



**Tacoma  
Urban League**

*Empowering Communities.  
Changing Lives.*

Today's Mission - Tomorrow's Movement

*Celebrating 50 Years of Service to the Tacoma – Pierce County Community*

# **2019 – 2021 TACOMA URBAN LEAGUE STRATEGIC PLAN**

**TACOMA URBAN LEAGUE BOARD OF DIRECTORS**

January 2019

## **Message from the Board Chair and President and CEO**

### **Dear Friends:**

On behalf of the Tacoma Urban League (the League) board, volunteers, and staff, we are pleased to present our three-year Strategic Plan. This Plan presents the long-term strategic direction of the League as we embark on our journey to be the driver of economic, educational, and policy change which impacts the economic and social fabric of the communities we serve.

The Plan is ambitious and bold. It is an integrated and strategic approach to the League's growth. It builds on much of the work the League has done before, and it is the right direction for our community.

We do not want to just train and place our youth in jobs; we want to help create jobs. We want to support, empower, and even embolden small businesses so that they can create jobs. We want to take our engagement of youth to the next level and help all parents be empowered to care for, nurture, and guide their children into becoming smart, responsible, capable adults. This Plan represents a revitalized commitment to public policy. We will never change our community if we do not change the systems to benefit everyone. Simply put, we are dedicated to the creation of positive change for future generations of African Americans in particular, as well as other marginalized and vulnerable communities.

We invite you to review this plan to learn more about the direction of the League and explore ways you can be a part of it.

Sincerely,

LaTasha Wortham, Board Chair

T'wina Nobles, President and CEO

## The Strategic Planning Process

In 2017 and early 2018, a dedicated committee of staff, Board members, and community volunteers worked to create a five-year strategic plan for the Tacoma Urban League. In order to complete the plan, the committee completed several key phases to collect data and discuss the needs of the agency, which included:

1. Community Input and Survey
2. Focus Groups (Young Professionals, The Guild, and Selected Community Leaders)
3. Board of Directors Retreat
4. Committee Meetings and Discussions

Through these phases of work, the committee learned that the local community values the work of the Tacoma Urban League, both as a longstanding community institution and values the specific programs that we provide to the community. We also learned that the public wanted us to reach more people through our continued advocacy and current programs rather than provide new or alternative programming. With this feedback in hand, the committee moved forward knowing that a key priority of the Tacoma Urban League is to grow our capacity to serve more individuals under much our current programming model.

To this end, the board has developed several work products that include our mission, and a strategic framework with several key goals, actions and targeted outcomes that will drive the work of the Tacoma Urban League over the next five years.

## History

For more than 50 years the Tacoma Urban League has worked in a variety of ways to strengthen and support the local African American community and other vulnerable and socio-economically challenged communities. Founded in 1968, the Tacoma Urban League is devoted to empowering African Americans and other disenfranchised groups to enter the economic and social mainstream. From its earliest days in the civil rights movement, through years of partnership with government and public agencies, the Tacoma Urban League has been a beacon of hope and a catalyst for change in the South Puget Sound African American community.

## Our Mission

Our Mission continues to be focused on assisting African Americans and other underserved urban residents in the achievement of social equality and economic independence. Advocating for the inclusion and participation in all aspects of society is a deeply held value and commitment. We continue to take our role as an advocate and convener on many public policy issues impacting our constituents and stakeholders. Through advocacy, service delivery and research, the Tacoma Urban League:

- Conducts specialized programs and provides services that sustain, improve and facilitate the growth, development, and education of individuals and families;
- Intervenes and advocates in social, economic, and public policy arenas where the interests of the League's constituents are at stake;
- Strengthens race relations and builds bridges of understanding for an integrated, culturally diverse and pluralistic society;
- Mobilizes, organizes and coordinates professional service providers and community groups to ensure their full development and self-sufficiency; and
- Participates in fact-finding and assessment to increase community awareness of the social and economic needs of the League's constituents.

Our commitment and role in advocacy civic engagement can be highlighted in the following diagram:



## Today's Mission - Tomorrow's Movement

Our commitment to advancing the movement in the future is grounded in our programs and services. As we build our capacity to deliver them from both a resource and funding perspective, our vision is to become the preferred agent of change in the greater Tacoma community.

The Tacoma Urban League has been operating a variety of programs designed to assist in achieving our mission as an important part of serving the needs of our constituents. The following is a recap of current and recent programming:

1. **The Male Involvement Program (MIP)** – a youth violence prevention program aimed at middle school males of color. It teaches alternate options for reducing conflict, managing anger, and avoiding violence through structured dialogue, culture specific exercises and group mentoring. Students enrolled in MIP receive mentoring and direction from adult males of color.
2. **Girls With Purpose (GWP)** – an all-girls program that combines positive adult female mentoring with group activities and a structured curriculum that helps to empower young females of color to succeed as productive citizens, both scholastically and in all aspects of their personal life. Its target audience is middle school aged girls between 11-14 years old.
3. **Career Empowerment Academy** – Tacoma Urban League and community partners bring you Career Empowerment Academy. The Academy consists of a week-long class that is geared toward assistance with job readiness, job search, training, and labor market information. The program model facilitates ongoing assistance with job placement and connections to training needed for good-paying jobs that provide a pathway to long-term careers. The Academy offers evening classes to create a comprehensive career plan and the opportunity to network with industry leaders.
4. **Black Empowerment Center (BEC)** – The Black Empowerment Center works to improve and protect the economic security of African-Americans in the Tacoma Pierce County area by enhancing asset-building services, improving policy advocacy strategies and increasing

leadership capacity. Programming includes advocacy, financial coaching, and entrepreneurial support for small business development.

5. **Household Budget & Finance Workshops** – Our free Household Budget & Finance

Workshops are a part of the Black Empowerment Center and provide information and tools that help participants increase their financial well-being. Learn about how to calculate and build a household budget, plan your savings, access fresh start checking accounts and more. We partner with Sound Outreach, Tacoma Public Utilities, and the Black Empowerment Center to create a culturally-anchored experience that brings peer leaders and community members together in post workshop break-out sessions to share experiences, knowledge, and take meaningful next steps and action around their personal and household finances.

6. **Home Ownership Program** – Our Home Ownership Program is a part of the Black

Empowerment Center and helps community members achieve and sustain successful home ownership through a variety of classes, workshops, one-to-one coaching and support. Home ownership is one of the most important ways that families build wealth and we work to make that dream a reality. In partnership with the Urban League of Metropolitan Seattle (ULMS) our Housing Program provides direct service programs and resources to individuals and families who seek knowledge, understanding and access to pertinent financial education that result in maintaining and obtaining home ownership. We support and work with clients, in the South Sound Region, during hardships that could jeopardize home ownership. We process home foreclosures, loan modifications and meditations. We also work with local industry professionals to connect clients with Down Payment Assistance programs, lenders, and other real estate professionals as well as working with local agencies like Tacoma Housing Authority, City of Tacoma and Pierce County to create access to special programs and housing stock for low to mid-income range families.

7. **Family Support Partnership** – This program provides support and training to families with children ages 2-12. A referral system is used to identify families and a screening process is used to determine program suitability. This is in partnership with Tacoma Pierce County Health Department Strengthening Families Division.
  
8. **Equity & Inclusion** – Tacoma Urban League works with a diverse group of consultants to offer equity and inclusion training and resources to local organizations. Our consultants include The Institute for Sustainable Diversity and Inclusion, Coleman and Associates, and Monique Dubose (Master Resiliency Coach).
  
9. **Voter Advocacy** – Tacoma Urban League strives to increase the voting power of low-income communities and communities of color in Pierce County/Tacoma by conducting targeted voter registration, education and participation efforts.
  
10. **Hilltop Urban Gardens** – Tacoma Urban Leagues is the fiscal sponsor for HUG who seeks to increase racial equity and food sovereignty in the Hilltop area of Tacoma and supports and advocates for racial and gender justice.

## The Tacoma Urban League Moving Forward: 2018 – 2023

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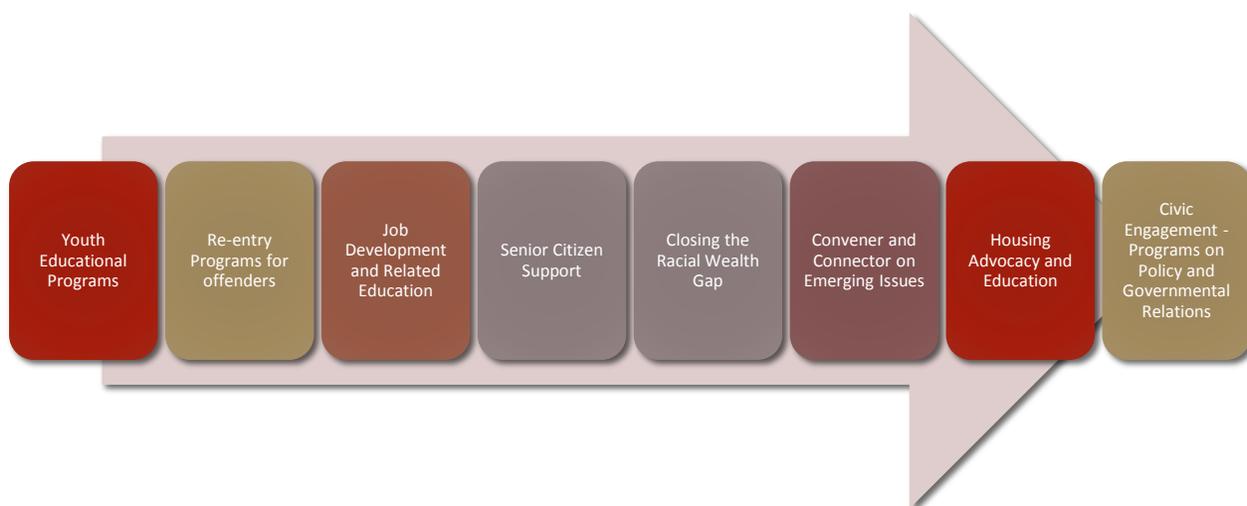
### Our Role

In 2017, the Tacoma Urban League embarked on discussions with key stakeholders to gain ideas and feedback on the role of the league in future years. Meetings were held with board, staff, and its volunteer organizations (Guild, YPs, etc.).

Stakeholders recommended that the future role of the Tacoma Urban League be focused as follows:

1. **Deliver Targeted Programs:** Continued focus on youth-oriented programming such as felons re-entering society, etc.
  2. **Targeted Areas of Focus:** Education, Tutoring, Economic Development, Employment and Black Male Involvement.
  3. **Connector:** Serve as a connector and convener collaborating with other organizations – bridge building – being a catalyst for change.
  4. **Resource:** Community resource and clearing house for clients to go to seek help.
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### Identified High Priority Programming Areas



## **Proposed Strategic Framework and Goals**

The input received helped to shape the development of an updated strategic plan which includes updated statements of our mission; our strategic priorities, relevant goals and metrics, and strategies to support funding these efforts. Several key themes emerged from these meetings with our stakeholders which serves as the basis for the four major goals established. They include the following:

- 1. Increase African American youth high school graduation rates by supportive programs focused on involvement and mentoring strategies for male and female youth***
- 2. Increase the pipeline of diverse talent by providing programs that support employment readiness, essential skills training, and increases business and government partnerships around hiring and contracting***
- 3. Increase programs and services focused on racial equity gap including economic development and home ownership as foundations for financial asset building and wealth gap reduction in the African American community***
- 4. Develop a multi-year financial sustainability plan to addresses the major financial requirements and positions the Tacoma Urban League as a major voice in the Tacoma community and surrounding areas***

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***GOAL 1: Increase African American youth high school graduation rates by supportive programs focused on involvement and mentoring strategies for male and female youth***

**The Need:**

- Programs and services to address cognitive and emotional competencies
- Tutoring to reduce reading and math literacy gaps
- Programs and services to address social and emotional behaviors

**Objectives:**

- Students must have access to the resources and services they need to address a comprehensive academic and socio-economic gaps and needs

**Actions:**

- Secure resources, partnerships, and support for mentoring, tutoring, out-of-school time programming and services that address the academic and socio-economic needs of the student
- Secure resources, partnerships, and support to involve parents as meaningful, active partners in school and in their children's education
- Secure resources, partnerships, and support for services to support students and create safer schools, improve academic achievement and prepare student for college and careers

**Outcomes:**

Increase middle school and high school retention rates for targeted youth served.

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***GOAL 2: Increase the pipeline of diverse talent by providing programs that support employment readiness and soft skills training***

**The Need**

Establish and grow relationships with area employers, entrepreneurs, and regional economic development initiatives for employment opportunities for our constituents.

**Objectives:**

- Provide youth with ready access to resources and services they need to identify career options and gain early work-related experience
- Adults must have access to resources and services they need to secure and retain employment in both high tech sectors and historically table occupational fields
- Support employers in accessing the resources they need to assume greater responsibility in hiring and retaining youth, especially African American youth and minimally skilled and long-term unemployed workers.

**Actions**

- Secure resources, partnerships, and support for programming and services that helps youth explore career possibilities and access “earn and learn” apprenticeships, internships and work-related opportunities
- Secure resources, partnerships, and support for programming and services that helps adults reduce employment barriers and access to targeted training and employment assistance.

**Outcomes:**

- Increased employment rates for African American and other socio-economically challenged youth and adults

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***GOAL 3: Increase programs and services focused on racial equity gap including economic development and home ownership as foundations for financial asset building and wealth gap reduction in the African American community***

**Key Need**

The Tacoma Urban League must have direct impact on the economic fabric of our community. In order to do this, we must put people to work and support their desire for homeownership.

**Objectives:**

- Provide access to the resources and services that potential homeowners need to strengthen their finances and make responsible, sustainable home purchasing decisions
- Provide access to the resources and services potential homeowners need to build start-up capital and make responsible, sustainable business development decisions.
- Provide access to information and resources available at financial institutions they need to more equitably provide loan products to low-to-moderate prospective homeowners.

**Actions:**

- Secure resources, partnerships, and support for programming and services that increase financial capabilities and improve financial stability through sustainable home ownership
- Secure resources, partnerships, and support for programs and services that increase financial capabilities and improve financial stability through sustainable business development and growth
- Secure resources, partnerships and support for policy and practice to increase responsible lending to lower income households/ low equity businesses.

**Outcomes:**

- Increased financial assets and wealth among African Americans and other underserved populations

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***GOAL 4: Develop a multi-year financial sustainability plan to address the major financial requirements and position the Tacoma Urban League as a major voice in the Tacoma community and surrounding areas.***

**Key Need**

- Diversify revenue streams by source to ensure financial solvency within 5 years

**Objectives:**

- Build a multi-year financial plan that provides adequate funding for administrative costs and for paying down existing debt.
- Create a marketing and membership plan and outreach strategy which builds a solid donor base and increases corporate support
- Develop plan to bring the affiliate in compliance with National Terms of Affiliation requirements

**Actions:**

- Secure resources through donations, grants, and memberships to help sustain overhead and related non-programmatic costs.
- Update marketing and membership strategies and tools
- Grow the current composition of the board of directors, supported with the necessary skills and knowledge to support the implementation of the strategic plan.
- Create an annual operating plan with clear actions, metrics and outcomes that tracks actions and results.

**Outcomes:**

- Increase financial viability and donor support of the Tacoma Urban League and its programming.
- Increase the level of personal commitment to the League by sharing information, increasing membership, capital campaigns, and better branding and marketing materials (including website).
- Position and promote ourselves as an organization that is engaged around issues of public policy and that has influence to affect public policy on the policy area(s) we select.

### Our Timeline **(sample plan)**

Action Item	2018	2019	2020	2021	2022
Announcement & Kick-off of 3-year plan					
Implement Strategic Action areas					
Conduct Review of 3-year plan					
Provide updates to strategic partners					
Adjust and renew plan					

#### Acknowledgements

- Staff
- Tacoma Urban League Guild
- Tacoma Urban League Young Professionals
- Community Participants

#### Board of Directors

LaTasha Wortham – Board Chair  
 Gregory Christopher – Board Vice Chair  
 Alicia Klein – Board Secretary & Guild Representative  
 Timothy Allen – Board Treasurer  
 Cliff Brown  
 David Devine  
 Effenus Henderson  
 Faaluaina Pritchard, ED  
 Bonnie Pinckney  
 Kamrica Ary-Turner -Young Professionals Representative