



CANCER CONSORTIUM

FRED HUTCH • UNIVERSITY OF WASHINGTON • SEATTLE CHILDREN'S

Office of Community Outreach & Engagement

2025

ANNUAL REPORT



Land Acknowledgment

As the Office of Community Outreach and Engagement, we recognize our responsibility to use our time, resources and presence in service to the communities and the 29 federally recognized Tribes across Washington state.

Our work takes place on lands stewarded by Tribes whose rights are affirmed through the following treaties:

- Treaty of Medicine Creek, 1854
- Treaty with Walla Walla 1855
- Treaty of Neah Bay, 1855
- Treaty with the Yakama, 1855
- Treaty of Point Elliott, 1855
- Quinault Treaty, 1856
- Treaty of Point No Point, 1855

In Seattle, we acknowledge the Coast Salish peoples of this land and the enduring relationships between land, people, and the shared waters that connect the Suquamish, Tulalip, and Muckleshoot Tribes. Our work in Sunnyside takes place on the traditional territory of the Confederated Tribes and Bands of the Yakama Nation. In Spokane, our work is based on the homelands of the four bands of the Spokane Tribe of Indians: Sntútʔulixʷi, Snxʷmeneʔi, Scʔqesciʔni and Sčewíleʔ (Upper Band, Middle Band, Lower Band, Chewelah Band).

We offer this acknowledgement with respect for Tribal Sovereignty, treaty rights, and ongoing stewardship, and with a commitment to accountability, reciprocity and continued relationship with the Tribal Nations and relatives of this region.

OCOE Specific Aims



Aim 1

Monitor the cancer burden in Washington state.



Aim 2

Use an equitable, bidirectional approach to implement education, programs and policies to reduce the cancer burden.



Aim 3

Facilitate research relevant to Washingtonians to reduce the burden of cancer.



Aim 4

Facilitate cancer research in high-need areas in the state and beyond.

Letter from Leadership



Jason "Jay" Mendoza, MD, MPH
Associate Director



Megan J. Shen, PhD
Deputy Associate Director



Katherine "Kathy" Briant, MPH
Assistant Director

Dear Community Partners and Colleagues,

We are proud to share the progress that defines the work of the Fred Hutch/ University of Washington/Seattle Children's Cancer Consortium's Office of Community Outreach and Engagement (OCOGE). Our vision is simple yet profound: better outcomes for everybody. Cancer does not affect all communities equally, and we remain committed to reducing cancer-related health disparities across Washington state.

This year, we deepened our collaborations with community organizations, Tribes, researchers and advocates to ensure that every voice is heard. Through authentic engagement, education and community-driven research, we worked to build trust and create solutions that matter to our communities. From expanding cancer prevention and screening initiatives to supporting culturally attuned programs, our efforts were guided by the pursuit that "better outcomes for everybody" is a shared responsibility.

We are especially proud of the partnerships and collaborations that have flourished through our Community Grants Program, Indigenous Cancer Health Excellence Initiative, and our regional and statewide coalition work. These collaborations empower communities to lead the way in designing sustainable programs that reflect their priorities and strengths. The accomplishments highlighted in this inaugural annual report reflect the power of authentic partnerships and community-driven solutions.

Looking ahead, we will continue to listen, learn and act alongside the communities we serve. Thank you for your unwavering support and dedication to our mission. Together, we are transforming the landscape of cancer care and research by centering communities. Through this shared commitment we can achieve our vision: a future where every person — regardless of race, ethnicity, geography or income — has access to the resources and care they need to thrive.

With gratitude and determination,

Jason A. Mendoza, MD, MPH
Associate Director of
Community Outreach &
Engagement (COE)

Megan J. Shen, PhD
Deputy Associate Director of
COE

Katherine J. Briant, MPH
Assistant Director, OCOGE

Our History and Milestones

1995



1995 Center for Community Health Promotion Established

Beti Thompson, PhD, established the Center for Community Health Promotion (CCHP) through grants that supported community health educators to build partnerships with the Hispanic community in the Lower Yakima Valley to collaboratively address health disparities.

1999



1999 Central Washington Community Action Board Formed

The Community Action Board (CAB) was formalized to bring Fred Hutch researchers and community partners together in a shared effort to improve the health of Hispanics in the Yakima Valley.

2010



2010 Health Disparities Research Center Begins

In 2010, Beti Thompson, PhD, Kathy Briant, MPH, and Heidi Tham, MPH, received support from Fred Hutch to form a cancer health disparities initiative, which evolved into the Health Disparities Research Center in 2011.

2012



2012 Western Washington Community Action Coalition Formed

The Community Action Coalition (CAC) formed to engage Western Washington partners in planning and addressing community cancer prevention and control needs.

2014



2014 Community Grants Program Launched

Community Grants Program launched to support community-led solutions to cancer prevention and addressing health disparities. A total of \$15,000 was awarded to support three projects in 2014.

2015



2015 Health Disparities Research Center

The Health Disparities Research Center (HDRC) became part of the Consortium's Cancer Center Support Grant (CCSG) with Beti Thompson, PhD, as associate director of Minority Health & Health Disparities. Emphasis was placed on facilitating opportunities for collaboration among diverse communities, faculty and clinicians.



2017



OCOE Launch & Program Faculty

HDRC served as a foundation for the launch of the OCOE. Jay Mendoza, MD, MPH, named as Associate Director of Community Outreach & Engagement, Kathy Briant, MPH, named as Program Administrator, and Beti Thompson, PhD, became Associate Director Emeritus. Seven Consortium faculty members selected to lead efforts in priority areas.

2019



Western WA Community Health Educators

Four Community Health Educators (CHEs) hired in Seattle to work with populations facing the highest cancer burden (African-American, Indigenous, urban-dwelling and rural communities) in Western Washington service area.

2020



OCOE in Cancer Center Support Grant

Based on a National Cancer Institute requirement for Community Outreach & Engagement, Consortium included OCOE in CCSG application to show how we engage with populations to reduce the cancer burden in Western Washington and the Yakima Valley.

2021



R&RR Becomes a Shared Resource

The Recruitment and Retention Shared Resource (R&RSR) supports Consortium investigators in improving engagement with and recruitment of underrepresented and underserved populations in cancer research and clinical trials.

2022

Spokane Office Opens & ICHE-i Established



First Spokane-based CHE was hired. Eastern WA coalition (CANEW) launched to highlight community priorities, share resources and collaborate on cancer control projects.



Indigenous Cancer Health Excellence Initiative (ICHE-i) established to strengthen relationships with Tribes and Urban Indian communities to collaborate on addressing cancer disparities through Indigenous-led solutions.

2024



Community Benefit Program Joined OCOE

The Community Benefit Program joined OCOE. With a similar mission, the Community Benefit Manager reports on how Fred Hutch helps promote healthier communities by helping patients navigate and find support for health needs.

Honoring the legacy of Dr. Beti Thompson

Beti Thompson, PhD, professor emeritus at Fred Hutch and the University of Washington, has left an indelible mark on public health, cancer prevention and the OCOE. For more than three decades, she dedicated her career to improving cancer prevention among underserved populations. In 2010, she founded the Health Disparities Research Center, which served as the foundation for establishing the OCOE for the Fred Hutch/ UW/Seattle Children’s Cancer Consortium (Consortium) in 2017.

Throughout her career, Dr. Thompson secured numerous federal grants aimed at improving population health by reducing health disparities related to cancer, diabetes, pesticide exposure and obesity using community-based participatory research (CBPR) initiatives. Equally remarkable is her dedication to mentoring the next generation. She has guided countless students, fellows and junior faculty as they have secured prestigious fellowships and academic positions.

Her influence extends far beyond research. Dr. Thompson is recognized through numerous honors, including the UW School of Public Health’s Outstanding Faculty Mentoring Award, induction into the Washington State Academy of Sciences, and the American Society of Preventive Oncology’s Lifetime Achievement Award, to name a few.



Dr. Beti Thompson has worked tirelessly with varied community partners to build capacity to address health disparities through CBPR, earning a national and international reputation in community research, tobacco control, and health disparities and setting a standard for collaboration and impact.

Dr. Thompson’s career is a testament to what is possible when science meets compassion. Her work reminds us that research is not just about data — it’s about people, partnerships and the pursuit of justice in health.

To honor her legacy of upholding the highest standards of intervention research while maintaining humility and deep respect for community, in 2017, the OCOE established the annual Beti Thompson Community Health Champion Award to recognize a community member, group or organization that has had an extraordinary impact on the health and well-being of their community. In 2018, the OCOE added the Beti Thompson Cancer Health Research Award to recognize an outstanding scientist from the Consortium who has made significant contributions to cancer disparities research and the scientific understanding of the etiology, detection, diagnosis, treatment or prevention of cancer. In 2023, the Staff Champion Award was added to recognize an outstanding staff member from the Consortium who has made an extraordinary contribution in prioritizing improved health access and meaningful community involvement within their program.

These awards are presented by Dr. Thompson at the annual Pathways to Health Symposium (see page 13).



Beti with the inaugural Beti Thompson Community Health Champion Awardee, Giselle Zapata-Garcia.



The Staff Champion Award was renamed the Stephau E. Wallace Award in 2024 in memory of its first recipient, Dr. Stephau Wallace.

Staff & Faculty

Faculty Program Leads



Allison Cole, MD, MPH
Program Lead, Rural Populations



Margaret "Peggy" Hannon, PhD, MPH
Program Lead, Cancer Screening Activities



Jaimee Heffner, PhD
Program Lead, Urban Dwelling Populations



Kristine Karvonen, MD, MS
Program Lead, Patient Navigation



Yaw Nyame, MD, MS, MBA
Program Lead, Black/African-descent Populations



Myra Parker, PhD, JD, MPH
Program Lead, Indigenous Populations



Steve Schwartz, PhD
Program Lead, Needs Assessment

Staff & Faculty *continued*

Research Team



Tina Burrows
Clinical Trials Navigator



Elizabeth Carosso
Program Administrator for
Research Operations



David Doody, MS
Senior Statistical Analyst



Jean McDougall, PhD, MPH
Staff Scientist, Director,
Recruitment & Retention
Shared Resource



Solange Mecham
Clinical Research Coordinator

Community Health Education Team



Cithlali Chavez Mendoza
Community Health
Educator, Urban-dwelling
Populations



Michaella Cobbinah
Community Health Educator,
Black/African Descent
Populations



Nora Gonzalez
Community Health
Educator, Sunnyside Office



Genoveva Ibarra
Community Project
Manager, Sunnyside Office



Jessica Lopez-Ramirez
Community Health
Educator, Spokane Office



Lluneli Marin-Gomez
Community Health
Educator, Rural Populations

Staff & Faculty *continued*

Community Health Education Team



Margarita Olivera
Community Health Educator, Sunnyside Office



Daniel Padron, MPH
Community Health Educator, Spokane Office



Liz Tallent
Community Health Education Manager

Indigenous Cancer Health Excellence Initiative (ICHE-i) Team



Craig Dee
Project Manager, ICHE-i
Diné



Snowy Johnson, MPH
Senior Health Educator, ICHE-i
Apsáalooke, Kainai, & Flathead Salish



Emily Vega
Project Coordinator II, ICHE-i
Chumash & Tohono O'odham

Staff & Faculty *continued*

Community Benefit and Administrative Team



Katie Treend, MPH
Community Benefit Manager



Jamie Ersbak
Administrative Manager



Avigail Galvan
Project Coordinator



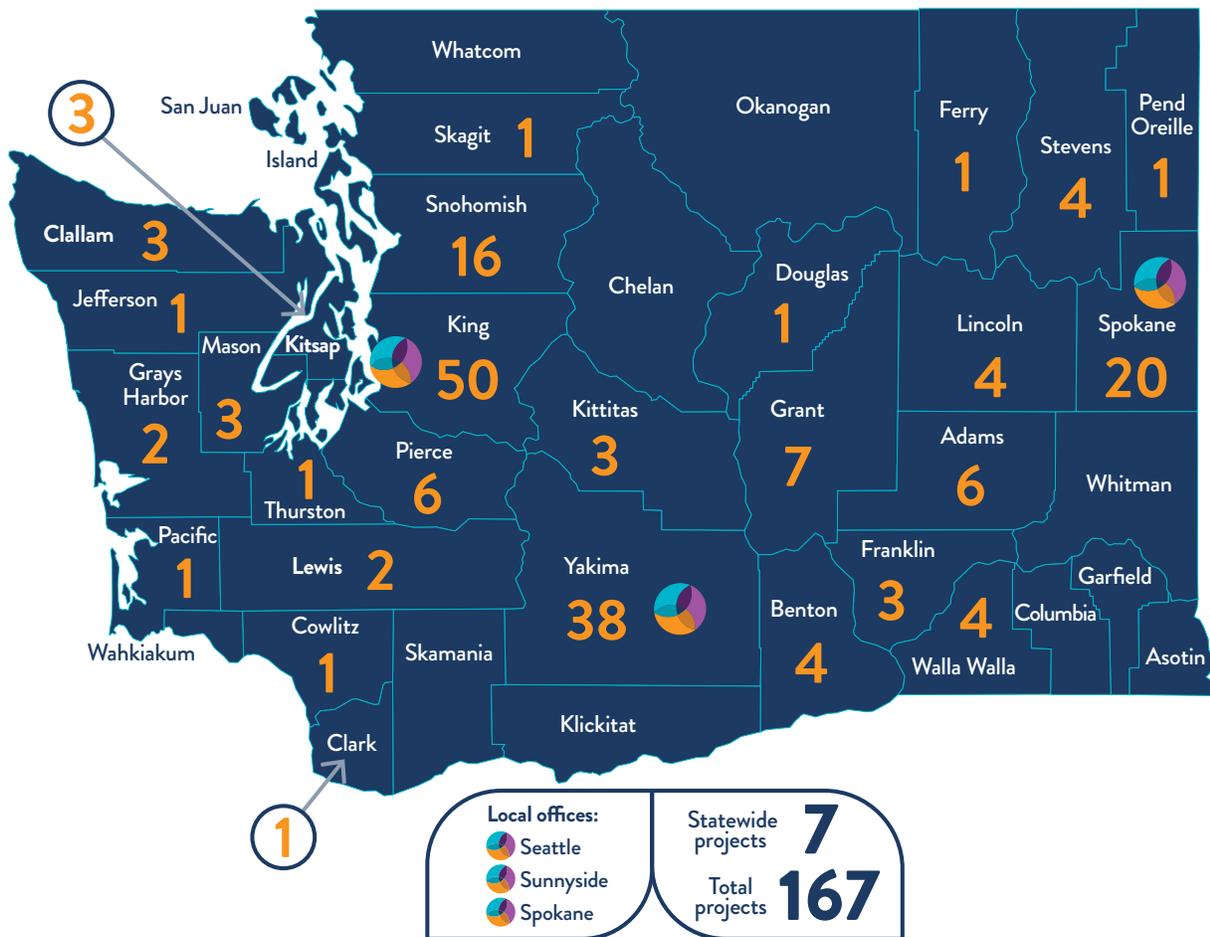
Sara McSorley
Project Coordinator

A Year of Projects and Events

The OCOE outreach team works with community partners across the state to share cancer prevention education resources in accessible, engaging ways. Projects include everything from cancer information workshops, health fair events, symposia, podcasts, resource development and more. Here are a few highlights from 2025.



Project Reach by County in Washington State





Keynote speakers Dr. Yamilé Molina (L) and Dr. Karriem S. Watson (R).

Tewodros Ayele (R) discusses community grant work during poster session.

Ludy Villegas (L) speaks during panel presentation.

Pathways to Health Symposium

In May 2025, the Pathways to Health Symposium brought together community champions, researchers and providers to discuss health disparities and access to care under the theme of Mountains, Valleys and Islands: Bridging Access to Care in Washington State.

Keynote speakers Yamilé Molina, PhD, and Karriem Watson, DHSc, called attendees to action and panelists shared their stories as patients, providers and community advocates.

Six organizations showcased project posters highlighting their work funded through the Community Grants Program.

- See their posters here or scan the QR code: FredHutch.org/Pathways-to-Health-Symposium
- Read a recap of the symposium here or scan the QR code: FredHutch.org/Screening-Access



Project posters



Recap



Spokane attendees participate in table conversations.

OCOE staff with speaker Lily Bertha Gonzalez in Granger.

Renton keynote speaker, Sen. Rebecca Saldaña (L) with community partner Silvia Kennedy (R).

Latina Health Symposium

The OCOE collaborated with Latinos Promoting Good Health and other community organizations across Washington state to host the Latina Health Symposium in Renton, Granger, and Spokane in honor of Hispanic Heritage Month.

239 people representing over 100 different organizations attended, including community health workers, providers and public health professionals supporting Latina health across Washington state.

This year, the speakers and panelists shared themes of a community united, knowing your rights, mental health, and finding a path forward together.

“ This was my first Latina Health Symposium and it was amazing! I loved seeing other Latinas in different professions that I can connect and network with.”

— Participant at the Latina Health Symposium in Spokane

Health and Wellness Festival

Seattle-based community health educators brought together 22 local organizations and 175 community members at the Health and Wellness Festival in Rainier Beach. This event provided health resources and access to screenings, including mammograms, along with additional services such as youth vaccines and blood pressure checks.



Rahel Schwartz (YMCA) leads Zumba session.

“The event was very well organized, and we were able to speak to many community members about the resources available for them and what services we have to offer.”

— Member from Seattle Urban League



OCOE health educator, Nora Gonzalez, presents on colorectal cancer.

Cancer Prevention Workshops with Nuestra Casa

The OCOE team in Sunnyside collaborated with Nuestra Casa to host a cancer prevention workshop series in Spanish on cervical, colorectal and breast cancers. The series provided a safe and informative space for 29 people to learn about cancer prevention, screening and how to take next steps in their health care.

Breast Health Event with Feast World Kitchen

In Spokane, the OCOE team partnered with Feast World Kitchen, Thrive International and local community health workers to host a workshop on breast health and cancer prevention for the Afghan community and open to all. This event provided culturally relevant health education information and resources in Arabic, Dari and Pashto, providing a safe space for women to ask questions and take their next steps for breast health.

Over 100 people attended, representing over 14 countries including Afghanistan, Colombia, Cuba, Ghana, Iraq, Jordan, Mexico, Nicaragua, Russia, South Sudan, Sudan, Syria, Ukraine and Venezuela.



OCOE health educator, Jessica Lopez-Ramirez, with community partners at event.



2025 Tribal Cancer Health Summit

In March of 2025, the OCOE's ICHE-i team hosted the inaugural Tribal Cancer Health Summit (Summit) that brought together partners from across Washington state to strengthen Tribal-driven approaches to cancer prevention, screening, treatment, survivorship and research. The Summit created a dedicated space for Tribes and partners to come together, share experiences and learn from one another.

Grounded in Tribal Sovereignty and self-determination, the Summit centered community voices and lived experiences to inform future program planning and collaboration. Participants shared promising practices and identified community-defined priorities across the cancer control continuum, with a shared emphasis on the need for culturally grounded patient navigation, investment in Indigenous and Tribal-serving workforces, and locally tailored resources.

“Your work is not for today. It is for seven generations forward.”

— Rodney Haring, PhD, MSW
Seneca
Chair, Department of Indigenous Cancer Health
Roswell Park Comprehensive Cancer Center



Ronnie Washines, Yakama Nation Review (L) and Arlen Washines (R) speak during the Summit.



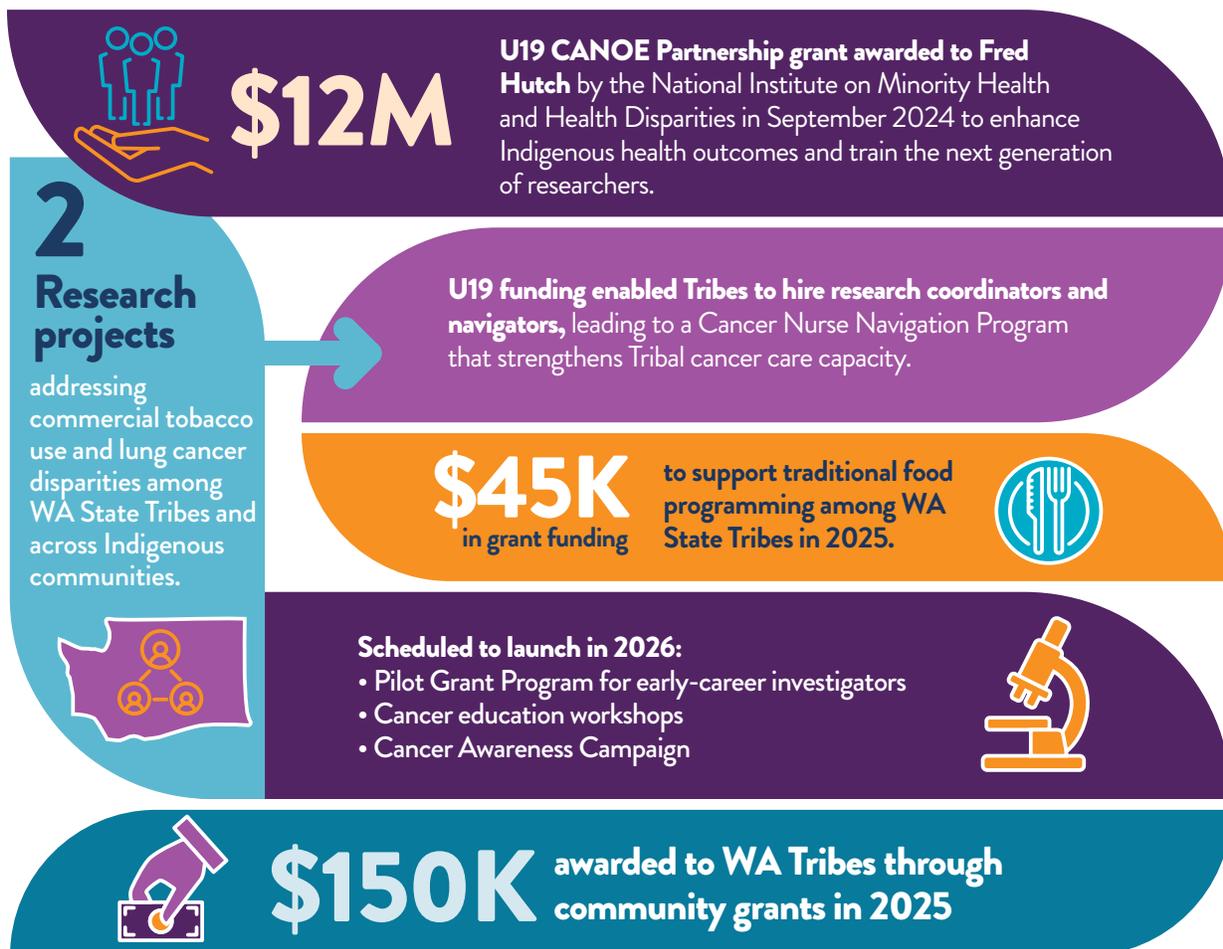
Dr. Rodney Haring (R) delivering his keynote address.

The Summit also strengthened relationships with the Consortium, reinforcing commitments to reciprocity, accountability, and long-term partnership.

Collectively, the Summit marked an important step from dialogue to action, supporting clearer pathways for Tribal-led initiatives, stronger coordination among partners, and continued progress toward community-driven cancer care.

U19 CANOE Partnership in 2025

Building on priorities and relationships strengthened through the Summit, the ICHE-i continues to engage Tribes and Urban Indian Organizations (UIOs) across Washington state to strengthen access to culturally grounded cancer prevention, screening and education resources. Through relationship-centered engagement, ICHE-i supports the sharing of knowledge, tools, and opportunities that respond to community-identified cancer priorities.



As the coordinating structure for the the U19 Cancer Awareness, Navigation, Outreach, and Enhanced Indigenous Health Outcomes (CANOE) Partnership, ICHE-i advanced this work by launching three funding programs that distributed more than \$250,000 in community grants and pilot awards to Washington state Tribes and early-career investigators committed to Indigenous cancer research. Through the Tribal Community Grants Program, three community-based projects were funded to expand culturally appropriate cancer prevention and screening efforts and to support quality improvement initiatives focused on strengthening cancer care coordination for patients and families. In parallel, the CANOE Partnership Pilot Grant and Career Development Program was launched to support community-engaged research strategies addressing cancer health disparities among American Indian and Alaska Native communities.

Informed by Summit dialogue and community-defined priorities, these investments mark a transition from planning to action, supporting active partnerships, community-driven projects, and shared accountability between the Consortium and Washington state Tribes and UIOs.

Collaborating with Regional Coalitions



Caption: OCOE staff and CAC members at the in-person gathering in July.

The OCOE works with community members and organizations through three Community Coalitions to support sustainable cancer control programs and build capacity for research collaboration.

- Eastern Washington: Community Action Network of Eastern Washington (CANEW)
- Central Washington: Community Action Board (CAB)
- Western Washington: Community Action Coalition (CAC)

Coalition members provide insight from their lived experience and organizational roles to facilitate understanding of community specific cancer prevention and control needs. Together, coalitions work toward listening to community voices, experiences and expertise to reduce cancer disparities for residents in Washington state.

Coalition areas of focus in 2025 included:

- Sharing resources for cancer prevention, screening, treatment and support
- Supporting programming to advance community health
- Learning about opportunities for community engagement in research

Learn more about the regional coalitions here: wportal.org/partners/fred-hutch-community-coalitions

Statewide Movement with the Cancer Action Plan of Washington



Cancer Action Plan of Washington

Statewide Coalition

The Cancer Action Plan of Washington (CAPOW) Statewide Coalition is a thriving partnership of individuals and organizations across Washington state.

In 2025, the coalition finalized a 5-year cancer plan for 2025-2030 and set up workgroups to monitor and work toward the objectives and strategies of the CAPOW.

Learn more or join a workgroup here: canceractionplanofwashington.com/about

Workgroups include:

- Advocacy and Government Relations
- Clinical Trials
- Communications
- Data Governance
- Health Disparities
- Prevention and Screening
- Survivorship and Supportive Care

The CAPOW coalition held their hybrid annual meeting on October 30, 2025, at the Pacific Tower in Seattle with over 100 people participating from across the state via Zoom and regional sites in Poughkeepsie, Sunnyside, Spokane and Pullman.

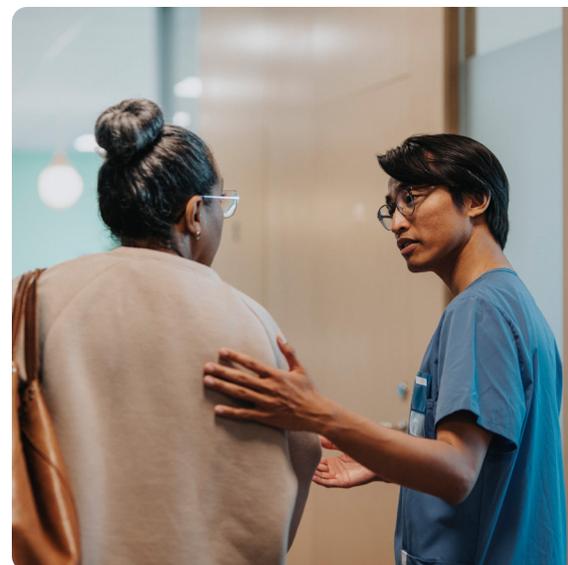


Breaking Barriers Today for Better Treatments Tomorrow

Increasing participation in cancer clinical trials remained a priority this year for Fred Hutch. Clinical trials test novel interventions and are key to establishing new treatments for patients with cancer.

With support from the Andy Hill Cancer Research Endowment (CARE) Fund, the GUIDE Study launched in 2023 to test a new clinical trial navigation model designed to reduce barriers to cancer clinical trial participation. The program includes personalized support as well as reimbursement for clinical trial–related expenses, with the goal of improving both enrollment and retention.

A key milestone was reached in July 2025, when the study successfully met its enrollment target of 100 participants. Follow-up and data collection will continue through January 2026. This pilot study may guide the development of scalable navigation and financial support programs and help ensure that breakthroughs in cancer care are accessible to all patients, not just those with the financial means or geographic proximity to participate.



A Record-Breaking Year at the Recruitment & Retention Shared Resource

In 2025, the Recruitment & Retention Shared Resource (R&RSR) experienced its busiest year yet receiving the highest number of requests since its launch in 2020.

2025 Highlights:

We reviewed 14 investigator-initiated trial (IIT) protocols, providing feedback on inclusion/exclusion criteria and ensuring access to and alignment with the catchment area population.

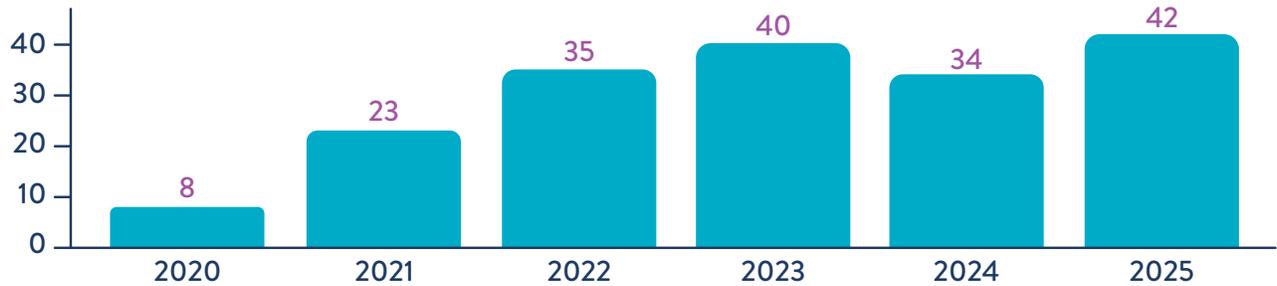
We established service agreements with three research teams, to provide support with culturally tailored participant recruitment, implementation

of a physical activity & nutrition intervention, and facilitation of focus groups and interviews.

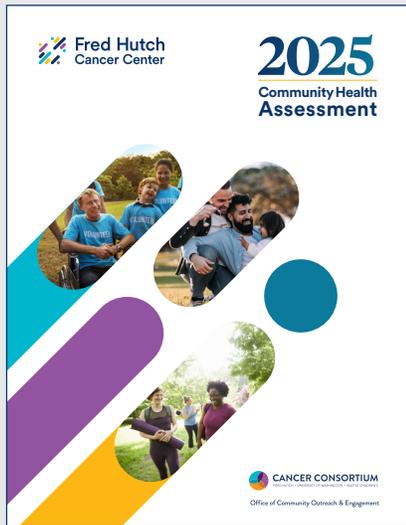
We helped 6 investigators connect with community coalitions, clinics and partners to expand research in 2025. Our Spokane office facilitated a partnership between a rural clinic and a researcher to pilot a community-level intervention to boost colorectal cancer screening in a rural region of Washington state.

As demand continues to grow, the R&RSR is positioned to play an even greater role in broadening participation in research and strengthening community-academic collaborations.

Completed R&RSR Requests



Allison Cole of the University of Washington moderates a panel during the 2025 Pathways to Health Symposium on May 13, 2025.



Community Benefit

In 2025, the Community Benefit Program drafted and published an updated Community Health Assessment (CHA). This assessment reviewed public data, population-based cancer statistics, and included insights from interviews and listening sessions of 93 individuals. It describes differences in cancer outcomes across Washington state, identifies key health needs, and emphasizes social determinants of health as contributors to cancer disparities.

The Community Benefit Program works within OCOE and across many programs at Fred Hutch on activities outlined in a recently published Community Benefit Implementation Plan. This plan outlines goals and objectives for addressing the community's cancer-related health needs identified in the CHA. These priorities are combined into three focus areas: 1) Access to care; 2) Prevention and screening; 3) Social and economic drivers of health.

To read the 2025 Community Health Assessment or the 2025-2028 Community Benefit Implementation Plan, scan the QR Code or visit FredHutch.org/en/about/about-the-hutch/community-benefit.html



Funding Innovative Projects with Community-Led Solutions



The Community Grants Program funds community-led projects that address cancer related prevention, education and access to care with communities and Tribes in Washington state. The OCOE provides support to build community capacity by offering applicants the option of a grant advisor to help with the development of their proposal. Grantees are matched with a community health educator to provide technical assistance for project implementation.

Since establishing the program in 2014, the OCOE has awarded over 68 grants to community-based organizations and Tribes in the state. In 2025, OCOE received 40 applications – a record number – showing the increasing need for funding and partnerships to support community-led cancer prevention work.

In 2025, 10 organizations across Washington state were awarded a combined total of \$150,000.

2025 Community Grants Program Awardees

Grantee	Project
Cancer Lifeline	Addressing Social Determinants of Health and Advancing Health Equity with Patient Financial Assistance Funds
Camp Kesem	Camp Kesem, University of Washington
Congolese United Foundation	Afya ya Utumbo (Gut Health in Swahili): Colorectal Cancer Awareness & Screening in King County
International Community Health Services	Building Trust and Expanding Care in South King County through Outreach and Education
Lahai Health	Access to Women’s Cancer Screenings for Uninsured Adults in King and Snohomish Counties
Neighborcare Health	Navigation to Colorectal Cancer Screening Through Strategic Outreach Calls Conducted by Neighborcare’s Patient Outreach and Engagement Team in King County
Northeast Tri County Health District	Expansion of Cancer Care Fuel Card Program for Ferry, Pend Oreille, and Stevens Counties
SouthEast Seattle Senior Center	Addressing Cancer Awareness Disparities in South Seattle
Tacoma Urban League, Leaders in Women’s Health	Breast Health Navigator Program in Pierce County
Wellness House	Assessment to Inform Wellness House Support Services for Spanish Speakers in Yakima County

To read the 2024–2025 Community Grants Program Annual Report, scan the QR code or visit lead.me/CGP2024



Stay Connected with OCOE

Sign up for our newsletter to get updates and information about events and workshops from our team.

Listen to our podcast *Cancer Health Equity Now!* which amplifies work being done by community organizations, researchers and OCOE community health educators in Washington state and beyond.



Newsletter



Podcast

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Bluesky: @enddisparities.bsky.social



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