

2023 ANNUAL REPORT

Published September 2024



INATAI
FOUNDATION

IMMIGRA



Community members representing Firelands Workers United / Trabajadores Unidos, based in Aberdeen, advocate for rent stabilization, affordable healthcare, and benefits for workers during a march at the state capitol in Olympia. Photo courtesy of Firelands Workers United / Trabajadores Unidos.

FEATURED GRANTEE

Firelands Workers United / Trabajadores Unidos organizes multiracial worker power in disinvested rural counties in Washington state to win green, union jobs caring for our homes, people, land, and water. Through bilingual base-building, education, organizing, training, advocacy, civic engagement, narrative strategy, and cultural resilience, Firelands connects rural workers and tenants to unite across race and build participatory power.



We have a choice: either we keep just getting by, putting out a new fire every day, or we can come together to organize for the good jobs, housing, healthcare, childcare, healthy lands, and dignity we all need and deserve.”

- FIRELANDS WORKERS UNITED / TRABAJADORES UNIDOS

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WE BELIEVE THAT CONNECTION CREATES POWER.

Thank you for reading our 2023 annual report. The past year was particularly special for our organization and the people to whom we are accountable. It was a year of important organizational milestones, as we go from start-up to growth mode.

When I first arrived at the foundation in fall 2018, we were a wildly different organization. We had five employees, our name and mission statement didn't reflect our aspirations, and our grantmaking work and community visits had just begun. We were brand new. Today, we have grown to more than 60 team members, updated our values and mission statement, reintroduced ourselves with a new name, and granted a grand total of \$264 million to incredibly diverse organizations in every county in our state.

Still, we are a young and maturing organization, and we continue to wrestle with many questions: How do we earn trust and build authentic relationships with grantees and the communities they serve? What kind of infrastructure and support do communities across Washington need to build true power? Are we fully utilizing our unique 501(c)(4) resources to advance racial justice and equity? Are we playing our best role? Are we doing enough?

As we find the answers, we will continue to do our forever work: listening, learning, and confronting our own biases. To help frame this report, I'd like to share some of the most important lessons that have stuck with us over the years.

Our People Are Everywhere

We have always aspired to be a truly statewide organization. Leaders and organizations across Washington have shared that they are locked out of investment and partnership because of where they live. They face assumptions about their competency, sophistication, and values, along with notions about who Washington is, all based on geography. These biases permeate every part of our state, and we at Inatai are not immune to them. Yet every day, we see more and more evidence that there are incredible communities in every corner of Washington advancing equity and racial justice. We are becoming better practiced at following their lead and championing their work.

Inatai continues to grant general operating dollars to organizations all over our state, particularly in areas that have been ignored by philanthropy and excluded from decision-making tables. To us, there is no greater sign of trust in community leadership than making general operating grants. It is a demonstration of our belief that communities and leaders are the greatest experts in their own lives and work.

Last year, we made grants to organizations in 35 Washington counties and committed funding to 20 Tribal nations. More than 78 percent of the organizations we supported are led by people of color.

We are working to build a statewide team that reflects the communities to whom we are accountable. We proudly call ourselves a multiracial organization. More than 80 percent of our team identify as people of color, 25 percent identify as having a disability, and 25 percent are part of the LGBTQIA+ community.

We have learned that when we have team members and board members who live all over our state, we are a stronger and more strategic grant maker. Our team is spread throughout Washington, and our board now represents Thurston, Clark, Skagit, Asotin, Kitsap, Pierce, King, Walla Walla, and Franklin counties.

Equity and Racial Justice Will Only Be Possible Because of Power-Building

Funding is not the only measure by which we keep track of our statewide approach. There are also the relationships we maintain and the connections we create. Last year, we supported a wide range of convenings held across Washington. This was in direct response to feedback we received saying Inatai is uniquely positioned to facilitate connections among leaders and organizations throughout the state. In 2023, we launched a series of regional convenings to honor this request, and we also hosted several other types of gatherings, which you'll read about in this report. Communities across Washington are excited and enthused to learn about power, civic infrastructure, and how they can contribute their ideas, visions, and solutions to our broader state.

This point is evident in the ballot initiatives we supported last year, from Bellingham to Spokane, and Dayton. As a 501(c)(4), Inatai has the ability and privilege to fund political power building that other grant makers often can't or won't support. We've made important strides, granting nearly \$11 million to 501(c)(4) organizations in 2023. But those dollars represent less than a fifth of our total grantmaking, meaning we still have significant room to grow in this area of work.

As you read this report, I hope you get the sense that Inatai is clear about three things. We are fierce about being a truly statewide organization. We are unapologetic about prioritizing the voices and views of those most impacted. We are proud of our commitment to equity and racial justice, which grows stronger every day.

It is an honor for all of us at Inatai Foundation to work alongside so many incredible leaders across our state. I love Washington and its people, and I am so hopeful for our future. What makes me hopeful is the organizations and leaders working hard every day to make this state more equitable. There is so much talent, vision, and authentic leadership in every corner of Washington. To the hundreds of communities, leaders, and organizations who are transforming the balance of power towards equity and racial justice: thank you. We are grateful to share in your vision, your work, and your joy, and we are excited for our future.



**NICHOLE
JUNE MAHER**

A stylized, handwritten signature in black ink, representing Nichole June Maher.

President & CEO



Building Community Power

Community power is the ability of communities to achieve collective purpose and realize a shared vision of transformation. It is the only power that can transform society to be equitable and racially just.

Creating a free, just, inclusive society begins with centering the leadership of people of color, people with disabilities, immigrants and refugees, the LGBTQIA+ community, and people living on low incomes.

Across Washington, leaders and organizations with bold visions are building that power in racially diverse communities. They understand the obstacles they face, how to break them down, and how to forge a better future. Our role is to provide flexible, responsive resources that support them as they build power and realize their goals.

Inatai Foundation is a 501(c)(4) working to transform the balance of power and ensure equity and racial justice across Washington and beyond. We are accountable to community leaders and organizations, channeling the funding, capital leverage, and influence we have to those rooted in and led by the communities, so they have the resources, opportunities, infrastructure, information, and power they need to bring their visions to life.

Seattle Black Panther Party founders speaking on a panel at our October team retreat. From left: Aaron Dixon, Leathia Stallworth-Krasucki, Larry Gossett, and Inatai Policy & Advocacy Director Nick Allen, who moderated the discussion. Photo: Uly Curry.

Our Name

Our name, “Inatai,” means “across” or “other side.” It comes from Chinuk Wawa, an Indigenous language used in Washington and beyond with a long history of connecting people from different backgrounds.

The word “inatai” expresses our belief that powerful communities working together will move our state, and all of us, to a place of greater equity and justice.

Too often, Indigenous words are co-opted by non-Native organizations without honoring their origins. Last spring, we sought and received permission from the Chinook Indian Nation, whose ancestors made their homes at the mouth at the Columbia River, where Chinuk Wawa originates.

Our team gathered with Chinook tribal councilmembers and their families in Bay Center, Washington. The Chinook community in attendance offered wisdom, talked about what they are celebrating in the present, and described their hopes for the future as they continue to fight for federal recognition. We are forever grateful, and for as long as we are Inatai, we will make an annual contribution to the Chinook Indian Nation.

The Pacific Ocean at Long Beach, Pacific County. Photo: Amiran White.





*Inatai President & CEO
Nichole June Maher leads a
session on our 50-Year Vision
at the May team retreat in
Winthrop. Photo: John Lok.*

2023 at a Glance

\$64M

Total Grantmaking

631

Grants and
Contributions

437

Unique Recipient
Organizations

78%

of Grantee
Organizations
are Led by
People of Color

94%

of Grant Dollars are
Unrestricted

20

Sovereign
Nations Funded

Milestones

JANUARY

- Held legislative session policy briefings for policy-change organizations to uplift opportunities and provide space to connect, learn, and engage on policy matters.

FEBRUARY

- Changed our name to Inatai Foundation.
- Published our first-ever independent, external evaluation that shows how grantee leaders experience our foundation and areas where we can improve.

MARCH

- Began the process of aligning our grantmaking with our recently updated mission to build community power for equity and racial justice and our vision of values-aligned leaders driving decision-making in every corner of our state.

MAY

- Brought together organizations across the state to share strategies and build alliances at the Power to the Voter Summit in Vancouver.
- Held a team retreat in Winthrop, where we learned about organizing for justice with the New Georgia Project, applied a power analysis exercise to our work at Inatai, and dove deep into the foundation's 50-Year Vision.

JUNE

- We officially welcomed three new board members—Sita Symonette, Brenda Rodríguez López, and Kazi Joshua—and Seth Kirby took on the role of board chair.

SEPTEMBER

- Hosted the first in a series of regional Shaping the Future convenings in Wenatchee, bringing North Central Washington organizations together to strengthen relationships and identify shared values and priorities that will help make meaningful progress toward changing the balance of power in the state.
- Relocated our Seattle office and began offering conference rooms for grantee organizations and values-aligned partners to use for meetings and events.

OCTOBER

- Hosted a retreat in Seattle at the historic Washington Hall and our new office, and we learned from legends Aaron Dixon, Leathia Stallworth-Krasucki, and Larry Gossett, who founded the Seattle Black Panthers chapter and University of Washington's Black Student Union.
- Resourced a series of ballot initiatives across the state, many of which succeeded.
 - Vote No on Spokane Ballot Measure No. 1
 - Vote No on Columbia County Proposition 2
 - Vote No on Whatcom County Proposition 4
 - Vote Yes on Bellingham Initiatives 1 & 2



Volunteers with Justice Not Jails, a Spokane-based coalition led by people of color, gather for a community canvassing event to prevent the establishment of a new jail. Photo courtesy of Justice Not Jails.

FEATURED GRANTEE

Justice Not Jails is a coalition led by people of color that advocates for equitable, community-driven solutions and opposes jail expansion in Spokane. In November 2023, it successfully defeated Spokane County Measure 1, which sought to increase the sales tax to construct a new jail.



We cannot use carceral solutions for humanitarian problems.”

- JUSTICE NOT JAILS

Advocating for Change

All change is political. The policies that shape our lives, those that achieve or deny racial justice and equity, are shaped by inherently political institutions, bodies, and campaigns.

For our communities to change the balance of power and drive those decisions, they must be heard in the courtroom, in city hall, in Olympia, and at the ballot box.

Inatai engages directly with organizations to support community-led, issue-based campaigns that can build a more just and equitable future for Washington. These efforts are often overlooked by traditional grantmakers, yet they are vital in defending civil rights, building community power, and holding systems accountable to those they serve.

Through our Campaigns, Litigation, Issues, & Policy (CLIP) Fund, we support a wide range of advocacy efforts:

- **Ballot measures and initiatives:** Supporting or opposing state and local ballot measure campaigns that impact communities’ rights, dignity, and ability to achieve justice.
- **Litigation:** Funding legal action to dismantle policies that shrink the voting power of Black, Indigenous, Latinx, Asian, Pacific Islander, and other communities of color.
- **Legislative advocacy:** Ensuring communities’ expertise and leadership help decision-making on the policies and issues that matter most to them.
- **Grassroots organizing:** Activating community support around elections, legislative activity, and pivotal moments that impact policy.
- **Polling and research:** Developing knowledge to shape campaign strategies, better understand the perspectives of the public, and effectively educate them about policy issues.
- **Voter engagement:** Ensuring those fighting for equity and racial justice have the support needed to engage their communities in the democratic process.

Advocacy Highlights

Inatai Foundation supported five ballot initiatives in November 2023. Four passed outright, while a fifth laid important groundwork for future efforts by promoting preventive and rehabilitative solutions over incarceration in Whatcom County.

Vote No on Spokane County Ballot Measure 1:

Stopped the harmful expansion of Spokane’s jail system in direct opposition to proven research on effective and equitable solutions.

Vote No on Columbia County Proposition 2:

Blocked an effort to shutter the county’s only library because it offered books on gender, sexuality, and race.

Vote Yes on Bellingham Initiatives 1 & 2:

Raised the minimum wage in Bellingham and provided renter protections from sudden hikes and relocation assistance for displaced residents.

Vote No on Whatcom County Proposition 4:

Opposed a tax to fund the construction of a “mega jail” in Ferndale which would widen racial equity gaps and come at the expense of much-needed mental and behavioral health services.



Community leaders across Washington gathered in Vancouver for Inatai’s Power to the Voter Summit. Photo: Uly Curry.

FEATURED EVENT

The Power to the Voter Summit was hosted in Vancouver for leaders across Washington state. Representatives from more than two dozen organizations built relationships, strategized together, and shared learning around voter engagement and other political strategies to build community power in support of racial justice and equity.

“Building relationships with community members and community partners, and being thoughtful in that process, has been critical to the success of our voter engagement in Southwest Washington.”

- WILL MILLER, Executive Director, NAYA Action Fund

FEATURED GRANTEE

Tri-Cities League of United Latin American Citizens (LULAC) is an all-volunteer organization focused on civic engagement, coalition building, and advocacy. In 2020, its members challenged Franklin County's at-large elections, which were structured in a way that prevented Latino voters from electing candidates of their choice, in violation of the Washington Voting Rights Act. In June 2023, the Washington Supreme Court affirmed Tri-Cities LULAC's challenge and upheld the constitutionality of the Washington Voting Rights Act, protecting the rights of voters across Washington.



Members of the Tri-Cities League of United Latin American Citizens, based in Pasco, gather for a winter celebration in the Tri-Cities. Photo courtesy of Tri-Cities LULAC.

“

Together, we're proving that the fight for voting rights isn't just about politics; it's about empowering every member of our community to have a seat at the table.”

- GABRIEL PORTUGAL, President, Tri-Cities League of United Latin American Citizens

A train bridge that connects Kennewick and Pasco in the Tri-Cities. Photo: Choco-Foto.



Funding Community Organizations

In communities throughout Washington, organizations led by and for people of color; LGBTQIA+ people; immigrants; people with disabilities; people living on low incomes; and those who experience ableism, gender inequity, and ageism are working to craft a more racially just and equitable future for our state. Since 2019, we have granted \$264 million to help bring their visions of change to life.

Community members connecting at Asia Pacific Cultural Center's annual New Year Celebration in Tacoma. Photo: Uly Curry.



Our Grants

Beyond Washington

While our primary focus is on Washington, we support multicultural and culturally specific legal advocacy, political organizing, voter engagement, and voter protection work happening beyond our state that can impact communities within it.

CLIP or Campaigns, Litigation, Issues, & Policy

Targeted support to political, policy, and advocacy efforts addressing pressing issues facing communities and laying the groundwork for longer-term change.

Community Power

Support for community-based organizations that serve people and places often overlooked and underfunded by traditional philanthropy.

Emerging Opportunities

Support specific power-building efforts identified by grantee organizations and community leaders as advancing long-term goals.

Response & Recovery

Set up to deploy response grants in the early days of the COVID-19 pandemic, the portfolio has shifted to respond to the realities of the last few years and will soon sunset. Its final grants will support ongoing advocacy, organizing, and policy work.

Sovereign Nations

Support Tribal Nations across Washington to uplift, advance, and protect Indigenous sovereignty.

Sponsorships

Support Washington community organizations working for racial justice and equity as they host celebrations, leadership retreats, strategic planning sessions, and other events.

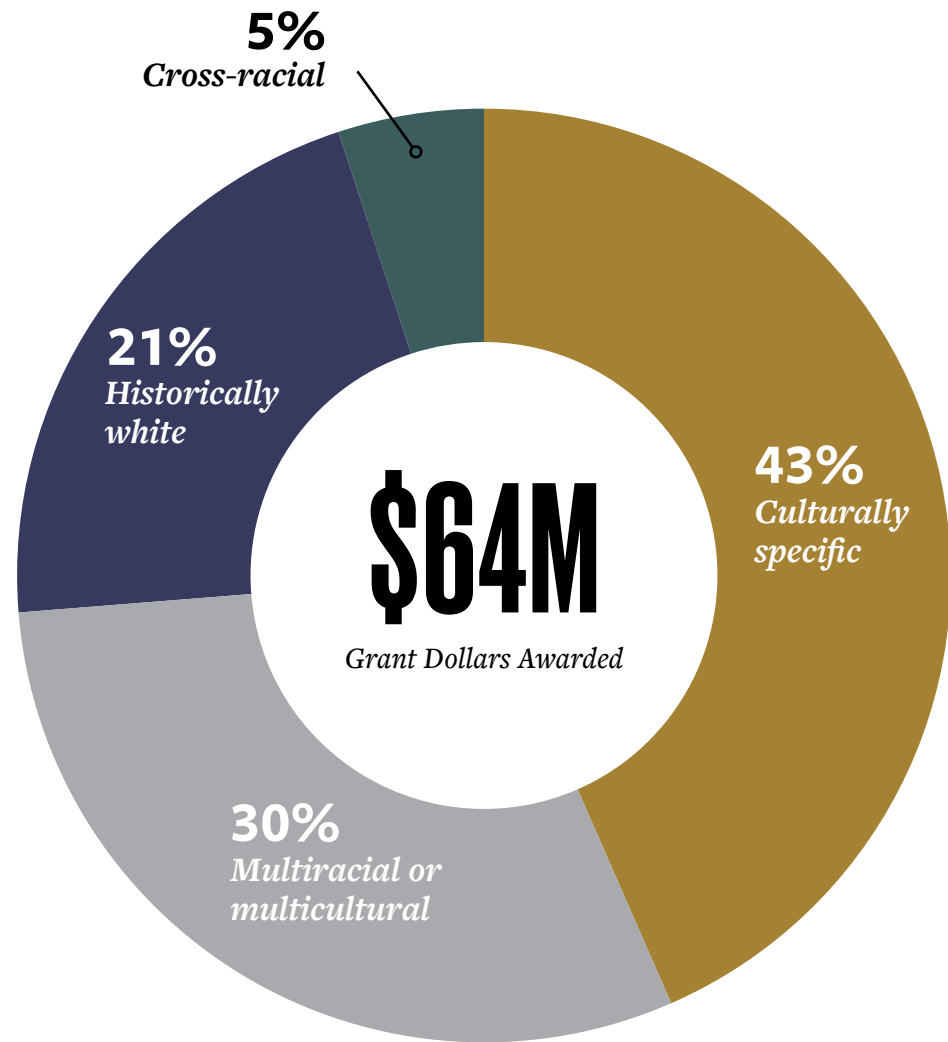
Systems Change

Support for organizations building community power through advocacy, political action, organizing, narrative change, and other strategies.

Transformational Capacity Building

Additional resources to current Inatai grant recipients to strengthen organizational capacity.

Grantmaking by Organization Identity



Culturally specific organizations are created by and for people of a specific racial or ethnic identity group and are accountable to that community.

Multiracial or multicultural organizations have missions, boards, and leaders from multiple racial and ethnic identities that reflect Washington.

Historically white organizations are founded, formed, governed, and have cultures and values primarily led by white people.

Cross-racial organizations are coalitions or networks of groups, each with a specific racial, ethnic, or multicultural base. They come together to advance political, policy, or other priorities.

NOTE: One percent was awarded to organizations that did not fit into any of these categories.

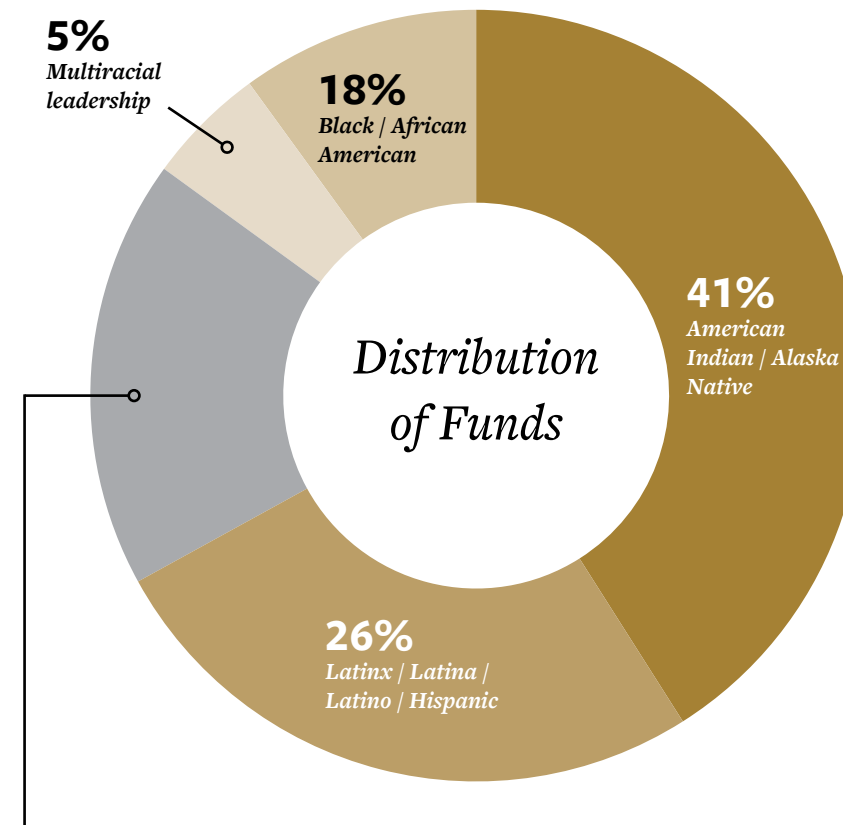
A CLOSER LOOK

Culturally Specific Organizations

Nearly half of Inatai’s grant dollars went to culturally specific organizations, which are led by and serve people of a specific racial or ethnic community. The below data represent the culturally specific organizations we funded last year. It provides a snapshot of those organizations that received new grants in 2023.

Organizations receiving multiyear grants that began in previous years are not included in this data. In 2023, we prioritized funding Native-led organizations. Inatai carefully reviews the balance of our funding on a year-to-year basis. In past years, we have prioritized getting to know and supporting a range of different groups of organizations, including those that are Black-led, queer-led, and others.

Looking at the leadership of culturally specific organizations specifically, we see the following distribution of funds in 2023:



A NOTE ABOUT NATIVE HAWAIIAN / PACIFIC ISLANDER AND ASIAN ORGANIZATIONS

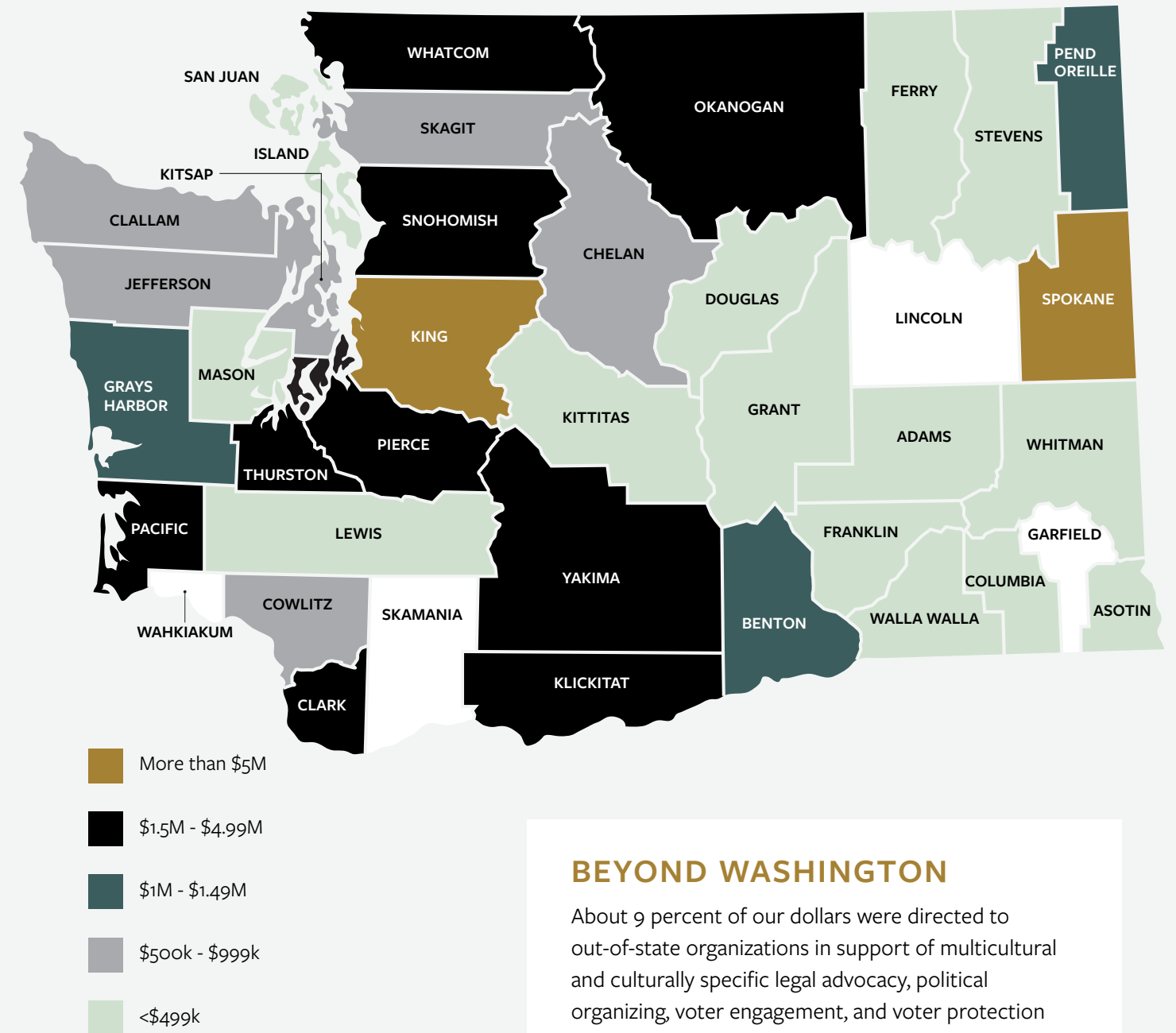
At the request of Native Hawaiian and Pacific Islander grantee leaders and organizations, we disaggregate the AAPI (Asian American and Pacific Islander) racial category into four different groups in our data collection, which appear under “Additional Identities” in this graph. In this report, we count organizations with multiple Asian or Pacific Islander identities as multicultural or multiracial, and they are counted here under “Multiracial leadership.”

ADDITIONAL IDENTITIES:

- African (4%)
- Arab / Middle Eastern / North African (1%)
- Asian / East Asian (2%)
- Asian / Southeast Asian (<1%)
- Native Hawaiian / Pacific Islander (2%)
- Asian / South Asian (<1%)

Supporting Community Change Across Washington

Inatai is committed to serving every part of Washington, and we work continuously to expand our outreach throughout the state's many geographic regions and build our understanding of their varying challenges, needs, and priorities. We ask organizations to identify the primary county or counties they serve, and we also work to understand how applicants define their own geography. The work that we fund ranges from hyperlocal to statewide. We use this information to better see where our resources are going and where we could better reflect our vision of supporting leaders in every corner of our state.



BEYOND WASHINGTON

About 9 percent of our dollars were directed to out-of-state organizations in support of multicultural and culturally specific legal advocacy, political organizing, voter engagement, and voter protection work that impacts Washington communities. More than one third of those funds remained in the Pacific Northwest, in neighboring states.

Participants gather for introductions in Wenatchee for *Shaping the Future*: North Central Washington. Photo: Kariba Jack.



FEATURED EVENT

Leaders from 35 organizations throughout North Central Washington came together for the first regional **Shaping the Future event** at Wenatchee Valley College to connect, share joy, and explore how power building can create pathways to equity and racial justice.

“

In disability justice, we have the saying: ‘Nothing about us without us.’”

- Participant **MAYRA COLAZO**, Central Washington Disability Resources, reporting out during the *Shaping the Future* event.

More Than a Grantmaker

To shift the balance of power in Washington state, community organizations and leaders need to be equipped with the resources, tools, relationships, information, and influence to bring their visions to life. As a funder, advocate, investor, convener, and more, we offer multipronged support to help those we serve reach and control the levers of change.

The Five Roles We Play

FUNDING ORGANIZATIONS

We provide flexible, responsive resources that support organizations, networks, and leaders as they build power.

CAPITAL LEVERAGE

We leverage our endowment, infrastructure, expertise, and investment influence to offer a new model of investment and portfolio management to our value-aligned peers and enable greater collective impact for all.

INSTITUTIONAL INFLUENCE

When and where communities are denied power, we use our direct influence with decision-makers in policymaking, government, philanthropy, and beyond to advance the interests of communities.

POWER-BUILDING INFRASTRUCTURE

We identify, build, and strengthen infrastructure that every community-led organization, network, and leader can use to build community power.

ACTIONABLE INFORMATION

Our reports and resources are informed by the leaders and organizations we serve and designed to enable communities to increase their power, serve their people, influence opinion, and fuel action.



Leaders from Lavender Rights Project, located in Seattle, share signs from a campaign to raise awareness on the harm that transphobia creates. Photo courtesy of Lavender Rights Project.

FEATURED GRANTEE

Lavender Rights Project is a Washington-based organization with a national reach, situated within the Movement for Black Lives. Its role in this movement is to advocate for the needs of all Black people and all trans people using an intersectional, Black feminist lens.



Lavender Rights Project is creating a world in which the Black and Indigenous gender-diverse communities are at the forefront of liberation and recognized for our power to build.”

- LAVENDER RIGHTS PROJECT

Looking Ahead

Here is a sample of what Inatai is working on in 2024 and beyond:

- Expanding our regional Shaping the Future convenings throughout Washington in 2024 and 2025, leading up to a big statewide conference in the future. This, and other events, will be part of our connection strategy to facilitate shared learning and relationship building among powerful community leaders that Inatai supports.
- Building out our research and evaluation work to strengthen how we provide actionable information to the leaders and organizations we serve.
- Hiring more people in more places throughout Washington to reflect our statewide approach to leadership, grantmaking, politics, and policy.
- Solidifying Inatai's strategy for the implementation of our 50-Year Vision, which will kick off in 2025.

Attendees of the Power to the Voter Summit in Vancouver raise their hands in celebration of a successful event. Photo: Uly Curry.



INATAI

FOUNDATION

Inatai Foundation is a 501(c)(4) philanthropy seeking to transform the balance of power to ensure equity and racial justice across Washington state and beyond. We are accountable to leaders and organizations building power in racially diverse communities in our state and seek to primarily fund community-based organizations led by people of color. With a team based throughout Washington, we work to advance four distinct areas of work: relationship building, policy and advocacy, investment management, and grantmaking.

For more information, visit www.inatai.org

