



## News & Updates

April 2026

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#### Rachel's Remarks

As a society, we talk a lot about investing in our future. We also say that children are our future. What I learned from the Early Learning & Care Symposium, held in March, is that investing in our youth is an incredible investment in our future.

For every \$1 invested in early childhood, there's a \$16 return. This return is from increased high school graduation rates, college matriculation, economic development, and personal income levels. Investment in early childhood also decreases special education or remediation, dependence on social welfare, and crime-related costs and incarceration rates.

If you missed the Symposium, don't worry! You can [view the presentations on our YouTube channel](#). I hope you'll join us for our next Symposium - the Regional Housing Summit - on June 11 at the Leavenworth Festhalle.

### Ready, Set, Action Plan!

**SHARE YOUR VOICE**  
**TAKE THE OUR VALLEY,**  
**OUR FUTURE SURVEY.**

**COMPARTE TU VOZ**  
**PARTICIPE EN LA**  
**ENCUESTA NUESTRO**  
**VALLE, NUESTRO**  
**FUTURO.**

Take the Survey

## What We've Been Up To



### Early Learning Symposium

Attendees explored the critical role of the first five years in children's social, emotional, and cognitive development. Additionally, our keynote, Deeann Burtch Puffert underscored the connection between early care, workforce stability, and long-term economic resilience.

A powerful moment came from local provider and advocate, Gloria Vasquez, who shared her experiences in Spanish with live English interpretation by CAFE. This offered

Phase 2  
Engaging the  
Community

JAN. - JUNE '26

### Engaging the Community

In addition to the resident survey with nearly 400 responses, we have conducted 34 stakeholder interviews and are hosting 19 listening sessions. Listening sessions invite communities to offer their perspective on their unique challenges and opportunities.

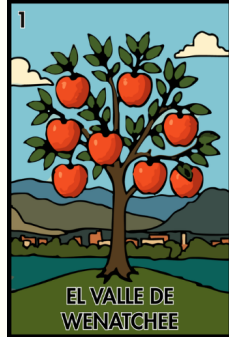
In partnership with NCW Libraries, you are invited to join us for an in-person listening session near you.

attendees a meaningful example of language justice in action.

[Watch the Presentations](#)

[Listening Sessions](#)

## Join Us



### Wenatchee Valley Lotería April 24, 4pm-10pm

Our partners, Parque Padrinos and Pinnacles Prep, are hosting a celebratory fundraiser. Everyone is welcome to join this history-making event focused on culture, connection, and fun. Join the celebration on April 24 to break the **world record** for the largest Lotería game ever played, enjoy the patio party, and dance the night away!

[Get Your Ticket](#)



### Wellness Leadership Retreat May 6-7 - Soap Lake

Hosted by Thriving Together NCW, this two-day event is a powerful opportunity to invest in yourself, elevate your wellbeing, and strengthen your capacity to lead with clarity, presence, and resilience. Discounts for Thriving Together members and scholarships available.

[Register & Learn More](#)

## Game Changer: Regional Housing Approach



### Department of Housing Task Force Survey



### Save the Date June 11

Share your experience with housing in Washington. Your feedback will help provide recommendations to the Governor and Legislature on how to structure a new Department of Housing. The new department will serve as the state's coordinating and problem-solving hub to ensure adequate housing supply and housing stability for everyone. **The survey closes April 26th**

[Take the Survey](#)

The annual Housing Summit is back June 11. Join us at the Leavenworth Festhalle to explore the challenges of building affordable housing and identify creative solutions to reduce barriers and costs to build using the 5 L's to shape the discussion: Laws, Land, Labor, Lumber/Materials, Lending.

[Learn More](#)

## Action Plan Successes

The shared vision of Our Valley is becoming a reality through the steady progress of our partners' achieving objectives and moving Game Changer initiatives forward. Join us in celebrating them!

- [Regional groups work to rebuild NCW's local food economy](#) (Wenatchee Business Journal)
- [Empowering economic development through STEM education partnerships](#) (Wenatchee Business World)
- [\\$26 million aimed at boosting Washington's 12th District projects](#) (KPQ)
- Participate in Comprehensive Planning Community Meetings in [Chelan County](#) and [City of Wenatchee](#). Follow your local jurisdiction for more updates.

## Steve's Reading Recommendations

- [Strong El Niño could worsen Washington's fire season](#) (Axios Seattle)
- [Hydropower generation expected to recover despite snow drought in the West](#) (US Energy Information Administration)
- [Child care crisis forces Washington county to try unusual solution](#) (Seattle Times)
- [New state law will bring region's farmers, food banks closer to fight hunger](#) (Tri-City Herald)
- [Report warns Washington's affordability crisis is accelerating as climbing costs persist](#) (KOMO News)
- [New state law nixes mortgage lender tax break to boost wildfire funding](#) (Washington State Standard)
- [Fentanyl overdose prevention in Washington has improved, but headwinds remain](#) (Seattle Times)

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Our Valley Our Future | 14 N Wenatchee Ave Ste 155 | Wenatchee, WA 98801 US

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