

**Solid Ground believes poverty is solvable, that people know best what they need, and that they should be involved in decisions that affect their lives.** We conduct a Community Needs Assessment once every three years to listen to and honor input from people we serve, and to collaborate with partners to ensure our services support people to create the lives they want to live.

**Three goals of this work:**

- 1) Identify how well the needs of people living on low incomes are being met
- 2) Identify barriers that limit our effectiveness
- 3) Develop recommendations to enhance our community’s ability to address these challenges

## Key Findings

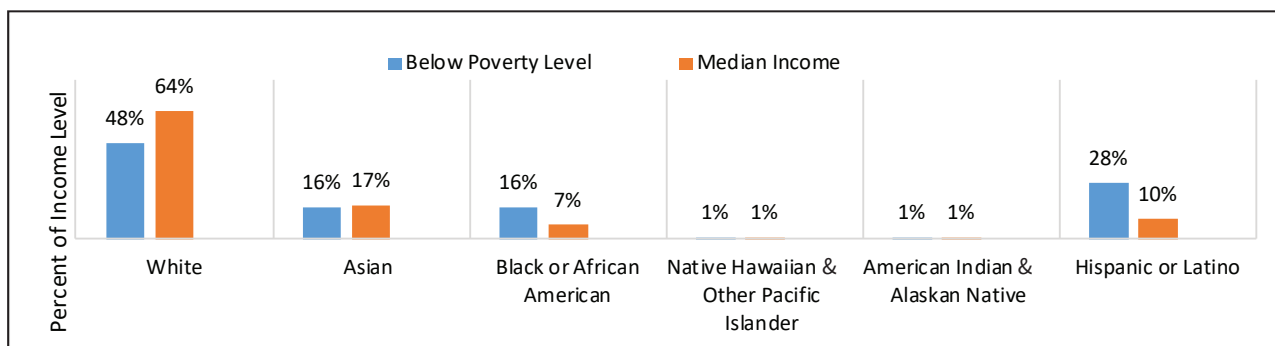
**Whole Lives:** People want to be seen as whole beings, not isolated problems. Issues such as “housing” and “health” are interconnected in a person’s life and by how systems “treat” them; they often cannot be addressed in isolation. People also want earlier and deeper support before they reach a state of crisis.

**Building Commitment to End Poverty in the Community:** Growing inequity in our community feels overpowering to many people. Community members want to help but don’t know where to start, and they often struggle with being identified as a problem to their neighbors.

**Internal Support:** Navigating the system itself is a huge challenge. There is a shared desire both for deeper, consistent support between nonprofits and people accessing services, as well as for agencies to mitigate the impact of various program restrictions on participants.

## 2017 King/Snohomish County Households at Income Level, by Race

▶ \$20,420 = Poverty Level for a 3-person household ▶ \$89,675 = Area Median Income for a 3-person household



## Gender & Poverty

**In Seattle in 2017, 53.3% of people who live under the federal poverty line identified as women,** up from 50.4% in 2014. Nationally, 55.4% of people living in poverty identified as women. The US Census is limited in its ability to provide information on individuals whose identities do not fit into the gender binary (i.e., men and women). In 2015, the National Center for Transgender Equality reported that 28% of transgender people in our state lived in poverty, 14% were unemployed, and 37% experienced homelessness at some point. Of those, 33% avoided staying in a shelter because of fear of mistreatment due to their gender.

# Top Community-Identified Needs

(Ranked by the percentage of respondents who identified each need.)



## Health: 20%

*“People of color in King County are more likely to be uninsured and to have poor health outcomes.” (King County, 2018)*

- ▶ Lack of accessible and affordable medical care
- ▶ Inability to actively make healthy choices
- ▶ Increased healthcare barriers for those experiencing chronic homelessness

## Civic & Community Involvement: 18%

*“Social isolation is increasingly understood as not only a significant cause of emotional difficulty, but also as a potent risk factor for health-harming conditions.” (King County)*

- ▶ People living on low incomes report not feeling fully seen and valued
- ▶ Social isolation and lack of community
- ▶ Lack of power to navigate supportive systems



## Housing: 17%

*“A total of 12,112 individuals were experiencing homelessness in Seattle/King County on January 26, 2018. Fifty-two percent (52%) of the population was unsheltered, living on the street, or in parks, tents, vehicles, or other places not meant for human habitation.” (All Home, 2018)*

- ▶ Lack of affordable housing
- ▶ Lack of support when housing is at risk or when newly housed
- ▶ Additional barriers when chronically homeless

## Income & Asset Building: 15%

*From 2014-2017, the national cost of living rose 3.5%. The Seattle metropolitan area, on the other hand, had an increase of 6.8% after already starting above the national average in 2014.*

- ▶ Income inequality creates heavier burdens on those living on low incomes
- ▶ There are financial hurdles to navigate when working with a fixed income
- ▶ People report not feeling ready or supported to take on living wage employment



## Mobility: 8%

*Many respondents commented on the cost burden for people on low incomes who live further outside of the city but need to commute in.*

- ▶ Challenging for a growing number of older adults and homebound individuals
- ▶ Lack of transportation options that work for different needs
- ▶ High financial and time costs of transportation