



## A RENEWAL OF NATIVE UNITY & ADVOCACY

### We Are Strong, Together

Seattle Urban Native Nonprofits (SUNN) collaborative serves the Seattle-King County area, a region that is home to a thriving and vibrant Native community encompassing a rich blend of Tribal cultures, multi-generational families, and individuals with many talents and professions.

The history of urban Natives in Seattle is one of persistence and resilience, and of resisting attempts to drive out, forcibly relocate and assimilate the people who first lived here. Today, 7 out of 10 Native people live in urban centers.

**7 of 10**  
NATIVE PEOPLE  
LIVE IN URBAN SETTINGS

Our strength and unity come from shared adversity and a deep ancestral knowledge that we are all connected. We have a long history of coming together to take care of one another, build community connections, celebrate our diverse cultures, and advocate for our inherent rights, justice, and equality.

### OUR VISION

*We envision a healthy, safe, and thriving Native community collectively engaged in honoring our vibrant and diverse cultures in a gathering place and forum that both symbolizes, unites, and galvanizes the beauty, resilience, power, and sacredness of our being.*



### INTRODUCTION

### Our Challenges

Despite our strengths, inequities continue to exist for our urban Native community. Rooted in historical oppression and institutional racism, these inequities result in disproportionately poor outcomes in health, education, housing, and economic opportunity.

Chronic underfunding of Native organizations and a lack of culturally responsive services designed to address the unique needs and traumatic experiences of the Native community compound these challenges, along with a continuing lack of representation in decision-making spaces and the invisibility of Native people in mainstream institutions, data, and the media.

### A Renewal

Seattle Urban Native Nonprofits is the first collaboration of its kind in King County and represents a renewal and resurgence of unity and collective advocacy on behalf of the Native community.

As an urban Native community residing on the lands of the Duwamish, Suquamish, Muckleshoot, Tulalip, Puyallup, Snoqualmie, and Stillaguamish people in Coast Salish territories, we hold a responsibility to the first peoples of these lands and to our relatives from across Indian Country who migrate here every day.

In the tradition of Indigenous leadership, we look back on generations of Indigenous resistance, cultural knowledge, and community building to inspire and inform a new era of policy and system changes led by today's Indigenous leaders, with the goal of improving the health and well-being of our relatives both today and in the future.



## A BRIEF HISTORY

### A Collaboration Decades In The Making

The urban Native experience is rooted in collective advocacy. For generations, Native people in King County and across the nation have come together to advocate for political and social change to improve the health and well-being of our relatives and to address the longstanding inequities experienced by our communities.

### Together, We Can Lift Up The Sky

In 2014, the United Way King County published a report\* about the American Indian and Alaska Native (AI/AN) community in Seattle-King County. While acknowledging the serious challenges facing the AI/AN community, the report also highlighted its considerable assets as well as a number of opportunities moving forward.

### Seattle Urban Native Nonprofits

Seattle Urban Native Nonprofits was a direct outcome of the United Way report, convening decades of knowledge, expertise, and cultural wisdom from Indigenous leaders and community advocates from across King County.

Meeting regularly, these leaders are moving forward together by centering Indigenous strengths-based approaches, and identifying shared priorities and opportunities for mutual support—all while building collective power through dialog, education, action, and advocacy.

*\*Together we can lift up the sky: A Vision for the Urban Indian Community: Assessment of Assets and Opportunities for the King County Urban Indian Population" can be downloaded for free at [www.liftupthesky.org](http://www.liftupthesky.org). The report was developed by Kauffman and Associates, Inc., with the support of the City of Seattle, Seattle Foundation, and the Muckleshoot Charity Fund.*

## OUR MISSION

*The SUNN Collaborative builds collective power in partnership with our Seattle-King County Native community through Native leadership and policy advocacy to advance our health, well-being, and inherent responsibilities.*

## INTRODUCTION

## COMMUNITY ASSETS

The 2014 United Way King County report\* identified the following as Seattle urban Native community's strongest assets. These strengths still hold true today.

### Nonprofit Diversity

A large and growing community of diverse Native-led nonprofits and organizations is focused on meeting the needs of the AI/AN community in King County.

### Hub for Native Arts and Culture

A thriving community of Native artists devoted to traditional, contemporary, and media arts is well supported by the wider community and helps keep alive distinguished art forms that remain living traditions among today's Native families.

**22,000**  
INDIVIDUALS  
SERVED ANNUALLY  
BY OUR MEMBERS

### Community Cohesion and Involvement

A strong cultural bond exists in the Seattle Native community, bringing together members of many tribes in a shared determination to meet needs, strengthen culture and advance traditional ways. Volunteerism is highly valued and widespread.

### Native Leadership and Achievements

The Native community encompasses individuals with a wide range of professional achievements, education, and life experiences. This includes talented current leaders as well as youth leaders, who are deeply engaged with tribal and urban Native efforts.



SEATTLE  
URBAN  
NATIVE  
NONPROFITS

www.seattleurbanatives.org  
sunn.outreach@gmail.com  
@seattleurbanativenonprofits  
@seattleurbanativenonprofits  
@seaurbanatives

Seattle Urban Native Nonprofits (SUNN) collaborative convenes and strengthens Native-led organizations throughout King County to build collective power through dialog, education, action, and advocacy. To increase the well-being of our urban Native family, we call upon Indigenous strength, resilience, and wisdom to address systemic inequities and galvanize community-centered solutions.