



ANNUAL REPORT

FROM THE DESK OF RAY STEPHANSON

In 2011, Bob Drewel, Doug Purcell, Rich Cooper, and I — along with a few other key leaders—founded Economic Alliance Snohomish County. It's hard to believe that was 14 years ago.

At EASC, we're problem-solvers. If you're a company looking to locate or expand in Snohomish County — we can help. If you're a public agency facing roadblocks — we're here as an extension of your team.

We support school districts in raising awareness around STEM education and career pathways for students. Our Washington APEX Accelerator team helps contractors qualify to do business with the government and military.

And we advocate for legislation that helps our region—and push back on proposals that may hinder your success. Together, we focus on growing wealth, creating and retaining jobs, and enhancing our quality of life.

Here's my pitch: if you know of an organization that could benefit from our services, send them our way. If you're not yet an investor, please consider joining us. With growing budget pressures at the state level, it's more important than ever that we have the resources to deliver on our commitments.

All the best to you,

Ray Stephanson
President & CEO




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As the designated Associate Development Organization (ADO) for Snohomish County, EASC serves as the primary economic development driver, leading efforts in business retention, expansion and recruitment to sustain regional economic growth.

With in-house resources like the Snohomish STEM Network, Washington APEX Accelerator and the Small Business Development Council, we are agile and ready to help your business succeed at every juncture of your business plan, from start-up assistance to meeting current and future workforce needs to developing an international trade strategy.

As Snohomish County's largest business advocacy organization, EASC is the business voice in Olympia and Washington, D.C., representing the needs of industries across our region. Through tailored retention programs, infrastructure development support and alignment with workforce boards and higher education institutions, EASC initiatives have proven successful in elevating Snohomish County's profile for economic diversity strength.

Snohomish County's unique blend of advantages include the ideal geographical location for local, national and international business, access to resources and a highly-trained and professional workforce. It is here that the industries that will shape the future have gathered to start the next business revolution.



EASC events are where decision-makers gather to network and receive updates that impact the economic well-being and vitality of Snohomish County.

In 2024, EASC events enhanced investor visibility and our county's unique profile. Signature events and integrated campaigns created broad access points for engagement while reinforcing EASC's role as the trusted connection across sectors and audiences.

Events included everything from a Business Builder Expo, tailored for startups and entrepreneurs, to a Health Care roundtable. Other topics include global trade, housing and FIFA World Cup® 2026 regional readiness.

We also held two advocacy missions to Olympia and Washington, D.C., representing Snohomish County's business voice in the halls of power.

Investors: 210

Events Reach: Over 6,000 attendees across 20+ events, virtually and in-person.

20k+ engagement per month from 3.8k followers on Meta and 2.1k on LinkedIn

18k+ email subscribers, open rate of 26%.

6k unique visitors per month on website

50+ earned articles with a combined readership of over 2 million.

Ad-equivalency rate of story placements: \$700k

ONE COUNTY, ONE VOICE: ADVOCACY

In 2024, EASC solidified its position as the trusted connection between business and government, delivering measurable wins and fostering direct engagement with decision-makers at every level. This year's advocacy efforts were defined not just by policy outcomes, but by the relationships built and voices amplified.

Strategic Delegations to Advance Regional Priorities

Olympia Delegation (February 2024)

EASC led 28 business and civic leaders to the state capitol. The delegation participated in over 20 scheduled meetings with

Hosted a legislative reception with Senator June Robinson and Representative Emily Alvarado Berg

Washington, D.C. Delegation (April 2024)

EASC led 27 business and civic leaders to Washington, D.C. for two full days of direct engagement with federal stakeholders.

The delegation held meetings with representatives from both congressional chambers, key Senate policy advisors, agencies representing county interests such as energy and aviation and more.

These conversations advanced priorities in international trade, clean energy infrastructure, economic development, and military affairs. EASC's strategic media coverage of the Fly-In earned over \$300,000 in advertising value equivalency across regional publications.

Key Wins in 2024

- ★ \$1.2 million in WEDA funding secured with EASC support.
- ★ Advocated to lift the ADO funding cap, aligning future funding with economic growth and inflation.
- ★ Supported critical regional infrastructure priorities through direct legislative advocacy.
- ★ Advanced workforce and community priorities, including:
 - Support for childcare affordability
 - Occupational licensing compacts
 - Economic Security for All (EcSA)
 - Behavioral and mental health infrastructure \
 - Housing affordability and supply legislation

In addition to direct lobbying, EASC's advocacy team provided formal remarks to the Washington State Transportation Commission, emphasizing the role of infrastructure in long-term economic competitiveness.



OPPORTUNITY LIVES HERE: ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT

We work hard to ensure our county remains the best place for businesses to land, grow and expand.

Through resources at our disposal and the connections we are able to make to our partners at SBDC, APEX Accelerator, Higher Education and Workforce Snohomish, to name a few, we equip business with every tool they need to succeed.

We work closely with Snohomish County and our partners to refine a long-range economic development strategy for the next four to five years, one that prioritizes business expansion, smart recruitment, and expanded regional and global reach through upcoming infrastructure like the Paine Field expansion and new light rail projects. This strategy will help us align our economic development, workforce development, and advocacy efforts, especially in rural communities.

Focus Sectors:

- ★ Advanced Manufacturing
- ★ Aerospace & Aviation
- ★ Agriculture & Food Manufacturing
- ★ Clean Tech
- ★ Forest Products
- ★ Information & Communications Tech
- ★ Life Sciences & Global Health
- ★ Maritime
- ★ Military & Defense
- ★ Retail & Small Business

Direct Business Support

Conducted one-on-one outreach to businesses across key sectors, including aerospace, advanced manufacturing, clean tech, and logistics

Delivered resource referrals to:

- Grant programs
- Workforce training partners, such as Career Connect NW & Snohomish STEM, Workforce Snohomish, WSU Everett, EvCC, Edmonds CC, WATR Center

Business Expansion & Retention

Supported relocation and expansion planning for multiple businesses, including:

Lafarge and Egge – awarded \$200,000 Evergreen Manufacturing Growth Grant with EASC assistance. Ribbon cutting in December 2024.

- New Jobs: 25
- Capital investment: \$1.3M+

ZeroAvia – Ribbon cutting for their manufacturing facility at Paine Field. The ribbon cutting was a major milestone for the company's growth



Business Recruitment

2024 Pipeline: 75 projects, which includes new inquiries and holdovers from previous years.

EASC attended SelectUSA in DC and SelectUSA Spinoff in June 2024

Snohomish County Day took place on Friday, June 21. The delegation visited [confirm sponsors] Port of Everett, Boeing, Tulalip Tribe, Lyell Manufacturing, and Bothell.

Flew to DC for 20+ meetings with companies interested in locating in the region

Project Win – Echandia

- Swedish maritime / clean tech battery component manufacturing
- Located in Marysville at the Marysville Corporate Center in a 20k sq. Ft facility
- New Jobs: 25 in year 1; 50-75 in year 2 - all contingent on contracts
- Capital Investment: \$2M+

International Trade

Joined Seattle Metro Chamber's International Leadership Mission to Korea (see Wendy notes)

Participated in Washington State delegation for Farnborough Air Show and the mission trip to Chester. SnoCo participants included representatives from Port of Everett, Snohomish County / Paine Field, WATR Center.

Supported Greater Seattle Partners with Cohort 2 of the Greater Seattle Export Accelerator program

Two Snohomish County companies went through the program:
Bushliner and Integrity Machining

Workforce Alignment and Legislative Input

Provided intelligence to EASC's Advocacy team to support priorities including:

- Workforce accessibility
- Childcare
- Behavioral health
- Apprenticeships
- Infrastructure planning

Aligned closely with STEM and Marketing teams to convert business insights into programmatic content, legislative language, and resource connection stories



INVESTING IN OUR FUTURE: SNOHOMISH STEM NETWORK

EASC's Snohomish STEM Network advanced key workforce priorities in 2024 by fostering partnerships, advocating policy alignment, and expanding experiential learning opportunities. As a cross-sector initiative, Snohomish STEM connects education and industry to help develop a future-ready workforce for Snohomish County.

Career Pathways & Employer Engagement

- STEM Like Me!® career exploration activities engaged 32 employers and reached over 983 students with hands-on exposure to careers in STEM sectors.
 - 77% of students increased their understanding of STEM careers, and 50% of students surveyed increased their desire to pursue a STEM career.
- Explore I.T.SM, a virtual technology-focused partnership initiative, connected 66 students with 4 IT employers, helping demystify careers in software, cybersecurity, and technical support.
 - 85% of students increased their understanding of I.T. careers, and 62% of students surveyed increased their desire to pursue these careers.
- Healthcare ECHO TourSM reached 547 high school & middle school students, offering interactive career experiences across multiple healthcare sites. Follow-up surveys showed:
 - 91% of students gained new understanding of healthcare careers, and 72% reported they were likely to pursue a career in healthcare as a result.
- Hosted Spring into STEMSM at Imagine Children's Museum, drawing 700+ children and adults for hands-on exploration of early STEM concepts and career exposure.
- Convened a regional Apprenticeship 101 Roadshow attended by 60+ career counselors, increasing awareness of career-starting apprenticeship opportunities.

Student Impact and System Leadership

- Exceeded ARPA contract targets for student engagement by more than 60%:
- Goal: 5,300 students
- Actual reached: 21,446 students

Facilitated an exploratory Zero Emission Workforce Planning Group in partnership with Snohomish County, key employers, higher education and Career Connect Washington, focused on building a talent pipeline to meet emerging needs in green transportation and energy sectors.

Spearheaded advisory work with multiple school districts to better align CTE programs with high-demand sectors including aerospace, healthcare, and advanced manufacturing.



Access & Advocacy

Advanced understanding of child care as a workforce issue by gathering local business data to inform family-friendly workplace policies in Snohomish County.

The final report was submitted with recommendations to Snohomish County and shared with Economic Alliance Snohomish County's Board of Trustees and key regional stakeholders.

Provided support and outreach coordination for multiple equity-focused STEM programs, including WSU Everett's Girls Explore STEM and Edmonds College's Expanding Your Horizons.

Developed new partnerships with nonprofits and community-based organizations to reduce barriers to STEM career pathways for underrepresented students.

Collaborated with higher education institutions on inclusive program design and student engagement strategy.



SBDC

As a hosted partner program at EASC, the Small Business Development Center (SBDC) provided no-cost, one-on-one business advising to entrepreneurs and growing companies across Snohomish County. In 2024, the SBDC supported local resiliency and expansion through targeted advising, financial readiness support, and collaborative referrals.

Client Advising and Economic Impact

- Delivered over 800 hours of direct advising to Snohomish County businesses
- Supported \$4.5 million in capital formation through loans, grants, and equity investment
- Helped generate or retain over 50 jobs through growth-focused client services

Key Advising Focus Areas

- Business planning and strategy
- Budgeting and cash flow analysis
- Loan packaging and capital access
- Human resources and employee retention
- Marketing strategy and online presence

Strategic Outreach and Referrals

Partnered with EASC's Business Retention & Expansion (BRE) team to provide targeted advising for businesses seeking:

- Grants
- Workforce resources
- Technical assistance

Many SBDC clients were first connected through Coffee Chats, BRE touchpoints, or event follow-ups, ensuring businesses were efficiently matched to the most appropriate resource stream.

EMPOWERING BUSINESS: APEX ACCELERATOR

As one of EASC's hosted partner programs, the APEX Accelerator delivered critical support for businesses seeking to navigate and win public sector contracts. Serving five counties in the North Puget Sound region, APEX provided personalized advising, strategic workshops, and direct procurement connections to help small and diverse businesses compete more effectively in government markets.



Client Advising and Impact

Delivered over 362 one-on-one counseling sessions, totaling more than 727 hours of advising across Snohomish, Skagit, Whatcom, Island, and San Juan Counties.

APEX clients in Snohomish County alone were awarded over \$23.9 million in government contracts.

71% of those contracts were awarded by state and local government agencies, demonstrating strong regional procurement engagement.

Workshops and Outreach

Hosted 34 workshops that reached 295 small business attendees, covering topics such as capability statements, procurement readiness, and government certifications.

Delivered over 25 presentations and technical briefings at community events and with resource partners.

Played a key support role in Coffee Chats, investor programs, and BRE touchpoints, raising visibility of government contracting services across EASC's network.

North Puget Sound Contracting Conference (NPSCC)

Partnered with regional agencies and organizations to promote and execute the 2024 North Puget Sound Contracting Conference.

Co-facilitated the event, which brought together:

- 500 attendees
- 260 businesses
- 29 public agencies



Hosted a “Meet the Buyers” matchmaking event within the conference, attended by 60+ businesses and eight public agencies, offering direct connections between local suppliers and public procurement officers.



Your trusted connection.

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