



# Regional Partnership Reapplication Recommendations to Council

May 2026

## Executive Summary

WSAC Regional Partnerships recommends funding four Regional Challenge Grant awards for a total of up to \$2.76 million, following the 2026 reapplication process. This document summarizes the partnerships and their strategies. These funds would be awarded over a two-year period to partnerships across eleven counties.

## Reapplication Background

WSAC supports regional partnerships that are making positive changes in their local communities and increasing postsecondary attainment. The Regional Partnerships team is committed to making disciplined investments with regular reporting requirements. The two-year Regional Challenge Grant (RCG) award cycle helps WSAC consistently track progress.

Last September, WSAC invited the second cohort of five partnerships to reapply for funding spanning July 1, 2026, through June 30, 2028. The rigorous review process involved eight reviewers who considered the Statement of Work, Budget, and Self-Assessment Tool, and other internal assessments and memos from WSAC. Reviewers also evaluated transcripts from two conversations with partnerships following trusted philanthropic reporting methods. The same process was followed last year. For complete details about the reapplication, please see the [Request for Partnership Reapplication Document](#).

## Recommendations to Council

WSAC is pleased to recommend reapplication funding for four regional partnerships. All of these partnerships are committed to driving effective change in their communities. They use innovative, community-informed strategies that will increase postsecondary attainment in Washington.

Partnership	Location by County	Recommendation
ELEVATE	Snohomish County	\$576,840
Kitsap Strong	Kitsap and Mason Counties	\$686,855
Olympic Peninsula Resource Co-Op	Clallam and Jefferson Counties	\$879,283
WSU Native American Health Sciences	Ferry, Okanogan, Pend Oreille, Spokane, Stevens, and Yakima Counties	\$608,432
<b>Total</b>		<b>\$2,751,410</b>

## Regional Partnerships Recommendations to Council

### ELEVATE | \$576,840

#### *Empowering Learners to Excel through Vocational Advancement, Training, and Education* Snohomish County

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

North of Seattle in Everett, the ELEVATE partnership uses four strategies to support local adult learners. This includes Academic Credit for Prior Learning, creating a sense of camaraderie, supporting basic needs, and continuing partnership recruitment activities. This partnership began in 2024, and these strategies build on what was learned and implemented in years three and four. They include articulating 40 Adult Basic Education credits that can be transferred to EvCC. They have also recruited 43 new students to the community college through wraparound support services.

Over the next two years, the partnership will be growing its basic needs support to implement the innovative Completion Fund. This strategy provides consistent, ongoing support for adult learners each month, as long as they meet the necessary academic and non-academic requirements. This includes monthly meetings with a college navigator, attendance at partnership workshops, and being in good academic standing, among other requirements. This strategy will test new evidence for similar initiatives using a randomized control trial implemented by WSAC. This will provide new learning for the field and for the agency. WSAC and our partners believe that the Completion Fund will help adult learners persist and reduce the drop-in wraparound services through workshops and navigator support.

*“It’s hard to be an adult learner because you are working on navigating all aspects of life while trying to better yourself through schools. That balancing act is very difficult. The ELEVATE program and their staff have been incredibly kind and supportive through this process.” – ELEVATE learner*

### Kitsap Strong | \$686,855

#### Kitsap and Mason Counties

Partners: Bainbridge Island School District, Bremerton School District, Catalyst Public Schools, Central Kitsap School District, Kitsap Strong, North Kitsap School District, North Mason School District, Olympic College, Olympic Educational Service District 114, South Kitsap School District, Dr. Chan Hellman, Dr. Angela Pharris, Maya McKenzie, and Jeff Allen

In Kitsap County, Kitsap Strong uses a trauma-informed, hope-centered systems-change framework (focused on goal setting and actions that strengthen wellbeing and willpower) throughout its innovative enrollment and retention strategies. They offer two key school transition programs that directly serve local students. *Launch 2 College* helps students transition from high school to Olympic College, and *Future Focused Summer Academy* helps students transition from elementary to middle school. In addition, they train and support adults throughout their community who are shifting the climate in which students are building their postsecondary plans. These “Hope Navigators” include counselors, teachers, coaches, and nonprofit program leaders. In the first two-year grant period, the partnerships built the skills of this group. In the second, they will continue to support teams of navigators to apply hope-centered strategies and leadership at their schools and organizations.

## Regional Partnerships Recommendations to Council

This investment will help students in six regional school districts, as well as those attending a tribal compact school, a public charter school, and Olympic College. This work includes 10 targeted partners, but Kitsap Strong's partnership includes more than 110 organizations. Their goal is to transform systems to improve their community's well-being and educational attainment to alleviate generational poverty.

*"It is just so powerful to see the impact of this work. I know there's data we collect, but I can tangibly see the shift in language in our system, in our community, and how these partnerships are now supporting our families" - Iva Scott, Assistant Superintendent, Bremerton School District*

### Olympic Peninsula Resource Co-Op | \$879,283

#### Clallam and Jefferson Counties

Partners: Department of Social & Health Services, Olympic Peninsula YMCA, Peninsula College, Serenity House of Clallam County, United Way of Clallam County, West Sound STEM Network, Olympic Community Action Partnership (OlyCAP)

This partnership brings together resource co-ops in several locations across Forks, Port Angeles, and Port Townsend. It places services in trusted community settings that are easy to access. These one-stop shops provide resources for housing, childcare, and transportation. They also offer financial aid assistance, college enrollment, and advising resources. By combining services that are usually spread across systems, they limit barriers and reduce time and travel for adult learners. This directly addresses known barriers that prevent adults from starting or returning to degree or credential programs. The model is designed to boost postsecondary enrollment and help more people earn credentials in their community.

In the next grant period, Peninsula College will deepen and refine its support for learners who enrolled through the resource co-ops in the first two years. The focus will be on persistence, completion, and workforce alignment. The partnership will better respond to the unique strengths, assets, and needs of the three sub-regions, ensuring services remain locally relevant and accessible. The partnership will continue to meet learners where they live through a place-based approach, grounded in liberatory design, prioritizing shared decision-making and learner voice. Along with long-term partners such as Serenity House, and new partners such as Olympic Community Action Partnership, they will grow the network's geographic reach and service capacity. They aim to build on the existing community trust while strengthening resources and support systems available to learners.

*"I met an individual at a Quilcene Food Bank pop-up who was initially very intimidated about returning to school, particularly math. She recently shared with me that she is now teaching the math she's learning at Peninsula College to others in her community. In a small, tight-knit community, that ripple effect can inspire others to see postsecondary education as possible." - Caitlin Sackett, Academic Advisor, Peninsula College*

### The Washington State University Native American Health Sciences partnership

\$608,432 | Ferry, Okanogan, Pend Oreille, Spokane, Stevens, and Yakima Counties<sup>1</sup>

Partners: Coeur d'Alene Tribe, Confederated Tribes and Bands of the Yakama Nation, The Confederated Tribes of the Colville Reservation, Kalispel Tribe of Indians, The Nez Perce Tribe, Providence, Spokane Colleges, The Spokane Tribe of Indians, Washington State University Native American Health Sciences

The Washington State University (WSU) Native American Health Sciences (NAHS) partnership will use strategic action plans (SAP) created in years one and two with each tribal nation partner. Each SAP was co-created with each tribe through culturally relevant facilitation practices in a series of in-person Plateau meetings. They reflect each community's unique place-based strengths and strategies. In addition, WSU NAHS will engage a new tribal partner (the Nez Perce Tribe) to develop a Pathway Program Plan. Initial plans include the following:

Kalispel Tribe of Indians	Career exploration through canoe culture, training youth as first aid responders, HIPAA training, and hosting a healthcare career fair. Implement a 1st–4th-grade cohort in medical, dental, and physical therapy at the Camas Center.
Spokane Tribe of Indians	Partner with local schools on the Spokane Indian Reservation to develop a K-2 healthcare pathway through play-based learning and the Spokane Salish language.
Confederated Tribes and Bands of the Yakama Nation	Develop a health science dictionary in the Ichishkiin Sínwit language that will include words related to health, medicine, ceremonies, traditional foods, healing, wellness, and practices. Implement programs to promote western and traditional health sciences with K-12 grade students.
The Coeur d'Alene Tribe	Create a cohort-based pathway for 6th–8th-grade students in health care career exploration, in partnership with Providence, WSU NAHS, and Marimn Health, through hands-on learning.
The Confederated Tribes of the Colville Reservation	Career exploration through the Junior Rodeo, training youth as physical therapists, nurses, EMTs, and physicians to inspire students through an engaging entry point to health careers. In addition, they will create teen mentorship programs in the health sciences, including a cultural medicine program.
The Nez Perce Tribe	A new partner in the reapplication period will create a SAP for their own culturally grounded health science pathway.

In addition to each pathway plan, the partnership will implement the Resource Flow strategy in close connection with WSAC. The Resource Flow strategy will fill the gap in awareness of postsecondary opportunities to tribal partners. This ensures that tribal communities are aware of policies and programs to make their pathways more equitable and accessible. These opportunities include the American Indian Endowed Scholarship, Washington Health Corps, and Washington College Grant.

<sup>1</sup> Washington State University Native American Health Sciences serves the tribal lands across our state associated with each partner that is within the listed county lines.

## Regional Partnerships Recommendations to Council

*"As Yakama people, we often see projects brought to us after the decisions have already been made, and then we're asked why they aren't working for our community. The truth is, when our voices are not included from the start, the work cannot truly reflect our needs, our culture, or our way of life. That's why I want to express my deep gratitude to WSU for approaching this pilot project differently, in essence, living out the principle of 'Nothing about us, without us.' From the very beginning, they have invited us into the planning, listened to our voices, and worked alongside our people to shape something meaningful for our community. This kind of partnership honors our sovereignty, respects our knowledge, and builds a foundation for true collaboration." – Yakama Nation Tribal Member Rose George*