

# NWEA

— NORTHWEST —  
EDUCATION ACCESS



## 2019-2020 Annual Report

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## Executive Director Message

The 2019-20 school year started like any other, but ended unlike anything we'd ever seen. We all felt things shifting in February as COVID-19 increasingly flooded national and global conversations. Our state experienced the first known outbreak in the U.S. Over late winter and early spring we navigated rolling closures, re-openings, and then a more permanent switch to virtual operations as many schools and partners reckoned with the arrival of the global pandemic that we've now been living with for the past year.

This shared context impacted NWEA's community and you'll see that reflected in this year's annual report. Not surprisingly, we saw a decrease in the number of students served and credentials completed over the course of the year, as did many of our partners. Most of this decrease came in the College Prep portion of our work, signaling that young people were delaying reconnecting with education in the face of all that was happening.

And yet. Numbers never tell the whole story. The power of relationships doesn't show up in a chart. The impact of a supportive call or quick text just to check in might not make it into a database. Holding space together to process all that is happening is nearly impossible to quantify. NWEA's COVID response included shifting to virtual support services, calls, and texts. With your support, we were able to distribute nearly \$75,000 in emergency funds as well as 60 laptops so that young people could continue their education programs in online classes.

We are all adapting and re-norming together. Young people understand the impact that education can have for them, their families, and communities. NWEA continues to prioritize centering relationships and connection so that when they decide the time is right for them, we'll be here to continue the journey.

Onward!

**Laura DiZazzo**  
Executive Director, Northwest Education Access

# Meet Sheen

I started my quest for higher education back in 2010. All I knew was I wanted to go to college like all the other people my age. At the time, I was a homeless foster youth and nothing in my life was stable. My mom is mentally and physically disabled, and my dad was always in prison. The relatives I knew had no college experience or ever talked to me about higher education.

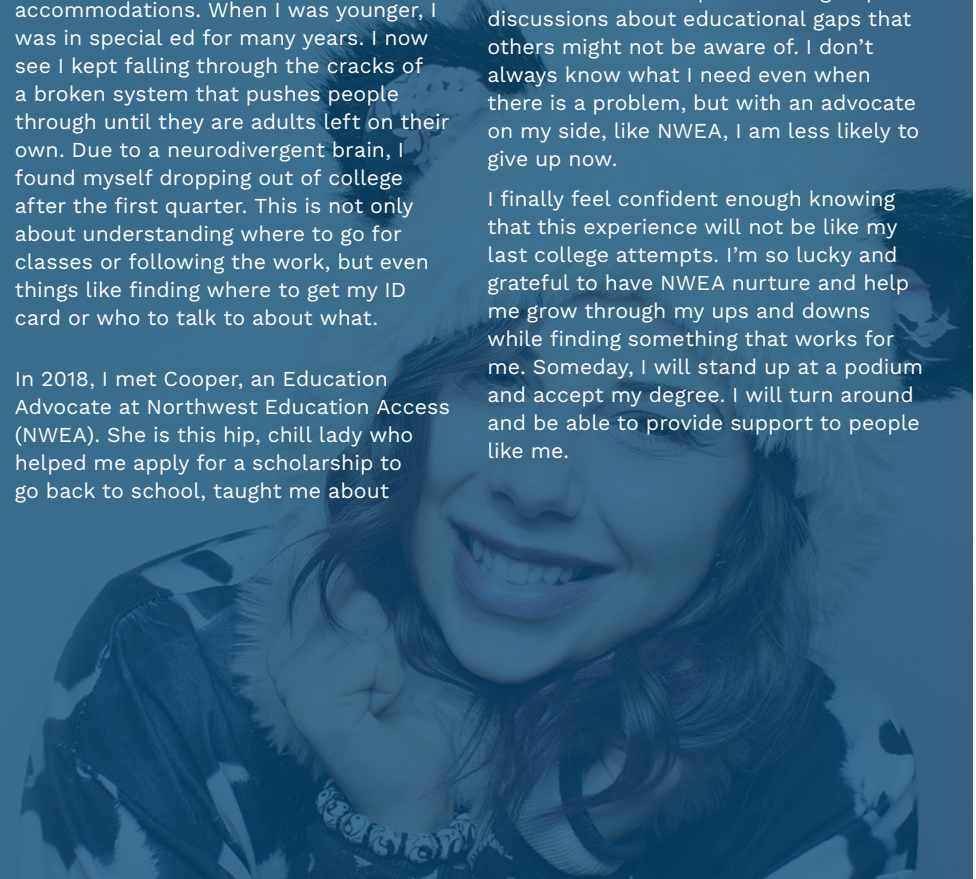
I was born with ADHD, a learning disability called dyscalculia, and a sensory processing disorder that makes it difficult for me to work in disorganized environments without reasonable accommodations. When I was younger, I was in special ed for many years. I now see I kept falling through the cracks of a broken system that pushes people through until they are adults left on their own. Due to a neurodivergent brain, I found myself dropping out of college after the first quarter. This is not only about understanding where to go for classes or following the work, but even things like finding where to get my ID card or who to talk to about what.

In 2018, I met Cooper, an Education Advocate at Northwest Education Access (NWEA). She is this hip, chill lady who helped me apply for a scholarship to go back to school, taught me about

FAFSA, and researched other avenues of education for me.

Cooper worked hard with me to find opportunities with other young people striving for higher education. She guided and pushed me to do better, all while not giving up on me, unlike most of the other systems I've been forced through as a youth. NWEA has found opportunities for me to connect with other students and be acknowledged as young adults trying to elevate their lives with a better education for a better financial situation. With Cooper's support, I have attended Microsoft interview panels and group discussions about educational gaps that others might not be aware of. I don't always know what I need even when there is a problem, but with an advocate on my side, like NWEA, I am less likely to give up now.

I finally feel confident enough knowing that this experience will not be like my last college attempts. I'm so lucky and grateful to have NWEA nurture and help me grow through my ups and downs while finding something that works for me. Someday, I will stand up at a podium and accept my degree. I will turn around and be able to provide support to people like me.

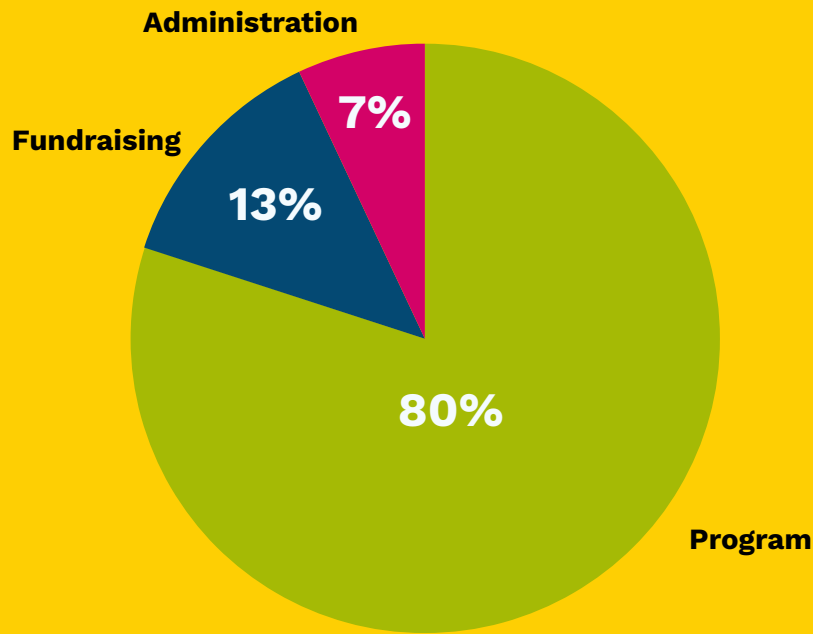


# NWEA 2019-2020 Report

**Students Served: 849**  
2,483 served since 2011



**EXPENSES**  
**\$2,096,187**



## College Prep Program

**434**

Students Received Assistance

**74**

High School Equivalencies Earned

**191**

College Placement Exams

## College Success Program

**415**

College Students Served

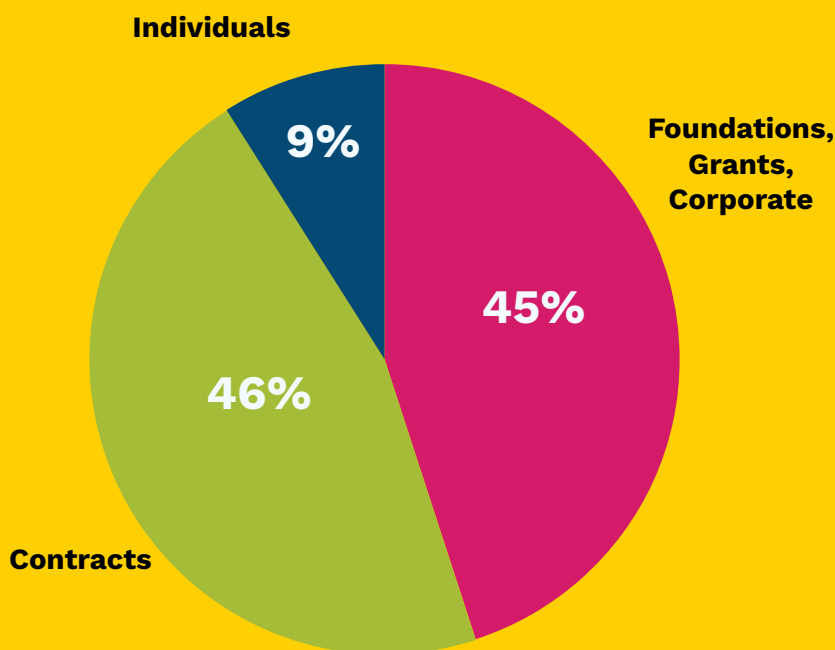
**158**

Students Started College

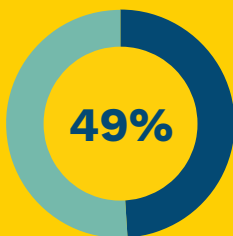
**65**

Students Graduated with a Degree

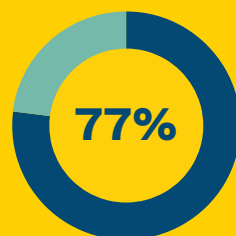
**REVENUE**  
**\$2,968,550**



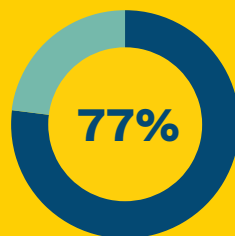
Low-Income



Experienced homelessness



1st gen high school graduate



1st gen college attendee



**41%**  
male

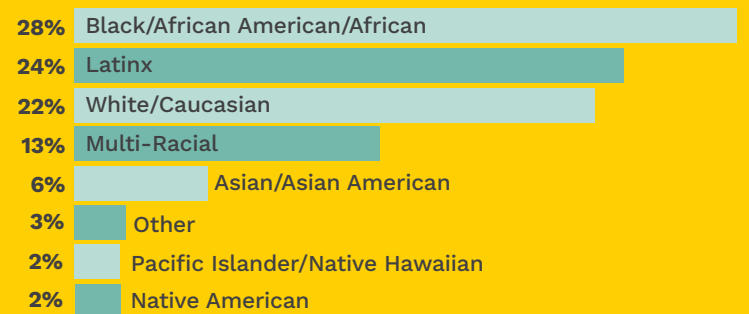


**54%**  
female



**8%**  
transgender/  
gender non-  
conforming

## Student Body



Thanks to your generosity, NWEA awarded:

**\$171,420**

in scholarships and COVID emergency funds to 229 students!

## 2019-2020 Corporate & Foundation Donors

ACT  
Amazon  
Anderson Foundation  
Anonymous  
Apex Systems  
Apple Inc.  
Auburn School District  
BECU Foundation  
The Bill & Melinda Gates Foundation  
BNSF Railway Foundation  
Boeing Company  
Community Center for Education Results  
DocuSign  
DXC Technology

Eastside Community Aid Thrift Shop  
Eileen Fisher, Inc.  
Electronic Scrip, Inc.  
Ernest R. and Audrey M. Turner Foundation  
Garneau-Nicon Family Foundation  
Google  
Harvest Foundation  
Kirkpatrick Family Foundation  
Krueger Sheet Metal Company  
Laird Norton Company, Inc.  
MadeHere LLC  
Mannix Canby Foundation  
Medina Foundation  
Microsoft

Muckleshoot Indian Tribe  
Murtfeldt Charitable Foundation  
Optimal  
Plugable Technologies  
Port Jobs  
RealNetworks Foundation  
Rotary Club of Mercer Island  
Rotary Club of Seattle-International District  
Safeco Insurance Foundation  
Satterberg Foundation  
Seattle Central College  
Seattle Children's Hospital  
ServiceNow Inc.  
Sheng-Yen Lu Foundation  
SkillUp Washington  
Tulalip Tribes Charitable Fund

Ulmschneider Educational Foundation  
Union Bank  
United Way of King County  
VMware  
Windermere Real Estate - Capitol Hill  
Windermere Real Estate - Greenwood  
World Wide Technology, Inc.  
Wyman Youth Trust