School’s Out Washington
2019-2022 Strategic Plan

September 2019
EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

In any organization’s journey, there are long gradual climbs, occasional dips, and from time to time, a steep ascent. Looking up from the last few years of rapid climbing at School’s Out Washington, it is clear that we have reached a new vantage. After more than doubling in size, opening offices across the state, launching major new and ambitious programming, and transitioning from our founding director to new leadership, we have found that a different approach is needed to navigate a changing landscape and scout the path that lies ahead.

Our new strategic plan leverages the strong foundation we’ve built over the past 32 years to reach for an even bigger, systemic impact, responding to the following “Big Questions” as we prioritize our work over the next three years:

1. How can School’s Out facilitate the building of an equitable Expanded Learning Opportunity ecosystem?
2. How can School’s Out embody a practice of continuous data-driven quality improvement and innovation across the organization?

We are interested, first and foremost, in advancing equity for youth of color, youth in poverty, and other disenfranchised youth and families through their engagement in high quality, culturally responsive, and accessible summer and afterschool programs. We will do this by working to strengthen the formal systems (policies, institutional practices, and funding) and the informal and cultural systems (communities of practice, beliefs, and youth and family voice) that are needed to make this happen. Our strategic plan recognizes that to do this well, our role must be that of facilitator, helping to shape a vision and theory of change informed by community, while becoming more targeted in our programming and supporting providers, youth, and families to shape and participate in advocacy.

To achieve ambitious work that advances equity, we also recognize that we need to shore up our tools and practices as a learning organization. In our strategic plan, we focus on growing our evaluation capacity, positioning us to improve our work, share best practices, and be more responsive to the needs and perspectives of youth and providers. We also recognize the need to strengthen and formalize our internal practices around continuous quality improvement, increasing our own effectiveness while better aligning these internal practices to our programmatic work.

I am confident that this is the right strategic plan for School’s Out Washington at this point in our journey. These strategies were shaped through robust stakeholder engagement and an inclusive planning process. In three years, with the implementation of this plan, we will be positioned to be a stronger, clearer learning organization supporting equity through major advances in high quality expanded learning ecosystems. We’re ready for this next climb—the view is going to be great.

In solidarity,

Elizabeth Whitford
CEO
BUILDING ON OUR MOMENTUM

School’s Out Washington is at a pivotal moment. In the past decade, with support from key partners including the Raikes Foundation, Department of Children, Youth, and Families, Office of Superintendent of Public Instruction, and a diverse array of expanded learning programs across the state, School’s Out has established and grown an Expanded Learning Opportunity Quality System. This system includes tools to define what quality looks like and a suite of supports for programs to engage in a continuous improvement process.

Building on this momentum, School’s Out has utilized our reach and reputation with funders, policy makers, and community stakeholders to elevate the need for an equitable statewide expanded learning system that supports the ongoing learning and development of young people beyond the school day. To date, School’s Out has engaged 756 expanded learning programs in quality improvement initiatives, leading to better results for youth and a common language and understanding among staff to feel connected and part of a field of practice. In 2017, through successful advocacy efforts, the Washington State Legislature funded the Expanded Learning Opportunities Quality Initiative enabling School’s Out and our partners to evaluate the effectiveness of our quality intervention with positive results leading to ongoing funding of this work. School’s Out also launched Elevate Washington, a comprehensive, state-wide youth program directory and data resource, housing a comprehensive database to paint the full picture of the expanded learning field.

During this period of rapid growth, School’s Out has nearly doubled in size, including opening offices in Tacoma and Spokane to better serve and be responsive to local needs. In King County, School’s Out was selected to lead and administer the Best Starts for Kids Quality Out-of-School Time investment based on our long record of promoting high quality and equitable practices in expanded learning.

All of these efforts have resulted in more children and youth having access to quality expanded learning opportunities that provide holistic support, enrichment, and skill building.

While we celebrate the strong foundation and successful efforts that have impacted hundreds of thousands of young people across Washington, we know there are many more youth who do not have access to these same opportunities. School’s Out’s 2019-2022 Strategic Plan provides a framework to address this inequity and to increase the quantity, quality, and availability of programs for young people across the state.
STRATEGIC PLAN PROCESS OVERVIEW
School’s Out Washington’s 2019-2022 Strategic Plan utilizes the La Piana model, a process in which two Big Questions are identified, indicating an opportunity, threat, or challenge of significance that the organization will be facing in the immediate future. One question focuses on how to further strengthen School’s Out’s internal organizational infrastructure and the second question focuses on external issues related to our mission-driven work. These Big Questions, along with the strategies and tactics included in the 2019-2022 Strategic Plan, will guide how School’s Out drives resources and streamlines our work toward these critical areas.

RACIAL EQUITY FRAMEWORK
School’s Out has a longstanding commitment to using a racial equity framework in our programming and organizational practices. We designed an inclusive process to gather input from a broad range of stakeholders, including staff, board, community members, and program partners and used these diverse perspectives to inform key strategies. Throughout the strategic planning process, we deployed a racial equity strategy screen to keep School’s Out accountable to our racial equity commitment. The screen required us to consider whether and how the strategy was positioned to advance equitable outcomes for youth of color and youth in poverty, capacities and skills needed to implement the strategy, and what needs to be monitored and considered to avoid any unintended negative consequences around racial equity during implementation. The completed screen for our final strategies is included as an addendum to this document.

STRATEGIC PLANNING TASKFORCE
A taskforce comprised of School’s Out staff and board members was formed to provide oversight and a feedback loop throughout the strategic planning process. Members were selected based on interest and their ability to represent diverse perspectives across the organization, including in job function, geographic location, ethnic/racial diversity, and gender. The taskforce used the Color Brave Space norms developed by Equity Matters as working communication agreements during meetings. Specific roles of the taskforce included:

- Reviewing data gathered from stakeholders;
- Facilitating overall staff engagement in the process;
- Writing and recommending the final Big Questions, strategies, and tactics, based on staff and Board themes, and community stakeholder input;
- Developing a working draft of key terms and definitions; and
- Determining a strategy screen for the plan and assessing the draft strategies accordingly.

ENGAGING DIVERSE VOICES IN SHAPING SCHOOL’S OUT’S PRIORITIES
As part of School’s Out’s strategic planning process, we gathered information from key stakeholders, including School’s Out staff and board members, and community partners. We held three focus groups with expanded learning providers in King, Pierce, and Spokane Counties representing a diverse range of organizations from large, multi-site agencies, to small community-based, and people of color led organizations. We also conducted interviews with 12 stakeholders representing the areas of philanthropy, regional and state government agencies, policy makers, and other community leaders. The
feedback and insights offered by these stakeholders were constructive and consistent themes emerged across regions and role. All of this feedback, which is summarized in the themes below, directly helped inform the strategies and tactics in our strategic plan.

**OPPORTUNITIES & CHALLENGES FACING THE FIELD OF EXPANDED LEARNING**

The following includes a summary of themes mentioned with the most frequency across stakeholder groups regarding opportunities and challenges for School’s Out and our collective work to build an equitable expanded learning system.

**Lack of Sustainable Funding for Expanded Learning Providers**

The need for increased private and public funding to support quality expanded learning opportunities continues to pose challenges for the field as a whole, and especially for smaller community-based organizations, people of color led organizations, and in rural and underserved areas. Stakeholders not only spoke to the need for increasing the amount of private and public funding, but also to thinking creatively about leveraging partnerships with K-12 education and other youth-serving sectors to maximize resources.

“*In Spokane, it is more difficult to raise large amounts of sustained and stable funding. There are long-term financial challenges to securing funding and creating stability in access to quality programs.*”

- Funder, Spokane County

"*We need to have really diverse and non-restrictive funding for providers so that they can address the needs of marginalized communities and adapt to ongoing changes. It is not helpful when funding is only for one year and programs are required to do things in one specific way.*"

- Provider, Pierce County

**Inequitable Access to Expanded Learning Opportunities**

Barriers such as transportation, geographic service gaps, space and facilities, contribute substantially to disparities in equitable access to programs. Stakeholders also spoke about the lack of direct service funding for providers, which often drives a fee-based service model. This is a major contributor to inequitable access to programs, with family income often determining the quality and availability of programs. Additionally, youth may not be receiving the types of supports they need or would benefit from because of service deserts, lack of culturally-responsive programming, or other limited types of program offerings.

"*There are not enough affordable, geographically-diverse, and culturally competent expanded learning opportunities programs that can be accessed. Expanded learning opportunities may require a great percentage of families’ income and availability varies by geographic areas.*"

- Statewide Advocacy Partner

**Making High Quality Programs Possible for All Providers**

While stakeholders emphasized the importance of the expanded learning system building efforts in Washington state, concerns emerged around the following areas: sustainability of the work in less resourced regions; how to support smaller organizations to engage in continuous quality improvement
given their limited capacity to participate in trainings; and how to ensure the Youth Program Quality suite of tools are fully responsive and relevant to communities of color.

"I've seen the ripple effect when staff who participate in PQA share out and influence their whole program and other sites."
- Provider, Spokane County

“It’s a loss if we think that just because there isn’t more money that it’s not going to sustain. You have to look at [Youth Program Quality] and see what it will look like if marginally funded, fully funded, not funded... be clear about the assets developed no matter what the level of funding is."
- District partner, Spokane

Need to Center Racial Equity
Racial equity, diversity, and inclusion principles emerged throughout the stakeholder interviews and focus groups as critical to integrate throughout strategies to build and strengthen expanded learning opportunities and a broader system. Stakeholders stressed the importance of using data to create systems that center equity and reach marginalized and underserved youth. The flexibility and diversity in the design of expanded learning programs present opportunities to target needs of different populations and create culturally-responsive and equitable programming. It is important to strengthen the diversity and equity practices within expanded learning programs so that staff knowledge and program offerings recognize and honor the needs of youth of color or youth with special needs.

"Youth need staff that look like them and honor their cultures and experiences. When those staff are present that can be the place or that one person that keeps youth engaged in the education system. In the best-case scenario staff reflect who that person is."
- Non-Profit Leader, King County

Supporting the Whole Child Means Deeper, Wraparound Interventions
Societal challenges like income inequality, homelessness, food insecurity, and increasing mental health needs impact all areas of a young person’s life. The need for deeper interventions that elevate social emotional learning, youth development principles, and other areas of support arose as critical to supporting the whole child within the expanded learning space.

Improving Alignment Across Youth-Serving Systems
An opportunity exists for expanded learning programs to better align to K12 education, early learning, juvenile justice, and other youth-serving systems as part of a framework that supports the whole child. Schools, government agencies, and community organizations need to better align and strengthen partnerships across environments where young people spend most of their time, and expanded learning programs are uniquely positioned at the intersections of many of these youth-serving systems.

“If a young person is successful in one time of day it doesn’t always translate to success elsewhere, and there aren’t warm handoffs between contexts."
- Non-Profit Leader, King County
OPPORTUNITIES & CHALLENGES FACING SCHOOL’S OUT WASHINGTON

The major areas of focus below helped to inform the strategies in this plan including strengths for School’s Out to build on, and gaps where School’s Out can step in to advance systems-level change and increase access to quality expanded learning opportunities.

Lead Expanded Learning Advocacy Efforts
Community input validated the important role School’s Out plays in leading advocacy efforts to advance equitable access to quality expanded learning opportunities. At both the statewide and regional levels, we heard resoundingly across all stakeholder groups a desire for School’s Out to grow our role in advocating for the field, strengthening a movement, and building up advocacy skills within organizations. School’s Out staff also emphasized the importance of cultivating partners across systems and with other expanded learning stakeholders at the local, state, and national levels. We heard about the importance of recognizing varying needs by region and population, building a movement that provides space for the diversity of the expanded learning sector, and creating a unified voice that can amplify our overall message around the need for funding to increase access and drive quality.

School’s Out Washington must continue to elevate community voice and engage youth and families in growing an expanded learning movement. As a convener, School’s Out can facilitate this process and bring together community voices representing the diversity of the state, and of the expanded learning sector, with a focus on bringing in voices of smaller, people of color led, and community-based providers.

Strengthen Quality System-Building
School’s Out has made great strides in building an Expanded Learning Opportunities Quality System, developing the foundational pillars including Quality Standards, Core Competencies, Elevate Washington, and widespread use of the Youth Program Quality suite of tools to measure continuous quality improvement. As the expanded learning field continues to professionalize and make its mark within the broader ecosystem of youth-serving systems, creating a framework that centers equity, is culturally relevant, and responsive to local needs and contexts is critical. Recognizing the many assets within communities, continuing to strengthen and build an expanded learning system with the community “at the table” centering youth voice and the greater needs of youth and families is a strong desire. Concurrently, School’s Out needs to step more fully into a leadership role and equal partner with K12 education and other youth-serving systems to better align services and strategies keeping equity and youth voice central in emerging strategies.

Continue Quality Work with Focus on Capacity-Building for Small and People-of-Color-Led Organizations
School’s Out has established itself as the lead organization in Washington and is regarded nationally when it comes to driving quality practice and defining what an Expanded Learning Opportunities Quality System looks like and how it can be responsive to the varying needs by region and type of program. While School’s Out and the expanded learning field have made significant headway, centering equity and moving forward strategies within the context of making quality practices more accessible and doable for smaller organizations and people of color led organizations is key. School’s Out staff stressed the importance of broadening, scaffolding, and customizing our services to meet the diverse needs of
expanded learning opportunities making our services more relevant and feasible through a variety of approaches. With a strong foundation to build on, continuing to support expanded learning opportunities through a data-informed lens of equity in implementing a quality framework will guide School’s Out and the expanded learning field forward in the next iteration of deepening the quality work.

**Center Racial Equity**

While many organizations talk about prioritizing racial equity, School’s Out has the opportunity to advance its commitment to equity work and be a leader when it comes to using our voice, positional power, and long-term commitment to “walk the talk” when it comes to racial equity. In order to improve organizational practices related to racial equity, School’s Out staff and Board need to continue their work to come together around a common definition and framework of what equity means, while continuing to increase staff investment in racial equity to reflect our external facing values in this area.

“Be explicit about race and racial equity. This can be a huge leverage point for [School’s Out Washington]. School’s Out can influence both large and small organizations when it comes to race and racial equity if School’s Out is intentional. School’s Out needs to reframe the conversation.”
- Equity Leader, King County

**Balance Resources & Support at the Statewide, Regional, and Local Levels**

School’s Out is faced with both the opportunity and challenge of advancing efforts at the statewide level that benefit youth across Washington and continue to build relationships and deepen our work at the regional and local levels. Having staff outside of King County in Pierce and Spokane counties has created opportunities to broaden our reach through our quality work, engage in local efforts to understand what systems and structures are already in place, and increase efforts to mobilize the expanded learning opportunities field and key partners around a shared vision and advocacy strategy. Questions around sustainability of our regional offices, how to potentially grow support to other communities across the state, and further clarify School’s Out’s role within local communities will be important considerations to grapple with as part of our broader statewide system building strategy.

"SOWA needs to be on the ground in communities all over WA to truly understand the system. The kids are the same everywhere, that’s in common, but most communities have a variety of structures within each of them."
- District Partner, Spokane

**Strengthen School’s Out’s Internal Infrastructure, Communications & Evaluation Systems**

School’s Out’s staff has grown at a rapid rate over the past few years, now at 35 staff (excluding YDEKC and SOAR staff who are under School’s Out’s fiscal sponsorship). As a mid-sized non-profit organization, School’s Out faces opportunities and challenges in both delivery of programming, and in organizational structure and operations. School’s Out staff stressed the need to shore up organizational policies and practices to increase efficiencies and provide clarity around key functions. Investing both in staff to build assets and increase retention rates and in innovative strategies to generate more revenue and refresh the School’s Out brand emerged as priority areas. With quality improvement and equity core to School’s Out’s work, we need to dedicate more time and resources to better aligning our internal
organizational data collection and evaluation efforts to better tell our story and impact in both quantitative and qualitative measures.

FROM STAKEHOLDER INPUT TO A VISIONARY NEW PLAN

Our strategic planning taskforce listened to and took seriously the insights of our stakeholders. The feedback was sorted and considered, and then shaped into our two Big Questions, then into five strategies, and a set of tactics we will deploy to achieve them.

Over the next three years, School’s Out’s 2019-2022 Strategic Plan will help guide and focus our efforts to clarify how we move forward as a field to advance equitable access to quality expanded learning opportunities with a focus on youth of color and low-income youth, and the role School’s Out holds in advancing this collective effort. In order to achieve our vision of an equitable, quality expanded learning opportunities system reaching all youth across Washington State, the strategic plan also focuses on developing internal continuous quality improvement frameworks to increase efficiencies and strengthen our data and evaluation practices and systems as a best practice and accountability measure.

These ambitious and timely strategies bring energy and innovation to School’s Out as an organization and in our role strengthening systems as we work to ensure youth in Washington have every opportunity they deserve to thrive and reach their fullest potential.
BIG QUESTIONS, STRATEGIES, & TACTICS

BIG QUESTION 1
How can School’s Out facilitate the building of an equitable Expanded Learning Opportunity ecosystem?

STRATEGY 1: Lead with a clear vision and theory of change for an equitable expanded learning opportunities (ELO) ecosystem and define our role within it.

Tactic 1-a Define and develop School’s Out's vision and theory of change for an equitable expanded learning opportunities ecosystem, informed by stakeholder input.

Tactic 1-b Clarify and make decisions about School’s Out’s role within the vision and theory of change for an equitable expanded learning opportunities ecosystem.

Tactic 1-c Communicate School’s Out’s vision and role through an updated mission and brand identity.

STRATEGY 2: Build a movement for a strong and equitable expanded learning opportunities ecosystem.

Tactic 2-a Define, expand, and support a more robust local to statewide advocacy structure.

Tactic 2-b Create accessible pathways and tools for youth, families, communities, and programs to engage in and shape collective advocacy.

Tactic 2-c Mobilize the movement for an equitable expanded learning opportunities ecosystem through storytelling, leveraging data and centering expanded learning opportunities stakeholder voices.

STRATEGY 3: Intentionally focus our programmatic services to most effectively support youth of color and low-income youth, with attention to intersectionality.

Tactic 3-a Target our services and funding opportunities to increase the engagement of People of Color (POC)-led organizations and those embedded in high-poverty, underserved communities.

Tactic 3-b Identify key opportunities across the state to meaningfully co-design and innovate around programmatic services with impacted communities and providers.
BIG QUESTION 2
How can School’s Out embody a practice of continuous data-driven quality improvement and innovation across the organization?

STRATEGY 4: Strengthen evaluation capacity and practices.

- **Tactic 4-a** Utilize current data collected to drive learning and improvements.
- **Tactic 4-b** Build staff capacity to develop and implement a consistent annual evaluation plan for each programmatic service area.
- **Tactic 4-c** Invest in and publicize deeper dive evaluations of select innovative projects to inform future investments and services.

STRATEGY 5: Implement a framework that drives continuous quality improvement (CQI) into all internal practices.

- **Tactic 5-a** Develop and equip staff to implement a framework, routine, and norms for an internal CQI process that strengthens our collaborative learning culture.
- **Tactic 5-b** Increase organizational investment of time and money into internal administrative capacity and infrastructure.
- **Tactic 5-c** Use the CQI framework to drive innovations and advancements in School’s Out’s racial equity organizational priorities.
What Guides Our Work: SOWA Mission, Vision & Values

**Mission:** School’s Out Washington provides services and guidance for organizations to ensure all young people have safe places to learn and grow when not in school. SOWA is dedicated to building community systems to support quality expanded learning opportunities after school and in the summer for Washington’s children and youth ages 5 through young adulthood.

**Vision:** School’s Out Washington strives to build communities where...
- All children and youth are safe, happy and thriving with caring adults during their non-school hours.
- Quality expanded learning opportunities are available to all, responsive to community need, and integral to community well-being.
- Funding and supports for expanded learning opportunities is ample, varied and on-going.
- Expanded learning professionals are valued, respected and well-compensated with easy access to training and education.

**Values: How we Approach Our Work**

**Quality** Learning and using relevant means to encourage internal and external excellence and accountability.

**Equity** Providing equitable access to opportunities for all children and youth.

**Action** Responding to emerging community needs and implementing relevant solutions through active leadership.

**Connection** Fostering relationships, building partnerships and connecting communities and resources.

**Innovation** Exploring and sharing new and creative ways to carry out our work and achieve our goals.

**Identity Statement**

The identity statement was developed to clarify and summarize SOWA’s unique role and contribution in the community. It is intended to answer key questions regarding our service, clients served, key areas of focus and program delivery. Along with our mission and vision statement, our identity statement articulates our role in the community.

*Leveraging our role as a trusted intermediary, we provide leadership, training and a commitment to advance racial equity across all the work we do in the community. We are a national leader in expanded learning, while providing critical funding and connections across Washington, including advocating and providing a voice for the field.*

*Through our work, we create better outcomes for children and youth, increasing quality, accountability and accessibility of programming for children, youth, and families, while improving the knowledge and skills of expanded learning professionals. Through our commitment and programming, we increase equal access and opportunity for all young people, especially young people of color, by leading efforts in leveling the playing field and promoting racial equity.*

The identity statement table below provides more detail on SOWA’s current scope and impact.
Identity Statement Table

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Components of Identity Statement</th>
<th>Ingredients</th>
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<tr>
<td>We advance our mission of</td>
<td>School’s Out Washington provides services and guidance for organizations to ensure all young people have safe places to learn and grow when not in school. SOWA is dedicated to building community systems to support quality expanded learning opportunities after school and in the summer for Washington’s children and youth ages 5 through young adulthood.</td>
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<td>...and seek to (impact)</td>
<td>Create better outcomes for children and youth, including:</td>
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<td></td>
<td>• Increase <strong>quality</strong> and <strong>accessibility</strong> of programming for children, youth and families</td>
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<td>• Improve the <strong>knowledge and skills</strong> of child and youth development professionals through assessment, training and professional development</td>
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<td>• Increase <strong>funding</strong> and <strong>capacity building</strong> resources to expanded learning programs</td>
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<td>• Strengthen <strong>partnerships</strong> between formal and informal educators</td>
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<td>• Increase <strong>public will</strong> and <strong>public policy</strong> for the expanded learning and youth development field</td>
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<td>• Increase <strong>equal access and opportunity</strong> for all young people, especially young people of color, by leading efforts in leveling the playing field and <strong>promoting racial equity.</strong></td>
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by serving (customers) Expanded learning providers and organizations, schools and school district administration; municipal and state agency leadership and private and public funders and systems leaders.

In (geographic area) Washington State

through (programs or services)  • Promoting quality standards and accountability  
  • Strengthening and supporting the expanded learning professional workforce  
  • Engaging, convening and supporting the Expanded Learning Opportunities (ELO) field  
  • Promoting effective policies and the sustainability of the system  
  • Brokering and leveraging resources

and emphasizing our competitive advantages of  • Our role as a trusted intermediary with the depth of experience, skills and talent to leverage our training, coaching and programming in support of the expanded learning community across the state.  
  • Our commitment in and practice of providing a Racial Equity lens to all of the work we do in the community.  
  • Our national relationships and leadership that positions Washington State as a leader in expanded learning.  
  • Our strong roots in, and relationships to, expanded learning providers across the state, and our ability to represent providers with authenticity in policy and systems level advocacy and leadership.

We are sustainable by (funding sources) Grants and funding from foundations, federal, state and local government grants, earned income and individual donations.
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<th>Strategy/Tactics</th>
<th>Will this strategy advance outcomes for youth of color and youth in poverty?</th>
<th>What might be potential unintended racial equity consequences of this strategy?</th>
<th>What capacity (time and resources) requirements will implementation of this strategy require? Is this realistic in this timeframe?</th>
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| **Strategy 1-1:** Lead with a clear vision and theory of change for an equitable Expanded Learning Opportunities (ELO) ecosystem and define our role within it.  
  - **Tactic 1-1-a:** Define and develop SOWA’s vision and theory of change for an equitable ELO ecosystem, informed by stakeholder input.  
  - **Tactic 1-1-b:** Clarify and make decisions about SOWA’s role within the vision and theory of change of an equitable ELO ecosystem.  
  - **Tactic 1-1-c:** Communicate SOWA’s vision and role through an updated mission and brand identity. | The definition and measure of “equitable” within the vision and theory of change of an ELO ecosystem would be one that advances equitable outcomes for youth of color and youth in poverty. This purpose will need to be explicit and central to the vision and theory of change. | While systems-level work is the fastest way to create lasting advances in equity, most of our formal systems and culture are designed to actively privilege white and wealthy people, sometimes in ways that are hard to see because they are so pervasive. In taking on systems level work, we run the risk of unintentionally institutionalizing practices that are oppressive. We will need to carefully, and repeatedly, consider the ways that structural and institutional oppression are or may play out in the systems work we are promoting, and work actively to counter and/or correct those forces as we move forward. | We would benefit from skilled facilitation in the development of the theory of change, though we may be able to do this still with internal staffing.  
We would benefit from external design and communications consulting around visuals for the theory of change, and around brand identity. |
| **Strategy 1-2:** Build a movement for a strong and equitable ELO ecosystem.  
  - **Tactic 1-2-a:** Define, expand, and support a more robust local to statewide advocacy structure.  
  - **Tactic 1-2-b:** Create accessible pathways and tools for youth, families, communities, and programs to engage in and shape collective advocacy.  
  - **Tactic 1-2-c:** Mobilize the movement for an equitable ELO ecosystem through storytelling, leveraging data and centering ELO stakeholder voices. | The purpose of this strategy is to have a more robust and inclusive advocacy approach and program. This should not only make our advocacy efforts more successful, but it should also yield more effective and responsive policy solutions based on the needs and priorities identified by impacted youth and families of color and in poverty, as well as the providers most closely connected to them. | One of the greater potential unintended consequences in this strategy would be that the advocacy engagement and storytelling we do is surface and/or tokenizing of people and communities of color and in poverty, or hoarded for SOWA’s marketing use only but not made available for use in advancing the field overall. Doing so could have lasting harm on the trust and legitimacy SOWA holds in these communities, and could mean that we are working to advance policy changes that are not, in fact, supported by the most impacted communities and thus not | o do this well, we will need to bolster our Advocacy staffing, including having dedicated advocacy staff time in each of our regions/hubs. We will also need to invest in advocacy training for our hub/region leads and key partners. Finally, we will also need some additional communications/storytelling capacity, which can be accomplished through staffing or a consultant well versed in systems change work to identify and eliminate systemic oppression. Some of this need will be covered through the new public Elevate Washington and staffing. |
Addendum B: Strategy Screen

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<tr>
<th>Strategy 1-3: Intentionally focus our programmatic services to most effectively support youth of color and low-income youth, with attention to intersectionality.</th>
<th>By targeting our programming, and finding opportunities to co-design our services with providers and communities, we will be amplifying the impact and effectiveness of our programs for youth of color and youth in poverty. We will increasingly focus on serving POC-led organizations and those in high poverty, underserved communities under the assumption that those programs are best positioned to positively impact youth of color and youth in poverty. This strategy is premised on the theory of “Targeted Universalism” (see john powell’s work on this topic).</th>
<th>This strategy will require us to investigate more explicitly who we are serving. It may require refocusing away from some providers in order to become more targeted, given that our capacity is not endless. These choices can be fraught and staff will need support around those decisions and communications to the degree these choices arise.</th>
<th>This strategy will be aided by data from a more robustly populated Elevate Washington, so we can more effectively identify programs, high poverty communities and gap areas. This may also require staff training around approaches to co-designing with community.</th>
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<td>• Tactic 1-3-a: Target our services and funding opportunities to increase the engagement of POC-led organizations and those embedded in high-poverty, underserved communities.</td>
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<td>• Tactic 1-3-b: Identify key opportunities across the state to meaningfully co-design and innovate around programmatic services with impacted communities and providers.</td>
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<td>Strategy 2-1: Strengthen evaluation capacity and practices.</td>
<td>Strong evaluation will also look at impacts on youth outcomes, with a focus on youth of color and youth in poverty. Evaluation should also include input from impacted communities (providers, youth and families). Deep dive evaluations have the potential to promote equitable ELO strategies across the field locally and nationally, to amplify their overall impact.</td>
<td>Poorly designed or interpreted evaluation runs the risk of bias confirmation and/or codifying practices that do not in fact yield the results they suggest. Given our position as a systems leader, this could lead to the waste of resources or the advancement of inequitable practices. We will need to adhere to responsible and rigorous evaluation practices, particularly around our publicized evaluations, to prevent this.</td>
<td>To achieve this we will need dedicated staff or consulting capacity around our evaluation. Ideally, tactics A and B are supported by an internal evaluation team, and tactic C by a combination of internal and external staff/consultants. We have quite a bit of data gathered already, so much of the resource investment is around making good use of that data. We will also need training for key staff around evaluation practices, survey design, etc.</td>
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<td>• Tactic 2-1-a: Utilize current data collected to drive learning and improvements.</td>
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<td>• Tactic 2-1-b: Build staff capacity to develop and implement a consistent annual evaluation plan for each programmatic service area.</td>
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<td>• Tactic 2-1-c: Invest in and publicize deeper dive evaluations of select innovative projects to inform future investments and services.</td>
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Addendum B: Strategy Screen

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Strategy 2-2: Implement a framework that drives continuous quality improvement (CQI) into all internal practices.</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>• <strong>Tactic 2-2-a:</strong> Develop, implement, and train staff on a framework, routine, and norms for an internal CQI process that strengthens our collaborative learning culture.</td>
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<td>• <strong>Tactic 2-2-b:</strong> Increase organizational investment of time and money into internal administrative capacity and infrastructure.</td>
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<tr>
<td>• <strong>Tactic 2-2-c:</strong> Use the CQI framework to drive innovations and advancements in SOWA’s racial equity organizational priorities.</td>
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<td>An internal CQI framework will help us become a more aligned organization in terms of priorities in our external work and our internal practice, allowing us to have a clearer identity and stronger staff buy in. Finally, our racial equity work is focused on aligning our internal practices with the external impact we seek to have for youth, communities, and providers of color. We cannot achieve the latter in any meaningful or sustainable way without tending to the former, including ensuring that SOWA is a place that attracts, engages, promotes, and retains staff of color.</td>
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<td>The potential unintended consequence would be if, as a result of lack of skill or bandwidth or resistance, this becomes performative and not used to meaningfully drive improvement. We need a framework that is relevant and practical so that staff will be invested and see value in using the framework to make meaningful improvements.</td>
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<td>While we have considerable in-staff expertise around CQI for program quality, we would likely benefit from external consulting to help us adapt these practices to internal organizational improvement, and then to support training for all staff around the new framework. This will also require increased resources dedicated to internal administrative capacity. Finally, this will require increased dedication of time for planning and process improvements.</td>
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</table>
Addendum C: Interview and Focus Group Participants

SOWA STRATEGIC PLAN 2019 STAKEHOLDER INTERVIEW PARTICIPANTS:

Focus groups

- Pierce County:
  - Amber Evans-Wynn – YMCA
  - Kaitlan Ohler – Safe Streets
  - Kimberly Keith – Hilltop Artists
  - Taylor Woodruff – Alchemy Skate

- King County:
  - Athena Moag – SWYFS (Southwest Youth & Family Services)
  - Cherryl Jackson Williams – RIZ (Renton Innovation Zone)
  - Darline Guerrero-Launch
  - Marissa Rousselle – City of Seattle
  - Ricky Rodriguez – Bike Works
  - Ruel Olanday – UWKC (United Way of King County)
  - Tolu Taiwo – YWCA
  - Charlett Shoecraft – Empowering Youth and Families

- Spokane County:
  - Jason Lesley – Spokane Public Schools Express
  - Cristine Brischle – YMCA of the Inland Northwest
  - Charles Williams – (Formerly) Richard Allen Apartments/SE Neighborhood Networks/Emmanuel Family Life Center
  - Sally Pritchard – Spokane County United Way

Interviewee list

- Sheila Capestany, King County
- Gina Anstey, Greater Tacoma Community Center
- Nicole Rose, Department of Children, Youth, Families
- Marie Sauter, Gates Foundation
- Sally Pritchard, Spokane County United Way
- Lisa White, Spokane School District
- Erin Okuno, Southeast Seattle Education Coalition
- Jessica Werner, YDEKC
- Gail Joseph, UW’s Cultivate Learning
- Heidi Schultz, the 21st CCLC Program Supervisor with OSPI
- Tafona Erwin, Graduate Tacoma
- Paula Steinke, Soar