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Green Infrastructure Workforce Collaborative

Developing an equitable and sustainable path to support Puget Sound's move to green infrastructure.

Around Puget Sound, cities continue to expand their investment in green infrastructure—tree canopy, rain gardens, and bioswales—in lieu of traditional gray infrastructure.

While gray infrastructure may have minimal maintenance needs over its lifespan, green infrastructure provides significant net benefits over the long-term, including effectively working with natural systems to reduce flooding, moderate heat waves, replenish water supplies, improve air quality, and make life better for local residents.

In addition to these many benefits, green infrastructure projects also have the potential to support robust local economic development with family-wage jobs and rewarding career paths. But, project implementers often struggle to find workers trained for this specialized work, and prospective workers lack equitable entry points into the field and training to support career advancement. In addition, practitioners struggle to maintain a pipeline of projects to sustain their business and workforce.

The Green Infrastructure Workforce Collaborative brings together practitioners from multiple sectors and across the Puget Sound region to build accessible and equitable career paths alongside the design, installation and maintenance of green infrastructure projects, thereby realizing the economic development potential and community benefits of the region's move toward green infrastructure.

In five short years, the Workforce Collaborative has:

- Created spaces for networking, problem-solving, and information-sharing across practitioners, workers, and decision makers, allowing them to more easily identify and troubleshoot workforce issues.
- Increased visibility and connected people to accessible career pathways
- Collaboratively designed and launched a regional curriculum to support skill development for young adults and existing workforce.
- Launched pilots to address training and workforce gaps, such as a place-based green infrastructure training pilot in Pierce County.

“Addressing the vast stormwater problem requires a team approach from public and private entities all working together. The Green Infrastructure Workforce Collaborative coalesces around building a workforce with a specialized skill set to support implementation and maintenance of green infrastructure. The Collaborative supports career development, including for those facing traditional barriers to employment, preparing participants to compete in this growing and essential field—creating a win-win from the employer to the employees and trainees.” —**Tatiana Dreisbach, Washington State Dept of Transportation**

A bold vision for the future

Building on successes to date, the Workforce Collaborative has big plans for the future. From expanding its membership to include more businesses, early career workers and better geographic representation; to creating more training opportunities and pilots in partnership with communities, municipalities, agencies, and businesses; to establishing a long-term pipeline of projects by working with public agencies to balance supply and demand, the Workforce Collaborative has a bold vision and the right sectors involved to make a big impact on the region.

The Workforce Collaborative invites green infrastructure practitioners, decision-makers and workers to join a community of actively engaged professionals who share a vision and desire to collaboratively create the enabling conditions for a robust green infrastructure workforce.

Join the Green Infrastructure Workforce Collaborative to:

- 📌 **Help create** meaningful green infrastructure career pathways — from entry-level to PhD level positions — for local workers through curricula and training opportunities.
- 📌 **Get help** navigating the complicated and interconnected challenges involved with green infrastructure projects and workforce issues.
- 📌 **Be part** of an effort that is making local communities more resilient in the face of climate change, with cleaner air and water and good paying local jobs and career paths.
- 📌 **Jointly advocate** for priority policy changes and more funding to support expanded green infrastructure projects and workforce opportunities.



Participants in a Green Stormwater Infrastructure training exploring plants: © Janieka Ellington / Palmer Scholars

Our Mission

The Workforce Collaborative promotes knowledge sharing and collaborates to create opportunities to develop sustainable, equitable, and inclusive career and employment opportunities within the green infrastructure field for the southern portion of the Salish Sea Region, extending from Thurston County north to Whatcom County.