



Regional Partnerships Legislative Report – Appendix B

December 2025

Centro Cultural Mexicano

Theme: K-12 postsecondary enrollment

King, Pierce, and Snohomish Counties

Partners: Centro Cultural Mexicano, Latino Educational Training Institute, Mi Centro, and Cascadia College



Theory of Change

On the outskirts of the Seattle-metro area, Hispanic or Latino youth and adult prospective learners aspire to enroll in and complete postsecondary programs, despite cultural, linguistic, and economic barriers. Served by community-based organizations in Redmond, Everett, and Tacoma, the community accesses services offered in Spanish to advance their economic mobility. These services include basic needs, financial literacy, cultural engagement, and small business support. Supporting this population from a place of community trust is necessary. However, the Hispanic or Latino population remains underrepresented and often misrepresented in regional education and workforce systems. When disaggregating state postsecondary attainment by race and ethnicity, only 32 percent of Hispanic or Latino individuals have a credential after high school, compared to 62 percent for all individuals statewide.¹ While service providers are aware of community needs, there has yet to be regional coordination to fully understand and address barriers influencing Latino learners' ability to enroll and persist, and research must be conducted to inform effective strategies and equitable policy solutions

The partnership aims to increase awareness of and build regional capacity to address the barriers preventing postsecondary enrollment and retention for Hispanic or Latino learners in Snohomish, Pierce, and King Counties. Through data collection via a community-wide survey and thorough analysis, the partnership will create a strategic action plan to better equip regional leaders and organizations to effectively engage Hispanic or Latino learners. The partnership anticipates that the data collected will accurately reflect the experiences, aspirations, challenges, and barriers of the community of prospective learners. Ultimately, the findings will inform targeted strategies, guide policy development, and strengthen regional collaboration to advance equitable postsecondary access and success for Hispanic or Latino learners.

Summary of Impact

Over the past academic year, the partnership gathered information on barriers to postsecondary enrollment and retention from more than 400 Latino learners: high school graduates, adult learners returning to education, and individuals seeking vocational training. The data collection has affirmed best practices for outreach to Latino or Hispanic learners, which have lasting implications for future outreach on postsecondary opportunities. Best practices include using plain language, designing materials for

¹ Washington Student Achievement Council. (2025). *Attainment Goal Dashboard*. <https://wsac.wa.gov/attainment-dashboard>

individuals with limited time, making materials available in Spanish, and partnering with service providers to reach families. Preliminary results indicate that access to financial resources is one of the most significant barriers to enrollment amongst all three groups. Additional barriers include a lack of guidance about postsecondary, housing, childcare, and language access.

City of Seattle Postsecondary Success Network

Theme: K-12 postsecondary enrollment

King County

Partners: El Centro de la Raza, Empowering Youth & Family Outreach, Mentoring Urban Students & Teens, Project Baldwin, Project Maya, Seattle Public Schools, Right Standing Solutions, Scholar Fund, Brotherhood Initiative, City of Seattle Department of Education & Early Learning, Seattle Promise, Seattle Youth Employment Program, and Sisterhood Initiative



Theory of Change

Notable for its billion-dollar tech conglomerates, Seattle is easily becoming one of the fastest-growing cities in the country. While income gaps widen for Black, Indigenous, and People of Color (BIPOC), so does access to quality postsecondary resources. Despite this, BIPOC students have a strong desire to go to college, and their families are strongly supportive of their college-going. Seattle has a wealth of community-based organizations engaging specific student populations. Since 2018, Seattle Promise has streamlined enrollment for Seattle Public Schools students to Seattle Colleges. While current infrastructure does exist, there is an opportunity to coordinate services among service providers and a need to support retention for BIPOC students once enrolled. The Postsecondary Success Network was founded to create transparency around the work partners are doing individually and collectively, identify opportunities for cross-partner collaboration, and strengthen the collective impact to improve retention for BIPOC students.

The partnership believes that enabling postsecondary enrollment and completion for Seattle BIPOC students requires engagement with both students and student-facing professionals. Culturally specific mentorship enables students to reinterpret their marginalized identities as cultural assets, while also building key college and career readiness skills. Paid career exploration opportunities allow students to identify their professional interests, gain marketable skills, and build their career network. Professional development for educators builds adult knowledge of culturally specific and sustainable approaches to college and career advising, and strategies for engaging families in college preparation.

Summary of Impact

Over the past academic year, the partnership has increased coordination of services to support BIPOC students enrolling and persisting in college. Over 250 students engaged in career-connected learning and culturally responsive mentoring provided by partner organizations. While Seattle Promise can expedite the college-going process for graduates who want to stay local, the partnership is finding that more students are interested in attending college away from home. To this end, the partnership has enabled students to visit 11 colleges and universities in the past academic year. Nearly 80 staff at two Seattle Public Schools participated in professional development.

Cornerstone

Theme: Postsecondary credential completion for adult learners

Lewis County

Partners: Bethel Church, Boys and Girls Club, Chehalis Foundation, Summit Center for Child Development, United Way of Lewis County, Centralia College, Chehalis School District, and Baker Evaluation Research Consulting Group



Theory of Change

For over a decade, Chehalis School District and Chehalis Foundation have collaborated on the Student Achievement Initiative (SAI), a multi-year effort credited for increasing high school graduation rates, remarkably from 77 percent in 2010 to 97.6 percent in 2024.² As many graduates decide to stay local, a partnership with Centralia College has also created a warm handoff for enrollment at the two-year institution. At the same time, English learners (EL) and low-income students continue to be underrepresented in these outcomes, especially given that Chehalis and neighboring Centralia are home to approximately 15 percent and 20 percent Hispanic or Latino individuals, respectively.³ These same statistics also mirror the population of low-income residents in both locations. For these longtime partner organizations, there is an opportunity to engage and guide underrepresented students and their families from the onset of education toward graduation and postsecondary success.

The Cornerstone partnership believes supporting whole families yields success for K-12 and beyond. When parents thrive, whole families thrive too. To this end, Cornerstone cultivates strong relationships with low-income students, EL, and their families, blending case management and high-quality engagement opportunities to lay the groundwork for postsecondary preparation. While the impacts of Cornerstone on postsecondary enrollment and completion for young students may not be easily seen for many years, effective early learning develops skills needed to persist in elementary and secondary education.⁴ A dual generation approach focuses on the success of whole family systems, propelling youth into the SAI orbit and accompanying parents on their own unfinished educational journeys.

Summary of Impact

In the past academic year, Cornerstone has enabled 11 parenting students to enroll in local postsecondary programs. The partnership has provided dynamic parent educational support, such as administering career assessments, providing resume and job search support, and hosting parenting skills classes. This integrated approach promotes family stability at home while encouraging parents to pursue their academic and career goals. As basic needs insecurity is a known barrier to credential completion,

² Washington Office of Superintendent of Public Instruction. (2025). *W F West High School, Chehalis School District*. Washington State Report Card. <https://reportcard.ospi.k12.wa.us/ReportCard/ViewSchoolOrDistrict/101859>

³ U.S. Census Bureau, U.S. Department of Commerce. "Hispanic or Latino Origin by Race." *American Community Survey, ACS 5-Year Estimates Detailed Tables, Table B03002*, <https://data.census.gov/table/ACSDT5Y2023.B03002?q=B03002:+Hispanic+or+Latino+Origin+by+Race>. Accessed Nov. 21, 2025.

⁴ Schoch, A. D., Gerson, C. S., Halle, T., & Bredeson, M. (2023). *Children's Learning and Development Benefits from High-Quality Early Care and Education: A Summary of the Evidence* <https://acf.gov/sites/default/files/documents/opre/%232023-226%20Benefits%20from%20ECE%20Highlight%20508.pdf>

partner organizations have supplied funding for parenting students. To date, the RCG investment has enabled 27 parents to enroll in a postsecondary program, and nine parents have already graduated.

Empowering Learners to Excel through Vocation Advancement, Training, and Education (ELEVATE)

Theme: Postsecondary credential completion for adult learners

Snohomish County

Partners: Evergreen Goodwill of Northwest Washington (EGNW), Latino Educational Training Institute (LETI), Volunteers of America Western Washington (VoAWW), Keep Dreams Alive Foundation (KDA) and Everett Community College (EvCC)



Theory of Change

North of Seattle, in Everett, data from the 2022-23 academic year shows that 47 percent of the student population was 25 years old or older, excluding programs that involve high school dual enrollment. Many individuals have years of experience in the military, workplace, community, family settings, and academic institutions outside of the U.S. While some adults may not be currently enrolled in an institution of higher education, many adult learners are gaining job-specific skills through adult basic education classes at local community-based organizations. A unique challenge for the region is recognizing how this learning can count toward postsecondary credentials.

ELEVATE builds infrastructure in Snohomish County to support adult learners, so that they can earn postsecondary credentials that lead to sustainable wage jobs. This infrastructure is three-pronged, aiming to support adult learners with their academic, social and emotional, and basic needs. First, growing Academic Credit for Prior Learning (ACPL) will enable more adult learners to be awarded academic credits toward a degree or certificate at EvCC for courses taken at local community-based organizations. This also means supporting students who have completed credentials in countries outside of the U.S. in getting their credentials translated, evaluated, and transferred to EvCC. Second, the partnership works to increase the sense of belonging for adult learners on EvCC’s campus through expanding the support services partner organizations provide and by creating a dedicated space for adult learners on campus. Third, ELEVATE supports learners’ basic needs through the creation of the ELEVATE Completion Fund, which provides monthly financial support for basic needs for a smaller cohort of ELEVATE learners. In combination with the ELEVATE Completion Fund, the partnership provides emergency basic needs funding to help prevent stop-outs due to financial constraints. By targeting all three needs, the partnership believes more adult learners in the region will enroll, persist, and complete credentials that increase their economic mobility.

Summary of Impact

Since formalizing the partnership, ELEVATE has expanded ACPL ‘crosswalks’, or how courses at local organizations translate into academic credit. Learners can earn up to 40 credits from various qualifying courses at three partner organizations: Evergreen Goodwill Snohomish County Job Training and Education Center, the Latino Educational Training Institute (LETI), and Volunteers of America. Current ACPL credit agreements created through ELEVATE crosswalks include credits in computer literacy, business, communication studies, and accounting. As of July 2025, the partnership has opened the newly furnished Adult Learner Center at EvCC. This on-campus space is equipped with dynamic seating, phone charging stations, kids’ toys and books, and a lending library stocked with laptops, iPads, and noise-cancelling

headphones. To guide student-facing support, Evergreen Goodwill Snohomish County Job Training and Education Center has hired a College Navigator to connect students to these added resources and assist in the process of applying to, and succeeding at, EvCC.

Foundation for Tacoma Students

Theme: FAFSA Completion

Pierce County

Partners: Foundation for Tacoma Students, Northwest Education Access, College Success Foundation – Tacoma, Degrees of Change, Palmer Scholars, Bethel School District, Franklin Pierce Schools, Peninsula School District, Tacoma Public Schools, Bates Technical College, Clover Park Technical College, Pacific Lutheran University, Pierce College, Tacoma Community College, University of Puget Sound, University of Washington – Tacoma, WorkForce Central



Theory of Change

The Foundation for Tacoma Students collaborates with Pierce County schools to coordinate a community response for financial aid completion support and college readiness to decrease “summer melt” and increase college enrollment. This partnership concluded its Regional Challenge Grant in 2025.

Summary of Impact

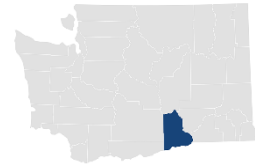
During the 2024-25 academic year, the partnership supported FAFSA completion and direct-to-college enrollment efforts through its What’s Next Senior Supports (WNSS) and Campaign Free Aid (CFA) strategies. Through WNSS, the partnership collaborated with the Franklin-Pierce, Peninsula, and Tacoma school districts to survey 545 graduating seniors on their career plans after high school. 68 percent of survey respondents who requested follow-up received support from a Community Response Team (CRT) member within 48 hours, a welcome contrast from 30 percent in the previous academic year. Financial aid completion support is one type of assistance CRT members provided as a core component of the CFA strategy. In conjunction with school districts, IHEs, and area CBOs, the partnership hosted 50 convenings in support of FAFSA completion. In the Bethel School District, 59 percent of high school seniors served by CFA completed the FAFSA, compared to the district's rate of 54 percent.

Generating Rural Opportunity Washington Network (GROW-Net)

Theme: K-12 postsecondary enrollment

Benton County

Partners: Benton City Revitalization, Benton-Franklin Workforce Development Council, Open Doors-TC Futures, The STEM Foundation, Tri-City Development Council, Tri-City Regional Chamber, Columbia Basin College, Washington State University Tri-Cities, Educational Service District 123, Kiona-Benton City (Ki-Be) School District, and Mid-Columbia Libraries



Theory of Change

The Mid-Columbia Basin region is an agricultural powerhouse where more than 300 different varieties of crops grow. Approximately 20 miles from the Tri-Cities, an urban center with 300,000 residents, the rural town of Benton City is home to 3,000 individuals. In the Ki-Be school district, about 60 percent of students are Hispanic or Latino, meaning they learn to adeptly navigate bilingual and bicultural contexts.⁵ Many of these students will be the first in their families to go to college. Local Benton City organizations bring a wealth of experience in understanding how to conduct culturally responsive outreach that involves whole family systems. There is an opportunity to increase collaboration and resource flows between IHEs, nonprofits, and businesses between Benton City and the Tri-Cities.

Generating Rural Opportunity Washington Network (GROW-Net) engages both Ki-Be students and parents in exploring potential academic and career pathways, situating the decision to enroll in postsecondary programs as a process rooted in familial and cultural contexts. Partner organizations collaborate to host programming for students, while familiarizing parents with resources available to support their students. When learners engage in intentionally designed post-high school preparation programming, such as STEM experiences, career exploration, and High School and Beyond Plan activities, they can better see themselves reflected in their own post-high school plans, they view their skills as assets and strengths, and they feel empowered to use their home language to share what they know. When parents and caregivers are engaged in in-school and out-of-school enrichment activities that are responsive to their lives and informational needs, parents and caregivers can better support their learners in identifying what comes next.

Summary of Impact

The partnership is already facilitating direct enrollment for Ki-Be students to Columbia Basin College and WSU Tri-Cities (WSU-TC). Through providing workshops and visits for students, the partnership functions as a warm handoff for prepared, motivated youth to pursue education and training within the commuting area of their own community. Targeted college and career programming allows students to consider career options, especially for in-demand STEM careers. Further, hosting information sessions with parents at familiar locations such as the workplace and the library is yielding more informed and connected parents who can assist their students. In the second academic year of this approach, enrollment from Ki-Be to WSU-TC increased from one to seven students, clearly demonstrating a positive impact on their community of learners.

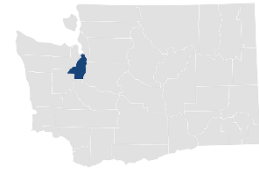
⁵ Washington Office of Superintendent of Public Instruction. (2025). *Kiona-Benton City School District*. Washington State Report Card. <https://reportcard.ospi.k12.wa.us/ReportCard/ViewSchoolOrDistrict/100119>

Kitsap Strong

Theme: K-12 postsecondary enrollment

Kitsap County

Partners: Bainbridge Island School District, Bremerton School District, Central Kitsap School District, Chief Kitsap Academy, Kitsap Community Resources, Kitsap Strong, North Kitsap School District, North Mason School District, Olympic College, Olympic Educational Service District 114, South Kitsap School District, and Chan Hellman, PhD - Hope Centered & Trauma-Informed



Theory of Change

In recent years, postsecondary enrollment has steadily declined within Kitsap County. Simultaneously, over 30 percent of Kitsap County residents report having had three or more Adverse Childhood Experiences, which are associated with social and behavioral issues later in life. Trauma-informed care and hope-centered educational practices can create protective factors for students in the short-term, and lead to greater resilience and educational persistence in the long-term. Kitsap Strong has led efforts to build community resilience for over a decade with more than 30 community organizations, school districts, colleges, and government agencies. There continues to be ample opportunity to nurture hopeful young people who pursue postsecondary programs, particularly with training educators and student-facing professionals in providing responsive care.

The partnership believes that a trauma-informed and hope-centered educational ecosystem will support more Kitsap and north Mason County students to enroll and persist in postsecondary spaces. Building this ecosystem means training and supporting the adults who impact K-12th grade students' lives on a daily basis. To this end, the partnership enables hope-centered training for service providers and educators and offers continuous learning and implementation support for participants in a community of practice. A hope-centered ecosystem also relies on designing meaningful opportunities to reach students at pivotal stages in their educational journey. The partnership collaborates with Olympic College to provide summer programming that supports the transition to middle school and postsecondary, thereby improving school attendance and cultivating hopeful, informed, and motivated young people.

Summary of Impact

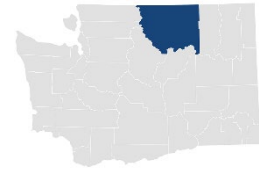
This past academic year, Kitsap Strong has laid the foundation for a regional hope-centered infrastructure supporting K-12 direct enrollment and retention. The partnership enabled training for 77 professionals and over 300 hours of deeper engagement in a community of practice. These learnings have reached students at two postsecondary institutions, six school districts, and 16 schools and community-based organizations. All high school graduates who completed Olympic College's inaugural summer bridge program, Launch2College, are still enrolled at the writing of this report.

Methow Futures

Theme: Economic mobility

Okanogan County

Partners: Big Picture Learning, Methow Futures Mentorship Network, Methow Valley Education Foundation, Methow Valley Elder Care Network, Room One, Wenatchee Valley College, Western Washington University, Methow Valley School District, North Central Educational Service District, Family Health Center, BlackCap Construction, Methow Trails, Sawtooth Dental, Loup Loup Ski and Education Foundation, and Methow Recycles



Theory of Change

Nestled in the North Cascades and along the Methow River, the Methow Valley is rich in its natural resources and outdoor recreational industries. Until recently, one of the largest employers had been the U.S. Forest Service. While the geography is vast, beautiful, and remote, the nearest four-year institution of higher education is 3-4 hours away by car. As the cost of living and housing is on the rise, the prospect of living long-term in the same place grows more difficult for recent high school graduates. There is a need for young people to gain skills and experience to obtain gainful employment, and the valley has a wealth of local industry partners.

The partnership envisions a future in which youth and adult learners pursue post-high school learning and training that is relevant to their interests and skills, while cultivating and retaining talent in the community through real-world learning. Partner organizations enable real-world learning in the form of internships, apprenticeships, and dual credit opportunities for students at two local high schools. With a diverse composition of cross-sector partners, Methow Futures provides high-level coordination between social service providers, private businesses, and governmental entities. It facilitates a deeply symbiotic relationship with students and the local workforce, where learners identify their skills and career interests while enabling local industries to nurture the skilled labor that fuels the economy. The partnership's individualized approach allows students to pursue college and career training in a way that honors their individual goals and motivations, supports their potential for upward mobility, and informs their decision about where they will go after graduation. When taken together, the partners create, in the geographically largest school district in Washington State, a local example of how to authentically pursue systems change in education.

Summary of Impact

Over the past academic year, the partnership strengthened local college and career pathways, thereby laying the foundation for the future economic mobility of their students in their chosen pathway. Through strong relationships with partner organizations, students gained real-world learning experience by participating in college in the high school natural resources courses, healthcare job shadow rotations, and paid summer sustainability work. Indicative of the strength of collaboration in the community, the partnership added seven new internship sites. The partnership launched an apprenticeship scholarship program, which will enable more students to gain access to industry-recognized credentials. Consistent with the previous year of reporting, over 90 percent of students attending the district's Independent Learning Center high school participated in a weekly internship.

Mpower

Theme: FAFSA completion

Spokane County

Partners: Big Brothers Big Sisters, Communities in Schools of Northeast Washington, LaunchNW/Innovia Foundation, Nuestras Raices, Slingshot, Eastern Washington University, Gonzaga University, Whitworth University, Central Valley School District, East Valley School District, Liberty School District, Medical Lake School District, NEWESD 101, Nine Mile Falls School District, Riverside School District, and Spokane Public Schools



Theory of Change

While 12 out of 13 school districts in Spokane County regularly outpace the Washington State’s average graduation rate, only 46 percent of adults in the county have a postsecondary degree.⁶ This disparity is further amplified for BIPOC, English Learners, foster youth, and low-income students. The second-largest city in Washington, Spokane is anchored by several mission-similar CBOs as well as its healthcare and manufacturing industries. Within the region, there is an opportunity to coordinate around a shared vision that links student success to economic development.

Through its multisided mentoring and career readiness approach, Mpower prepares students to enroll and persist in their desired postsecondary pathway. The partnership implements four styles of mentoring: peer, near-peer, adult, and family. This deeply collaborative approach to mentoring places site coordinators from CBO partners within schools full-time to coordinate connections between mentors and students, complementing existing school resources. Partner organizations strengthen this approach by providing individualized career coaching and career exploration opportunities. In tandem, Mpower enables students to build self-awareness about how their skills and interests translate into good jobs in the community.

Summary of Impact

This past year, the partnership prepared 10th – 12th grade students for postsecondary with its mentoring and career exploration efforts. Specifically, more than 200 individuals received mentoring services, and 190 students received individual career coaching. This approach is already yielding more students demonstrating intent to enroll as they complete the FAFSA in greater numbers. At Riverside School District, the FAFSA completion rate jumped to 62 percent in 2025, a 59 percent increase from 2023, marking two years of progress under the RCG investment.⁷

⁶ Washington Student Achievement Council. (2023). *Attainment Goal Dashboard*. <https://wsac.wa.gov/attainment-dashboard>

⁷ Washington Student Achievement Council. (2025). *FAFSA Completion for High School Seniors*. <https://wsac.wa.gov/fafsa-completion>

Olympic Peninsula Resource CO-OP

Theme: Postsecondary credential completion for adult learners

Callam and Jefferson Counties

Partners: Olympic Angels, Olympic Community Action Programs, Olympic Community of Health, Olympic Peninsula YMCA, Peninsula College, Serenity House of Clallam County, United Way of Clallam County, West Sound STEM Network, and Department of Social & Health Services



Theory of Change

Situated by the Strait of Juan de Fuca and Olympic National Park, students are regularly filling seats at Peninsula College, where they've experienced record enrollment in the fall of 2023 and 2024. Yet in Clallam and Jefferson Counties, only 39 percent of adults complete an AA degree or higher.⁸ Basic needs insecurity is a known barrier for credential completion, especially for adult learners in the Olympic Peninsula. Over 80 percent of Peninsula College students who enroll in Transitional Studies are over the age of 20, and 54 percent receive need-based aid. At the same time, overlapping basic needs, such as transportation, reliable internet and technology, and childcare, impact adult learners' ability to enroll and persist in postsecondary programs.

By streamlining access to services and basic needs support, the Olympic Peninsula Resource CO-OP aims to increase enrollment and credential completion for adult learners. Through regular resource events, called COConnections and OPPortunities (CO-OPs), partnership members provide wraparound supports to adult learners and youth aging out of foster care, such as housing, financial aid, childcare, food, transportation, and healthcare. CO-OPs are hosted in three areas on the Olympic Peninsula: Forks, Port Angeles, and Port Townsend. These consistent touchpoints allow service providers to build trust with community members while enabling adult learners to access training and education in high-demand fields.

Summary of Impact

In the past academic year, the partnership enabled postsecondary enrollment and retention for adult learners. Through the CO-OP model, attendees have received wraparound support for basic needs and have already enrolled in Transitional Studies and AA programs at Peninsula College. In the first half of 2025 alone, over 90 individuals received support with college financial aid, applications, and scholarships. Through staffing the three CO-OPs, the partnership identified and referred attendees who qualify for Peninsula College workforce programs and transitional studies programs, such as GED and High School Plus, outlining a clear path to postsecondary enrollment and workforce programs. As a result of ongoing learning and adaptation of the CO-OP model, the Forks CO-OP location rotates to the Hoh, Quileute, and Neah Bay Tribes once per month, thereby reaching all major communities on the west end of Clallam County. This approach is an innovative example of postsecondary outreach to adults living in rural and geographically isolated communities.

⁸ Washington Student Achievement Council. (2023). *Attainment Goal Dashboard*. <https://wsac.wa.gov/attainment-dashboard>

United Way of the Blue Mountains

Theme: K-12 postsecondary enrollment

Walla Walla and Columbia Counties

Partners: Communities In Schools of the Blue Mountains, First Fruits, United Way of the Blue Mountains, College Place High School, Prescott School District, and Walla Walla Public Schools



Theory of Change

Walla Walla and Columbia County are well known for their agriculture, tourism, and manufacturing industries. As an agricultural hub, seasonal migration and harvest seasons shape the community and its students. In a 2023 regional study on low college enrollment rates, students attributed their decision to attend college based on a series of complex push and pull factors.⁹ Top push factors, or disincentives, were skepticism about return on investment, negative experiences with schooling, and the difficulty of obtaining a job without further education. Key pull factors, or incentives, were family encouragement, structured opportunities for career exploration, and aligned individual goals that college could help achieve. These pull factors are the basis for the partnership’s approach to increasing postsecondary enrollment and completion in the region.

United Way of the Blue Mountains / Elevate is currently partnering with local high schools to support students’ postsecondary success. The partnership grounds its approach in building substantive relationships with students and their families. Student and family advisory groups provide an open space to consider college and career pathways in culturally responsive ways, especially as the facilitators are CBO staff and members of their own community. When students and families have a dedicated space to talk about postsecondary barriers and learn about available resources, they begin to feel more comfortable making decisions about post-high school plans. These spaces beget more spaces as the community discovers new opportunities to discuss educational decisions, shifting individual mindsets, and the community culture around postsecondary planning. Changes in the educational culture around education will, over time, create changes in students’ post-high school plans, resulting in to increased educational attainment.

Summary of Impact

In the past academic year, the partnership launched three advisory groups for parents and three advisory groups for high school students. Advisory groups met monthly, allowing parents and students to deepen relationships with each other and with the CBO partner facilitating each group. These advisory groups have enabled more open communication with school leaders about structuring opportunities for students. This advisory group model increases awareness of the opportunities for student success among students and parents, another key pull factor in the college decision process.

⁹ Karp, M. M., & Heiser, C. (2024). Exploring Postsecondary Decisions in the Walla Walla Valley/ Northern Blue Mountain Region. Phase Two Advisory.

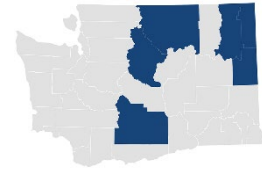
Washington State University (WSU) Native American Health Sciences

Theme: K-12 postsecondary enrollment

Chelan, Okanogan, Pend Oreille, Spokane, Stevens, and Yakima

Counties

Partners: Spokane Colleges, WSU Native American Health Sciences, Coeur d'Alene Tribe, Confederated Tribes of the Colville Reservation, Confederated Tribes and Bands of the Yakama Nation, Kalispel Tribe of Indians, Spokane Tribe of Indians, Providence Medical Group, and Seattle Children's Hospital



Theory of Change

62 percent of Washingtonians have a postsecondary credential, but only 26 percent of Native American Indian or Alaska Native people in Washington have one.¹⁰ Few Native American students complete health science degree programs, and no institution of higher education in the US has a clinical simulation center designed for and by Native Americans. Simply put, more infrastructure is necessary to support Native students. Interrupting this cycle means delivering a health science curriculum that is built with Native voices and increases a student's ability to pursue health and health-related pathways. This intergenerational work, in turn, will equip Native students to provide adequate care in their own communities through job placement motivated by the partnership's work. This harnesses both their cultural and traditional knowledge into the healthcare experience.

The partnership envisions that culturally responsive health sciences pathway programs will encourage more Native American learners in Central and Eastern Washington to pursue healthcare careers. At the request of tribal elders, the partnership is developing pathway programs through a strategic planning approach for each of the five tribal partners that reflects their cultural values, priorities, and ways of knowing. As Native American students require more representation in both postsecondary enrollment and careers in health sciences, partners advocate for reaching youth as early as kindergarten. They contend that youth who are introduced to math and science early on in their educational journey build the confidence and skills needed to persist in these fields. Further, situating curriculum within the learners' cultural and place-based contexts allows them to see themselves in healthcare careers and as care providers for their community.

Summary of Impact

In the past academic year, the partnership increased coordination for pathways development with five tribes: the Coeur d'Alene Tribe, Confederated Tribes of the Colville Reservation, Confederated Tribes and Bands of the Yakama Nation, Kalispel Tribe of Indians, and Spokane Tribe of Indians. The partnership facilitated Plateau Meetings to map out priorities and to envision what an ideal pathways program would look like. Rooted in an intergenerational approach to addressing community problems, the partnership convened Tribal Council members, educators, mental health professionals, medical professionals, parents, elders, and youth. The partnership is set to complete a pathway program plan by the end of this fiscal year, a strong foundation for implementing plans in the years to come.

¹⁰ Washington Student Achievement Council. (2023). *Attainment Goal Dashboard*. <https://wsac.wa.gov/attainment-dashboard>

Yakima Valley Partners for Education

Theme: FAFSA completion

Yakima County

Partners: Catholic Charities Housing Services of Central WA, College Success Foundation, Communities in Schools of Central WA, KDNA, Nuestra Casa, Partners for Rural Impact, Strive Together, YVFWC - Parents as Teachers Program at Safe Haven, Eastern Washington University, Heritage University, Yakima Valley College, Granger School District, Mt. Adams School District, Sunnyside School District, West Valley School District, Grandview School District, Toppenish School District, Yakama Tribal School, Wapato School District, Confederated Bands and Tribes of the Yakama Nation, Yakama Nation Tribal Services, Self Help Credit Union, People for People, El Conquistador, Silvias Taxes, Taxes Y Mas, Communities for Our Colleges, and UW GEAR UP



Theory of Change

In Yakima County, which is well-known for its agricultural industry, over 50 percent of residents identify as Hispanic or Latino.¹¹ In the lower Yakima Valley, for example, approximately 90 percent of students in the Mabton and Sunnyside school districts are from low-income backgrounds.^{12 13} As the cost of college continues to rise, financial aid is a primary factor in students' decisions post-high school. While many factors influence the decision to attend college, a strong correlation exists between financial aid completion and college enrollment.¹⁴ There is an opportunity to coordinate community resources to make college an affordable and meaningful choice for students in the lower valley.

Yakima Valley Partners for Education (YVPE) believes that when students feel supported by their families and their larger community, they will enroll in postsecondary education at higher rates. YVPE provides culturally relevant programming to Native and Latino youth, fostering a community-level shift in the value of educational opportunities after high school. This programming includes community conversations, tax preparation events, school-based programming, and campus-to-campus transportation. Specifically, its approach to designing and implementing community events and tax preparation sessions centers on cultural relevance that extends beyond rote language translation. In doing so, it welcomes community members into a space designed especially for them.

Summary of Impact

In the past academic year, YVPE advanced FAFSA completion rates for students in the lower Yakima Valley. For the Class of 2025, Granger School District's FAFSA completion rate was 80 percent, a 21 percent increase from the initial two-year start under the RCG investment.¹⁵ Toppenish School District

¹¹ U.S. Census Bureau, U.S. Department of Commerce. "Hispanic or Latino Origin by Race." *American Community Survey, ACS 5-Year Estimates Detailed Tables, Table B03002*, <https://data.census.gov/table/ACS5Y2023.B03002?q=B03002:+Hispanic+or+Latino+Origin+by+Race>. Accessed Nov. 21, 2025.

¹² Washington Office of Superintendent of Public Instruction. (2025). *Mabton School District*. Washington State Report Card. <https://reportcard.ospi.k12.wa.us/ReportCard/ViewSchoolOrDistrict/100137>

¹³ Washington Office of Superintendent of Public Instruction. (2025). *Sunnyside School District*. Washington State Report Card. <https://reportcard.ospi.k12.wa.us/ReportCard/ViewSchoolOrDistrict/100260>

¹⁴ DeBaun, B. (2019). *Survey Data Strengthen Association between FAFSA Completion and Enrollment*. Latest News: Data, Research & Evaluation. <https://www.ncan.org/news/456025/Survey-Data-Strengthen-Association-Between-FAFSA-Completion-and-Enrollment.htm>

¹⁵ Washington Student Achievement Council. (2025). *FAFSA Completion for High School Seniors*. <https://wsac.wa.gov/fafsa-completion>

finished the year with a 74 percent completion rate, a 23 percent increase from 2023.¹⁶ Further, Granger and Mabton school districts ranked second and fourth, respectively, for the highest percentages of completed FAFSA applications in Washington.¹⁷ With its extensive network of 22 CBO, IHE, K-12, and tribal partners, the partnership reached 3,000 community members through its programming. In addition, this larger community approach, which blends basic needs support with postsecondary education, has enabled students and families to view affordability as less of a barrier to enrollment.

¹⁶ Ibid.

¹⁷ Ibid.

About the Washington Student Achievement Council

The Washington Student Achievement Council is committed to increasing educational opportunities and attainment in Washington. The Council has three main functions:

- Lead statewide strategic planning to increase educational attainment.
- Administer programs that help people access and pay for college.
- Advocate for the economic, social, and civic benefits of higher education.

The Council has ten members. Four members represent each of Washington's major education sectors: four-year public baccalaureates, four-year private colleges, public community and technical colleges, and K-12 public schools. Six are citizen members, including two current students (one graduate student and one undergraduate student).

If you would like copies of this document in an alternative format, please contact the Washington Student Achievement Council at:

Mail:

P.O. Box 43430

Olympia, WA 98504-3430

Phone:

360-753-7800

TTY/TDD users may dial 7-1-1 for relay services



**WASHINGTON STUDENT
ACHIEVEMENT COUNCIL**
EDUCATION · OPPORTUNITY · RESULTS