

Regional Partnerships: Fall 2023 Update

In 2022, the Regional Challenge Grant (RCG) fund was created with an initial appropriation of \$6 million to award competitive grants to place-based regional partnerships that are committed to increasing educational attainment in their communities. An additional \$16 million was appropriated in the biennial budget for 2023-2025. More information about the inaugural year of RCG can be found in the [2023 RCG Legislative Report](#) and in the [Program Framework](#).

Strategic Direction

With this increased investment, WSAC will continue developing regional partnerships in alignment with both the original principles in the legislation and in consideration of the lessons learned in the first year of implementation. These guiding principles include:

- Strong relationships with current and future partners are critical to our understanding of how partnerships grow and evolve in communities.
- Learning what works alongside a community takes time.
- The opportunity for this investment should be accessible to communities across our State.
- Our processes must continuously improve, and our awards must reflect the community needs, as well as resources available to WSAC and our partners.

Next Steps

- Current and future investments should be sustained for more than 1-2 years.
- Additional partnerships may apply beginning in January 2024.
- The request for Letters of Interest will be simplified from last year's request and recommended award levels will be responsive to the needs, capacity, and proposed strategies of the applicants.

In January 2024, each current partnership will have an opportunity to meet with WSAC staff to negotiate an extension to their current agreement through June 2025. Additionally, new partnerships will have the opportunity to submit a Letter of Interest. Recommendations for new partnerships will be made to the Council at the June Council meeting. All award negotiations and recommendations will reflect partnership need and capacity.