Articulating SOWA's Theory of Change

The following theory of change was developed by a guiding team at SOWA, drawing on inputs from the data collection process. This visual demonstrates the connections between SOWA's various streams of work and the impact and vision SOWA strives to realize.

Theory of Change

VISION
By establishing a robust expanded learning ecosystem that spans all Washington communities, we create the conditions for all young people to be healthy, thriving, and reach the future they envision.

IMPACT
Young people—especially BIPOC youth and youth in poverty—develop socially, emotionally, and academically through engagement in high-quality, culturally informed programming.

LONG TERM OUTCOMES

Program Access and Impact
- There is increased access for all youth, including new opportunities in areas where programs were previously unavailable
- High quality, community-responsive programs use research-backed practices to demonstrate positive youth outcomes

Diversity and Representation in Programming
- Programs have diverse leadership and staff reflective of their communities.
- There are more BIPOC-led, rural, and responsive grassroots youth-serving organizations.

Community Engagement and Visibility
- The field is known and supported by community, funders, and policy makers.
- Collaboration and alignment exists among providers, schools, housing, system leaders, and communities.

OUTPUTS
- Collective action for increased funding and strengthened infrastructure
- Equitable and responsive policies and practices
- A strong and valued youth development workforce
- High-quality, inclusive expanded learning environments
- Visible strengths, equity gaps, and needs backed by data insights and storytelling

INPUTS

Achieving our vision in Washington requires that every strategy we're focused on advances equity.

Advocacy & Collective Action
- Lead state and federal advocacy efforts
- Convene partners and providers in cross functional coalitions
- Provide training and technical assistance to adjacent youth systems

Grantmaking
- Steward resources to programs supporting BIPOC and refugee youth and youth in poverty

Data Insights & Engagement
- Collect and evaluate youth program data
- Communicate data-driven insights and community-connected stories

Quality Improvement & Professional Development
- Provide professional and workforce development supports
- Facilitate cycles of Continuous Quality Improvement for programs

ASSUMPTIONS/ WE KNOW THAT:
- Program access for youth at the intersections of race, poverty, ability, gender, language, and homelessness is highly uneven and impacted by structural racism and oppression.
- When we prioritize program quality and access for BIPOC and refugee youth, rural youth, and youth in poverty, we create better systems and more opportunities for all Washington youth.
- Integrating youth, family, and provider voice into our systems-building work is necessary to produce higher impact and more equitable results.
- We must address the provider gaps that exist in geographic areas with fewer local and philanthropic resources in order to support equitable, statewide access to programming.
- SOWA will be positioned to deliver on these outcomes when our organization realizes the same changes and sustaining investments that we're advocating to bring to the field.