

Regional Challenge Grant: Recommendations

The following are recommendations to the Council for approval of two additional Partnership Formation awardees for the Regional Challenge Grant. The recommendations below include the maximum award that WSAC will consider, which would total \$250,000. Pending the Council’s approval, WSAC staff will move forward with negotiations and grant agreements in February 2023.

Partnership Formation Grant Recommendations Totaling up to \$250,000 over a 1-year grant period

Lead Partner Name, County	Maximum Award
Methow Valley School District, Okanogan County	\$125,000
United Way of the Blue Mountains, Walla Walla County	\$125,000

Partnership Formation Grant Narratives

Methow Valley School District – *Partnered with Methow Valley Education Foundation, TwispWorks, Room One, Family Health Centers, and Western Washington University Sustainability Pathways*

To formalize cross-sector business partnerships toward the development of paid apprenticeships based on student interests and local skills gaps to position students ages 16–24 for upward mobility in livable wage-earning jobs in the community.

- Create local and regional partnerships that can capitalize on a range of expertise and experience to develop a comprehensive understanding of the specific barriers and opportunities that the community’s rural youth face in gaining skills, credentials, and the education necessary to close the skill gaps seen by local employers.
- Vastly expand dual credit and “earn to learn” opportunities directly linking students to career-connected postsecondary degree and certificate programs.

United Way of the Blue Mountains – *Elevate Postsecondary Access and Success Working Group Partnered with Walla Walla Community College*

Build partnership capacity by completing a qualitative study on why individuals in the rural region choose to forgo postsecondary education, to inform strategic action and increase postsecondary enrollment in the region.

- Utilize the network of cradle-to-career contacts to conduct research for interviews, focus groups, and surveys.
- Leverage evidence to inform action through a participatory planning process utilizing a collective impact model.

The complete recommended LOI’s are available to the public [online here](#).