

Salmon Fry Education Contract

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.

Proviso Purpose

To work with Washington State educators in currently unserved high-poverty elementary schools to secure salmon eggs, offer learning opportunities aligned to the Washington State Science Learning Standards as the fry develop, and assist when students release their fry into local creeks and lakes.

Services Provided

The Hood Canal Salmon Enhancement Group, with 15 nonprofit partners statewide, implemented the **Salmon in the Schools (SITS)** program for high-poverty elementary schools. Partners coordinated with WDFW and local hatcheries for salmon eggs and release sites, installed aquariums, and provided in-class and virtual learning, teacher support, and program evaluations. Educators received manuals, videos, and technical assistance to maintain healthy habitats. Many partners also engaged families through reading events, community stewardship activities, and student art exhibits. HCSEG maintained regular communication with OSPI to share program progress and outcomes.

Criteria for Receiving Services/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 2024-25 School Year

Number of School Districts:	79
Number of Schools:	155
Number of Students:	10,077
Number of Educators:	361



Are Federal or Other Funds Contingent on State Funding?

No.

State Funding History

Fiscal Year	Amount Funded	Actual Expenditures
2025	\$500,000	\$499,040
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)

Fiscal Year	Number of Beneficiaries
2025	10,672
2024	11,772
2023	11,093
2022	109

Programmatic Changes Since Inception (If Any)

This year, the partnership expanded to include the **Grays Harbor Conservation District**, extending Salmon in the Schools (SITS) programming to additional schools in that region that were previously unserved. The team also broadened its quarterly SITS partner check-ins to include other organizations conducting similar programs outside of this grant, such as Islandwood, the City of Federal Way, Kitsap County, Seattle Public Utilities, Clear Creek Task Force, and Seattle Salmon in the Schools. This collaboration has strengthened knowledge sharing, addressed common challenges, and supported continuous program improvement statewide.

Program(s) Evaluation or Major Findings

The Salmon in the Schools (SITS) program expanded its reach and partnerships across Washington State, increasing student engagement and environmental stewardship. New collaborations included the Grays Harbor Conservation District and several tribal and community partners such as the Yakama Nation and Jamestown S’Klallam Tribe. The Benton Conservation District hosted its largest Salmon Summit, serving over 6,800 students in person and online, with Spanish live-streaming and high school volunteer support. Skagit Fisheries Enhancement Group partnered with Skagit County Parks to plant 800 trees, and several partners involved high school interns for aquarium care and mentoring. Surveys showed gains in student knowledge, and YBEEP’s year-long teacher training provided 35 clock hours in STEM and DEI, receiving strong educator feedback.

Major Challenges Faced by Program(s)

The Salmon in the Schools (SITS) program faces several challenges, including occasional aquarium equipment malfunctions and fish mortality, rising transportation and bussing costs, and high staff turnover at participating high-poverty schools, which requires repeated teacher training each year. Limited budgets constrain program growth, as partners rely on grants to cover equipment, supplies, and transportation. Consequently, demand for SITS continues to exceed the partnership's capacity to serve all eligible schools.

Future Opportunities

Due to discontinued funding, SITS partners are exploring strategies to continue the program in the 2025–26 school year. Many partners face significant risk of scaling back or suspending services, with one partner able to fund only 11% of their program, limiting offerings to egg deliveries and lessons for the Wenatchee School District. The partnership will maintain regular meetings to share updates, address obstacles, and identify potential funding and collaboration opportunities to support program continuation.

Other Relevant Information

N/A

Schools/Districts Receiving Assistance

[Click here to see a list of all OSPI grant recipients in the 2025 Fiscal Year.](#)

Program Contact Information

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