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Mission

To provide sacred spaces to strengthen the minds and bodies of QTPIs (Queer and Trans Pacific Islanders) through community organizing, community care, civic engagement, and cultural stewardship.

Vision

To create a world of cultural wealth, dignity, healing and liberation for QTPIs that honors our ancestors and supports future generations and ourselves.
Letter from the Executive Director

2021 continued to be a year of challenge and change for our community, and UTOPIA WA remained intricately connected and adaptable in the face of difficult conditions. To address the immediate needs of our community, we prioritized basic needs through mutual aid in the form of financial and rental assistance, food distribution, and safety supplies. We continue to mobilize to meet core community needs, as we cannot focus on making change while our communities are suffering from ongoing struggles and issues that are compounded by COVID-19.

Health and wellness emerged as core priorities for UTOPIA WA in 2021, and we launched our new Mapu Maia Clinic to provide culturally aligned, accessible healthcare and COVID-19 health resources focusing on the LGBTQIA+ Pacific Islander community. UTOPIA WA continued to be a touchstone for COVID-19 support and resources as its impacts weighed heavily on our community the LGBTQIA+ Pacific Islander community.

UTOPIA WA leaders also took significant strides to uplift the leadership of most marginalized among us through statewide organizing to improve the rights, safety, and liberation of sex workers. The Tautua Trans Leadership Cohort and our coalition DecrimWA continue to fight to increase protections for sex workers and repeal any anti-sex worker legislation at all levels of government. Together we hone in on our strengths as bridge-builders between Black, Indigenous, Communities of color, keepers of culture, and family within our Pasifika communities, experienced organizers using ancestral and community wisdom to engage in generative conflict required for our communities to grow together.

UTOPIA WA celebrated the power and resilience of our community, building joyful connections and honoring shared cultural traditions together. We added 12 fresh staff in 2021, 3 of whom are leaders from our programs, and promoted 5 staff into deeper roles. We served 900+ people through our regular programs and 631 more with emergency support and assistance. We launched an Eco Justice program to coordinate community response to stop climate change and a youth program to serve and support QTPI youth. We also launched ROOTED in Culture, celebration of Indigenous Pacific Islander cultures and an amplification of queer and trans Pacific Islander voices through the lens of the most significant social issues impacting our community in 2021.

Together, all our programs celebrate the strengths, voice, creativity, beauty, and resiliency of QTPIs in Washington State. UTOPIA WA is a powerful community and family, and we are pleased to share our growth with you.

In solidarity,

Taffy Johnson
Executive Director
**Pandemic Response Work**

Existing health disparities and the exponential impact of racism, xenophobia, economic equality, and trans- and homophobia are taking a tremendous toll on our community in the pandemic; Pacific Islanders have the highest rate of COVID-19 cases of all ethnic groups. UTOPIA Washington has been working to provide essential health and safety resources, financial assistance, and community connection with QTPI across Washington. As a trusted organization with deep relationships in this community, UTOPIA Washington’s role is vital to provide resources, community connection, stability, and opportunities for empowering action amidst the chaos of the pandemic.

In 2021 UTOPIA Washington Distributed

- **$136,320.00** in food vouchers to Queer, Trans, Gender Nonconforming Pacific Islander, Black, Indigenous, and People of Color
- **$15,300.00** in food gift cards to Trans & Gender Diverse Sex Workers
- **$22,629.36** in financial assistance to QTBIPOC communities & Sex Workers
- 150+ care packages for Trans & Gender Diverse Sex Workers
- 1,500+ boxes (10,000+ lbs. of food) of canned goods, fresh produce, and other food items
- 3,592 PPE Supplies (Personal Protective Equipment)
- 40+ COVID-19 Informational Videos based on science and facts that reached over 70,000 Community members digitally
- 7 COVID-19 vaccine clinics serving over 485 community members from Washington State.
Who We Are
Celebrating the diversity of our community

UTOPIA Washington is led and founded by Pacific Islander women who identify as unapologetically transgender and/or Fa’afafine. We are authentically community led, and all our programming comes directly from the needs of our community. Our strength as a community is in the diversity of stories, experiences, and identities. As Fa’afafine, Mahu, Leiti, Vakasalewalewa and many other Pacific Islander identities, our very beings are by nature intersectional, and our work cannot help but be so as well.
What We Do: UTOPIA Washington Programs
Pasifika Community & Liberation

From the very start, our work has been steeped in the barriers, challenges, and experiences of Pacific Islander members of the LGBTQIA+ community who face pervasive racism, homophobia and transphobia in ways that impact their safety, health, sense of wellness, and their desire to build a positive future. UTOPIA Washington works to create a vibrant space for members of our community to address basic needs, build pathways toward new expanded career and life opportunities, foster a sense of common purpose, and advocate for social justice, education, and overall wellness among members of the QTPI community in Washington.
**Sex Workers Empowerment Initiative (SWEI)**
SWEI focuses on shifting culture through public education, policy and systems change work in fighting against all forms of criminalization, providing community care work and base building in order to create real safety for all people - while centering the lived experiences and needs of Black, Indigenous, People of Color, Queer, Trans, Non-Binary, Gender Diverse, Intersex - in sex work. We are sex workers who are against all forms of trafficking.

**Highlights**
- SWEI launched the first phase of the Shalimar Sex Worker Tool Kit honoring the life of our beloved sister, Shalimar Seiuli. Shalimar is famously known as the transgender sex worker picked up by actor Eddie Murphy on Santa Monica Boulevard in 1997. Her death was ruled an accident by investigators but remains a mystery to her friends and community to this day. Shalimar Sex Worker Toolkit provides sex workers with tools and resources to keep themselves and others safe. The toolkit includes stories of sex workers & resources for healing, self and community care, linkage to community resources, safety strategies, and individualized development plans to build wealth and skills.
- SWEI Team partnered with with Lavender Rights, Legal Voice, and Swedish hospital to support community members with amending legal documents. In 2021 we aided 60 Trans folks and provided over $10K in financial assistance for legal document fees.
- We strive on building relationships but also showing up with support to promote the safety and welfare of sex workers. Street outreach has been a big movement for UTOPIA as we work to identify the needs and harm that’s being done to sex workers so we can better strategize a support system that works for sex workers. Last year we were able to foster these relationships and support 387 Sex Workers through our outreach efforts. We also worked on building ways that allies can support our Outreach efforts through our Support a Sex Worker Registry. This registry allows folks to donate SW community identified needs.

“Our SWEI team continues to strengthen its commitment to dismantle the inequalities that sex workers often face, by full decriminalization and pushing for full bodily autonomy. We work towards advocating for equal opportunities to reinforce and reinstate equal human rights for all trans women, gender diverse folks and all those whose welfare is continuously in jeopardy because of their work in the sex work industry. We hope to usher in a new era where we can rewrite our own narrative of how Sex Work is Work. By destigmatizing, we can create healthier spaces that will not minimize and discredit the work and survival of others.”
Laumila (Cultural Stewardship)
Celebrating & lifting up QTPI cultural identity via community connection. Laumila derives from the Native Hawaiian language meaning "Many hands lighten the load." This is the value that Laumila models to empower, enrich and preserve the indigeneity of Tagata Pasifika (Pacific Islanders) through language revitalization, cultural competency and decolonization. We look to provide a space for QTPI's to succeed and thrive in their cultural heritage. Laumila envisions the cultural sustainability of Tagata Pasifika centering the stewardship of Queer and Trans Pacific Islanders.

Highlights
- In the year 2021 we were able to recruit 33 trans and gender diverse individuals to become members of our Tautua Trans leadership cohort. We built their individual advocacy and leadership through workshops that centered issues and social justice topics that impact the lives of the trans community. We provided cultural workshops and campaigns that validate the indigeneity of trans pacific islanders living in diaspora. We distributed over $33K in stipends to support the lives of our leaders so they have capacity to engage in our development efforts.
- Our climate justice initiative Malama i ka aina partnered with king county and was able to distribute 50+ box fans for QTBIPOC families in the south king county area. Our air purifier initiative has been able to distribute more than 50 air purifiers to local business and private homes. Through our adopt a street project that deals with cleaning our local parks we were able to gather 30+ volunteers and hosted 4 Adopt A Street events to assist with the cleaning and beautification of these parks and neighborhoods.
- Rooted in culture is the cultural piece of our work, through rooted we were able to put together a production that featured different island nations and their cultures. We were able to gather 50 Trans Pacific Islanders to participate in this production called "Vaka the Journey" and featured this production at our annual UTOPIA Washington LUAU fundraiser. We were able to conduct ROOTED sessions every other Friday and each session consisted of 10 - 15 participants that were eager to learn of cultural practices and competency.

"Laumila embodies the very essence of operating from a cultural lens' and what that looks like for Indigenous communities of the Pacific. Our efforts in implementing language revitalization, decolonization and cultural preservation are a testament to the very heart of our organizational mission: Building sacred and safe spaces to strengthen the minds and bodies of Queer and Trans Pacific islanders. We continue this work, in hopes that diasporic Queer and Trans Pacific islanders will be empowered and find validity in their cultural heritage and existence."
Fofō (Community Care)
Fofō is a Samoan traditional word that has various meanings. The work that we do resonates with the definition of Fofō that means to heal, mend and to remedy. As members of the Community Care Team, our goal is to connect our community members with the necessary services and resources that will allow them to begin their restoration journey while allowing us to be a support system in their self determined path. Our mission is to safeguard our community by continuing to work with them side by side, to heal physically, mentally, spiritually, environmentally and culturally.

Highlights
- In 2021 Fofō provided ongoing care work to a total of 61 active enrolled community members who were seeking different types of support and assistance.
  - 10 for Rental and Housing Support
  - 11 financial assistance
  - 5 Amending Legal documents
  - 5 food assistance
  - 30 case enrollment.
- We hosted 7 vaccine clinics, vaccinated 485 community members, and distributed PPE that included but not limited to 2,018 hand sanitizers, 1,544 face masks, and 20 sanitation wipes.
- UTOPIA Washington’s Community Giving Project in November of 2021 was able to give out 8000 lbs of food which included:
  - 600 Boxes packed for food distribution
  - 300 plates of hot meals served
  - 85+ families served
  - With the help of 64 volunteers and a collective, 181 volunteer hours.

“The work that we do with our team is never without its difficulties. However, difficulties and hardships are what drive us to be resilient and creative in finding ways we can organize and care for our queer and trans community effectively. The Wellness team is undergoing a lot of bright and positive changes and we hope that those who have their eyes on us will continue to see the growth and the challenging work we’re putting in to bridge the resources out there and extend it to our community.”
Malu'i Hotau Kakai (Civic Engagement)
Malu'i Hotau Kakai is a Tongan phrase that means "Protect Our People". Malu'i aims to harness the collective political power of the queer and trans Pacific Islander community of Washington State for positive change through storytelling, voter engagement, and community organizing. We envision a fully represented Queer and Trans Pacific Islander community at every level of government: local, state and federal where they influence decision-makers to make positive change for the well-being of our community.

Highlights
- UTOPIA Washington successfully advocated in the 2021 Washington Legislative Session to pass Senate Bill 5313, which would require health insurers to cover medically necessary gender-affirming treatment in their health plans. Several staff members testified directly to the House and Senate with their own stories of challenges navigating the healthcare system as trans women of color. UTOPIA also partnered with 17 partner organizations with 245 individuals to lobby in 58 meetings with state representatives and senators to advocate for bills on healthcare, immigration reform, police accountability and more.
- In Summer and Fall 2021, Malu'i organized three different candidate forums inviting candidates for the seat of Seattle City Mayor, Seattle City Council Positions 8 and 9, and Kent City Mayor. We reached a total of 739 viewers as we worked in collaboration with other Asian and Pacific Islander partner organizations like ACRS and Wing Luke Museum to interview these candidates. In addition, we contacted 5,780 low propensity voters of color in King County to encourage them to get out to vote.
- In Summer 2021, UTOPIA Washington held a hybrid model Citizenship Clinic in which we were able to assist 21 community members in completing the citizenship application process. We sought to fill a need of many Pacific Islander individuals and families interested in gaining US citizenship. With the help of volunteers, translation experts and partners like ACRS and New American Campaign, we helped community members fill out N-400 forms, apply for fee waivers and meet with Department of Justice accredited paralegals to review their applications.

“Regardless of the challenges that have been presented throughout this pandemic, the civic engagement program was able to organize community members successfully and safely to actively participate in the democratic process. Upon reflection, we were able to mobilize volunteers to host a phone & text bank event which allowed us to contact six-thousand Washington voters to remind them to vote during last year’s election season.”
Toloa o le Vai (Youth Program) - Launched 2022
Toloa o le Vai meaning Birds of Water is in reference to an old Samoan proverb "E lele le Toloa, ae ma'au lava i le vai" meaning "Though the bird may fly far away, it always returns to its waters." Just like the Toloa bird, TOV looks to create safe & sacred healing spaces for all 2SLGBTQIA+ youth and their allies by reclaiming our Indigenous Queer identities and cultural practices to EMPOWER our youth in their journey and celebrating who they are in their fullness. Our goal is to provide support during school or after school to promote social, emotional, cognitive and academic development of our youth while working to reduce risky behaviors. Most importantly we aim to promote physical health and a safe and supportive environment for our queer, trans and gender diverse youth.

Things we are doing now:
- After-school Safe Space focuses on the social and emotional support for Queer and Trans Youth while having fun and spending time being in community with one another. We have some cultural workshops, community service opportunities and outings planned.
- In-School Safe Space provides Queer and Trans youth in school an advocate and safe space as our Youth Program Manager is in-house at our partner schools during certain days in the week to be available and a safe presence for youth.
- Professional Development training with school administration and staff that provides insight on the realities of Queer and Trans Youth and helps to provide them with an analysis on how to recognize, foster, and be in connection with the students they serve.

“In light of the pandemic many disparities have been highlighted, especially that of our 2SLGBTQIA+ students in our k-12 school systems. UTOPIA Washington’s youth program “Toloa o le Vai” is working diligently to provide safe and sacred healing spaces during and after school where all 2SLGBTQIA+ students and their allies can receive social and emotional support and be in community with one another, while also providing workshop & training opportunity for school administration and staff in hopes to equip our educators with the tools they need to better support their 2SLGBTQIA+ students and families.”
Other Highlights

- We found a new home, a place of gathering for our community. In early 2021 with the growth of our team and the expanded reach of our work, we set out to search for a new home. We secured our current home in April of 2021. Since then, we have filled it with love, healing and beautiful stories shared with and by QTBIPOC folks who have walked through those doors. Still located in the heart of Kent to accommodate the South King and Pierce County residents who are not able to access LGBTQIA+ services in Seattle, our new 6,500 sq. ft. home enabled us to host clinics, workshops, support groups, one on one supports, food distributions, and many more community engagements right here.

- UTOPIA WA’s systems and policy change organizing grew significantly in 2021, with the support of a new Community Organizer and new, engaged cohort leaders. We built up the skills and shared language of our leadership cohort, did deep community education on decolonization and sex worker decriminalization, and cultural sharing creative liberation work. All our work was community led, with the most marginalized at the core, and we never kept our eyes off the basic needs of our community, which have been great during the pandemic. We let them inform the pace and trajectory of our work as we continue to work towards organizing goals to increase the power and safety of QTPI and sex workers in King County.

- UTOPIA WA’s new Mapu Maia Clinic serves as a trusted, culturally aligned, free resource for Pacific Islanders in the LGBTQIA+ community, in helping them access transgender healthcare services, including hormone replacement therapy, primary and urgent care, STI testing and prevention, PrEP navigation, COVID-19 vaccines, mental health support, and preventative care. We currently partner with HealthPoint to open the clinic monthly, but we have had a much larger demand for healthcare services than we have been able to meet, so we are currently raising funds to support the expansion of the clinic to be open 5-6 days a week. The clinic also provides PPE, safer sex supplies, and multilingual resources to support people navigating the healthcare system and getting them enrolled in health insurance.

- Climate Justice organizing has transitioned to our Laulima Cultural Heritage Programs and has been renamed to, “Malama I Ka ‘Aina”, a Native Hawaiian saying that translates to “To care for the land.” Our EverGreen initiative teaches our staff and community about sustainability, recycling responsibly, and best practices that foster environmentally consciousness decisions. As diasporic Tagata Pasifika it is our duty to be educated and increase the awareness of climate justice, by finding sustainable solutions that will benefit our people and lands of origin.
In 2021 UTOPIA WA:

- Provided 500+ QTPI and other queer and trans people of color with essential health and safety resources through our street outreach and other work.
- Served over 200 Trans & Gender Diverse Sex Workers.
- Hosted 15 Virtual Talanoa Events including:
  - Transgender Day of Remembrance
  - Talanoa: Occupational Health & Safety of Sex Workers
  - TRANSpire Eleganza Virtual Fashion Show
  - Talanoa: Black and Brown Transwomen on Connecting our Movements
  - Behind the Scenes: Vaka - The Voyage
  - Faces of Resilience
  - Talanoa: Mental Health Awareness
- Held 12 monthly TransAction support group for Trans & Gender Diverse current and former Sex Workers.
- Held 12 monthly Real Talk support group for Queer & Trans Black, Indigenous, People of Color.
- Developed the leadership and organizing skills of 33 QTPI through the Tautua Trans Leadership Cohort.
- Held 6 sexual health testing clinics throughout the year including HIV/STI testing, and PrEP Services.
- Hired 12 new staff members and promoted 5 to deeper roles
- Connected 50+ Pacific Islander Transgender folks with their culture through the works of building the production of “Vaka the Journey” showcased at the UTOPIA WA 2021 Annual Luau.
"Years later the dreams of an individual were willed to reality"

Times were a bit different for a young fa’afafine like me when I was still living in American Samoa. Somehow my circumstances and curiosity brought me to the Pacific Northwest in the late Washington winter of 2007. At such a young and impressionable age, I found a lot of things fascinating while being so far away from everything I was familiar with; I was honestly a bit lonely. However, I was not aware that there was a small group, later to be known as UTOPIA Washington, of Queer and Trans Pacific Islanders that were already organizing and hanging out often in Washington. It was easy to find my place there and I was immediately attached, they could not rid of me, and the rest was a once upon a time story.

Now going into 2022, I sometimes find myself reflecting a lot about my past, my experiences, and just a lot of where life has taken me. My community has always been present since my move here. It was also the reason I would always find myself back whenever the wind blew me towards another state. Washington and my community are my home and after seeing it grow to what it is now, UTOPIA Washington has become the home to several people with shared experiences.
I take pride in being a member of my UTOPIA WA family. There are not enough words to describe how poetic the universe has been to have led me to this very moment. I remember being present at a meeting when UTOPIA WA was in its infancy, and I can clearly recall the hours of planning and the voices of our leaders hoping to be able to establish a haven for community members like us, queer and proudly trans. I remember being present at our organizing efforts to create safe spaces and provide care work and support to those that needed it. We needed it and I needed it. The kindness and the intentionality of our services never left me. When I first took on an official role at UTOPIA Washington, I was a care worker and as a care worker, I was able to give back to the community for the community that gave me so much.

The world really does operate like a Shakespearean play sometimes. Seeing the work and the drive of a sapling UTOPIA WA to what it is now, is quite a meaningful and remarkable sight. Because our leaders have paved and created an opportunity and an environment for each of us to display our brilliance, it only makes sense that we elevate ourselves and the work that we do. I would like to think that we were all carefully selected to move the work together. This is the true power of UTOPIA Washington. A formidable leader and a talented team that understands the importance of creating safe spaces, community organizing, community care, civic engagement, and cultural stewardship.
Financial Report

UTOPIA WA Growth 2016 - 2022 (Projected)

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2021 UTOPIA WA Funding Sources

- Foundation Grants: 57%
- Government Grants: 17.5%
- COVID-19 Funding: 11.6%
- Fundraising: 6%
- Sponsorships: 4.4%
- Individual Contributions: 3.5%
Expense Breakdown

UTOPIA WA 2021 Program Expenses

Sex Workers Empowerment Initiative 31.3%

Malu'i Hotau Kakai: Civic Engagement 13.2%

Administration 15.4%

COVID-19 Supports 16.4%

Fundraising 2.3%

Fofō: Community Care 16.7%

Laulima: Cultural Stewardship 4.7%
UTOPIA Washington offers our most sincere thank you for all the generous community and foundation support invested in our work in 2021. We are honored and humbled to be stewards of these resources; seeing them make such a positive impact in the lives of our community members.

Thank you!
Our Values

Dignity
"Ukuli'i ka pua, onaona i ka mau'u"
Tiny is the flower, yet it scents the grass around it

Diligence
"O le 'ala i le pule o le Tautua"
The path to leadership is through good service

Teamwork
"Galulue fa'atasi e māmā ai se 'avega"
Working together lightens the load

Sustainability
"E mae te tavake ki ona fulu"
The tavake bird treasures its red feathers

Cultural Heritage
"Ko taku reo taku ohooho, ko taku reo taku mapihi mauria"
My language is my awakening, my language is the window to my soul