



**TO:** Hyun Kim, City Manager  
**FROM:** Carol Wolfe, Division Manager Community and Economic Development Department  
**COPY:** Tanja Carter, Director, Community and Economic Development Department  
**SUBJECT:** Response to February 24, 2026, EDC Questions: Workforce Update  
**DATE:** April 28, 2026

---

**PRESENTATION TYPE:** Informational Briefing memo

**SUMMARY:**

Community and Economic Development (CED) is providing additional information in follow up to two presentations to the Economic Development Committee (EDC) on February 24, 2026. Questions were in relation to material provided for the 2018/19 Tacoma Workforce Advisory Committee (TCWAC) recommendations and a CED Workforce Programs Update. Staff will provide a brief overview of program data at the April 28<sup>th</sup> Economic Development Committee.

**BACKGROUND:**

CED staff presented progress in completing the 25 recommendations from the TCWAC and whether existing city programs were meeting workforce goals. Staff also presented comprehensive updates on the City's workforce development programs, including Equity in Contracting, Local Employment and Apprenticeship Training Program (LEAP), Tacoma Training and Employment Program (TTEP), and EPA Brownfields initiatives.

**QUESTIONS AND RESPONSES:**

1. Council Member Scott requested the data provided be compared to the goals for the program.  
**Staff Response:** Local employee utilization consistently exceeded the 15% goal each year, reaching 25–33%, demonstrating strong performance against program requirements. In contrast, TPU Service Area (TPUSA) apprentice utilization remained below the 15% goal across all years, and Washington State apprentice utilization met the goal only once, indicating continued gaps in apprentice participation. Overall, the program is outperforming expectations for local hires but falling short of apprentice utilization targets.
2. Council Member Scott asked if we understand why the city resident number is lower.  
**Staff Response:** The city resident utilization number is lower than the Economically Distressed Area (EDA) resident utilization number as the city is smaller than the EDA geography.
3. Council Member Palmer asked for more context and purpose for the numbers included in data.  
**Staff Response:** The purpose of the data is to show progress towards the program requirements. City goals include utilization of local hires, priority hires, and apprentices on our public work and improvement projects, and the utilization of small, minority, and women-owned businesses on our projects. The numbers show the percentage by which we are meeting the goals



4. Council Member Palmer asked what is the process of getting to the goals for these programs?

**Staff Response:** The process for establishing LEAP and EIC requirements on public work and improvements, is in Tacoma Municipal Code Chapters 1.07 (EIC) and 1.90 (LEAP). Staff evaluates bidder responses for compliance with utilization goals, supports contractors and certified firms in meeting the goals, provide compliance updates throughout awarded projects, and address issues in meeting the requirements or noncompliance with requirements.

5. Council Member Palmer asked for more details on what the EIC capacity building and training programs “actually look like”.

**Staff Response:** EIC capacity building and training programs include OMWBE certification process and enrollment, Bonding Basics, Business Taxes, Access to Capital, Small Business Technical Assistance, Networking Opportunities such as Grit City Connect.

6. Council Member Palmer asked how many folks participate in the EIC capacity building and training program.

**Staff Response:** On average our training workshops have 20 participants with Access to Capital being the highest in attendance (40-45). Networking events range between 100-125 attendees.

7. Council Member Palmer requested more information on how EIC, LEAP, TTEP and EPA Brownfields program outcomes line up with program goals and requested established goals for all.

**Staff Response:**

- **EIC:**

- Goals: The EIC program has an overall annual participation goal of 21%, but we do not set cumulative goals for local business spend, MBE, WBE, or SBE categories across all projects. Instead, goals for MBE, WBE, and SBE/DBE participation are established on a project-by-project basis using a legally defensible goal setting methodology.
- Outcomes: Year-over-year outcomes show steady improvement, with MBE utilization rising from 10% to 21% and WBE utilization increasing from 5% to 11%, indicating growing progress toward equitable participation. SBE/DBE utilization, while variable, demonstrates continued engagement of small and disadvantaged firms in public works projects.

- **LEAP:**

- Goals: 15% utilization of local employees, apprentices, and or WA State apprentices on qualifying public work and improvement projects.
- Outcome: Local employee utilization consistently exceeded the 15% goal each year, reaching 25–33%, demonstrating strong performance against program requirements. In contrast, TPU Service Area (TPUSA) apprentice utilization remained below the 15% goal across all years, and Washington State apprentice utilization met the goal only once, indicating continued gaps in apprentice participation. Overall, the program is outperforming expectations for local hires but falling short of apprentice utilization targets.

- **TTEP:**

- Goals: At least 80% of enrolled students graduate from training, and Placement into apprenticeship programs or family wage jobs over \$20.00 per hour or Pierce County’s published living wage; whichever is higher.
- Outcome: 85% graduation rate for 2024/25. Wage at 3-6 months post program completion: ranges from \$17/hr. to \$46/hr.



- **EPA Brownfields:**

- 2023-2028 Goals: 280 participants and 140 participants enrolled in one of seven training cohorts.
  - Projected Outcome as of year 3 in the grant cycle: 105 trainees graduated; 79 attaining environmentally related positions; 4 assisted with pursuing further education; wages at 3-6 months post program completion of \$18.50/hr. to \$41.39/hr.

8. Council Member Palmer requested more information on “how successful job placement is” for the workforce programs presented.

**Staff Response:** Success is measured by number of pre-apprenticeship and workforce development program training graduates resulting in apprenticeships or family wage jobs over \$20.00 per hour or Pierce County’s published living wage, whichever is higher and retained from 3 months to up to 18 months. At time of presentation, data is reflective of placements within 3-6 months post program completion.

- Is it successful: The City’s workforce programs show strong early placement outcomes, with 85% of TTEP participants graduating and securing an average wage of \$31.50, which is well above the program’s \$20 family-wage goal three to six months after completion. The EPA Brownfields Job Training Program also demonstrates meaningful progress, with 57% of graduates employed, 34% placed in environmentally related positions, and an average wage of \$29.95, exceeding the same \$20 benchmark. These early indicators reflect solid success in connecting program graduates to sustainable, family-wage jobs.

9. Council Member Palmer requested more information on our areas of opportunity for workforce development.

**Staff Response:** Areas of opportunity in workforce programs include, but are not limited to: Strategically partnering with local career, technical education institutions, immigrant and refugee communities, advocates and partners of the unhoused community, advocates and partners in the foster care system, and advocates and partners in the justice system. Opportunities also include increased collaboration with TPU.

10. Council Member Palmer requested data specific to setting of EIC goals, specifically where there are disparities.

- **Staff Response:** The summary report of disparities can be found in the [City of Tacoma 2024 Economic Disparity Study Final Report](#) on the City of Tacoma web page. Specific utilization data is found on pages 130-163.

**ISSUE:**

This is an information briefing only.

**ALTERNATIVES:**

This is an information briefing only. There are no alternatives presented.

**FISCAL IMPACT:**

This is an information briefing only. There is no fiscal impact.

**RECOMMENDATION:**

This is an information briefing only. There is no recommendation.