

# Strengthening Our Foundation

2025 ANNUAL REPORT





Nubia López and Samantha Grono  
at the End of Fellowship Celebration

## LETTER FROM EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR, NUBIA LÓPEZ

Dear Friends and Partners,

In April we gathered to celebrate the conclusion of the 2024-26 Fellowship cohort and each Fellow shared a story to give testament to their leadership journey. What most struck me is their relentless belief in a world where each child and their community thrives. This belief is grounded in each of their unique experiences and buoyed by our collective vision, that together we can build what our communities deserve: equitable systems that uplift children and families.

Reflecting on this last year, we are filled with pride and gratitude for the impact we are making together. In our second cohort our focus was to strengthen: strengthen our Fellows' leadership, strengthen the capacity of our partner organizations, and strengthen our relationships to positively impact the sector. In surveys, Fellows shared that they deepened their understanding of the systems and policies in the early childhood sector and furthermore they built confidence in their leadership to have a positive impact. Our collective power grows through skill building and the confidence in our leadership. It is what it takes to transform the early childhood policy landscape so that every child and their family can thrive.

Looking forward to our 2026-28 Fellowship cohort we are eager to build upon our Fellowship's foundation and expand our geographic reach. Over the past year we have been developing relationships in rural communities and are excited to build new partnerships to intentionally include communities across the state to fulfill our mission.

We are thrilled to enter a new season of growth as we prepare for the next Fellowship cohort. Thank you for making our work possible by investing in Pathwaves' mission.

In Community,

**Nubia López**  
Executive Director



## 2024-26 FELLOWSHIP CURRICULUM

The 2024-26 Pathwaves Fellowship cohort concluded in April 2026. And, each Fellow has secured roles within the early childhood policy sector.

During the second cohort, the Pathwaves curriculum offered opportunities for Fellows to apply their learning from professional development days. The 20-month program was divided into modules, and each module concluded with a project or presentation where Fellows could demonstrate their learning. The curriculum included opportunities for Fellows to:

- **Practice conducting a policy analysis:** Fellows worked together to identify and research an issue area and create policy recommendations. Recommendations were presented to their peers, placement site supervisors, and Pathwaves board members. The presentations demonstrated the Fellows' ability to practice analyzing an early childhood policy issue, finding solutions to complex challenges, and presenting in front of community members.
- **Learn about early childhood policy in rural communities:** In partnership with the Yakima Valley Community Foundation and members of the Pathwaves board, Fellows visited community organizations providing early childhood services in the Yakima Valley. Fellows reported that the field trip provided meaningful context for policy priorities in rural communities and an important opportunity to develop new connections with leaders across the state.
- **Utilize storytelling as an advocacy tool:** The Fellowship curriculum concludes with a storytelling series facilitated in partnership with Storytellers for Change. Developing storytelling skills is directly connected to the Fellows' ability to participate in public policy advocacy. At the Fellow Celebration, Fellows presented a story sharing their leadership journey throughout the program, many Fellows highlighted what brought them to the Fellowship, what they learned, and the vision they hold for the future of communities. These stories demonstrated the individual and collective growth of our Fellows, and the impact we are having together.



## FELLOW HIGHLIGHTS



Pathwaves Fellow Raishawn Swensen with child care providers and Senator Claire Wilson.



Pathwaves Fellow Dania Nuño Carrillo

**Raishawn Swensen**, 2024-26 Fellow at Washington Association for the Education of Young Children (WAEYC), hosted a Day of Action to build connections between child care providers and legislators. The idea for the Day of Action arose from conversations Raishawn had with child care providers at a conference. Providers shared that they could not take time away to attend advocacy days in Olympia. They formulated a plan to invite legislators to visit a child care centers and understand the unique challenges and opportunities in each community.

Raishawn organized an event bringing 21 legislators to six child care centers across the state. The event proved successful, providers reported feeling a significant boost in confidence to share their priorities and needs with the visiting legislators. Additionally, they named that it was meaningful to hear from the legislators about their own connections to child care, and why early childhood policy is important to them. Raishawn hopes that these new connections will blossom into deeper relationships that result in improved outcomes for children and providers in our state.

**Dania Nuño Carrillo**, 2024-26 Fellow at Washington STEM, supported the process improvement for the Early Learning Dashboard in partnership with the Department of Children Youth and Families. The purpose of the project was to improve accessibility and usability of the current early learning dashboards through feedback from current users and to integrate findings into a roadmap they can use for future work.

She created a protocol for conducting outreach to ensure the project methodology and design were human-centered. With her team, Dania identified four participant groups: system influencers or advocates, data specialists or researchers, and providers, and community members. Dania's biggest takeaway was that people are hungry for comprehensive data and it needs to be presented in ways that are digestible and accessible way to be useful. Future dashboards will now be created to more effectively meet the data needs of a many groups like legislators, advocates, and community members.



2024-26 Pathwaves Fellows and Board members visit Campbell Farm in Yakima County.

## 2024-26 FELLOWSHIP COHORT

- Asha Farah:** Voices of Tomorrow
- Barbara Belk:** Families of Color Seattle
- Dania Nuño Carrillo:** Washington STEM
- Elisha Sneddy:** Hummingbird Indigenous Family Services
- Gemma O’Neil:** Washington Family Engagement
- Jasmine Walters:** Best Starts for Kids
- Kawthar:** OneAmerica
- Raishawn Swensen:** Washington Association for the Education of Young Children

## STAFF

- Lish Olson:** Manager of People and Culture
- Nubia López:** Executive Director

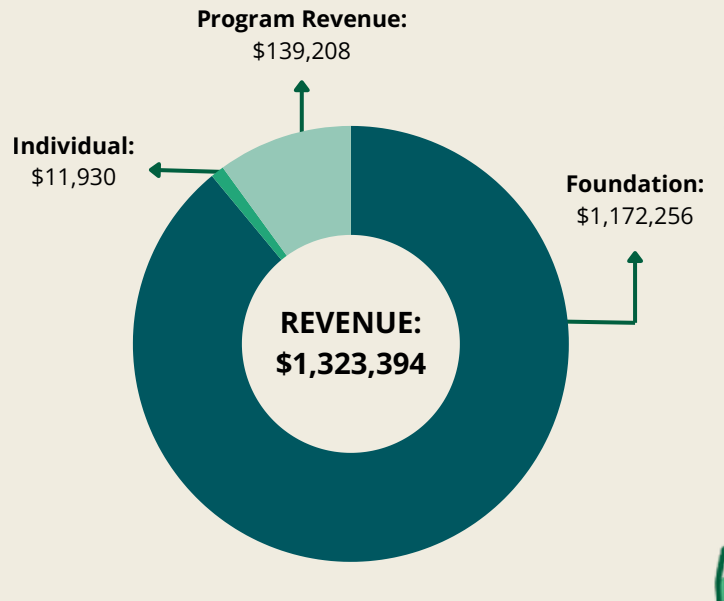
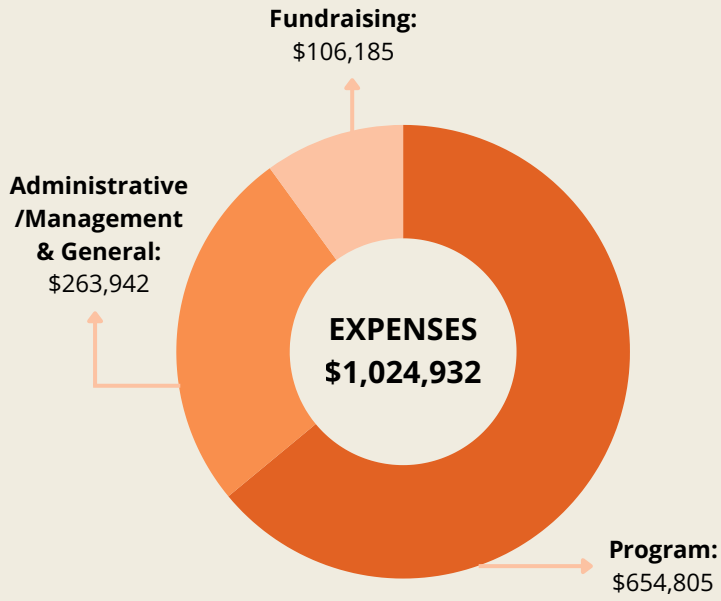
## 2025 BOARD OF DIRECTORS

- Dr. Kelly Niccolls :** Cheney School District
- Maggie Mendoza:** Educational Service District 105
- Maria Vasquez:** Growth X Design, LLC
- Sabrina Miller:** Yakama Nation Child Care Development Fund
- Samantha Grono:** Washington State Women's Commission
- Tanya Hutton:** National Indian Child Care Association





# 2025 FINANCIALS



**Net Assets:**  
**\$1,627,287**

2024-26 Pathwaves Dania Nuño Carrillo and Elisha Sneddy during a field trip to Olympia.





2024-26 Pathwaves Fellows, staff,, and community partners

## 2025 CONTRIBUTORS

Pathwaves is deeply appreciative for the financial support from our community, without which none of our work would be possible. Thank you to everyone who has contributed!

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| Andrea Severson           | Lindsay Boswell          |
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| Leslie Dozono             | Thelma Wong              |

**To support Pathwaves in our efforts to increase the representation and power of people of color in early childhood policy spaces, please visit <https://pathwaveswa.org/donate>**





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