

Communities Count Data Informing Action (before 2013)

Communities Count aspires to provide clear, comprehensive data to affect long-term change, with particular emphasis on prevention. Documenting the tangible outcomes of data dissemination is challenging because outcomes at one level—increased awareness and the availability of information—are indirect and may not immediately lead to policy change, funding allocations, or realignment of priorities.

Fortunately, the municipalities, non-profit organizations, and foundations listed below have provided us with feedback about how our data helps them accomplish their goals. We update this log regularly to inform the public about how Communities Count data are used to shape policy and funding decisions to improve the quality of King County communities and the health and well-being of County residents.

- In 2012, the **City of Renton** used Communities Count data to **shift 2012 funding priorities toward basic needs (food and housing)**.
- **Seattle Children's Hospital** used Communities Count data on **affordable housing** in their **2012 Community Health Needs Assessment**.
- In 2012, the **City of Bellevue** used a **broad range of Communities Count data** (all of which provided information on **vulnerable populations**, and some of which provided information on **veterans**) for their **Human Services Needs Assessment**. In February, 2013, the Human Services Planner for the City of Bellevue reported that Communities Count data in the **2012 Needs Assessment** were **used in allocating funds for 2013/2014**. One significant shift was an **increase in funding for affordable housing**.
- In May of 2012, **Seattle's Union Gospel Mission** explained how they were combining Communities Count data on **food insecurity** with the **Communities Count map of current food bank locations**: "We have been looking for this kind of data because hunger is a primary element of our mission: to serve, rescue and transform those in greatest need. We have long had a desire to link sources to serve food insecure individuals and families way beyond the homeless population we are known to serve - through our church network, through the food bank network, through providers of food - fresh and packaged - and your information is a giant step forward in helping us to activate all those connections."
- April, 2012: **Eastside Pathways** requested data on daily reading/telling stories to children in Bellevue. Communities Count provided the requested data, with the caveat that with such small numbers, the estimates were unreliable.
- February, 2012: Communities Count data on **reading/telling stories to children** were used in the Baseline Technical Report of **The Road Map Project**, supported by the **Community Center for Education Results (CCER)**.
- February, 2012: Communities Count's **food hardship** data were taken to Olympia by the **Children's Alliance, United Way**, and other organizations on **Hunger Action Day**. One of the

goals was to **prevent elimination of Washington State’s Food Assistance Program (FAP)**, which provides benefits to legal immigrants who are not eligible for the federal Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP). The program survived, although funding was reduced.

- In January of 2012, a representative of **Northwest Health Law Advocates** requested permission to use quotes on **access to health insurance** from Communities Count’s 2011 interviews with low- to middle-income families raising young children. She shared the interviews with some of the groups (**Children’s Alliance** and **Washington CAN!**) **advocating for the Federal Basic Health Option in the 2012 legislative session.**
- In October of 2011, King County’s Department of Community and Human Services included **“living wage income” data** from Communities Count in a **funding proposal.**
- In September, 2011, with support from Communities Count data (see <http://www.b-sustainable.org/social-environment/family-friendly-benefits> and http://www.communitiescount.org/index.php?page=report_page&pageid=86§ionid=23&year=), the **Seattle City Council passed the Family Friendly Benefits Ordinance** (<http://www.seattlepi.com/local/article/Seattle-mandates-paid-sick-leave-for-workers-2167071.php>). Communities Count has been reporting on family-friendly benefits since at least 2002.
- In January, 2011, **contractors for ECEAP, Head Start and Early Head Start** used Communities Count data in **updating their Community Needs Assessments.**
- Communities Count staff joined with the **Eastside Human Services Forum** to invite policy-makers, planners, service providers, city and county staff, advocates, non-profit organizations, community leaders and the general public to an **education forum** in March 2009. A presentation highlighting **East King County data** was followed by a discussion about policies and actions that could be taken to address downward trending indicators of concern in East region.
- In May, 2008, City of Seattle Resolution Number 31060 officially adopted the 2008-2010 Seattle Human Services Department Strategic Investment Plan Update the Seattle City Council. In support of this resolution, the City’s Legislative Information Service cited Communities Count’s report that in 10.4% of King County households, **food money did not last until the end of the month** (<http://clerk.ci.seattle.wa.us/~scripts/nph-brs.exe?s1=&s3=&s2=&s4=comprehensive+plan+growth+target&Sect4=AND&l=20&Sect2=THESE&Sect3=PLURON&Sect5=RESNY&Sect6=HITOFF&d=RESF&p=1&u=%2F~public%2Fresny.htm&r=15&f=G>).
- **City Club** used Communities Count indicators to inform its 2008 Community Matters campaign.
- The **City of Burien** committed \$50,000 to early childhood development programs after seeing **community-specific data on school readiness.**
- A **South King County** partnership was formed to address the low scores reported in South County on the frequency of parents **reading to their children.** The partnership included libraries, WIC clinics, pediatricians, literacy groups, and PHSKC.

- In response to Communities Count data on **youth and protective factors**, the **City of North Bend** modified its budget, moving \$20,000 from Main-Street beautification to **support for youth programs**.
- **b-sustainable.org** included several Communities Count indicators in their interactive website.
- Data from the ***Freedom from Discrimination*** indicator led **Renton**, through its **City Council** and senior City leaders, to **look more closely at how they can respond as a city to the persistence of discrimination in their jurisdiction** and provide training for their staff.
- A representative from the **Society of Vincent de Paul** reported that in the Society's application for **City of Renton Human Services funding**, "*Communities Count provided much of the data used to build a compelling needs statement that scored well in the funding application cycle. Our program competed successfully and was funded.*"
- Communities Count staff provided technical assistance to the **South King County Committee to End Homelessness** using Communities Count indicators to show important **local trends contributing to homelessness**. This group's Political Will Building Subgroup has created "calls to action" for five South County cities and written op-eds and other advocacy messages about the problem of homelessness in the region.

In addition to the specific applications listed above, municipalities, foundations, and non-profit organizations rely on Communities Count as an essential resource for their everyday work. These include:

- **United Way**, in their monthly newsletter and updates to community indicators.
- **King County**, in their award-winning AIMS High benchmark website measuring the effectiveness of county government.
- **Cities of Renton and Bellevue**, in their city planning efforts.
- Several **King County suburban cities**, in their performance measurement work.
- **City Club**, in various campaigns and programs.
- **The Seattle Foundation**, in much of their work. Specific comments: The data and analysis provided a vital perspective on King County as the Foundation developed the *Healthy Community* report. Furthermore, the monthly recession-linked data updates provided guidance in the Foundation's efforts with the Building Resilience Initiative. The Foundation's grantees continue to point to *Communities Count* as a reference for where to focus their efforts.
- **Contractors for ECEAP and grantees for Head Start and Early Head Start**, in updating their Community Assessments of needs and strengths (every 3 years).