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Our mission is to provide spaces to strengthen the minds and bodies of QTPIs – Queer and Trans Pacific Islanders – through community organizing, community care, civic engagement and cultural stewardship.

Our vision is a world of cultural wealth, dignity, healing, and liberation for QTPIs that honors our ancestors and supports future generations and ourselves.

Dignity

Diligence

Teamwork

Sustainability

Cultural Heritage
2022 marked a change in the way we work here at UTOPIA Washington. Whereas the last three years had been focused on recovery and response, this year prioritized sustainable growth as we explore what the future of this work may look like. The climate - both socially and ecologically - is changing around us, and our work must evolve alongside it.

Analysis building has been at the core of our commitment to sustainable growth, developed through collaborative strategic planning. By connecting staff, executives, community members, and allies we have painted a picture of the inequities faced by our people, and explored pathways to combat oppression wherever it occurs.

This work started with our internal staff team, who came together for a multi-day strategic planning retreat in mid 2022. During this retreat we explored the 'why' behind UTOPIA Washington, and developed strategies to move the work forward collaboratively with our community. We continued our strategic planning efforts with the QTPI retreat in August, which opened the space to all fa'afafine, fa'atane, leiti, māhū wahine, māhū kāne, vakasalewalewa, palopa, akava’ine, lesbian, gay, bisexual, trans, queer, intersex, asexual, gender nonconforming, and gender diverse Pacific Islanders in Washington. This event centered talanoa, cultural revitalization, and fellowship, and gave us deeper insight into the needs and experiences of the people we serve.

In addition to analysis building, we have turned inward and focused heavily on team building throughout 2022. We brought more people to the table, reassessed how we divide our labor, further developed our benefits, and even expanded our community clinic to a second location to accommodate the growth of our programming. We believe in the capacity of our people to be leaders, and these changes reflect that - we are giving the time, space, and resources needed to allow those empowering this work to thrive.

Throughout all this, our focus remained on Black and Brown organizing - especially that already occurring within our communities. We formed and participated in coalitions, cohorts, and other networks centering our people, and listened intently to the lived experiences of our Black and indigenous kin when planning our steps for the coming years.

We are so grateful for the continued support of our community, our staff, and everyone else who makes this work possible. UTOPIA Washington has grown to be a cultural home for many of us, and I am honored to be at the forefront of what we are creating here together.

In Solidarity,

Taffy Johnson  
Executive Director
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, Māhū, Leitī, Vakasalewalewa and many other Pacific Islander identities, our very beings are by nature intersectional, and our work cannot help but be so as well.
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.

Pasifika Community & Liberation
MANA speaks to the collective strength that we hold as a people. We utilize MANA, or our cultural strength, to provide a voice for our diasporic queer and trans Pacific islanders, who have been culturally deprived and disempowered by systemic oppression and cultural erasure. As stewards of culture we look to reclaim our narratives and bridge generational gaps through programs that offer cultural competency, language revitalization, and decolonization practices. We also utilize the traditional Pasifika methods, which include storytelling through Talanoa (the tying of our stories), in the hopes that our stories and lived experiences will weave a resilient cultural mat, and ensure the continuity of our customs and traditions for future generations.

OUR PROGRAMS

- The Tautua Trans Leadership Cohort focuses on developing the leadership and advocate capacity of our local Queer and Trans Pacific Islander community. Through this work, the next generation of community leaders are stewarded through the act of Tautua, or being of service.
- Our MANA Youth program looks to create a safe and sacred healing space for all Two-Spirit and LGBTQIA+ youth, young adults, and their allies. We do this by reclaiming our indigenous queer culture and practices, and celebrating youth in the fullness of their identities.
- The Talanoa, ROOTED in Culture, and TUGU after Dark programs offer us a space to speak openly and honestly about the topics, issues, and practices that concern our Pasifika community. Through these events we dispel stigma and learn what it is to be people of the Pacific Islands.
- Our Ala Mai program allows us as community to reconnect with the sacred cultural traditions of the Pacific. Through song, dance, craft, and fellowship we are rekindling our connection with ourselves, our diasporic peers, and our ancestors in a safe and sacred space made especially for us.

"An old Samoan proverb teaches that 'The pathway to leadership is through service', or 'O le ala i le pule o le tautua'. The meaning of the word 'Tautua' is 'to be of service', which is what we wanted to model through the Tautua Leadership Cohort. UTOPIA Washington seeks to build and strengthen the leadership of Queer and Trans Pacific islanders, by having its future leaders demonstrate the act of Tautua in their serving of community."
"The MANA youth program is a place of comfort and self-expression. Just to be around people who have similar experiences and outcomes in their lives is humbling! It pushes me to do better - not just for myself but for those around me. The program taught me to love unconditionally, and to be selfless not selfish. I get to live my life unapologetically and without judgement. It’s helping me grow into the person I am."

2022 MANA HIGHLIGHTS

We connected with over 100 students across 12 schools, providing fellowship and cultural connection to LGBTQIA+ youth.

We held more than 30 Tautua Trans Leadership Cohort events, culminating in the graduation of 22 program participants.

We held 28 virtual and in-person events through the Talanoa, ROOTED in Culture, and TUGU after dark series, with more than 100,000 viewers in total.
LE NOFO - THE RISE TO THE THRONE

One of the crowning achievements of the MANA program in 2022 was the annual UTOPIA Washington Lū’au. Many of our Tatuta Trans Leadership Cohort, Youth program, and Ala Mai participants were involved, sharing their skills and talents upon the stage. Together, we made this event one to remember - a space to connect with our Pasifika community, share the beauty of Tagata Moana, and affirm all the hard work done by our staff, program participants, and local community. We are so thankful to all who made this event what it was, and we can’t wait to return again in 2023 with yet another showcase of our vast and vibrant cultural heritage.

If you would like to learn more about Le Nofo or other past UTOPIA Washington Lū’au events, visit our website at utopiawa.org/luau

THE FUTURE OF MANA

Going into 2023, MANA will focus on greater cultural opportunity for our diasporic community through the Ala Mai program. Additionally, we will continue to deepen cultural narratives through ROOTED in Culture and Talanoa, while also expanding our work with local 2SLGBTQIA+ youth. This work continues to be made possible by our funders and donors, as well as by those community members who participate and uplift the work of these programs.

“We thank you for making the year 2022 a great and memorable one for MANA. We not only provided community with various cultural opportunities to learn about their Pasifika heritage, but we were also able to establish a relationship with the indigenous people of this land through the UNTIKAWA organization. For the year 2023 we will continue to build and stand in solidarity with our first Nations community as it strengthens our work as cultural stewards and navigators!”
UTOPIA Washington’s SPEaC Change Program stands for Systems, Policy, Environment, and Cultural Change. It emerged out of a combination of the civic engagement work, environmental justice work, and regional community organizing work of different but connected teams. This program seeks to effect change not just through individual change but through larger environmental changes. We do this through voter registration, community education, candidate forums, legislative advocacy, social media campaigns, coalition building, immigration support services, and regional organizing.

OUR PROGRAMS

Malama i Ka ‘Aina focuses on the impact of climate change and sustainable advocacy in our communities - especially those still residing within the Pacific. Through this program, we care for the land and create a more livable world for all.

2022 saw the launch of the EverGreen initiative, which sought to implement environmentally friendly practices throughout our office. We also expanded our partnerships with local green organizations, increased our political advocacy around sustainable energy practices, and furthered education through events, infographics, and talanoa.

The Civic Engagement and Policy program centers the importance of political involvement within our communities. By empowering voters, informing policy, and making our voices heard we create a brighter future for our communities.

Our team championed the passing of ESHB 1956 in early 2022, which ensures greater protections for those currently in the carceral system. We also furthered community education through several events, including those discussing AA/NHPI disaggregation, birthright citizenship, and a collaborative phone bank event combatting voter suppression.

The Regional Community Organizer works to connect the disparate experiences, practices, and actions of the UTOPIA chapters, as well as facilitate greater connectivity within our local Pasifika and LGBTQIA+ communities.

2022 saw the formalization of this role, as well as the development of new local and regional policy agendas to ensure the sustainable future of UTOPIA. Additionally, through this work we hosted our first Queer and Trans Pacific Islander retreat, which created a space for our community to connect, build analysis, and develop ecosystems of collective care together.

“Grassroots organizing and activism begins at the local level, and unites communities to create change. Also, the support gained through grassroots efforts is essential for any issue to be recognized at a national mechanism that can influence policies and build partnerships.”
2022 SPEaC CHANGE HIGHLIGHTS

We collected more than 100 bags of garbage from our local streets with the support of 70+ community members.

We made more than 2,000 calls to encourage voter participation in our local community - especially among Pacific Islanders.

We further developed the UTOPIA National Council, allowing us to work collaboratively with other chapters in Alaska, California, Hawaii, Montana, Las Vegas, and Portland.

Our gender identities continue to be questioned and weaponized for ill-informed binary agendas. The passing of House Bill 1956 ensured the privacy, safety, and welfare of our incarcerated Trans and Gender Diverse community. When we stand vigilant against oppressors, we prevail - and we did!"
UTOPIA WASHINGTON PROGRAMS

UTOPIA QTPi RETREAT

UTOPIA Washington held its first state-wide Queer and Trans Pacific Islander - or QTPi - Camp retreat in Lacey, Washington. The purpose of this retreat was to elevate the next generation of Queer and Trans Pasifika youth, and create opportunities for community members to define what ecosystems of care and safety look like to them.

Over 90 community members registered to attend this multi-day event, which included workshops, games, talanoa, cultural crafts, and fellowship between Pasifika people of all ages, genders, and backgrounds. The event gave us space to connect as a community, where we could be accepted in our fullness and without fear. The space also gave greater opportunity for inter-generational connection, with youth and elders forming closer connections based on mutual care.

We can't wait to continue this event in 2023, and provide even more opportunities for our community to lead this important work.

THE FUTURE OF SPEaC CHANGE

Through 2023, our focus will be on the uptick in discriminatory policies targeting LGBTQIA+ individuals worldwide. We will expand our efforts to create sustainable social and environmental ecosystems, which center the autonomy of all living things. We plan to continue coalition and cohort development efforts, especially in those spaces centering state-level policy, sustainability, and generative mutual aid.

“As we close another chapter, I want to say thank you to everyone that contributed to the work of our program. This has been a year long process, supported by the tremendous dedication and commitment of our organizational leaders, partners, community members, youth, staff, and friends. This work could not be done by one person, but through the collective we accomplished everything we set out to do this year.”
Mapu Maia Health Clinic

The Mapu Maia Health Clinic was designed to be a place of refuge, aimed at providing the 2SLGBTQIA+ community with quality healthcare in a space that honors all facets of their identity. Mapu Maia is a Samoan phrase, which refers to inviting someone over to rest. This is the sentiment we wish to communicate through the program, by offering gender affirming and culturally-aligned services and support congruent with our communities wellbeing.

OUR PROGRAMS

Fofō seeks to connect our community with safe, accessible, and culturally-relevant care for all aspects of their lives.
Our clinic program expanded to occupy its own office, offering STI and HIV prevention and treatment, PreP navigation, vaccinations, and dental care to our local community.
We also expanded our community care work, providing rental support and peer groups to those in need.
We launched our newest food sovereignty programs in 2022, opening our very own in-house Makeki. From here, we distributed fresh produce, canned goods, and other culturally-relevant foods to the community. We also partnered with Doordash to offer Project Dash, which allowed community to shop our food pantry just like they would a standard grocery store. Those food items were then delivered directly to community, supporting those with limited mobility or poor access to transportation.

The Sex Workers Empowerment Initiative focuses on outreach, care work, and decriminalization within our local and regional sex worker communities.
We tripled street outreach efforts in 2022, divided into 'Moonlight’ and ‘Starlight’ phases. Out Moonlight efforts focused on nighttime outreach, while Starlight allowed us to connect with sex workers operating during the day. This increase was a direct response to the increased policing seen at the end of 2021, which saw many sex workers dispersed and disconnected from available resources.
We also prioritized collaborative community partnerships and coalition building, supporting retreats with both Decrim WA in February, and King County Levy VSHSL in August. We also launched the D17 Decrim WA Cohort, which connected 12 leaders from Surge, TWOCSN, Sacred Communities, Queer the Land, and UTOPIA Washington.

"As members of the Mapu Maia team, our goal is to connect community with the services and resource that allow them to begin their restoration journey. We want to support our community while they determine their own path in life. Our mission is to safeguard our community, by working with them side by side. Together, we can heal physically, mentally, spiritually, environmentally, and culturally."
We provided 12 cohort members CPR and First Aid certification and scholarships, as well as professional development training in the medical field.

We provided fresh produce, canned goods, and more to over 1,000 local individuals and households.

We distributed 278 safety kits and 80 wish list items to sex workers. Items distributed include safety tools, visa gift cards, hand warmers, and more.

"Our Sex Workers Empowerment Initiative (SWEI) has come a long way towards destigmatizing the way people view sex workers today. I feel a sense of pride knowing that SWEI can build and foster relationships to support the autonomy of Sex Workers"
UTOPIA Washington’s Noqu Seni Rosi Glam Room is sponsored by Thrive Causemetics. All the products donated by Thrive Causemetics help affirm our Trans and gender diverse community members, providing them with the tools and products to explore and uplift their true beauty and identity. Our commitment to the aid, support, and recognition of Trans Women in our cultural communities and society, in general, has been positively impacted by our ability to provide them with resources and products that support and affirm their beauty, existence, and livelihood. Thrive Causemetics’ commitment to being vegan, cruelty-free, and eco-friendly aligns with our foundational pillar of cultural stewardship, not only to our communities, but to the lands we occupy, live, and play on. UTOPIA Washington is a proud partner of Thrive Causemetics that continues to support the community members we serve, in a way that impacts both the internal and external beauty of the whole person.

THE FUTURE OF MAPU MAIA CLINIC

The Mapu Maia team seeks to navigate 2023 with consistency and growth. We are prioritizing staff and community skill development, especially around HIV and harm reduction. We also plan to offer clinic services on a recurring weekly basis, and further increase sex worker outreach efforts within King and Pierce county.

“I visited the Mapu Maia clinic to receive my COVID-19 booster vaccination, and it was a wonderful experience. I was able to use my chosen name throughout the process, which was not something I’d experienced at other clinics. The staff were kind, knowledgeable, and accommodating, and made the process feel fun! If every clinic was like this I would feel a lot more comfortable seeking out medical care.”
Expanded our team to include 24 core staff, including those entering new roles as Deputy Director, Finance Director, Youth Program Manager, Youth Coordinator, Community Care Program Coordinator, Regional Community Organizer, and SWEI Program Coordinator. Additionally, we shifted internally to accommodate programmatic changes. This resulted in several new roles as Cultural Program Director, SWEI Program Manager, Community Care Program Manager, Operations Manager, Cultural Program Manager, Climate & Environmental Program Manager, Development Manager, Community Care Program Coordinator, Finance Associate, and Development Associate.

Secured a second location at 812 Central Ave N., Kent, which is the new home for our Mapu Maia Health Clinic plus our Cultural Center "Fale Mālama". The Fale Mālama houses our full-service kitchen, fulfilling our vision in providing weekly hot meals to the community. These new facilities have allowed us to further expand our reach of services in care work and community care with wellness clinics, community care services, and cultural workshops.

Saw substantial growth in our online presence, with more than 400 new subscribers, over 3,200 new followers, and live streams totaling more than 5,800 hours of viewing time.

Further developed our staff benefits package to include a robust leave development program, retirement services, life insurance, FSA, mental health days, floating holidays, and more.
I grew up learning that family was reserved only for those you share blood with. That idea was quickly proven wrong when I first landed here in the PNW in 2006.

It was scary, being a Samoan fa’afafine, hearing of horror stories of Transgender communities who were being discriminated or worse, murdered in the US. I was relieved to have discovered a small Samoan fa’afafine community who have also made home in Washington State. My fears were allayed, having discovered my home away from home. We didn’t have much, just a bowl of ramen to end the day and a can of four loko to wrap up our week. It wasn’t much, but to me it was enough! When tragedy struck home we joined Taffy, who organized and mobilized our fa'afafine siblings and other allies from the Pacific for relief efforts to support our loved ones back home. This enabled a lot of moving pieces to have formed what is known today as UTOPIA Washington.

I currently serve as the co-chair for the board of UTOPIA Washington, but I have been a member since its inception over 10 years ago. It’s great leaders like UTOPIA Washington’s Executive Director Taffy Maene-Johnson that continues to motivate me to consistently volunteer and show up for our community. I was never a community person until I saw how passionate and driven Taffy and some of my older sisters are with the work they do.
Some were born for the advocacy leadership, and some were born to support those leaders to help move the work further. Public speaking isn’t my forte so I steer away from such light and serve the community the best way I can, such as continuously volunteering for UTOPIA WA programmatic needs and community efforts. We are fortunate, especially for all our Pacific Islanders who have moved to Washington in recent years to have the kind of support and assistance that UTOPIA WA provides. It’s the assurance of support that such spaces are available that makes migrating a whole lot easier and safer. I believe this continues to be the sole purpose as to why a lot of our QTPI (Queer & Trans Pacific Islanders) community makes WA their destination for better opportunities.

UTOPIA WA highlights the lived experience of community that best aids in the system of care that is the epitome of its living soul and purpose of its creation. We can be part of UTOPIAs work in any space. It’s the spirit of support and love of how we can support and care for other QTPI/LGBTQIA+ community. You can practice its values at workspaces, churches, and even out in public spaces. When you support, show love and compassion to a person or community, you are part of the work.

I envision the continuation of UTOPIA WA work that will surpass my time as well as the time of others who are actively doing the work today. That’s the power of UTOPIA, it’s the endless ability of creating safe welcoming spaces that continues to care for community
2022 UTOPIA WA Funding Sources

- Government Grants: 48.7%
- Foundation Grants: 43.6%
- Fundraising Event Income: 3.8%
- Corporate Contributions: 0.8%

2022 UTOPIA WA Program Expenses

- Management & General: 20.2%
- Fundraising: 5.7%
- Program Services: 74.1%
OUR FUNDERS

AAPI CIVIC ENGAGEMENT FUND  Albertsons Companies Foundation  King County Best Starts for KIDS

COO COMMUNITIES OF OPPORTUNITY  Gilead  GIVE COMMUNITY FOUNDATION  GROUNDSWELL FUND  GHF

First Financial Northwest Bank  Healthier Here  MultiCare

newventurEfund  Philanthropy Northwest  Pride Foundation

Satterberg foundation  Seattle Foundation  United Way

United Way of King County  The Visibility Impact Fund  Holman ENTERPRISES

Seattle PRIDE

youth vision and activism for gender justice

THIRD WAVE FUND
UTOPIA Washington offers our most sincere thank you for all the generous community and foundation support invested in our work in 2022. 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.

2023 will be a year of greater analysis building and internal development, starting with the results of our recent strategic planning. We present our new mission, vision, and values below, as well as our plan for the next three years of UTOPIA Washington. We are excited to get your feedback and work with our community to further these efforts.

Thank you to all who made 2022 possible, and to those continuing to support this work in 2023.
After months of intentional strategic planning with our staff, cohort and youth leaders, Board members, and community, we are excited to present our new mission, vision, and MANAfesto (values). You can take a deeper dive into our 2023-2026 Strategic Plan linked below.
We are actively replacing systems of oppression with ecosystems of care and safety for all our communities through Black and Brown organizing, prioritizing land and bodily autonomy, and reclaiming our cultural narratives.

A world of abundance, autonomy, and harmony, where all forms of supremacy cease to exist for all life.
MANAfest

Principled Struggle
We are actively engaging in generative conflict rooted in deep love and care that helps us grow as people together.

Sustainability
Sustainability requires connection to community and land. We honor this connection to all life through our cultural practices.

A/Urgency
We center the self-determination of community members and community as a whole while taking urgent action.

Cultural Knowledge
With intersectional, experiential, & cultural knowledge, our communities have the fullest picture of our shared narrative, trust it.

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2023-2026 Strategic Plan