

**COMMITTED** *to*  
**COMMUNITY**

2025

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At WECU, we are committed to strengthening the well-being of the communities we serve. I am proud to present the 2025 Community Impact Report, which highlights the positive work we accomplished together throughout the year, including our support for local education, our efforts to foster financial confidence, and our partnerships with organizations that contribute to a vibrant and connected region. I hope you will join me in celebrating the many accomplishments reflected in this report. As we look ahead to 2026, we remain dedicated to serving our members and our communities with care, reliability, and purpose.



**JENNIFER KUTCHER**  
PRESIDENT AND CEO, WECU



# TEAM WECU

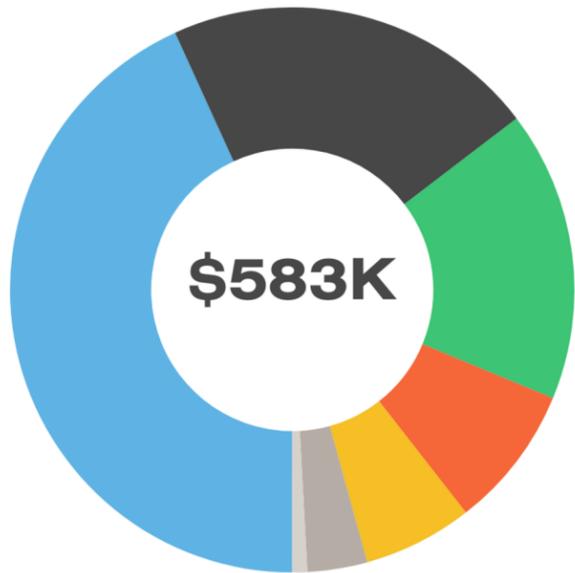


**1,400 VOLUNTEER HOURS  
60 CAUSES SUPPORTED**

## TEAM WECU

Team WECU provides staff with volunteer opportunities, coordinating with nonprofits to support meaningful community causes. Additionally, staff are encouraged to use a Paid Day Off to Volunteer with the community group of their choice. More than 1,400 service hours have been reported between the two programs, with 43% of staff participating, more than 60 causes supported, and compensation of \$23,813 paid to employees for time off.





## WECU GIVING BY PROGRAM

- 43% Sponsorship
- 22% Education First
- 17% Scholarships
- 8% Community Builder
- 6% Servant Leadership
- 3% United Way
- 1% Disaster Relief

## Charitable Giving

### EDUCATION FIRST GRANTS

WECU's flagship grant program, Education First makes a meaningful difference by supporting local initiatives as they provide quality educational programming to our neighbors and friends. WECU has donated \$815,000 since the program's inception in 2019. Another \$125,000 will be awarded in the summer of 2026.

**Communities In Schools of Whatcom-Skagit:** A leading dropout-prevention organization that places site coordinators in local schools to provide school-wide supports, small-group services, and individualized case management, helping students overcome barriers and stay engaged in learning.

**FuturesNW:** A career exploration program offering hands-on workshops led by college instructors and industry professionals, helping high school students explore post-secondary and career pathways.

**Whatcom Dispute Resolution Center:** Provides in-school conflict-resolution workshops that teach students communication, problem-solving, and emotional-regulation skills, while supporting educators with de-escalation strategies to improve school climate and safety.

**Wild Whatcom:** Delivers inclusive outdoor education programs that connect students to nature through NGSS (Next Generation Science Standards) aligned science lessons and individualized STEAM (Science, Technology, Arts and Math) based outdoor learning for students.

Previous awardees in their second year of funding are BAAY, Skagit Preschool and Resource Center, Whatcom Literacy Council, and Economic Development Alliance of Skagit County - Startup School.



## Charitable Giving Continued

### SCHOLARSHIPS

WECU proudly supports local education by partnering with foundations at Western Washington University, Whatcom Community College, Bellingham Technical College, Skagit Valley College, and Northwest Indian College. WECU contributed \$97,000 in scholarship awards to these institutions of higher learning.



*\$97,000 in scholarship awards*

“

*This scholarship not only helps cover essential expenses such as rent, bills, and childcare, but it also allows me to be more fully present in my studies and in my time with my baby. Beyond the practical support, receiving this scholarship is an inspiring reminder that there are people who believe in my potential—even without knowing me personally.*

**- Lily W**

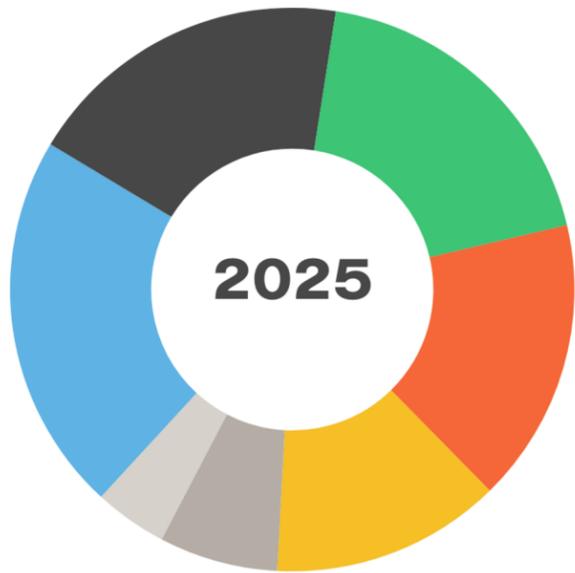
*Nursing, Skagit Valley College*

“

*This scholarship will make a real difference as I continue my education while working at Costco. Balancing school and work will be challenging, but your support eases the financial pressure and allows me to stay focused on my long-term goals. I'm excited to keep growing in my education and career.*

**- Christian S**

*BAS Operations Management, Bellingham Technical College*



## COMMUNITY BUILDER BY CAUSE

- 22% Education
- 19% Food and Housing
- 19% Health and Safety
- 16% Arts, Culture, and Civics Groups
- 13% Sports and Youth Programs
- 7% Other
- 4% Animal Welfare



## Charitable Giving Continued

### 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 \$47,750. One hundred six (106) nonprofits were supported by this program in 2025.

### SPONSORSHIPS AND IN-KIND DONATIONS

**Birchwood Community Resource Center:** WECU and the Bellingham School District continues their partnership. The school district hosts its Community Transitions Program (CT) in the WECU Birchwood Branch, now known as the Birchwood Community Resource Center. The CT Program serves students who receive special education services in the Bellingham School District through the age of 21, seeking to successfully transition students to more independent living, employment, or postsecondary training. The value of this donated space is \$50,000 per year.

**Education Centers:** WECU offers free spaces to community nonprofits for educational meetings and seminars. The Ferndale and Holly St Education Centers were used by nonprofits 203 times, an increase of 62% over the previous year.

### STAFF AND MEMBER DONATIONS

In 2025, WECU gifted \$108,540 to United Way. A corporate donation of \$20,000 and \$26,155 in time off encouraged payroll deduction giving, through which 62 employees gave an astounding \$69,901. Other corporate gifts included a \$2,500 Servant Leadership grant awarded in recognition of employee board service and paid staff hours for two employees serving on the United Way Community Impact Panels.

*\$251,800 to nonprofits*

### EVENTS AND SPONSORSHIPS

WECU contributed \$251,800 to nonprofits through community events and sponsorships. These partnerships raise the profile of our cooperative while helping support some of Whatcom and Skagit Counties' most important causes.

Gifts were awarded to:

- University and College Foundations
- School District Foundations
- Community and Health Foundations
- Food Banks
- Youth-Serving Organizations
- City Parks & Recreation Departments
- Chambers of Commerce
- and more!

*\$36,500 to 16 nonprofits*

### SERVANT LEADERSHIP

Servant leadership recognizes employees serving on nonprofit boards. This year, \$36,500 was awarded to 16 nonprofits in support of their missions:

- Bellingham Childcare and Learning Center
- Bellingham Kiwanis Club
- Carl Cozier Elementary PTO
- Engedi Refuge
- Generations Early Learning & Family Services
- Sean Humphrey House
- Skagit Habitat for Humanity
- United Way of Whatcom County
- Upfront Theatre
- Whatcom Family YMCA
- Downtown Bellingham Association
- Everson Nooksack Valley Chamber of Commerce
- Placemake Arts Northwest
- Ferndale Public Schools Foundation
- Pickford Film Center
- Lynden Public Schools Foundation

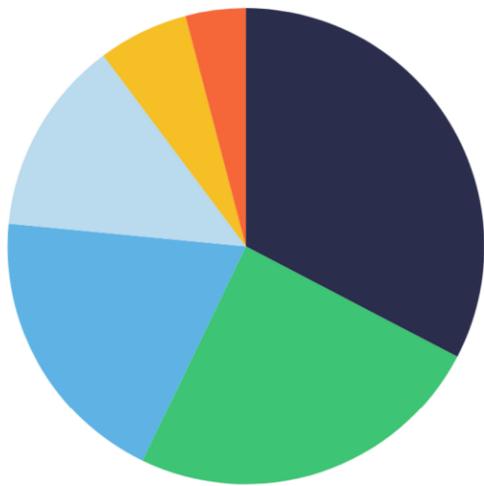
## Charitable Giving Continued

The 2025 Food Drive marked one of the most significant community giving efforts in recent years. Community donations totaled \$35,788, spurred in large part by a \$20,000 matching gift commitment from WECU, bringing the campaign total to \$55,788. When combined with \$1,609 donated through other drives, the total impact rose to \$57,398, representing more than 3,400 percent growth compared to pre-campaign totals.

This remarkable increase showed how a matching gift incentive and an online donation option could deepen community engagement and magnify support for local food banks. WECU volunteers further strengthened these efforts by dedicating 240 hours to Helping Hands Food Bank, the Bellingham Food Bank, and Tri Parish Food Bank. Employees sorted produce, organized donations, prepared distributions, and supported seasonal needs. Through the Paid Day to Volunteer benefit, staff could assist during weekday shifts when food banks require the most hands-on support.

Alongside food security efforts, WECU's annual baby essentials and toy drives continued to meet basic needs for families across the region. Donations of diapers, wipes, nonperishable pantry items, and holiday gifts supported more than 300 families in Whatcom and Skagit Counties, contributing tangible comfort and care during the holiday season.





## Community Presentations by Subject

- 33% Budgeting
- 24% Basics of Banking
- 19% Credit and Loans
- 13% Scams and Fraud
- 5% Business and Entrepreneurship
- 6% First Step

WECU led 98 financial education lessons, reaching 2,230 students.

## Financial Wellness

### REALITY FAIRS (BITE OF REALITY)

WECU hosted three Bite of Reality events in 2025, engaging over 330 students from Bellingham High School, Options High School, Shuksan Middle School, and La Venture Middle School in interactive, 90-minute financial literacy simulations. With the support of more than 50 volunteers, including WECU staff and community partners, students navigated real-life budgeting challenges and gained insights into managing expenses like childcare, housing, and transportation.



### 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, 116 members participated.



### SAVE THE DIFFERENCE

10,005 WECU members were enrolled in the Save the Difference in 2025, an increase of 34%! The Save the Difference program allows members to build savings into their everyday by rounding up debit card purchases and depositing the difference into their preferred savings account. Together they saved \$1,134,336 last year, an increase of 65%!



\$1,134,336 in savings

## Financial Wellness Continued

### 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. 1,257 WECU members called MMI and 306 visited their website. Of these, 170 members went on to participate in counseling sessions and 11 started a Debt Management Plan, paying down \$185,174 in high interest debt.



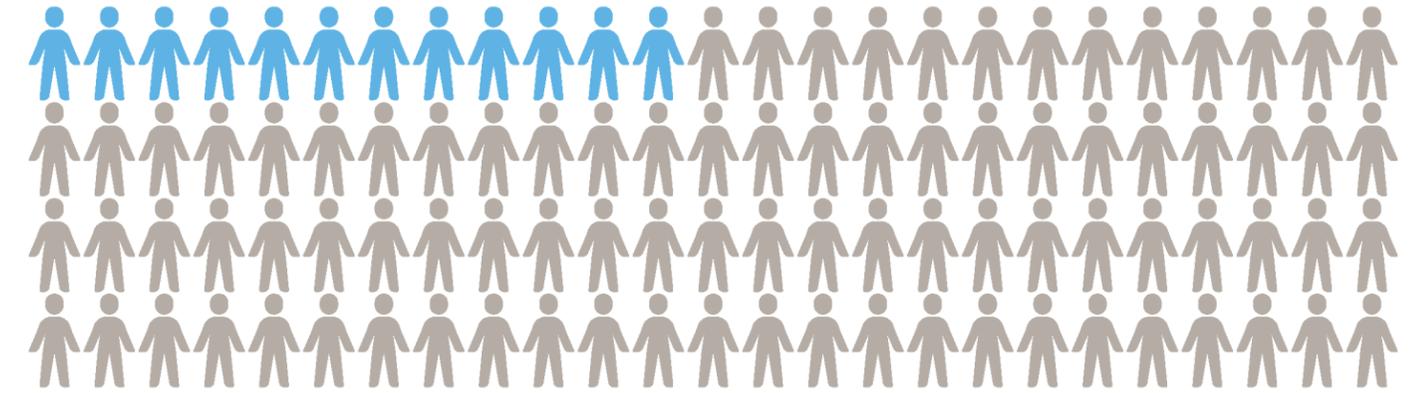
### FIRST STEP SAVING AND CHECKING

First Step Savings and Checking accounts are youth-centered accounts that encourage early financial education, feature above market interest rates, and no overdraft fees. There are currently 10,446 First Step Savings and 5,765 First Step Checking accounts.

### FIRST STEP VISA

WECU's First Step Visa Program allows 15-19-year-olds to build their credit and practice responsible credit card use. After attending a required educational seminar, students are invited to apply for a \$300 limit First Step Visa card. 214 students attended, and 136 cards were issued—an annual increase of 40%. Graduates of the First Step Credit Card Program have credit scores 55 points higher than non-graduate WECU members of similar age (732 versus 677).





**12%** of WECU members are subprime\*

## 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 financial center and ATM networks that span Whatcom and Skagit Counties.

Some financial institutions may target large-dollar loans, but smaller loans are critical to working families.

*Analysis of member profiles estimates that 19% of WECU members are low-to-moderate income. WECU defines low-to-moderate income as households with annual income less than \$50,000.*

### EBT: ELECTRONIC BENEFIT TRANSFER

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. The total amount saved at WECU ATMs was over \$54,043 based on a national average ATM fee of \$4.86.

### MANUFACTURED HOMES

WECU is proud to fund Manufactured Homes. WECU funded 36 Manufactured Homes on Land with an average original balance of \$315,367. WECU is also proud to fund nine manufactured homes located in mobile home parks, with an average loan size of approximately \$65,028, filling an important community need.



**45%** of auto loans funded are under **\$20,000**



**29%** of credit cards funded are **\$1,000** or less



**23%** of personal loans funded are under **\$3,000**

## Serving the Underserved Continued

### LANGUAGE BARRIERS

Language barriers create challenges to accessing financial products and services and discourage individuals who do not speak English from using a formalized banking system. WECU partners with TransPerfect to provide translation services in over 200 languages. To ensure all members feel welcome and heard, WECU staff made 8,842 calls to TransPerfect in 2025 and used their translation services for 113,951 minutes.

### SUBPRIME

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

### 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. 158 savings secured credit cards were opened with WECU now having 2,137 total cards. The average balance is 29% of the card limit - a healthy ratio for improving credit!

### SPEND SAFE

WECU's Spend Safe is a second chance account that features no overdraft fees. There are 816 Spend Safe accounts and 54% of cardholders have subprime credit.

### ITIN LENDING

WECU launched ITIN Lending in May, 2022. WECU funded 2,936 ITIN loans since then with original balances or limits of \$55,439,576.



**12%**

*of WECU auto lending that takes place at the dealership is subprime.*



**19%**

*of WECU auto lending that takes place in branch is subprime.*



**19%**

*of our consumer lending is for subprime members. 4% of members have Thin Files.\*\**

\*WECU defines subprime as credit scores less than 650.

\*\*Thin File means they do not have enough information on their credit report to create a credit score



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OPPORTUNITY 

The Equal Housing Opportunity logo consists of a stylized house icon with a horizontal line through the middle, representing the Equal Housing Opportunity symbol.