



Citi Foundation



**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**

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**TACOMA COMMUNITY ORGANIZATIONS RECEIVE FUNDING THROUGH  
THE CITI FOUNDATION AND LISC TO HELP TRAIN WORKERS FOR  
GROWING JOB SECTORS**

*Two nonprofits will use \$380,000 in grants to help veterans and other displaced workers prepare for skilled positions in manufacturing, technology*

TACOMA - The Citi Foundation and the Local Initiatives Support Corporation (LISC) today announced new funding through the Bridges to Career Opportunities initiative (Bridges) to help connect unemployed and underemployed people in Tacoma to quality jobs in growth industries.

Two local nonprofits have been awarded \$380,000 over three years and technical support to provide services that help job seekers increase their incomes, improve their credit and raise their standards of living. Services include skills training and career development, as well as personal finance coaching, continuing education courses (to strengthen math and reading skills), and resources to help job seekers secure transportation, child care and housing arrangements, which can be impediments to career mobility.

The new funding is part of a \$10 million three-year national effort by the Citi Foundation and LISC to expand the reach of Bridges and spur economic opportunity for thousands of families across the country, including an estimated 1,800 Tacoma workers.

"We are grateful that these two valued Tacoma organizations will be beneficiaries of the funding provided by the Citi Foundation and LISC," said Tacoma Mayor Victoria Woodards. "With this support, Goodwill of the Olympics and Sound Outreach can ensure that even more Tacoma families are career ready and able to take on living wage jobs."

The grantees both have long and successful track records of outreach in the communities they serve. They will use the Bridges funding to tailor their services to growing employment sectors while also expanding their reach to a wider range of local residents.

**Goodwill of the Olympics and Rainier Region** will use the Bridges support and strategy to enhance career path job training programs at their Milgard Work Opportunity Center in Tacoma. They will now integrate within their culinary, computer, YouthBuild construction, warehouse, barista, and other career programs an enhanced set of career coaching, financial coaching, and other supportive services to ensure participants are competitive in their job search and successful in their careers. These enhanced services are incorporated into Goodwill's new Career Readiness Education & Development (CRED) program and are available to veterans, military families and others seeking employment in the region.

**Sound Outreach** will prepare students for careers in the building trades through a pre-apprenticeship program at the Trade Occupations Opportunity Learning (TOOL) center. Their

Bridges program also offers an "on-ramp" educational feature allowing individuals to increase their likelihood of being accepted into the trade program and Sound Outreach is adding job retention coaches and the ability to connect Bridges participants to other financial and social services that can support their success. Clients will have access to on-going career counseling, asset-building products, and other helpful supports such as reasonable auto refinance loans.

"The demands of today's U.S. job market are playing out in different ways for American workers and we need to support those who are being negatively impacted by the forces that are shaping the modern economy," said Ed Skyler, executive vice president for global public affairs at Citi and chair of the Citi Foundation. "By connecting programs that provide not only education and skills building, but support services for family and housing needs, we're helping American workers who have been or are in danger of being displaced achieve success and contribute to their communities."

The Tacoma groups are among 40 community-based nonprofits to be awarded funding through this program (a full listing of participating organizations can be found [here](#)).

"Our vocational training programs are more valuable to both employers and job candidates when they include additional support services focused on individual well-being and career progression," said Jayme Kaniss, PhD, dean of vocational school programs for Goodwill. "Thanks to substantial support from the Bridges to Career Opportunities initiative, our job training programs not only provide individuals with technical skills but also with interpersonal, financial, and productivity skills that promote career success."

The majority of people who enter the Bridges program are either unemployed or working in minimum wage jobs and testing at a 6<sup>th</sup>-8<sup>th</sup> grade education level. After Bridges, more than three-quarters of participants move on to occupational skills training and 60 percent achieve industry-recognized credentials—opening doors to living wage jobs they would not otherwise be able to access and putting them on career pathways with the opportunity for ongoing advancement. In the last two years alone, more than 3,000 training participants across the country have been placed in jobs.

Dona Ponepinto, president and CEO of United Way said, "We know that healthy, sustainable communities are made up of people who have living wage jobs and feel confident about their economic futures. When we launched our Center for Strong Families in 2016, our vision was to provide financial and employment coaching as well as income assistance support. The missing link was to include adult education for specific career paths. This Citi Foundation grant for two of our Center for Strong Families partners now presents even more opportunities for Pierce County residents."

The Citi Foundation's investment in Bridges builds on a decades-long relationship between the Foundation and LISC. It also signals an expansion of the Citi Foundation's [Pathways to Progress](#) initiative beyond youth-focused career readiness to provide adult job seekers the full range of services needed for long-term employment.

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### **About the Citi Foundation**

The **Citi Foundation** works to promote economic progress and improve the lives of people in low-income communities around the world. We invest in efforts that increase financial inclusion, catalyze job opportunities for youth, and reimagine approaches to building economically vibrant cities. The Citi Foundation's "More than Philanthropy" approach leverages the enormous

expertise of Citi and its people to fulfill our mission and drive thought leadership and innovation. For more information, visit [www.citifoundation.com](http://www.citifoundation.com).

### **About LISC**

With residents and partners, LISC forges resilient and inclusive communities of opportunity across America – great places to live, work, visit, do business and raise families. Since 1979, LISC has invested \$18.6 billion to build or rehab 376,000 affordable homes and apartments and develop 63 million square feet of retail, community and educational space. To learn more, visit [www.lisc.org](http://www.lisc.org).

### **About United Way**

United Way of Pierce County has a bold goal to lift 15,000 households out of poverty and into financial stability by 2028. We will achieve this by mobilizing local businesses, community organizations, governmental agencies and individuals, to make a long-term measurable difference in our community. United Way's Center for Strong Families was launched in 2016 and provides dedicated staff for on-going technical assistance and overall network management in implementing the Bridges to Career Opportunities model as part of the Center for Strong Families. Together, we are creating a stronger community. To learn more or to join our fight against poverty in Pierce County, visit [www.uwpc.org](http://www.uwpc.org).

### **Contact**

United Way of Pierce County  
Media

Katherine Ransom, 253-284-2549  
[KatherineR@uwpc.org](mailto:KatherineR@uwpc.org)

Or

Amanda Fox, 347-581-6498  
[amandacainfox@gmail.com](mailto:amandacainfox@gmail.com)

Citi

Media

Elizabeth Kelly, 212-559-2477  
[elizabeth.kelly@citi.com](mailto:elizabeth.kelly@citi.com)