



# Arcora Foundation

## 2021 Community Report



### Our Mission and Vision

Combining arc and oral, Arcora Foundation represents our mission: to bend the arc of oral health toward equity. Our vision is that all people enjoy good oral and overall health with no one left behind.

**ARCORA**  
Foundation

# Our Focus Areas

## Transformation

Transforming health systems to ensure a healthy mouth is part of whole-person care delivered in clinical and community settings.

## Access

Ensuring people in underserved communities get affordable dental care that is convenient and easy to access.

## Prevention

Working with individuals and communities on upstream approaches to make it easier for people to avoid oral diseases.

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Nonprofit Delta Dental of Washington, the state’s largest dental benefits company, funds our work.



## A Message From the CEO

I want to extend my deep appreciation to those who made our work possible in 2020. I’m grateful to our community partners for helping us to better understand the impacts of poor oral health on families and individuals and for working with us to develop community-led approaches to make a bigger impact.

I also want to thank our funder, Delta Dental of Washington. In this year of unprecedented need, they provided additional funding, which allowed us to expand our grants and provide more assistance to organizations and communities statewide. Their support, along with that of our Board, allows us to do more to achieve our shared vision of improving oral health for all, with no one left behind. This year has been challenging, but still we’ve made important progress.

- When dental offices closed early in the pandemic, our DentistLink program stepped in to ensure people could get access to urgent dental care.
- We are helping to lead a coalition, with dental providers and other advocates, to preserve funding for dental care for lower-income adults.
- Partnerships developed around community water fluoridation (CWF) have led to important progress to provide the benefits of fluoridated water to more people. Milestones included significant steps toward fluoridating Spokane’s water and launching a statewide education campaign.
- We strengthen our commitment to equity in every facet of our work. We continue to apply an equity lens to programs and grant requests. On our journey to become an equitable organization, we are working internally to deepen our understanding of systemic racism and how to become a more inclusive and diverse organization.
- We established a Diversity, Equity and Inclusion (DEI) Board Committee to ensure our equity commitment is embedded in everything we do.

We are working toward a future where health equity is the norm. But, it takes many voices to advocate for change. I hope you will join with us to ensure that every child and every adult enjoys the benefits of good oral health—because you are not healthy without good oral health.

-Vanetta Abdellatif  
*President and CEO, Arcora Foundation*





## Connecting People to Care When They Need it Most

Due to COVID-19, in March, Governor Inslee ordered the closure of dental offices, except for urgent needs. To help people get essential dental care, DentistLink quickly organized, launched and promoted an urgent care team of providers across the state. In partnership with the Washington State Dental Association and Delta Dental of Washington, DentistLink recruited 308 offices to provide urgent care to more than 5,800 individuals.

DentistLink is a free referral service to connect everyone to dental care, regardless of insurance. In total, we served 18,562 users throughout the year and more than 52,000 people visited the website. Visit our updated website that features a new Find a Dentist search tool at [DentistLink.org](https://DentistLink.org).

To learn more about DentistLink and how to get involved, contact Svea Stromme at [SSstromme@ArcoraFoundation.org](mailto:SSstromme@ArcoraFoundation.org).

“It was a challenging experience trying to find a provider, but I’m grateful for everyone’s help and I was so happy to find someone. I didn’t know what I was going to do. I’m doing great now. Thank you so much!”

DENTISTLINK USER, ANACORTES

## Fluoridated Water Benefits Everyone

In Washington, only 56 percent of people who receive water from public water systems benefit from the recommended level of fluoride essential to strengthen teeth and prevent tooth decay.

Water fluoridation is a cost-effective and equitable way to improve health without regard to age, race, ethnicity or income. Arcora Foundation has partnered with more than 40 organizations to launch a statewide education campaign to increase public awareness of the need and benefits of community water fluoridation. Join our efforts to support health equity through increased access to fluoridated water.

To learn more, contact Stacy Torrance at [STorrance@ArcoraFoundation.org](mailto:STorrance@ArcoraFoundation.org) or visit [WashingtonWaterFluoridation.org](https://WashingtonWaterFluoridation.org).



For more information, or to suggest continuing education topics, contact Karen Lewis at [KLewis@ArcoraFoundation.org](mailto:KLewis@ArcoraFoundation.org).

## Continuing Dental Education Offerings Grow

In March, dental offices closed because of the pandemic. Dental providers had many questions about how to safely re-open and protect the health of patients and staff, how to change care delivery to ensure infection control and how to build confidence among patients that dental care is safe and necessary during a pandemic.

To help answer these questions, Arcora Foundation partnered with leaders in the dental community to develop relevant continuing dental education (CDE) courses.

We hosted webinars on topics such as teledentistry, minimally invasive dentistry and how to talk about the importance of fluoride with patients. These CDEs reached more than 900 dental providers.

Each webinar provided opportunities to learn more about the educational interests of dental professionals. Using feedback from dental providers, additional courses are being developed in 2021. All courses are offered at no cost and are available on the [Arcora Foundation](https://www.arcorafoundation.org) website.

## Responsive Programs and Grants Focused on Equity

As a result of COVID-19, and with additional financial support from Delta Dental of Washington, Arcora Foundation quickly pivoted to help meet the urgent needs in communities across the state.



**\$3 million** in grants to safety net clinics to help keep essential oral health services available for tens of thousands of people



**\$1.1 million** to support tribal clinics impacted by the pandemic to ensure innovative and culturally appropriate care



**\$200,000** to nonprofits across the state to address immediate needs such as food security



**18,562** people connected to urgent and routine dental care through DentistLink



**55,000** oral health kits distributed to 45 diverse community organizations



**921** dental providers received continuing dental education training



**5,000** people received oral health education and resources through Community Health Workers



**\$3 million** with support from Delta Dental of Washington, combined with \$1 million raised locally to move forward with water fluoridation in Spokane

“ This is a great example of working with communities to learn what they believe the best solutions are to uniquely serve their community.”

YAKIMA VALLEY COMMUNITY FOUNDATION



## Local Impact Networks: Growing Impact

Arcora Foundation's work with Local Impact Networks (LIN) expanded in 2020. Each Network is built by committed, local partners dedicated to improving local systems of care. They accomplish this by supporting policy initiatives, sharing best practices and increasing access to care in underserved communities.

The momentum in each LIN community was not slowed by COVID-19. Instead, the pandemic galvanized partners to respond to the immediate needs of residents. Some examples include:

**Smile Spokane** worked with numerous community organizations and leaders in a successful effort to move forward with community water fluoridation in Spokane.

**Thurston Oral Health Network** pivoted to provide online nutrition support for older adults with diabetes working to improve their oral health and quality of life.

**The North Sound LIN** used LIN funding to assist partners with their pandemic response including providing oral health supplies and education to homebound families.

In addition, the Pierce County Centers for Excellence conducted a stakeholder analysis to explore the interest and readiness of key partners to establish a LIN, and the results are promising.

If you are interested in getting involved with a Network in your community, contact Maureen Finneran at [MFinneran@ArcoraFoundation.org](mailto:MFinneran@ArcoraFoundation.org).

“Our work with Arcora has been energizing and already added value by providing a structure for us to gather and share information with partners who would not have had the opportunity otherwise.”

PIERCE COUNTY PUBLIC HEALTH DEPARTMENT



THE  
**MIGHTY MOUTH**

## The Mighty Mouth Campaign Raises Awareness about the Value of Oral Health

The Mighty Mouth is a social marketing campaign to raise awareness about the importance of oral health and motivate people to do more to prevent oral disease. The Mighty Mouth aims to reduce health inequities by prioritizing populations at high risk for oral disease, including lower-income people during pregnancy and moms with young children. Our 2020 “mommy influencer” videos garnered over 2 million views and spread the message that the *earlier you start, the easier it is*.

The Mighty Mouth has digital ads, social media, videos, a website and educational materials to share with your communities. In fun and interesting ways, the campaign provides information about the importance of brushing, healthy snacking and regular dental care. Visit [TheMightyMouth.org](http://TheMightyMouth.org) and join with us to help spread the word that: You are healthier with a healthy mouth.



## Collaborating to Improve Oral Health in Indian Country

For nearly a decade, Arcora Foundation has been honored to partner with the Northwest Tribal Dental Support Center (NTDSC) to improve the oral health of American Indian/Alaska Native people in the Northwest. Together, Arcora Foundation and NTDSC launched Baby Teeth Matter, a collaborative aimed at increasing access to care for young Native children. The partnership launched an Elders Collaborative in 2019, focused on improving Native elders' oral health and supporting them in serving as oral health ambassadors and teachers in their communities.

**“ We are grateful for Arcora Foundation’s partnership in leading these collaboratives with us. Together with our Tribes, we’re working to ensure American Indian/Alaska Native people have access to innovative, culturally relevant dental programs that support good oral and overall health.”**

NORTHWEST TRIBAL DENTAL SUPPORT CENTER

Over half of tribal and Urban Indian dental programs in Washington, Idaho and Oregon participated in these collaboratives. Tribal dental programs developed and implemented innovative practices and protocols – including community-based dental care and minimally invasive dentistry – and significantly increased access to care.

To continue the journey to good oral health for all Native people in the Northwest, Arcora Foundation and the NTDSC are blending the best elements of both efforts to develop a single collaborative aimed at addressing the oral health of Native people across the lifespan. The new collaborative will launch in 2021.



## Supporting Dental Safety Net and Tribal Clinics to Advance Equity

Arcora Foundation, with supplemental funding from Delta Dental of Washington, provided more than \$4 million to safety net and tribal dental clinics throughout Washington to help prevent the loss of essential oral health care for tens of thousands of people due to impacts from the coronavirus pandemic.

Community health centers (CHCs), tribal and Urban Indian dental programs and non-profit dental clinics are the front line of healthcare services for many at-risk individuals and families, providing free, sliding fee and Medicaid-reimbursed dental care to meet immediate and long-term oral health needs. About half of CHCs are in rural areas and are often the only dental care available in the region. Many tribal and non-profit dental clinics are also in underserved areas.

Black, Indigenous and other people of color and people with a lower-income experience significant health inequities. Health equity was a key consideration and priority for grant funding decisions.

**“ We are very grateful for the support of Arcora Foundation as we work to address the need for dental services in the wake of the COVID-19 pandemic.”**

INTERNATIONAL COMMUNITY HEALTH SERVICES







Community Health Workers connected individuals to care through [DentistLink](#), provided information on what to expect at a dental visit during COVID-19 and shared information about maintain a health mouth while at home.

## Community Health Workers Help Make Information Accessible to All

Community Health Workers (CHWs) provide much needed health information and resources to diverse and low-income communities across the state. CHWs are frontline workers and trusted messengers who help break down barriers and connect people in their own communities with vital information about how to stay healthy and access care.

In 2020, Arcora Foundation provided oral health training to more than 400 CHWs. The CHWs taught individuals how to access DentistLink, what to expect during a dental visit during COVID-19 and shared simple and effective ways to maintain a healthy mouth while at home. This information was provided in eleven languages.

The CHWs reached more than 5,000 people and shared essential information about the value of good oral health and how to access care and prevent disease.



## Oral Health by the Numbers: Arcora's New Data Dashboards

Have you ever wondered how many children in your county receive dental care or how many dentists are in your community? Arcora Foundation's new, interactive dashboards summarize the status of oral health and dental care access in Washington. These dashboards are available for anyone to use. Users can search by county or Accountable Community of Health, and the data are broken down by age, race/ethnicity and income.

Visit [ArcoraFoundation.org](https://www.ArcoraFoundation.org) to access these interactive dashboards.