



CARE Together Fund

Impact Report

May 2023



Based in SeaTac but serving all of King County, World Changers opened its Trinity Housing Services in the spring of 2022 and has assisted more than 40 formerly incarcerated men make a smooth transition back into the community. These men help with WC's Mobile Food Pantry and other food programs.

Photo: Michael B. Maine

In March of 2020, the Renton Regional Community Foundation (RRCF) mobilized to support the South King County region as it came to grips with the Covid-19 pandemic and what it could mean to our community's residents. Our newly established **CARE¹ Together Fund** had three goals:

- 1** Make it as easy as possible for groups to access funding.
- 2** Ensure that organizations could use the money the best way they saw fit (no strings attached).
- 3** Support those most affected by the pandemic: primarily our Black and Brown neighbors.

Doing away with the typical grant application process, we simply asked for one thing:

Email us a paragraph stating your need.

From there, our committee of community leaders made grant decisions, while RRCF fund advisors, other people in our circle, and big-hearted strangers donated nearly \$800,000 over the next two years. As of December 2022, all the funds have been disbursed, through 185 grants to 90 organizations.

¹CARE is an acronym for Communities Aligned Around Racial Equity

“There is no such thing as a single-issue struggle because we do not live single-issue lives.”²

— Audre Lorde

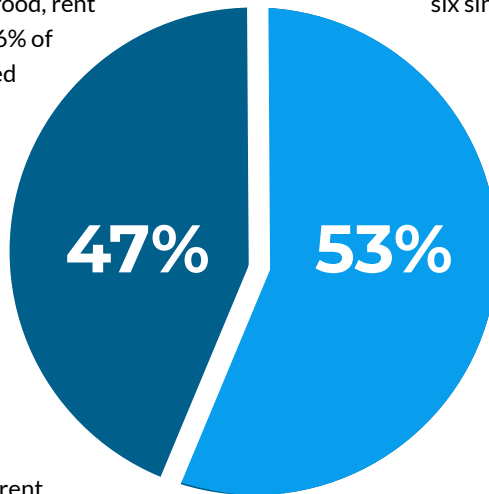
Where your dollars went to work

RRCF granted \$782,521 to 90 organizations, many of whom received multiple grants over the two-and-a-half-year cycle. Grants were usually \$5000 and under; two were \$10,000. Most of the organizations operate with budgets below \$1 million, led by and supporting Black and Brown communities. All are focused on South King County.

Multiple area support

Nearly half (47%)

of the grant dollars supported more than one area (e.g., food, rent and utilities) with 46% of those grants directed toward three or more different challenges. This is an important point: needs compound; they are interrelated. Most of the grants (78%) that addressed multiple areas included food security; after that, rent assistance and diapers/basic hygiene (45% and 46% respectively). Other areas included transportation and mental health support.



The other half (53%)

of your dollars focused on one of six single areas:

- 41% Food security
- 26% Rent and utilities
- 12% Other (vaccine access, education supplies, resource navigation)
- 11% Diapers & basic supplies
- 6% Mental health
- 4% Gas & transportation

² 1982 speech, *Learning from the 60s*, Harvard University. Lorde was speaking about the struggle for racial justice.

“We have taken all the barriers and challenges away that folks normally experience when they go to food banks. We’ve changed the game; y’all know that— right?”

— LaTanya Horace-DuBois, The Silent Task Force

How your support made a difference

Dignity

Your dollars didn’t just help put food on people’s tables. It helped people in ways that fed their cultural heritage and sense of dignity. No one was compelled to explain or prove their need.

Depth

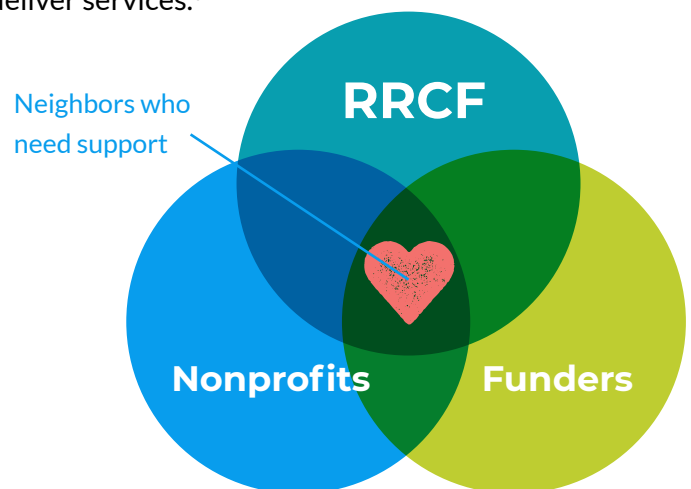
CARE Together funds helped organizations offer more wrap-around services. For example, providing a family with money for gas, advocating for mental health services for a teenage daughter, and directing them to an agency that could help with healthy food.

Reach

While we can’t report precise numbers, grantee organizations report helping thousands of people throughout South King County withstand the pandemic and its aftermath over the last two and a half years.

Partnerships

There’s been a 36% surge in partnerships among 44 nonprofits surveyed from 2021 to 2022; Ninety-seven percent of nonprofits report partnering with other organizations to deliver services.³



³Renton Regional Community Foundation’s 2022 Nonprofit Survey Report

What we're seeing

We've witnessed an extraordinary commitment from South King County nonprofits to support their neighbors through extremely challenging times. The work is heroic, and at times seems unsustainable. Here's what else we're seeing:

Community Issues

Need exceeds resources The Covid-19 emergency has faded – and so has relief aid. Meanwhile, the urgency regarding basic needs remains front and center, and outstrips nonprofit capacity to deliver. Many residents continue to face food, shelter, childcare, transportation, medical, and mental health challenges.

Complexity Needs are intertwined and lead to entrenched challenges, especially for children. More and deeper wrap-around services are needed, as are policies and broad-based initiatives that address multiple needs at once.

Cultural relevance Food banks that emerged during the pandemic offering culturally specific items are struggling; social and emotional support services that speak to various cultural customs are lacking.

Barriers to support Language, immigration status, and shame keeps people from getting the support they need. Reaching everyone who needs help means adding capacity (e.g., outreach staff, language skills) and changing approaches (new ways of thinking and messaging).

Children The instability that arises from uncertain housing, food, and transportation leads to erratic school attendance, medical issues, stress, trauma, and the risk of repeating the cycle. Creating a low barrier system to access support for children is paramount.

Safety Hard times often come with physical safety risks, including domestic violence, the various threats of substandard (or no) housing, and the health and behavioral effects of chronic stress. As if that isn't enough, hate crimes are increasing.

Nonprofit Issues

Costs for nonprofits continue to increase (cost of living increases for staff, program costs, etc.).

Funding, both from private and public sources, has gone down.

Staffing – finding and retaining qualified team members – is a universal and ongoing challenge.

Fatigue and burnout are real, not only due to short staffing but the reality of facing injustice, despair, and people in crisis on a daily basis.

Flexible funding and general operating support are critical.

Donor engagement is appreciated and desired to increase trust and understanding of issues.

What's next?

South King County nonprofits are committed to shaping a region that proves the possibility and power of multicultural communities. They are digging in and working creatively with whatever resources they can muster to:

- Build and re-build programs to be more equitable, just, and sustainable
- Prioritize and ensure access to basic needs
- Deepen partnerships
- Expand staff and volunteer base to meet increasing demand for services
- Respond to community needs
- Remain flexible and keep learning
- Infuse joy and a sense of possibility into all aspects of programs and services

“Our work is challenging, and we only know how to keep on keeping on continuing serving our most vulnerable, underserved community.”

– The Silent Task Force

At the same time, Renton Regional Community Foundation will be working with all our partners, including donors, nonprofits, elected officials, and other community leaders to:

- Raise more money to support this work
- Expand organizational capacity for both RRCF and our nonprofit partners
- Make more connections: with you and between you and your community

Trust is the most valuable aspect of your gift, whether it's ten dollars or ten thousand. When you give money without strings, you're empowering the nonprofit leaders in South King County to do what they do best: develop ideas, make decisions, offer programs and services, and advocate for policies based on who and what they know about the communities in which they live and work.

Thank you, thank you, thank you.

Appreciation for you and your generosity is widespread and heartfelt.

To see a full list of all CARE Together Fund grantees please visit: rentonfoundation.org/care-together-fund/ or snap this code.





Above: Victorious Life Christian Center distributed food to 2,210 Renton residents in 2022.

Below : The CARE Together Fund supported UTOPIA Washington's Health and Wellness Fair that involved collaborating with 25 community partners, and provided resources and culturally centered approaches to community health and wellness to more than 100 South King County residents.



Photo: UTOPIA Washington

RENTON REGIONAL
COMMUNITY
Foundation

RentonFoundation.org
t: 425-282-5199