



Washington Office of Superintendent of
PUBLIC INSTRUCTION

Salmon Fry Education Contract

1. **Purpose:**

The purpose of the proviso is 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.

2. **Description of services provided:**

The Hood Canal Salmon Enhancement Group, along with 14 other nonprofit subcontractors across Washington State, developed a plan to deliver a Salmon in the Schools (SITS) program to elementary schools designated as high poverty. Partners conducted outreach to qualifying elementary schools to enroll them in a SITS program, consulted with WDFW and local hatcheries to obtain eggs and develop a plan for a salmon release site, installed salmon aquariums in all participating schools, implemented in-class and virtual learning opportunities throughout the program, assisted educators and students in release day events and all program activities, as well as provided assessments and evaluations before, during and after program implementation.

Partners designed, developed and provided a program support plan for all participating teachers. This included instruction manuals, videos, in-class support, virtual meetings, or a combination of all methods. Teachers were provided support in establishing and maintaining a healthy environment for their SITS aquarium habitat. Several partners also engaged with families and communities through coordinated activities which included: virtual SITS related reading events among schools, students and parents; release day community stewardship activities; maintaining aquariums in public spaces; and public art exhibits created by SITS students.

3. **Criteria for receiving services and/or 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 2022-23 School Year:

Number of School Districts:	68
Number of Schools:	150
Number of Students:	10,581
Number of Educators:	294



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4. Are federal or other funds contingent on state funding?

No

5. State funding history:

Fiscal Year	Amount Funded	Actual Expenditures
2023	\$500,000	\$493,512
2022	\$500,000	\$491,909

6. Number of beneficiaries (e.g., school districts, schools, students, educators, other) history:

Fiscal Year	Number of Schools
22	109

7. Programmatic changes since inception (if any):

Program schedule varies by region depending on salmon egg development and species, but generally aquariums were installed in schools between November-January. After aquarium installation partners delivered eggs, provided lessons, assistance, aquarium maintenance, and program evaluations to participating teachers and students until the final release days (from March-May). This was the same schedule in the 2021-2022 program year. Restrictions that were put in place due to the COVID-19 pandemic have mostly been lifted, which allowed schools and students to participate in in-person salmon release day events and virtual release days were unnecessary.

8. Program evaluation or evaluation of major findings:

- Teachers have reported that especially in high-poverty schools that “one of the significant challenges in this Post Covid world is attendance.” These teachers also shared their opinions that the salmon aquarium and related lessons is improving student attendance, saying “I see the salmon making a difference in the students’ social-emotional development, increasing their attendance in school.”
- Teachers and students are still highly engaged in the SITS program and look forward to both lessons and field trips.
- Teachers and students found program lessons and activities to be age-appropriate.
- Many program partners created bi-lingual lessons and materials to be inclusive of all students in the program.
- Many SITS partners attended the informal educator training provided by OSPI, which was a great opportunity to learn and connect with other environmental educators in our area and across the state.



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- Program surveys and assessments show an increase in student knowledge of and attitudes towards salmon.
- Teachers expressed how well organized the program was this year and that they felt supported during the program.
- Using videos to show tank cleaning and maintenance to teachers was successful.
- Some partners recruited an older class (students who did SITS the previous year) to do the water quality testing and assist with tank cleaning.

9. Major challenges faced by the program:

- Aquarium equipment malfunction and some fish mortality issues. Although these are often out of our control, to combat these issues next year, we will consider decreasing the number of fish per tank to help with maintenance and mortality.
- Transportation and bussing costs significantly increased.
- Bus driver shortages meant partners needed to find other transportation resources for student field trips and release days.
- Larger school districts are extremely difficult to evaluate through program surveys and assessments as more staff time is needed than is funded to implement written/digital surveys and synthesize results.
- Some partners have faced the challenge of getting teachers/administrators to respond to SITS program inquiries. Partners have found success by going through their current teachers with SITS as well as their other education program in schools to get in contact with interested parties.
- Some partners had teachers who wanted assistance on a weekly basis for water quality and tank maintenance. This was an ask that the partners did not have the budget for.
- Overall program partners felt that the biggest obstacle to overcome was the budget for the SITS program. Almost all partners use other grant funds to carry out their SITS program or are unable to grow their program due to funding and capacity.

10. Future opportunities:

HCSEG and 14 program subcontracts have conducted outreach to schools and teachers and are working to finalize a list of new and old participating schools. New aquarium orders will be made if necessary. HCSEG and partners are communicating with WDFW to secure egg permits and plan release sites. Partners will schedule a program kick-off meeting in late August – early September to prepare for the upcoming SITS program. At this meeting we plan to discuss: teacher outreach and support, program curriculum and schedule, aquarium equipment maintenance and repair support, opportunities for our group to partner with other local organizations for program support, and training/development opportunities for partners to enhance their SITS programs. We also plan to discuss how to work towards the proviso goal of getting schools with active SITS programs to carry out their program



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independently in future years, which will allow us to have the funding and capacity to grow the SITS program into new schools. We are going to work together strategically for the long-term success of this program.

11. Statutory and/or budget language:

\$500,000 of the general fund—state appropriation for fiscal year 2022 and \$500,000 of the general fund—state appropriation for fiscal year 2023 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.

12. Other relevant information:

This proviso has allowed the various fish enhancement groups across the state to come together and create a collaborative around salmon learning in our state, the synergy and partnerships that has come from this is exciting.

13. Schools/districts receiving assistance:

[preliminaryfy23state-fundedprovisograntawardsupdated-42823.xlsx \(live.com\)](#)

14. Program Contact Information:

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