



The NAACP's 'Afro-Academic, Cultural, Technological and Scientific Olympics (ACT-SO) is a year-long student personal and professional development, and achievement program designed to recruit, stimulate, and encourage high academic and cultural achievement among African-American high school students.

The ACT-SO Program was founded in 1978 and provides a forum through which youth of African descent can demonstrate academic, artistic, and scientific prowess and expertise, and gain recognition for their efforts. ACT-SO has approximately 200 programs nationally. Over the past 42 years, over 250,000 students have participated in the program.

The ACT-SO Program includes 33 competitions in areas such as STEM (Science, Technology, Engineering, Math), Humanities, Business, and Performing, Visual and Culinary Arts, Aviation, Medical fields. Students can compete in up to three different categories of the 33 areas to choose from. Participants work with community-based volunteers for one year to develop projects and presentations. The experience culminates in local and national events where students compete for awards, and national gold medal winners are eligible for scholarships.

In 2021, the NAACP-Vancouver Branch established the ACT-SO Program in Vancouver, WA. Over 60 students in grades 9-12 participated, 11 of which were high school seniors. Of those, 21 students competed locally and regionally, with several winning regional awards. Two of the Vancouver regional winners moved on to compete nationally. Attached is an article highlighting their accomplishments.

The Vancouver ACT-SO program coordinator facilitates recruitment of students, mentors and volunteers, the enrichment program, and mentor matches. The program is year-round with an annual opportunity for Clark County students to sign up. Students are matched with community volunteers/mentors who have professional experience and talents in the same area as the students' field of interest. The mentors then guide and help the students hone their projects for competition, if students choose to compete.

Students meet twice a month with their mentors. Other ACT-SO programming includes guest speakers, workshops on professional skills, fieldtrips to local opportunities in the ACT-SO focus fields, such as those mentioned above. Other local ACT-SO programming includes college research and college prep, admissions, and financial aid application guidance.

The local NAACP ACT-SO Program staff are proud to announce the NAACP Vancouver Branch ACT-SO Scholarship Fund for local ACT-SO Program participants so they may continue their post-secondary education. Please join our efforts by donating to the Scholarship Fund at <https://www.cfsww.org/donate/>