



Committed to Community

2018

COMMUNITY
IMPACT REPORT





WECU employees proudly wear signature blue volunteer sweatshirts.

WECU is a not-for-profit financial cooperative. That makes us different.

The difference is reflected in our **low cost products and services** and the policies and procedures that guide our organization. As a local institution we are uniquely accountable to our community.

We thrive as Whatcom County thrives.

WECU is pleased to present its **2018 Community Impact Report**. The incredible outcomes in the areas of financial wellness, charitable giving and volunteerism are made possible by dedicated staff and members who bank with WECU.

Community Impact Snapshot

FINANCIAL GIFTS

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GIVING

WECU supported 170 nonprofit organizations donating over \$310,000.

WECU SCHOLARSHIPS

Among WECU charitable gifts, WECU gave \$73,000 in scholarships to students at Bellingham Technical College, Northwest Indian College, Western Washington University and Whatcom Community College.

FINANCIAL WELLNESS

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LEARNING

WECU offered 91 Financial Education lessons to 1500+ students.

FINANCIAL COUNSELING

WECU provides free financial counseling for members through Money Management International. Nearly 400 members were supported by financial counselors through this service. Using Debt Management Plans, 28 members paid back almost \$125,000, primarily towards high interest credit cards.

IN-KIND GIVING

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LYDIA PLACE

WECU donates a residential property, the “Chestnut House,” to Lydia Place. The Chestnut House is used as transitional housing for families experiencing homelessness. The total gift is estimated at \$21,000 annually.

EDUCATION CENTER

The Ferndale Education Center space was shared free of charge with 115 different nonprofit and service groups almost 400 times.

DONATIONS

WECU donated over 300 items such as desktop PCs, laptops, and printers to the local nonprofit, Computers for People in Need. The partnership also results in the reduction of e-waste.

DONATIONS FROM MEMBERS & STAFF

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UNITED WAY

WECU’s 2018 United Way Campaign again placed our cooperative in the top three campaigns in Whatcom County. Staff and corporate donations neared \$77,000.

WECU DRIVES

Held in the spring and summer, two food drives raised nearly \$8,000.

In the fall donations were collected totaling \$1,100 in order to purchase school supplies.

For the holiday season 300 toys, coats, books, and gifts cards were donated to Whatcom County families.

In partnership with Bloodworks Northwest, WECU hosted four community blood drives. 60 staff and members provided life-saving blood to as many as 170 local patients.

TEAM WECU

Pages 5–6

Nearly **130 employees** volunteered **270 times** at **23 events** through Team WECU.

Financial Gifts

IN TOTAL, WECU SUPPORTED **170 NONPROFIT ORGANIZATIONS**, DONATING OVER **\$310,000**.



As a part of WECU’s brand launch, a **\$25,000 donation** was made to early childhood education. The Opportunity Council’s Project X-It works with preschool children and their families to provide mentoring and financial education in an effort to end the cycle of generational poverty.

In 2018, seven of the enrolled families reported saving money when they weren’t before and, in total, participating families earned over \$5,000 in incentives from working towards their financial goals.

WECU SCHOLARSHIPS

Among WECU charitable gifts, WECU provided **\$73,000 in scholarships** to students at Bellingham Technical College, Northwest Indian College, Western Washington University and Whatcom Community College. In total **26 students received scholarships**.



Bobbi Westendorf, a scholarship recipient playing basketball at WWU, had this to say about her experience:

“...Being able to be a part of the women’s basketball team here at Western, I’ve grown not only as a basketball player but as a person as well. The history of the program and how powerful and strong all the women have been is inspirational. My team is special to me because we are family. Spending so much time together we create a bond that is once in a lifetime... I am currently in the process of finishing my multidisciplinary major (thematic in social sciences) and a minor in sociology. I decided on this major/minor because it will help me reach my career goal of being a school counselor. After Western, I plan to pursue a master’s in counseling, as well as hopefully becoming a basketball coach.”

Financial Wellness

LEARNING

In 2018, **WECU presented 91 Financial Education lessons to over 1500 students**, both youth and adult. Some of the most popular subjects were:

- The Basics of Banking
- Budgeting
- Credit and Loans

We also partnered with Junior Achievement to reach elementary, middle school, and high school students in Whatcom County.



FINANCIAL COUNSELING

One of the services WECU offers to members is **free access to high quality financial counselors** through our partnership with Money Management International. MMI is the largest nonprofit consumer credit counseling organization in the United States. Often nonprofits such as MMI have fees associated with certain services, but WECU covers those fees for members in order to promote their progress towards financial wellness.

Almost 2,000 WECU members visited MMI’s website in 2018 and another 400 called MMI’s financial counselors. There were nearly 130 counseling sessions, most of which focused on debt and budgeting. 28 members created Debt Management Plans with MMI paying back almost \$125,000, primarily towards high interest credit cards.

FINANCIAL EDUCATION OUTREACH BY TOPIC

- **BASICS OF BANKING**
169 students // 12 lessons
- **BUDGETING**
190 students // 14 lessons
- **CAREER FAIRS**
60 attendees // 4 fairs
- **CREDIT AND LOANS**
190 students // 13 lessons
- **CREDIT CARDS**
58 students // 6 lessons
- **FRAUD AND SCAMS**
55 students // 3 lessons
- **HOMEBUYING**
30 students // 1 lesson
- **JUNIOR ACHIEVEMENT PARTNERSHIP**
498 students // 27 lessons
- **OTHER COMMUNITY PRESENTATIONS**
276 students // 11 lessons

Debt Management Plans (DMPs) work with struggling consumers to pay off outstanding debts, bring accounts current, and improve credit scores. MMI’s DMP services involve creating a budget with the member, strategizing debt payback, negotiating rates and terms with creditors on behalf of the member, and disbursing a single payment from the member to all creditors involved in the plan.

In-Kind Gifts

LYDIA PLACE

WECU donates a residential property, the “Chestnut House,” to Lydia Place. As a nonprofit dedicated to disrupting the cycle of homelessness, Lydia Place uses the house as transitional housing for families in need. 2018 marks the fourth year of this gift, which is estimated at a \$21,000 value annually.

This year two families transitioned from living in a vehicle to residing in the Chestnut House.

The first family lived there for six months with a teenage daughter and son. Their stay gave them the opportunity to save up enough money for a deposit and move into a permanent home.

The second family lived in the Chestnut House from the summer of 2018 through December. At that time, the mother, father, two-year-old daughter and infant son successfully transitioned to their own apartment.

To learn more about Lydia Place and homelessness in Whatcom County, tune in to our podcast “Neighbor to Neighbor”

“Lydia Place” Episode:
wecu.com/news/2018/09/podcast-lydia-place

DONATIONS

WECU donated over 300 items such as desktop PCs, laptops, and printers to the local nonprofit, Computers for People in Need (CPN). CPN aims to span “the digital divide,” defined as the gulf between those with ready access to computers and the internet, and those without. The partnership also results in the reduction of e-waste.



EDUCATION CENTER

The Ferndale Education Center space was shared free of charge with 115 different nonprofit and service groups almost 400 times.



Donations from Members and Staff

UNITED WAY

WECU’s 2018 United Way Campaign again placed our cooperative in the top three campaigns in Whatcom County. Staff and corporate donations neared \$77,000.

WECU DRIVES

SPRING/SUMMER FOOD DRIVES

Branch donations drives raised approximately \$8,000 benefiting the Bellingham Food Bank, the Ferndale Food Bank, Lynden Project Hope, and the Nooksack Valley Food Bank.

FALL EDUCATION DRIVE

In partnership with Opportunity Council, donations totaling \$1,100 were collected and used to purchase school supplies.

HOLIDAY TOY DRIVE

300 toys, coats, books, gifts cards, and other gifts were donated to Whatcom County families in partnership with the Salvation Army.

BLOOD DRIVES

In partnership with Bloodworks Northwest, WECU hosted four community blood drives. 60 staff and members provided life-saving blood to as many as 170 local patients.



Senior Trainer and WECU United Way Campaign Chair, Meagan Southworth, accepts the Spirit of United Way Award.



\$1,100 in school supplies were collected.



\$8,000 benefited four Whatcom County food banks.



Hundreds of holiday gifts were collected at WECU branches.



Team WECU

130
WECU
EMPLOYEES

VOLUNTEERED
270
TIMES

AT
23
EVENTS

Banking for All

ELECTRONIC BENEFIT TRANSFER CARDS

Electronic Benefit Transfer (EBT) Cards issued by Washington State Department of Social and Health Services (DSHS), are reloadable and issued to community members receiving government support due to financial hardships. **WECU ATMs provide free withdraws for EBT users.**

LANGUAGE SUPPORT

Language differences create a significant barrier in accessing financial services, resulting in an underbanked population and the continuation of various financial cycles that feed into poverty. To promote equal access to fairly priced and straight-forward financial services, **WECU partners with LanguageLine**, a translation service provider, **to create a more accessible banking experience.**

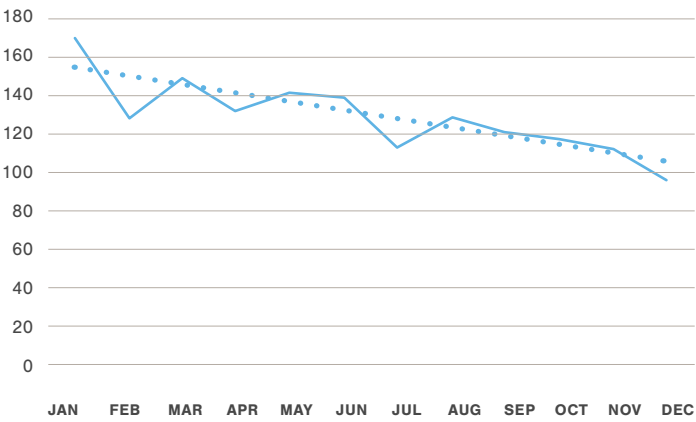
In 2018, there were over **1,500 calls** requesting translation services for WECU members. These calls resulted in over **18,000 minutes of translation.** Though overall usage of LanguageLine has increased from 2017 to 2018, both the number of calls and the number of minutes show a slight trend of decline over the course of the year.

EBT Card Transaction at WECU ATMs and Average Savings on Fees

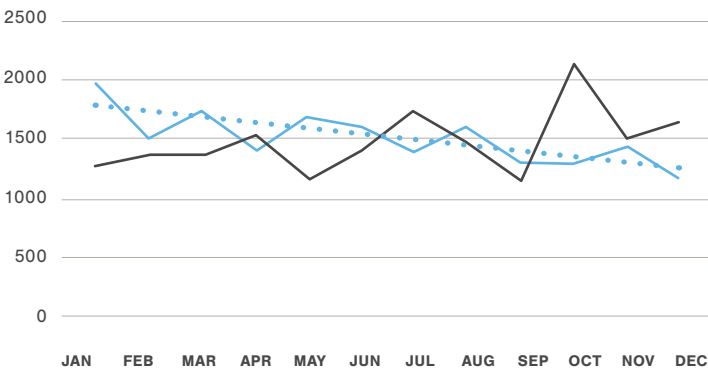
	2018	2017
JANUARY	2,105	2,366
FEBRUARY	1,999	2,048
MARCH	2,148	2,293
APRIL	2,108	2,271
MAY	1,984	2,231
JUNE	2,197	2,141
JULY	2,198	2,209
AUGUST	2,322	2,193
SEPTEMBER	2,280	2,111
OCTOBER	2,516	2,098
NOVEMBER	2,308	1,990
DECEMBER	2,308	2,286
TOTAL:	26,473	26,237
FEES SAVED:	\$66,183	\$65,592

Savings based on an average ATM fee of \$2.50.

Calls Requesting Translation Services in 2018



Minutes of Translation Service



2017 2018 2018 LINEAR

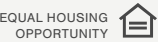


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