

COMMITTED *to* COMMUNITY

2021

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WECU’s Guiding Principle to be Socially Responsible and Community Minded guides the work illustrated in 2021’s Community Impact Report. Our not-for-profit, financial cooperative strives to be a charitable organization that collaborates with other businesses and nonprofits in a way that supports the needs of low-to-moderate income Whatcom County families.

I am proud of all that we have accomplished together.



JENNIFER KUTCHER
PRESIDENT AND CEO, WECU





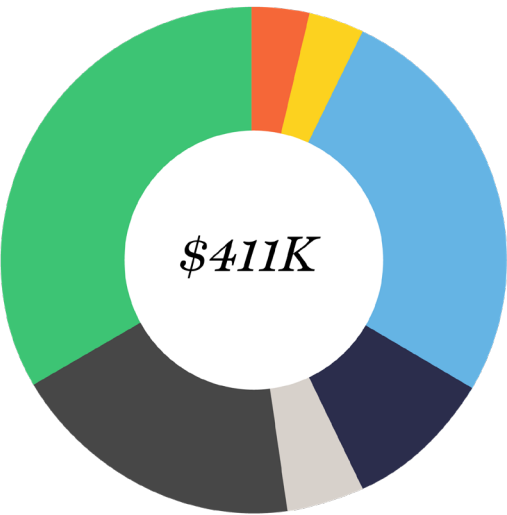
226 VOLUNTEERS
19 NONPROFIT EVENTS

TEAM WECU

WECU's volunteer program "Team WECU" took advantage of more open operations as COVID-19 precautions were lessened. Team WECU provided **226 volunteers** for **19 volunteer events** that benefited causes like Fun with the Fuzz and Habitat for Humanity.



TEAM WECU



WECU GIVING BY PROGRAM

- 4% United Way
- 4% Flood Relief Funding
- 27% Education First
- 9% Community Builder
- 5% Servant Leadership
- 18% Scholarships
- 33% Event Sponsorships

Charitable Giving

EDUCATION FIRST GRANTS

Back to school marked another year of Education First awardees granted \$110,000 in funds. The 2021-2022 recipients are:

Whatcom Literacy Council: A nonprofit empowering adult learners to achieve their goals and improve their lives through literacy.

Futures Northwest: A nonprofit dedicated to the mentorship of underserved high school students pursuing their career and college dreams.

Wild Whatcom: An outdoor learning opportunity for underserved 1, 2, 3 grade classrooms in local public schools.

Explorations Academy: A nonprofit using experiential education to inspire collaboration and social responsibility among students.

Previous awardees Communities in Schools, Max Higbee Center, and Whatcom Family YMCA received their second year of funding in 2021.



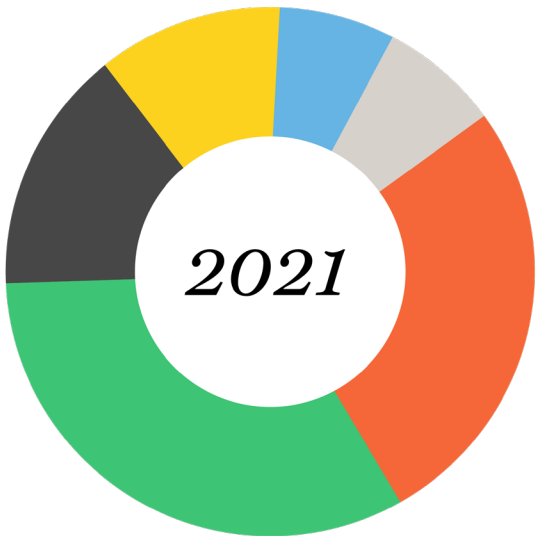
Explorations Academy



Whatcom Literacy Council



Wild Whatcom



COMMUNITY BUILDER BY CAUSE

- 7% Animal Welfare
- 7% Arts, Culture, and Civics Groups
- 27% Education
- 33% Food and Housing
- 15% Health and Safety
- 11% Sports and Youth Programs

COMMUNITY BUILDER

The Community Builder grant program recognizes Whatcom County do-gooders who strive to make a difference every day. Up to \$500 each, these grants support a wide variety of causes totaling **\$40,000. Sixty-eight (68) nonprofits** were supported by this program in 2021.

MEMBER AND STAFF DONATIONS

WECU's United Way Campaign totaled **\$89,299** through employee donations and a \$15,000 corporate gift. **Staff put together a record setting auction raising \$8,986** while other staff gave through payroll deduction and received paid time off. Some staff did both! Two WECU employees acted as Chairs of United Way Community Impact Panels, overseeing the deployment of Whatcom County United Way Campaign funds.

Members and staff love to donate through drives hosted in WECU branches and departments. In addition to essentials like diapers and wipes for babies and nonperishable pantry items, **a total of \$5,800 was donated to local food banks.** During the annual toy drive, holiday wishes were granted and needs were met for more than **350 Whatcom County children.**



Baby Essentials Charity Drive

\$21,000 to 9 nonprofits

SERVANT LEADERSHIP

Servant leadership recognizes employees serving on nonprofit boards. In its third year, **\$21,000 was awarded to 9 nonprofits** in support of their missions:

- Lydia Place
- Habit for Humanity
- Bellingham Community Meal
- Alderwood Elementary PTA
- American Red Cross NW Chapter
- Whatcom Family YMCA
- YWCA
- Kiwanis
- Peacehealth St. Joseph Medical Foundation

Community Partners

SCHOLARSHIPS

WECU proudly supports local education by partnering with foundations at Western Washington University, Whatcom Community College, Bellingham Technical College, and Northwest Indian College. WECU contributed **\$75,000 in scholarship awards** to these institutions of higher learning.

EVENTS AND SPONSORSHIPS

WECU contributed **\$165,000** to nonprofits through event sponsorships. These partnerships raise the profile of our cooperative while helping support some of Whatcom County’s most important causes. Gifts include:

- Boys and Girls Club of Whatcom County: Building Blocks for The Future Capital Campaign
- Sustainable Connections: Think Local First
- Northwest Washington Fair
- Flood Relief through the Whatcom Community Foundation
- Whatcom Old Settlers: Pioneer Days

\$75,000 in scholarship awards

Financial Wellness

COMMUNITY PRESENTATIONS

WECU led **26** financial education lessons reaching **666** students. “I learned so much from the short time we had with you as one of our guest speakers during FLARE. [Financial Literacy and Renters Education]. I have made it a goal to take my finances more seriously to become more financially independent.”
- Student from a WECU presentation in partnership with Opportunity Council

FIRST-TIME HOMEBUYER SEMINAR

WECU financial seminars include an on-demand First Time Home Buyer Seminar. For many members, a home is the largest purchase of their life. WECU’s First Time Home Buyer Seminar helps teach prospective home buyers the ins and outs of the home buying process and how to avoid common mistakes. Last year **226 members** participated.



Financial Wellness Continued

FIRST STEP AND YOUTH X

First Step Savings and Checking are youth-centered accounts that encourage early financial education and the formation of good financial habits. There are currently **2,549 First Step Savings** and **1,269 First Step Checking** accounts. As part of WECU’s First Step Checking offering, teens are invited to join YOU(th)x to participate in financial education challenges. So far, our 60 YOU(th)x members have completed almost 890 challenges!

STUDENT VISA

WECU’s Student Visa Program gives 16-21 year-olds a chance to build their credit and practice responsible credit card use. After attending a required educational seminar, students are invited to apply for a \$250 limit Student Visa Credit Card. Establishing credit early gives participants a head start in all the areas credit can impact their lives, from better interest rates on their first car to renting their first apartment. **One hundred and twenty one students** attended, and **55 related cards** were issued.

PAIRED SAVINGS

WECU is working with Duke’s Common Cents Lab on the Paired Savings Project which leverages research in Behavioral Science to increase member financial wellness. Project results will be forthcoming in Spring 2022.

SAVE THE DIFFERENCE

2,553 WECU members were enrolled in Save the Difference in 2021! The Save the Difference program allows members to build savings everyday by rounding up debit card purchases and depositing the difference into their preferred savings account. Together they saved \$260,199!

MMI

WECU partners with Money Management International (MMI), a full-service credit counseling agency, to give our members access to high-quality, free-to-the-member financial counseling. MMI’s services include budget counseling, credit report reviews, debt management, and student loan counseling. **Two hundred seventy four** WECU members called MMI and **329** visited their website. Of these, **71** members went on to participate in counseling sessions and **9** started a Debt Management Plan.



MONEY GOLDEN RULES

Each year WECU promotes America Saves Week using Financial Wellness material to bring forth important concepts. In 2021, WECU staff and members ranked WECU’s 2021 Money Golden Rules. The results are:

1. Your Biggest Investment is Yourself
2. Save for a Rainy Day
3. Aim for Progress, not Perfection
4. Live BELOW Your Means. Period.
5. Money Can’t Buy Happiness; But A Balanced Budget Makes It Affordable.
6. Pay Yourself First
7. Not all Debt is the Same
8. Measure Yourself by Your Own Yardstick
9. It’s Worth the Wait
10. Things are not as Shiny the Next Day

Visit wecu.com/GoldenRules to read about each Rule.



Serving the Underserved

LOW-TO-MODERATE INCOME

As a not-for-profit credit union WECU understands the importance of focused attention on members of our community with **low-to-moderate income**. Decisions big and small at WECU take this into consideration. Those include checking and savings accounts that feature no minimum balances and low fees and a branch and ATM networks that span Whatcom County, from Deming, to college campuses, up to Blaine and out to the Lummi Reservation.

- Analysis of member profiles estimates that 34% of WECU members are low-to-moderate income.
- The most recent geographic analysis shows that **56% of loans funded**, and **45% of the total amount of loans funded** were to **CDFI Target Markets**- markets where economic indicators show a higher level of distress. Some financial institutions may target large dollar loans but smaller loans are critical to working families.

EBT

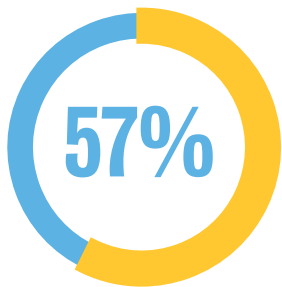
Electronic Benefit Transfer cards issued by Washington State Department of Social and Health Services (DSHS) are re-loadable and issued to community members receiving government support due to financial hardships. WECU ATMs provide free withdraws for EBT users. Total amount saved at WECU ATMs was over \$21,020 based on a national average ATM fee of \$2.87.



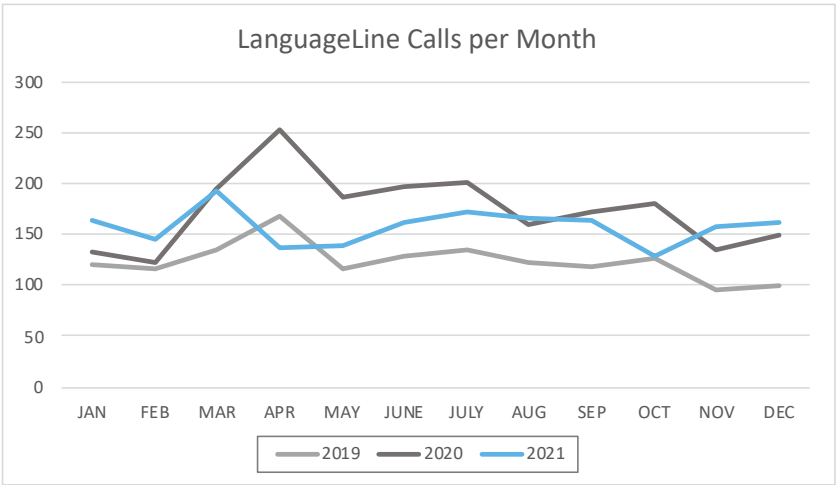
42% of auto loans funded are under **\$20,000**



63% of credit cards funded are **\$1,000** or less



of purchase loans for primary residences were under the median home price in Whatcom County.



SUBPRIME

Many community members encounter a time in their life when income is lost, or unexpected bills cause credit problems. WECU is dedicated to creating pathways back to stellar credit.

- 15% of WECU members are subprime

SECURED LOANS

Saving secured loans are a tool for members with poor credit histories to access a line of credit and begin rebuilding their credit scores. Last year, **98 secured credit personal loans** were opened. Additionally, **409 savings secured credit cards** were opened for a total of **2,118 cards**. Members are using them well too! The average balance to average limit is **35%- a great ratio for improving credit!**

SAFECARD

WECU's SafeCard is a second chance account that features no overdraft fees. There are **188** SafeCard accounts.

MMI

Debt Management Plans (DMP) are one of the services WECU members gain access to through WECU's partnership with Money Management International (MMI). A DMP allows members to make one single payment to MMI per month, who then sends the funds directly to each creditor. This plan reduces the stress of dealing with creditors and MMI may be able to negotiate for lower fees or rates. In 2021, WECU members paid off **\$116,100 in debt** using DMPs!

LANGUAGE BARRIERS

Language barriers create challenges accessing financial products and services, and discourage individuals who do not speak English from using a formalized banking system. WECU partners with LanguageLine to provide translation services in over 200 languages. To ensure all members feel welcome and heard, WECU staff made, **1885 calls** to LanguageLine in 2021 and used their translation services for almost **19,500 minutes**.



7% of WECU auto lending at a dealership is **subprime**



11% of WECU auto lending at a branch is **subprime**



9% of consumer lending is for **subprime members**



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