

From: Carey, Mike <MCarey@tacoma.gov>
Sent: Friday, January 30, 2026 1:23:51 PM
Subject: IPS follow up - Tacoma GRO Corps

Good morning Ramiro,

I wanted to follow up with you regarding the IPS meeting this week, and specifically the request for additional information about the GRO Corps program. As mentioned in the meeting, this workforce development program is in partnership with the Palmer Scholars, The Nature Conservancy, Pierce Conservation District, City of Tacoma Environmental Services, and other partnering agencies who provide training through the program. It is also important to note that in addition to sitting on the steering committee and providing supplemental funding, our Department also provides trainers for the cohorts from the Environmental Programs Group, Capital Delivery Group, and Urban Forestry.

Here is a quick summary about the program:

The Tacoma Green Resilience Opportunity Corps (GRO Corps) is a Green Stormwater Infrastructure (GSI) workforce program led by the Palmer Scholars' for young adults ages 18–26 who are not currently enrolled in school. The program creates equitable pathways into sustainable infrastructure careers while addressing regional environmental and workforce needs.

Delivered in partnership with the GSI Workforce Collaborative including the City of Tacoma, The Nature Conservancy, Pierce Conservation District, Clover Park Technical College, and Workforce Central, the program fills a critical gap in entry-level GSI training. Participants complete an eight-week, 96-hour training combining instruction in hydrology, stormwater management, and GSI principles with hands-on field projects that reduce stormwater pollution and support Puget Sound. A trauma informed model provides stipends, individualized navigation, and wraparound supports, preparing graduates for entry-level GSI roles while advancing environmental resilience and economic mobility.

The City of Tacoma has participated in the regional GSI Workforce Collaborative since 2020. Through a contract with The Nature Conservancy to run the Tacoma program and a subcontract with the Palmer Scholars to provide direct support to the cohorts, the pilot GRO Corps program started in 2024. Attached is the impact summary report for the 2-year pilot, which ran 2024-2025. We are now entering into our 3rd year, and our 4th cohort is set to start on Tuesday, March 17.

Please let me know if you would like to discuss further. Our partners with TNC and Palmer have also offered to present to IPS if there is interest as well.

Best regards,

Michael Carey (he/him) // Urban Forest Program Manager
ISA Certified Arborist // PN-7351A
City of Tacoma // Environmental Services

Center for Urban Waters
326 East D Street
253.208.5782 (Cell)