

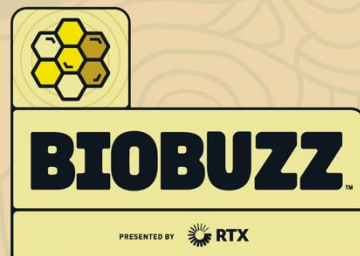
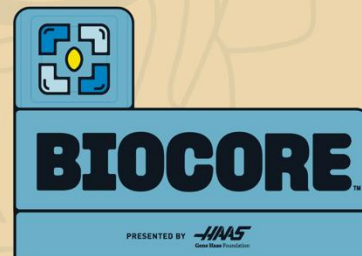
FIRST[®]

CANOPY[™]



October Coaches Chat

2026 / 2027 SEASON



Welcome FLL Challenge, FLL Future & FLL Explore Teams!

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Agenda-

- Registration
- Invoices
- Event Locations
- Outreach
- Important links
- Questions?

Please make sure to check the *FIRST* Washington website and the FLL Blog for all *FIRST* Washington information

Blog's are posted weekly.

An email is sent to let you know its posted with a link to the blog.

<https://firstwa.org/fll-blog/>

Registration-

FIRST Washington Registration-

- If you have not registered at firstwa.org , please do so asap!

Event Registration-

- For **Explore** – waiting on the last 2 venue confirmations
- For **Challenge** – Same process as last season, teams assigned to events
- For **Future** – not until early December



***FIRST* Washington Invoices-**

Invoices for the *FIRST* Washington fees have started to go out as of 10/14. They will be emailed out to the person you listed on your *FIRST* Washington registration in the “Name of person who should receive *FIRST*WA invoice” section.

Additional invoices are emailed out on Mondays. If you pay by credit card, do not expect to see your payment reflected on the status sheet immediately, it is updated manually once a day.

Only teams that have registered with *FIRST* Inspires AND *FIRST* Washington will be invoiced.



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Event Locations-

Qualifier events for Challenge (Founders) are posted on the *FIRST* Washington calendar!

<https://firstwa.org/events/>

Outreach!

FIRST WA is pursuing bipartisan support for a \$3 million proviso request for the 2027–2029 biennium and coordinating outreach to legislative committees and the Governor’s Office. If you and/or your team is planning any outreach to legislators, please use this document to ensure our ask is unified and aligned to support re-engaging State funding support for *FIRST* WA programs across the State. We are also working to secure space for a 2027 Day at the Capitol on February 19th.

Link to the flyer- [here](#)

INVEST IN WASHINGTON'S STUDENTS AND FUTURE WORKFORCE

WASHINGTON'S LARGEST HANDS-ON STEM LEARNING NETWORK

■ THE ASK

Invest \$3 million during the 2027–2029 biennium through a proviso funding to expand hands-on STEM learning, increase student opportunities, and strengthen workforce readiness across Washington state. Proposed funding source: the Workforce Education Investment Account (WEIA), which supports workforce development initiatives, including Career Connected Learning. This ask was previously funded via the OSPI budget.

\$3M

2027-2029 BIENNIUM
\$1.5 million annually

HISTORY

State support was provided through an OSPI budget proviso and matched dollar for dollar by private donations, increasing from \$825,000 annually in FY 2018 to \$1.475 million annually in FY 2024 and FY 2025. Although the proviso was not renewed in the 2024 budget cycle and is not included in the current state budget, student participation grew from 5,604 in 2020–21 to 10,148 in 2024–25—an increase of 4,544 students, or 81.1%.

	FY 2018	FY 2021	FY 2024	FY 2025	FY 2026
STATE FUNDING	\$825K	\$1.075M	\$1.475M	\$1.475M	\$0

CURRENT STATE

In 2024-25, FIRST Washington served **10,148 students** on **868 teams**, with more than 3,000 volunteers across roughly 75 events. Students can start in elementary school and stay engaged through graduation.

PROGRAM	GRADE SPAN	STUDENTS	SHARE
FIRST LEGO League	Elementary and middle school	4,218	41.6%
FIRST Tech Challenge	Middle and high school	1,769	17.4%
FIRST Robotics Competition	High school	4,161	41.0%
Total	Grades K through 12	10,148	100%

About \$148

in requested state support per student; full program cost is higher.

FUTURE

State support helps cover equipment, registration, training, and transportation. It is an investment in Washington students for Washington jobs, supporting workforce development, including Career Connected Learning. Illustrative annual allocations from the July 2026 OSPI request:

INVESTMENT AREA	WHAT IT FUNDS	ANNUAL	SHARE
Student access	Team startup grants, registration assistance, equipment, rural expansion	\$525,000	35.6%
Educator capacity	Coach and teacher training, professional development, program sustainability	\$310,000	21.0%
Career Connected Learning	Mentor-supported experiences, industry partnerships, workforce pathways	\$400,000	27.1%
Expanded participation	Rural communities, transportation, participation grants, financial barriers	\$240,000	16.3%
Total	\$2.95 million per biennium	\$1,475,000	100%

INVEST IN WASHINGTON'S STUDENTS AND FUTURE WORKFORCE

STUDENT OUTCOMES AND WORKFORCE READINESS

RESULTS

99%

graduation rate

84%

of seniors pursue higher education

60%+

ultimately work in STEM fields

9%

enter industry directly after high school

FIRST Washington seniors who go on to higher education

84%

Washington statewide

about 53%

OPPORTUNITIES TO EXPAND ACCESS

King County accounts for 51.0% of 2023-24 participation compared with 27.0% of Washington's population ages 5 to 19. Twelve counties recorded zero participation, including Ferry, Adams, Grays Harbor, Garfield, and Okanogan.

COUNTY	FIRST WA %	WA YOUTH %	GAP
King	51.0%	27.0%	+24.0
Pierce	6.5%	12.4%	-5.9
Yakima	0.6%	4.5%	-3.9
Clark	3.1%	6.8%	-3.7
Whatcom	0.3%	3.0%	-2.7
Other counties	38.5%	46.3%	-7.8
Total	100%	100%	0.0

A WORKFORCE PIPELINE

Over a full season, students work shoulder to shoulder with industry mentors on a complex, deadline-driven project. This is Career Connected Learning: a learning experience integrated with work-related content and skills. Alumni now work at:

Blue Origin | Lam Research | Amazon | Microsoft | McKinstry | Airgas | Simplot

WHERE SENIORS GO NEXT	SHARE
Higher education	84%
Industry jobs directly after high school	9%
Military	1%
Next step not reported or undecided	6%
Total	100%

2026 senior survey: 944 seniors across more than 200 teams.

FIRST LEGO League participation shares, 2022-23 to 2023-24: distressed communities 11% to 2%; at-risk 18% to 8%.

THE CASE IN THREE POINTS

1. IT WORKS

FIRST Washington reports a 99% graduation rate. Its 2026 senior survey reports 84% pursuing higher education, compared with about 53% statewide.

2. STUDENT OPPORTUNITY

State support expands student opportunities by helping teams cover equipment, registration, and transportation costs.

3. THE ASK

Provide \$3 million for the 2027-2029 biennium (\$1.5 million annually) through a new proviso for hands-on STEM learning and workforce development statewide.

Sources: FIRST Washington OSPI Budget Request (July 2026); OSPI proviso reports, Career and Technical Education (FY 2018 to FY 2025); FIRST Washington Wire, Vol. 03 (June 30, 2026); FIRST WA Data/Analytics Committee, 2023-24 Draft Annual Report.

Important Links-

Team Registration- All

- <https://www.firstinspires.org/robotics/fll/cost-and-registration>

FIRST Washington Registration-

- <https://firstwa.org/fll-registration/>

FLL Blog-

- <https://firstwa.org/fll-blog/>

FIRSTWA FLL Facebook for coaches

- <https://www.facebook.com/groups/FIRST.Washington.FLL/>

The background of the slide is a dark teal color with a white line-art topographic map. The map features various contour lines, a winding river or path, and some rectangular structures that could represent buildings or fields.

Next Coaches Chat- November 18th , 2026

Questions?