 1,000 boxes of food, while volunteers in Kendall provided food drive-up services at the East Whatcom Regional Resource Center where the Foothills Food Bank began utilizing a new building for food storage.

“Mostly people who call in to get (food) deliveries are desperate and not sure where to turn. The relief in their voice when they find out that food is coming is a wonderful thing to hear, at least we can take some pressure off this one area crucial of their lives.”

- Food box delivery volunteer
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 350 employees who work to bring services to people in Whatcom, Island, and San Juan counties with some programs serving Skagit and Snohomish counties.

OC Board of Directors

President: Mark Tompkins
Vice-President: Rebecca Boonstra
Secretary: Ozell Jackson
Treasurer: Paul Stermer
Past President: Steve Jones
ELAFS Policy Council Rep: Jeffrey Dietrich
Thomas Boucher
Rud Browne
Christianna Clinton
Sandy John
Mamie Lackie
Ramona Menish
Hannah Stone
Cindy Wolf

Agency Directors

Executive Director: Greg Winter
Associate Director: Sheri Emerson
Island County Director: Lisa Clark (2020)
Island County Director: Melissa Frasch-Brown (2021)
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.

2020 Revenue

- Federal $20,065,766
- State $4,498,442
- Local Government $4,746,483
- Fee for Service $5,417,761
- Donations & Foundation Grants $6,484,515
- Investment Income $23,588

Total Revenues $41,236,555

2020 Expenses

- Early Learning & Family Services $10,762,693
- Weatherization and Home Repair $1,732,968
- Energy Policy $346,428
- Housing Services $12,865,824
- Housing Enterprise $1,700,843
- Community Services $1,427,966
- Energy Assistance $4,867,371
- Other Supporting Services $1,563,841
- Administrative $3,567,970
- Fundraising $56,432

Total Expenditures $38,892,336

Revenue in Excess of Expenditures $2,344,219*

*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 2020.
Making it through, thanks to you

These uncertain times were met with unprecedented generosity—generosity that made it possible for many to survive a turbulent year. Given by countless community members like you, support for Opportunity Council programs ensured food, shelter, and basic services were available whenever anyone in our community needed help.

In the midst of an extraordinarily challenging year, you gave your neighbors a sense of, security, well-being, and hope.

Thank you.

GROUPS & FOUNDATIONS
Abbie & Louis Woerdeman Foundation
Tanner & Betty Zielke Foundation
Sara Johnson Fund
Posel Gockley Fund
Reading Wheeler Fund
Project Neighborly Fund
BBMR Fund
Celedo Fund
Metrozinger Fund
Posel Godkley Fund
Project Neighborly Fund
Reading Wheeler Fund
Resilience Fund
Sara Johnson Fund
Whidbey Community Foundation
Whidbey Presbyterian Church
Windermere Foundation
Windermere Real Estate, Hilton, Susan

INDIVIDUALS & HOUSEHOLDS
Ione Adams and Erik Senutty
Jan Adams
Joan and Michael Airoldi
Judith Akins
Blake Allen
Peggy Allen and Jim Hickey
Edoh Amiran and Veronica Wisniewski
Minda Amiran
Amy Nelson and Michael Sato
Breck and Gretchin Anderson
Peter Arneil
Jeff and Carol Arvin
Carl and Brenda Asplund
Peggy Atkinson
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Raymond Ballweg
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Vanessa Blackburn
Stephen and Judy Blum-Anderson
Nancy Blume
Jeanne Boni
Rebecca Boomstra
Leslie Boswell and Pi McGuire
Steve Bottle
Thomas Boucher
Bruce Brabec and Marlene Robinson
Carol Brach
David and Isabel Bradley
Jeff Braimes
Jean Brechan
Cynthia Brinn
Grace Briscoe and David McAdams
Pat and Jim Brittain
Chris and Lorrie Brod
Janet Brotzler
Leandra Brown
Beth Brownfield
Ariel Brownstein
Jo Bryant
Janet Brynjolfsson and Roy Grothe
Leaside Byrson
Barry Buchanan
Kris Ann Burke
Frank and Willo Burgler
Traci Burgler
Dorothy Burke
Thomas Burkland and Jacqueline Nicolai
Jim Burlingame
Lisa Byers and Laura Gallo
Christina Byrne and David Flanagan
Jesse Caemmerer
Margaret Cain
Robert and Yuki Caldwell
Cher Camell
Jeanne and Bill Carroll
Gary and Teresa Carson
Rocky Champagne
Corey and Janet Chaplin
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William Ciskowski
Miriam Cisternas
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Lisa Clark
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Dan Dahlgren
Victoria Dahlgren
Karen Dalenius
Carly Darcher
John Davies and Carol Kumeckawa

All efforts are made to accurately compile our list of supporters who made a financial contribution of more than $50 in 2020.
Whatcom County
1111 Cornwall Ave., Bellingham, WA 98225
360-734-5121 | 800-649-5121

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