



LEADERSHIP
SNOHOMISH
COUNTY™

SIGNATURE CLASS

PHYSICALLY DISTANCED, SOCIALY CONNECTED.

We never met in person.
We could not shake hands,
high-five, or share a hug.
Yet we developed meaningful
connections. We shared our
stories, offered support, and
created a sense of belonging.
The Signature Class of 2021
transformed boxes on a screen
into a community in action.

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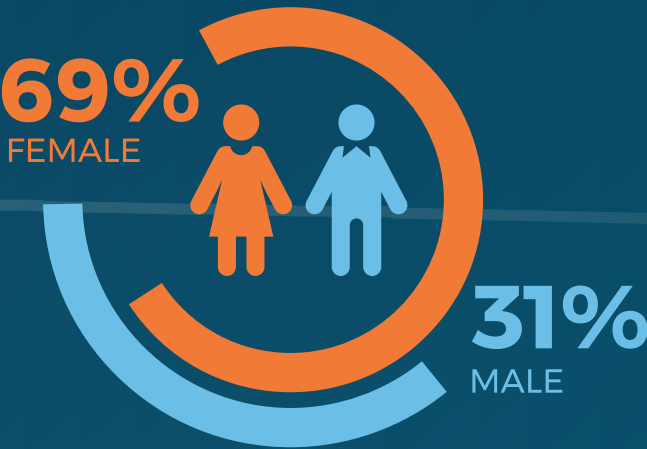
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THE CONSTRUCT: SIGNATURE CLASS OF 2021

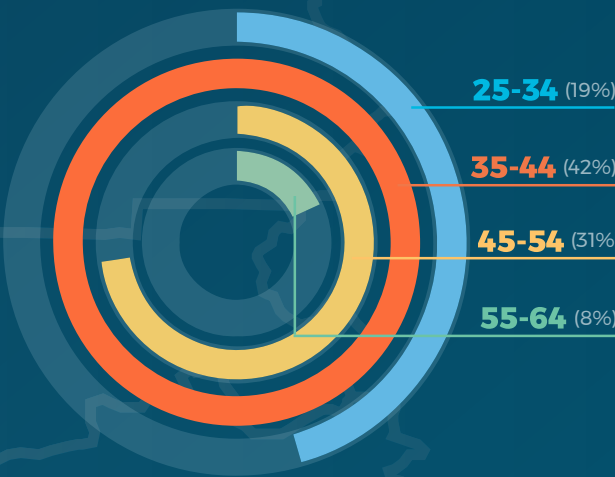
WHERE WE LIVE

38 people from varied career, educational, political, and cultural backgrounds created a community of authentic leaders.

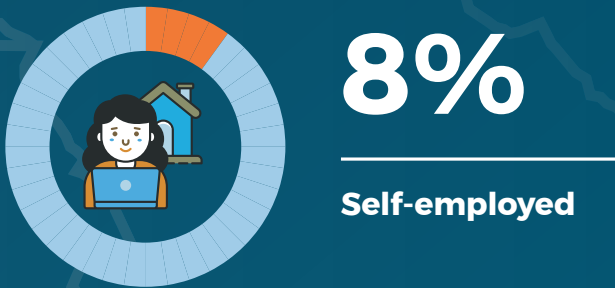
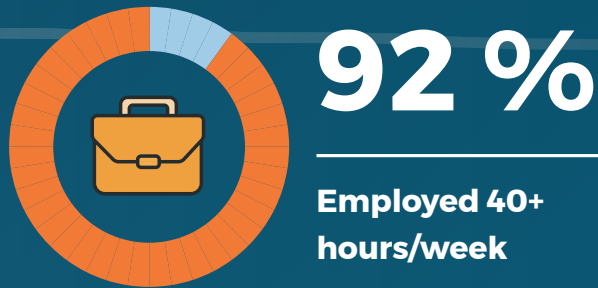
GENDER



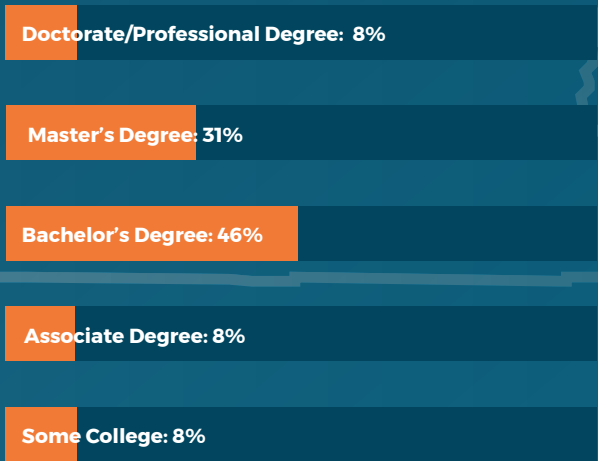
AGE



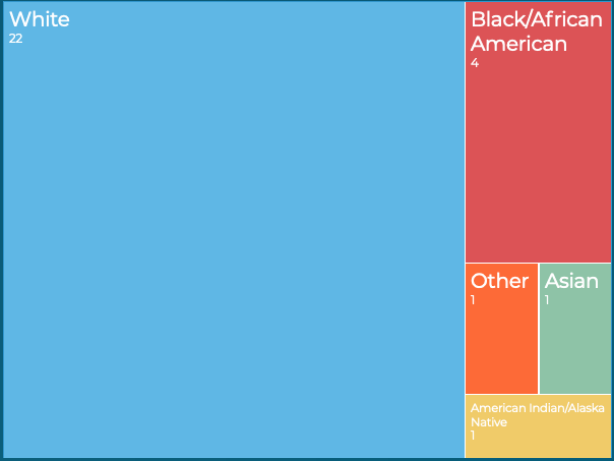
EMPLOYMENT



EDUCATION



ETHNIC BREAKDOWN



*Statistics based on survey of LSC Signature Class 2021. n=26. CI 90% margin of error +/-9%.

SUMMARY

Throughout the nine-month leadership program, we explored local issues and new leadership strategies to prepare for greater civic involvement.

We engaged in a ‘problem-posing’ approach to civic challenges, in which we were active participants, linking knowledge to action, with a goal to improve our community at a local level and beyond.





PEOPLE + INVOLVEMENT = COMMUNITY

This word cloud is a graphic representation of word frequency—greater prominence given to words that appeared more frequently in the transcripts of our afternoon “world cafe” breakout sessions. The larger the word in the cloud, the more commonly the word was used in class conversations. There is a significant correlation between the words “people” and “community.”*

Through an analysis of our cohort’s harvest notes, we uncovered five distinct themes: building relationships, breaking down barriers, empowerment, resilience, and trust. These overarching categories were common across all afternoon discussion sessions. The content in each section is a summary derived from statements recorded in breakout sessions.

*There is a quantitatively strong correlation between the words “people” and “community” (p-value = 0.00476), which validates the correlation between these two words.

THEME 1

Building Relationships

Relationships in our schools, neighborhoods, work, and towns took on new importance this past year as we lived and navigated through a global pandemic. Building relationships is one of the key ingredients for building community in Snohomish County. This theme spanned all courses and was shared by all presentations.

The LSC class heard from a variety of professionals engaged in reforming the legal system, education, and social services as well as public servants working to make cities and towns thriving communities. We heard from our class that “people want to be involved in their community but often don’t know where to start.” It is apparent that there is a deep web of interconnected relationships working to advance our community and we need to find ways to connect people to programs and initiatives.

“People can use their stories to help guide a community.”

THEME 2

Breaking Down Barriers

Breaking down barriers is a must to ensure people feel safe and a part of the Snohomish County community.

The correlation of people and community begins with equal access to services, education, and housing.

The LSC class had uncomfortable discussions and learned more about those around them.

The class lacked acceptable diversity to represent Snohomish County, but still the discussions were empowering. It was agreed these types of discussions must continue at the top leadership and authorities of organizations throughout the county for meaningful change to occur. Embracing the changing diversity of Snohomish County and working with leaders “committed to being a little uncomfortable to help make change is important.”

“Commit to being a little uncomfortable to help make change.”

THEME 3

Empowerment

Empowering ourselves and others propels change in our society. The two workshops on education and economic development stressed teaching entrepreneurship and providing more access to the trades in Snohomish County. Alternative education and tech school should be regarded as acceptable and equally important as college and higher education.

The theme of empowerment extended throughout all program sessions. We learned that social and health services programs in the county are not often connected, information isn't readily available, or services can be difficult to find. Seeking access to mental or addiction treatment or even legal help requires personal initiative to navigate the system.

“We must empower people to advocate for themselves and others.”

THEME 4

Resilience

Gratitude in the face of adversity is resilience. Even as many of us expressed how challenging the past year has been, there was a common thread of gratitude woven throughout our conversations.

The signature class of 2021, more than any other class, has demonstrated what it is to be resilient. Resilience is learned, and if nurtured can help us get through and overcome hardship.

Our cohort shared many meaningful accomplishments that help our community thrive as we recover from COVID-19. The ability to succeed despite barriers offsets the challenges and disappointments we faced during the pandemic. We are a resilient group of leaders committed to seeing Snohomish county flourish as we move into the new normal.

“We are all stronger than we thought. It's been an amazing adventure.”

THEME 5

Trust

One of the most powerful aspects of a strong community is that it can scale trust beyond individual relationships. We may trust other members of our community, but it is crucial we trust the organization as a whole. From law and justice, healthcare, education, and beyond, trust was a common theme as it relates to our lived values. We feel responsible for building and maintaining trust within the community, and strive to create a more forgiving society.

A sense of trust and responsibility among members of a community influences civic engagement. When we share our stories and actively listen to the stories of others, we establish common ground, show compassion, and build empathy.

**“We need to
work toward
becoming
a more
forgiving
society.”**

LOOKING AHEAD

“We’re committed to making Snohomish County the best place to live, work and play.”

—Snohomish County Government

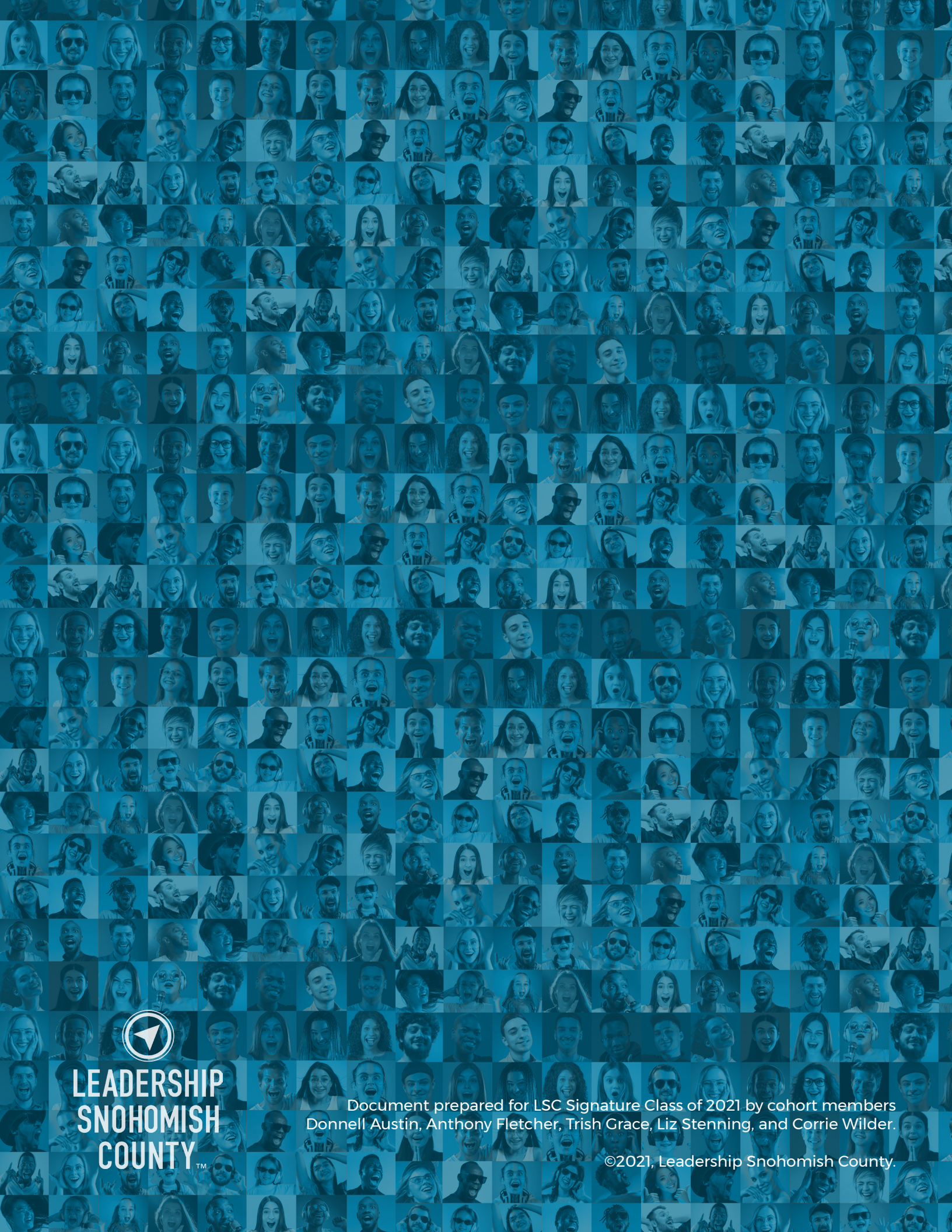
Building community, breaking down barriers, empowering others to succeed, and building resilience and trust throughout Snohomish County and beyond are the main tenets of the Signature Class of 2021. We are a strong community; in 2015, Snohomish County was ranked second among the 100 largest counties in the U.S. in positive causal effect on upward economic mobility (Chetty and Hendren, 2018). This is a strong position, but we still have much to accomplish.

In nine months, we were actively involved in learning from local experts, had deep discussions about current challenges, and had hands-on experience serving organizations in Snohomish County. We are inspired to continue our civic involvement and build relationships to create impactful, long-term collaborations.

References

Chetty, R. and Hendren, N (2018). The impacts of neighborhoods on intergenerational mobility: Childhood exposure effects and county-level estimates. *The Quarterly Journal of Economics*, 133(3), 1107-1162. <https://doi.org/10.1093/qje/qjy007>

Snohomish County Government. (n.d.). In Facebook [Facebook page]. Retrieved May 4, 2021 from <https://www.facebook.com/SnohomishCountyWA>.



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Document prepared for LSC Signature Class of 2021 by cohort members
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