



LAUNCH NW

2026 IMPACT REPORT



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*WELCOME!

In 2022, LaunchNW was just a bold idea: what if our entire community came together to help children find belonging and travel their best journey from birth to career attainment? Today, LaunchNW is that vision coming to life. Through a Promise Scholarship and nine robust initiatives, we address the challenges students face at every step of their educational journey. Behind each program is a caring and invested network of educators, donors, families, community partners, business leaders, and supporters. As our students thrive, our whole economy and our communities grow stronger.

This year marked key milestones for LaunchNW's collective mission. In January, we celebrated the achievement of independent nonprofit status, a step that strengthens our capacity to grow alongside Innovia Foundation in shared service to our community. And in May, our first cohort of LaunchNW Scholars graduated, their success fueled by LaunchNW's growing system of wrap-around supports. As our programs and our students take flight, the positive ripple effects continue to grow. Thank you for joining us in shaping a brighter future for our youth and our whole region. This is just the beginning.

Promise Scholarship

"The path forward won't always be easy, but you are not walking it alone." Last May, LaunchNW Executive Director Ben Small shared this message at our inaugural Student Celebration Dinner, where the first graduating class of Promise Scholars crossed the stage surrounded by mentors, teachers, family members, and supporters. More than a scholarship, LaunchNW's Promise Scholarship provides up to 4 years of renewable support for students pursuing degrees, apprenticeships, and certifications, along with mentorship and college navigation.

Ahead of the event, graduates reflected on the advice they needed on their first day of college: "Learn from failure," "be yourself," "get organized," and "have confidence." Many LaunchNW Scholars balance multiple jobs, family responsibilities, and the challenges of being a first-generation college student. While the Promise Scholarship doesn't remove these barriers, it gives students support to persevere. From dental assisting and elementary education to emergency medical services and computer science, our 2026 graduates are paying it forward, building careers that will strengthen our region. **More about the Promise Scholarship at LaunchNW.org/scholarships.**

"Do not stress and go be yourself, everything will work out the way it is supposed to."

Dominick Victor, Promise Scholar and 2026 Spokane Community College graduate



**As of
July 2026*

\$5.6 MILLION

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

\$387,500*

Awarded to third cohort students

78%

Two-year persistence rate of Promise Scholars from the 2024 high school graduating class

478

Total students awarded a scholarship

155*

2026-27 first-year students

209

2025-26 first-year students

114

2024-25 first-year students



Pictured: Students, mentors, and LaunchNW staff gathered at Mpower's peer mentor training in fall 2025.

"Most students begin the program unsure of their strengths and certainly unknowing of the resources available to them. Through positive mentor relationships, regular conversations, goal setting, and honest feedback, they become more confident in their abilities and discover that LaunchNW truly has resources and people there to help."

Reid Dickinson,
Mpower mentor



Mpower Mentoring

There is no one-size-fits-all pathway to post-high school success. Every young person has their own story and journey to travel. LaunchNW's Mpower Mentoring Program recognizes just that, connecting thousands of students in our region with a peer, college student, or trusted adult who can provide individualized support.

Mpower mentors are trained to help students locate scholarships, research careers, apply for post-high school education, and connect with organizations that meet basic needs like food security, transportation, and adequate housing. These practical supports give students the freedom to think bigger about their future beyond high school.

At a focus group this spring, one Lakeside High School mentee shared, "My mentor knew what she wanted to do after high school, and that helped me imagine what I could do." Mentorship opens the door not only to vital resources, but also to connections with people whose real stories prove success is attainable. **Meet some of our mentors and mentees, and learn more at LaunchNW.org/Mpower.**

8,200

Students engaged with mentoring through Mpower since 2023

87%

FAFSA completion rate for Mpower participating seniors in 2025, exceeding state and county averages

**2025-26
SCHOOL YEAR:**

3,018

Mpower participants

131

Peer Mentors





Youth Council

Last fall, LaunchNW's inaugural Youth Council graduation was a showcase of the impact youth leadership can make — on both students and the causes they champion. Backed by a \$50,000 budget through LaunchNW, the 2025 council empowered Spokane County high schoolers to spend a year identifying and implementing their own solutions to issues affecting the community. Project highlights included providing clothing for children living in homelessness, distributing 120 basic needs kits to students, launching a life skills curriculum for elementary children, producing fire safety booklets for the Latino community, and translating financial literacy resources for refugees and immigrants. This year, the 2026 council is already spearheading projects around leadership development, after-school activities, and community belonging. A project led by 2026 officers is forming a youth council of middle school students with their own budget to fund mini projects. **Hear from the 2026 officers and learn more at LaunchNW.org/youth-council.**

"I learned that communication and outreach is VITAL to get anything done, because you need to interact with people in order to move your ideas forward."

2025 LaunchNW Youth Council Member

18

Youth Council members from 8 area high schools in 2026

71%

Of 2025 council members reported impacting a cause they care about

\$50K

Annual budget to fund solutions for youth

All It Takes Is One

Student success is shaped by far more than what happens at school. Supportive and connected neighbors are the foundation of a community where young people thrive. All It Takes Is One (AITIO) is LaunchNW's grassroots initiative to connect volunteers to their best fit and support local efforts to bring the community together.

Through collaborative efforts this year, Volunteer Spokane is now integrated with several major volunteer platforms, making it easier to share opportunities across partner sites, including Serve Washington, Spokane Parks & Recreation, Whitworth Serves, Spokane County Regional Waste Ambassadors, and Gonzaga University. At AITIO's first-ever Experiential Volunteer Fair this spring, prospective volunteers met recruiting nonprofits, sampled volunteer activities, and discovered their best fit. A mini grant program for community-building events, downtown block party, and summer yard sign campaign gave neighbors more chances to gather and build meaningful connections.

More at LaunchNW.org/allittakesisone.

VOLUNTEER SPOKANE*

1,916
New users

7,727
Responses to volunteer opportunities

14,589
Hours served

\$627K
Value

VOLUNTEER NORTH IDAHO*

218
New users

45
New agencies

**ALL IT
TAKES IS
ONE**

*July 2025-June 2026

"Our regular mini neighborhood gatherings have been so good. We've been building deep bonds and inviting in more neighbors we don't know as well yet."

Maia, 2026 mini grant recipient for gatherings in Spokane's Bemiss neighborhood



Our Kids: Our Business

In February, LaunchNW and Our Kids: Our Business (OKOB) merged to expand supports for children and families across Spokane County. With a long-standing presence in the community, OKOB is a coalition of child advocates dedicated to ensuring every child feels safe, supported, and secure. Joining forces with OKOB has greatly expanded LaunchNW's ability to support early relational health — a critical part of our mission to support every young person's journey to success. This spring, a business breakfast and collective impact event brought more than 130 educators, business leaders, and early childhood advocates together for learning and connection as Johns Hopkins University researcher Dr. Christina Bethell shared the latest science on Positive Childhood Experiences and flourishing. **More at LaunchNW.org/ourkidsourbusiness.**



130+

Attendees at
LaunchNW OKOB
learning events in
spring 2026

100%

Of event attendees reported
understanding the importance of
improving conditions for families
with young children for
economic development

23

Spokane agencies
and individuals
engaged as a
member of the
OKOB coalition

Beyond Spokane

“What if future me is in construction?” Last year, LaunchNW rolled out a media campaign from Northport to Dayton, asking rural students to imagine their future selves in the workforce — and what it might take to get there. In the next decade, 75% of jobs will require education beyond high school, and yet, most students in rural communities across Eastern Washington and North Idaho do not go on after their high school graduation. LaunchNW is committed to opening more doors of possibility for these students.

Efforts this year include launching College Navigator positions at regional colleges and universities to better serve students in LaunchNW's rural footprint. Last fall, a two-day conference co-hosted with NEWSD 101 brought counselors from rural districts together to explore strategies for improving post-high school outcomes. And this summer, a healthcare career camp co-hosted with Providence in Colville, WA introduced students to pathways in the medical field.

On the horizon is a transformative new initiative, YouthBuild Stevens County, made possible by a \$1.5 million grant from the U.S. Department of Labor. This 40-month program will help youth in Northeast Washington earn high school credentials, gain hands-on construction skills backed by NCCER training and credentialing, develop leadership abilities, and transition into employment, registered apprenticeships, or postsecondary education. **More at LaunchNW.org/beyond-spokane-county.**

\$1.5 MILLION

Awarded from the U.S. Department of Labor
for investment in YouthBuild Stevens County

41

Rural students from Dayton, Pomeroy, and
Northport awarded a Promise Scholarship



College Navigators



Even with a scholarship, the transition to education beyond high school is not always easy. Enrolling in college, an apprenticeship, or any post-high school program comes with new responsibilities and complex systems to navigate. If support is not in place, these stressors can lead to burnout and dropout, instead of growth. In August 2025, LaunchNW's College Navigator program debuted with a team of five Navigators to help students overcome barriers and travel a successful postsecondary journey.

Embedded within regional campuses and apprenticeship and certificate programs — including Eastern Washington University, Gonzaga University, Spokane Community College, Spokane Falls Community College, Washington State University, and Whitworth University — Navigators work closely with students and campus faculty and staff. For Promise Scholars and the broader student body, Navigators are a listening ear, a bridge to resources, and a voice of encouragement, helping students align their education with their long-term goals through personal check-ins, coaching sessions, and referrals to on-campus services. Alongside hundreds of one-on-one touchpoints, Navigators also host dozens of fun, belonging-building events like game nights, painting parties, volunteer days, holiday celebrations, de-stress crafting nights, homework hangouts, picnics, and more.

As the program celebrates its inaugural year, its cumulative impact is already clear. The persistence rate for students supported by a Navigator stands at 93.7%, outpacing the average at every participating school. **More about the program and the Navigators who make it possible at LaunchNW.org/college-navigator.**

“Having someone who is unconditionally supportive and makes you think from a different perspective is something I've really enjoyed with my meetings with Mayra, and I think has been something that has really helped me adapt to Whitworth and college life as a whole.”

Lucas Mai, Whitworth student and Promise Scholar

93.7%

Persistence rate for students supported by a College Navigator, compared to 77.6% average across participating schools

241

Promise Scholars supported by college navigation across 6 universities and colleges

STUDENT SUPPORT

323

Check-ins

932

Coaching sessions

90

Sense of belonging events

100%

Of students surveyed agreed their Navigator helped them feel supported in their college journey

77

Referrals to on-campus resources

213

FAFSA/WASFA renewals



"[Dance] really helped me put myself out there. I'm talking more in classes. I'm branching out to new people at school. It's also helped me reach out to colleges, which is something I didn't think I'd be brave enough to do."

Chioma, Shadle Park High School Dance Team member and Winterfest performer



65%
Of SPS students participated in at least one activity in the 25-26 school year

61.7%
Of elementary students involved in 2+ activities show math proficiency, compared with 43.6% of non-involved peers

2,000+
Students and parents attended Winterfest in downtown Spokane

EngageIRL

Extracurricular activities are vital to student well-being — supporting not only physical health, but also mental health, safety, and academic success. Engage In Real Life (EngageIRL), a partnership between LaunchNW and Spokane Public Schools (SPS), is breaking ground to ensure students can access these opportunities. Five Engagement Navigators cover the entire district, connecting students with in-person experiences like clubs, sports, arts, and other community activities that build real-life relationships. As a result, SPS students are participating in extracurriculars at record numbers, showing increased math and reading proficiencies and lower absenteeism. In January, EngageIRL hosted the first-ever Winterfest in downtown Spokane with SPS (pictured above), spotlighting the benefit of real-life fun and drawing more than 2,000 attendees for ice skating, carousel rides, a fashion show, and a Q&A with the cast of a Broadway production.

More at LaunchNW.org/EngageIRL.

FAFSA Opens Doors

The FAFSA* can unlock thousands of dollars in financial aid, yet only 44% of Spokane County seniors completed the form in 2025. While the application itself may be straightforward, many students and families face barriers to completion. FAFSA Opens Doors brings schools, businesses, families, and community organizations together to share responsibility for financial aid access. Key efforts include a regional FAFSA Completion Committee, myth-busting social media campaign, multilingual resources, Educational Access Ambassador training, and one-on-one support through events, mentorship, and collaboration with cultural organizations and financial institutions.

Schools like Riverside High School show what is possible when FAFSA completion is a priority. After joining LaunchNW's FAFSA Completion Challenge in 2025, Riverside's completion rates more than doubled.

Hear from Riverside graduate Ella Tobaben and learn more at LaunchNW.org/fafsaopensdoors.

**FAFSA (Free Application for Federal Student Aid)*



32
Direct-support events with 21 schools and organizations during 25-26 school year

FAFSA resources translated into
10
LANGUAGES

Riverside High School FAFSA Completion
2024: **39%**
2025: **60%**
2026: **92%**

THANK YOU TO

Our Community Partners

Our region is served by hundreds of high-impact organizations that benefit children, students, families, and cultural communities. LaunchNW is committed to weaving a network of support among these partners toward a shared goal: helping every child travel their best journey to career attainment.

LaunchNW relies on partnerships with over 50 organizations to bring its scholarships and programming to life. Partners like NEWESD 101 share a similar footprint with LaunchNW and bring vital connections to school districts, helping us understand the unique needs and opportunities each of them face in adopting LaunchNW programming. Higher education partners like Whitworth University help us build multifaceted systems of support, from mentorship to college navigation, so we can meet every student where they are. Community organizations like Big Brothers Big Sisters offer deep expertise in managing mentorship programs, allowing initiatives like Mpower to thrive.

Find a full list of our partners at LaunchNW.org/program-partners.



“My challenge to all of us is simple: keep amplifying what students are doing well. Help others see what we already know: our young people are stepping up with heart and skill, and our future is brighter because of them.”

Robert Roettger, NEWESD 101 Superintendent and LaunchNW Board Member

50+

Partnerships with regional schools, nonprofits, and community organizations

LaunchNW is a 509(a)(3) nonprofit supporting organization of

INNOVIA 
FOUNDATION

(509) 624-2606 | www.LaunchNW.org

All data current as of July 2026.

Learn more at LaunchNW.org.



LAUNCHNW FOUNDING PARTNERS



LAUNCHNW FUNDERS

