

# CITY OF TACOMA 2022 FEDERAL PRIORITIES

## GENERAL GOVERNMENT

### **Responding to the COVID-19 Pandemic as Partners**

The City of Tacoma successfully advocated for direct federal relief for State and local governments in 2021 and was allotted \$61 million in aid to support existing City emergency programs addressing income, housing, food insecurity of residents and financial distress of small businesses, nonprofits, and venues. The City received a first tranche of American Rescue Plan funds in May of this year and will receive the second tranche in May 2022 to support ongoing economic and human services recovery. The City will prioritize working with local partners to meet the needs of Tacoma residents and businesses, and with the federal government to meet reporting requirements.

### **Together, We Will Change—Systems Transformation**

The City hopes to work together in partnership with federal policy makers to advance reforms that address the disparate impacts of systems and institutions on communities of color. As part of this, the City calls on Congress to advance transformation policies with regard to policing and the criminal justice system, economic security, immigration, housing, climate justice, and infrastructure to better support communities that historically have not been well-served by existing systems and policies. The City finds the following reforms of great importance:

#### *Policing and Criminal Justice Transformation*

Tacoma is undertaking an effort to analyze our existing policies in the Police Department and we are working to implement new initiatives and policies at the local level. We support comprehensive police reform legislation at the federal level that can align with our local and state efforts. **The City urges Congress to continue discussion on legislation such as the George Floyd Justice in Policing Act.**

The City also supports several other issue-specific bills that seek **to implement sentencing reform and provide financial incentives for states and cities to implement independent investigations and body-worn camera programs**, for example:

- Enhancing Oversight to End Discrimination in Policing Act
- Police Training and Independent Review Act
- Justice Safety Valve Act

#### *Economic Security*

Community members are asking leaders to not only address the violence of police brutality, but also the violence of poverty and the violence of a lack of opportunity. **Mayor Woodards joined Mayors for a Guaranteed Income (MGI), a network of mayors who are studying or piloting guaranteed income (GI) projects in their communities.** The City's own pilot program will launch this month. The City supports the priorities of this network and joins the Anchors Institutions Task Force **in calling for the creation of a Fund for Anchor Institutions within a federal agency** to rebuild in the wake of the pandemic by targeting low-income and historically disadvantaged communities of color.

We also support the **Commission to Study and Develop Reparation Proposals for African-Americans Act**, to establish a commission to study and recommend reparation proposals in a report to Congress and examine federal and state policies that contribute to white supremacy.

#### *Human Dignity and Public Safety: Immigration Reform*

**The City urges Congress to pass comprehensive immigration reform so that all residents may have an accessible path to citizenship and live without fear in the United States.** The City shares concerns expressed by the Tacoma community for the health, safety, and welfare of detainees held locally in the Northwest ICE Processing Center, a privately owned and operated immigration detention facility. The City finds that Immigration and Customs Enforcement (ICE)'s current operations are dehumanizing and **implores the federal government to replace it with an anti-racist agency that will humanely and equitably implement immigration laws and eradicate human trafficking.** To that end, we support legislation that would **end the use of privately-operated prisons and instead utilize available alternatives to immigration detention.** The City also supports legislative efforts such as the **Dignity for Detained Immigrants Act**, which will ensure that all immigrants receive individualized and fair bond hearings by ending the use of mandatory detention of certain immigrants and requiring the U.S. Department of Homeland Security to establish probable cause of removability in 48 hours. Likewise, the City supports the New Way Forward Act, which would end mandatory detention policies for immigrants in deportation proceedings, ban local law enforcement from aiding federal agents, and phase out the practice of holding federal detainees in private detention centers and county jails.

The City also is in favor of initiatives such as the **COVID-19 in Immigration Detention Data Transparency Act**, which calls for ICE, Customs and Border Patrol (CBP), and detention facilities to collect and share data on COVID-19 cases and vaccine distribution among detainees. More broadly, however, given the highly communicative nature of COVID-19, we support the immediate release of individuals in ICE custody for the duration of the COVID-19 pandemic. Accordingly, we support legislative efforts such as the **Federal Immigrant Release for Safety and Security Together (FIRST) Act**. This bill is crucial to ensuring the health and safety of undocumented individuals during a National Emergency related to a communicable disease.

#### *Human Dignity and Public Safety: Gun Violence*

Nearly 38,000 Americans die from gun-related injuries in the United States every year. Finding and declaring that gun violence directly affects residents, the Tacoma City Council adopted a Firearms and Ammunition Tax in 2019. The City joins the U.S. Conference of Mayors and the National League of Cities in requesting that Congress **advance critical legislation to reduce gun violence and promote public safety.** The City supports the **Bipartisan Background Checks Act** and the **Enhanced Background Checks Act**, to require and enhance background checks, as passed by the U.S. House of Representatives.

#### *Affordable Housing and Homelessness*

The City supports the **Housing Fairness Act to assess prevalence of housing discrimination and create a grant program for organizations to study the causes and effects of such discrimination.** We seek flexibility in federal funding to be able to deploy those resources toward communities in Tacoma that need them the most so that we may effectively address housing disparities.

#### *Telecommunications*

Access to high-speed broadband service in every community is essential to our ability to provide quality education, create more jobs, and increase small business growth. Local governments are central players in ensuring broadband connection to homes and businesses is achieved. **Tacoma calls on the Federal**

**Communications Commission and Congress to preserve local government authority to manage their rights-of-way to ensure the siting of cell towers and small cells is safe and appropriate.** The City supports the **Accelerating Wireless Broadband Development by Empowering Local Communities Act of 2019 (H.R. 530)**, which would overturn the FCC regulations limiting the ability of local governments to regulate the deployment of 5G wireless infrastructure.