



**SOLID GROUND'S
COMMUNITY REPORT 2021**

**OPENING DOORS TO
OPPORTUNITY**

In 2021, more than 67,000 people accessed Solid Ground services.

This report includes snapshots of some of our impacts!



Our 670 volunteers contributed 18,978 hours valued at \$640,522, making it possible to meet basic needs, nurture success, spread change, and cultivate health throughout our community.

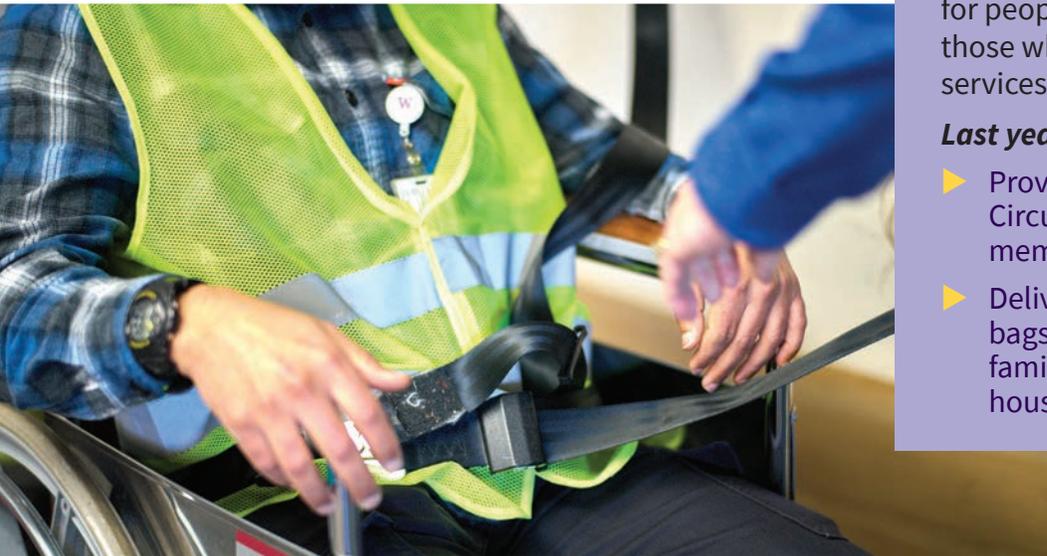
Solid Ground Transportation (SGT):

ACCESS buses provide low-cost rides to people who can't use King County Metro's fixed-route system.

SGT's Downtown Circulator buses offer FREE rides on a fixed-route, 7-stop circuit for people living on low incomes and those who access health and human services in downtown Seattle.

Last year, SGT:

- ▶ Provided **145,590** ACCESS and Circulator rides to community members.
- ▶ Delivered over **119,000** meals and bags of groceries to individuals, families, multifamily homes, and housing complexes.



Benefits Legal Assistance provided 202 people with legal support, creating better access to public benefits for housing and essential needs, cash, food, childcare, health and dental care, and more.





Solid Ground's Food System Support (FSS):

An integral leader in our region's emergency food response, FSS helps curb rising food insecurity.

Last year, FSS:

- ▶ Trained, supported, and coordinated the Seattle Food Committee's **28** members.
- ▶ Made **1,144** food deliveries to **22** food banks, totaling **8,417,511** lbs of food.
- ▶ Made **91** deliveries of sanitization, PPE, and supplies – including face masks, gloves, hand sanitizer, and grocery and produce bags.
- ▶ Disbursed more than **\$3 million** in federal COVID-19 relief.

Community Food Education (CFE) connected **370 kids and adults** with information and resources to grow, buy, cook, and eat nutritious foods, supporting the health and wellbeing of communities experiencing poverty.



Tenant Services counseled **317 individuals and families (393 people in all)** about their rights, connecting renters with resources to prevent eviction and ensure housing stability.



DEAR FRIENDS,

If there's a silver lining in the pandemic-driven isolation of the last few years, perhaps it's recognizing how precious our time together truly is. Through fellowship and collaboration – where we most clearly share our struggles and aspirations – we're at our strongest.

Collaboration is vital to our work at Solid Ground. Only by listening to community members can we understand what resources people need to thrive and what barriers stand in their way. In 2021, we worked to listen deeply to ensure that people who've experienced poverty firsthand have a voice in our decision-making. We invest time and talent in listening, because we believe people know best what it takes to meet their needs and achieve their dreams.

Here are some ways we listen to people most impacted:

- ▶ Solid Ground's **Community Accountability Council** is an independent body of people with lived experiences with poverty who meet monthly to provide input on everything from program design to messaging, and policy development to fundraising.
- ▶ Every three years, we survey Solid Ground program participants and others with lived experience as part of a **Community Needs Assessment (CNA)**. This input helps us identify unmet needs, gaps in services, and opportunities to align our work more closely with what people want and need. Following the 2020 CNA, we developed the "Every Door" model to make all of our services available to people, no matter what door they came through to get to Solid Ground.
- ▶ Each year, our advocacy partner, **Statewide Poverty Action Network**, conducts Listening Sessions in low-income communities throughout Washington state. What they hear informs their statewide advocacy legislative agenda, which guides Poverty Action's work for the upcoming legislative session.

While many of us have adjusted to a pandemic-induced "new normal" of life, many people continue to experience anxiety and isolation, food insecurity, rising rents, and housing instability. Every day, Solid Ground staff continue to meet changing basic needs, nurture success, and spread change. We meet people where they are and support them to overcome barriers to reaching their goals despite the ever-evolving COVID-19 crisis.

Here are some 2021 successes we're particularly proud of:

- ▶ As a core partner for United Way of King County's Home Base program, Solid Ground disbursed nearly **\$4 million in rental assistance funds** to more than **340 households** across King County – and nearly **\$700,000** through our **Homelessness Prevention Case Management**.
- ▶ We saw how COVID-19 traumas impacted people's mental health – so, we partnered with **Sisters in Common** to provide a direct pathway to **cultural healing** and **focused behavioral health services** for **formerly homeless adults** living at our Sand Point Housing campus.
- ▶ Advocacy partner **Poverty Action** hosted its first **Virtual Day of Action** on MLK Day 2021, engaging almost **200 people** across the state.

Poverty Action also...

- ◆ **Supported 12 community members** to testify to their lawmakers.
 - ◆ **Led six text banks** to engage Washingtonians to contact their legislators.
 - ◆ **Organized over 20 testimony opportunities** where Solid Ground staff amplified program participants' needs.
 - ◆ **Created an online Remote Advocacy Guide** to mobilize folks to raise their voices in new and powerful ways.
- ▶ Our **Volunteer Services** team took on the **Statewide Health Insurance Benefits Advisors (SHIBA)** program to provide free, unbiased information about Medicare coverage and access for King County residents. SHIBA volunteers work to empower, educate, and assist Medicare-eligible people, their families, and caregivers to make informed health insurance decisions that improve access to care and benefits.
 - ▶ **Tenant Services hosted 40 virtual Rent Smart workshops**, in both English and Spanish, to create safe spaces for tenants to learn about their rights and responsibilities under Washington State Landlord-Tenant law.
 - ▶ **Cooking Matters at Home online classes brought cooking and nutrition education into 69 participants' kitchens** – and supplied grocery store gift cards – to put healthy, culturally relevant, and accessible foods (safely) within reach.
 - ▶ **Poverty Action partnered with other coalition and community members to win:**
 - ◆ **A 15% increase in TANF** (Temporary Assistance for Needy Families) monthly cash grant benefits.
 - ◆ **Consumer protections** from predatory debt collection.
 - ◆ **Increased state investment in HEN** (Housing and Essential Needs).
 - ▶ **Solid Ground worked alongside partners to advocate for housing solutions** that best serve our communities, successfully removing the misguided Compassion Seattle initiative from the November 2021 ballot.

From innovating new responses to COVID-19, to stabilizing core services that help our communities thrive, we couldn't do this work without your partnership. Thank you for being a vital part of this community, helping us work toward solving poverty.

*In community &
collaboration,*



**Shalimar
Gonzales**
Solid Ground CEO

**Heidi
Eisenstein**
Board Chair



CASE MANAGEMENT: A partner in rebuilding stability

Poverty means having to make heartbreaking decisions every day. For Beverly,* one of those decisions was between paying her rent and paying to bury her son after he was murdered last year.

Beverly chose to bury her son, which meant she was soon facing eviction from the home she shared with her daughter and two grandsons, who'd been left fatherless by her son's murder. Not knowing what else to do, Beverly called Solid Ground's Tenant Services hotline and was referred to Barb Hart, a case manager in the Homelessness Prevention program.

As she does with all participants, Barb listened carefully to Beverly's story, asked about her needs and goals, and then got creative to quickly pull together resources from various programs to make sure Beverly and her family didn't lose their home.

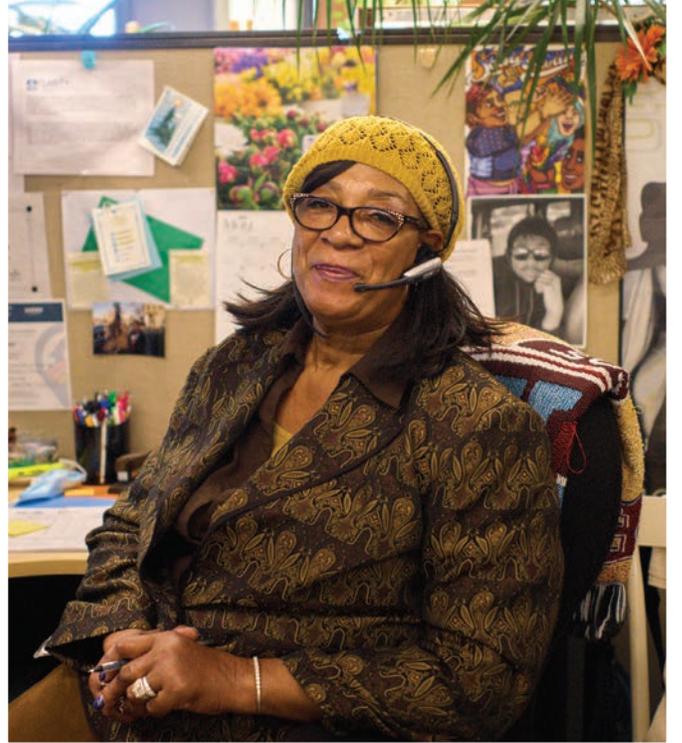
"She was still grieving on top of the stress of facing eviction, and she was so grateful that we were not only able to help her, but do it quickly," Barb says. "I like that we're able to respond immediately and not put people off for two or three weeks. We try to act with urgency."

But Barb's work didn't end there. She stayed in touch and discovered that Beverly's daughter, who helped pay the rent, had stopped receiving her Social Security payments, so Barb worked to get her benefits back. She also gave Beverly the space to talk about the grief and stress that she was experiencing – another big part of case management.

"She really just wanted to voice what was inside of her, and I gave her space to do that," Barb says. "It's a big part of the job. You've got to be able to listen and remain objective and really look at everyone from a trauma-informed perspective. You do not lead the conversation; you let them lead as far as what they want to share about their crisis and their trauma."

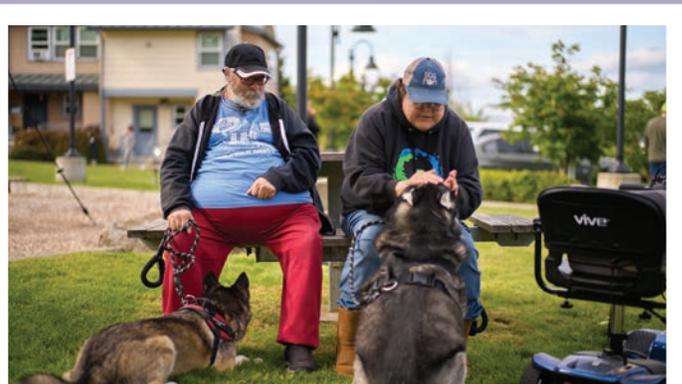
Barb had lined up three months of rental assistance for Beverly's family – but after just one payment, they regained the stability they needed to pay their bills and focus on grieving and healing as a family.

**Not pictured; not her real name*



"Sometimes people just need to know that someone is there to walk with them along the steps to make connections and get back on track."

~Barb Hart, Homelessness Prevention Case Manager



In 2021, Solid Ground's Rapid Rehousing, Shelter Diversion, and Tenant Services programs guided 836 people toward housing stability – preventing homelessness by helping people stay in their current homes, rapidly rehousing others, and providing in-depth case management and other support services to help families stay housed.



MORE THAN JUST HOUSING: Opening doors on the path to success

Tamara* is due to start her junior year at the University of Washington this fall and expects to graduate in the spring, having earned her computer science degree in just three years. In the meantime, she's working a coveted summer internship at Microsoft, gaining hands-on experience to give her an edge when applying for jobs next year.

She's also one of about 200 children, youth, and young adults living in Solid Ground's Sand Point Housing, where thousands of young people have had the chance to heal, grow, and thrive after destabilizing childhood experiences with poverty, homelessness, and other kinds of trauma.

Tamara and other children at Sand Point are supported by wraparound services designed to help them gain stability and build the academic and social/emotional skills they need to achieve success – however they choose to define it.

Early on, Tamara knew what success would look like for her: She wanted to code. Oliver Alexander-Adams, Sand Point's Family and Children's Program Manager, says Tamara's grades were always strong, but she still came to him for tutoring "religiously" so she could keep up with her significant workload and improve her SAT scores. She also got involved with a nonprofit called Girls Who Code and developed a mentoring relationship with a volunteer tutor who works at Google – a relationship that continues today.

In fact, when Oliver ran into Tamara the other day and asked her what support she needed, her response was: "You know what? I'm good."

"She was flying fine on her own. There wasn't anything left for us to do."

~Oliver Alexander-Adams, Sand Point Family and Children's Program Manager

"She was flying fine on her own. There wasn't anything left for us to do," Oliver says. "Which is kind of the whole point of supportive housing: To get to a place where you can no longer be effective as a case manager, not because you're not doing a good job, but because they've achieved a level of stability and self-sufficiency such that they no longer need your support."

**Not pictured; not her real name*

In 2021, Solid Ground's Residential Services housed 825 people – including 490 youth ages 0-24 – in temporary/short-term and permanent housing.



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◆ = UNRESTRICTED
❄️ = MULTI-YEAR

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FINANCIALS

Operating Support & Revenue

Government Contracts & Grants	\$24,327,862
Private Grants & Contributions	\$3,854,853
In-Kind Contributions	\$249,590
Earned & Other Revenue	\$1,033,513
Administrative Fee Charged	\$2,900,699
Total Operating Support & Revenue	\$32,366,517

Operating Expenses

Program Expenses

♦ Transportation	\$12,856,982
♦ Homelessness Prevention	\$4,487,604
♦ Housing & Services	\$3,843,879
♦ Hunger & Food Resources	\$4,041,309
♦ Advocacy	\$1,611,867
Management & General	\$3,628,391
Retired & Senior Volunteer Program	\$249,890
Fundraising	\$1,134,956
Total Operating Expenses	\$31,854,878

Net Income **\$511,639**

Balance Sheet

Current Assets	\$13,470,855
Fixed Assets	\$3,395,975
Other Assets	\$8,280,929
Total Assets	\$25,147,759
Current Liabilities	\$1,748,317
Long-term Liabilities	\$2,724,787
Shareholder Equity	\$20,674,655
Total Liabilities	\$25,147,759
Total Net Assets	0





