

A NEW PHASE

The Eastside Pathways Partnership continues to work toward sustainable change in systems by responding to the calls for more equity and representation in order to meet the needs of each community its Partners serve. Within the Partnership as a whole, communities of color shared and laid out their desired path towards a new leadership structure and these systems level changes have begun to reshape the Partnership as it looks to shift the landscape of its collective work toward equity.

The shifting of power began in 2020 with the East King County community's recognition that the Partnership's decision-making power and authority should rest more in the hands of the community than the Board of Directors. The recognition stemmed from a gap between the racial and ethnic demographics of the community served and those of the Eastside Pathways Board – the primary decision-making body for the Partnership.

A group of 26 individual partners formed the Reimagining Leadership Group to create an onboarding process for members of the newly formed Leadership Table.



The Leadership Table is comprised of community members (youth and adults) who hold informal authority as advocates for their communities. The Leadership Table will advocate for community level priorities, provide guidance on the Partnership's mission and vision, and hold formal authority on behalf of collective work of the Partnership – Collaborative Action Networks, Councils, and programs such as All Partner Meetings and/or leadership development opportunities.

In addition to these changes, Stephanie Cherrington, Eastside Pathways' Executive Director stepped down in December 2022 after 11 years leading the Backbone. Stephanie tirelessly advocated on behalf of the Eastside Pathways Partnership and East King County overall. She rightly believed that collective impact was the tool to solve the inequities in the East King County region and grew out a backbone staff to accelerate that work.

In April of 2023, Kalika Curry, formerly the Community Impact Manager, stepped into the role of Executive. Kalika brings strong social capital, deep knowledge of adaptive work and an unerring focus on racial equity to shepherd this work forward. Looking at the current state of the Partnership, Kalika sees one of her main tasks as shifting and disseminating power amongst and between Eastside Pathways Partners and the East King County community.

EASTSIDE PATHWAYS FRAMEWORK

Over the past three years, the Eastside Pathways Partnership has worked to exemplify the collective impact model by adopting a framework with three areas centering the focus population.

Person-Level - The East King County community sitting at the center and providing information about the acute and long-standing challenges that the Partnership needs to address.

Program-Level - The Collaborative Action Networks where Partners combine their resources with the tools they learn to collaborate and to address the challenges raised by the focus population.

System-Level – The Eastside Pathways Board, Leadership Table, Councils and Backbone marshalling and directing the resources necessary to support Partners in addressing these challenges.

The framework directs the Partnership's work and reinforces the notion that the community will provide knowledge and context by way of lived experience from their organization and/or community to drive the systemic challenges that exist in East King County. This framework also guides the resources and the actions to center, empower, and support those East King County communities most impacted.

While centering the impacted community at the Person-Level, the Partnership is also committed to providing ongoing training and support for individuals showing up in collaborative spaces such as: Collaborative Action Networks, Leadership Table and Councils.

The Partnership has found that stakeholders experience the greatest value-add when they exercise adaptive leadership and data-informed decision-making in their communities and organizations. These are some of the frameworks and tools that allow Partners to think and act more effectively towards systemic change and enact practice and policy change to improve their service to their community.

CAPACITY BUILDING

At all levels of the framework, the Eastside Pathways Partnership builds capacity tailored to help Partners grow and sustain collective work in East King County.

Among other offerings, the Partnership builds this capacity through the Wisdom Series, a series of talks, presentations, and screenings to encourage inquiry and action that create a community discussion to bring together different sectors of the Partnership. Additionally the Partnership hosts All Partner Meetings, the Eastside Pathways Institute and the Ages & Stages Convening to support peer to peer learning.

In the most recent Partnership Survey, Partners listed Racial Equity, Collective Impact, and Policy & Advocacy as areas in which they would like to receive further professional development for their staff.

Equity in Communications

Since the pandemic began, the Equity in Communications Group has used strategies to help students and families navigate a time of remote living and learning at the beginning of the COVID-19 pandemic.

After conducting a focus group with Latine families, they created a video newsletter from Bellevue and Lake Washington School Districts to deliver information by native Spanish speakers - featured on Facebook and YouTube in 15 minute bi-weekly segments. It covers dynamic information from both school districts, including how to access programs and navigate the school system to impact students and families.

In 2023, these videos have had an average weekly reach of 3,464 recipients, with an average of 106 weekly engagements.

This group's efforts are addressing gaps within the Bellevue and Lake Washington School Districts' communication and helping create policies that eliminate these gaps systemically.

A number of Eastside Pathways Partners including organizations such as Sistema Escolar USA, City of Kirkland, Bellevue and Lake Washington School Districts have provided resources to create and sustain this group. Sistema Escolar has been leading the translation services and community focus groups.

THE WAY FORWARD

2023 will continue to bring changes to the Eastside Pathways Partnership as it charts its direction forward. The Leadership changes will be accompanied by a growing Backbone staff and a more diverse array of Organizational, Community, and Philanthropic Partners representing the East King County community. Additionally, the Partnership is exploring a Youth Partner Pathway to broaden perspectives on the collective work.

As the primary convener for East King County organizations, the Partnership will rely on qualitative and quantitative data, the Leadership Table, East King County community and youth to amend its offerings where necessary to serve the needs of the Partnership and community. The leadership will lead the focus on addressing accessibility and racial equity at all levels of the Partnership, the use of data to connect the ongoing work of the community and CANs to the Partnership level outcomes, and how the Partnership sees diversity, equity, inclusion and belonging (DEIB) – beyond simply racial and ethnic lines.