



**WASHINGTON**  
STATE ASSOCIATION  
*of* **COUNTIES**

MAY 2024

2024

# Courthouse Briefing Document

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# Who We Are

## The Voice of Washington Counties

Created in 1906, the Washington State Association of Counties (WSAC) serves the counties of Washington State. Members include elected county commissioners, councilmembers, and executives from all of Washington's 39 counties. WSAC provides a variety of services to its member counties, including advocacy, professional development, public-private business partnerships, and a forum to network and share best practices.

While voting within the organization is limited to county commissioners, council members, and county executives, the Association also serves as an umbrella organization for affiliate organizations representing:

- County Road Engineers
- Local Public Health Officials
- County Administrators
- Solid Waste Managers
- County Human Service Administrators

- IT Directors
- Planning Directors
- Clerks of County Boards

WSAC also works closely with its sister organization, the Washington Association of County Officials (WACO), which serves independently elected non-judicial county officials, including assessors, auditors, treasurers, prosecutors, coroners, clerks, and sheriffs.





# Washington State Association of Counties Membership Benefits

Our mission at the Washington State Association of Counties (WSAC) is to be a voice for Washington State's 39 counties through advocacy, education, programs, services, and collaboration.

## What's in it for my County?

WSAC is committed to providing you and your counties with many resources and benefits to help you succeed in your position and for counties to grow and prosper from the advocacy work done on your behalf.

## OUR GUIDING CORE VALUES:

- Leadership
- Integrity
- Ethics
- Trust
- Vision
- Respect
- Collaboration
- Financial Stability

## Advocacy

The Legislative Advocacy & Policy Division supports one of WSAC's primary goals – to advocate on behalf of counties at the state legislature, regulatory agencies, and executive branch offices in support of sound policy and fiscal strategies that sustain the basic government services that ensure the health and safety of all Washingtonians.

## Training and Education

WSAC offers resources, such as the Newly Elected Officials training, to complete your legally required education, and the County Development Institute, an on-demand certification program, to kickstart your knowledge of county government. Live events include regularly scheduled virtual assemblies addressing emerging issues, and the County Leaders Conference which brings together county leadership to learn and network.

## Information, Research, and Resources

The staff at WSAC are committed to providing you with useful, responsive, and time-sensitive data so you can make informed decisions and respond to emerging issues. Our website contains data dashboards, legislative policy agendas, end-of-session reports, annual reports, and important links to many other areas of resources that can be your go-to when researching.

## Legal Services

The Strategic Litigation, Advocacy, and Communication Program ensures that the use of legal action is an effective tool to advance the WSAC policy agenda in coordination with legislative advocacy strategies and actions. Our legal actions are used sparingly and as a last resort.

## Affiliate Support

WSAC supports many different Washington county associations whose members serve at all levels of county government. WSAC provides professional development trainings and networking, support for associations with conference services, makes information available, and acts as a voice for counties at the State and Federal levels. We're dedicated to continuing work with affiliate associations, supporting our county professionals, and creating stronger local governments across the state.

## Cost Savings

WSAC has a growing list of business partners that are dedicated to partnering with counties to provide cost savings and grow public-private connections to foster relationships. We also work with the National Association of Counties (NACo), utilizing their nationwide buying power to save you more.

Visit [WSAC.org](https://www.wsac.org) for More Information

2023-24

# WSAC Board of Directors



**PRESIDENT**  
**Lisa Janicki**  
Skagit County



**FIRST VICE PRESIDENT**  
**Rob Coffman**  
Lincoln County



**SECOND VICE PRESIDENT**  
**Mark Ozias**  
Clallam County



**IMMEDIATE PAST PRESIDENT**  
**Mary Kuney**  
Spokane County

The WSAC Board of Directors is responsible for the general supervision over the affairs of the Association per WSAC Bylaws and adopted policies and procedures.

## 2023-24 ACTIVITIES

- Reviewed amicus filing requests and authorized participation
- Authorized filings and appeals of pending litigation
- Monitored Blake Decision, Civil Conversion and Indigent Defense Litigation
- Appointments/Nominations to Statewide Boards and Commissions
- Continue WSAC Bylaws review and update process
- Discussing and working on membership issues and challenges
- Program review and oversight
- Review 2023 Audit and Financials
- Appoint WSAC Federal Issues and Relations Committee
- Review and recommend Annual Budget and Program Expenditures, Dues, and Assessments
- Ongoing monitoring of WSAC financial health
- Updates and additions to WSAC Comprehensive Policy Manual
- Review County Leaders Conference Timeframe
- Selection of Interim WSAC Executive Director

## BOARD MEMBERS

<b>Will McKay</b>	Benton County
<b>Glen Yung</b>	Clark County
<b>Dan Sutton</b>	Douglas County
<b>Janet St. Clair</b>	Island County
<b>Katie Walters</b>	Kitsap County
<b>Scott Hutsell</b>	Lincoln County
<b>Sharon Trask</b>	Mason County
<b>Jani Hitchen</b>	Pierce County
<b>Christine Minney</b>	San Juan County
<b>Nate Nehring</b>	Snohomish County
<b>Megan Dunn</b>	Snohomish County
<b>Josh Kerns</b>	Spokane County
<b>Wes McCart</b>	Stevens County
<b>Carolina Mejia</b>	Thurston County
<b>Satpal Sidhu</b>	Whatcom County
<b>Art Swannack</b>	Whitman County
<b>Michael Largent</b>	Whitman County
<b>LaDon Linde</b>	Yakima County
<b>Amanda McKinney</b>	Yakima County

## ALTERNATES

<b>Michael Alvarez</b>	Benton County
<b>Karen Bowerman</b>	Clark County
<b>Dennis Weber</b>	Cowlitz County
<b>Danny Stone</b>	Grant County
<b>Ryan Mello</b>	Pierce County
<b>Peter Browning</b>	Skagit County
<b>Jared Mead</b>	Snohomish County
<b>Al French</b>	Spokane County
<b>Amber Waldref</b>	Spokane County
<b>Tye Menser</b>	Thurston County
<b>Kaylee Galloway</b>	Whatcom County

## 2024 REGULAR BOARD MEETINGS

- Wednesday, January 31, 2024, Thurston County
- Wednesday, May 15, 2024, Mason County
- Thursday, September 19, 2024, Kittitas County
- Tuesday, November 19, 2024, Clark County

# Letter from

## Interim Executive Director Derek Young & President Lisa Janicki



Each Courthouse Briefing is an opportunity for the leadership of the Washington State Association of Counties (WSAC) to travel throughout the State, engaging WSAC members and other county officials on unique issues in their Counties as well as sharing and speaking to the issues, challenges, and programs delivered by WSAC.

This is an exciting transition, as we introduce to WSAC members our Interim Executive Director Derek Young and discuss the membership challenges facing the Association, potential solutions, opportunities for the future, and provide an update and overview of WSAC programs, services, and accomplishments.

As with previous courthouse briefings, we will listen carefully to the thoughts of WSAC members, county officials, and staff regarding the issues most important to their ability to govern, lead, and manage their county.

We will share important and timely updates and information, including:

- Leadership Transition
- Membership
- Association Budget and Finance Information
- 2024 Legislative Outcomes
- Upcoming Legislative and Policy Development
- Federal Issues and Priorities
- “Learn” Opportunities
- The WSAC “HUB”
- Association Bylaws Review
- Business Partnerships
- Litigation Activities
- And... more

We are both pleased to serve you in our respective roles at the Association. If at any time you would like to talk about the Association or ideas on how to improve our organization to meet the needs of all counties throughout Washington State, please do not hesitate to reach out to either or both of us. We are committed to working with each of you. We know that we will be our best when all 39 counties are engaged members of WSAC. That is what we are working to achieve and maintain. It will take open, respectful, and constructive dialogue to achieve this. We look forward to our conversations.

**President**  
**Lisa Janicki**

**Interim Executive Director**  
**Derek Young**

# American Rescue Plan Act (ARPA) Funds

Washington's 39 counties received \$1.5 billion in direct allocations from the American Rescue Plan in the form of State and Local Fiscal Recovery Funds (SLFRFs). In Washington State, counties are investing ARPA funds to meet a variety of important community priorities. SLFRFs were intended to be a flexible resource for local governments to address specific pandemic related impacts in the contexts of their unique communities. Counties have until December 31st, 2024 to obligate funds and must spend all SLFRFs by December 31st, 2026.

Counties received the first half of their funds in spring 2021, and the remainder of the funding in summer and fall 2022. Many counties immediately applied the first tranche of funding to emergent issues that arose from the pandemic, such as:

- Housing Assistance – Rental and Utilities
- Food Insecurity
- Small Business and Non-Profit Organization Support
- Childcare
- Technology, IT Security, and other County Facility upgrade for Courthouses, Jails, and County facilities to allow social distancing and ensure employee and public health and safety
- PPE, testing, and vaccine efforts
- Incentive pay for frontline workers

Funding has also been used to shore up community members and institutions that were negatively impacted by the pandemic, including:

- Vulnerable populations including veterans, survivors of domestic violence, and the homeless.
- Small businesses
- Behavioral health providers
- Childcare providers
- Other Non-profit organizations serving vulnerable people

Counties are now working to apply the remainder of the funds to housing and infrastructure projects that will take

time to implement. Projects in Washington State include

- Broadband expansion projects
- Affordable Housing development
- Sewer and water treatment upgrades
- Projects intended to address the effects of sea-level rise

Despite not receiving the full allocation until fall of 2022, Washington's counties have made significant headway in planning, allocating, and obligating ARPA funds. As of December of 2023, 80% of SLFRFs received by counties have been obligated and 53% have been expended. ARPA has proven to be an essential funding source for counties during the pandemic recovery and counties continue to utilize these funds for community projects that would be impossible without this flexible, one-time disbursement of funding.

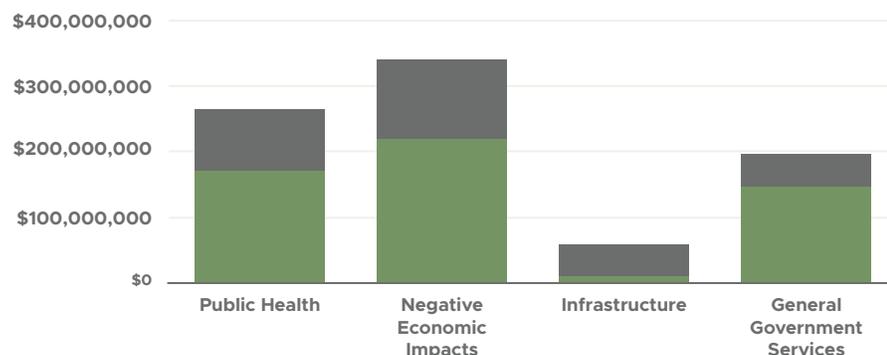


Counties are concerned about the recent changes to the definition of obligation in the Obligation Interim Final Rule published by Treasury in November, 2023. Most Counties in Washington are on track to obligate and spend their funds prior to the 2024 and 2026 deadlines. However, a 2-year deadline extension would provide flexibility for broadband projects and other large capital projects that take more time to implement.

Investments made in Washington Counties through ARPA funding have created stronger, healthier, and more resilient communities. These investments have allowed Counties to address impacts from the COVID-19 pandemic and to create new systems and supports that leave us better prepared for future crises.

## SLFRF ALLOCATION AND SPENDING BY CATEGORY

■ EXPENDED  
■ ALLOCATED



# Finance & Administration

The Finance and Administration department is responsible for the financial functions of WSAC, including accounts payable, accounts receivable, reporting, budgeting, contracts, grants, federal and state tax reporting, payroll, and benefits. The Finance and Administration department is also responsible for the management and financial functions of the Washington Counties Building.

## TEAM MEMBERS

**Bridget Lockling**  
Director, Operations and Administration

**Lynn Fiorillo-Lowe**  
Operations and Support Assistant

**Jay Saiki**  
Finance Manager

## 2024 Action Items

- **Update WSAC Bylaws & Policy Manual** — Work continues on reviewing the bylaws through the Bylaws Committee, which started in 2023. This work is critical as we look to implement changes that bring value and equity across all counties. We will review and make corresponding updates to the Comprehensive Policy Manual as needed.
- **Update WSAC Financial Policies & Procedures** — The financial policies and procedures must be reviewed and updated since many changes have occurred in the last few years. The Audit, Investment, and Finance Committee will review these updates.
- **Implement new company credit cards & expense tracking software** — New company credit cards were issued in 2024, which included an online expense tracking system and app to make reporting and documentation quicker and easier for staff and the finance team.
- **Transition and onboarding of Interim Executive Director** — Transition of Executive Director duties begins in late May and continued onboarding activities will occur throughout the summer. Recruitment for a permanent Executive Director is likely to start before the end of 2024.



Produces **20 sets** of financial statements and coordinates **4 tax returns**



Oversees over **\$6 million** in deposits and disbursements



Provides financial services for **6 associations**

# By The Numbers

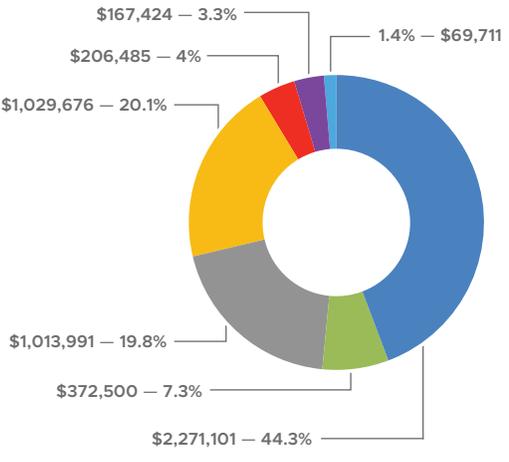
## 2023 Summary Financials

### WHERE WSAC REVENUES COME FROM

2023 Total Revenue — \$5,130,889

WSAC has a strong compliment of other funding sources to cover operating costs

- Membership Dues
- Special Assessments
- Revenue from Affiliates
- Contract Services
- Conferences and Events
- Endorsements & Other Non-Dues
- Net Investment Income



#### DUES AS % OF REVENUE

2015	52%
2016	49%
2017	43%
2018	54%
2019	56%
2020	54%
2021	54%
2022	48%
2023	49%

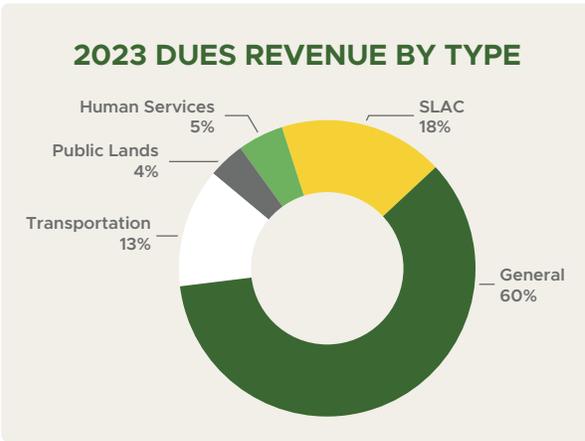
**\$182,357** ✓  
DECREASE IN NET INCOME FROM 2022

**\$257,901** ^  
INCREASE IN NET ASSETS FROM 2022

**66%** ^  
INCREASE IN NET ASSETS SINCE 2018

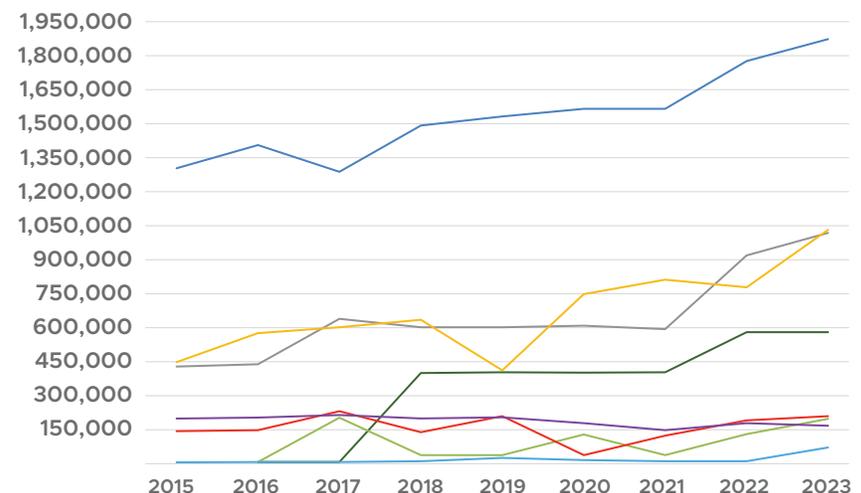
**\$1,091,628**  
SPECIAL FUND CASH BALANCE

**\$656,729**  
SLAC FUND CASH BALANCE



WSAC collects dues to support 5 main programs. Also collects assessments for 3 other special projects.

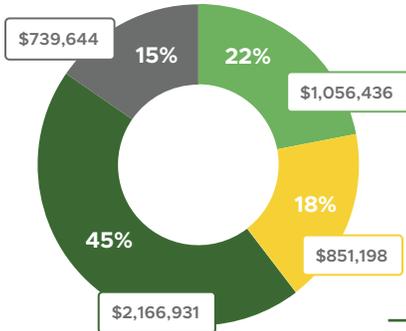
### 9 YEAR REVENUE TRENDS



- Membership Dues
- Revenue from Affiliates
- Endorsements & Other Non-Dues
- Litigation Funds
- Contract Services
- Conferences and Events
- Net Investment Income
- Special Assessments

# WHERE SPENDING OCCURS

2023 Total Expenditure — \$4,814,209



**82% of 2023 expenses went to the team of staff and contractors**

- Policy, Legislative, Litigation
- Member Services, Conferences & Events
- Affiliates and Contract Services
- General and Administrative



## SUPPORTING COUNTIES

Your team of experts

11 FTE – Policy, Government, Legal

6 FTE – Member Services, Communication, Marketing

3 FTE – Administrative, Financial, Logistics

6 Contracted Professionals – 13 Services Contracts



## LITIGATION

Tackling the legal issues most important to you

**\$227k Legal defense consultation**

- \$137k Civil Conversion
- \$87k Indigent Defense



## COMMUNICATION

Marketing the stories and messages that matter

**\$31k media, marketing, and brand awareness**

- \$40k investment in new Association Management Software**
- Expanded Business Partners Program to increase non-dues revenue**



## CONFERENCE

Training & educating county leaders

**8 in-person conferences supporting 5 associations**

**Nearly 700 attendees across all conferences**

**\$68k revenue from sponsors and vendors for County Leaders**

## NET INCOME & CASH RESERVES

Year	Net Income	Cash
2015	85,432	502,796
2016	106,118	646,280
2017	82,778	851,196
2018	238,782	749,561
2019	(88,178)	651,808
2020	68,532	661,591
2021	259,919	878,586
2022	499,037	1,783,018
2023	317,680	1,378,891

## NET ASSET CHANGES

Net Assets increased from new dues assessments and overall cost savings from staff vacancies.



# 2023 Combined Dues

County	General Dues	Transportation Dues	Public Lands Dues	Human Svcs Dues	County Planning Assessment	Solid Waste Assessment	SLAC Dues	Total Dues
Adams	6,122	2,073	100	308	213	523	3,363	12,701
Asotin	6,379	2,120	264	330	228	542	3,424	13,288
Benton	38,940	8,167	468	3,096	2,146	2,995	11,184	66,996
Chelan	16,343	3,971	4,078	1,176	815	1,293	5,799	33,474
Clallam	15,824	3,874	7,170	1,132	785	1,254	5,675	35,714
Clark	91,908	18,003	3,031	7,596	5,266	6,986	23,806	156,597
Columbia	3,178	1,526	513	58	40	301	2,662	8,277
Cowlitz	21,784	4,981	1,236	1,638	1,136	1,703	7,095	39,573
Douglas	10,052	2,802	150	642	445	819	4,300	19,210
Ferry	3,753	1,633	1,566	106	74	344	2,799	10,275
Franklin	19,621	4,579	310	1,455	1,008	1,540	6,580	35,093
Garfield	2,895	1,473	325	34	23	280	2,594	7,623
Grant	19,973	4,645	1,032	1,485	1,029	1,566	6,664	36,394
Grays Harbor	15,613	3,835	2,394	1,114	772	1,238	5,625	30,591
Island	17,553	4,195	100	1,279	887	1,384	6,087	31,485
Jefferson	8,224	2,463	3,789	486	337	681	3,864	19,845
King	319,849	60,330	3,734	33,798	23,429	30,223	78,125	549,489
Kitsap	50,714	10,353	900	4,096	2,840	3,883	13,990	86,776
Kittitas	10,602	2,904	2,366	688	477	860	4,431	22,329
Klickitat	6,474	2,138	575	338	234	549	3,447	13,754
Lewis	16,815	4,058	8,811	1,216	843	1,329	5,911	38,983
Lincoln	4,397	1,752	242	161	112	393	2,952	10,008
Mason	13,863	3,510	4,541	965	669	1,106	5,208	29,862
Okanogan	9,829	2,761	4,596	623	432	802	4,247	23,290
Pacific	6,551	2,152	2,334	344	239	555	3,465	15,640
Pend Oreille	4,839	1,834	1,704	199	138	426	3,057	12,196
Pierce	163,397	31,278	1,348	13,670	9,476	12,373	40,842	272,384
San Juan	5,615	1,978	100	265	183	485	3,242	11,869
Skagit	25,028	5,583	10,995	1,914	1,327	1,947	7,868	54,663
Skamania	4,543	1,779	4,918	174	120	404	2,987	14,925
Snohomish	147,932	28,406	8,602	12,356	8,565	11,207	37,157	254,226
Spokane	97,023	18,953	100	8,031	5,567	7,372	25,025	162,070
Stevens	10,576	2,900	1,104	686	476	858	4,424	21,024
Thurston	54,078	10,978	5,888	4,382	3,038	4,136	14,791	97,292
Wahkiakum	3,277	1,544	1,706	66	46	309	2,685	9,632
Walla Walla	13,249	3,396	100	913	633	1,060	5,062	24,413
Whatcom	42,261	8,783	5,490	3,378	2,342	3,246	11,975	77,475
Whitman	10,704	2,924	100	697	483	868	4,455	20,232
Yakima	47,118	9,685	2,417	3,791	2,628	3,612	13,133	82,384
<b>TOTALS</b>	<b>1,366,897</b>	<b>290,321</b>	<b>99,196</b>	<b>114,684</b>	<b>79,500</b>	<b>111,454</b>	<b>400,000</b>	<b>2,462,052</b>

# Advocacy

The Legislative Advocacy & Policy Division supports one of WSAC's primary goals - to advocate on behalf of counties at the state legislature, regulatory agencies, and executive branch offices in support of sound policy and fiscal strategies that sustain the basic government services that ensure the health and safety of all Washingtonians.

## 2024 Action Items

- **Legislative Session** — Work with the state legislature to educate lawmakers on county priorities for indigent defense and behavioral health system improvements.
- **Legislative Advocacy** — Monitor legislative and state budget proposals for county interests and opportunities.
- **Ongoing Advocacy & Professional Development** — Work with state agencies, members, and other stakeholders in analyzing unresolved and emerging county government issues and concerns and implementing legislation passed in 2024. Continue to develop and invest in professional development opportunities for members and staff.

### 60-Day “Short” Session Summary

The 2024 legislative session was the second half of the two-year legislative cycle. The short, 60-day session included the passage of supplemental state Operating, Capital, and Transportation budgets along with numerous legislative proposals. Some of the most significant issues for counties included bills proposing changes to indigent defense requirements and funding, public records, environmental justice, housing, prejudgment interest, and waste management. The 2024 session was also a precursor to a major election season, with statewide offices, all members of the House, and half of the Senate up for election.

### Supplemental State Budgets

The final Supplemental State Operating Budget increased total spending another \$2.1 billion over the previously approved 2-year, \$69.8 billion budget. There was special emphasis in the budget for spending on the opioid crisis (\$51 million) from funding received in legal settlements and increased investments (\$82 million) for housing and homelessness programs and (\$339 million) for behavioral health services. The Supplemental State Capital budget also included significant additional investments (\$127 million) for housing. There's also roughly \$249 million spread between the budgets in additional Climate Commitment Act (CCA) funding.

## TEAM MEMBERS

**Juliana Roe**  
Senior Policy Director

**Paul Jewell**  
Senior Policy Director

**Jaime Bodden**  
Managing Director,  
WSALPHO

**Axel Swanson**  
Managing Director,  
WSACE

**Brianna Steere**  
FPHS Policy Advisor

**Chris Goodwin**  
FPHS Policy Advisor

**Travis Dutton**  
Policy Analyst

**Curtis Steinhauer**  
Policy Analyst

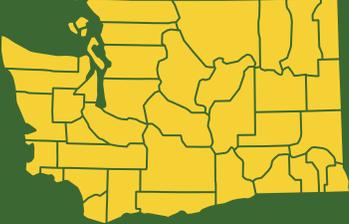
**Mike Hoover**  
Policy Consultant

### Citizen Initiatives

Also taking center stage this session were six controversial citizen initiatives. They included an initiative restoring police vehicular pursuits (I-2081), repealing the Climate Commitment Act (I-2117), making the state's long-term care insurance program voluntary rather than mandatory (I-2124), repealing the capital gains tax (I-2109), prohibiting state and local income taxes (I-2111), and establishing a parents' bill of rights (I-2081). The legislature ultimately adopted three initiatives (police pursuits, prohibiting an income tax, and parental rights). The voters will decide the remaining initiatives in November.

# Legislative Steering Committee

The Legislative Steering Committee (LSC) is responsible for preparing and recommending a proposed legislative agenda for the review and approval of the active WSAC members. The LSC monitors the events of each legislative session and is empowered to adopt policy relating to legislation, executive branch policies and operation, and the activities of other organizations and associations.



**39** Counties Involved

**Kate Dean, Co-Chair**  
Jefferson County  
Commissioner

**Kevin Overbay, Co-Chair**  
Chelan County  
Commissioner

## 2024 Action Items

- **LSC Meetings** — Meet in person/hybrid every other week during the legislative session to review and take positions on critical legislation affecting counties.
- **County Priority Updates** — Engage with leaders from state agencies and the legislature to keep them apprised of county priorities.
- **Legislative Agenda** — Develop a recommendation for the WSAC legislative agenda for the 2025-26 biennium.

## Preparing For 2025

The LSC adopted a new process for developing its recommendation to the membership for WSAC's 2025-26 legislative agenda. The new process requires a balanced recommendation with priorities that are important to larger, more populous counties and smaller, less populous counties. It also incorporates proportional voting and requires that priorities meet the following criteria:

- must be limited to county government operations, services, costs, revenues, or legislative or executive authority
- must benefit multiple counties
- must not directly harm any counties.

WSAC members will consider the LSC recommendation at the annual membership meeting at the County Leaders Conference in November.

### LEGISLATIVE STEERING COMMITTEE (LSC) ROSTER

<b>Dan Blankenship</b> Adams County	<b>Marty Hall</b> Columbia County	<b>Janet St. Clair</b> Island County	<b>Sharon Trask</b> Mason County	<b>Jani Hitchen</b> Pierce County Council Alternate	<b>Dave Somers</b> Snohomish County Executive	<b>Kaylee Galloway</b> Whatcom County Council
<b>Chris Seubert</b> Asotin County	<b>Richard Dahl</b> Cowlitz County	<b>Kate Dean</b> Jefferson County	<b>Chris Branch</b> Okanogan County	<b>Bruce Dammeier</b> Pierce County Executive	<b>Al French</b> Spokane County	<b>Satpal Sidhu</b> Whatcom County Executive
<b>Michael Alvarez</b> Benton County	<b>Dan Sutton</b> Douglas County	<b>Christine Rolfes</b> Kitsap County	<b>Lisa Olsen</b> Pacific County	<b>Christine Minney</b> San Juan County	<b>Wes McCart</b> Stevens County	<b>Jon Scanlon</b> Whatcom County Council Alternate
<b>Kevin Overbay</b> Chelan County	<b>Brian Dansel</b> Ferry County	<b>Laura Osiadacz</b> Kittitas County	<b>John Gentle</b> Pend Oreille County	<b>Lisa Janicki</b> Skagit County	<b>Wayne Fournier</b> Thurston County	<b>Art Swannack</b> Whitman County
<b>Mark Ozias</b> Clallam County	<b>Jim Nelson</b> Garfield County	<b>Jacob Anderson</b> Klickitat County	<b>Ryan Mello</b> Pierce County Council	<b>Richard Mahar</b> Skamania County	<b>Lee Tischer</b> Wahkiakum County	<b>Amanda McKinney</b> Yakima County
<b>Michelle Belkot</b> Clark County	<b>Danny Stone</b> Grant County	<b>Sean Swope</b> Lewis County	<b>Paul Herrera</b> Pierce County Council Alternate	<b>Megan Dunn</b> Snohomish County Council		
<b>Glen Yung</b> Clark County Alternate	<b>Jill Warne</b> Grays Harbor County	<b>Scott Hutsell</b> Lincoln County				

# County Legislative Priorities

At the end of the 2023 session, WSAC members found themselves in a welcome but unusual situation, having accomplished all four of their adopted legislative priorities. The Legislative Steering Committee met in the fall and considered adopting additional priorities for 2024. Ultimately, the committee opted to forgo additional priorities. Instead, it chose to concentrate its efforts on increasing legislative awareness and understanding of public defense and behavioral health issues. The committee also adopted positions on specific issues anticipated to be considered during the 2024 session.



## Equal Access to Justice – the Public Defense System

The absence of state revenue for such an obvious state mandate delegated to counties leaves counties with no option but to cut from other public health and safety services provided to our shared communities. Counties support increased state funding for trial court public defense.

### OUTCOMES

**HB 2202** would have created a state indigent defense and law enforcement assistance account in the state treasury. The revenues would be distributed to local governments as financial assistance to support law enforcement and public defense services. (No hearing)

WSAC Position: **SUPPORT** Outcome: **FAILED**

**2SSB 5780** creates a law student rural defense program via the Office of Public Defense (OPD) and a law student rural prosecution program via the CJTC. It also expands the criminal defense and prosecution training capacity at OPD and CJTC.

WSAC Position: **SUPPORT** Outcome: **PASSED**

**SB 5781** would have created a law student rural defense program via OPD.

WSAC Position: **SUPPORT** Outcome: **FAILED**

**SB 5782** would have required a study of the indigent defense system by the 6th Amendment Center. (No hearing)

WSAC Position: **NEUTRAL** Outcome: **FAILED**

**SB 6142** would have required counties to provide equal amounts of funding to both prosecutors and defense attorneys. Any cost increases for public defense costs above expenditures on the bill's effective date would be paid out of the State general fund. (No hearing)

WSAC Position: **SUPPORT** Outcome: **FAILED**

**SB 5773** would have provided cities and counties money for public defense, ramping up to 50% state funding by 2028. (No hearing)

WSAC Position: **SUPPORT** Outcome: **FAILED**



## Taking on the Behavioral Health Crisis

Counties are on the front line of Washington's behavioral health crisis. Our state has a shortage of mental health providers and a high demand for treatment. Counties need help to deliver what is needed most by some of our most vulnerable residents.

### OUTCOME

**1115 Waiver** - Counties supported an effort to ensure that the legislature approved implementing the 1115 waiver for up to 90 days, rather than the previously approved 30 days, for Medicaid benefits in detention facilities. This approval was successfully included in the state's final budget.

# County Supported Legislative Action



## County Revenue Enhancement & Flexibility

Counties support policies to increase and diversify county revenues and local flexibility in resource utilization. Statewide policies to eliminate or exempt fees and taxes should not impact local revenues.

### OUTCOMES

**SB 5770** would have replaced the current 1% annual property tax growth cap with a new limit based on annual inflation, plus any banked inflation balance, not to exceed 3%. This bill also removed the non-supplant language that applies to counties with a population of 1.5 million or more in the existing statute.

WSAC Position: **SUPPORT** Outcome: **FAILED**



## Investments in Fish Barrier Removal

Counties need financial assistance to advance goals for salmon recovery by replacing fish barriers.

### OUTCOMES

An additional **\$25 million** supplemental State Capital Budget appropriation for the Salmon Recovery Funding Board. If the Climate Commitment Act is repealed, the appropriation is null and void.

An additional **\$22 million** supplemental State Capital Budget appropriation for the Brian Abbott Fish Barrier Removal Board project list. If the Climate Commitment Act is repealed, the appropriation is null and void.



## Housing

Counties support state investment in infrastructure that supports housing development and resources to assist local government in streamlining permitting systems and processes.

### OUTCOMES

None.



## Study to Assess Septage Treatment Capacity

Counties support one-time funding to study septage treatment capacity.

### OUTCOMES

**\$250 thousand** is appropriated in the supplemental State Capital Budget for WSALPHO to conduct a statewide septage treatment assessment and capacity study.

# County Supported Legislative Action (continued)



## Broadband

Counties need funding to support local project planning, business development services, and stakeholder and partner engagement for broadband.

### OUTCOMES

**\$1.5 million** is provided in the supplemental State Operating Budget for Commerce to provide technical assistance to grantees of federal Broadband Equity Access and Deployment (BEAD) grant funding.



## Public Records Act Reforms

Counties support working with stakeholders to reduce abusive public records requests and litigation.

### OUTCOMES

**HB 2037** would have protected local governments from vexatious lawsuits associated with public records requests, providing more opportunities to correct mistakes and fully provide records while discouraging litigation and legal fees.

WSAC Position: **SUPPORT** Outcome: **FAILED**



## Fully Fund All New County Responsibilities and Stabilize Existing Support

Counties support state action, ensuring adequate resources for all new and existing requirements resulting from legislation.

### OUTCOMES

Unfortunately, bills WSAC considers as unfunded mandates were passed by the legislature and signed by the Governor. They include:

**HB 1998** requires counties to update their development regulations to allow co-living housing units. **County costs: \$672 thousand.**

**SB 6015** requires counties to update their development regulations to meet new statewide limitations on residential off-street parking requirements. **County costs: \$840 thousand.**



## Additional Corrections Officer Training Classes

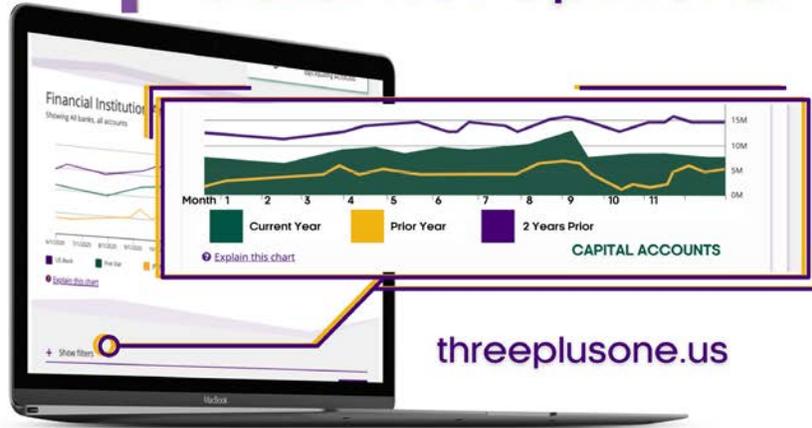
Counties supported the Criminal Justice Training Commission's request to add two additional corrections officer academy (COA) classes in FY 24 and four additional classes in FY 25, and thereafter.

### OUTCOMES

The supplemental State Operating Budget includes funding for one additional COA class in FY 24 and nine additional COA classes in FY 25.

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# Federal Priorities

LEARN MORE:  
[www.wsac.org/advocacy](http://www.wsac.org/advocacy)

The Washington State Association of Counties works closely with the National Association of Counties (NACo) in federal policy development and advocacy pertaining to proposed federal legislation, agency actions as well as other federal issues and proposals that have direct impact and nexus to the operations and administration of county government in Washington State.

## As part of the 2024 WSAC Federal Policies and Positions, WSAC members adopted these Federal Priority Issues:

**Medicaid Inmate Exclusion** – Congress needs to reinstate federal health care benefits for non-convicted justice involved individuals. Congress must address the crisis caused by this callous Medicaid inmate exclusion policy that strips individuals who are still presumed innocent of their federal benefits.

**Payment In Lieu of Taxes (PILT)** – This vital funding mechanism ensures counties receive property tax like compensation for federal lands within their boundaries. Full, predictable, and permanent mandatory funding for the PILT programs is needed to assure counties receive a property tax like compensation for federal lands within their boundaries. In Federal Fiscal Year (FFY) 2023, Washington’s counties (37 of 39) received \$27.1 million in PILT.

**Secure Rural Schools (SRS)** – Permanent reauthorization and funding of the SRS program is important to Washington State counties. In FFY22, Washington’s counties (27 of 39) received \$17.3 million in SRS funding. We ask Congress to:

- Restore full funding of SRS back to historic 25% funding level counties received with inflation built into the payment mechanism.
- Provide for yearly election of Title II/III designation
- Allow Resource Advisory Committee (RAC) appointments to be made at the regional or local forest level.

**County Veteran Service Officers (CVSOs)** – WSAC desires to have Veteran Service Officers serving all 39 counties as many veterans are not always aware of the benefits available to them. With the high presence of active and retired military personnel, WSAC supports the Commitment to Veteran Support and Outreach Act (H.R. 984/S.106), to authorize federal funding to expand and strengthen County Veteran Service Officers (CVSOs).

**Behavioral Health and Opioids** – According to the Washington’s Department of Health, 2,646 people died of a drug overdose (of which 1,803 were synthetic opioids) in 2022. In 2020 Washington State had 1,731 drug related deaths (of which 672 were synthetic opioids). This is in addition to over 1,200 suicides. It is important to act swiftly in addressing these national emergencies by providing additional resources and taking the steps outlined below. We recognize that government cannot tackle this issue alone, county leaders are also calling upon private sector and non-governmental partners, including, but not limited to, manufacturers, pharmacies, and health care providers to be part of the solution.

- Support the Local 9-8-8 Response Act
- Ongoing Support for Comprehensive State and Local Efforts
- Preventing & Identifying Addiction
- Expanding Access to Treatment & Recovery
- Enhancing Support for Law Enforcement
- Strengthen Interstate Collaboration to Stop Drugs Entering Washington State

## 2024 FEDERAL ISSUES AND RELATIONS COMMITTEE

**Mary Kuney, Chair**  
Spokane County  
Commissioner

**Mike French**  
Clallam County  
Commissioner

**Janet St. Clair**  
Island County  
Commissioner

**Sharon Trask**  
Mason County  
Commissioner

**Ron Wesen**  
Skagit County  
Commissioner

**Amanda McKinney**  
Yakima County  
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**Dan Blankenship**  
Adams County  
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**Dennis Weber**  
Cowlitz County  
Commissioner

**Sean Swope**  
Lewis County  
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**Jani Hitchen**  
Pierce County  
Councilmember

**Cindy Wolf**  
San Juan County  
Councilmember

**Eric Johnson**  
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**Kevin Overbay**  
Chelan County  
Commissioner

**Heidi Eisenhour**  
Jefferson County  
Commissioner

**Scott Hutsell**  
Lincoln County  
Commissioner

**Wes McCart**  
Stevens County  
Commissioner

**Kaylee Galloway**  
Whatcom County  
Councilmember

**Juliana Roe**  
Senior Policy Director  
and Interim General  
Counsel

## Public Land Payments

County	SRS/Fed FY 2022	PILT/Fed FY 2023	Dept of Energy FY 2022	Refuge (RRSA) Federal FY22	DFW PILT 2023	DNR PILT CY 2022	DNR/Timber 6Yr Annual Avg	Total	% of Total Revenue
Adams	-	66,244	-	6,124	3,455	932	-	76,756	0.07%
Asotin	70,299	192,437	-	494	49,870	-	-	313,100	0.28%
Benton	-	200,789	1,020,811	6,404	-	-	-	545,010	0.48%
Chelan	1,296,418	3,648,663	-	11,219	51,107	9,646	-	5,017,053	4.44%
Clallam	923,812	1,236,499	-	7,790	-	5,747	5,732,589	7,906,437	7.00%
Clark	3,409	2,535	-	28,830	-	2,330	2,644,127	2,681,231	2.38%
Columbia	128,482	445,105	-	689	20,713	-	-	594,989	0.53%
Cowlitz	129,532	29,007	-	1,675	-	1,216	906,135	1,067,565	0.95%
Douglas	2	183,951	-	-	-	153	-	184,106	0.16%
Ferry	760,857	898,561	-	-	36,048	-	-	1,695,466	1.50%
Franklin	-	190,729	188,268	84	-	204	-	355,252	0.31%
Garfield	118,808	280,891	-	-	19,842	-	-	419,541	0.37%
Grant	-	883,470	604,063	5,897	137,747	276	-	1,337,085	1.18%
Grays Harbor	374,357	302,487	-	4,230	75,955	70,122	1,983,440	2,810,592	2.49%
Island	-	2,364	-	-	-	-	-	2,364	0.00%
Jefferson	1,040,181	1,769,021	-	26,268	-	89,059	1,733,526	4,658,055	4.13%
King	205,151	1,017,602	-	-	-	355,862	2,738,183	4,316,799	3.82%
Kitsap	-	-	-	-	-	61,296	724,436	785,732	0.70%
Kittitas	638,272	1,291,922	-	-	451,954	241,259	-	2,623,406	2.32%
Klickitat	52,722	125,208	-	42,200	81,767	55,118	328,458	685,473	0.61%
Lewis	1,743,388	725,775	-	235	-	1,892	8,138,417	10,609,707	9.40%
Lincoln	-	281,957	-	-	13,642	325	-	295,924	0.26%
Mason	327,597	350,317	-	-	-	21,112	4,355,297	5,054,323	4.48%
Okanogan	1,845,365	3,142,410	-	1,052	501,207	79,230	-	5,569,264	4.93%
Pacific	-	8,143	-	67,863	-	27,940	2,523,517	2,627,463	2.33%
Pend Oreille	725,289	1,306,054	-	409	19,547	-	-	2,051,300	1.82%
Pierce	227,829	950,933	-	1,730	-	789	954,990	2,136,271	1.89%
San Juan	-	7,779	-	-	-	21,667	-	29,446	0.03%
Skagit	484,204	1,429,997	-	-	-	241,044	10,446,955	12,602,200	11.16%
Skamania	2,850,184	378,510	-	8,115	-	105,158	2,324,142	5,666,109	5.02%
Snohomish	627,474	1,663,329	-	-	-	256,146	7,071,593	9,618,542	8.52%
Spokane	-	6,482	-	58,468	-	20,670	-	85,620	0.08%
Stevens	343,604	706,798	-	163,267	-	3,034	107,050	1,323,753	1.17%
Thurston	1,116	1,355	-	20,232	-	134,727	5,922,188	6,079,618	5.39%
Wahkiakum	-	-	-	15,077	-	6,749	2,173,900	2,195,726	1.95%
Walla Walla	3,214	34,165	-	5,216	-	-	-	42,595	0.04%
Whatcom	987,291	2,254,709	-	-	-	5,370	2,628,987	5,876,356	5.21%
Whitman	-	67,294	-	-	-	153	-	67,447	0.06%
Yakima	1,394,460	1,044,486	-	7,130	410,437	22,724	-	2,879,238	2.55%
<b>Totals:</b>	<b>17,303,316</b>	<b>27,127,978</b>	<b>1,813,142</b>	<b>490,698</b>	<b>1,873,292</b>	<b>1,841,953</b>	<b>63,437,930</b>	<b>112,886,913.88</b>	<b>100.00%</b>

# Litigation & Amicus Briefs

In 2018, the WSAC Membership established the Strategic Litigation, Advocacy, and Communication (SLAC) Program designed to use legal actions as an effective tool to advance the WSAC policy agenda in coordination with legislative advocacy strategies and actions. WSAC's legal actions are used sparingly and as a last resort.

## Current Litigation Activities

### Trueblood Contempt Sanctions

The WSAC Board of Directors voted during its May 10, 2023, regular meeting to file an amicus curie brief in State of Washington, et. al., Respondents, vs. DSHS, COA No. 57573-6-II. The issue is whether counties can seek compensatory contempt sanctions against the Washington State Department of Social and Health Services (DSHS) when DSHS fails to timely transport Trueblood class members from jail, for admission at a state hospital for competency restoration, leaving counties to cover the costs of incarceration until the class members are transported. There is also a question as to whether a county may intervene in an underlying matter in order to pursue contempt sanctions against DSHS. The amicus brief is due 45 days after the last brief of the respondent which is currently due on June 21, 2023.

### Indigent Defense

The WSAC Board of Directors voted unanimously during their May 5, 2021, regular meeting to concur with the findings provided by the WSAC Legal Committee and Legislative Steering Committee that there are merits and reasonable grounds to support a legal challenge to require the State to fully fund constitutionally required trial court indigent defense services and authorized a legal challenge. WSAC filed its lawsuit on September 8, 2023. The State subsequently filed a motion to dismiss based on the premise that counties do not have legal standing to bring the suit. Superior Court Judge Allyson Zipp found in favor of the State and dismissed the lawsuit. WSAC must now determine whether to appeal the ruling.

### Civil Conversion

Following repeated violations of court orders by the State, a coalition of 28 counties (Coalition) and WSAC filed a lawsuit in Pierce County Superior Court against DSHS (Pierce County et. al. v. DSHS et. al., No. 3.23-cv-5775) on August 23, 2023, over DSHS's decision to stop providing initial evaluation and subsequent treatment for patients needing behavioral health support when exiting the criminal legal system. The Coalition also filed a motion for preliminary injunction to compel DSHS's immediate compliance with both state law and court orders. DSHS asserted it was not obligated to evaluate or treat patients whose criminal charges have been dismissed. After some legal maneuvering and the case was ultimately brought in front of Pierce County Superior Court Judge Michael Schwartz on October 6, 2023, who granted the Coalition's motion for a preliminary injunction. This order required DSHS to immediately perform its statutory obligation to evaluate all new conversion patients. The court further enjoined DSHS from releasing existing conversion patients without providing statutorily sufficient notification. In January 2024, the Coalition and the State were working on a Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) to settle the case. There have been some delays and the case has not yet settled. Pierce County plans to file its brief for settlement on June 28, 2024.

# Amicus Briefs

Amicus Curiae Briefs are a means to provide information to the court on a particular aspect of the case or point of law in an attempt to help the court make a determination on the matter. Over the past several years, WSAC has worked with counsel and county prosecuting attorneys to submit briefs on issues important to county government including:

- Personnel and Labor
- Public Works Liability
- Law Enforcement and Public Safety
- Public Health
- Corrections, Jails and Medical Costs
- Land Use and Zoning
- Taxation, Fees and Charges
- Public Records
- Franchise Agreements
- Juror Pay
- Public Health Responsibilities
- Trial Court Indigent Defense
- County Charter
- Constitutional and Administrative Authorities for County Elected Officials



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# Communications & Member Services

The Communications and Member Services Division oversees all external and internal communications and public-private partnerships that provide cost-saving services to counties. The department also produces in-person, hybrid, and virtual conferences that provide members and affiliates with networking and professional development opportunities.

## TEAM MEMBERS

### **Bridget Lockling**

Director, Operations and Administration

### **Tyler Melhart**

Graphic/Web Design Manager

### **Mitch Netzer**

Communications Manager

### **Jessica Strozewski**

Member Experience Manager

## 2024 Action Items

- **The Hub App** – Our new Association Management System, WaCounties Hub, is bringing together member information to create a valuable resource! This platform will allow groups to connect to share information, register for events, access news, and get the most up-to-date meeting resources. The Hub will continue to develop as we add more info and applications.
- **WSAC Website Redesign** – The WSAC Operations Team has been integrating the new AMS (The Hub) with the current website to streamline each platform, reduce redundancies, and create a better user experience. We also plan to give the website a facelift to give it a cleaner, faster, and more responsive design and navigation. A mobile app is also under construction to give the most friendly user experience possible!
- **Enhanced Learning and Networking** – We know that education, training, data, and information sharing are one of the most important resources an association can provide members. We are beginning a multi-year project to increase training opportunities and provide meaningful and responsive data that you need. We kicked off WACounties Quarterly to remind you of current benefits and important collaborations with other training partners. Virtual Assemblies will continue, and more Lunch and Learns will be added throughout the year. Look for more enhancements in 2024 and 2025.
- **County Leaders Conference** – This year's Annual Conference theme is "Finding a Path Forward Together." This year CLC will be hosted in Clark County, Vancouver, WA November 19th – 21st. Look for registrations to open this summer!

## 2023-24 Engagement

### 2023 Meetings

22 Virtual Assemblies

44+ Hybrid Meetings

### The Hub

350+ Registered Users

3,636 Total Records



Sign up at [members.wsac.org](https://members.wsac.org)

Connect with us on these social channels!



# Affiliate Directory

The Washington State Association of Counties (WSAC) supports many different kinds of county associations across the state, serving all levels of county government. WSAC does this by providing professional development trainings, networking, supporting associations with conference services, making information available, and acting as a voice for counties at the Washington State Legislature and in Congress in conjunction with the National Association of Counties (NACo). WSAC is dedicated to continue its work with affiliate associations and support our county professionals and creating stronger local governments across the state.



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**chorus**

# Business Partner Directory



Washington counties are engaged in delivering a broad range of services from public health and safety to road construction, environmental mitigation, and social services. With over 35,000 employees serving over 7.5 million residents, counties are looking to private and nonprofit sectors for innovation and solutions to improve their performance. Learn more about these services and how they can help improve service delivery and benefits to your county.

[wsac.org/businesspartners](https://wsac.org/businesspartners)



## Partner Level — Rainier

### Chorus

Chorus' digital health platform has helped state & county public-sector health agencies and health systems create and scale digital health applications through participatory design. Chorus' core product and solution offerings support a broad range of use cases including templates for community facing resource navigation tools, public and behavioral health workflows, and health system digital transformation.

**Ryan Napier**  
Business Development Lead  
ryan@joinchorus.com  
(310) 359-5263  
joinchorus.com

### Liberty Mutual Insurance

Through your affiliation with WSAC, this exclusive program gives your county a competitive edge and your employees an exclusive group discount on auto, home, and other lines of personal insurance. Plus, with Liberty Mutual's onsite educational events, you can deliver the tools your employees need to stay safe and secure in your workplace.

**Vicki Haworth**  
Lead Sales Representative  
vicki.haworth@libertymutual.com  
(360) 705-0600  
libertymutual.com

### **Live Healthy Prescription**

The NACo Prescription Discount Card is provided to you in a joint effort of your local county government and the National Association of Counties (NACo). Any county resident without prescription coverage can use this program. Even if you have prescription insurance coverage, you may still benefit from the discount card since it may save you money on prescriptions your existing plan does not cover.

**John Losh**  
*Member Outreach  
Manager*  
jlosh@naco.org  
(202) 661-8832  
nacohealth.org

### **NACo - National Association of Counties**

The National Association of Counties Financial Services Corporation (NACo FSC) leverages NACo's networks, evaluates emerging market county needs and establishes sustainable, cost-saving and value-added solutions that can be applied nationwide. By providing quality solutions, we strive to develop and maintain healthy, vibrant and safe counties across the United States.

**Paul Terragno**  
*Managing Director*  
pterragno@naco.org  
(202) 942-4228  
naco.org

### **Nationwide**

Nationwide Retirement Solutions (NRS) provides county employees with a Section 457 Deferred Compensation Program. Since its inception in 1980, NACo's Deferred Compensation Program has grown to become the largest supplemental retirement income program available to county employees.

**Kristopher Morton**  
*Program Director*  
k.morton@nationwide.com  
(614) 398-7184  
nrsforu.com

### **NextEra Energy Resources**

NextEra Energy Resources is America's premier clean energy leader and the world's largest producer of wind and solar energy. We develop, construct and operate power projects to produce electricity. Equally important, we are dedicated to quality, committed to environmental stewardship, and care about our communities.

**Ufuoma Ojumah**  
*Sr. Project Manager  
Development*  
ufuoma.ojumah@  
nexteraenergy.com  
(979) 739-1311

### **Previ**

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**Dallin Demke**  
*VP of Growth*  
hello@previ.com  
(801) 437-0620

### **Public Surplus**

Public Surplus has been helping government agencies sell their surplus for over 20 years. Public Surplus is excited to announce a new partnership with WSAC. Call us today to learn how your county can benefit.

**Jaren Waters**  
*Account Executive*  
jarenwaters@thepublicgroup.com  
(801) 932-7000 (ext. 428)  
wsac.org/businesspartners/public-surplus/

### **cashVest by three+one**

A liquidity data tool for the public sector & higher Ed to execute borrowing, investing, and cash management decisions with more confidence and greater ease. Because three+one is neither a bank nor a Registered Investment Advisor, we provide a pure and independent perspective on making certain every dollar you have is being put to work efficiently, every day.

**Samantha Rothschild**  
*Marketing Coordinator*  
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(585) 484-0311 (ext. 712)  
threeplusone.us

## Vector Payments

Our company brings decades of payments experience to further help local businesses apart of the WSAC network with the guaranteed lowest overall cost commitment including offers at 0% cost to you, best equipment available, and 24/7 personal support to ensure credit card processing is NEVER a pain point anymore.

**Ryan Mirpanah**  
*Managing Partner*  
ryan@vectorpayments.com  
(617) 681-0210  
vectorpayments.com

## WCIF - Washington Counties Insurance Fund

WCIF was established in 1958 by the Washington State Association of Counties (WSAC) to provide more cost-efficient health benefits for county employees. WCIF is a public non-profit multiple employer benefit trust (501 C9) that provides health and welfare benefits for the employees of counties and other publicly funded entities. WCIF currently provides services to over 100 participating employers within the State of Washington.

**Bobby Jackson**  
*Executive Director*  
bobby@wcif.net  
(360) 292-4475  
wcif.net

## Partner Level – Columbia

### Hampton Lumber

Hampton Lumber is a fourth-generation, family-owned company headquartered in Portland, OR. Hampton operates ten sawmills in Oregon, Washington, and British Columbia and markets wood products all over the world. Our forestlands are certified by the Sustainable Forestry Initiative (SFI), an independent, non-profit organization that promotes sustainable forest management.

**Kristin Rasmussen**  
*Director of Public Affairs & Communications*  
kristinrasmussen@hamptonlumber.com  
(503) 203-6563  
hamptonlumber.com

### PSE

Washington state's largest energy utility, serving over 1.2 million electric customers and 800,000 natural gas customers across 10 counties. Aspiring to reach beyond net zero carbon emissions by 2045

**Carryn Vande Griend**  
*PSE Local Government Affairs*  
carryn.vandegriend@pse.com  
(509) 218-9012  
pse.com

### SSC - Sanitary Service Company

SSC provides full service recycling and solid waste collection for residential and commercial customers. SSC works closely with Whatcom County on solid waste and recycling issues and provides services consistent with the County's Comprehensive Solid Waste Plan.

**Ted Carlson**  
*General Manager*  
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(360) 738-7853  
ssc-inc.com

## Partner Level – Cascade

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*Principal*

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*President*

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*Division Vice President*

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wasteconnections.com

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## For more information, contact:

Nationwide Retirement

(877) 677-3678

Nationwide Retirement Solutions and Nationwide Life Insurance Company (collectively "Nationwide") have endorsement relationships with the National Association of Counties (NACo). More information about the endorsement relationships can be found online at nrsforu.com.

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# WSAC Programs

## Columbia River Caucus

The Columbia River Basin Water Supply Development Program was initiated by the legislature in 2006. The purpose of the program is to seek out and develop new water supply in eastern Washington. New water supplies are intended for both in-stream and out-of-stream use; water from projects funded by the program are allocated 1/3 for in-stream use and 2/3 for out-of-stream use.

WSAC receives funding from the Department of Ecology to provide staff support to eastern Washington county commissioners. This allows commissioners to participate as full partners in the program. The commissioners meet quarterly as the Columbia River Caucus.

### 2023-24 ACTIVITIES

- Continue to monitor and engage in deliberations and negotiations on the Columbia River Treaty.
- Ensure counties have a voice in Ecology's management of the Columbia River Water Supply Program.
- Support quarterly meetings of the Columbia River Caucus.
- Support the Commissioner representatives at the quarterly meetings of the Columbia River Policy Advisory Group (CR-PAG).
- Continue to attend and participate in the CR-PAG as needed.
- Facilitate regular discussions and meetings with members and the Director of the Office of Columbia River.
- Conduct a 2-day field tour in late spring for WSAC members of Columbia River Basin water supply projects.
- Monitor statewide policy development on water resource management issues directly related to the Columbia River and, more broadly, to keep Caucus members informed of changes.



**Wes McCart, Chair**  
Stevens County  
Commissioner

**Paul Jewell**  
Senior Policy Director

**Travis Dutton**  
Policy Analyst

**Ben Floyd**  
Contract Facilitator, White  
Bluffs Consulting

**Lara Floyd**  
Contract Facilitator, White  
Bluffs Consulting

# Counties Coastal Caucus

The Washington State Association of Counties created the Coastal Counties Caucus, comprised of 14 counties bordering Puget Sound, Strait of Juan de Fuca, and the Pacific Ocean, shortly before the creation of the Puget Sound Partnership (PSP) in 2007. The Caucus creates a forum for counties to interact, engage, and recommend WSAC positions on issues relating to the waters of Puget Sound, Hood Canal, and the Pacific Ocean. The program also supports members of the Puget Sound Partnership's Ecosystem Coordination Board and Salmon Recovery Council, both of which have county elected official representation. The Caucus works to ensure coastal county interests and priorities are brought forward to the Legislative Steering Committee, state and federal agencies, tribal nations, and other key stakeholders.



## 2023-24 ACTIVITIES

- Support WSAC members serving on Puget Sound Partnership (PSP) Boards, Councils and Committees and coordinate representation in PSP meetings and other state efforts that impact communities along the Puget Sound and Pacific coast.
  - Ensure county policy interests are considered in the implementation of the 2022-2026 PSP Action Agenda and other salmon recovery related plans.
  - Monitored and reported on Puget Sound Partnership efforts that involved county policy interests to WSAC policy staff and the Counties Coastal Caucus including the 2022-2026 Action Agenda items such as the RFP opportunities provided through the Habitat, Shellfish, and Stormwater Initiative Leads and engaging Congressional leaders with Puget Sound Day on the hill (virtual).
  - Planned and coordinated the annual meeting for the WSAC Leaders Conference to include a briefing on the RCO's and SCC's new riparian grant programs and the PSP's newly formed Strategic Funding Team, a support team that will assist local partners with federal grant opportunities.
  - Communicated Puget Sound Partnership legislative priorities and opportunities for legislative briefings.
- Monitoring and communicating to Coastal Counties about shared work plan priorities for the Salmon Recovery Council and Ecosystem Coordination Board, including:
    1. Implement and adaptively manage the 2022-2026 Action Agenda and Puget Sound Salmon Recovery Plan for a more resilient Puget Sound ecosystem
    2. Develop, advance, and monitor necessary policy changes to protect and recovery Puget Sound, including salmon and other imperiled species and their habitats
    3. Strengthen and broaden relationships with vulnerable populations and overburdened communities to increase inclusiveness, build meaningful participation, and support equitable outcomes within the Puget Sound recovery network
    4. Support the Partnership in providing early and often engagement and communication, in addition to consultation, for all tribal nations
    5. Enhance and amplify the knowledge network that supports Puget Sound ecosystem recovery, including by improving coordination and integrating diverse types of knowledge
    6. Maintain, expand, and diversify funding for the recovery effort and ensure partners have capacity to scale recovery work with increased investments.

# Timber and Public Lands Program

The Timber Counties Program works diligently to support, advocate for, and represent our member counties with interests in timberland management issues. This includes counties that are beneficiaries of state forestlands and counties with other private, state, and federal forestlands utilized for commercial timber harvest, conservation, recreation, and other purposes.

## 2023-24 ACTIVITIES

- Provide advice and support for county representation in the Timber, Fish, and Wildlife (TFW) principles meetings.
- Mark Meleason, contractor for WSAC, continues to represent WSAC on the Cooperative Monitoring, Evaluation, and Review (CMER) Committee.
- Court Stanley, contractor for WSAC, continues to represent WSAC on the TFW Policy Committee and monitors the activities of the adaptive management program.
- Continued monitoring and follow-up with DNR on implementation of the trust lands performance assessment.
- Support quarterly meetings of the Timber Counties Caucus.
- Successfully advocated for additional funding to support encumbered lands replacement purchases and conservation of older forests in willing counties.
- Successfully implemented concurrence requirements for encumbered lands replacement acquisitions by the Department of Natural Resources.
- Convene a workgroup of encumbered lands counties to develop recommendations for distribution of benefits among counties utilizing land pooling.
- Incorporated additional Timber 101 presentations into quarterly caucus meetings and recorded them to add to WSAC's library of training videos.



**39** Counties Involved

**Tom Lannen, Chair**  
Skamania County  
Commissioner

**Paul Jewell**  
Senior Policy Director

**Travis Dutton**  
Policy Analyst

**Court Stanley**  
Program Consultant

**Mark Meleason**  
Program Consultant



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**Morton, WA**  
**Randle, WA**

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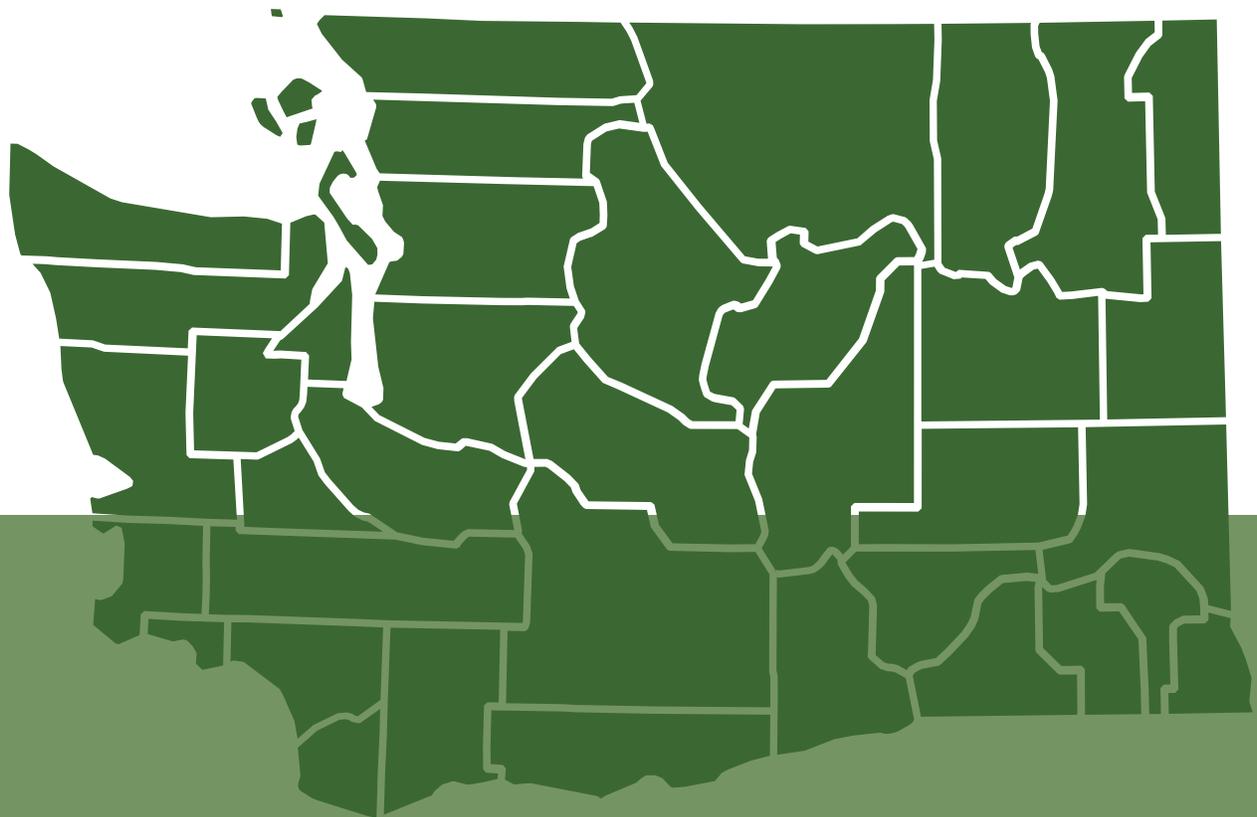
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**WASHINGTON**  
STATE ASSOCIATION  
*of* **COUNTIES**