

2024-2025 IMPACT REPORT

# *Evolving with Community*



**Waters  
Meet**

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March 2022

### *Equity Healing Framework*

The Equity Healing Framework created a new vision for how Waters Meet Foundation (then Empire Health Foundation) would approach our work and relationship with community. This new approach emphasized the need to transition from designing and implementing strategic initiatives to deeper community partnerships and support of community-led efforts.

2023

### *Driven by community voice*

As we sought to live into the values of the Equity Healing Framework, we worked as staff, leadership, and board to recenter our organization's relationship with community. Through community dinners, individual meetings, and outreach we explored new ways of showing up in community. An important aspect of this outreach was the report *Activating Community Voice*, produced by Roanhorse Consulting. This document reflected how our community partners view the way we were showing up in community and created space for reflection and growth for our organization to better walk alongside community.

May 2024

### *10-year Strategic Direction*

The 10-Year Strategic Direction created an operational framework for living into our organizational commitments to community. We believe that people with vision, and organizations with resources, can foster the sustainable systems change necessary to achieve health equity.

December 2025

### *Rebranding to Waters Meet*

As we've reimagined our relationship with community and how we approach our work, we've taken an important step to redefining who we are. Our new name, Waters Meet, reflects a deep belief in the power of coming together. Just as a creek feeds a stream, and a stream swells as it joins a river, we believe meaningful change happens when people, ideas, and experiences meet in shared purpose.

# *Flowing with Community, Building Momentum*



2023

### *Justice Not Jails Campaign*

In 2023, Waters Meet Action Fund (then Empire Health Community Advocacy Fund) supported the Justice Not Jails campaign to defeat Measure 1 — a Spokane County proposal focused on building more jail cells. Justice Not Jails was a multi-racial coalition of stakeholders, many with lived experience with the criminal justice system. The campaign was a resounding success and the ballot measure failed by a nearly 2 to 1 margin.

February 2024

### *Impact Investing Policy*

In 2024, our foundation board adopted a new Impact Investing Policy that aligns with our commitment to leverage our full resources on behalf of our community partners. We are shifting investments from traditional markets to our local community partners. Traditionally, we have only activated 5%-8% of our resources directly towards our mission each year. Our goal is to shift 100% of our investments to mission alignment and align 10-15% of our investments directly with our community partners and program work. These investments will build collective wealth of communities that have been persistently excluded from access to capital and investment.

April 2025

### *Building Connections Initiative*

The Building Connections Initiative, a cohort experience co-created with 20 by and for grassroots organizations from across our region, is our effort to align our grantmaking and programming with community. This initiative includes annual general operating grants and program that's designed with and for the grassroots organizations leading the cohort.

September 2025

### *Building Community Power*

Since 2023, Waters Meet Action Fund has been working with re:power — a nationwide power building and organizer training organization — to build advocacy and organizing skills with our community partners and leaders. In September 2025, Waters Meet Action Fund hosted the re:power Spokane Summit with our partners at Inatai Foundation. This four-day training event brought more than 50 organizers from across our region to build skills and lasting connections.

# Turning Commitments into Action

Five years ago, amidst the COVID pandemic and a historic uprising for racial justice, we realized we were still mostly asking communities to react to ideas we had already formed. That included programs we'd borrowed from other communities and then brought to our community to adopt. This approach led to meaningful work, but it didn't respond to the most pressing needs of our communities and community-led organizations.

Recognizing this reality, we committed to trying something different — letting community leadership shape things from the beginning. Not perfectly, and not overnight, but steadily.

That shift has changed more than our programs. It's affected how we decide what to fund, how we think about risk, what success looks like, and who gets to make the call when trade-offs are hard.

For us, "centering community" stopped being a step in a process and became the context for everything we do. Centering community meant practically and significantly deepening our relationships in the communities we are partnering with. It meant shifting our resources to by-and-for, grassroots organizations serving our prioritized communities.

**Waters Meet dedicates our resources to Black, Indigenous, People of Color (BIPOC), 2SLGBTQIA+, disability, rural, and low-income communities persistently impacted by structural inequities.**

Through this transition we have phased out our financial commitments to legacy programs, including rural health coaching and medication management, and maternal and newborn health justice. After years directly supporting nonprofits leading the homeless response in Spokane, we concluded our role directly supporting service providers in 2025.

As we continue to work with many of the organizations that supported these programs, we realize our role is not to develop and facilitate issue-focused programs. We believe, and community has shown us, that our role moving forward is to support community leaders and by and for grassroots organizations to build the power necessary to dismantle and rebuild broken systems.

This approach is at the core of the Building Connections — our flagship grantmaking initiative. Building Connections brings together 20 by-and-for grassroots organizations from across our service area with the support of annual grant funding, and a co-created community experience. Less than a year into this five-year program, we are already seeing momentum and connections being made. We are excited to support the natural evolution of this community-led initiative and commit our resources to the shared vision of the community organizations leading this work.

While we're excited about the direction our foundation and community partners are heading, we'd be remiss to discount the challenges ahead. The communities we support are being targeted everyday by a federal administration intent on reversing progress towards social and racial justice. Through these challenges we stand by our partners and pledge to use our resources and privilege to support thriving, self-determined communities and the infrastructure required to resist the destructive forces working against this.



## Endowment Balance

Waters Meet Foundation

2024

**\$79.2 million**

2025

**\$82.6 million**

Waters Meet Action Fund

2024

**\$20 million**

2025

**\$21 million**

## Investment Performance

Waters Meet Foundation

2024

**12.3%+**

2025

**11.9%+**

Waters Meet Action Fund

2024

**13.5%+**

2025

**12.9%+**

## Draws from Endowment

Waters Meet Foundation

2024

**\$4.9 million**

2025

**\$5.9 million**

Waters Meet Action Fund

2024

**\$2.1 million**

2025

**\$1 million**

From 2024-2025

**95%**

of all Waters Meet grants and sponsorships went to by and for grassroots organizations serving prioritized communities

Waters Meet brought over

**\$20M**

into community through a combination of endowment grants, government and third-party funded grants, and contracts with community based service providers between 2024-2025

# Kicking off Building Connections

Operationalizing our community-led approach to funding meant rethinking how we run programs and disburse grant funding. Building Connections represents our commitment to 20 by-and-for organizations, who we are supporting with general operations funding and engaging in a co-creative process to build a stronger nonprofit sector in our region.

The 20 organizations for Building Connections were selected from a pool of over 120 applicants, and 60 by-and-for organizations whose leadership and boards represent the community they serve. In selecting this set of organizations, we focused on organizations with the strongest ties to and relationships in the communities they serve.

As our flagship program, Building Connections represents a major investment of our foundation's time and resources, as well as the time and expertise of our community leaders. Waters Meet began this program by intentionally building space in community and fostering connection between community leaders.

We hosted three separate two-day sessions with cohort members and a dinner celebration where we shared space, stories, and traditions. These meetings have been a space where community leaders have created and strengthened the relationships necessary to build momentum towards collective action.

The cohort experience is being guided by the Gathering of Native Americans (GONA). This approach is built around phases of belonging, mastery, interdependence, and generosity. In 2025, we intentionally centered grounding and belonging to build a strong foundation for our work together.

So far, partners have identified key themes that we will continue to develop and collectively respond to, including:



Creating & Mobilizing Shared Co-Op Infrastructure



Collaboration & Alignment for Solidarity



Liberating Ourselves & Others through Healing, Health & Wellness



Gathering the Continuum of Collective Wisdom & Legacy Builders

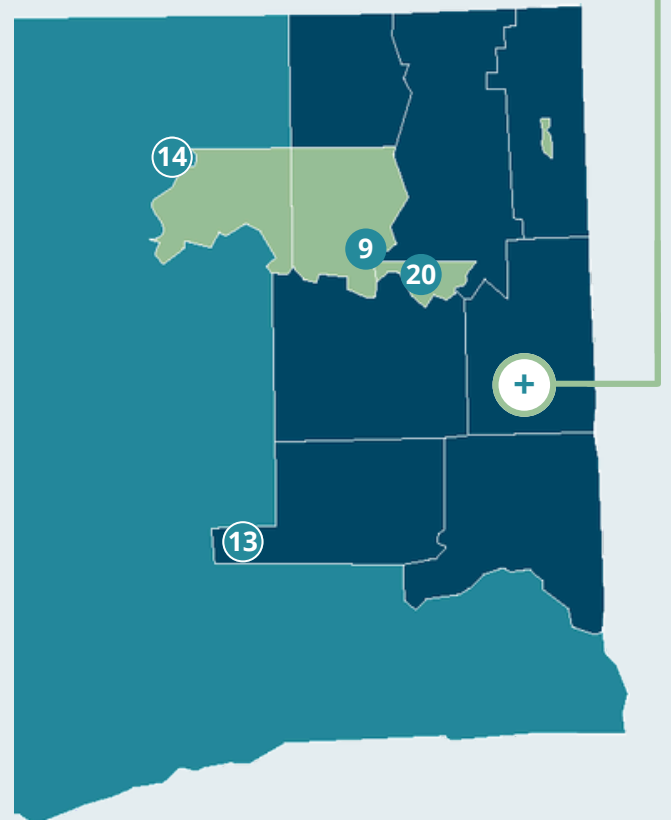
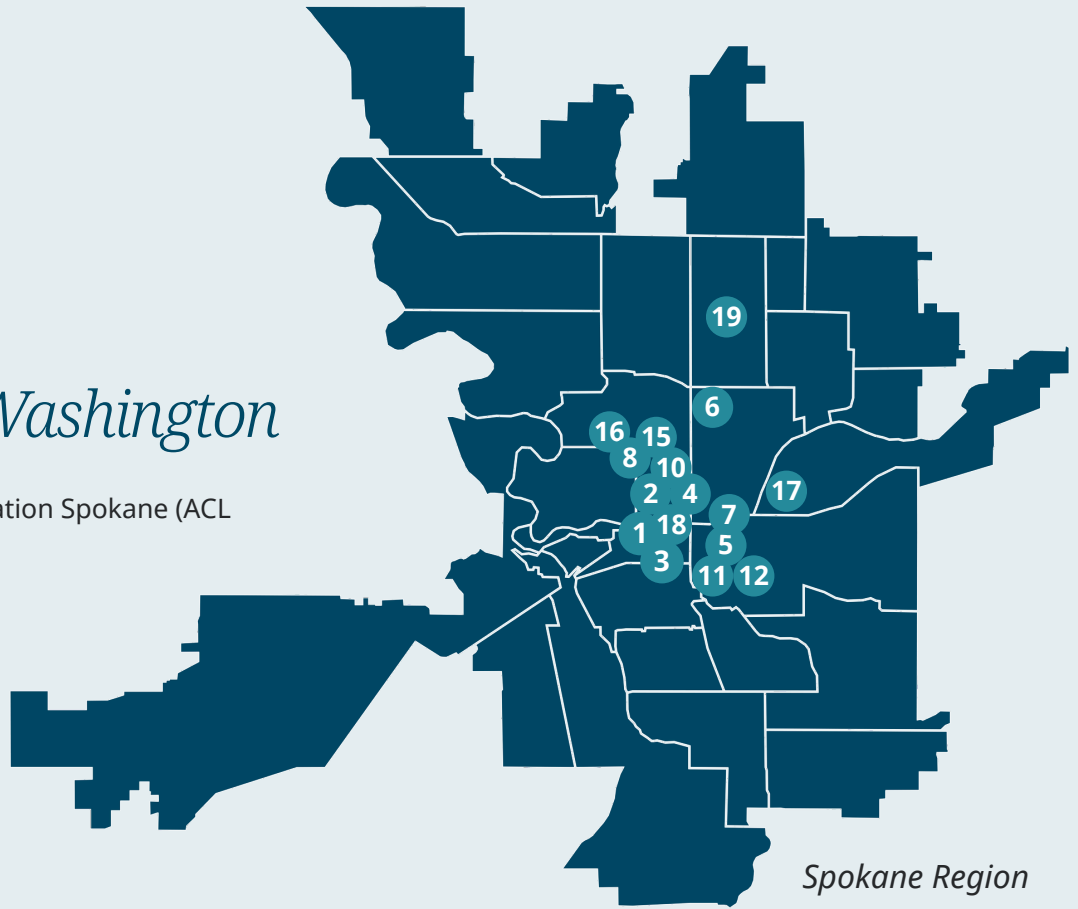


Advancing Collective Action



# Our Partners in Eastern Washington

- 1 Asians for Collective Liberation Spokane (ACL Spokane)
- 2 Terrain Programs
- 3 Spectrum
- 4 Manzanita House
- 5 CAT Spokane
- 6 Mujeres in Action (MiA)
- 7 SCAR Spokane
- 8 Pacific Islander Community Association of WA (PICA)
- 9 Inchelium Language & Culture Association (ILCA)
- 10 Way to Justice
- 11 Shades of Motherhood Network
- 12 Carl Maxey Center
- 13 Unidos Nueva Alianza Foundation
- 14 Foundation for Youth Resiliency and Engagement (FYRE)
- 15 Latinos en Spokane
- 16 American Indian Community Center (AICC)
- 17 Yoyot Sp'q'n'i'
- 18 Tenants Union
- 19 If You Could Save Just One
- 20 Spokane Tribal Network



# Our Shifting Role in Supporting Homeless Services

Waters Meet Foundation has been directly engaged with the homeless service community since the summer of 2022. Our work came during an unprecedented influx of federal funding to support communities impacted by the COVID-19 pandemic. Initially, we convened local service providers and other organizations working in housing to recommend projects eligible for federal relief funds.

Throughout this work we have focused on using our resources to encourage equitable investments in our unhoused community and support frontline service providers. Our capacity was able to bring more resources to Spokane, and augment local capacity, at a time when staffing and resources were unable to meet growing demand.

Our convening work led to a far more prominent role when we stepped up to administer state funding designated to pay for the decommissioning of Camp Hope through the Encampment Resolution Project (ERP). In that role, we contracted with service providers who were doing the boots on the ground work of creating new housing options and navigating people to housing and services. Our role in that project continued into June 2024, when the City of Spokane took over the ERP contract.

From October 2024 through the end of September 2025, we played a similar administrative role as the contracted operators of the city of Spokane's Housing Navigation Center and Specialized Shelter model. In this role, Waters Meet has overseen contracting with service providers operating shelters, as well as identifying and facilitating the opening of new shelters in coordination with property owners. Waters Meet also regularly convened providers from across the spectrum of homeless services in Spokane to facilitate knowledge exchange and troubleshoot challenges facing providers and our unhoused community.

While we are no longer under contract with the state Commerce Department and ended our contract to coordinate the city's dispersed shelter model in September, we continue to look for opportunities to support our unhoused community. The latest opportunity came about in the form of one-time money that we were able to leverage to buy 30 tiny home units.

We are currently in the site development phase of the pilot tiny home project — [New Roots Tiny Home Village](#). The New Roots Tiny Home Village is on a vacant portion of Waters Meet owned land at 7th and Audubon. Our goal is to complete development of this project in 2026 in order to pilot this long sought housing solution in Spokane.

Read our report **“Housing Navigation Center and Specialized Shelter Report”** at [watersmeet.foundation/housing26](https://watersmeet.foundation/housing26)

**Waters Meet**  
*Housing Navigation Center (HNC) and Specialized Shelter Report*

**Executive Summary**

From October 2024 to September 2025, Waters Meet Foundation (formerly Empire Health Foundation) served as the system operator of the pilot housing navigation center and specialized shelter system under contract with the City of Spokane. In this role, Waters Meet was tasked with overseeing contracting with the service providers operating shelters, as well as identifying and facilitating the opening of new shelters in coordination with property owners and service providers. Waters Meet also regularly convened providers from across the spectrum of homeless services in Spokane to facilitate knowledge exchange and troubleshoot challenges facing providers and our unhoused community.

Waters Meet has prepared this report to share what we have learned in this role. We believe these insights are important to consider in the context of the more holistic changes that are currently being implemented and considered across the housing and homeless services system in our community.

Over the course of the project, the shelters and navigation center served a total of **1526 unique individuals and 26 families with children**, providing emergency shelter, case management, housing navigation, and linkages to critical supportive services. The initiative prioritized low-barrier, person-centered approaches, with an emphasis on creating supportive community environments and improving coordination across providers and systems.

This pilot was intentionally designed as a collaborative effort and iterative learning process. Many of the lessons learned through the shelter collaborative have already been acted on by the City of Spokane's Community Housing and Human Services Department (CHHS). This includes changes to the Navigation Center and outreach model, as well as the planned development of a tiny home community in Spokane.

Neighborhood	Population Served
North Hill	Adults, priority mental health
Northwest	Adults, priority seniors
Cliff Canyon	Adults with referral from Providence Community Clinic
Emerson Garfield	Women
Brownie's Addition	Adults, priority those in process for housing but not in shelter
Chief Garry Park	Families with children
East Central	Men
East Central	Adults anywhere on recovery journey regardless
East Central	Women including children, priority indigenous, and those fleeing domestic



# Community Reinvestment Project

Waters Meet facilitated the convening of Spokane County's Local Advisory Team. This team of community leaders guided Commerce funding through the Community Reinvestment Project (CRP) — a statewide initiative investing in Black, Latine, and Indigenous communities disproportionately impacted by the racist war on drugs.

Through the Community Reinvestment Project, Waters Meet:

Distributed nearly

**\$1.7 million**

in state funding to 25 local organizations

**All organizations**

were led by people of color

Local organizations served

**2,377 people**

in Spokane, 90% of whom were people of color

We continue to lobby alongside our partners for additional state investments and program improvements.



Hear from partners and recipients about their CRP experience in this video series



# Integrating our Policy and Advocacy Work

In 2024 and 2025, Waters Meet Action Fund, the 501(c)4 policy and advocacy arm of our organization, made important progress in building community power in alignment with our 501(c)3 Foundation work.

These two years saw several milestones, including:



A multi-year advocacy capacity building campaign in collaboration with the national grassroots organization re:power that culminated in a four day skills building re:power Spokane Summit



State legislative advocacy and education in partnership with Capitol Path Consulting



The launch of a dedicated website and social media platforms for Waters Meet Action Fund.



The throughline of the work of Waters Meet Action Fund is alignment with our partners and foundation work. Each of the projects we've undertaken have come in response to community need and in order to support community voice and priorities.

Waters Meet Action Fund aligns its resources to match the needs of the Building Connections Initiative and our broader ecosystem of equity-driven organizations. This focuses our organizational attention on pressing matters in community like Indigenous voting access, public safety reform, and bridging the gap between lawmakers in Olympia and voices of constituents in eastern Washington.

**Moving forward, our advocacy efforts continue to build space and capacity for community leaders to represent their communities and demand a better future for everyone in eastern Washington.**



# **Waters Meet**

## *2024-2025 Impact Report*

**Waters Meet**

The Philanthropy Center

1020 W Riverside Ave, Spokane, WA 99201

(509) 315-1323