



2024

# Annual Impact Report

NORTH SOUND ACH



*We exist to create a just and inclusive culture and the necessary conditions for all community members to thrive.*



North Sound ACH

[www.NorthSoundACH.org](http://www.NorthSoundACH.org)

# Letter from the Board Chair

Hello fellow change makers, system disrupters, and unapologetic dreamers for a brighter future, filled with equitable and inclusive spaces within the entire North Sound region. 2024 was my first year on the board, and as I stepped into that space, I was ready to let go of everything I had learned up until that point – to enter into a season humbly admitting that I didn't have all of the answers, and that I needed to listen to the voices of those who need to be heard the most.

I believe that James Baldwin says it best in his book (No Name In The Street 1972) *“If one really wishes to know how justice is administered in a country, one does not question the policemen, the lawyers, the judges, or the protected members of the middle class. One goes to the unprotected – those, precisely, who need the law's protection most! – and listens to their testimony.”*

More than 50 years later we are still actively working to fulfill that call to action. One of the ways that we have committed to doing that is with the Vital Conditions framework.

As a board we have a commitment to continue learning so that we can evolve as changemakers across our region, state, and country. Bringing what we learn back to our partners, coupled with curiosity about what we learn from them, will continue our collective growth for years to come. I am excited for what our collective future will bring about.

**Kevin Riley, Board Chair**

# Letter from the CEO

One of the significant impacts of North Sound ACH during 2024 can be readily seen through the growth of the Collaborative Action Network – through member references and word of mouth, this collective group of partners grew from 140 organizations to 222. The North Sound ACH Partner Convening in August had the largest number of attendees since we began convening in 2019.

The Network is an alliance of dreamers, offering their resources and expertise to their peers, because they believe in a just and inclusive culture and the necessary conditions required for all community members to thrive. North Sound ACH is proud to help facilitate this group, knowing we can achieve far more by working together.

North Sound ACH has a continued focus on assuring that all communities and community members can see themselves in programs and processes as they are designed and implemented is a core part of our work and we look forward to continuing to grow this Network with your leadership and involvement.

**Liz Baxter, CEO**



North Sound ACH, founded in 2014 by a group of community leaders from across five counties and eight tribal nations, continues to grow and expand its relationships across this diverse region – from a small project in a parent nonprofit, to an independent nonprofit with 35 staff. When asked by the Washington Health Care Authority in 2018 to name our sustainability model, we said **“relationship building”** – believing that by finding ways to see each other, build connections and deep relationships can find resources and assets to serve the communities long into the future.



# Collaborative Action Network

CONVENED BY **NORTH SOUND ACH**

The Collaborative Action Network includes organizations from the public and private sectors, artists and farmers, clinical and community-based organizations, and more – connecting community partners to each other so they can share ideas and resources and see what’s working:

***Fire & EMS, Resource Centers, Education, Social Services, Housing, Healthcare, Government, Food Security, Behavioral Health & Substance Use Disorder Services, Foundations, Children & Family Services, Faith-Based organizations, and Tribal Organizations, Health Centers, and Tribal Governments.***



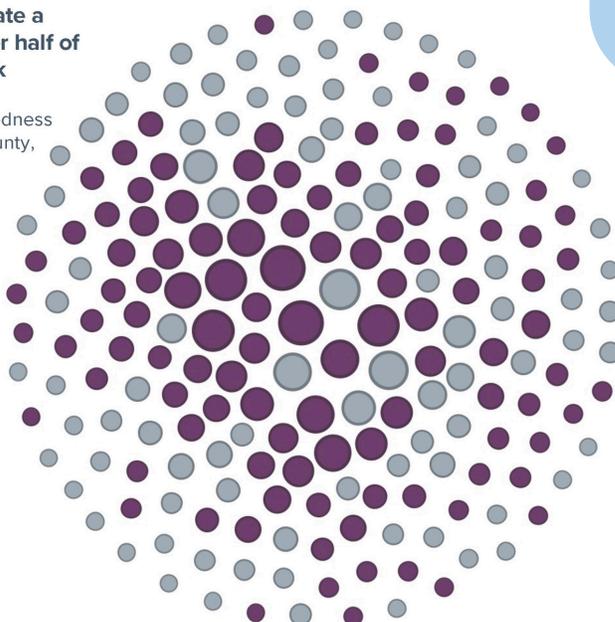
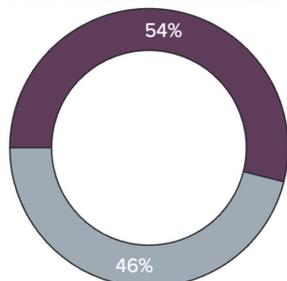
***At the biannual winter convening, we were able to form relationships with neighboring county groups in the Network that remain strong today. Having support through partnerships (official and unofficial) has proven to be as necessary as it is fulfilling.”***

**– Network partner**

North Sound ACH helped facilitate a connection either to or from over half of the organizations in the Network

Organizations at all levels of connectedness in the Network, as well as in every county, reported that North Sound ACH had helped them to connect to another Network partner in some capacity.

■ ACH aided connection   ■ ACH did not aid connection



Together, we creating a connected network of partners working on the biggest health, social and community needs of our region – creating a space where everyone feels they belong.

from the Social Network Analysis report  
Read the full report [here](#)

North Sound ACH periodically has funding for collaborative partner projects. Proposals were reviewed by Network peers and partners, who were empowered to make the decisions that leveraged **\$4.2 million** for projects that were innovative, elevated young leaders, and tested new ideas across the region. Here is the list of projects funded in 2024:



# Collaborative Action Network

CONVENED BY NORTH SOUND ACH



- |   |  |   |
|---|--|---|
| <b>Bellingham Food Bank Satellite Expansion Program</b>   | <b>Compass Health Harm Reduction training</b>                                | <b>Recovery Cafe Skagit Expand Recovery Support Services</b>                |
| <b>Freedom Run 2024 5K BRE Innovative Solutions</b>       | <b>Health Ministries Network Ask a Nurse Expansion</b>                       | <b>Skagit County Public Health Diversion and Shelter/Housing</b>            |
| <b>Camp Fire of Snohomish County After School Program</b> | <b>House of Wisdom Expanding educational programs</b>                        | <b>Skagit Hospital District 304 Youth as Leaders: Skagit Farm to School</b> |
| <b>Center for Independence BIPOC Outreach Project</b>     | <b>Ideal Option Substance Use Treatment in Maple Falls</b>                   | <b>Trans-WA Gender-Affirming Hair Removal</b>                               |
| <b>Coast Salish Youth Coalition Org Founding</b>          | <b>Joyce L. Sobel Family Resource Center San Juan County Youth Host Home</b> | <b>Triumph Teen Life Center Community Resource Center</b>                   |
| <b>Community Boating Center Youth Enrichment Programs</b> | <b>NW WA Indian Health Board Supporting Indigenous Lifegivers</b>            | <b>Unbridled Spirit 7 Healing Through Horses</b>                            |
| <b>Decolonize Sports Reclamation of Native Lacrosse</b>   | <b>Northwest Youth Services The Omni Center</b>                              | <b>Vamos Youth Development Programming</b>                                  |
| <b>EARTH BIPOC youth arts workshops</b>                   | <b>Orcas Community Resource Center Trauma-Informed Care Implementation</b>   | <b>Whatcom CARE Implementation and Expansion Project</b>                    |
| <b>Fatherhood the Foundation Program Development</b>      | <b>OUR Journey Gang &amp; Youth Reentry Intervention</b>                     | <b>Whatcom Family &amp; Community Network Mobile Mama Internship</b>        |
| <b>Futures NW Learning with Leaders series</b>            | <b>Participatory Justice Expanding Participatory Justice model</b>           | <b>Whatcom Food Network Capacity Building</b>                               |
|   |  | <b>Whatcom Literacy Council Free Adult Literacy Programs</b>                |



**Coast Salish Youth Coalition**

*“ It is such a privilege to be surrounded by the very best humans, and to be a key player in facilitating the magic that happens when projects slowly take shape and then life. It’s not simply standing by and nodding in approval, rather it is taking active steps – being an active participant in real change. This is the dream of anyone who is called to do this type of progressive work.”*  
 – Review Committee member

80% of network partners attend the ACH-hosted virtual **Learning Series**, which continues to feature local, regional, and tribal experts who share their knowledge around topics such as Birth Equity, Health & the Outdoors, Art as a Tool for Self-Care & Activism, and Community-Centric Fundraising. Sessions are available in real time and can be viewed in the North Sound Resource Library, with a specific link for the [2024 Learning Series!](#)

## 2024 Community Investment Funding



**Partners Sponsorships and Grants: \$4.2 million**  
**Community Hub partners: \$2.7 million**  
**Emergency Response: \$179k**

Within the Network, North Sound ACH hosts several Communities of Practice for partners who wanted to focus in on a certain policy or focus area.



### Diversity, Equity, Inclusion, and Belonging

(DEIB) is a framework to promote the fair treatment and full participation of all people, particularly groups who have historically been underrepresented or subject to discrimination. Partners came together to discuss how to build support for DEIB programs and professionals within the workplaces of our Network members.



### Measuring Well-Being:

collecting and measuring data through an equity lens – harmonizing qualitative and quantitative data, reflecting and honoring the view of multiple cultures and identities, and shared data practices – this group developed the region’s first Well-Being Survey, launched in late 2024.



**Jail Reintegration:** sharing resources, connections, and support to address challenges in the reintegration of people leaving jails and prisons. Partners came from higher ed, food access, Substance Use Disorder peer navigators, as well as re-entry advocacy organizations.



*...authentic relationships take time to build. By consistently showing up and following through with our commitments, and when we are able to combine that commitment with the correct communication style, we have been successful in building stronger relationships” – Network partner*

NORTH SOUND  
**Community Hub**  
 A SERVICE OF NORTH SOUND ACH

Another significant impact for North Sound ACH is its continued partnering with the Washington State Health Care Authority in implementing the State’s [Medicaid Transformation Project \(MTP\) waiver](#). 2024 was a planning year for building infrastructure and networks to support care coordination, and piloting new services.

Expanding connections between various care coordination programs is critical to people getting the care and services they need. North Sound ACH has a Community Hub that connects community members to culturally-relevant care through a trusted, trained, and highly-skilled community-based workforce.



We emphasize the importance of coordinating services effectively to connect individuals with the necessary services and support systems to thrive. The Community Hub uses braided funding, including funds from the Medicaid waiver to support these community-based workers, such as community health workers, *promotoras*, and others who help folks navigate the complexities of clinical and community services.

While the Hub is **open for referrals from anyone**, priority populations for Medicaid funding includes those returning to communities from jails and prisons, people with complex clinical or social needs, people at risk of homelessness, facing food insecurity and other social factors that impact health.

The North Sound Community Hub began as part of the first Medicaid waiver (approved in 2017), and grew significantly during the Covid-19 response while working with the state Department of Health. A global pandemic, climate events, wildfires and other emergencies led us to expand our care coordination efforts to be prepared for future challenges. We now have team members focusing on creating and implementing emergency protocols for natural and human-made disaster events, so that we will be better prepared to support our communities when the next disaster event occurs.



### Community Hub partners

- SeaMar Community Health Centers
- Opportunity Council
- Anacortes Family Resource Center
- Ideal Option
- Homage Senior Services
- North County (Snohomish) Fire & EMS
- Community Action of Skagit County
- South Snohomish Fire & EMS
- Island County Human Services
- Ferndale Community Services

# ACH Programs in 2024

## Leadership Development

To create a thriving region and feel a sense of belonging, we piloted two learning institutes in 2024 to explore the history, data, and lived experiences behind our values.

- The Anti-Racist Leadership Institute curriculum gave a foundation of concepts, theories, and language that describe the ways in which race, and more importantly racism, impacts the lives, experiences, opportunities, and outcomes of people in the North Sound region, in order to fully work and live in our values.

- The Youth Learning Institute, where **participants aged 16 to 24 explored leadership in ways that resonated with their passions** – engaging with others



from diverse backgrounds, enhancing their ability to connect with others and understanding different perspectives, which are key to effective leadership. Topics included activism, sports, identity, futurity, arts and music, with guest speakers and activities centered around youth lived experience.

## Reducing Youth Homelessness

Through a contract with the WA Department of Commerce, North Sound ACH has worked with the A Way Home Project, and community partners to connect youth to immediate housing resources within Skagit County. We acted as a fiscal intermediary providing financial support to unhoused youth and collaborating with community organizations to bridge service gaps.

This program had a great impact on youth in Skagit County. In 2024, **29 cases of youth were diverted and prevented from becoming unaccompanied or homeless**. Some of these cases result from parents losing jobs due to illness leaving their youth at risk of becoming unaccompanied; clients fleeing domestic violence; gaps while students tried to secure college housing to pursue a college degree.

## Exploring Art in Wellbeing

Poet Quaniqua Williams, known as Khemistry, was North Sound ACH's inaugural Artist-in-Residence in 2024, sharing her original poems and leading arts workshops for the community.



Through 11 virtual and in-person workshops throughout 2024, **Khemistry created spaces for individuals to come together, sharing their thoughts and feelings, and found common ground amidst the vastness of human existence.**

Participants immersed themselves in the joy of creativity, using art as a powerful tool for restoration and transformation. Khemistry will be working on a book with poems and art we gathered from these community workshops.

## Belonging & Civic Muscle

North Sound ACH adopted the Vital Conditions for Well-being Framework, which has belonging and civic muscle at its center. In 2024, North Sound ACH worked in collaboration with the Skagit County Auditor's office, community leaders in Skagit County's Latino community, and the Skagit County Board of Commissioners to support the county **providing English and Spanish election materials to the voters of Skagit County starting in 2024.**

Through community advocacy and funding, Skagit County was able to get registration forms, local voters' pamphlets with candidate information, and ballot instructions translated into Spanish. Voters in Skagit County where Spanish was a first or primary language could experience the County intentionally including them in the election process. It is important to note that while federal laws require this when counties reach a certain percentage of county residents that speak a certain language, Skagit County took on this project before they were federally required to do so, intentionally wanting to increase a sense of belonging to county residents.

# Our Team



**In 2024 we added new team members, including new leadership roles, and expanding the Community Hub.**



## Presenting at Conferences

- CEO **Liz Baxter** was on two panels, Expressions of Belonging, and Applying Targeted Universalism: Case Studies from the Field at the Othering & Belonging Conference (February)
- Specialists **Emily Blue and Natalie Espraza's** poster, Embracing on Ecosystem of Complexity, at the Othering & Belonging Conference (February)
- Specialist **Michaela Vendiola** presented Empowering the Next Generation of Tribal Public Health Leadership: A Coast Salish Intertribal Youth Council Coalition, at the Washington State Public Health Association Conference (October)

## Staff Professional Development Reading List

- **Weathering: The Extraordinary Stress of Ordinary Life in an Unjust Society** Hardcover by Dr. Arline Geronimus
- **The Four Pivots: Reimagining Justice, Reimagining Ourselves** by Shawn A. Ginwright PhD
- **An Everyone Culture: Becoming a Deliberately Developmental Organization** by Robert Kegan, Lisa Laskow Lahey, et al.
- **Belonging without Othering: How We Save Ourselves and the World** by John A. Powell and Stephen Menéndez
- **Calling In: How to Start Making Change with Those You'd Rather Cancel** by Loretta J Ross
- **Do the Work!: An Antiracist Activity Book** by W. Kamau Bell and Kate Schatz
- **Flourishing Kin: Indigenous Wisdom for Collective Well-Being** by Yuria Celidwen Ph.D
- **Emergent Strategy** by adrienne maree brown



Sign up for our [newsletter!](#)

Email: [Team@NorthSoundACH.org](mailto:Team@NorthSoundACH.org)

Follow us on socials: [@NorthSoundACH](#)



North Sound ACH