



# Regional Partnership Investment Update

May 2026

## Executive Summary

This document includes an investment update on funds for the 2026 reapplication. The recommendation made to Council includes total awards of up to \$2.76 million. Funds will be awarded over two years and support four partnerships across eleven counties.

## Introduction

WSAC believes community solutions are required to increase our state attainment goal, especially when we look at attainment rates disaggregated by race, ethnicity, and region. Regional Partnerships implement innovative strategies for and by communities. The Regional Challenge Grant (RCG) is one part of WSAC's Regional Partnership vision and is in its third academic year of implementation. This means there are 12 place-based strategies being implemented in 18 counties, with more than 120 total organizations belonging to a partnership. See Appendix A for a list of partnerships by sector.

RCG awards occur on a two-year cycle, allowing for consistent evaluation of the partnerships. WSAC uses a rigorous, multi-level process to evaluate partnerships seeking renewal. Program staff review evidence, such as existing progress reports, short-term outcomes, facilitated discussions, and self-assessment tools. For more information, please visit the 2025 Legislative Budget Report: [2025RCG\\_budgetreport.pdf](#)

The Legislature's 2025-27 biennial operating budget eliminated all carry-forward level funding (\$16 million). The supplemental session this year did not restore funds to RCG. As of this report, there is no additional funding to support RCG in Washington State. However, funds in the RCG account roll over to allow for multi-year grant awards.

## Continuing Partnership Investments Despite Budgetary Constraints

WSAC's Regional Partnerships has earmarked \$2.76 million in investments for our second cohort. This funding will focus on adult learners and completion-related strategies. Without continued funding, this will be our last two-year grant cycle. See our companion document, Recommendations to Council, for more information about each partnership's grant award recommendation.

To date, we have continued program implementation despite the budget elimination. There are three main reasons for this: 1) We have reallocated funding originally planned for new partnerships to sustain our current partnerships. 2) We have reduced program overhead to prioritize investing in communities. 3) We were supported by the 2025 investment of \$1.5 million from the Ballmer Group. A second Ballmer Group award was contingent on continued state funding, which was not made possible due to the lack of a state investment. While this has allowed us to continue our work in the short-term, it has meant that partnership grant awards have been reduced, and effective work has not been scaled.

## Looking Ahead

Without new funding, the grant award for the first cohort will conclude in June 2027. Likewise, funding for the second cohort will end at the close of their second grant period in June 2028.

Figure 1. Regional Partnership Implementation Timeline 2026 – 2029, pending no new funding in FY27

	Year 4 (July 25 – June 26)	Year 5 (July 26 – June 27)	Year 6 (July 27 – June 28)	Year 7 (July 28 – June 29)
<b>Partners</b>	Cohort 1, Year 3 - 4			
<b>Partners</b>	Cohort 2, Year 2 - 4			
<b>Program</b>		Partnership sustainability plans for transition planning		Administrative close out, final partnership reports, final program report

By policy design, RCG creates systems change in local communities. This change is intended to shift local thinking about additional training and high school through cultural mental models. This plan was a disciplined, scaled investment model over ten years. It was cut short due to budget constraints.

Continued partnership progress demonstrates financial aid application rates, high school graduation rates, and college retention rates are improving as regional partnerships address barriers and shift educational culture for K-12 students, adults, and families.<sup>1,2</sup> Specifically, progress includes:

- MPower-served high schools outperformed regional benchmarks on both FAFSA completion (81% v. 51%) and graduation (100% v. 85%) in AY 2024-25.
- As of April 2026, FAFSA filing rates in the Methow Valley reached 84%, exceeding the statewide rate by 38 points and the district rate by 22 points this time last AY.
- 68% of Kiona-Benton middle school students in the last academic year engaged in STEM career-connected learning.
- Last academic year, ELEVATE advanced accelerated credential opportunities by formalizing 28+ college-level credits at Everett Community College for coursework completed at Evergreen Goodwill and the Latino Educational Training Institute.

Over the summer, we will investigate ways to continue innovation and support place-based strategies to increase the state attainment goal. This effort will build on our current effective successes demonstrated across rural, urban, and suburban communities in Washington State. We appreciate our Council’s support in our continued efforts to prioritize communities to create systems change.

<sup>1</sup> [2025 RCG Legislative Report](#)

<sup>2</sup> [RCG Early Impact: What We Know](#)

## Appendix A

Each Regional Partnership comprises at least three entities. These include at least one community-based organization and at least one education institution, such as a K-12 school or a college. Most partnerships exceed this minimum requirement. This appendix shows a current point-in-time view of how Regional Partnerships are represented across the sectors represented by our Council. This is not a comprehensive list of all entities that meaningfully belong to a local network, which can also include tribal nations, workforce sectors, and other business organizations.

Working together across different sectors supports learners on their journeys, both inside and outside our systems.

### Community-Based Organizations

Serving more than 50 community-based organizations across the state.

Organization Name	Location	Affiliated Partnership
Benton City Revitalization	Benton City, WA	Generating Rural Opportunity Washington Network
Benton-Franklin Workforce Development Council	Kennewick, WA	Generating Rural Opportunity Washington Network
Bethel Church	Chehalis, WA	Cornerstone
Big Brothers Big Sisters	Spokane, WA	Mpower
Big Picture Learning	Multiple Locations	Methow Futures
Boys and Girls Club	Chehalis, WA	Cornerstone
Catholic Charities Housing Services of Central WA	Yakima, WA	Yakima Valley Partners for Education
Centro Cultural Mexicano	Redmond, WA	Centro Cultural Mexicano
Chehalis Foundation	Chehalis, WA	Cornerstone
College Success Foundation	Yakima, WA	Yakima Valley Partners for Education
Communities in Schools of Central WA	Yakima, WA	Yakima Valley Partners for Education
Communities In Schools of the Blue Mountains	Walla Walla, WA	United Way of the Blue Mountains
Communities in Schools of Northeast Washington	Spokane, WA	Mpower
El Centro de la Raza	Seattle, WA	City of Seattle Postsecondary Success Network
Empowering Youth & Family Outreach	Seattle, WA	City of Seattle Postsecondary Success Network
Evergreen Goodwill of Northwest Washington	Everett, WA	ELEVATE
Family Health Center	Okanogan, WA	Methow Futures
Keep Dreams Alive Foundation	Marysville, WA	ELEVATE
Kitsap Community Resources	Bremerton, WA	Kitsap Strong

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Kitsap Strong	Bremerton, WA	Kitsap Strong
Latino Educational Training Institute	Lynnwood, WA	Centro Cultural Mexicano, ELEVATE
LaunchNW - Innovia Foundation	Spokane, WA	Mpower
Loup Loup Ski Education Foundation	Okanogan, WA	Methow Futures
Mentoring Urban Students & Teens	Seattle, WA	City of Seattle Postsecondary Success Network
Methow Futures Mentorship Network	Carlton, Twisp, Winthrop, and Mazama, WA	Methow Futures
Methow Recycles	Twisp, WA	Methow Futures
Methow Trails	Winthrop, WA	Methow Futures
Methow Valley Education Foundation	Winthrop, WA	Methow Futures
Methow Valley Elder Care Network	Winthrop, WA	Methow Futures
Mi Centro	Tacoma, WA	Centro Cultural Mexicano
Mid-Columbia Libraries	Kennewick, WA	Generating Rural Opportunity Washington Network
Nuestra Casa	Sunnyside, WA	Yakima Valley Partners for Education
Nuestras Raices	Spokane, WA	Mpower
Olympic Angels	Port Townsend, WA	Olympic Peninsula Resource CO-OP
Olympic Community Action Programs	Port Angeles, WA	Olympic Peninsula Resource CO-OP
Olympic Community of Health	Port Hadlock, WA	Olympic Peninsula Resource CO-OP
Olympic Peninsula YMCA	Sequim, WA	Olympic Peninsula Resource CO-OP
Open Doors-TC Futures	Kennewick, WA	Generating Rural Opportunity Washington Network
Partners for Rural Impact	Berea, KY	Yakima Valley Partners for Education
People for People Yakima	Yakima, WA	Yakima Valley Partners for Education
Room One	Twisp, WA	Methow Futures
Serenity House of Clallam County	Port Angeles, WA	Olympic Peninsula Resource CO-OP
Slingshot	Spokane, WA	Mpower
StriveTogether	Cincinnati, OH	Yakima Valley Partners for Education
Summit Center for Child Development	Chehalis, WA	Cornerstone
The STEM Foundation	Richland, WA	Generating Rural Opportunity Washington Network
Tri-City Development Council	Kennewick, WA	Generating Rural Opportunity Washington Network
Tri-City Regional Chamber	Kennewick, WA	Generating Rural Opportunity Washington Network
United Way of Clallam County	Port Angeles, WA	Olympic Peninsula Resource CO-OP
United Way of Lewis County	Chehalis, WA	Cornerstone
United Way of the Blue Mountains	Walla Walla, WA	United Way of the Blue Mountains

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Volunteers of America Western Washington	Everett, WA	ELEVATE
West Sound STEM Network	Port Orchard, WA	Olympic Peninsula Resource CO-OP
Yakima Valley Farmworkers Clinic - Parents as Teachers Program at Safe Haven	Toppenish, WA	Yakima Valley Partners for Education

### Community and Technical Colleges

Serving 11 of 34 state community and technical colleges.

Organization Name	Location	Affiliated Partnership
Cascadia College	Bothell, WA	Centro Cultural Mexicano
Centralia College	Centralia, WA	Cornerstone
Columbia Basin College	Pasco, WA	Generating Rural Opportunity Washington Network
Everett Community College	Everett, WA	ELEVATE
Olympic College	Bremerton, WA	Kitsap Strong
Peninsula College	Port Angeles, WA	Olympic Peninsula Resource CO-OP
Seattle Colleges - Seattle Promise, Project Baldwin, & Sisterhood	Seattle, WA	City of Seattle Postsecondary Success Network
Spokane Colleges	Spokane, WA	Washington State University Native American Health Sciences
Walla Walla Community College	Walla Walla, WA	United Way of the Blue Mountains
Wenatchee Valley College	Wenatchee and Omak, WA	Methow Futures
Yakima Valley College	Grandview, WA	Yakima Valley Partners for Education

### Four-Year Public Institutions

Serving 5 of 6 state public four-year institutions.

Organization Name	Location	Affiliated Partnership
Central Washington University	Ellensburg, WA	Yakima Valley Partners for Education
Eastern Washington University - Aspire	Cheney, WA	Mpower, Yakima Valley Partners for Education
University of Washington - Brotherhood Initiative and Sisterhood Initiative	Seattle, WA	City of Seattle Postsecondary Success Network
University of Washington - GEAR UP	Toppenish, WA	Yakima Valley Partners for Education
Washington State University Native American Health Sciences	Spokane, WA	Washington State University Native American Health Sciences
Washington State University Tri-Cities	Richland, WA	Generating Rural Opportunity Washington Network

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Western Washington University - Sustainability Engagement Institute	Bellingham & Twisp, WA	Methow Futures
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### Private, Not-for Profit Colleges and Universities

Serving 4 of 9 private colleges.

Organization Name	Location	Affiliated Partnership
Gonzaga University	Spokane, WA	Mpower
Heritage University	Toppenish, WA	Yakima Valley Partners for Education
Whitman College	Walla Walla, WA	United Way of the Blue Mountains
Whitworth University	Spokane, WA	Mpower

### K-12 Entities

Directly involving 4 of 9 Educational Service Districts in a partnership and 30 school districts, high schools, or tribal schools.

Organization Name	Location	Affiliated Partnership
Bainbridge Island School District	Bainbridge Island, WA	Kitsap Strong
Bremerton School District	Bremerton, WA	Kitsap Strong
Central Kitsap School District	Bremerton, WA	Kitsap Strong
Central Valley School District	Spokane Valley, WA	Mpower
Chehalis School District	Chehalis, WA	Cornerstone
College Place High School	College Place, WA	United Way of the Blue Mountains
East Valley School District	Spokane Valley, WA	Mpower
Educational Service District 123	Kennewick, WA	Generating Rural Opportunity Washington Network
Grandview School District	Grandview, WA	Yakima Valley Partners for Education
Granger School District	Granger, WA	Yakima Valley Partners for Education
Kiona-Benton School District	Benton City, WA	Generating Rural Opportunity Washington Network
Liberty School District	Spangle, WA	Mpower
Medical Lake School District	Medical Lake, WA	Mpower
Methow Valley School District	Winthrop, WA	Methow Futures
Mt. Adams School District	White Swan, WA	Yakima Valley Partners for Education
Nine Mile Falls School District	Nine Mile Falls, WA	Mpower
North Central Educational Service District	Wenatchee, WA	Methow Futures
North Kitsap School District	Poulsbo, WA	Kitsap Strong

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North Mason School District	Belfair, WA	Kitsap Strong
NorthEast Washington Educational Service District 101	Spokane, WA	Mpower
Olympic Educational Service District 114	Bremerton, WA	Kitsap Strong
Prescott School District	Prescott, WA	United Way of the Blue Mountains
Riverside School District	Riverside, WA	Mpower
Seattle Public Schools	Seattle, WA	City of Seattle Postsecondary Success Network
South Kitsap School District	Port Orchard, WA	Kitsap Strong
Spokane Public Schools	Spokane, WA	Mpower
Sunnyside School District	Sunnyside, WA	Yakima Valley Partners for Education
Toppenish School District	Toppenish, WA	Yakima Valley Partners for Education
Walla Walla Public Schools	Walla Walla, WA	United Way of the Blue Mountains
Wapato School District	Wapato, WA	Yakima Valley Partners for Education
South Kitsap School District	Port Angeles, WA	Olympic Peninsula Resource CO-OP
West Valley School District	West Valley, WA	Yakima Valley Partners for Education
Yakama Nation Tribal School	Toppenish, WA	Yakima Valley Partners for Education