



2022-23 Impact Report





The 2022-23 year was full of energy and momentum! Our NWEdA community continues to amaze and inspire me. We wrapped up the final year of our strategic plan, which marked an opportunity to look back and take stock of all we have moved forward together over the past four years:



- we've invested in our stellar staff team with new structures and supports;
- we acknowledged the significance that social capital and connectivity has on economic opportunity by cultivating a wider group of community volunteers who are dedicated to partnering with our students;
- we created a whole new Engagement Team focused on student leadership, engagement, and community connection in order to amplify their voices in all that we do;
- our Pierce and Snohomish County siblings linked arms with us to envision new ways of supporting young people by leveraging what can be offered across community; and
- Kyana Wheeler has helped guide us on a deep anti-racist journey to fundamentally shift how we approach our work and the questions we ask ourselves.

Throughout this journey we have realized that the dominant ideas of 'growth' don't necessarily feel like home to NWEdA. Instead of continuously adding staff and students, we've invested in supporting other organizations who have expertise in specific regions and communities. We acknowledge the power of the collective and are partnering with other providers for mutual sharing and learning to support more youth collaboratively by sharing what we've all learned.

2023-24 promises to be full of new horizons and adventures. NWEdA will complete a new planning and listening process to continually ask ourselves how to deepen our work for the benefit of community. The possibilities are endless, and I can't wait to see where we go next.

Laura DiZazzo
Executive Director



Education is a *human right.*

Vision:

A future in which all young people have the equitable access and support needed to achieve their education and career goals.

Mission:

Northwest Education Access provides comprehensive and individualized support to help low-income young people, ages 16-29, build their own path to higher education and beyond.



By the numbers

2023-24 Demographics

1st generation high school graduate

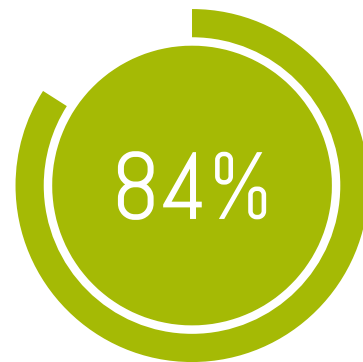
71%

1st generation college attendee

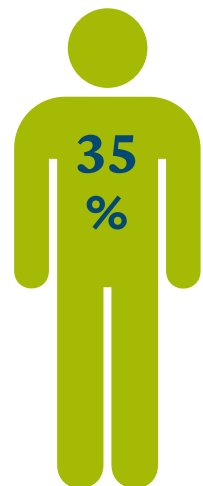
47%



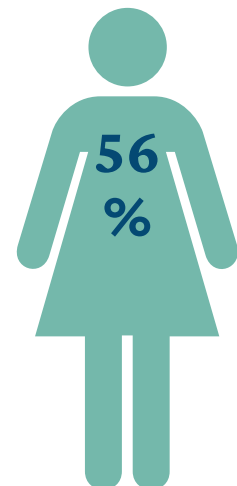
34% experienced homelessness



84%
People of color



35%
Male



56%
Female



9%
Transgender/gender non-conforming



903
Students served



119
Started college



43
Laptops distributed



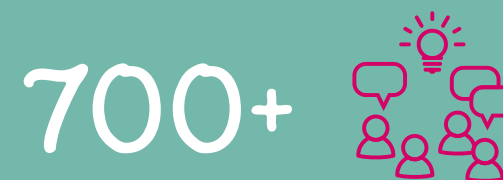
7,300
Bus tickets provided



5,680
One-on-one hours between students and Education Advocates



149
Students received scholarships



700+
Students attended financial aid workshops



62
Students earned their degree

Victoria is reaching for the stars



Last December, with the support of Northwest Education Access, Victoria graduated with her Bachelor's Degree in Health Information Management from Bellevue College.

Victoria shared, "Northwest Education Access has been a foundation in my career and helped me in each stage become successful."

Victoria is no stranger to NWEA—she first joined our program in 2009 when she was 19: "I was lost and trying to figure out what I was going to do as far as college. They [NWEA] helped me with my financial aid, and they helped me enroll in community college."

After needing to take a break for unforeseen circumstances, Victoria reconnected with us a few years later when she got an opportunity to go to school through a Worker Retraining Program at Renton Technical College.

At this point, Victoria connected with Jeff, who became her NWEA Education Advocate. With NWEA's support, Victoria received her Associates Degree and became a Certified Medical Assistant. Victoria shared, "NWEA paid for the American Association of Medical Assistants test for me and supported me throughout the entire program with scrubs, tuition assistance, and financial aid applications."

Since finishing this program, Victoria has been busy building her career. She worked at Virginia Mason from 2014-16 and then has been at Swedish Medical since May 2016—nearly 8 years! She noted, "I've just grown exponentially in my career there."

But Victoria's educational journey was not done yet! She shared, "In 2016 I seen an opportunity to go back to school to get my Bachelor's degree, and Jeff helped me again with the whole entire process—with the financial aid, with the pre-recs, and with my letter to actually get into the Health Information Management program at Bellevue College." During this time, Victoria was also invited to join the Phi Theta Kappa Honor Society.

When asked what drew her to healthcare, Victoria explained, "I've always been a people person, so I like to help people, and healthcare is universal and I like that, I like that I get to meet people from all walks of life, ethnicities, cultures, and backgrounds. Getting to know patients and their families is rewarding and humbling."

Victoria went on to say, "I come from poverty. My mom never graduated high school, so I broke every generational curse on my life because I'm the first one on my mom's side to graduate from college, so that's a big deal. I'm most proud of making it. I'm a young African American woman, I'm from a background where people barely got high school diplomas. My mom told 'smart kids sit in the front.' And she pushed me and for that I never gave up, and I just kept going"

In her spare time, Victoria enjoys reading books that are encouraging and motivating, going to the gym and doing Zumba, spending time with her family and at church, and giving back to the community.

Northwest Education Access is a great program that helps people of all walks of life. I can't even put into words how it transforms and changes people's lives for the better, because education is like compound interest—it just grows on itself, and once you educate a person, there's nothing that they can't do.

The year in review



Capacity Building Program

We recognize that there are countless community-based organizations doing great work, often specializing in serving specific populations. The goal of our capacity building program is to share best practices and tools so organizations that have already built strong relationships in their communities can help students successfully transition to postsecondary programs.

Every student deserves this support, and we can only make it widely available if we work together.

NWEdA hosted a release party early in 2023 to share our capacity building guide, "[The Power of Supportive Relationships: A Student-Centered Approach to Postsecondary Success](#)." The guide includes several of our best practices and learnings in supporting young people with with postsecondary navigation.



In addition to our guide, NWEdA has workshops, program design support, and a toolkit. In 2022-23, we delivered workshops to our partners at Rainier Athletes, Treehouse, Gear Up Achievers, Centro Rendu, and Congolese Integration Network. We would like to thank the Ballmer Group, The Boeing Company, Puget Sound College and Career Network (PSCCN), Pyramid Communications, and our photographer, Joshua Huston for supporting this project!

[Scan the QR Code or Click Here to view our Capacity Building Guide](#)



Volunteer Highlights

In 2022-23, our volunteers worked to enhance career development for NWEdA students through several unique workshops.

105
Active
Volunteers

In our Job-Prep Bootcamps, students engaged in a Q&A session with NWEdA volunteer Courtney, an HR Manager in the tech sector. She offered insights into leaving a strong impression through resumes and during interviews.

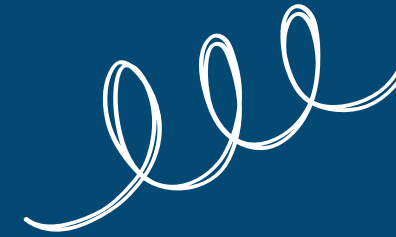
With imposter syndrome being a concern for students in previous workshops, we held a panel featuring staff, alumni, and volunteers to share their strategies for overcoming self-doubt in academic and professional settings. Students' takeaways included recognizing the prevalence of imposter syndrome and the importance of leveraging personal strengths to combat it.

We also introduced a new series called Career Previews, starting with a coding preview led by our staff tutor, Seth, and supported by our volunteer, Trystan, a software engineer. The second preview focused on Commercial Banking in Real Estate, presented by one of our alumni, Eliot and his colleague, Ashlee. These previews demystified different industries, providing information to guide students' career initial steps.

Our volunteers, staff, and alumni highlighted the transformative impact of mentorship on the trajectory of students who lack exposure to career professionals. The workshops emphasized the significance of a supportive community in bridging gaps in education and career navigation.

“
"Thank you so much for arranging this event! I got a lot of knowledge on imposter syndrome and how to manage it and not letting it consume me." - NWEdA Student
”

The year in review continued



Partnerships

Partnerships continue to be a cornerstone in our work with students. The ability to get students connected, provide them all of the resources they need to build and implement an education plan, and support them until graduation depends on a network of support.

Here are a few of our current partnerships we wanted to highlight:

King County Promise (KCP)

A regional initiative that aims to ensure that underserved and underrepresented high school students and community and technical college students receive comprehensive advising to support attainment of a postsecondary credential.

Since 2022-23, NWEdA has been engaged in two KCP partnerships:

- **Highline Promise** with Highline College, Highline Public Schools, and Becoming a Man.
- **Promise to Community Partnership** with Renton Technical College, Congolese Integration Network, and Centro Rendú (of St Vincent de Paul).

Snohomish County

NWEdA continues to build new partnerships in South Snohomish County. In addition to strong partnerships with Edmonds Community College and Latino Education Training Institute, we recently launched a new partnership to serve students at Connect Casino Road in South Everett.

Pierce County

NWEdA supports students at Willie Stewart Academy, Fresh Start and the Workforce Department at Tacoma Community College, and Goodwill. Our team has helped to create the Reengaged Learners Workgroup in partnership with the Foundation of Tacoma Students (FFTS) to bring together partners and programs that support young people. NWEdA is also part of FFTS' community initiatives to support financial aid completion across the county.

Recognition in the Community



Copyright Foundation for Tacoma Students / Lisa Monet Photography

NWEdA received two awards from community partners in 2022-23. We were recognized by the Foundation for Tacoma Students (FFTS) with the Community Impact Award for our work in Pierce County. It's been a privilege to work alongside FFTS in our joint efforts to increase supports to students transitioning into postsecondary pathways through efforts such as the Campaign Free College, Reengaged Learners Network, and the Regional Challenge Grant.

We also received the Transformational Leadership Award from Puget Sound Educational Service District (PSESD), with whom we've been partnering on the implementation of King County Promise. Their nomination shared:

"Northwest Education Access centers students at every step and aims to remove barriers for them to return to a postsecondary pathway that makes sense for their individual circumstances. They have partnered to build data infrastructure, KCP programming, KCP curriculum, and KCP practitioner learning circles—all focused on dismantling structural racism in education and uplifting marginalized voices."



The year in review continued



2023 Biennial Student Survey

We conducted our second biennial student survey to help us better understand the student experience in postsecondary education settings and with our program. This survey informs us of what we are doing well and highlights opportunities for program improvement. Over 150 students & alumni responded to our survey and were compensated with a \$10 Target gift card. The survey collected demographic information and asked questions pertaining to everything from school preparation and a sense of belonging to mental health and engagement with Education Advocates.

Respondents who received support from our volunteers felt a stronger sense of belonging to our organization compared to those who had not.

NWEdA's Key Findings

School Preparedness & Resources



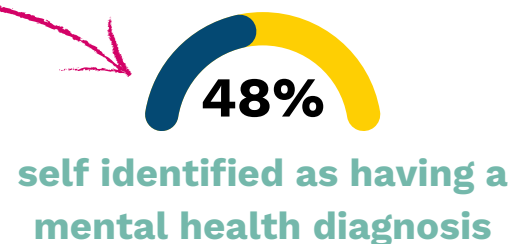
Education Advocate Relationship



School Climate



Students are facing significant mental health challenges while navigating their education.



Student and Community Engagement

At Northwest Education Access we take pride in engaging our students and alumni in important decision-making processes, as well as providing opportunities for them to connect and build community to create a sense of belonging with one another.

Some Highlights

- ✪ We hosted in-person events, such as Bowling Night, Movie Night, Game Night, Study Night and Pottery Painting Sessions, where students, alumni and staff came together to bond over fun and interactive activities.
- ✪ The Student and Alumni Advisory Board (SAAB) hosted a “Mental Health Awareness” panel discussion where stories, advice, and resources were shared to bring awareness to the daily mental health struggles that can get in the way of education and professional development.
- ✪ SAAB also created their own one-time scholarship called “The Support Scholarship” with the intention to provide accessible funding to NWEdA students.
- ✪ We had a successful Advocacy Day, where our community joined forces to meet with our state legislators to advocate for increased investment in trusted community-based providers offering high school reengagement and postsecondary transition support.
- ✪ We celebrated our graduates and their families at our Graduation Celebration and hosted a School Year-End Party where students, alumni, staff, and volunteers remembered and celebrated all that the 2022-23 school year brought.



Our Supporters

A special thank you to all of our generous supporters, including the following corporations, foundations, and government. Your gifts help us to live out our mission.

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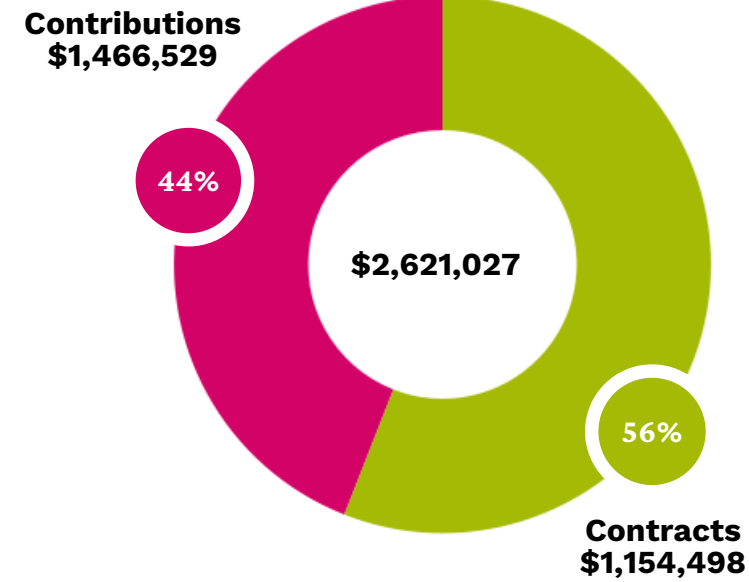
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 Windermere Real Estate - Greenwood
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 Workforce Central of Pierce County
 Wow-We Care Charity Inc

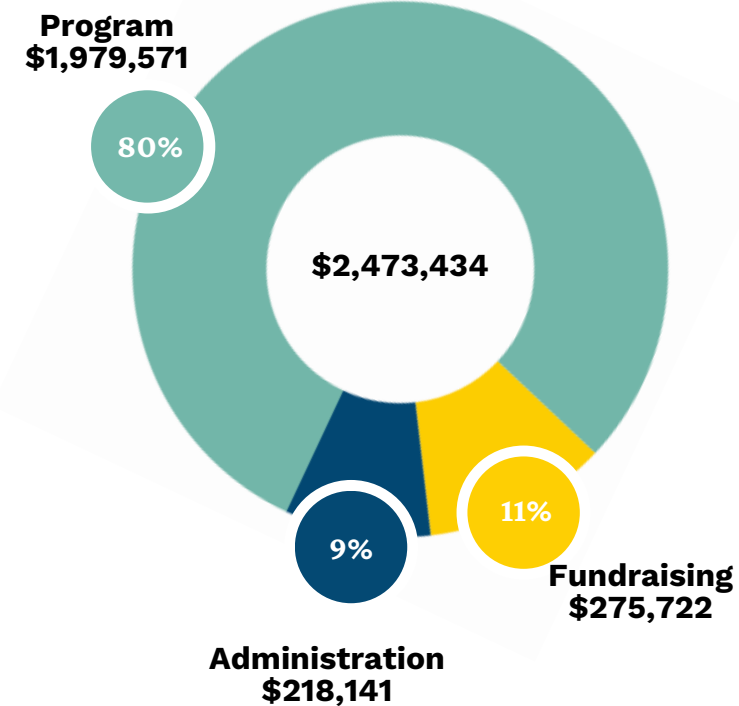


Finances

Revenue



Expenses





Make a Difference

Everyone has a role to play in helping to make education a reality for all. There are many ways you can get involved with Northwest Education Access. You can help make a difference by staying informed, attending an event, becoming a volunteer, or giving a gift.



Scan the QR code, or visit nweducationaccess.org to learn more