

Case Study: Washington State

Washington State Drowning Prevention Network ([WADPN](#))

The Washington State Drowning Prevention Network launched in 1994 to provide a forum for organizations to work together to promote water safety and prevent drowning. The Network grew out of the Seattle King County Drowning Prevention Coalition as interest grew among other counties throughout the state to be involved with drowning prevention.

The network is led by the following organizations:

- Washington State Department of Health
- Safe Kids Washington
- Public Health Seattle and King County
- Seattle Children's
- Washington State Parks Boating Program
- Washington Recreation and Park Association Aquatics
- Seattle Parks and Recreation Aquatics

Currently, 300 people have signed up to be part of the WADPN though anyone is invited to attend meetings and access resources. Organizations and people involved include: aquatics, boating, public health, health care, parks and recreation, pool and spa industry, family members, first responders, community-based organizations, foundations, and many others.

Priorities of the Network have been shaped by data, programs and advocacy that are of interest to members as well as by funding available for specific activities. There are three working groups, each of which has an action plan with a timeline and deliverables: Media and Outreach, Life Jackets and Education.

Successes include:

Partnerships and Collaboration

- Almost 30 years of a continuously functioning volunteer Network.
- Collaborative leadership and active involvement by members.
- Twice yearly meetings that consistently include presentations and discussions about data, advocacy, programming and reaching a variety of diverse communities.
- Cross promotion of messages and education by boating, open water, pool and home safety agencies and organizations.

Advocacy

- Individual members have collaborated on successful statewide advocacy efforts including child life jackets, mandatory boater education and boating under the influence legislation as well as local level policies such as single gender swim and life jacket loaner access.
- Members are kept informed of policy efforts both at a state and national level.

Data and Surveillance

- Sharing of data and information including boating fatalities and injuries, life jacket observations, media reports of drownings as well as water safety focused posts, Washington state syndromic surveillance and state and local public health drowning data.

Access

- Annual discount life jacket coupon for Washington state in partnership with national sporting goods store.
- Updated statewide list and map of life jacket loaner stations.
- Standard multilingual sign for loaner stations based on user input and literacy best practices.
- Collaborations to distribute free or discounted life jackets to children and under-resourced communities.

Education

- Annual April Pools Day event opening pools for a free day to learn about water safety and swimming programs.
- Member sharing to learn about community-based efforts to educate children, families, boaters and other groups.

Communications

- Media messaging developed and promoted to all members based on data and WADPN input on emerging trends.
- Participation in National Water Safety Month, Paddle Safe Week and other state or national water and boating safety campaigns.
- Regular distribution of a drowning prevention compiler with information and resources including education materials, conferences, reports, etc.