



**Tacoma  
Urban League**

*Empowering Communities.  
Changing Lives.*

**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**

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**Tacoma Urban League Receives \$400,000 Grant from Northwest Area Foundation to Continue Local Project to Improve Wealth for African Americans**

Tacoma WA., (March 29, 2017) The Tacoma Urban League has received a grant of \$400,000 from the Northwest Area Foundation to continue funding a Community of Practice project designed to build capacity to improve economic outcomes for African Americans in Tacoma-Pierce County. The grant is part of a three-year initiative to advance the financial capability of communities in cities with the highest African-American populations within the Northwest Area Foundation's region: Minneapolis and St. Paul, Minnesota; Portland, Oregon; Seattle and Tacoma, Washington; and Des Moines, Iowa. The initiative will bring together a cohort of six African-American-led organizations that will deliver culturally tailored work in asset-building from each of these cities.

"For nearly 50 years, the Tacoma Urban League has worked in a variety of ways to strengthen and support the local African American community," said Tacoma Urban League President Victoria Woodards, adding that "Our work with the AAFC Initiative is another exciting example of how the Tacoma Urban League connects national programs and resources in meaningful ways to our local community."

The Tacoma Community of Practice consists of five nonprofit organizations currently providing financial support services in housing, mentorship, leadership development, financial literacy, asset-building, and advocacy. Representatives include United Way of Pierce County, Dona Ponepinto, President and CEO; Northwest Leadership Foundation, Pat Colemon, President and CEO; Tacoma Ministerial Alliance, Rev. Toney Montgomery, President; Tacoma Branch NAACP, Rev. Gregory Christopher, President; and Tacoma Urban League.

The grant will fund a pilot project that employs an ongoing cohort model using community based participatory action research that directly engages community and their experience and knowledge in the research process. The cohort will bring together the voices and experiences of diverse members of the local African American community to explore beliefs and practices regarding financial issues affecting our community — together as a community. The pilot project is grounded in the desire to identify, understand and respond to community needs, issues and concerns that will collaboratively design and implement local strategies that increase financial wellbeing for African Americans in the Tacoma area.

The initiative also supports efforts to reach out and convene other organizations that can work collaboratively with groups within the African-American communities of each city. “The Tacoma Urban League will use the grant to extend the collective impact of our Community of Practice as we build on the learning and research work of Phase I and begin to implement our pilot program that will improve the economic security of African-Americans in Tacoma-Pierce County,” says Victoria Woodards, TUL president and CEO.

For more information, please contact Victoria Woodards, President and CEO, Tacoma Urban League, 253.383.2006.

The mission of Tacoma Urban League is to assist African Americans, other ethnic minorities and economically disadvantaged individuals and families in the achievement of social equality and economic independence.

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