

Love and Liberation

2023 Highlights



King County

Department of Community and
Human Services



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Love and Liberation

Love and Liberation (L&L) is a racial justice initiative focused on self-liberation and systems change to improve academic and life outcomes for young people of color. This work is undertaken by the Racial Equity Coalition (REC) with the administrative support of United Way of King County. The coalition consists of 14 Black, Indigenous, and Community of Color partner nonprofits that have come together as a collective with a unified vision across races and cultural backgrounds – a vision in which young people of color are celebrated in their cultural identities and have the agency and resources to determine where they are going and how they are getting there.

L&L is funded by the [Puget Sound Taxpayer Accountability Account](#) (PSTAA) and [United Way of King County](#) (UWKC). This report is a snapshot of the initiative's work in 2023 and includes quotes from narrative reports shared by REC. Each REC organization contributes to one or more of the outcomes shared here. For a list of which REC organizations report on which measures, see the [appendix](#).

For questions on this report, please contact DCHSData@KingCounty.gov.

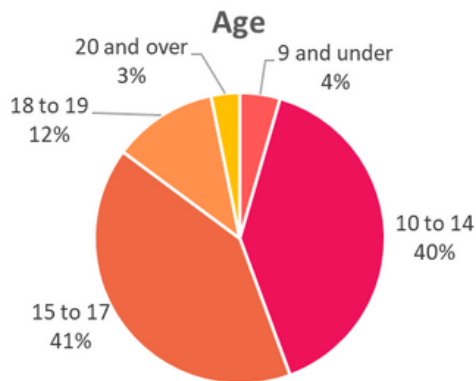
Meet the Racial Equity Coalition



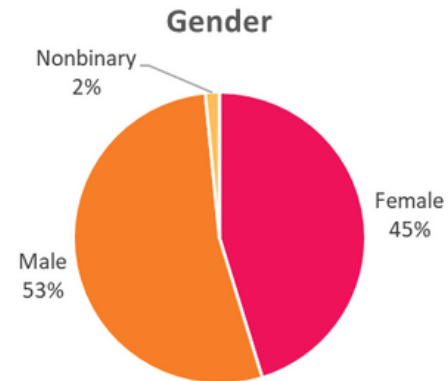
POWERFUL VOICES



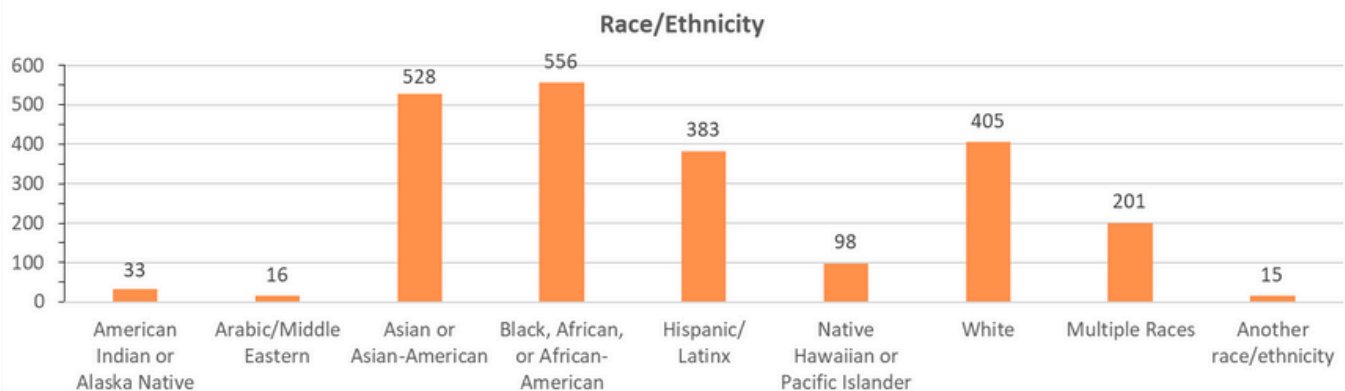
L&L serves a diverse community of young people.



While the target age for L&L is 10 to 19, young people outside of that age range were not prohibited from participating.



Not all programs collected detailed gender identity data, which may lead to undercounting of gender expansive populations.



One provider changed how they were collecting and reporting the race of Hispanic/Latinx young people during 2023, leading to an increase from previous years in the White race category.

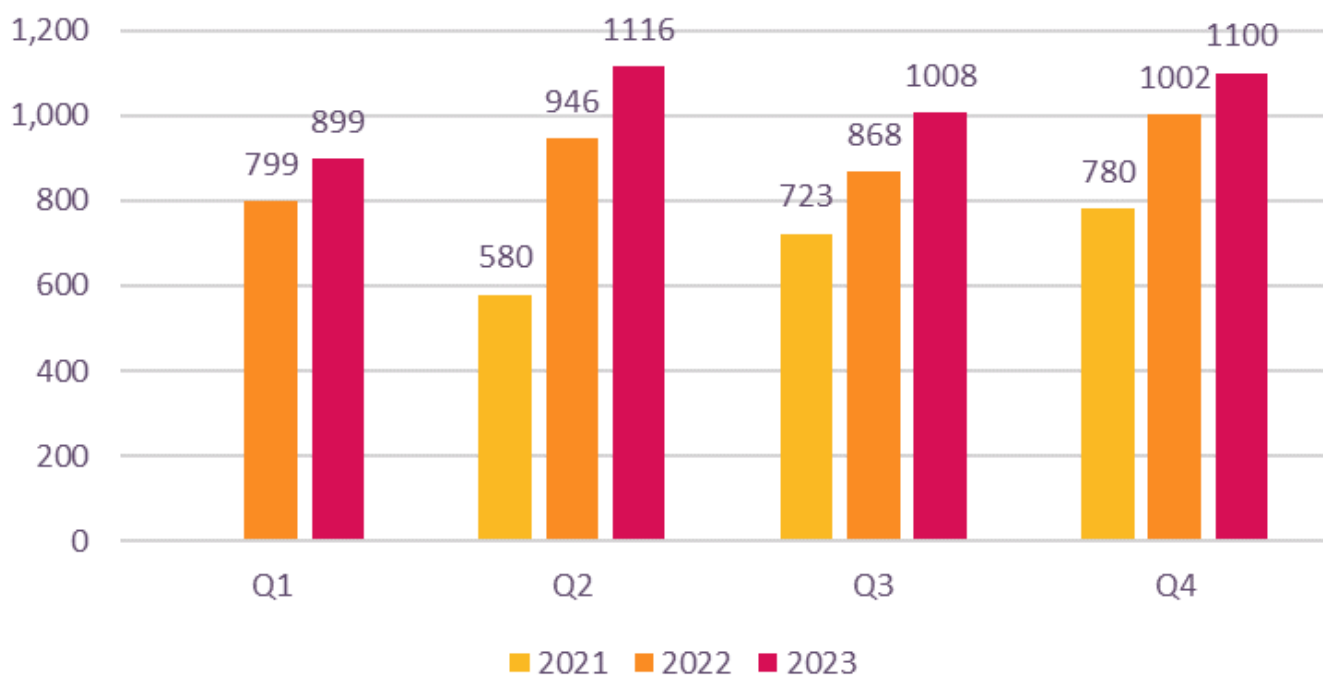


Photo courtesy of El Centro de la Raza

L&L has continued to expand its reach over time.

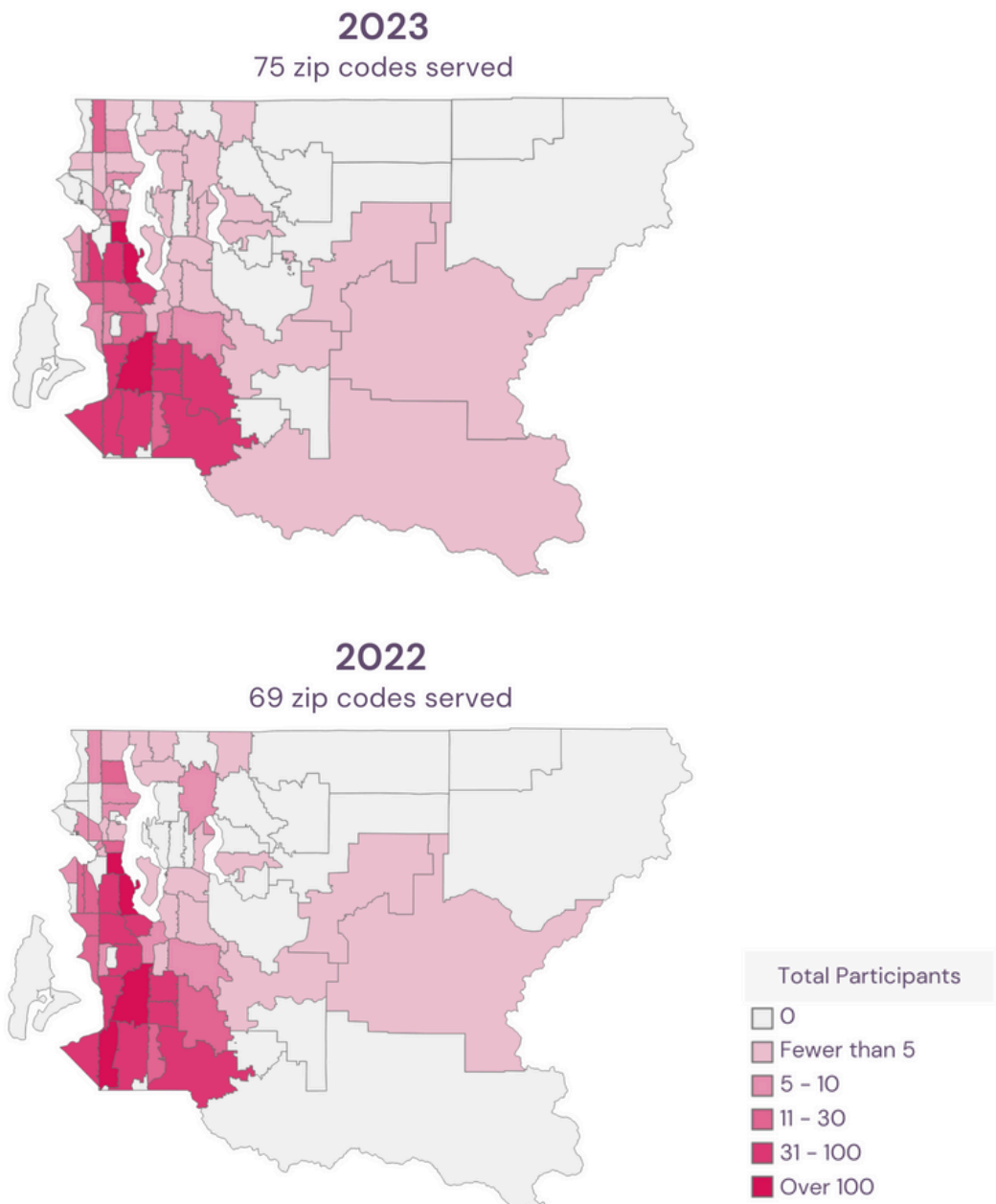
The Racial Equity Coalition has increased the number of young people they are serving year to year, with seasonal ebbs and flows. In 2023, L&L served 2120 young people, an increase over the 1903 young people served in 2022. L&L serves the most young people during Quarter 2 (which spans the end of school year programming and start of summer programming) and Quarter 4 (the start of the school year).

Young People Served by Quarter



L&L continues to reach new geographic communities.

In 2023, L&L served young people from 75 different zip codes in King County, which is an increase over all prior years of the initiative.



Young people in L&L developed a sense of belonging to their community.

80% of participants reported that they developed a sense of belonging to their school and/or community.



Photo courtesy of FEEST

"[Y]outh come because they want to be in a place they feel comfortable and are being heard. We have seen how some youth have created close bonds with their peers. We ensure that they are in a welcoming place for everyone and we have seen this when the youth are willing to share personal experiences to the group."

– Para Los Niños de Highline

L&L has helped young people advocate for themselves and others.

"FEEST really helped shape the way I organize and envision justice. A lot of organizing spaces are dominated by adults, and FEEST makes spaces for youth and empowers youth. It felt like a community."

– Youth participant in FEEST

57% of participants developed leadership skills, shown through organizing and/or advocacy activities.

L&L helped young people develop a positive cultural identity.

"There is little to no space for Black Muslim girls. [Black Muslimah Collective] is a place where you can be your true self, a place where you can relate and understand your other fellow Muslim peers."

– Youth participant in Powerful Voices

98% of participants reported having developed a positive cultural identity.

Young people in L&L built social emotional skills.

73% of participants built social emotional skills through organized activities.

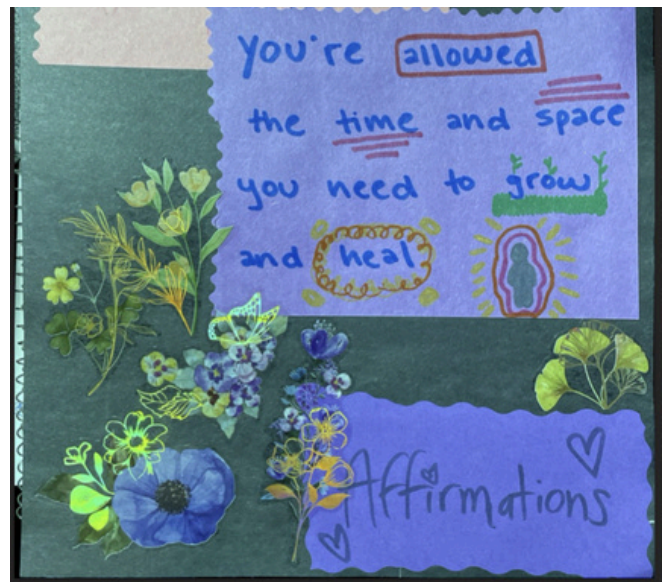


Photo courtesy of FEEST

"[O]ur youth showed a noticeable improvement this school year when asked if they understand and respect other's feelings."

– 4C Coalition

Young people in L&L feel supported in navigating and disrupting the school-to-prison pipeline.

97% of participants reported that they feel supported by the community in navigating and disrupting the school-to-prison pipeline.



Photo courtesy of Glover Empower Mentoring

"Beyond just helping the students take their educational experience to a new level, we are holding teachers to a new standard of accountability. When a teacher sends a student to us who is not doing their work, we ask the student directly what the issue is. Oftentimes, they feel unheard or disrespected by their teacher, resulting in a loss of trust. When we show up in the classroom to observe and the student knows they have an advocate and ally, both the students and teachers try harder to stay engaged and committed. We bring a new level of accountability to the student-teacher relationship that benefits everyone."

- Community Passageways



Photo courtesy of Falis Community Services

"I was born in Kenya and grew up in the Kent area... During my high school years, I was in and out of the country. I attended most of my high school in Kenya. You can just imagine the difference in school systems, the different language and culture, it was difficult to navigate. But with the help of Falis Community Services, they made it possible for me to use my advantage of everything I learned outside of the country and I was able to graduate with a higher GPA and attend one year of college as I attended high school, where I am pursuing my nursing degree. I attended all the programs Falis Community Services had to offer for youth programs and that's what allowed me to pursue what I am now. I am grateful that I had the chance to work with Falis Community Services."

– Abdinasir, Falis Community Services participant

"Growing up, I had always been the quiet, shy, and reserved kid who would never talk to anyone unless they talked to me first. As time has progressed, I am proud to say that I have gained the confidence to speak up and have even emceed multiple AGE UP events in the past couple of years. Throughout my time at AGE UP, I am glad to see my growth as a leader, role model, and person. Working at AGE UP has allowed me to gain more experience and has helped me better understand the field I see myself pursuing in the future working with young folks.

This program has taught me so many life skills and lessons that I would have never learned this early on in my life. I have learned how to love and appreciate myself, alongside learning the importance of practicing self-care (shoutout Ash). We learn so much by being in a space with people who care for us. AGE UP teaches young people many social skills and together we learn about topics we would never get to learn about in school. I've gotten to lead workshops on topics I care about such as mental health, healthy relationships, and toxic masculinity. This program highlights and uplifts youth in our community by giving us opportunities to learn and teach others about the things we want to see change in. That's why people come back to this safe space we've created."

– Taylor, AGE UP alumni and board member



Love & Liberation takes a holistic approach, working to change systems to better serve young people of color.

REC organizations partner with schools to change how students experience the school environment.

"We've also worked along side teachers and counselors to identify different needs of our students and their families in order to cater our program to be more specific to them whether it be academic support for their students or even food bags for some of our families as well as connecting them with other programs at our center such as our gender based violence or small business resiliency programs."

– Filipino Community of Seattle

"We have identified students who need extra support from trusted adults, whether the support be clinical or otherwise. By dedicating capacity to building rapport with these students, we have become the adults in the school they can rely on and confide in, as we guide them in the right direction for a brighter future."

– Asian Counseling and Referral Services



Photo courtesy of El Centro de la Raza

"This quarter, we reached out to more than 250 Special Education Professionals in Seattle Public Schools to recruit for our programs. This outreach enabled us to share our Program with a broader neurodivergent population in SPS and to foster relationships with Cleveland High School, Chief Sealth High School, and Seattle World School."

– Open Doors for Multicultural Families

REC organizations help families build the access and supports needed to navigate the school system.

"During our first couple workshops of the year, family members have expressed wanting to develop a group of Spanish speaking parents that can regularly meet and support one another to ensure that they know everything that is needed to successfully navigate the public school system in the United States."

– El Centro de la Raza



Photo courtesy of Education with Purpose Foundation for Pacific Islanders

"That word scholar, it really does mean a lot, especially in the Polynesian community. We need more of it. I coach football and I know we give back a lot in the football community.

But it's just really, really great to see a program that's academically driven to provide for our Polynesian community."

– Parent participant in Education with Purpose Foundation for Pacific Islanders

Read more on how EDWPF is bringing together Pacific Islander scholars and families on [UWKC's blog](#).

REC organizations work to build a sense of place for youth and communities of color.

"GEM partnered with Brazil Center and Sound Transit with the Roadhouse space at Angle Lake station to promote a community space for community youth to show off their artistic wares and abilities. We are currently working to bring an art walk into this space in the future as well so young artists can continue to be expressive and show their talent in a safe community space."

– Glover Empower Mentoring

In 2023, Red Eagle Soaring and its partners celebrated the grand opening of Station Space, a creativity and empowerment hub for young people of color located in King Street Station. Red Eagle Soaring's new location in Station Space will provide expanded program hours, new partnerships, and a sustainable, accessible home for young Indigenous artists. To learn more about the space, click [here](#).



Photo courtesy of Red Eagle Soaring

REC's approach emphasizes building connection and belonging for community leaders of color.

As the facilitator for REC, United Way of King County (UWKC) supports REC organizations by organizing opportunities and staffing convenings for REC to connect and build meaningful relationships. Throughout the year, REC attends in person gatherings at REC organization sites, an annual day long retreat, and various social events for REC families. Additionally, UWKC facilitates REC meetings and checks in with REC members regularly.

In November 2023, PSTAA provided funding for REC and UWKC staff to attend the School's Out Washington's Bridge Conference. This annual conference brings together youth development professionals for professional development and networking. REC and UWKC attendees were able to connect with each other on a deeper level and attend workshops to explore and share practical strategies for working with youth and improving systems.



Photo courtesy of United Way of King County

To stay up-to-date on UWKC's work, including REC happenings, check out the [Hourglass podcast](#).

Appendix: Which REC organizations contribute to which performance measures?

Performance Measure	REC Organizations Reporting
Number of young people enrolled into services	All
Percent of young people that develop a sense of belonging to school and/or community	4C Coalition, AGE UP, Community Passageways, Falis Community Services, Red Eagle Soaring
Percent of young people that develop a positive cultural identity	ACRS, EDWPF for Pacific Islanders, El Centro de la Raza, Filipino Community of Seattle, Para Los Niños, Powerful Voices
Percent of young people that build social emotional skills through organized activities	EDWPF for Pacific Islanders, Open Doors for Multicultural Families
Percent of young people that develop leadership skills, shown through organizing/advocacy activities	Falis Community Services, FEEST, Glover Empower Mentoring
Percent of young people that feel supported by the community in navigating/disrupting the school to prison pipeline	Community Passageways, El Centro de la Raza