

APRIL 2021

The Catalyst

a periodic publication from
Vision Action Network

INSPIRING
COLLABORATION
IN WASHINGTON COUNTY





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DIRECTOR'S CORNER

OUR WORK CONTINUES

"The arc of the universe is long, but it bends toward justice." These words from Rev. Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. ring particularly true for me this week. Like so many others, I was relieved at the outcome of Derek Chauvin's trial in the murder of George Floyd. I don't wish to imagine what might have unfolded were he not convicted. And yet, I see it as just one moment in time, one measure of accountability amidst countless acts of violence meted out to Black and Brown people under the guise of justice. This conviction is a step towards reform, but there is still a long journey ahead of us. Racism is deeply embedded throughout our institutions, systems, and culture. As a White man, I'm mindful that I cannot separate myself from all that has been designed for my advantage. I am complicit in racism, despite my best efforts to combat it. The work continues.

Soon our region will see a significant influx of new tax revenue from the supportive housing services (SHS) measure that passed in 2019. Washington County Thrives, a long-standing collaborative initiative, has consistently supported increased investment in affordable housing and wrap-around services, along with workforce training and early learning and youth enrichment that make up its three-pronged approach to confront poverty. VAN convenes the Thrives Collaborative each month to share information and keep the big picture in mind, focusing on systemic changes that make it easier for people to access resources, so they can live fuller, richer lives. Our homeless and mental health crises are the results of decades of public disinvestment and short-term thinking, and it may take just as long to recover. The work continues.

It's Earth Day as I type this missive, and the recent span of unseasonably warm and dry days has me both reveling and reflecting on a planet that is changing in ways we will never fully comprehend. The overwhelming evidence that warns me of catastrophe on a global scale is often ignored by my tendency to think and live in the moment. The morning sun feels like a slice of heaven as I work remotely, sipping coffee outside a favorite café. It's hard to see any downside, yet my actions today bear consequences for tomorrow. So, I pray for rain and do my part to walk more, drive and fly less, reduce consumption, and consider the impact on the generations to follow. The work continues.

I'm delighted to announce the premiere of Finding Community, VAN's podcast about the people of Washington County. Our first episode features Washington County Commissioner Nafisa Fai. She is the first Black person and first Muslim to hold this office in Washington County. We talked about the path that led her to public service and her vision of a "beloved community." Her election is just one step toward realizing and celebrating the strength that comes with diversity in Washington County. If you have suggestions for future guests who are breaking through barriers and bridging all that divides us these days, I'd like to hear from you. The work continues.

As a convener, VAN keeps the long game in mind, and it often seems we will never cross the finish line. In truth, we won't. The line continues to move, and it's sometimes difficult to see progress, yet we bring stakeholders together and move forward with intention because it's the right thing to do.

The work continues. Our work continues. I hope you join us!



Glenn Montgomery
Executive Director

In service,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Glenn Montgomery".

EQUITY CORNER

GENDER EQUITY AND PANDEMIC PARENTING

How is everyone coping with parenting during the pandemic?

In my social circle, this topic surfaced quickly after the first lockdowns in March 2020. Friends and family spent a lot of time praying, thinking, and strategizing on this topic. In my professional circle, the topic finally started to emerge at the beginning of the year. It came with a sense of urgency around mitigating the alarming consequences of trying to “juggle it all” during the pandemic. It turns out, reports show there is no such thing as “juggling it all.” Adapting to current circumstances came at a high cost, especially for women and primary caregivers.

A year into the pandemic, we commemorated Women's History Month "[at a moment when female workforce participation has dipped to 57 percent, the lowest it has been in more than three decades.](#)"

We are at a tipping point where we must question **what is being asked of women and primary caregivers**. And, **how is our community expected to emerge from the pandemic, and thrive equitably, without a massive revision of existing workplace policies, AND existing childcare policy and infrastructure?**

An [article from Harvard Business Review](#) released last November says: "*It has become alarmingly clear that the Covid-19 pandemic is threatening women's careers. In September 2020 alone, 865,000 women left the U.S. workforce, compared to 216,000 men. Furthermore, one in four women is considering either leaving the workforce or reducing their work hours.*"

According to HBR, we have adopted a current narrative "**suggesting how working mothers can work from home with kids, manage work/life boundaries (or lack thereof), and handle anxiety over school decisions.**" However, they point out that this is not sustainable and could further push women out of the workforce.

These conclusions are supported by a [staggering report from McKinsey & Company](#) that reveals the effects of the pandemic among women in the workplace in 2020, the unique impact on women of different races and ethnicities, and how the COVID-19 crisis is threatening to erase the gains of the past six years on closing the gender gap.

Vox talks about the [parental burnout crisis reaching a tipping point](#). In Summer 2020, millions of parents were already burnt-out by the demands of pandemic child-rearing. As mentioned, [a shocking number of women](#), many of them moms, dropped out of the workforce by September 2020. And by December 2020, “parents were still in the same situation they were forced into nine months ago: trying to balance work, childcare, education, and keeping their families safe as a pandemic raged virtually unchecked around them.”

On the positive side, the [McKinsey & Company report](#) also shows that this is an opportunity to build a better workplace. “This is a pivotal moment,” the report concludes, **“If companies rise to the moment with bold action, they can protect hard-won gains in gender diversity and lay the foundation for a better workplace long after Covid-19 is behind us.”**

These articles give us timely tools and resources to address the current widening gender gap in the workplace, but we ought to look at existing childcare policy and infrastructure simultaneously for a sustainable and equitable long-term solution.

We are indeed at a tipping point and a solution will require a large-scale shift in American work culture. Perhaps at a local level, we can become groundbreakers on implementing policy around these issues to retain and sustain a feasible solution for working parents and primary caregivers. Let's start by doing ALL we can.



Fernanda Wilent

Director of Community Engagement

VAN INITIATIVES AND CONVENINGS



Washington County Thrives has been around for a long time. In fact, many of its stakeholders began meeting in response to the Great Recession when Community Action first approached VAN and said, “We’re the experts on poverty in Washington County, and you’re the convener, so how about we partner up.” Together, we created space for triage during the worst of the economic crisis, and after the recovery, stakeholders welcomed VAN’s continued role as convener of their collaborative efforts.

Rather than focus on a single issue, Thrives operates at the intersection where many forces come together to prevent people from getting ahead in life. Thrives advocates for systemic changes that remove barriers and increase access to foundational resources, such as affordable housing, job skills training, child care, mental health services, nutritious food, and addiction treatment.

Thrives supported passage of both bond and tax measures to address the housing and homelessness crises across the metro region. Many of Thrives stakeholders participated in an ad hoc committee convened by VAN which led to the publication of [“Improving PSH Service Delivery in Washington County.”](#)

Many were also on the Advisory Committee of the County’s Local Implementation Plan which was approved by the Metro regional oversight committee on April 26.

Thrives also submitted a [letter to the Board of County Commissioners](#) that recommends changes to current systems to include:

- better alignment of housing, health, workforce, and human services providers in partnership with government agencies across jurisdictions;
- expanded navigational support to overcome existing barriers that prevent people from accessing vital services designed to keep them stably housed;
- consistent policies and investments among jurisdictions that deliver clear direction and effective support to providers.

With its sights on implementation, Thrives is focused on building capacity to best leverage funding dollars and meet the needs of Washington County’s most vulnerable residents. To learn more, join the Collaborative on the third Wednesdays of each month from 8:30-10am. May’s featured topic will be on the intersection of workforce training and child care.

[Join the list!](#)

Join the mailing list to receive updates and grab a seat at the table (on Zoom) – 3rd Wednesdays each month from 8:30-10am!

VAN INITIATIVES AND CONVENINGS

EQUITY, DIVERSITY, AND INCLUSION

In 2019, VAN formerly adopted its Equity, Diversity, and Inclusion initiative. Since then, staff have been busy with our efforts to advance equity internally, as well as in our work with the community. We're near the end of a strategic planning process that places equity at the center, including a revised Statement on Equity and other policies that reflect our commitment to EDI.

VAN continues to convene the Racial Equity Collaborative (REC) which launched a [Racial Equity Plan](#) at the end of 2020 to serve as a model for innovative partnerships and capacity building of culturally specific organizations rooted in this work. The Racial Equity Plan guides the work of the collaborative and encourages us to look for win-win opportunities where the REC can jointly provide support and expertise to advance equity while building the internal capacity of its members and the communities they represent.

As an example, the REC partnered with [ECONorthwest](#), a for-profit company with urban development expertise, on a successful proposal for the [City of Beaverton's Downtown Equity Strategy](#). Together, we will engage the community to develop recommendations that prevent and mitigate displacement of people and businesses in the downtown area, while creating a place where all people feel welcome and included. We will especially focus on the needs of people of color and all who stand to be most impacted by downtown revitalization efforts. As an outcome of this project, Beaverton staff and elected officials will be better equipped to embrace EDI principles and apply a racial equity lens for urban redevelopment and public infrastructure projects throughout the city.

We invite you to learn more and follow the updates of this project at beavertonoregon.gov/downtonequity.

VAN seeks to further explore opportunities like this, since it is a model of innovative partnership that allows for equity and justice to be built intentionally.

We welcome new organizations to join the REC and to think creatively about how to accomplish our broader goals. If you are interested in learning more or becoming part of the REC, please contact VAN or any of the REC partners!



[Contact REC](#)

If you are interested in learning more or becoming part of the REC, please reach out!

NEW AT VAN



VAN is excited to introduce a new podcast!

Our new podcast, [Finding Community](#), will be coming to you each month, featuring interviews with people making a difference throughout Washington County.

In our first episode, VAN's Executive Director Glenn Montgomery sits down with Washington County Commissioner Nafisa Fai. They discuss the path that led her to public service, her current priorities, and her vision of a "beloved community."

Find it and subscribe on your favorite podcast app, or at [spreaker.com/show/finding-community](https://www.spreaker.com/show/finding-community).

Got VAN?

OUR mission is to bring people together across sectors to address complex issues for the benefit of the Washington County community.

Need a convener or value-added facilitator?



**Vision
Action
Network**

Contact Glenn Montgomery, Executive Director
glennc@visionactionnetwork.org or 503-846-5792

Follow VAN



IN THE SPOTLIGHT

EVENTS & CONVENINGS



City of Hillsboro Hosts Community Dialogue Workshops

Hillsboro Mediation invites residents throughout Washington County to [register via email](#) by May 7 at noon for a series of FREE online workshops on May 8, 15, 22 (Saturdays). These workshops are designed for community members to learn and practice real dialogue that uncovers complexity and cultivates connection. Email your name and cell phone number to Mediation@Hillsboro-Oregon.gov.



THPRD Expands Multilingual Welcome Center

The Tualatin Hills Parks and Recreation Multilingual Welcome Center has been expanded to offer special registration assistance in more languages. Details are still being finalized, but, in addition to Spanish, they expect to offer translation services for Arabic, Farsi, Somali, and more. All non-English speakers needing extra assistance are encouraged to attend the [Multilingual Center Event](#), offered 7:30 am to 12:00 pm on Saturday, May 1 at THPRD's Howard M. Terpenning Complex at 15707 SW Walker Rd. Learn more and check out [Financial Aid for THPRD programs](#) at www.thprd.org.

COVID-19 Vaccine Virtual Town Hall

Hillsboro's Youth Advisory Council (YAC) is hosting a virtual Town Hall event on Friday, May 14, from 6-7 pm. If you have questions about the COVID-19 vaccine, including where and how to get it, join the YAC and a panel of experts to get answers. For more info, visit Hillsboro-Oregon.gov/YAC.

COVID-19 Vaccine Virtual Town Hall

Friday, May 14 | 6 pm – 7 pm

Answers to your questions.

Facts from the experts.



Richard Adam Kellis, M.D.
Nafisa Far
Dave Boden
Tina Edlund

Introduction by
Mayor Steve Callaway



Hosted by the
Youth Advisory Council
YAC
education equity environment

Visit Hillsboro-Oregon.gov/YAC for details

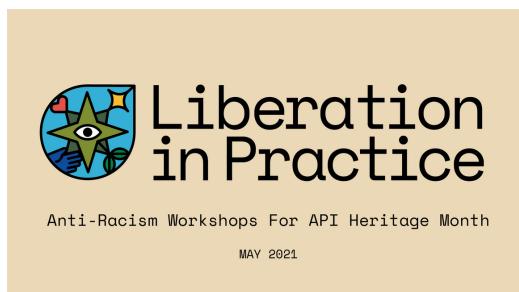
IN THE SPOTLIGHT

EVENTS & CONVENINGS

Oregon Humanities Connect in Place Series

Oregon Humanities is hosting virtual conversations with people across the state on Tuesday evenings at 5pm, with the aim of creating spaces for Oregonians to gather, connect, reflect, and talk with one another. Registration is FREE. Learn more and register at oregonhumanities.org/.

Oregon Humanities



Anti-Racism Workshops for the BIPOC Community

Asian Pacific American Network of Oregon (APANO) is hosting a series of free anti-racism workshops [for and by the BIPOC community](#), [Liberation in Practice: Anti-Racism Workshops for Asian & Pacific Islander Heritage Month](#). A special event on Friday, May 14, 2021 is open to ALL audiences, [Celebrating Asian & Pacific Islander Resilience & Solidarity](#). Learn more and register at apano.org/liberationinpractice/.

MESO offering free online classes

MESO has a mission to elevate and empower historically excluded and under resourced entrepreneurs with tailored business assistance and flexible capital to build family wealth through small business ownership. Free classes are offered via Zoom. Find out more at mesopdx.org/education/.



Small Business Workshop: Washington County Economic Trends

This online presentation and discussion with a state labor economist focused on Washington County will examine how COVID-19 has impacted the area. Thursday, May 6, 9am-10am, with Brandon Schrader, Oregon Employment Department Workforce Analyst. More info at tigard-or.gov/business/small_business_webinar.php.

IN THE SPOTLIGHT

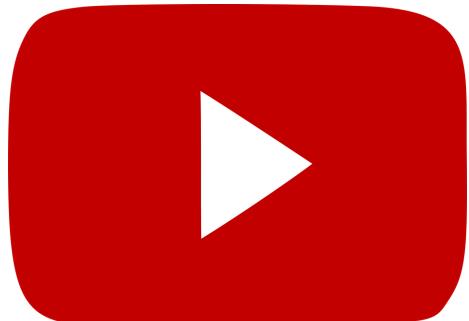
ROUNDABOUT THE COUNTY

Washington County and cities give yearly update!

Check out our [YouTube playlist](#) featuring the 2021 State of the County and State of the City addresses.

Subscribe to VAN on YouTube!

youtube.com/user/visionactionnetwork



WCCLS Libraries Limited Reopening

Many of our local libraries have reopened for limited browsing, use of computers, and other services. Each library is different, so check your [local library's website](#) for information on appointment requirements and current capacity limits. Visit wccls.org for more info.

Reopening Help for Washington County Businesses

[Washington Co. Business Recovery Centers](#) are open now to help businesses throughout our county reopen and recover. Small businesses in Washington County can place a free online order for the Personal Protective Equipment (PPE) necessary for reopening, available in limited quantities. More info at businessrecoverycenters.org.



WashCo seeks volunteers to serve!

[Apply by May 18, 2021](#)

Make your voice heard in Washington County. Apply to represent your community on a board, council or committee that advises the Board of Commissioners on matters of interest to people who live and work in Washington County. Find out more and apply at: www.co.washington.or.us/CAO/BoardsCommissions/

IN THE SPOTLIGHT

ROUNDABOUT THE COUNTY



Long Range Planning Work Program

The [Draft 2021-22 Long Range Planning Work Program](#) for Washington County is open for public comment through 5 p.m. May 7.

The Annual Work Program identifies tasks for Washington County Transportation and Community Planning staff. These tasks include ordinances, studies, projects and other activities.

Collaboration for better services and outcomes

Portland Community College's workforce development division helps participants find quality, living-wage employment and economic prosperity. Check out [this article](#) about the collective efforts to engage and align community-based, education and [WorkSource Portland-Metro](#), and how that collaboration results in better services and outcomes for all. www.pcc.edu/news/2021/04/partnership-that-works/.



Nonprofit Employee Compensation Survey

Feedback Wanted - Deadline April 30!

In collaboration with partner Adelante Mujeres, VAN invites Washington County nonprofits to complete a short [Employee Compensation Survey](#). The survey is meant to complement, rather than replace others, such as the NAO and MBL surveys. We are interested in how local nonprofits set wages/salaries and what the sector is doing to further equity in employee compensation. All survey responses will be kept confidential, and the aggregate results will be shared with all respondents. The deadline to complete the survey is Friday, April 30, 2021. surveymonkey.com/r/73YKFBG

IN THE SPOTLIGHT

ROUNDABOUT THE COUNTY

Beaverton free tax site extended until July 15

CASH Oregon and Metropolitan Family Services (in collaboration with the City of Beaverton) will be extending its free tax prep site through July 15 in response to high need. For more information, visit beavertonoregon.gov/1260/Tax-Assistance-Program.

The City of Beaverton is now accepting Welcoming Week Grant Applications!

Applications are now open to support community-led, interactive events for the public as part of Beaverton Welcoming Week, September 10-19, 2021. Grant awards of up to \$1500 are available to support events that focus on creating opportunities for cross-cultural relationship building between immigrants and U.S.-born residents and affirm Beaverton's identity as a welcoming city.



Funded projects must serve the Beaverton area and priority is given to proposals built through cross cultural and cross sector partnerships. Application deadline: Friday, May 7. More info at www.BeavertonOregon.gov/WelcomingWeek

Farmers and Night Markets resume

Local communities throughout Washington County are welcoming back Farmers and Night Markets. Check out the links below for information on each market's dates, hours, COVID-19 precautions, vendor sign-up instructions, and more!

[Beaverton Night Market](#)

[Beaverton Farmers Market](#)

[Cornelius Farmers Market](#)

[Forest Grove Farmers Market](#)

[Hillsboro Tuesday Night Market](#)

[Hillsboro Farmers Markets](#)

[Sherwood Saturday Market](#)

[Tigard Farmers Market](#)



IN THE SPOTLIGHT

ROUNDABOUT THE COUNTY

Youth Leadership Opportunity

The City of Beaverton invites area high school students to apply to the [Mayor's Youth Advisory Board \(MYAB\)](#) for the next school year. MYAB's goal is to serve the common good of the community and provide a voice for youth while organizing constructive community projects, strengthening relationships among all members of the community, promoting youth activism in governmental affairs, and acting as a resource for any city organization upon request.

Beaverton area high school students of all different backgrounds and abilities are invited to apply. There is no GPA requirement to be considered for MYAB. Applicants will be selected based on their background and unique experiences that they bring to the board. Deadline for applications is Friday, May 21. For more info and to apply, visit beavertonoregon.gov/289/Mayors-Youth-Advisory-Board.



Members sought for new Climate Action Task Force

The City of Beaverton is seeking to fill positions on the city's new [Climate Action Task Force](#). The Task force will enhance City Council awareness of community perspectives on climate change. Apply to share your lived experience, provide feedback on the city's climate action work, and offer insight on potential impacts to the community.

Members will be appointed by the Mayor and City Council for up to a three-year term, beginning in July 2021. Stipends will be provided to members for meeting participation. The deadline for applications is Sunday, May 23. For more information visit beavertonoregon.gov/ClimateActionTaskForce

IN THE SPOTLIGHT

COVID-19 CORNER

Reopening Washington County

Find out the county's current risk level, capacity limits for gatherings, and more on the county's [reopening site](#).



All adults (ages 16+) in Oregon are now eligible for COVID-19 vaccine.

To stay up to date, OHA recommends the following steps:

1. Check out OHA's website:
govstatus.egov.com/OR-OHA-COVID-19
2. Text ORCOVID to 898211 to get text/SMS updates (English and Spanish only)
3. Email ORCOVID@211info.org (All languages)

For more information about [vaccines](#) and continued COVID-19 [testing](#) in Washington County, please refer to Washington County's Health & Human Services website at co.washington.or.us/covid-19

Relevant links:

- Information on [test sites](#) in Washington County.
- Where and when to get a vaccine - [OHA's eligibility and scheduling tool](#). (English / Spanish).
- Washington County looks through an [equity lens](#) to address Covid-19.



Vision Action Network

Mission: VAN engages stakeholders across sectors to collaboratively address critical issues in Washington County.

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WorkSystems, Inc.

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Community Action

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