



LAUNCH NW

2025 IMPACT REPORT

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A MESSAGE FROM

Our Executive Director

If money was not a barrier, what would we do to transform our region? This was the simple, but audacious, question posed to Innovia staff, donors, volunteers, and partners in 2020. With the pandemic looming, formulating an answer would take time, but the data were clear — our region was facing an education and workforce crisis.

By 2022, LaunchNW was born, founded in the bold vision of a community that comes together to ensure every child has the opportunity — and support — to pursue their career and education of choice. Today, these early efforts have blossomed into six

robust initiatives supporting the needs of our young people from every angle — through scholarships, our youth council, mentorship, community engagement, volunteerism, and FAFSA support. In fall 2025, we are thrilled to roll out a seventh initiative, the College Navigator Program, which guides students through the transition out of high school and into their next steps.

As we expand our work beyond Spokane County into rural Eastern Washington and North Idaho, we are immensely grateful for the generous partnerships that make our impact possible. Countless donors, volunteers, leaders, and partner organizations have poured their energy and resources into LaunchNW, ensuring thousands of children travel their best path to success. When we make more possible for our youth, we make more possible for our whole community. I hope you will join us.

Gratefully,

BEN SMALL

Executive Director of LaunchNW

Our Scholarship Fundraising Committee

Dear Friends,

Thank you for your generous support of Innovia Foundation's LaunchNW initiative. Because of your generosity, this bold vision is now a reality — one that is already changing lives across our region.

We hope you share our excitement about the early outcomes. LaunchNW is more than a scholarship program — it is a comprehensive “cradle to career” effort designed to foster healthy, successful lives and economic prosperity. In just two years, more students are engaging in after-school activities, school attendance is on the rise, and we continue to expand the number of students and schools in our Mpower Mentoring Program.

Your support is helping to attract additional investment. The Washington Student Achievement Council recently renewed a grant for student mentoring, and Ballmer Group awarded a \$2.5M grant to place post-high school navigators in local universities and community colleges. These navigators will greatly assist our efforts to increase degree, credential, and apprenticeship persistence and completion.

There is tremendous momentum, and even greater opportunities ahead. Thousands of young people are counting on us to help them gain the education and skills to thrive. We invite you to stay engaged, share this good news, and continue your investment in LaunchNW. Together, we can change lives and transform our region for generations to come.

Warm regards,

JACK HEATH

MARTY DICKINSON



JACK HEATH,
*Co-Chair of the
LaunchNW Fundraising
Committee and CEO of
Washington Trust Bank*



MARTY DICKINSON,
*Co-Chair of the LaunchNW
Fundraising Committee
and Chief Community and
Marketing Officer of STCU*

Mpower Mentoring

There's nothing quite like mentorship. It improves academic, social, and economic conditions for mentees, and can even strengthen workforce pipelines.

The Mpower Mentoring Program aims to do just that, connecting students at 13 Spokane County high schools with mentors who support their educational journeys. Eastern Washington University (EWU) Aspire Mentoring is an important connector in this network, pairing EWU students with near-peer high schoolers.

According to EWU student and Aspire Mentor Lead Cecelia DeLay, near-peer mentorship hits a sweet spot for building effective relationships. For college-age mentors, high school is a fresh and relatable experience, but also one they have navigated successfully.

Through trainings on topics like resume-building, interviewing, and insurance, Aspire helps its mentors build on their own experiences. In the end, it's not just mentees who learn something.

"We have seen incredible retention and graduation rates with our mentors," shares Jasmin Davis, Aspire Manager for the Aspire Near Peer Mentoring Program.

Through programs like Aspire, the benefits of mentorship are rippling across participating schools in our region. To support the ongoing impact of Mpower and programs like Aspire, visit LaunchNW.org/Mpower.



"When we were learning about resources to help the mentees, I felt like I was learning too because I didn't know about all these resources."

- Ana O., Aspire Mentor

SINCE 2023

5,200

High school students engaged in mentorship

Mentorship participants report increased experiences of

BELONGING

2024-2025 SCHOOL YEAR

3,500

High school students engaged in mentorship at 13 schools

134

Peer mentors, more than doubling last year's count

Mpower students are on pace to outperform Washington State's average rate of FAFSA completion

EWU ASPIRE MENTORING

70%

Of Mpower and Aspire 2024-2025 participants plan to attend college

MPOWER

mentoring program



FAFSA Opens Doors

A traditional 2- or 4-year college degree was never in consideration for Carter Gibson, so neither was applying for the FAFSA*. It wasn't until LaunchNW inspired a FAFSA completion campaign at Riverside High School that Carter realized how the FAFSA could support his dream of attending trade school to become a professional welder.

Confusion among students and their families is common when it comes to who is eligible for financial aid. FAFSA Opens Doors partners with schools to smooth the path toward unlocking aid. Each year, applicants are awarded thousands of dollars in grants and scholarships from federal and state programs, universities and trade schools, and private scholarship organizations.

During the 2024-2025 school year, FAFSA Opens Doors launched a FAFSA completion challenge at five high schools, including Riverside. Across these participating schools, FAFSA completion rates climbed to exceed both state and county averages. As FAFSA Opens Doors prepares for a new application season, **learn how you can support the effort at LaunchNW.org/FAFSASupport**.

*FAFSA (Free Application for Federal Student Aid)



"FAFSA has opened up so many doors of opportunity for our students after high school. It helps them achieve dreams they never thought were even possible."

- Ken Russell, Superintendent of Riverside School District

FAFSA COMPLETION CHALLENGE SCHOOLS

57%
Average completion rate in 2025, exceeding both the state and county averages

64%
Riverside & West Valley High Schools

62%
Rogers High School

CLASS OF 2025

50%
FAFSA completion rate in Washington State

49%
FAFSA completion rate in Spokane County



ALL IT TAKES IS ONE



All It Takes Is One

Volunteer opportunities not only connect youth to the belonging they need, they also bring volunteers a sense of purpose. All It Takes Is One (AITIO) is founded on the belief that each of us has a role to play in creating a more connected community for our youth.

AITIO works toward this vision through community-building efforts, including programs that distribute kind notes at local gathering places or help neighborhoods host a block party.

To mobilize those interested in taking the next step of volunteerism, AITIO has partnered with United Way to revitalize online volunteer platforms in both Spokane and North Idaho. These sites match community members with the organizations that best fit their interests and skills. **Volunteer and get connected to the community movement at LaunchNW.org/volunteer.**

"At Vanessa Behan, I volunteer with kids, and we spend time with kids who don't have love and support. Just to be there and model what a healthy, loving relationship could look like — especially for these kids — it is invaluable."

- Tori, Community Volunteer at Vanessa Behan

VOLUNTEER SPOKANE SINCE 2024

5,650+
Volunteer responses

40%
Increase in new volunteer registrations from April 2024 to April 2025

VOLUNTEER NORTH IDAHO SINCE 2025

43
Agencies seeking volunteers

27
Volunteer responses to needs since launch in April



Youth Council

While many youth councils are open discussion groups, LaunchNW's Youth Council allows students to invest directly in the needs they see in their community. Hailing from neighborhoods across Spokane County, students in the council are paid and acceptance to the group is by application only. With a \$50,000 budget each year, students meet regularly to advocate for youth needs in the Spokane County community and vote on the solutions they will fund.

"The Youth Council isn't just about creating solutions. It's also about thinking critically and interacting with people who have very different experiences than you," says Iona Cairncross, Community and Youth Engagement Program Manager at LaunchNW. "It's about knowing who you are and then also learning who others are."

Since launching in the fall of 2024, the council has voted to fund projects impacting youth homelessness, financial literacy, mentorship, and fire safety. **Learn more about this group of young changemakers at LaunchNW.org/youthcouncil.**

"Serving as the LaunchNW Youth Council Chair has grown me in ways I wouldn't have known possible. It's inspired me to take risks, aim for new heights, and expanded my love for my community. Most importantly, I've learnt that the future of our communities is in our hands and we are more than capable of positively impacting the world around us."

- Nikita Habimana, Youth Council Chair

\$30,150
Allocated to local needs

16
Youth Council Members

7
Spokane County high schools represented

Beyond Spokane County

For students, place has impact. It can create opportunities, while also posing barriers for success. LaunchNW is expanding beyond Spokane County to break down these obstacles for every student in our region.

Students from Dayton, Northport, and Pomeroy High Schools are now eligible for the LaunchNW scholarship. In rural communities across Eastern Washington, strategies include support for FAFSA completion, \$880,000 in grants to build post-high school pathways, a College Navigator Program to help students transition to college and trades, and an awareness campaign centered on the need for post-high school education.

In Kootenai County, a \$500,000 matching gift challenge invites the community to help secure local access to LaunchNW's scholarship and programming. Once met, a planning council will establish the work of LaunchNW in the communities of Kootenai County and North Idaho.

Rooted deeply in the commitment of Innovia Foundation to serve communities across Eastern Washington and North Idaho, LaunchNW strives to meet the post-high school access needs of all in our region. **Learn more at LaunchNW.org/rural.**



\$880K
Awarded in grants for rural communities to build post-high school pathways

120
Students attended LaunchNW's Junior Summit at Whitworth University in spring 2025

20
Rural high school students awarded a Promise Scholarship since 2023



EngageIRL

Middle schoolers discover much more than great views and fresh air on hikes with River City Youth's Outdoors Club — they build lasting connections with peers, mentors, and nature.

"Since COVID, we've observed a lag in development in key social skills," says Wilson Faust, an Engagement Navigator at Yasuhara Middle School. Unmitigated exposure to devices and the intense isolation of the pandemic has affected young minds in ways that educators are only now uncovering.

Programs like the Outdoors Club prompt students to navigate social skills, while learning collaboration and communication. One hike last winter on Mt. Spokane was long and cold, but students praised the challenge, pointing to the support of teamwork and good snowshoes.

River City Youth is one of dozens of youth-serving organizations offering programs through Engage In Real Life, an initiative of LaunchNW and Spokane Public Schools (SPS) that gets kids off their devices and into real-world activities that enrich their lives. **Explore the impact of EngageIRL and its robust real-life activity calendar at EngageIRL.com.**

“

I imagine this program being a kind of cumulative experience that kids take with them throughout and beyond all their school years.”

- Wilson Faust, Engagement Navigator at Yasuhara Middle School



INCREASE IN ATTENDANCE FOR KIDS ENGAGED IN EXTRACURRICULARS

9%
at Holmes
Elementary

6%
at Rogers
High School

4%
across participating
middle schools

18,734

Students involved in a school club, a sport, the arts, or a community group during the 24-25 school year

63%
Of the SPS
student body
engaged in a
real-life activity

60
Youth-serving
organizations
offering programs
through EngageIRL

Early Learning

Early learning lays the groundwork for a child's future and their success. LaunchNW invests in this pivotal window of opportunity through Early Childhood Engagement Specialists who focus on early relational health. Specialists from Refugee and Immigrant Connections Spokane, GLOW Children Early Learning Center, The Shades of Motherhood Network, and Raze Early Learning & Development Center immerse themselves in the Spokane early childhood community, supporting children and families with events, support services, resource referrals, trainings, and community partnerships. **Learn more about the impact of our early learning partners at LaunchNW.org/EngageIRL.**



"We don't just show up—we build bridges, listen deeply, and respond with care."

-Stephaine Courtney, Executive Director of Shades of Motherhood

REFUGEE & IMMIGRANT CONNECTIONS SPOKANE

18

Families served through support such as weekly home visits, food delivery, and educational workshops

SHADES OF MOTHERHOOD NETWORK

30

Mothers provided doula and birth support, including peer mentorship

GLOW CHILDREN EARLY LEARNING CENTER

160+

Families served through programs such as neighborhood events, literacy support, and a diaper and infant needs bank

**All data reported
May-July 2025*



"I truly want to say thank you for impacting me way more than I could have ever imagined."

- Alyna Rose,

LaunchNW Promise Scholar and Mpower Peer Mentor

\$3.8M

Committed in renewable funding for 4 years of post-high school education

\$500K

Awarded in 2025 to second cohort students

LaunchNW Promise Scholarship

Alyna Rose is a LaunchNW Promise Scholar who defies expectations. She loves scrapbooking, rock music, and horror movies. A recent graduate of North Central High School, she also loves teaching, but stepping toward that future required a college education. When Alyna was accepted into Whitworth University, LaunchNW made enrollment possible.

"Whitworth gave me a big scholarship, but LaunchNW has given me money that tipped it down to a realistic number – and that's been so appreciated."

Today, Alyna is on track to become the teacher she's always wanted to be, studying elementary education with an endorsement in reading and early childhood.

"[Teachers] really are the core building blocks of people's lives. To a lot of people, that sounds terrifying. For me, weirdly enough, it does not. I'm here today because of the teachers I've had."

Alyna is one of hundreds of students who have received support from LaunchNW's Promise Scholarship since its rollout in 2023. The endowed scholarship fills funding gaps for students pursuing 2- and 4-year degrees, apprenticeships, and certifications across Eastern Washington. **Learn more about supporting students like Alyna through the Promise Scholarship at LaunchNW.org/scholarships.**

312

Total students awarded a scholarship since 2023

200

First-year students in 2025-2026

112

First-year students in 2024-2025

86%

Projected persistence rate of 2024-2025 first-year scholars*

**Persistence rate projection as of early September 2025. For comparison, Spokane County's one-year persistence rate was 73%, according to the most recent Education Research & Data Center (ERDC) report.*



THANK YOU TO

Our Community Partners

It takes a village to support students along their journey — from birth to career attainment. LaunchNW partners with over 90 organizations embedded in the communities where our children learn and grow.

A trusted presence in schools across the region, Communities in Schools (CIS) of Northeast Washington has partnered with LaunchNW for three years, connecting high school students to peer, college, and career professional mentors through the Mpower Mentoring Program.

"The Mpower Mentoring Program designed by LaunchNW supports our mission to surround students with a community of support, empowering them to stay in school and achieve in life," shares Deb Raub, Executive Director of CIS of Northeast Washington.

Family Promise of Spokane is another piece in the puzzle of support, helping students experiencing homelessness get the aid they need. Family Promise partners with MPower to ensure the most vulnerable students and their families find the stability of safe housing and reliable work so they can achieve academic success.

"By embedding case managers in high schools, we meet families where they are," says Joe Ader, Chief Executive Officer of Family Promise of Spokane. "Together, Family Promise of Spokane and LaunchNW are proving that reducing the burden of homelessness strengthens children's ability to achieve success in the classroom now and into the future."

Learn more about the dozens of organizations like CIS of Northeast Washington and Family Promise that make our collaborative work possible at LaunchNW.org/our-partners.



All data current
as of August 2025.

Learn more at
LaunchNW.org.

LaunchNW is an initiative of

INNOVIA
FOUNDATION

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COMMUNITIES IN SCHOOLS OF NORTHEAST WASHINGTON

3
Years of
partnership
with LaunchNW

250+
Students participating
in Mpower programs
across CIS partner
schools since 2023

FAMILY PROMISE OF SPOKANE

*In partnership with LaunchNW, school-based
housing case managers across Spokane
County high schools have housed*

374
People

194
Children

110
families across
six Spokane high
school zones

LAUNCHNW FOUNDING PARTNERS



LAUNCHNW FUNDERS

