2021 Annual Report

Direct services, impactful investments, and steadfast partnerships









Your Community Action Agency. Since 1965.

2021 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.

Message from Executive Director and Board President

Dear Friends,

As we reflect on last year, we're reminded that the impact of the Covid Pandemic continues.

But we're also, and much more encouraged, of the many ways you and others in our community continue to pitch in and support each other.

This report celebrates the impact your support helped make possible in 2021. For example:

With help from you, families had a safe place to stay until they were able to find a place to call home. (More on page 8)

Thanks to many community partners, we found ways to ensure young children had the chance to learn in person and families had access to child care (more on page 10).

And despite not being able to serve meals in person, Maple Alley Inn staff and volunteers prepared meals that were delivered to families and individuals in quarantine and others in need. (More on page 13).

Whether you are a donor, a partner organization, a staff member, vendor or volunteer, you play a key role in this report. Through direct service, investments and partnerships, all of us are working together to address local needs and build a stronger community.

Thank you for supporting this work and building a brighter future for the generations to come.

With much gratitude,

Greg Winter, Executive Director

Mark Tompkins, San Juan County Health and Community Services, director and OC Board President.



Greg Winter, Executive Directo

Mark Tompkins, Board President

Making an Impact

Thank you for making an impact.

Whether providing direct services, investing in our communities' members and resources, or working with our steadfast partners to leverage impact, Opportunity Council is proud to partner with you in building a community where every one has the chance to reach their full potential.

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Board and Staff Leadership

Our team is committed to our mission.

Our tripartite board represents policy makers, people who use our services, and diverse community sectors.

2021* Board of directors & agency directors

OC Board of Directors	Agency Directors
President: Mark Tompkins	Executive Director: Greg Winter
Vice-President: Rebecca Boonstra	Associate Director: Sheri Emerson
Secretary: Ozell Jackson	Island County Director: Melissa Frasch-Brown
Treasurer: Paul Stermer	Chief Financial Officer: David Foreman
Past President: Steve Jones	Chief People & Culture Officer: Pamela Wheeeler
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Thomas Boucher	Early Learning and Family Services Director: David Webster
Rud Browne	Whatcom Homeless Service Center Director: Teri Bryant
Christianna Clinton	Home Improvement Director: Ross Quigley
Sandy John	Housing Development and Property Management Director: Wendy Lawrence
Mamie Lackie	Human Resource Director: Deborah Cwalina
Ramona Menish	
Hannah Stone	

Cindy Wolf

*For a current list of Opportunity Council board members and agency directors, please visit our website, www.oppco.org.

Making a difference,

Through direct services, impactful investments and steadfast partnerships

Everyone needs a little help now and then.

Whether for people experiencing homelessness, working families, aging seniors, or other community members fighting to keep their heads above water, you make it possible for Opportunity Council's direct service programs to provide tangible, practical help that helps people get on their feet and meet their own and their family's basic needs.

Investing in the future contributes to ongoing stability and well-being.

By investing in programs and services that give children the start in life they deserve, put adults on the path to full time employment and financial self-sufficiency, and support the health of our environment, we help our clients build better lives and contribute to a community where everyone can succeed.

We're all in this together.

Community Action is about partnerships—community taking action for itself. With your support, together in partnership with other organizations, community coalitions, educators, employers, plus volunteers, supporters, and advocates, the Opportunity Council is a catalyst for the change we wish to see in the world.



Community Resource Centers

Connecting people with resources

For decades, Community Resource Centers have been the frontline of the work of Opportunity Council providing a welcoming, environment for real people to connect with the help they need. Centered in the communities they serve and staffed by experts, Community Resource Centers are where the needs of the community are met.

Despite the ongoing barriers presented in 2021, OC Community Resource Center staff in Whatcom and Island counties continued to connect with local residents to share vital information, provide referrals to partner agencies and programs, and help people in need make connections to more than 50 Opportunity Council services and programs. We also partnered with the Resource Centers in San Juan island to provide services and referrals.

STATS

Over 15,000 Calls, visits, or referrals for services made through Community Resource Centers (CRC).

6,106 Services and referrals completed for 2,026 housholds in the Bellingham CRC.

1,614 Calls and visits made to East Whatcom Regional Resource Center in Kendall.

2,400 Household visited the Oak Harbor CRC.

6,776 Calls and visits to the CRCs in San Juan County.

The impact Community Resource Centers have goes far beyond four walls. Pictured here, the Island County Resource Center staff offer connection, resources, and fun at a 2021 Island County health fair.

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A Safe Place to Call Home

2021 was a stressful year for many, highlighting the continued impact of the pandemic and high housing costs.

With your support, over 900 families were able to get housing or maintain housing through Opportunity Council's supportive housing and case management programs. Through these programs, people found professional support as they navigated the complexities of a housing system that continues to have too few homes to meet the housing need.

To help preserve the number of available homes and keep vulnerable adults and other household members from slipping into homelessness, the home repair program also thrived in 2021. From fixing loose steps to repairing leaky plumbing and roofs, the home repair program helped aging seniors (and other community members with very limited income) stay in their homes, while also preserving the houses and neighborhoods that define our communities.

STATS

153 Home repair projects ensured home safety and durability.

942 Households were able to get or maintain housing in 2021, in Whatcom, Island and San Juan counties.

549 People contacted, connected quarterly (on average) by the Whatcom Homeless Outreach Team.

235 Households stayed safely at local motels until they were able to find a new place to call home.

1,949 Households served with rental assistance.

Insulation. Heat. Plumbing. Floors. Windows. Ceilings. Pictured here, a client working with our Homeless Services staff surveys her new apartment. It's a safe, dry, respite she gets to call home thanks to her hard work with the Homeless Outreach team and your support.



Investing in tomorrow

Early Learning and Child Care programs provide opportunities to grow, thrive

We know that when young children have access to interactive environments that support early brain development and healthy relationships, we increase the likelihood that they'll be able to contribute and thrive later in life. That's why early learning programs continue to be a core strategy in efforts to end poverty.

Though the impacts of Covid-19 continued to impact enrollment rates, more than 400 children had the chance to grow, learn, and explore through early learning and child care programs. Innovation was the constant theme as staff sought out virtual ways to engage children and families when in-person services were impacted by guarantines and staffing issues. Using a program called "Ready Rosie" children were able to participate in virtual circle time and enjoy unique at home activities delivered by the Early Learning Team.

STATS

82 Children had a safe place to stay while their caregivers earned a living, thanks to emergency childcare vouchers.

Referrals managed to connect children with special needs with medical care, housing, food and 1,00

87 Infants & families got off to a great start thanks to the wraparound family services of Early Head Start.

6 Children explored, played, and thrived under the care of Early Learning Experts in Head Start and Early Childhood Education and Assistance Program (ECEAP).

79 Youth served at Kids Days of Summer at East Whatcom Community Resource Center.

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Keeping the lights on, food on the table

For individuals and families, basic services are key for keeping heads above water

Pandemic shutdowns, inflation, lost hours, and stagnant wages are economic factors that serve as powerful currents pulling against people.

We expanded our outreach efforts in 2021 to make sure parents, caretakers, seniors and individuals had access to programs to help with rent, utilities, and expanded food benefits including support for enrolling in Basic Food Assistance.

2021 also saw the expansion of utility assistance to include water bills. Opportunity Council was able to implement working relationships with vendors to help make sure individuals behind on their bills could connect with newly available help.

STATS

129 Households accessed the food they needed by enrolling in the Basic Food Assistance program.

10,140 Energy and utility assistance grants helped keep the heat, lights, and water on for people in Island, San Juan and Whatcom Counties.

11,409 Maple Alley Inn meals delivered to individuals and families.

Needs don't get much more basic than food. Despite not being able to serve meals in person, the staff and volunteers of Maple Alley Inn continued to feed the community by preparing meals for families staying in motels, individuals in quarantine with no other support, and those children and adults that called Opportunity Council housing home.



Investing in our future

Financial wellness, job training, and energy efficiency contribute to increased sustainability

Through supportive employment programs, financial literacy classes, renter education, and investments in energy efficiency, people gained the tools they need to build a better life for themselves and their community.

While 95% of trainings were virtual in 2021, by the end of the year in-person training began to return to the Building Performance Centers. With trainings designed to help attendees advance their careers, the Building Performance Center is a state leader in weatherization and home performance job training.

With new Covid protocols in place, the Community Energy Challenge (a joint effort with Sustainable Connections), conducted more than 100 comprehensive home energy audits and worked with more than 60 households to upgrade their energy efficiency. The Weatherization Program both helped reduce household carbon emissions with programs like furnace repair and helped seniors, families, and other households become more climate resilient through weatherization, furnace replacement, and conservation education.

STATS

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

369 Trainees gained skills through Building Performance Center trainings.

23 Tax hotline calls were fielded. 81 Homes were weatherized to improve comfort and affordability.

106 Comprehensive home energy audits and 76 energy efficiency upgrade projects were completed at 63 different homes.

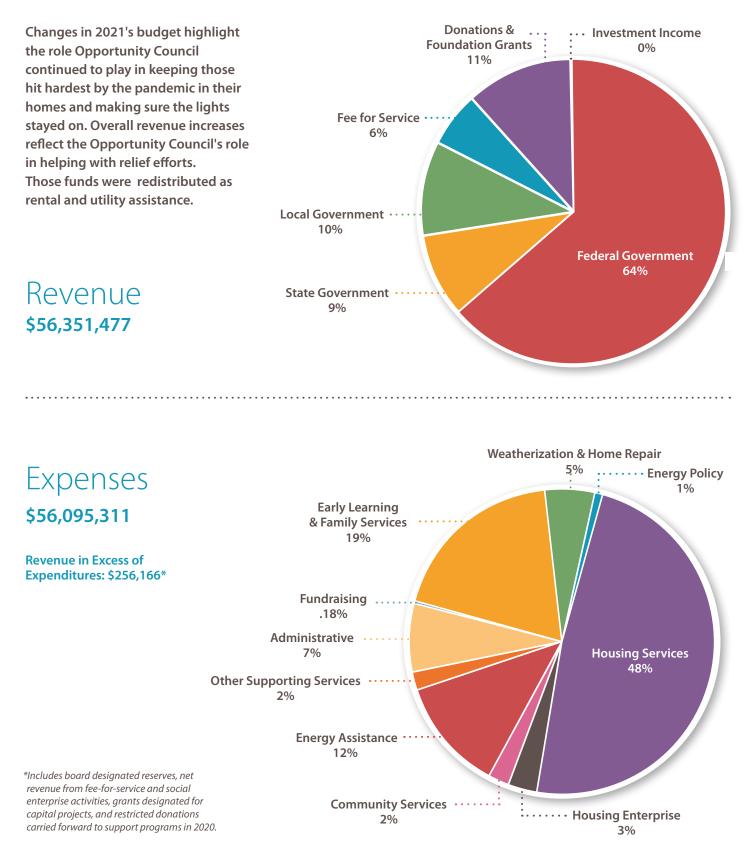
65 Households learned how to conserve energy so they could cut costs and stay warm through the Energy Conservation Education.

798 Local childcare businesses from five counties received support.

Impact upon impact upon impact: training for weatherization professionals improves the earning potential of attendees, strengthens our local job markets, and increases the number of professionals improving the sustainability and climate resiliency of homes.

us.

Meeting a growing need





Made Possible by You: Donors & Supporters

STATS

8,613 Hours of service given to deliver food, grow fresh organic produce, keep the homes of vulnerable adults clean and safe, and help senior neighbors access healthcare.

DONORS

GROUPS & FOUNDATIONS

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