



## FY 2020-2021: Innovative Water Infrastructure Workforce Development Grant Program

FACT SHEET

### Mountains To Sound Greenway Trust (MSGT) – Pathways to Watershed Stewardship Careers



#### INTRODUCTION

The Safe Drinking Water Act (SDWA) authorized the Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) to award grants to nonprofit professional or service organizations, nonprofit labor organizations, nonprofit community colleges, institutions of higher education, or other nonprofit training and educational institutions to (1) assist in the development and use of innovative activities relating to water workforce development and career opportunities in the drinking water and wastewater utility sector, and (2) expand public awareness about drinking water and wastewater utilities and to connect individuals to careers in the drinking water and wastewater utility sector.

A total of 9 organizations were recently selected by EPA to receive grant funding under this program. EPA has developed Fact Sheets on each of these projects that includes the language from the grant submission.

To learn more about the range of activities EPA is undertaking to support our Nation's water workforce, please go to [Sustainable Water Infrastructure-Water Sector Workforce](#).



#### PROJECT OBJECTIVES

The Mountains to Sound Greenway Trust: Watershed Stewardship Careers (Pathways) helps high-school-age students learn about water systems and natural resource management while developing skills and connections that will be crucial for careers in the field. The program comprises two distinct, partnership-based subprograms: Clean Water Ambassadors and Equitable Green Opportunities for Youth in Highline. Each program has a focus on reaching students in underserved communities, thereby addressing the essential challenge of diversifying the pipeline for the near future of the

workforce in this field. Both make use of online platforms and can be readily adapted to meet the changing landscape of the ongoing COVID-19 pandemic.

Clean Water Ambassadors is a year-long internship that started in 2016 as a partnership between the Mountains to Sound Greenway Trust and King County. Interns spend the summer gaining valuable field experience, honing their leadership and communication skills, and making professional connections within the regional water-management community.

Equitable Green Opportunities for Youth in Highline (EGOYH) is a new program for 2021, designed in partnership between the Mountains to Sound Greenway Trust, Pacific Education Institute, and Highline School District.



#### MAJOR ACTIVITIES

For seven weeks in the summer, interns work approximately 30 hour per week, spread between an office environment and various locations in the field. While assisting King County Wastewater, they also spend time on networking and skills-development activities to maximize their opportunity to prepare for careers in the field. During this time, Clean Water Ambassadors research and create individual proposals for follow-up projects within their own communities. After capping their summer experience with a professional presentation to a large audience of staff and community members, interns work a minimum of 40 hours during the following school year to implement their projects and support events for King County Wastewater and the Greenway Trust. Interns are paid employees of King County, earning more than \$16/hour and receiving ORCA bus cards to cover the cost of their commute.

The Clean Water Ambassadors program transforms environmental sustainability and clean water from nice ideals into clear and tangible career paths for its participants. Ambassadors become experts and champions, providing a voice within their schools and communities on the most relevant water issues of the day.





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Mountain to Sounds Greenway



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## OUTCOMES

Pathways to Watershed Stewardship Careers will provide more than 80 high-school students with immersive work experience and extensive mentoring by professionals in water and natural resource management roles. Student interns will receive more than 15,000 hours of training and career development in preparation for future jobs in the field. These programs will widen the door to such careers in deeply urban areas, addressing a crucial need for greater diversity in the workforce pipeline for this field.

- ◊ Improved ecosystem health and habitat quality due to ecological restoration that benefits threatened native fish population, other wildlife, and people, as measured by feet/ acres of restoration, native vegetation planted, invasives removed, salmon reproduction.
- ◊ Cleaner water in Puget Sound and tributary streams, as measured in water-quality monitoring assessments
- ◊ Increased student awareness about career opportunities in water/natural resource sectors, as documented by program assessments on knowledge acquisition.
- ◊ An increasingly diverse pipeline for water-management careers, leading to a more broadly representative and effective workforce in the future, as measurable by increased number and diversity of students entering postsecondary training or education programs that support the water and wastewater utility workforce.



## PARTNERSHIPS

- ◊ King County Wastewater Treatment Division
- ◊ Pacific Education Institute (PEI)
- ◊ Highline School District
- ◊ US Forest Services- Mount Baker- Snoqualmie National Forest (USFS)
- ◊ Washington State Department of Natural Resources (DNR)



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