



2020 HIGHLIGHTS

About Us

The Financial Empowerment Network (FEN) is a nonprofit 501 (c) 3 in Washington state dedicated to helping low and moderate-income people become financially stable.

Since FEN's inception in 2006, spearheaded by the City of Seattle, Washington Appleseed, and The Seattle Foundation's active leadership, we have become a prominent force in the region for financial empowerment.

Our Vision

We envision communities where low- and moderate-income individuals and families can achieve financial well-being.

Our Mission

We advance financial empowerment through partnerships that support access to affordable, effective, and relevant services, products, and other resources.

Our Process

We serve as a liaison and broker to create connections, disseminate evidence-based and promising practices, and bring resources to a network of providers to integrate financial empowerment into other services, including anti-poverty strategies.

Board of Directors: Grace Adriano, King County Housing Authority; John Babauta, First Tech Federal Credit Union; Jerry DeGriek, Public Health Seattle and King County; Michael Dotson, Banner Bank; Jeff Friend, the City of Des Moines; Becky House, American Financial Solutions; Rishabh Jain, Navia Benefits; and John Kim, Pacific Hospital Preservation & Development Authority.

Initiative Chairs: Lydia Assefa-Dawson, King County Housing Authority; Becky House, American Financial Solutions, Tom McKay, Northwest Justice Project; and Linda Taylor, Urban League.

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Strategic Initiatives



Bank On Seattle-King County, launched in 2008, was the second in a national movement to help people without bank accounts access affordable financial services, including checking, savings, credit, and financial education. In 2019 we expanded our footprint with **Bank On Washington** as part of our statewide initiative.



The **2020 Bank On Washington Week on May 18—22** theme offered the **Magic of Banking** to reach a broader audience and offer parents and K-12 teachers a new learning experience for their students. You can find recorded events posted at our YouTube Channel— <https://bit.ly/3m2PwhR>

The week also highlighted the **Bank On Washington 2019 Film Fest winning videos**. The videos addressed financial inclusion and the barriers and solutions to being banked in Washington state. Our Facebook reach totaled 3,499 and 22 shares on the initial post.

- Issaquah High School - <https://bit.ly/3m14Lrm>
- East Valley High School, Spokane - <https://bit.ly/31tmAaZ>
- Heritage University - <https://bit.ly/31pX32I>



Our two-day annual **Bank On Forum** centered around financial resilience, hope, connections, and action. The Forum had 187 unique devices logged in with high levels of interaction in the chat as well and raving reviews. Download the 2020 Bank On [agenda](#) and check out the forum program's [resource page](#).

The **2020 Bank On Washington Forum recording** is available for download at www.bankonwashington.org.

2020 Integration of Financial Empowerment into Service Systems

In 2020 eleven **teachings** (824 combined registrations and YouTube viewers) offered continuing financial education for professionals in the field, whom we define as case managers, advocates, and financial counselors/coaches, to guide and contextualize their clients' needs.

Recordings are available on our [YouTube Channel](#).

- Overcoming Language & Communication Barriers
- [Removing Barriers to Reentry: LFO's in WA State](#)
- [Retirement Strategies: WA Retirement Marketplace](#)
- [Debt Management, Credit Reports & Scores](#)
- [An Overview of Financial Empowerment](#)
- [UWKC Virtual Tax Time](#)
- [Scalable Financial Wellness Solutions](#)
- [An Overview of Medical Debt](#)
- [A History of Asset Building in Washington State](#)
- [2020 Community Development Service: Expanding Participation in Bank On Coalitions](#)
- BOWA & [Seattle Clemency Project](#) (SCP) Initiative

Our Financial Empowerment **monthly newsletters** and **regional resource repository** assist professionals in accessing credible referral resources and training opportunities. It is an essential tool in building a high-quality, accessible system of interconnected agencies offering financial empowerment services.

Our **Financial Empowerment Trainers Task Force** addresses the growing need to expand continuing education and retain qualified trainers to ensure the sustainability of ongoing training for nonprofit professionals in Washington state. In 2021 they will introduce a Learning Management System as part of our new website.

Our course catalog offers a compilation of workshops and new courses introduced by the Task Force members to address the growing need to assist organizations in integrating financial empowerment into their service delivery. View the catalog [here](#)>

Task Force members include Liz Myntti-Lower Columbia Cap, Devin Stubblefield-Faith Financial Center, Jared Schapiro, Workforce Snohomish, Becky House-American Financial Solutions, Carmen Marttila-Jr. Achievement, Lydia Assefa Dawson-King County Housing Authority, and Barbara Maxwell, BMAC.

Our **Homeownership and Foreclosure Prevention Team** offers support still needed to ensure that people do not lose their homes and have access to affordable housing.

The Team works **statewide** with organizations to host community events, workshops, and created the ***Washington Foreclosure Prevention Resource Guide: A Tool to Educate Homeowners about the Foreclosure Process***. [Download a copy](#)>

Meetings are held on the 3rd Wednesday of every month.

Our **EITC/Free Tax Preparation Campaign** connects low-income individuals with free tax preparation assistance and helps in accessing the Earned Income Tax Credit.

In 2020, FEN supported United Way with funding and a virtual tax year transition with outreach and training.

- 33 tax locations across King County.
- 975 certified volunteers committed to a weekly 3-4 hour shift.
- 10,418+ tax returns prepared.
- \$18.8+ million in tax refunds brought back to our community.
- 1,223 households are connected to public benefits or asset-building services.
- 30% of all clients served receive EITC.
- 135 ITIN applications and renewals completed through our partnership with Express Credit Union's Certified Acceptance Agent, so that undocumented members of our community have access to safe and secure tax preparation services.
- 325 referred to Financial Empowerment Network partner organizations for financial coaching for help with obtaining a bank account, improving credit &/or reducing debt.
- 741 calls received from the toll-free hotline assisted taxpayers with Economic Impact Payments and other tax questions.