

# *Salmon Fry Education Contract*

## **Statutory and/or Budget Language**

\$500,000 of the general fund—state appropriation for fiscal year 2024 and \$500,000 of the general fund—state appropriation for fiscal year 2025 are provided solely for the office to contract with an organization that works with educators to secure salmon eggs, offer learning opportunities as the fry develop, and assist when students release their fry into local creeks and lakes. Funding may only be used for new programs located in elementary schools that are eligible for high-poverty allocations from the learning assistance program. Of the amounts provided in this subsection, the office may use no more than \$35,000 each fiscal year for office administration costs related to the contract.

## **Purpose**

This proviso-funded program works with Washington State educators in currently unserved high-poverty elementary schools to provide salmon-raising tanks with salmon eggs, offer learning opportunities to students and educators as the eggs develop into salmon fry, and support students to release their fry into local creeks and lakes identified as healthy salmon habitats.

## **Description of Services Provided**

In the 2023–24 school year, the the contracted lead, Hood Canal Salmon Enhancement Group (HCSEG), contracted with 14 other salmon education nonprofits to provide the Salmon in the Schools program to high poverty schools across Washington State. HCSEG and subcontractors partnered with the Washington Department of Fish and Wildlife and with tribal hatcheries to secure salmon eggs for participating classrooms. Classrooms were provided with large salmon tanks and related equipment, and educators were supported with healthy maintenance of the tanks. Programming included both in-class and virtual learning experiences with students about the life cycle and habitat needs of salmon. Teachers were also provided with teaching manuals, videos, in-class support, and virtual meetings to help them support student learning. Families and communities were also served through family events held at schools and community salmon release day events.

## **Criteria for Receiving Services and/or Grants**

Funding may only be used for programs located in elementary schools that are eligible for high-poverty allocations from the learning assistance program.



## Beneficiaries in the 2023–24 School Year

<b>Number of School Districts</b>	73
<b>Number of Schools</b>	150
<b>Number of Students</b>	11,091
<b>Number of Educators</b>	458
<b>Other</b>	N/A

## Are Federal or Other Funds Contingent on State Funding?

No

## State Funding History

<b>Fiscal Year</b>	<b>Amount Funded</b>	<b>Actual Expenditures</b>
2024	\$500,000	\$498,322
2023	\$500,000	\$493,512
2022	\$500,000	\$491,909

## Number of Beneficiaries Per Fiscal Year (e.g. School Districts, Schools, Students, Educators, Other)

<b>Fiscal Year</b>	<b>Number of Beneficiaries</b>
2024	11,772
2023	11,093
2022	109

## Programmatic Changes Since Inception (If Any)

This year, participating teachers were newly asked to complete a survey to gather information on how much value the SITS program brings to themselves as educators and their students. The survey also inquired about their ability to carry out the program independently. This year the 15 SITS partners developed an internal Strategy Group to seek additional sources of funding for the SITS program, seek ways to overcome obstacles that prevent teachers from carrying out the SITS program independently, and fine-tune strategies for equitably distributing the proviso funding to each partner.

## Program Evaluation or Evaluation of Major Findings

Program surveys and assessments showed an increase in student knowledge of and attitudes towards salmon. For example, Skagit Fisheries Enhancement Group saw results from 8 schools (450) students that showed an 86% overall improvement in scores between the student pre and post surveys.

Several partners were newly able to utilize local high school interns to assist in tank maintenance and cleaning, as well as mentoring elementary grade students during release day activities.

Benton Conservation District expanded their Salmon Summit release day in Kennewick to include a Salmon Summit West program in Prosser, with roughly 500 students in attendance this year. This year over 2,800 students attended the Salmon Summit in Kennewick in person and 4,350 more students joined online from classrooms across WA, OR, ID, MT and NJ.

Several partners are collaborating with local tribes for their programs' release day events. Some of these tribal partners include (but are not limited to): Yakima Nation, Confederated Tribes of the Umatilla Indian Reservation, the Wanapum Tribe, the American Indian Science and Engineering Society, and Jamestown S'Klallam Tribe.

Partners reported that in Year 3 their instruction and engagement with teachers has increased, and they are working to encourage/empower teachers to take on more ownership of the program.

## Major Challenges Faced by the Program

Aquarium equipment malfunctioning and some fish mortality issues were experienced.

Transportation and bussing costs significantly increased.

One of the greatest obstacles is the staff turnover rate at the participating high poverty schools. Due to frequent staff turnover, a school that has already participated in SITS the previous year must have their teachers reintroduced to the program in each following year. This makes it almost impossible for schools to become independent in leading their programs and allow the partners to have the capacity to grow into additional schools.

One of the other larger obstacles to overcome is the current funding for the SITS program. Unfortunately, transportation, bussing, supplies and equipment costs continue to rise each year. All of the partners currently use and are seeking other grant funds to carry out their SITS program for these high poverty schools, and most are unable to grow their program due to funding and related constraints on capacity.

## Future Opportunities

An increase in the funding for this proviso would allow the Salmon in the Schools partners to significantly expand the number of high poverty schools that are served by the program.

## Other Relevant Information

Benton Conservation District hosted a live streaming Salmon in the Schools event that served 4,350 WA students but the OSPI grant eligibility of each individual student is unknown, so this is not officially counted in the beneficiary numbers.

Website created for this proviso-funded program. [Salmon in the Schools](#)

## Schools/Districts Receiving Assistance

[Click here to see a list of all OSPI grant recipients in the 2024 Fiscal Year.](#)

### Program Contact Information

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