

ANNUAL REPORT

2019–2020

JULY 1 - JUNE 30

*Pictured: Green Pathways 2019-2021 Fellow Cohort*





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# ▶ A Hello from Our Board

## Friends:

This past year we have found ourselves facing unprecedented challenges: the global pandemic and accompanying disinformation; widespread systemic racism that remains as entrenched as ever; record-breaking levels of housing insecurity; a rampant escalation in xenophobic rhetoric; a climate crisis whose negative effects continue to be felt disproportionately by low-income communities and communities of color; and an administration seemingly determined to turn a blind eye to it all.

Attempts to summarize the mounting problems we face only serve to further overwhelm us, and not much we say can cut through the fog of worry and uncertainty that clouds our vision for the future. And yet, even amidst the many hardships vying for our time and attention, there remain causes for celebration and gratitude.

This year we've witnessed the rise of so many powerful advocates for change, the unparalleled dedication of community organizers, and the stubborn hope displayed by those working to reform our broken systems. It's the very same commitment, resiliency, and courage that we are lucky enough to see firsthand from members of RVC and our partner organizations.

As a community and country, we are confronted with an inordinate number of challenges, but a challenge is just that, an invitation to engage.

RVC's work is more important now than ever. RVC's commitment to lifting up communities is exactly what is needed in these trying times.

Many of us are struggling to navigate this unfamiliar landscape, and though it can be difficult to know where best to focus our energies, RVC and its partner organizations are still forging their own paths forward. An investment in RVC is an investment in our future as a community. Your contribution will support us in this work.

We hope you'll join us!

## Sarah & Regina



*Regina Elmi*

Board Co-chair



*Sarah Servin*

Board Co-chair

# Letter from Staff

## **Beloved community,**

This was a year of transformation. Not all good, by any means - our nation's botched response to COVID-19 has changed our country in painful ways, and has shone a light on the deeply entrenched systems that oppress communities of color.

But it's not all bad, either. Our internal leadership transition has inspired us to reflect on what kind of organization we want to be, and how we want to shape leadership moving forward. We're reimagining our leadership structures and distributing power across the organization, putting us well on our way to becoming a fully self-managing organization.

At the same time, we are doubling down on our programs, improving their quality and impact. Our team has grown tremendously over the last year, allowing us to devote more time to working closely with each of our partner organizations to find a promising path forward together.

And as the world has quickly changed, so have we. Between the pandemic and the rise of the Black Lives Matter movement, we know our partners' needs have shifted, and we have met them in stride. Whether it's developing a completely new remote supervision training within weeks of office closures, or collaborating with funders to develop innovative ways to get more funding directly in our partners' hands, we are adapting and learning together about how best to serve our communities.

We continue to be inspired by the passion and brilliance of our partners, and look to them to understand the best path forward. Despite how bleak the world seems, we know that our partners have always worked towards, and will continue to build, a brighter future. That gives us hope, and nourishes us to continue to transform the sector together.

With gratitude,  
**The RVC Team**





*RVC staff at Vu's Vegan Roast in February 2020.*

## ► Who We Are

RVC promotes social justice and strengthens the power of communities by cultivating leaders of color, supporting organizations led by communities of color, and fostering collaboration between diverse communities. We are invested in working with others to create a strong collective capacity that allows communities of color to have the power to fulfill their own dreams.

### HOW WE MAKE AN IMPACT

- Our **Community Impact Fellowship Program** trains emerging leaders of color and places them at grassroots organizations led by communities of color.
- Our **Green Pathways Fellowship Program** provides leaders of color with training and experience at local organizations in the environmental sector.
- Our **Operations Support Program** provides support for our partners, so they can spend their time and energy focusing on serving their communities.
- Our **Capacity Building Program** strengthens organizations of color through culturally-relevant consulting that allows organizations to better carry out their missions.
- **Advocacy and Collaboration** are embedded into all of our work, and are thus central to who we are. We facilitate resource-sharing and create strategic partnerships that allow for local action across diverse communities of color.



*RVC 2019-2021 Community Impact Fellows at Vu's Vegan Roast.*

## ► Community Impact Fellowship

Our **Community Impact Fellowship Program** places talented leaders of color in two-year, full-time positions at local grassroots organizations that are led by and serve people of color. Our program helps build the next generation of nonprofits leaders while increasing resources going to these organizations.

Our Fellows bring their experience, passion, and talent, and we provide a livable wage, benefits, and ongoing opportunities for professional development and community building.

### THIS YEAR'S ACCOMPLISHMENTS & HIGHLIGHTS

- **Recruited, hired, and trained 12 emerging leaders of color as part of our third Community Impact Fellowship cohort.** Our CI Fellows represent a wide array of communities, passions, and interests, and we're so excited to bring on another cohort full of inspiring and dedicated leaders of color.
- **Community Impact Fellows have participated in 8 full-day trainings to learn, reflect, and grow their skills together.** Through trainings and coaching sessions, fellows gain hands-on experience and professional development in non-profit management and collective, adaptive, transformational, and just leadership. Together, they delve into topics like navigating power, giving and receiving feedback, communication and storytelling, and sustainability and self-care.
- **Fellows have engaged with 10 mentors** who provide additional guidance and support. As experienced professionals in the sector, these mentors provide fellows with a unique perspective that allows for further leadership development and growth of their professional network.
- **Fellows are building a strong network of community power and knowledge.** Through Lunch n' Learns, trainings, and retreats, fellows not only gain skills but also bond with and learn from one another. There's an immense amount of love in the cohort, and the Fellows are deeply appreciative to know they can lean on one another for support.



# ► Our Community Impact Fellows

Please meet our 2019-2021 **Community Impact Fellowship** cohort! Our emerging leaders are strengthening their skills in nonprofit management, adaptive and collective leadership, advocacy and policy, community organizing, and cultural dynamics. As they work to support communities of color, they also regularly engage in community-building through discussions on systemic racism, power, privilege, and intersectionality.



**Saida Bulhan**  
RVC



**Ashley Escobar**  
*All Girl Everything  
Ultimate Program*



**Bilen Eshetu**  
*Somali Parents  
Education Board*



**Ari Lozano**  
*All Girl Everything  
Ultimate Program*



**Francoise Milinganyo**  
*Congolese Integration  
Network*



**Débora Oliveira-Couch**  
*Seattle Music Partners*



**Naima Shaltu**  
*East African  
Community Services*



**Fundisha Tibebe**  
*Somali Family Safety  
Task Force*



**Thao-Uyên Vu**  
*Powerful Voices*



**Wanjiku Wainaina**  
*Multicultural  
Community Coalition*



**E.N. West**  
*Surge Reproductive  
Justice*



**Tracey Wong**  
*Totem Star*





## IMPACT STORY

# A Community Impact Fellow combats reproductive oppression through community organizing

E.N. West is a Community Impact Fellow with Surge Reproductive Justice, one of our amazing partner organizations who aims to end reproductive oppression and ensure all communities have access to reproductive health services.

At Surge, E is the Communications and Community Engagement Manager, which means their work can involve anything from advocating around policies to planning events. Currently, E is heading Surge's "Just Speak" open mic series, a quarterly event that brings community together to tell and listen to stories about the different sides of reproductive

justice. On a day-to-day basis though, E has been focused on building relationships with community and developing Surge's communications infrastructure.

Jackie Vaughn, Executive Director of Surge, is excited by the drive and passion E brings to the organization. "Working with E has truly been a pleasure," explains Jackie. "E has been laying the foundations for our communications strategy and program at Surge. It's important work that is long overdue... It will be exciting to see how E shapes our communications strategy and the way we speak about the work that Surge does." ■





2019-2021 Green Pathways Fellows bonding at their opening retreat.

## ► Green Pathways Fellowship

Our **Green Pathways Fellowship Program** creates a pathway for future leaders of color in the green sector by providing living wage, entry-level positions in the environmental justice movement.

We place Fellows at host environmental justice-focused organizations for two years. During this time, Fellows develop their leadership and technical skill sets, which center cultural relevancy, community, and contextual adaptability.

### PROGRAM ACCOMPLISHMENTS & HIGHLIGHTS

- We launched the first cohort of our Green Pathways Fellowship with 10 emerging leaders of color!** Fellows built community with one another at a kickoff retreat, and completed a 5-week training where they gained insight into the skills and knowledge needed to navigate nonprofits and lead change in the environmental justice movement.
- GP Fellows engaged in monthly trainings and have active mentors in the sector.** In trainings, Fellows have learned about integrating disability justice and somatics-centered leadership into their work, as well as how to build resilience in white spaces. With their mentors, Fellows further their leadership development by getting the perspective of knowledgeable leaders in the movement and growing their own networks in the sector.
- Fellows are already recognizing growth in leadership in themselves and others.** They're gaining confidence in their decision-making skills, are more practiced at giving and receiving feedback, and are leaning into taking initiative and being creative in their roles.
- Fellows are collaborating and connecting with one another.** Fellows have been able to organize tabling events, volunteer or attend one another's events, share professional development opportunities, and support food justice projects.

## ► Our Green Pathways Fellows

Introducing our 2019-2021 **Green Pathways Fellowship** cohort! All of our leaders are gaining experience in the green sector, while also building upon their understandings of environmental and climate justice and developing the leadership and other professional skills they need to be successful in the environmental sector.



**Yolanda Altamirano**  
*Forterra*



**Ashley Arhin**  
*Forterra*



**Magdalena Angel Cano**  
*Duwamish River  
CleanupCoalition*



**Rheana Dale**  
*Forterra*



**Sharon Huerta**  
*Resource Media*



**Shaylea Pilarski**  
*Got Green*



**Clyzzel Samson**  
*King Conservation District*



**Tuvshinzaya Tumurkhuyag**  
*The Nature Conservancy*



**Johanna Wasse**  
*Forterra*



**Venice Wong**  
*Forterra*



A portrait of a smiling woman with dark, curly hair, wearing a red, white, and blue striped shirt. The background is a blurred green foliage. In the top left corner, there is an orange rectangular box with the text "IMPACT STORY" in white capital letters.

## IMPACT STORY

# A Green Pathways Fellow is empowered to make her voice heard

Shaylea Pilarski is one of the fellows in our first cohort of the Green Pathways Fellowship Program, and she's been engaging in really cool work with Got Green, a South Seattle-based organization led by people of color organizing for environmental, racial, and economic justice.

Prior to her fellowship, Shaylea had a lot of environmental groundwork experience, cleaning up neighborhoods and building rain gardens. She says that her fellowship has helped her understand all the different facets that make up the environmental movement. "Being at Got Green made me see that environmental justice isn't all about planting

trees, recycling, picking up trash, or taking public transit," she explains. "It's also about the people, the community, and policies and arguing cases to city council members, in order to give the people a chance to have their voices heard."

Shaylea's already learned so much, but is still excited to see what else her fellowship has in store for her. "Here at Got Green, it's like I've gained another family. They make me feel comfortable, and Got Green is a place where I belong, where my voice can be heard," she proudly says. "I've learned so much here, and I also know I'll be leaving with so many new skills and a new lens of how I look at things and see people." ■



*RVC staff, partners, and community members gathering at RVC's Open House in Fall 2019.*

## ► Operations Support Program

There is an urgent need for organizations led by communities of color to have the stability they need to serve their communities effectively. But many organizations are forced to spend a significant amount of time and energy on operations, such as financial management, HR, payroll, legal compliance, and insurance. We launched our **Operations Support Program** in 2018 *because we believe there is another way.*

By centralizing the operations of many smaller organizations, our Operations Support Program provides the highest quality back-office support and streamlines their administration. This frees up the time and energy of our Operations Support Partners to focus on providing more effective services, building community power, and changing inequitable systems and policies.

### THIS YEAR'S ACCOMPLISHMENTS & HIGHLIGHTS

- **Our program has grown to 16 partner organizations!** All of our partners do amazing work to uplift and strengthen our communities. We're so excited to welcome Creative Justice, Green Light Outreach, Renton Innovation Zone Partnership, and The Good Foot Arts Collective to the RVC family!
- **Our partner, Somali Parents Education Board, tripled their budget,** mostly through general operating funds. This has allowed them to transition from an all-volunteer organization to hiring 5 full and part-time staff. The unrestricted funding has also allowed SPEB to pivot quickly into a direct service organization during the COVID-19 crisis.
- **We have 125 people on the RVC payroll,** 65 of which are full-time employees with stable income and health benefits that provide some security and stability as we all navigate the challenges that COVID-19 brings.
- **Our partner, Renton Innovation Zone Partnership, hired new staff** to help manage their action team meetings and get the ball rolling on their innovation fund -- a pool of funds they're advising and giving to community-based organizations in Renton.



## IMPACT STORY



# Operations Support Program helps Mujer al Volante build for the future

Mujer al Volante is the first program in Seattle that empowers low-income immigrant Latinx women and mothers by encouraging and supporting them in learning how to drive.

As a grassroots organization, they've struggled with the lack of response from government agencies and other nonprofits, leaving their founding Executive Director (ED), Jacqueline Garcia, bogged down with proposals, paperwork, and other administrative tasks.

MAV teamed up with us as an Operations Support Program partner, so that we could provide back-office and administrative support in order to help manage their workload

and allow Jacqueline and MAV to focus their attention on uplifting the Latinx community.

This partnership allowed MAV to not only hire Jacqueline on as ED, but also redirect her efforts to developing strategic relationships, build partnerships, and plan for MAV's future.

Jacqueline is eager to continue their hard work and expand their scope to further serve communities. "We will continue to look for funding to build capacity and expand our services. Our program is very unique and we are looking to establish new and fair partnerships and collaborations." ■





*Mujer al Volante board members and RVC staff at MAV's board retreat.*

## ► Capacity Building Program

RVC's capacity building support goes hand-in-hand with our Fellowship and Operations Support Programs. We recognize that because of inequitable investment in communities of color, many organizations that serve our communities struggle with cycles of instability and burn out, leaving them without enough time, energy, or resources to fulfill their mission.

With our **Capacity Building Program**, our goal is to move organizations away from the burnout cycle by supporting them in building stronger infrastructure, leadership, and practices so that they can fulfill their mission and serve their community, while taking care of their staff's well-being. We offer culturally-responsive coaching, customized capacity building plans, consulting support, and much more.

### THIS YEAR'S ACCOMPLISHMENTS & HIGHLIGHTS

- We served 42 organizations this year!**  
 Our Capacity Building Program team grew to 5 capacity builders, and collectively we've engaged in strategic planning, board development, strategic budgeting, succession planning, and more with our partners.
- We successfully supported Families of Color Seattle through a leadership transition.**  
 We facilitated strategic planning to support the transition, which included having an interim Executive Director (ED) on the way to naming a new permanent ED.
- Surge Reproductive Justice oriented and onboarded 6 new board members.** They've also begun a process to build their financial literacy and are planning to expand their internal staff to help increase the reach of their advocacy and community engagement work.
- In response to COVID-19, we organized a series of virtual trainings to serve our partners collectively for the first time.** We connected with our partners over Zoom to provide trainings around virtual fundraising, remote supervision, and how to navigate information on new paid leave, payroll loans, and COVID-19 policies.
- Our partner, Mujer al Volante, has been able to hire their Executive Director, form a board, and expand their programming.** MAV is hiring a program coordinator to support community outreach and education, and thanks to a grant our capacity builders co-wrote with them, they've also added voter engagement to their programs.



A group of approximately 15 diverse young people, mostly Black and Latinx, are posing on a colorful playground structure. They are arranged in several rows, some standing and some crouching. The structure has a blue base, green sides, and a red top bar. The background shows a grassy area and trees under a clear blue sky. An orange box with the text 'IMPACT STORY' is in the top left corner.

## IMPACT STORY

# WA-BLOC boosts their supervision skills with RVC support

Washington Building Leaders of Change (WA-BLOC) is an organization that empowers youth of color through academic, creative, and place-based leadership. As an RVC partner organization, they work with our capacity building team who provides them with ongoing, adaptive support so they can continue their important work of promoting and advocating for underserved communities.

This year, WA-BLOC underwent a week-long supervisor training through RVC's Capacity Building program. "Before the training, I felt like I didn't have enough of the necessary tools needed to communicate effectively with other team members, ...but [the training] allowed me to take a step back and reflect on what my strengths and growth areas were, while also

seeing how other members communicated," says Makelah Smith, WA-BLOC's Programming Manager.

WA-BLOC has been appreciative of the space to build their skills and grow as an organization, without having to compromise their values. They're feeling energized and are as dedicated as ever to strengthening their organization and their service to the community. "Everyone on the team truly believes in our young people and we all work together tirelessly to reimagine a different world. I couldn't ask for a better job," says Makelah proudly. ■



## Our Partners

RVC's strength lies in the sense of community we've built with our partners. Through collaboration, we facilitate resource-sharing and foster strategic partnerships, creating the opportunity for local action across diverse communities of color.

### OUR OPERATIONS SUPPORT AND FELLOWSHIP PROGRAM PARTNERS



AGE UP



Congolese Integration  
Network



Creative Justice



Duwamish River  
Cleanup Coalition



East African  
Community Services



Families Of Color  
Seattle



First Five  
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Green Light Project



Got Green



King Conservation  
District



Mujer al Volante



Multicultural Community  
Coalition



Nurturing Roots



Partners for  
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Powerful Voices



## ► Our Partners, continued



**Rainier Beach  
Action Coalition**



**Renton Innovation Zone  
Partnership**



**Resource Media**



**Seattle Music Partners**



**Somali Family Safety  
Task Force**



**Somali Parents  
Education Board**



**Somos Seattle**



**Surge Reproductive  
Justice**



**The Good Foot Arts  
Collective**



**The Nature Conservancy**



**Totem Star**



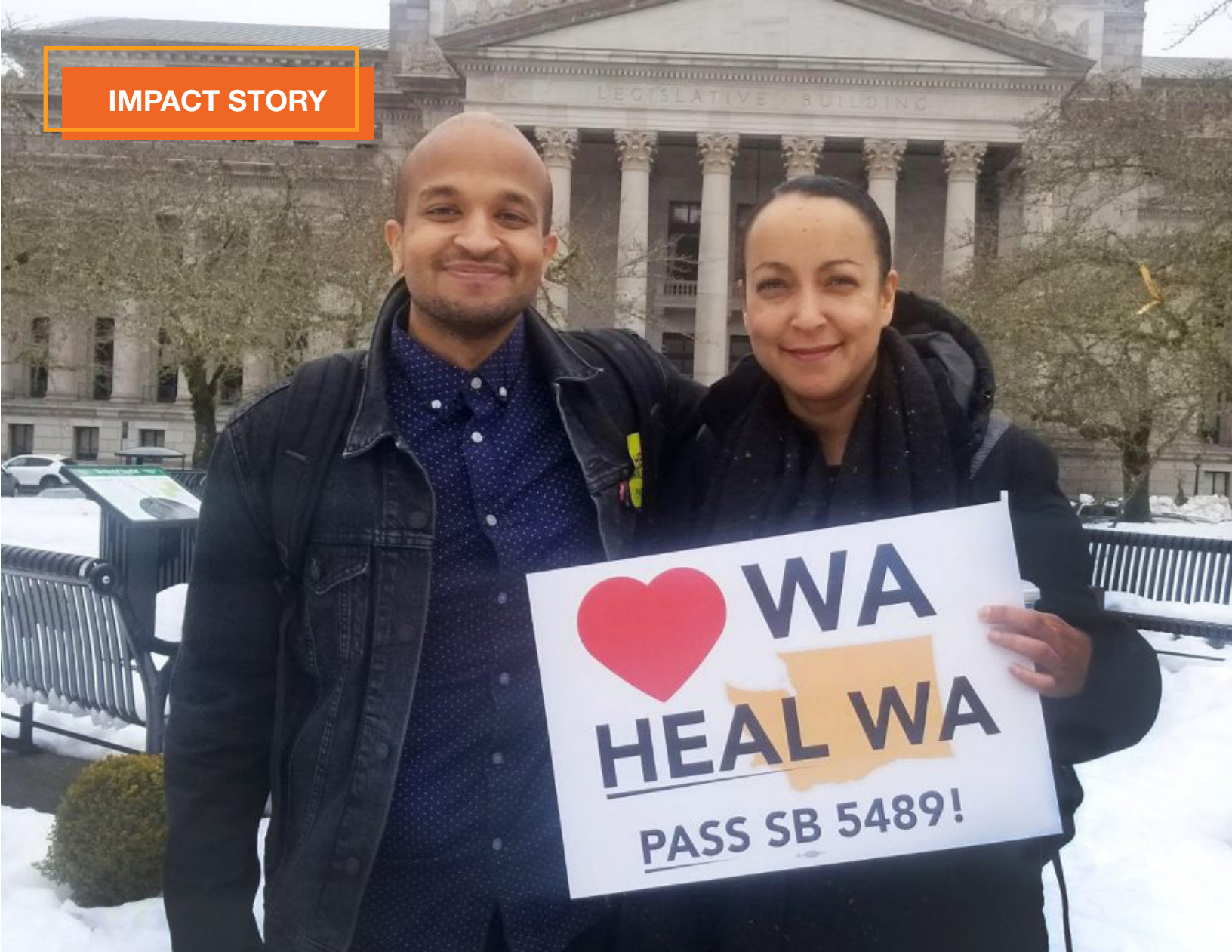
**Washington Building  
Leaders of Change**

### OUR CAPACITY BUILDING PARTNERS THROUGH BEST STARTS FOR KIDS

Atlantic Street Center  
Coalition for Refugees from Burma  
DADS (Divine Alternatives for Dads)  
El Centro de la Raza  
Hope Central  
Iraqi Community Center of Washington  
Korean Community Services Center

Open Arms Perinatal Services  
Refugee Womens Alliance  
Somali Health Board  
St Vincent De Paul of Seattle KC  
United Indians of All Tribes Foundation  
Voices of Tomorrow  
West African Community Council

## IMPACT STORY



# RVC Community Impact alumni push forward policies together

During his time as a Community Impact Fellow (2017-2019) with Got Green, Johnny Fikru learned the importance of partnerships and building trusting relationships with other community organizations.

This led him to build a bond with Front and Centered, a statewide coalition that works to ensure that Indigenous, low-income, and communities of color have a prominent voice in issues of economic and environmental change.

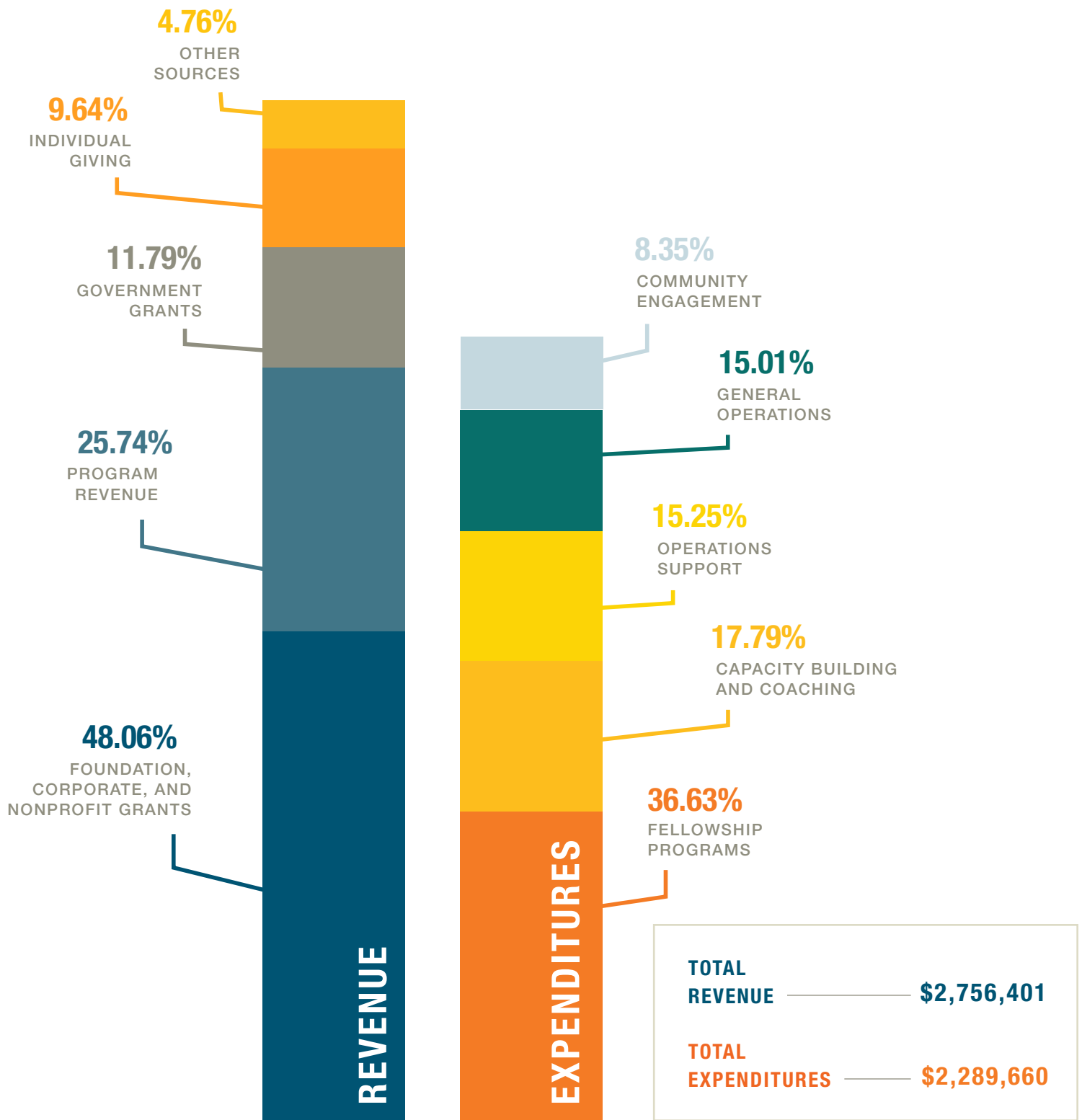
Their partnership grew when Johnny was on the front lines advocating for Healthy Environment for All, the HEAL Act (SB 5489), a bill that will define environmental justice for state agencies, creating a foundation and pathway for all

communities to benefit from environmental policy.

Alongside another RVC Community Impact alumnus from our very first cohort, Niesha Fort, Johnny rallied, supported, and dropped some knowledge on lawmakers around how important the HEAL Act is for all of us.

Johnny knows the impact that our communities can have if we work together, and he was overjoyed to be a part of collaboration on this level. "Front and Centered is advocating on the state level for the work that I am doing with Got Green in South Seattle, it is so important to show up to support the people who are fighting for us on a state level!" said Johnny. ■

## ► FY20 RVC Financials





# ► Our Donors

## FUNDERS

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*Vu's Vegan Roast, February 2020.*

# ► Special Thanks

## SHOUTOUT TO OUR SPONSORS FOR VU'S VEGAN ROAST

### ORGANIZATIONS

Bill & Melinda Gates Foundation  
Clover Search Works  
Columbia Bank  
RielImagine Solutions  
Seattle Aquarium

Seattle Foundation  
Stacy Nguyen Creative  
SVP Seattle  
The WinBooth  
United Way of King County

### INDIVIDUALS

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Ananda Valenzuela  
Darcie Larson  
Emilio Garza  
Maureen & David Feit

Miriam Zmiewski-Angelova  
Mynga Le  
Regina Elmi  
Sarah Servin  
Vu Le

## AND A BIG THANKS TO OUR VOLUNTEERS!

Aaron Middleton  
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Adrian Down  
Alice Fong  
Allison Carney  
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Andy Valdez-Pape  
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Here at RVC, we believe that we must all work together to create a more just society. We must strengthen the power of communities of color by building capacity.

Please help us in this endeavor. Your financial contribution will support our programs and much, much more!

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