

Context for Tacoma's Guaranteed Income Demonstration

Growing Resilience In Tacoma (GRIT)

Updated June 8, 2021

Objective

A Guaranteed Income strategy in Tacoma should be the natural evolution of work already being undertaken in our community to dismantle poverty. It should be additive to the City, County, State or National efforts that are aimed at improving child welfare, reforming childcare systems, supporting affordable housing initiatives, advancing women's economic empowerment and reducing poverty. The sheer number of these disparate efforts reinforce the case for a need for support services. And while there are many links between these efforts, they are not coherent nor connected and prove difficult for participants to navigate.

Primary objective – systems transformation with a focus on informing Federal policies that promote economic opportunity, such as additional Economic Impact Payments (EIPs) and expansion and modernization of Earned income Tax Credits (EITC), and that enhance, improve and increase equity in the social safety net.

Strategy & Deliverables

Early deliverables in the demonstration will be limited to participant spending reports and storytelling efforts. Impact and survey data will not be released until a year after the demonstration closes. Tacoma should leverage storytelling efforts to:

- Show positive community impact through assistance to 100+ ALICE families during ongoing COVID-19 pandemic economic crisis
- Provide a face for ALICE families in order to break the stigma around poverty
- Help our community gain a better understanding of the impact of GI
- Demonstrate that unrestricted funds provide people in poverty financial empowerment
- Illuminate the disparities in job opportunities, family care and housing to help build a case for policy that reflects and supports single head of households' fundamental roles in both the workplace and in families

In addition, one year after the demonstration, data from the demonstration should provide a better understanding of the impact of GI in Tacoma and can be used to support the development of innovative policies that effectively fight poverty and further implementation of GI programs on the federal level.

Guiding Principles

Invest in ALICE: Support a population already identified as struggling - Asset Limited, Income Constrained and Employed - which represents the financial disparities of BIPOC families and has been disproportionately impacted by the COVID-19 pandemic.

Cultivate Resilience: Families are empowered to make financial decisions and address crises on their own terms.

Change the Narrative: Through storytelling and data, build a case for supporting more equity in housing, childcare, physical well being, and financial wellness and uplift the truth that poverty is a systems failure - not a personal failure.

Build Support: Leverage learnings and experiences to impact systems changes that support unconditional cash programs and other strength-based policies that enhance, improve and increase equity in the social safety net.

Pilot design

Amounts

Participants will be provided \$500 per month for 12 months.

Sample Size and Duration

The duration of the demonstration is 12 months, September 2021 - September 2022.

For the purpose of policy impact and statistical power in research and evaluation, the demonstration will be a randomized controlled trial (RCT) and have an overall sample size of 242 people in the treatment and control groups. The treatment group consists of people receiving the monthly payments. There will be 110 people in the treatment group: 100 people + 5 for storytelling cohort + 5 alternates. The control group are participants not receiving the payment. The control group will be 20% larger than the treatment group: there will be 132 people in the control group.

Eligibility Parameters

City of Tacoma Resident

The City of Tacoma's Equity index was used to choose the geographic area. Zip code specific areas with a higher percentage of ALICE and poverty than average Citywide: Eastside (98404), Hilltop (98405), South Tacoma (98409), and the South End (98408).

ALICE

ALICE stands for Asset Limited, Income Constrained while Employed. Pre-pandemic, 40% of Tacoma households identified as ALICE. Household income would be between 100% and 200% of the Federal Poverty Level. About 15% of these households are headed by a single adult. While we don't know the demographics of the Tacoma ALICE population, we do know that Pierce County.

Zipcode	Households	Poverty Household	ALICE Household	Above ALICE Household
98404	11,384	2,203	2,987	6,194
98405	9,595	1,806	2,862	4,927
98408	7,448	1,169	2,040	4,239

98409	9,956	1,708	3,020	5,228
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Income: between 100% and 200% federal poverty level

	Number of People in Household							
	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8
200% FPL	\$25,760	\$34,840	\$43,920	\$53,000	\$62,080	\$71,160	\$80,240	\$98,320
100% FPL	\$12,880	\$17,420	\$21,960	\$26,500	\$31,040	\$35,580	\$40,120	\$44,660

Single Parent or Guardian Household

The GRIT demonstration wants to look at parent or guardian household income earners 18 years or older, with children in their care. In order to alleviate confusion with the IRS term ‘single head of household’ and its definition of dependents, the term single parent or guardian households will be used to define this requirement.

Age of Children

Children living in the home up to age 17, children with disabilities up to age 21.

[City of Tacoma data](#) for the desired zip codes for this project identifies the number of families with children under age 18 as well as those with only children age 5 and under, and those with children age 5-17.

Selection Criteria Lenses/Filters for Weighting the Sample

(ranked in order of priority)

Race & Ethnicity

The composition of participants should match, to the extent possible, the disproportionality that BIPOC households show in the need among ALICE families with children at risk of homelessness.

Age of Children

The composition of participants should match, to the extent possible, the percentage of ALICE families in Pierce County with children under the age of 5. The interactive [Pierce County profile for ALICE](#) identifies 17,264 ALICE families with children in the County in 2018. According to [City of Tacoma data](#) for the desired zip codes for this project, about 16.5% of families with single heads of household who are experiencing poverty have only children under the age of 5 in the household, and about 5% for those at or above poverty.

Gender

The composition of participants should match, to the extent possible, gender makeup of ALICE single parents or guardians.

Research domains

Additionally, the Tacoma demonstration would like to look at the impact on housing and childcare.

Housing Affordability & Homelessness

GRIT would like to look at housing access, stability, number of residency changes, renters versus owners, debt burden, risk of eviction, availability of affordable housing, adequate housing - several families/households sharing one space, distance of commute between home and work.

Local Policy Initiatives on Housing Affordability and Homelessness

- Both the City of Tacoma and Pierce County are deep into detailed planning of new policies to create or preserve more affordable housing.
- City of Tacoma Affordable Housing Action Strategy (AHAS). [See AHAS](#)
- Home in Tacoma proposal. [See Home In Tacoma](#)
- Pierce County's planning is not as far along in its planning. [Here is a link to planning documents and studies from 2006 to the present](#)

The Unmet Need for Affordable Housing

- Both the City and County are good sources of data about the unmet need. Pierce County probably has the best data on the extent and nature of homelessness on its [dashboard](#). This homelessness count is understood to be an undercount.
- The National Low Income Housing Coalition publishes a valuable annual housing market and wage survey for every city and county showing the mismatch between rents and minimum wages: [Out of Reach](#).
- THA tracks the mismatch in Tacoma between rents and incomes. It uses these data to calculate the shortfall in affordable housing units now and over the City's planning horizon 2017 – 2040. Their [most recent report](#).

Childcare Affordability & Access

Childcare access and affordability, parental stress related to child care, affordable child care, availability of after school programs

Help Me Grow Pierce County would like to learn if guaranteed income recipients are statistically less likely to experience a child welfare intake. It is suggested to use a *intakes screened in* measurement which would cover three options that are based severity of the allegations and the family's history (chronicity of screened in intakes, dependency history, etc.): Investigation 72 hour response, Investigation 24 hour response, or Family Assessment Response (aka FAR) which always has a 72 hour response. No data currently exists, locally or nationally, on the impact of cash benefits on this issue. In Pierce County 6,000 intakes are screened for some response each year, with just under 1,000 youth

under age 18 entering care annually. The "[rate of opened investigations and assessments](#)" for Pierce County families was about 66 per 1,000 children in 2019 and 2018.

Project Child Success is interested in parental stress related to finding, securing and maintaining quality child care.

Policy Initiatives

- [White paper from Graduate Tacoma](#)
- [State of the Children: Early Learning & Care](#) - children under the age of 6 in Pierce County, provides 98408 disaggregate
- [2021 Bill Tracking: 10-Year Plan to Reduce Poverty & Inequality](#) - a number of these relate to childcare

Recruitment

Following are the ways people will have access to the application form/baseline survey. The survey will be open for 1 week, including a weekend. The timeline can be extended for a week, if needed.

Website: Publicize the website containing the application survey and allow individuals to complete the application survey. At the close of the application window, CGIR will verify residence in Tacoma and randomly assign applicants to the treatment condition and the control condition.

Negotiable by CGIR and the City:

Community Outreach: Work with community stakeholders to help sign-up participants - provide access, answer technical questions, not assist with filling in the document. Ask United Way board to disperse to their organizations.

Email: Direct email to list of people already interested in the demonstration. Add to newsletter to share with opt-ins.

Virtual Town Hall or Press Conference: Explain the process and criteria. Provide link and timeline.

Community Media: Articles or ads in Hilltop Action Coalition, local Spanish speaking radio stations

Language Translation

Languages needed: English, Spanish, Korean, Russian, Mandarin/Cantonese, Tagalog, Vietnamese
If there's a language that the Center cannot translate the application/survey to, it is Tacoma's responsibility (including cost) to arrange. If we use a local vendor for translation we will have to provide their contact information so the Center can include it in the IRB.