



## 2020 NUHSA in Action

As this extraordinary year comes to a close, we reflect on the extreme challenges many in our community have faced. The COVID-19 pandemic and related political upheaval have exacerbated health inequities, thrown millions into economic distress, and heightened mental health needs. This tumultuous year has also seen a renewed focus and commitment to racial equity and a movement led by youth to demand justice.

Human service providers are needed now more than ever, and organizations are stretched thin to meet increasing demand. Over the last year, NUHSA has worked hard to serve these essential workers, advocate on their behalf, and provide a supportive and collaborative network to share information, leverage resources and create greater impact. Together, our strong alliance of service providers, nonprofits, faith communities, city and county leaders, school districts and community members have helped meet the critical human service needs of our community.

The ramifications of the pandemic will be severe, and many will continue to struggle. NUHSA, along with its members and partners, are proud to reaffirm our commitment to advocate for a strong, accessible health and human services system and will continue to lead North King County in ensuring everyone is healthy and has the support needed to reach their full potential.

### Year in Review

In 2020, NUHSA established 3 broad goals focused on affordable housing, advocacy and homelessness (both in terms of addressing short-term shelter needs and longer-term supportive housing and assistance). We have expanded our membership; grown our Board of Directors; increased communication with our members and the community through our newsletter and social media; and engaged with our members, partners and governments across North King County in a variety of ways.

Accomplishments include the following:

#### Advocacy

- Communicated with city leadership (councils and city managers) to advocate for an increased focus on human services funding. Members attended city council meetings and provided public comment as each city's proposed biennium budget was discussed. **All North King County cities have committed to sustained or increased human services budgets for 2021-2022.**
- Convened members and partners in a coordinated effort to **restore human services funding in the City of Bothell Biennium Budget** where it had initially been eliminated entirely. Through meetings with nearly all City Councilmembers and the City Manager, along with a letter campaign and public comment, funding was fully restored for 2021 with the intent to revamp the grant program for allocation in 2022.

- Collected information from school districts, providers and others regarding behavioral health resources and **advocated for increased behavioral health support, particularly for youth.** Disseminated these resources via social media, our newsletter and direct outreach.
- Served as a member of the **Connect2Community Network**, a community of organizations working to build a unified information exchange network in King County and co-designing shared standards, practices and tools that support care coordination and improve health and wellness in our region.
- Participated in the **North King County Census Coalition 2020** to support a robust regional effort and ensure strong participation. Also served as a **Stakeholder Toolkit Advisory Group** member to review and advise on an overarching 2020 Census campaign creative concept for King County, developing a communications toolkit and supporting community awareness and use of these materials.
- Approved a statement in **support of progressive revenue** in partnership with WA Low Income Housing Alliance and others that encourages state level action to address the inequality embedded in our tax code and increase funding for human services, including affordable housing and homelessness programs.
- Participated on the **Veterans, Seniors & Human Services Levy** Advisory Board, along with continued monitoring of implementation to note gaps in housing stability and advocating for directed funding that best serves our most vulnerable populations.

## Shelter

- Partnered with the City of Shoreline, St. Dunstan's Episcopal Church and Lake City Partners to host the **Shoreline Severe Weather Shelter**, now in its second year. NUHSA helped recruit and train 11 volunteers, purchased supplies and will oversee volunteer coordination throughout the Nov.1-March 30<sup>th</sup> timeframe. Last winter (Dec. 1-April 1), the Shoreline Severe Weather Shelter was open 14 nights, serving between 2 and 11 individuals each night.
- Participated in the **North King County Shelter Task Force**, comprised of city council members from all the five cities and others to address a 24/7 and long-term shelter for North King County. A grant was submitted to the Department of Commerce (DOC), and with this funding support, the City of Shoreline, in partnership with King County and Lake City Partners, began exploring a possible regional shelter site.
- Advocated for the proposed regional **Shoreline Enhanced Shelter** which would provide 24/7 shelter, case management and services for homeless individuals, with the long-term goal to redevelop the property for permanent supportive housing.

## Grants

- **Housing Development Consortium (HDC):** With funding from King County and in partnership HDC, ARCH and Cedar River Group, implemented the *North King County & Snoqualmie Valley Subregional Collaboration for Affordable Housing* project with the aim to facilitate a deeper engagement in affordable housing strategies and related coordinated and coalition-based activities.

NUHSA organized three *Affordable Housing 101* public workshops for interested community members and advocates to learn about affordable housing options, tools and best practices - and then promoted these presentations through print and social media, community partners and direct outreach. Each workshop was targeted to a specific region and tailored to include speakers and data relevant to the needs of each community, including Shoreline/Lake Forest Park; Kenmore/Bothell/Woodinville; and

Carnation/Duvall/North Bend/Snoqualmie. Resources and ideas for staying engaged were shared. Interest in these workshops was strong, with approx. 50 in attendance at each workshop (with around 80 registering for each).

The second part to the contract involves a housing needs assessment and NUHSA has helped coordinate and facilitate these conversations for the North King County communities. The assessment will help determine overall readiness to implement more affordable housing in each community, with the potential goal of creating a cross-city strategy for the development of low-income housing. Results will also help determine what technical or organizational assistance may be needed by local jurisdictions in order to increase low-income housing production and implement long-term affordable housing policies. A summit of elected and community leaders will be held in the spring of 2021 to share results and determine next steps.

- **HealthierHere:** With this support, NUHSA has participated in efforts to develop cross-sector partnerships and explore collaborative approaches for decreasing health disparities while also increasing individual and community health. Regional goals include transforming the way health care is delivered to King County residents by working with medical, behavioral health, social service and community providers to build a welcoming, accessible and integrated delivery system fostering health and wellness for all.

As part of this work, HealthierHere (with Kaiser Permanente and Community Health Plan of WA) launched in June a web-based technology platform (Unite Us) that enables its users to send “closed-loop” referrals. Over 30 clinical and community organizations are now active on the platform in King County. NUHSA serves as a member of the *Connect2Community Network*, which grew out of this effort, working to build a unified information exchange network and co-designing shared standards, practices and tools that support care coordination and improve health and wellness in our region.

## Partnerships

- In partnership with the Cities of Lake Forest Park and the Rotary Clubs of Lake Forest Park and Shoreline - and with funding support from King County - NUHSA collaborated to bring a **YouthCare Resource Navigator** to Shoreline and Lake Forest Park. This person will provide case management and connection to resources for homeless youth ages 14-22, including food support, health care services, behavioral health supports, legal assistance, educational support, employment/vocational resources, and more. The position will be housed at the Teen Center in Shoreline and have an office at the Lake Forest Park Town Center but will work mostly out in the community to help youth navigate the complex systems for ensuring stability, safety and long-term success.
- Hosted a **Best Starts for Kids Community Conversation** with nearly 40 human service providers, individuals and agencies serving children/youth and focused on equity and health access. Participants received an update on BSK, provided feedback, and discussed needs and gaps in North King County.
- Continued to actively support the **Shoreline Community Court** through promotion and weekly participation as Court Volunteers.
- Staff and board partnered and collaborated through participation on the **King County Human Services Coalition; North King County Mobility Coalition; and Northshore Human Services Coalition.**

Monthly meetings provide opportunities for NUHSA members and the Board of Directors to learn about area services and organizations and build a foundation for partnership and collaboration.

*Presentations included:*

- **State Representative Cindy Ryu** (32<sup>nd</sup> Legislative District);
- Theresa LaCroix, Executive Director; **Shoreline-Lake Forest Park Senior Center**
- Colleen Kelly, Community Services Manager; City of Shoreline  
- *Affordable housing revenue discussion on behalf of the **King County Affordable Housing Committee** to identify potential revenue sources/tools.*
- Mary Ellen Stone, Executive Director; **King County Sexual Assault Resource Center**
- Huma Zarif, Staff Attorney, Northwest Health Law Advocates; **Public Charge**

**This year, due to the pandemic and civic and social unrest, NUHSA prioritized discussion and reflection to support growth and learning, and we identified gaps and leveraged resources to better connect and serve our community.**

- May & June meetings focused on information sharing related to basic needs support, including food access, rental assistance, testing/healthcare, transportation, childcare and remote learning. Key was connecting school districts with human service organizations, particularly as we transitioned into summer.
- July meeting focused on racial equity and what this means for human services and NUHSA. How do our members provide services for people of color? How are we complicit in supporting systemic racism? This will be ongoing work for NUHSA and our members as we recognize a responsibility to become more educated and lift everyone up in our community.

## **Events**

### **Affordable Housing Week (May)**

Partnered with Housing Development Consortium to advocate for *Affordable Housing Week*.

### **Human Services Awards (Dec.)**

This annual awards program honors those who have made a significant contribution to the health and welfare of our community by advocating for health and human services and strengthening our community through their initiative and leadership. 2020 recipients include:

- *Human Services Champion of the Year:*  
George Ahearn, EastWest Food Rescue  
Karen Tynes, Community Volunteer
- *Outstanding Human Services Program:*  
Babies of Homelessness  
Shoreline Community Court
- *Youth Human Services Leadership Award:*  
Black Lives Matter Shoreline

***NUHSA's members and Board of Directors are invested in supporting our community and ensuring that all North King County residents have access to a strong health and human services system.***

***Join us!***