



Introducing the Pitch to Ditch Poverty Challenge 2021 Finalists!

Last year, we challenged the community to develop creative approaches to address barriers to poverty at our first Pitch to Ditch Poverty Contest. Pitch to Ditch Poverty originated from realizing that our communities are full of groups and individuals with big ideas to address the challenges in their communities. This contest recognizes that groups and individuals impacted by our communities' challenges also have the knowledge and lived experiences that best equip them to visualize and implement community-based solutions to those challenges.

The Pitch to Ditch Poverty challenge provides funding, support, and recognition to individuals and community-led groups with big ideas and projects that address the racial and social injustices that disproportionately impact individuals in poverty. This year we wanted the contest to lift up and highlight those big ideas that help mitigate the racial and social inequities that are so evident today and those ideas that address the impact of the COVID-19 crisis in our communities. From a pool of over 15 applicants, the committee selected three finalists. Today, we'll watch a video from each group and then later in the program, we'll ask YOU to vote for the group that you believe should receive the award. First place receives \$5,000, second place \$3,000 and third place \$2,000.

Challenger #1: Career-Connected Learning for Low-Income Young Adults of Color

Data indicates that only 11% of low-income, first-generation students who enter college graduate in 6 years. This proposal provides wrap-around support to help ensure those students are successful in school and connected to career opportunities upon graduation.

Challenger #2: Future Forward Outreach for Tax Time Financial Inclusion

Many families and individuals are not able to maximize their tax refunds and other income because banking services are often not accessible or affordable. This proposal would create informational materials in multiple languages informing low-and moderate-income tax filers of safer banking options and asset-building opportunities.

Challenger #3: Read Me Justice

More than 42 million adults in the US, including many in Pierce County, read and write below a third-grade level. This proposal supports learning labs with people with lived experience to help others learn to read, or read better, so they can have more confidence and function better in day-to-day situations.