



Funds Distribution Report

Recipient Organization:
Schools Out Washington

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Tukwila, WA 98188

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<https://schoolsoutwashington.org>

Organization's General Goals:
SOWA forges community connections, invites collaboration and works to build meaningful relationships with the programs we exist to support. As we design, implement and evaluate our core practices, we are increasingly focused on Black, Indigenous, and People of Color (BIPOC).

Date of Award:	Level:
2023 Q3	\$500 to \$2,500

For more information, please read the attached report from Schools Out Washington.

8802 27th Ave NE
Tulalip, WA 98271
TulalipCares.org

School's Out Washington Report to Tulalip Tribes Charitable Fund 2023 Bridge Conference

On behalf of our team at School's Out Washington, we deeply appreciate the Tulalip Tribes Charitable Fund's funding support for our 2023 Bridge Conference. The following report provides an overview of highlights from the November 2023 conference held at the Greater Tacoma Convention Center, which brought together over 560 youth development practitioners, educators, community leaders, and others committed to creating opportunities for young people to thrive. With the theme of Forging Brighter Futures, we reflected, connected, and reimagined a collective future together.

2023 Bridge Conference Highlights

On Bridge day one, we opened the conference with a powerful message from our keynote speaker, [Melannie Denise Cunningham](#). Her talk centered on our foundation and how we show up for ourselves and others.

Ms. Melannie challenged us to reflect on our upbringing and on the cycles of socialization that we are passing on to the next generation. Presenters and attendees alike embraced this concept to learn and unlearn for connection as humans and as ambassadors in the youth development field. The seeds we plant today in young people will flourish as they become leaders.

The two-day Bridge Conference offered over 40 different sessions, providing attendees with strategies to think, talk, and act in new ways. This message flowed into our systems-change conversation. Policymakers and field leaders convened to discuss challenges faced in the field of youth development. One theme that continued to arise was unintentional silos. We don't often lean on each other as providers and leaders when we need support.

In breakout sessions focused on reflection, youth development thought leaders outlined plans to continue the conversation post-conference. Presenters and attendees ended day two energized to continue the work together, connected with one goal—elevating our young people.

[Washington State Senator Yasmin Trudeau](#) joined us in our closing session. She discussed how we can mobilize the youth development sector to move us toward our goal of building sustainable systems. Her advice was to contact your representative and make your position known. Washington's legislative session begins in January.

Conference evaluation data

As in years past, the conference evaluations distributed to all attendees demonstrated the positive impact of the workshops in increasing skills and knowledge and in connecting with peers. The following provides a snapshot of some of the key evaluation findings.

- 90% of conference participants agree that “I increased my professional knowledge and/or skills as a result of attending this conference”
- 95% agree “The overall environment at this conference was welcoming and inclusive”. 97% agree “During this conference, I had meaningful opportunities to engage with other participants.”

Conference participant data

The Bridge Conference draws in youth development professionals and advocates from across WA State. This year the Bridge Conference featured 562 Registrants. The following highlights demographics of who participated.

Geography

- 16 Counties in WA State were represented by participants including: King, Pierce, Snohomish, Thurston, Yakima, Spokane, Cowlitz, Benton, Chelan, Franklin, Kitsap, Lewis, Okanogan, Pacific, and Walla Walla Counties.
- Attendees came from outside of Washington State and included participants from California, Arizona, Florida, Oregon, New York, Oklahoma, Michigan, and Ohio.
- 63% of Attendees came from King County

Demographics

- 70% of Attendees identified as Black, Indigenous, or People of Color with one or more racial identities.
- 68% of our attendees identified as Women, 24% as Men, 4% as non-binary, and 2% as another gender identity.
- 46% of Attendees work directly with youth in programs, 30% of attendees were administrators or managers of youth programs, and 17% were K-12 Educators, Funders, and Supporting Youth Organizations.

Feedback from Conference attendees

Here is what some of our participants had to say about their experience at the Bridge Conference:

“I appreciate how SOWA provided a space for all of the youth workers from all variety of background/organizations to share their experiences and knowledge. It was a fulfilling experience for me as a first-time participant.”

“The focus on equity and inclusion connected throughout every workshop, speaker, and conversation. More than just words- a movement.”

“The most memorable moment for me at this year's conference was the opening speech from the Keynote speaker Melannie Denise Cunningham. She was such an amazing and inspiring figure”

In closing, we want to thank the Tulalip Tribes Charitable Fund’s generous support of our 2023 Bridge Conference. If you have any questions or would like to learn more about the Bridge Conference or Schools Out Washingtons work more broadly, please do not hesitate to reach out to our Grants and Contracts Director, Bill Hanawalt, at bhanawalt@schoolsoutwashington.org or 206.323.7997.

