



THE WASHINGTON BUS

2019 IMPACT REPORT



THE NEXT ERA OF THE BUS

After a six-month process of reflecting on our strengths, structures, and strategic direction, the Washington Bus is moving to a shared leadership model with two Co-Executive Directors. Our search for a Co-Executive Director for Policy and Program and a Co-Executive Director for Operations and Development is currently underway and expected to conclude in early 2020. These roles will shape, inspire, and manage the organization's future in collaboration with one another, a talented staff team, and a deeply committed Board of Directors. We are excited about the possibilities this new structure will bring and look forward to sharing more news with you soon.

This year, we welcomed several new talents to our staff and Board of Directors. Together, we are ready to tackle the work that lies ahead for the Bus in 2020 and beyond. So much has changed, but the spirit of this community and our shared commitment to the equitable representation of young people in Washington State is unwavering. We've registered 6,370 young people to vote this year -- that's over 71,000 since our inception. It's been an honor to serve as the organizing home to so many volunteers and young activists over the last 12 years. To each of you who has pushed us to think bigger and be better, we thank you. Our work this year was made possible by you.

Seferiana Day, Washington Bus Board President and Bus Fellowship Alumna

Aaron Robertson, Washington Bus Education Fund Board President

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To best fulfill our mission, "The Washington Bus" header is comprised of two separate entities: The Washington Bus Education Fund 501(c)(3) and The Washington Bus 501(c)(4). This report includes highlights from both organizations. Cover images by Hello There You.

BUS IMPACT

What will new laws and fewer barriers to voter registration mean for the future of Washington State?

The Bus is a proud member of the Washington Voting Justice Coalition, working now to support the implementation of our state's new voting laws which went into effect this July. Governor Jay Inslee told us, "The Washington Bus has been a key partner in our work to provide access to democracy in our state. With Automatic Voter Registration and Same Day Registration, thousands of Washingtonians have now been registered to vote. And just since July of this year, more than 17,000 16 and 17-year olds have been pre-registered, so that when they turn 18 they will be ready to vote." Oregon, which passed Automatic Voter Registration in 2015, now has over 90% of their eligible population registered to vote.

Bus staff member Libby Watson feels that fewer barriers to registration mean more opportunities to focus on voter mobilization. "We can lend more time and resources to ensuring that young people know why, when, and how to vote by the time they're eligible. Plus, because young people tend to move frequently, ensuring that our constituents keep their address up to date is critical." Young people in our country have immense challenges to overcome, but our state has taken a major step forward. Said Governor Inslee, "In our voting justice work, it is our young voters that continuously push for progressive and innovative voting reforms, which benefit all Washingtonians."

The Alliance for Youth Action



Photo: Andrew Gillum at the Youth Action Summit with our affiliate Engage Miami's Gilbert Placeres. Image by Jason Colston.

The Washington Bus is one of 11 affiliates in the Alliance for Youth Action. The Alliance is a national youth organizing network driven by local organizations working in Chicago, Miami, Montana, Georgia, Milwaukee, Minnesota, Texas, Oregon, Colorado, and Ohio. The network shares resources and strategies to invest in people power at the local level. Young people are the largest and most diverse voting bloc in the country. Our organizing today is building the movement for unprecedented turnout across the country on November 3rd, 2020.



6,370

Voter Registrations



10,897

Calls



2,937

Pledge-to-vote cards



20,830

Texts



378

Volunteer hours

This year, the Bus partnered with the City of Seattle on education and outreach for the **Democracy Voucher Program**, a new way for eligible Seattle residents to participate in local government by supporting campaigns and/or running for office themselves. We spoke to over 1,000 young people about democratizing political giving and supporting their preferred candidates' campaigns. The Seattle Ethics and Elections Commission reports that nearly twice as many residents used their vouchers this year compared to 2017. In 2021, eligible Seattle residents will receive new vouchers which can be used to support participating candidates for mayor, city attorney, and city council at-large races.

We were thrilled to join 38 incredible organizations once again in the **Voter Education Fund** cohort, a partnership with the Seattle Foundation, King County Elections, and community organizations working to reduce inequities in voting access in historically underrepresented communities. We are proud to work with so many local organizations led by and for the communities they serve.



Photo: 2019 Voter Education Fund Cohort. Image by King County Elections.

We continued our partnership with **Communities of Opportunity** with support from King County and the Seattle Foundation. Communities of Opportunity is a network of community-driven partnerships working on policy and systems change to eliminate racial, health, and economic disparities in King County. This year, we mobilized young people around the King County Promise, a proposal for a more equitable and supportive post-secondary education system for students of color, first generation, and students impacted by poverty.

Throughout the year, we partnered with **27 high schools, 13 two and four-year colleges, and 22 community organizations** to host voter registration drives and class raps. What's a class rap? The Bus visits classrooms and assemblies to provide nonpartisan presentations about the history of voting rights, the importance of holistic civic engagement, and the opportunities that young people have to make a difference in their communities. By targeting schools and organizations that serve young and historically underrepresented people, we're bringing important resources to the next generations of leaders.

DID YOU KNOW?



The Bus has registered 71,865 people to vote since our inception!



In 2019, the average age of a voter registered by the Bus was 18!

PARTNER SPOTLIGHT: THE VERA PROJECT

Ricky Graboski, VERA Interim Executive Director

“The Vera Project exists to harness youth-driven engagement in music and art as a tool for personal and community transformation. The Bus has been a key partner to VERA for years, providing our community with the support and knowledge required to truly participate in and lead our democratic process. From collaborating on the foundation of our organizing and engagement committee to bridging the gap between art and activism with voter engagement at VERA shows, the Bus has helped formulate some of our most meaningful programming.”



Photo: Community listening session at VERA.



The Youth Agenda is an issues and policy platform determined by feedback from our base. We're refreshing it this year to ensure that our organizing capacity is focused on the issues that impact young people most. So far, affordable housing, climate justice, immigration reform, gun law reform, and criminal justice reform are rising to the top.

EVENTS RECAP

In June, 127 Bus Bash guests welcomed the 2019 Fellowship cohort. Together, we raised a record \$23,269 for the Washington Bus Education Fund. We were inspired by guest speakers Sarah Servin, Fellowship Class of 2012, and Seattle City Councilmember Lorena González. A major shout out to our sponsors this year: Lucky Seven Foundation, King County Executive Dow Constantine, The Goss Family, Washington State Labor Council, AFL-CIO, evo, House Democratic Campaign Committee, Abracadabra Printing, Bob and Libby, Caffè Vita, CD Strategic, Janet Levinger and Will Poole, Leslie and Tom Redd, NWP Consulting, and Summit Strategy.

In August, the Washington Bus teamed up with The Stranger and Neumos to host our 5th ever Candidate Survivor, Seattle's largest and loudest candidate forum. Candidates for Seattle City Council shared their policy positions and hidden talents with a crowd of 400 young people! Thank you to our event sponsor CN4 Partners.



Photo: Bus Bash 2019. Image by Hello There You.



Photo: Candidate Survivor 2019. Image by Timothy Kenney for The Stranger.

FELLOWSHIP REVIEW

Bus Fellows collected more than 500 signatures in support of post-secondary education funding allocated from the Puget Sound Taxpayer Accountability Account and delivered them to the King County Council. We organized listening sessions throughout King County to create space for aspiring students to share their perspectives on the equitable allocation of county resources and mobilized young people to testify at council meetings about their challenges accessing higher education. Ultimately, the council allocated \$112.4 million dollars over a 15 year period to the King County Promise program to provide K-12 and post-secondary supports and to fund community-based organizations working with students of color, first-generation college students, and students impacted by poverty.

2019 Fellow Andrea Escobar told us, “I was drawn to the Fellowship because of the opportunity to work with experts in the field and develop academically and professionally. Before the Fellowship, I didn’t completely understand what community organizing actually meant. The program allowed me to learn in a group that was really diverse and willing to listen and learn from each other. I was out in the field registering people to vote and becoming more connected to my community.” **To learn more about becoming a Fellow in 2020 email us at contact@washingtonbus.org.**



Photo: Hodan Abdi, Saagar Mehta, Edgar Espino, Shivani Trivedi, Nasra Ali, Geeta Iyer, Krisna Mandujano, Mayra Meraz, Emily Fortier, Andrea Escobar, Thearina Leng, Flora Lloyd, and Gabby Borenstein

FELLOWSHIP SPOTLIGHT: NURA ABDI, '18

Interviewed by Mo Pannier, Leadership Development Coordinator



Photo: Nura Abdi, '18, with King County Councilmember-elect Girmay Zahilay. Image by Duha Mohamed.

MO: What was your role on Girmay Zahilay's King County Council campaign?

NURA: I was the Student Outreach Coordinator -- registering voters, tabling, spreading the word. I was a student while working on the campaign. I'm double-majoring in Law, Economics and Public Policy and Global Studies, with a minor in Human Rights at UW Bothell.

MO: Did any of your Bus Fellowship experience prepare you for that role?

NURA: There's a lot. Definitely door knocking and phone banking. I learned that in order to be an organizer, you have to build community. The Bus inspired me to do youth civic engagement -- I saw the power that has, especially in my community.

MO: What is your advice to young people who wish there were more people running for office who reflect the communities they represent?

NURA: Run! If you don't see it, be the first person to be it. Young people are the ones inheriting the future. We're changing the way politics work.

FINANCIALS

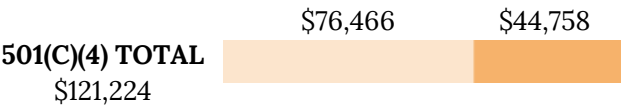
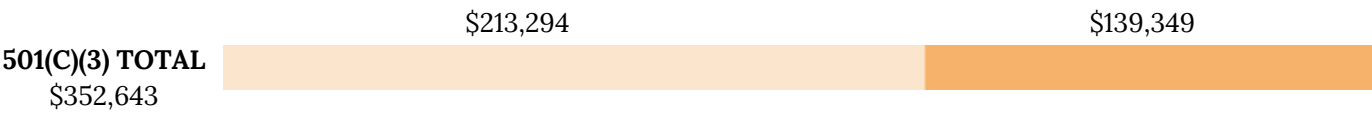
REVENUE

Individuals Institutions Labor



EXPENSES

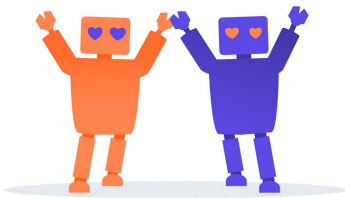
Personnel Operating



*As of 11/30/19,
not yet audited.

BUS FRIENDS FOREVER

We call our network of monthly donors our Bus Friends Forever. **BFFs support our work year-round!** Supporters of the Washington Bus drive our crucial voter mobilization, electoral organizing, and policy advocacy. Supporters of the Washington Bus Education Fund drive our nonpartisan voter registration, voter education, and leadership development programming, including the Bus Fellowship.



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