



# 2025 Annual Report

*Our Region Connected*



## Walter Thorn

Board President



### Letter from the Board President

North Central Washington is a place where people take pride in building strong communities and creating opportunities for the next generation. As a Policy Board, our role is to help ensure that the work of NCW Tech Alliance reflects the strengths, needs, and aspirations of the region. In 2025, we focused on guiding a strategy that supports learning, technology access, and innovation in ways that strengthen the long-term vitality of our communities.

This year, we are beginning to see how these efforts reinforce one another. Families are gaining confidence with technology and navigating education with greater clarity. Young people are exploring hands-on learning experiences that connect their curiosity to future careers. Entrepreneurs are finding support, networks, and pathways to bring new ideas to life. These are not isolated successes. They are signs of a region moving forward with shared purpose.

The Policy Board plays a key role in shaping this momentum. We help ensure that NCW Tech Alliance remains focused on the conditions that allow people to learn, work, and innovate close to home. We also work to elevate the voices and experiences of the many communities that make up our region, so that our strategy reflects the diversity and character of North Central Washington.

As we look ahead, we are committed to supporting a clear and coordinated vision for the future. On behalf of the Policy Board, thank you for your support, your collaboration, and your belief in what is possible for North Central Washington. We are proud to serve this region and to help guide the work of NCW Tech Alliance as it grows in impact and reach.

Warm regards,  
Walter Thorn

## Policy Board of Directors



**Judi Kuntz**  
Board Vice-President



**Julia O'Donnell**  
North Central ESD



**Joel Graves**  
Microsoft



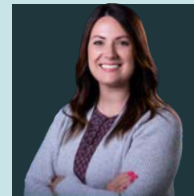
**Shon Dempsey**



**Ian Fitzgerald**  
Chelan County PUD



**Lee Alley**



**Rachelle Lange**  
Convergent  
Nonprofit Solutions



**Ian Weyenberg**  
NetDocuments



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Center



**Thomas Kozina**



**Yolanda Ibarra**  
Big Bend  
Community College



**Josef Dunbar**  
Confluence Health

### Patron Council & President Emeritus\*

Thank you to our 2025 strategic advisors:

- Lisa Karstetter, Microsoft
- Jenny Rickel, Native Network
- Brenda Mandelis, LocalTel
- JC Baldwin, GTC Technical Support
- Ron Brown, Wenatchee School District\*
- Robert Pageler, Confluence Health\*

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North Central Washington is full of talent and possibility. In 2025, NCW Tech Alliance turned that potential into progress by connecting people, technology, and partners across the region. We believe everyone deserves the tools and opportunities to shape their future, no matter where they live, what language they speak, or what resources they have today.

Our impact comes from more than programs alone. We bring communities and partners together so efforts align instead of overlap. Schools, libraries, tribes, health providers, businesses, and local governments are working side by side to expand access, strengthen pathways, and support innovation.

The result is real regional momentum. More students saw a path to future careers. More residents built digital skills for work and daily life. More entrepreneurs gained the connections and capital to grow here at home. Together, we are building a stronger North Central Washington.

### Our Mission

NCW Tech Alliance connects people, technology, and partners so our region can learn, work, and build the futures they choose.

### Our Vision

We believe people should be able to live and work where they love. That means every resident in every community can access the skills, tools, and opportunities they need to thrive without leaving the place they call home.

## Our Values



## Our Pillars

### Technology

Adoption,  
Connectivity,  
& Devices

### Entrepreneurship

Capital,  
Networking,  
& Innovation

### STEM Education & Workforce Development

Training,  
Skills,  
& Credentials



## Our Team



**Sarah Sanford**  
Director of  
Operations



**David Mabee**  
Director of  
Marketing



**Becca Freimuth**  
Director of  
Entrepreneurship



**Rosie Martin**  
Administrative  
Assistant



**David Estrada**  
STEM Program  
Manager



**Juan Servin**  
Technology  
Program Manager



**Jennifer Walker**  
Tech Engagement Specialist  
*AmeriCorps Member,  
American Connection Corps*



## Sue Kane, PhD

CEO

This past year at NCW Tech Alliance was a year of alignment. Across North Central Washington, we saw people, partners, and possibility begin to move together in new ways. What stands out most is not one program or milestone, but the pattern beneath them. Our work in entrepreneurship, STEM and workforce development, and technology is becoming a shared ecosystem, with each part strengthening the others.

In a year when many focused on returning to normal, our region chose something braver. We chose to build what comes next. We listened deeply, mapped barriers and opportunities, and invested in the relationships and trust that make collective impact possible. I am proud of how our team showed up, with curiosity, humility, and a commitment to results. We did more than run programs. We built pathways. We did more than host events. We strengthened belonging. We did more than respond to needs. We helped build systems that will serve our region for years to come.

As we look ahead, our charge is clear. The future of North Central Washington depends on how well we prepare our people, businesses, and communities to thrive in a changing world. With gratitude for our partners, funders, and community members, we move forward with confidence that together we can build a region where everyone has the tools, access, and opportunity to shape their future.

Sincerely,  
Sue Kane, PhD

# 2025 Year in Review

*In 2025, people across North Central Washington gained access, developed skills, and took meaningful steps toward education, careers, and economic opportunity.*

## Opening Pathways



730 Participants  
in AI Skilling



1,800+ financial  
aid applications  
supported



1,400+ K-5 students &  
families reached at STEM  
Nights in Moses Lake

## Expanding Access



220+ computers  
distributed



100+ digital  
literacy graduates



125 Digital  
Navigators trained

## Regional Momentum



350+ Flywheel  
Investment  
Conference  
attendees



37 microgrants &  
\$100k invested in  
community-led digital  
access projects



55 organizations &  
municipalities  
made digital access  
commitments

**13,948 Miles Traveled**

Meeting communities where they are



**22,000+ individuals reached**

Connected to skills, access, and opportunity



# Stronger Together

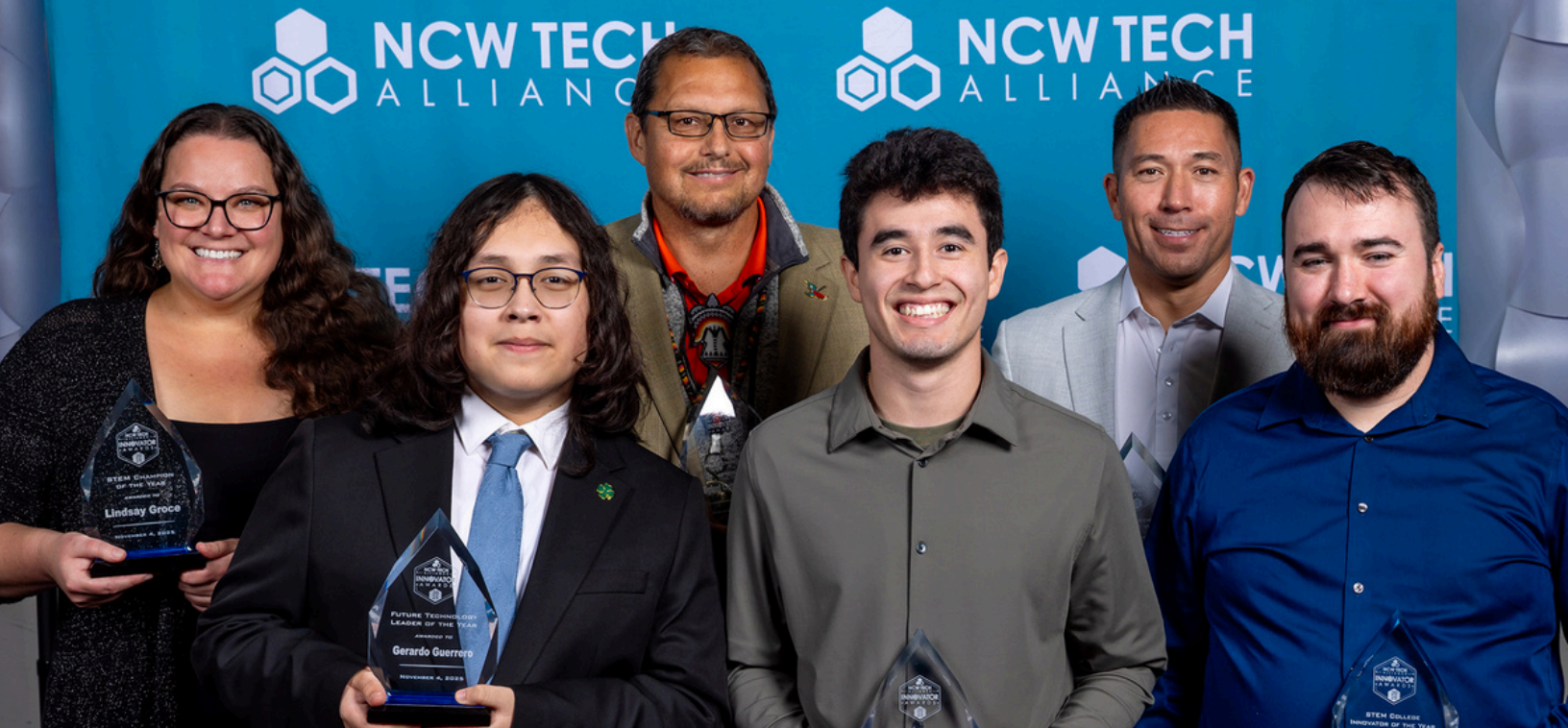
Our role is to help efforts across North Central Washington move in the same direction so resources align, partnerships strengthen, and communities see greater impact. NCW Tech Alliance leads through partnership, bringing people and organizations together around shared goals. No single organization can close the digital divide or build a stronger regional economy alone.

## Thank you to our regional partners



**TOGETHER, THESE  
PARTNERSHIPS AND  
PROGRAMS CREATE  
A REGIONAL  
ECOSYSTEM THAT  
SURROUNDS  
STUDENTS, FAMILIES,  
AND FOUNDERS WITH  
THE SUPPORT THEY  
NEED TO LEARN,  
GROW, AND PURSUE  
OPPORTUNITY.**




















For nearly 25 years, NCW Tech Alliance has championed innovation, entrepreneurship, STEM education, and digital inclusion to help build a region where opportunity is within reach for everyone. But technology does not change the world on its own. People do. Educators, entrepreneurs, students, and community builders are the ones who give innovation its meaning.

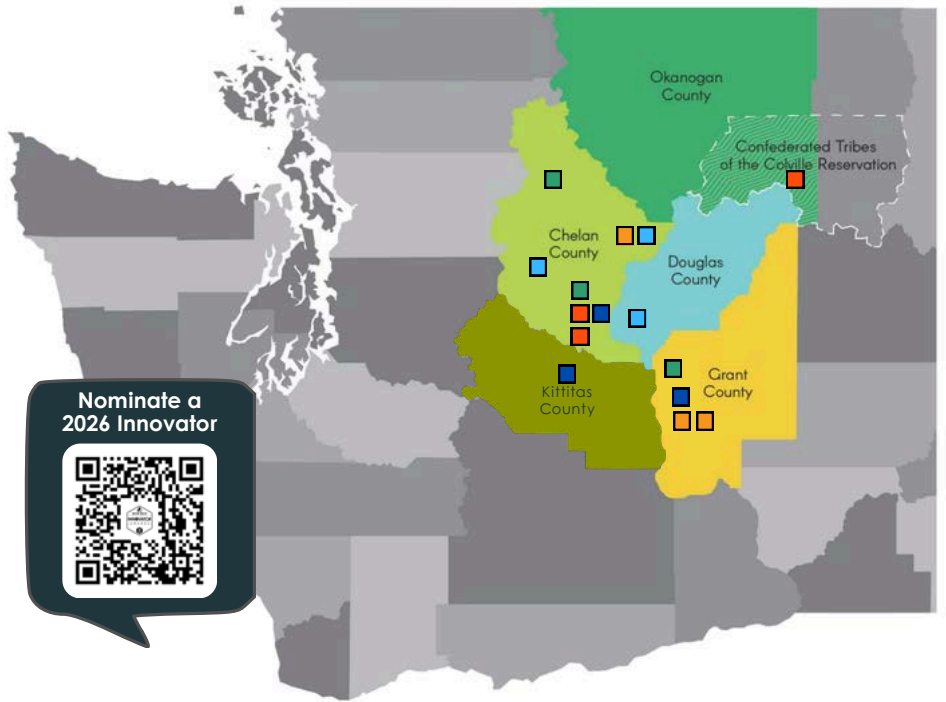
The Innovator Awards bring those stories to life, from the first spark in a classroom to the bold leadership of an Entrepreneur of the Year. In one room, our pillars and values come together, and the future of North Central Washington feels tangible, local, and full of possibility.

PRESENTED BY:



			<b>K-12 FUTURE TECHNOLOGY LEADER</b>
			<b>STEM COLLEGE INNOVATOR</b>
			<b>STEM CHAMPION OF THE YEAR</b>
			<b>NEWCOMER IN TECHNOLOGY</b>
			<b>ENTREPRENEUR OF THE YEAR</b>

★ 2025 Innovator Award Winner



Communities Represented in the 2025 Innovator Nominations



Read more stories in a blog post from Sarah Sanford

Director of Operations, NCW Tech Alliance

In 2025, more than 400 community members gathered for the 24th Annual Innovator Awards to celebrate 15 finalists whose ideas, courage, and commitment are expanding what's possible in North Central Washington. The event made innovation feel personal, bringing stories of risk, resilience, and purpose to the center of the room.

The community came not only to applaud great ideas, but to honor the people behind them: founders who took bold risks, students who tried something new, and neighbors who saw challenges and chose to act.

The Innovator Awards remind us that innovation grows when communities show up for people. By making innovation visible and local, NCW Tech Alliance strengthens confidence in the talent, creativity, and potential already rooted across North Central Washington and helps build a future shaped by the people who call this region home.

“Awards like this are not an end point. They are a reminder of our responsibility to keep serving, to lead with purpose, and to elevate those around us.”

– Ernie Rasmussen, Executive Director, Bigfoot Communications



# STEM & Workforce Development



In 2025, NCW Tech Alliance strengthened STEM and workforce pathways across North Central Washington, helping more students and families connect to learning, credentials, and career opportunity. Through the Apple STEM Network and aligned regional efforts, we expanded access to career-connected learning, supported educators, and helped young people see a future for themselves right here at home.



In 2025, we focused on building a connected pathway from early awareness to career opportunity.

In elementary school, that starts with curiosity. Take Flight STEM Nights engaged more than 1,400 students and families in hands-on learning and connections with local employers, helping young people see that exciting careers in aerospace, clean energy, data centers, and more exist right here in North Central Washington. Just as importantly, they begin to see that they can build a future without leaving the place they love.



More young people are building digital and AI skills, expanding opportunity. Through the AI Expo, Hour of AI, and the Community Skills Initiative AI Skill-a-Thon, more than 730 individuals built in-demand skills in AI, cybersecurity, IT, and data analytics while earning credentials that support future careers.



At the same time, we expanded access to credentials. By supporting more than 1,800 students with their financial aid applications, we helped open doors to postsecondary education, training, and the next step on their path.

Together with our partners, we are building the relationships, skills, and opportunities that move students from curiosity to career and strengthen the future of North Central Washington.

When students can see a path and have the support to follow it, the whole region moves forward.



## Opening Pathways



Hands-on STEM events helped K-5 students explore local careers and imagine their future.

Students are building the skills and accessing the resources that help them prepare for education, training, and future careers.



Students are earning credentials that connect to real opportunities in the local workforce.



# Technology

Across North Central Washington, many residents face daily barriers to work, healthcare, education, and connection because they lack the devices, internet access, or digital skills needed to fully participate in modern life.

Through NCW Tech Help and community partners, more people gained both access to technology and the confidence to use it. In 2025, residents built digital skills, connected to resources, and navigated work, learning, and services with greater independence.



At the same time, NCW Tech Alliance helped people and organizations move from learning about AI and cybersecurity to using these tools in real life. Through the AI Expo, AI in Action workshops, Tech Talks for Nonprofits, and regional cybersecurity events, participants built the confidence to strengthen their work, make better decisions, and adapt in a changing digital world.



In 2025, NCW Tech Alliance brought digital literacy training directly into communities across North Central Washington, hosting six cohorts including its first Tribal training in Inchelium. Participants in Royal City, George, Malaga, Quincy, Wenatchee, and Inchelium built practical skills to use email, complete online forms, and access healthcare, education, and work opportunities with confidence. As access, training, and partnerships come together, technology becomes a pathway to resilience, stability, and opportunity.





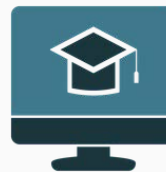
“Before this class, I felt stuck, like I was walking everywhere while the world zoomed past me. But now, learning how to navigate online, I feel like I’ve been handed the keys to a brand-new vehicle.”

— Gary Wulff  
Inchelium Tribal Member



**220+**

Computers distributed to community members in need



**100+**

Digital literacy graduates across six communities



**55+**

Organizations and municipalities turned digital access commitments into action



**37**

Microgrants and \$100,000 invested in community-led digital access projects

**SPONSORS**



# Entrepreneurship

Last year, NCW Tech Alliance expanded access to the relationships, resources, and skills rural and Latino entrepreneurs need to grow in North Central Washington. By aligning partners across education, industry, and investment, we helped founders find clearer pathways to mentorship, funding, and business support. At the same time, bilingual AI and technology training gave entrepreneurs practical tools to strengthen operations, adapt to change, and pursue new opportunities.

As these efforts came together, more small business owners moved from idea to action to growth. They built businesses that create jobs, strengthen local economies, and keep opportunity rooted in the communities they call home.



## Edwin Eaton

2025 Entrepreneur of the Year



## Entrepreneurship in Action

As founder of iPro Building Services, Edwin Eaton grew a traditional janitorial company into a multi-state business by tackling the day-to-day challenges that often limit small business growth. After developing Cinch Software to improve his own operations, he launched BluePrint Consulting to help other entrepreneurs build stronger systems and grow with confidence.

Edwin's journey shows what can happen when innovation is rooted in real experience and community need. A solution built for one business became a pathway for others to grow, helping strengthen entrepreneurship and expand opportunity across our region.

**"My company has been recognized nationally on the Inc. 5000 for multiple years — but this one hit different. Maybe because it's local. Maybe because it represents the community that's been behind me since day one."**

**-Edwin Eaton**



Learn more about Edwin

# Building Stronger Regional Collaboration

In 2025, NCW Tech Alliance strengthened the region's innovation ecosystem by connecting founders, investors, and future entrepreneurs across North Central Washington. Through Flywheel, more than \$1.65 million has been invested in startups over time, helping expand access to capital and relationships that can move good ideas forward.

At the same time, culturally responsive programming for Latino founders and entrepreneurship experiences for students helped ensure that more people can see themselves in innovation. Together, this work is growing a more inclusive economy and creating more pathways for local ideas to become lasting community impact.

When innovation is rooted in community and a shared purpose, it becomes a future we build together, not something that just happens to us.



Leaders from WSU's Tree Fruit Research Center and Confluence Health worked to better connect cutting-edge research with local growers and providers.



Entrepreneurs and industry leaders explored federal R&D funding as a pathway to move from startup ideas to mid-sized, investable companies.



Partners from across sectors came together to share insights and align strategies to strengthen the regional economy.



CAPITAL | TALENT | MOMENTUM

COMMUNITY | INSPIRE | CELEBRATE

LAUNCH | CONNECT | GROW



# A YEAR OF IMPACT

NCW Tech Alliance moves with purpose. This is what impact looks like across our region: collaboration that opens doors, innovation rooted in community, and progress that includes everyone.



## Expanded access and support

Communities built the access and support systems that make opportunity possible.

## Skills for work and life

People gained the skills to navigate daily life and prepare for future careers.



## Confidence and capacity to grow

Entrepreneurs and local businesses grew with the relationships, tools, and confidence to build close to home.

**Together, these changes helped create a more connected region.**

**“Before, I did not know how to look for apps or download them. Now I do. Even though I still have a lot to learn, I know I have made a lot of progress.”**

**— Brisa, Digital Literacy Skills Program Participant**



# 2025 Financial Summary

NCW Tech Alliance is changing lives in our region by improving digital literacy and opening doors to education and good-paying jobs.

- Dr. Sara Thompson Tweedy,  
President, Big Bend Community College

In 2025, NCW Tech Alliance continued to grow as a regional social impact organization, turning every dollar invested into expanded access to technology, stronger workforce pathways, and support for entrepreneurs building the future of North Central Washington.

## Total Revenue \$1,301,863

Grants	\$1,063,287
Event Sponsorship	\$152,236
Membership	\$42,545
Donations/Other	\$43,795

## Total Expenses \$1,261,201

Staffing	\$629,622
Program Investments	\$374,198
Operations	\$143,105
Community Reinvestment	\$114,276

## Annual Partners

We are grateful for the annual partnership of our generous donors who supported and helped us make an impact in 2025.



## Members & Volunteers

Thank you to our members and volunteers whose generosity, time, and commitment made this work possible in 2025.



Partners & Members



**NCW TECH**  
ALLIANCE