

LEARN Community of Practice
Local Education Adult Resource Network

February 11, 2025
12:00 – 1:30 PM

Agenda

1. Welcome
2. Learning: Regional Challenge Grant Partnership Highlight – ELEVATE and Oly Co-Op
3. Engaging: Small Group Networking
4. Wrap Up

Meeting Schedule

Monthly, 90 minutes from 12:00 – 1:30 PM

- March 11, 2025
- April 8, 2025
- May 13, 2025
- *June 10, 2025* potential in-person convening*

Information: <https://wsac.wa.gov/LEARN>

Contact: AdultPathways@wsac.wa.gov

LEARN Session #7 – February 11 Themes

Funding Opportunities

- [Substance Use Disorder Professional Block Grant](#) for CTCs
- [Behavioral Health Conditional Scholarship Program](#) for Graduate Students

Regional Challenge Grants featuring Adult Learners

- Empowering Learners to Excel through Vocational Advancement, Training and Education (ELEVATE)
 - ELEVATE is a partnership with Evergreen Goodwill Job Training and Education Center and Everett Community College (EvCC), aimed at increasing the awarding of Academic Credit for Prior Learning (ACPL).
 - Focusing on adult learners means reducing barriers such as cost of transportation, access to technology and food insecurity; building a sense of belonging including plans for a physical space on EvCC's campus to build community; and providing financial navigation and empowerment resources to learners.
 - Through surveying, the partnership has centered the voices of potential and current adult learners and identify areas of support and alignment that the partnership can build.
 - Within the ACPL strategy, there is momentum at the college and Evergreen Goodwill to operationalize the evaluation of curriculum and create articulation agreements for 11 potential ACPL credits.
 - Contact: elevate@everettcc.edu
- Olympic Peninsula Resource CO-OP
 - This partnership comprises the Department of Social & Health Services, Olympic Angels, Olympic Community of Health, Olympic Peninsula YMCA, Peninsula College, Serenity House, United Way of Clallam County, and West Sound STEM Network.
 - Centering adult learners in this partnership is through the establishment of one-stop resource hubs that can address known factors that would otherwise prevent adult learners from engaging in training after high school. These hubs are built on the idea that adult learners may find many pathways to additional education and skilling, and spaces where adults and their families may be seeking social services or find trusted advisors could create more pathways to higher education.
 - At the current stage of work, the partnership has begun to meet regularly with partnership members and host hubs in shared community spaces in key locations across their service region. The partnership is also focused on learning about the work each partner can provide, including development of a short survey intended to capture community member feedback after engaging with a hub site.
 - Contact: Krista Francis at KFrancis@pencol.edu

Additional Insights from Panelists

- Recommendations/resources
 - Take a mental-health first-aid class.
 - The work can be personal which is both motivating and stressful.
- You are not alone in the work. Others in your network can be resources for students. Learn their work. You don't have to solve or try to solve every issue. It's an asset to lean on partners and practice warm handoffs a client's need exceeds the scope of your work.
- Just try things and see what happens!
- Utilizing liberatory design principles can be helpful guideposts in decision making and processes.
- Collaboration can be messy, and we have to balance our own capacity within the different systems we operate within.



Local Education Adult Resource Network (LEARN) Community of Practice

February 11, 2025





Agenda

- Regional Challenge Grant Partnership Highlight:
 - Empowering Learners to Excel through Vocational Advancement, Training, and Education (ELEVATE)
 - Olympic Peninsula Resource CO-OP
- Small Group Discussion
- Wrap Up
 - Highlight new funding opportunities
 - Next session



Regional Challenge Grant Partnership Presentations

ELEVATE & Olympic Peninsula Resource CO-OP



Panel Q&A

ELEVATE

- **Tania Siler**, Center Manager - Evergreen Goodwill of NW Washington
- **Rachel Strachan**, Manager for the Worker Retraining Grant - Everett Community College

Olympic Peninsula Resource CO-OP

- **Anne Higdon**, Benefits Navigator - Peninsula College
- **Krista Francis**, Vice President of Student Services - Peninsula College
- **Ezekiel Hill**, DSHS
- **Kennedy Cameron**, Educational Attainment Specialist - United Way
- **Catherine North**, Program Specialist 2, Transitional Studies - Peninsula College



Small Group Networking, 20 minutes

- You will select the breakout room you want to attend.
- This is *networking*. You can move to different rooms at any time, as many times as you want.
- Use the first few minutes for introductions, or be sure to introduce yourself as you participate.
 - Who are you? What type of work do you do?

Breakout Room Topics

- Reflecting on ELEVATE and Olympic Peninsula Resource CO-OP
- Potential Federal Administration impacts to your work
- Adult learner needs in the moment — what's hot right now
- “Untopic”



Wrap Up

- ***NEW*** WSAC Funding Opportunities
 - Substance Use Disorder Professional Block Grant for CTCs
 - Behavioral Health Conditional Scholarship Program for Graduate Students
- Next session – March 11
 - WSAC's Work to Support Adult Pathways

Contact email: adultpathways@wsac.wa.gov

Website: www.wsac.wa.gov/LEARN



E.L.E.V.A.T.E.

*Empowering Learners to **Excel** through **V**ocational
Advancement, **T**raining and **E**ducation.*



Who is ELEVATE?

ELEVATE is currently a partnership between Evergreen Goodwill Job Training and Education Center and Everett Community College. We intend to expand to include other CBOs within the community.

Though we have been partners in various capacities in the past, this new endeavor is a more formal way to pave the way for ACPL locally.

Involved parties include:

- Tania Siler-Evergreen Goodwill Job Training and Education Center Manager
- Lily Istrate Hart-Grants Manager Evergreen Goodwill of Northwest Washington
- Rachel Strachan-Worker Retraining Program Manager EvCC
- Russell Dorsey-Associate Director of Outreach and Recruitment EvCC
- Madeline Dougherty-Academic Credit for Prior Learning Specialist EvCC

Identified Goals

Since **ACPL** increases the likelihood of certificate and/or degree completion, we hope to help get Washington closer to its educational attainment goal of having 70% of adults having earned a postsecondary credential.

Through experiences working with students and clients, we know that external barriers prevent students from completing their chosen programs of study. In addition to awarding ACPL, we aim to **reduce barriers** such as cost of transportation, access to technology and food insecurity.

We also acknowledge that **sense of belonging** is key for our adult learners. We hope to create a space on EvCC's campus where adult learners can gather to study, recharge and build community.

Plans are in place to partner with the LISC grant to **provide financial navigation and empowerment** resources and workshops in addition to the college prep workshops we plan to host.

Surveys Show...

We have been surveying potential adult learners within the community to identify goals and barriers. It's important to our team that we don't assume or prescribe goals. It's our job to serve students and in order to do that we need to center student and community voices throughout this process.

We value the insight and experiences of community members who participate in our surveys. Everyone is compensated with gas cards or meals for their time and expertise.

- 75% of participants (of a current sample size of 43) have indicated that they want to attend college for a certificate or degree.
- Most common goals include:
 - 20 mentions of education/skills development
 - 18 mentions of career development/employment
 - 14 mentions of family/well-being/community impact.
 - 9 mentions of financial stability

Surveys Show...

The top four most needed supports include:

- 17 mentions of academic support and tutoring
- 13 mentions of financial support
- 12 mentions of housing and living assistance
- 8 mentions of English Language Learning support

Aligned with that, the four most mentioned barriers to education include:

- 20 mentions of financial issues/need for funding.
 - This includes need for tuition, living expenses and transportation
- 11 mentions of family responsibilities
- 6 mentions of unstable housing
- 6 mentions of language barriers

What do people want more help with:

- 30 mentions of how to pay for college
- 27 mentions of how to apply to college and also how to sign up for classes after applying
- 20 mentions of how to find other resources
- 17 mentions of how to decide what program to sign up for

Surveys Show...

We also have a survey for service providers!

If you work with adult learners or prospective adult learners, scan this QR code



or visit <https://forms.gle/foTxKfmmdKfYbooC7>

APCL

Faculty at EvCC have been supportive of ACPL efforts!

We have an articulation agreement between SnoCo JTEC and EvCC that outlines up to 11 college credits student can be awarded if they participate in SnoCo JTEC classes. If a student has certification from SnoCo JTEC in all four computer classes, they can receive 11 credits at EvCC, including CL 101 which is required as a baseline for five short term certificates.

Identified short term certifications are all supported by Workforce Funding grants for eligible students and align with jobs in demand in Snohomish county according to ESD's demand/decline list.

- Bookkeeping Certificate
- Business Administration Certificate
- Business Technology Certificate
- Medical Billing Specialist Certificate
- Medical Office Administration/Front Office Certificates

Summary

Successes:

- We already have an articulation agreement that outlines 11 potential ACPL credits.
- Goodwill JTEC has been successful in conducting surveys, students are interested and excited!
- EvCC staff and faculty have been supportive of evaluating curriculum.

Challenges:

- Formalizing community partners.
- Hiring a new support role.
- Overall, things take time.

Next steps include hiring our College Attainment and Financial Empowerment coach, assessing needs for a belonging center on campus, and onboarding our first “cohort” of students by Summer.



—Resource Co-Op—

Partners:

Peninsula College

DSHS

United Way Clallam County

West Sound Stem Network

Olympic Peninsula YMCA

Olympic Community of Health

Olympic Angels

Clallam Transit

And Growing!

Panelist & Presenter Information – February LEARN session

We are grateful for all of our panelists who shared their insights. Please note, not all panelists submitted biographical information, but those who did are featured below.

ELEVATE PARTNERSHIP

Tania Siler is a Center Manger with Evergreen Goodwill of NW Washington for over 15 years, working closely with Refugees, Immigrants and Asylees to obtain skills that will help each person choose rewarding employment, financial security and the experience of educational achievement. Her background is based in English as a Second Language (ESL) acquisition. She spent over 10 years in Kobe, Japan teaching English to Elementary, Jr. High school, college students and well as students that attended classes at her English conversation school.



Evergreen Goodwill's Mission: Every day we do our best to connect people with the jobs, services, and skills they need. Evergreen Goodwill provides quality, effective employment training and basic education to individuals experiencing significant barriers to economic opportunity. Because Jobs Change Lives.



Rachel Strachan (she/her/hers). Rachel has worked at Everett Community College (EvCC) for two years, both as an outreach specialist and now as Program Manager for the Worker Retraining grant, and now with the Regional Challenge! She has three cats at home and likes to cook and garden in her spare time.

OLYMPIC PENINSULA RESOURCE CO-OP PARTNERSHIP



Anne Higdon is the Benefits Navigator with Workforce Programs at Peninsula College. She also works with both the Supporting Students Experiencing Homeless grant program, and the Regional Challenge grant program's Olympic Peninsula Resource Co-ops. Known for her lived experience as an adult learner and for her cooperative approach, Anne specializes in helping students overcome barriers to their educational goals. In November of 2024 Anne was awarded the Peninsula College Disco Apple award in recognition for her incredible work and commitment to students. Outside of work, Anne is passionate about gardening and spending time in nature.



Tasha Fitzgerald is the Executive Director at Olympic Angels, an organization that builds supportive communities across the Olympic Peninsula to transform the foster care experience for children, youth, and families. By fostering stability, normalcy, and social capital, we aim to improve outcomes in education, well-being, and life trajectories. Starting as a Case Manager and now serving as Executive Director, Tasha has seen firsthand how our work positively impacts lives. Her passion for strengthening our region and creating meaningful change drives her dedication to this mission.

Kennedy Cameron (they/them). Kennedy is an Educational Attainment Specialist for United Way of Clallam County. They help reduce barriers to higher education by navigating adult and teen learners through the student financial aid process. As a lifelong Clallam County resident, and first-generation college student who graduated from the University of Washington, they really enjoy supporting rural students in achieving their goals.

Panelist & Presenter Information – February LEARN session



Caitlin Sackett is an academic advisor at the Peninsula College Port Townsend campus. Through her work with Olympic Peninsula Resource Co-Op, she connects community members and students with resources and support to help them navigate their academic and career goals.



Krista Francis serves as the Vice President for Student Services at Peninsula College. With a wealth of experience in higher education, she has previously held positions as the Associate Dean for Enrollment and Financial Aid Services and the Director of Human Resources. Krista is deeply committed to the transformative role community colleges play in supporting student success, with a particular focus on promoting equity and providing opportunities for diverse individuals to thrive.