

Anchors in Resilience Communities - Washington

Established in 2013, Anchors in Resilient Communities (ARC) is a multi-sector collaborative program coordinated by [Health Care Without Harm](#) (HCWH) and [Emerald Cities Collaborative](#) (ECC). The ARC program operates on the belief that the **collective power of individuals and institutions** can design equitable, local economies that work for everyone. In partnership, community and anchor institutions in the health, education and government sectors can utilize the powerful combination of their procurement practices and investment capacity to address the social determinants of health, community wealth, and environmental resilience in local communities with an emphasis on communities of color and low- and moderate-income residents. Developed and refined in the Bay area of California, the ARC program principles and strategies are adaptable to other regions, with their own unique anchor institutions and community structures. The Puget Sound Region has been identified as an area with the potential for a successful ARC program which is the subject of this proposal.

The ARC model will be successful when health and wealth are equitably shared across communities, and when the systems that support daily life – especially food, water, and energy production and delivery – are robust enough to withstand the uncertainty of climate change. When cross-sector, multi-stakeholder initiatives like ARC become standard practice, we can begin to unwind generations of inequity and disinvestment and fortify our communities with the health and wealth necessary to be prepared for economic and climate-related challenges.

Building Resilient Communities in the Puget Sound Region

The South Puget Sound Region is a racially diverse area from the southern part of Seattle, through South King County and to the south of Tacoma. Strong institutions anchor the economy, including hospitals, public and private universities, large military bases, international ports and some notable private firms.

Over decades, wealth generated by these anchor institutions and by society as a whole has largely bypassed the region's sizable communities of color making up nearly 50% of the population compared to 30% statewide. Gentrification in Seattle has uprooted communities, moving them south and this gentrification is gaining momentum in the south Sound as well. Poverty is advancing quickly. WalletHub 2018 study found Tacoma residents experienced much higher rates of work- and health-related stress than Seattleites. South Sound residents – especially African Americans – experience greater obstacles to home ownership, higher rates of obesity, lower per capita incomes, and higher rates of poverty - low-income residents make up over 30% of the population.

Low-income communities and communities of color in the South Puget Sound are vulnerable to health disparities that result from their localized environments and economic conditions. The exposure to particulate matter, ozone, traffic, and lead paint are all over the 75th percentile in the State of Washington according to the Environmental Protection Agency. They are more likely to live in close proximity to superfund sites, hazardous waste sites, and wastewater discharge sites - placing in the 85th percentile or above in all of those categories. All of this leads to an air toxics cancer risk in the 80th percentile. And, all of these current health risks are likely to be exacerbated by the impacts of climate change.

Climate change and responses to its impacts can exacerbate disparities evident in communities of color. Toxic smoke from forest fires delivers a double hit to children already suffering disparately with high rates of asthma. Monies invested in energy efficiency, electric vehicle infrastructure, and renewable energy typically disproportionately benefit affluent whites, widening wealth gaps. Heat

events hit hardest in dense urban communities with older housing stock, without air conditioning, and with residences occupied by elders and young children. We understand that this reality is rooted in both past and current systems of oppression linked to institutional and structural racism.

Agricultural systems and the communities that rely on them are critically threatened by the impacts of climate change. Warmer temperatures can cause pests and weeds to thrive, which may increase the use of harmful chemical agents linked to neurodevelopmental disorders and cancer in humans, while decreasing yields and impacting farmers' livelihoods. Increased frequency of drought also threatens crop yields, challenging food prices and available food access, and has already begun to impact communities in the path of wildfires, including farmers. Conventional agriculture and food systems accelerate increasingly harmful levels of greenhouse gas emissions that pose additional health and economic threats, especially for the elderly, poor, and marginalized.

Strong, equitable, regional food systems can play a major role in building climate-resilient communities. By investing in communities most negatively impacted by the current food system's health and economic inequities, the potential exists to reinvigorate local food production, processing and distribution networks while simultaneously reducing the greenhouse gas emissions associated with conventional food production and transportation. Developing living-wage, career-pathway jobs in the food sector could benefit the wellbeing of thousands of workers and families in the region and strengthen their resilience in the face of climate disruption.

Creating a more equitable, healthy society and one that is resilient in the face of climate change is the work of ARC. Diverse communities are eager to be full partners in this work, but remain insufficiently resourced and supported to influence policy development and participate in economic development over the long time horizons required. Greater investment in grassroots leadership development and economic development – and strategic engagement of anchor institutions around climate change and equity – can position communities of color to benefit more fully from environmental policy change, today and over the long-term.

The ARC program intends to build greater community resilience in South Puget Sound to combat:

- Current and escalating health disparities
- Risk of declining air quality from forest fire events and local air pollution
- Insufficient access to healthy food, urban farming, and food procurement
- Economic disparities and stunted social enterprises
- Lacking career opportunities for young people of color, the formerly incarcerated and veterans
- Threats from Increased density, gentrification and growth and associated pressures on home ownership, and affordable housing

Opportunities and Anchor Institutions

Fortunately the Puget Sound Region has a multitude of community-minded Anchor Institutions that will be recruited to participate in the ARC program to enhance the active community outreach activities in which they are already engaged. These institutions include Virginia Mason Medical Centers, Multicare, Seattle Childrens, UW Medical Centers, CHI Franciscan, UW Tacoma, University of Puget Sound, Kaiser Permanente, Community Health Centers, SeaMar, and many others. These institutions have demonstrated their activism and desire through collaboration the many networks already doing important work in the community and environmental arenas. They include:

- Tacoma Anchor Collaborative
- Healthcare Anchor Network
- WA Healthcare Climate Alliance
- Higher Education Sustainability Network
- Pacific Northwest Healthcare Sustainability Network

The region is also home to many Community-based organizations representing the tremendous diversity of the region. These organizations have deep roots in their communities and understand both the resources and challenges that the communities possess. Among the community-based groups affiliated with the Front and Centered Coalition include Africatown, Asia Pacific Cultural Center, Asian Counseling and Referral Service, Asian Pacific Islander Coalition of Pierce County, Casa Latina, Duwamish River Cleanup Coalition / TAG, El Centro de la Raza, Filipino American Political Action Group of Washington, Got Green, Hilltop Urban Gardens, NAACP – Seattle King County Chapter, NAACP – Tacoma Chapter, OneAmerica, Progreso: Latino Progress, Puget Sound Sage, Refugee & Immigrant Services NW, United Indians of All Tribes Foundation, and the Urban League, Tacoma.

ARC Implementation Plan

This project is based on a successful multi-year effort in the San Francisco Bay Area co-lead by HCWH and ECC. To test the waters for replicating this model in South Puget Sound we have designed a planning and inquiry phase to take place over the next 9 months as described below:

Phase 1 - Planning and Inquiry, 2020

Create Project Steering Committee	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Develop ad hoc steering committee to support Phase 1 - target 4-6 institutions, funders and community groups ● Recruit from collaboratives of healthcare, government, and educational anchors in the service area ● Seek out alliances of community groups and communities of color to support needs assessment
Conduct Preliminary Anchor & Community Research	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Understand anchor impact in areas including Employment, Purchasing, Budget/Spend ● Research Community Needs, Challenges, Demographics, etc. identified
June 2020 Convening	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Convene/sponsor event to bring anchors and community groups together ● Share needs and opportunities from our research ● Presentation on ARC California - the story and impact ● Preliminary asset mapping of needs and opportunities

Structured Interviews with Institutions & Community Organizations	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Develop Interview Guide; etc ● Conduct an assessment of the collective anchor demand for products and services ● Research existing community capacities in the Seattle region that could “ramp up” to meet those demands and opportunities to develop new capacity ● Assessment Report developed
Reconvening December 2020	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Public learning session ● Report out of findings ● Review assessment and plot course forward

Phase 2 - Project Implementation, 2021 and beyond

Based on the results of the detailed assessments of anchor institutions and conversations with community networks we will seek opportunities to bring anchor resources to benefit community climate resilience and economic development. This “opportunistic” approach will look to bring the greatest benefits to the community based upon immediate opportunities. The project will be developed and approved by an ARC Steering Committee made up of both anchor representatives and community organizations. The implementation timeline will depend on the specific project selected and the alignment of community and anchor needs. We will endeavor for a 1-2 year implementation timeline.

ARC Facilitators

- **Emerald Cities Collaborative (ECC)** - concurrently advances environmental sustainability and equity in Washington’s urban areas through programs and partnerships that deliver environmental benefits, and provide marginalized communities access to business opportunities, training, education, and pathways to family wage careers. In its 10-year history ECC has developed extensive expertise and relationships in the areas of energy efficiency, renewable energy, clean energy jobs, workforce development, affordable housing, and collaboration.
- **Health Care Without Harm** - envisions health care as an innovative sector with the capacity to accelerate transition to a low-carbon economy and improve community resilience and health equity in the communities most at risk in the face of climate change. Our organization is uniquely poised, with programmatic expertise at the intersection of food and climate. Our national and international network of over 1,000 hospitals and health systems harnesses the power of large organizations to create lasting change for underserved communities.

Cast Study: East Bay, California ARC

The first identified project of ARC is to help coordinate the procurement and investment of Bay Area (California) anchor institutions to build an equitable, healthy, and resilient regional food system through the **Regional Food System Initiative**. This initiative will leverage the collective purchasing power of ARC anchor participants including Kaiser Permanente with their “Total Health” goal to source *100 percent local and sustainable food, system-wide, by 2025*. In alignment with [ARC's Logic Model](#), the Initiative aims to: **1)** Develop a food production center in the East Bay that produces up to 200,000 healthy meals per day for institutional clients, integrates community health and wealth as

primary outcomes by prioritizing workforce/career pathways, supports small business incubation, and creates 250-300 high-paying jobs in the food sector; **2)** Increase contracting opportunities for “hyper-local” food producers and processors of color within 0-50 miles of the East Bay to enter the institutional market with ARC anchor partners, addressing infrastructure needs, food safety compliance, and distribution challenges; **3)** Create a vibrant local food economy and supply chain ecosystem of food producers, microenterprise development, and community-owned businesses that can meet the growing demand of anchor institutions in the region and increase the availability of healthy, fresh food in communities suffering from high rates of diet-related disease.