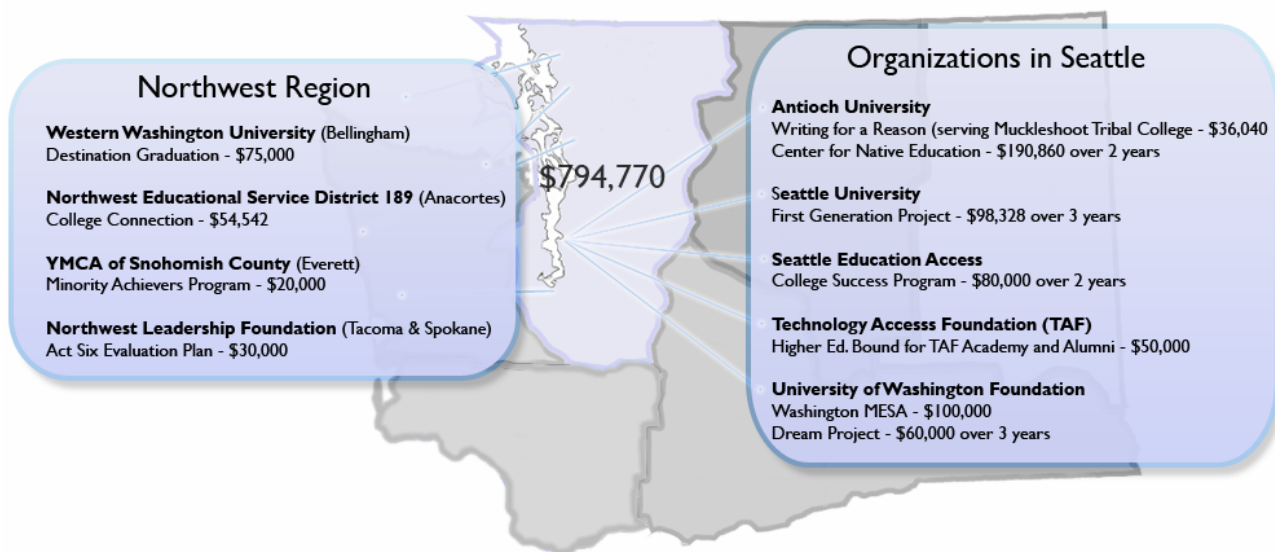


*For Immediate Release  
 June 7, 2007*

**2007 College Spark Community Grants**

Over \$1.4 million dollars awarded in Washington



**College Spark announces grants for Northwest Washington**

**SEATTLE** – College Spark Washington today announced that it will provide \$794,770 in grants aimed at boosting college-readiness and graduation rates among low-income students in Northwest Washington.

“Studies show that students whose parents have a college education are more likely to pursue and succeed in higher education themselves. Success in higher education has a remarkable way of ending the cycle of poverty,” said Ned Lange, chairman of the College Spark board.

**Antioch University** (Auburn) – \$36,040 for academic supports for the First Peoples’ Program, which will help students at the Muckleshoot Tribal College pass the tests required to become a certified teacher.

**Center for Native Education at Antioch University** (statewide) – \$190,860 over two years to support the formation of a coalition including Antioch and six community colleges. The coalition will provide support to schools participating in the Early College for Native Youth program. Funding will be distributed to the following community college partners:

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P. 206.461.7248 \* F. 206.461.7208 \* [www.collegespark.org](http://www.collegespark.org)



- Everett Community College (Everett)
- Olympic College (Shelton campus)
- Olympic College (Bainbridge Island campus)
- Skagit Valley College (Mount Vernon)
- Spokane Falls Community College (Spokane)
- Whatcom Community College (Bellingham)

**Northwest Leadership Foundation** (Tacoma and Spokane) – \$30,000 to conduct an evaluation of the Act Six program which aims to increase the retention and completion rates of selected students attending Whitworth College in Spokane, WA.

**NW Educational Service District 189** (Anacortes) – \$54,542 to fund a program assisting low-income migrant students and their families to develop goals and plans for postsecondary education.

**Seattle Education Access** (Seattle) – \$80,000 over two years to double the number of students served annually to 160, build the organization’s fundraising capacity, and increase the amount of time spent coaching, advising and providing academic tutoring for each student.

**Seattle University** (Seattle) – \$98,328 over three years to fund a project matching college students with low-income, first-generation middle and high school students in King County to provide ongoing mentoring and tutoring.

**Technology Access Foundation (TAF)** (Seattle) – a \$50,000 grant to increase support to TAF alumni enrolled in college, increase capacity of the Higher Ed Bound program, and support activities around integrating the program into a future TAF Academy.

**University of Washington Foundation** (Renton, Seattle & Tukwila) – \$60,000 over three years to further develop the ***Dream Project***, a mentoring program matching UW students with first-generation and low-income high school students. Mentors will provide tutoring, assist with college and financial aid applications, and coordinate college visits and campus events for students and parents.

**University of Washington Foundation - Washington MESA** (statewide) – \$100,000 to expand services aimed at lengthening student participation and increasing the number of MESA seniors entering college and to implement an evaluation plan to gauge program effectiveness.

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**Western Washington University** (Bellingham) – \$75,000 to fund a program to re-engage low-income students who have left WWU and are 40 credits or less away from degree completion. Services include assistance with re-enrollment, financial aid and scholarships, mentoring and other supports.

**YMCA - Snohomish County** (Everett) – \$20,000 to implement the Minority Achievers Program (MAP) at North Middle School. The college-readiness program includes assistance with homework, college admissions and financial aid; college and university visits; mentoring and career exploration; parent support and involvement; scholarships; and a summer camp designed to expose minority and immigrant youth to science careers.

The eleven grants are among 19 College Spark announced today, totaling more than \$1.4 million. Since 2005, the organization has awarded over \$3 million in Community Grants. Funding for this year’s grants was made possible by an arrangement with Northwest Education Loan Association (NELA) [www.nela.net](http://www.nela.net) and USA Funds [www.usafunds.org](http://www.usafunds.org), two nonprofits dedicated to assisting students with financial aid services for higher education.

Nearly 700,000 residents of Northwest Washington are living on incomes of less than 200% of the poverty level, or roughly \$40,000 annually for a family of four, according to U.S. Census data. The grants provided by College Spark support programs aimed at increasing educational opportunities and success for students in low-income families.

“It is our hope that our grant funds will help foster innovative strategies that substantially increase the percentage of low-income students graduating from college in Washington,” College Spark’s Executive Director, Christine McCabe said.

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For more information about College Spark, go to [www.collegespark.org](http://www.collegespark.org)

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