


# Washington Rural Community Resources: COHORT & NWRIS



**WSAC Conference Presentation**  
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**Across rural Washington, we  
hear the same concerns**



Water/  
Wastewater

Housing

Emergency  
Community  
Centers

Food  
Systems

Broadband

Child Care

**Common issues across counties  
and communities with similar,  
but also unique, circumstances**

# They also share some common barriers.

- **Lack of Human Capacity**
  - Experience, Expertise, Time
- **Lack of Financial Capacity**
  - Match, Bridge, Start-up
- **Access to Data**
  - Primary, Secondary, Analysis
- **Awareness**

# The Issue

- **We need to increase access and opportunities for rural communities**

# COHORT and NWRIS

## COHORT – Coastal County Focus

- Legislatively created
- Led by Ecology

## NWRIS – Statewide Focus

- Four agency partnership
- Federal and State

# What is COHORT?

The Coastal Hazards Organizational Resilience Team (COHORT) was developed in response to coastal communities' request that the state help address the growing severity of natural hazards, which include flooding, erosion, sea level rise, landslides, and a Cascadia earthquake and tsunami event.

FUNDED BY WASHINGTON'S

**CLIMATE**   
**COMMITMENT**  
**ACT** 

# COHORT is an Interdisciplinary Team Created to Address Coastal Hazards Across Entities



DEPARTMENT OF  
**ECOLOGY**  
State of Washington



WASHINGTON STATE UNIVERSITY  
**EXTENSION**





# COHORT Mission

**COHORT aims to work collaboratively with diverse communities and interests across 15 counties in the co-creation of projects designed to enhance capacities that address current and future challenges arising from changing coastal systems.**



# COHORT Goals



## Short Term:

- Enhance community relationships and identify needs.
- Connect community partners with resources.

## Long Term:

- Develop trusting and mutually beneficial relationships.
- Provide technical assistance to scope and design projects.
- Enhance long-term, community-centered capacity.

# WSU Extension Peninsula COHORT Project

## Expansion of Beach Naturalists Volunteer Training Program

- Implement new outreach plan targeting marginalized and underserved populations.
- Add additional Coastal Resilience topics to existing training and increase professional development opportunities for trained volunteers.

# WSU Extension King & Pierce Counties COHORT Project

## South Puget Sound Coastal Resilience Pilot Projects

### Vashon Nature Center Project

- Salmon recovery data collection pre- and post-bulkhead removal.

### South Park Duwamish River Project

- Flood preparation education and recovery efforts.

# WSU Extension Island County COHORT Project

## Coastal Resiliency and Sea Level Rise

- Provides outreach education to elderly citizens in low-lying coastal areas.
- Education will address public health and safety concerns regarding the impacts of flooding on aging septic systems.

# WSU Extension Wahkiakum County COHORT Project

## Engagement of Wahkiakum County Citizens & Leaders in Coastal Hazards Mitigation Projects

- Compile hazard-related priorities document.
- Deliver educational public presentations.
- Coordinate site visits to view successful flood and erosion mitigation projects.
- Leverage COHORT to initiate more projects

# Northwest Rural Investment Strategy

## Partners

- Washington Department of Commerce
- USDA Rural Development
- Program for Rural Washington
- WSU Extension

## *We help connect communities to Commerce and navigate resources*

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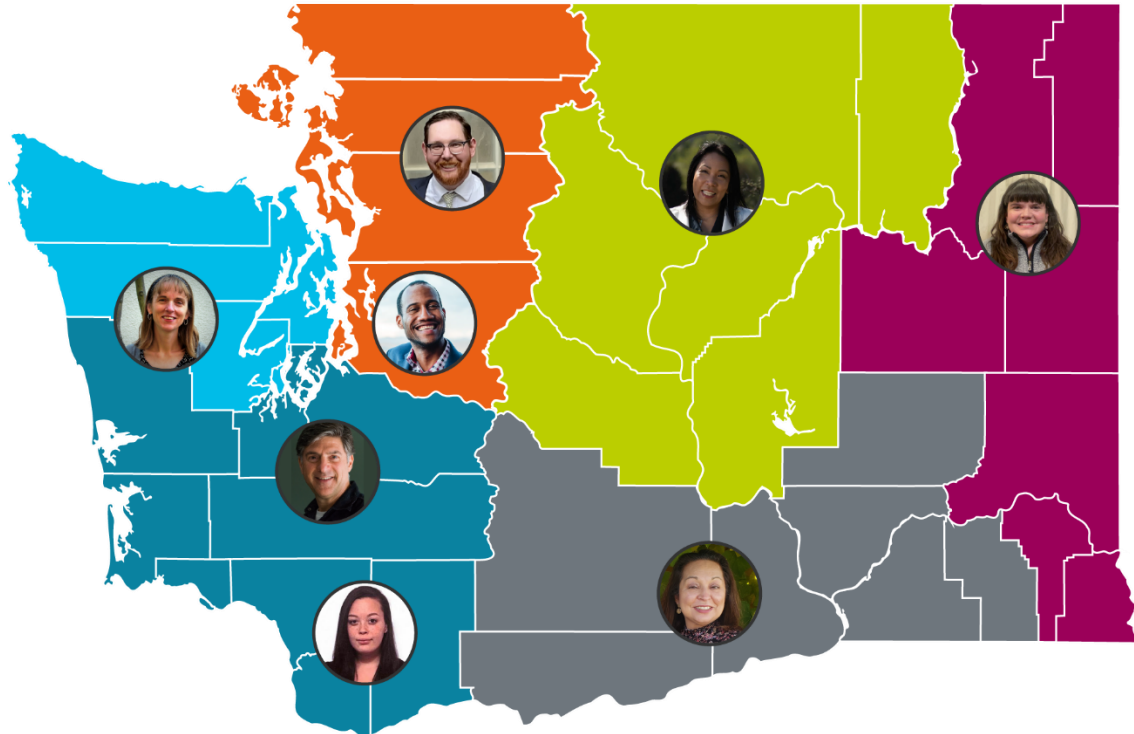
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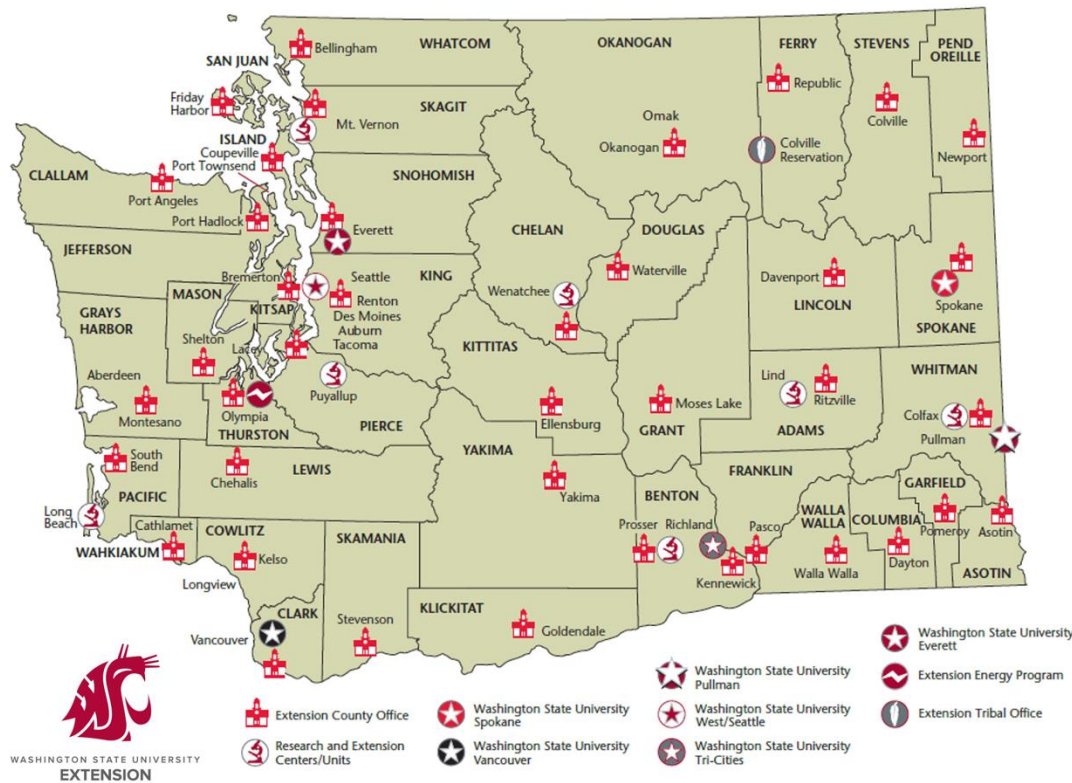


**PRWA is currently focused on eastern Washington as it has the greatest concentration of small rural communities. Through NWRIS, it will be expanding services statewide by early 2026.**



WSU Extension is a natural partner given its long- established Extension offices in every county, focus on rural development, and association with the state's land-grant university.

## Washington State University



# Northwest Rural Investment Strategy

## Approach

- Form a **core group** to coordinate, communicate, and follow-up
- To deploy **technical assistance** and **capacity building** resources
- To accelerate **access to** federal and state **capital**,
- Particularly for **under-served rural** communities across Washington State

# Collaborate with COHORT!

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# Connect with NWRIS

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# Thank You!

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