



**Tacoma  
Housing  
Authority**



## **TACOMA HOUSING AUTHORITY RECEIVES \$80K GRANT FROM VIRIGINA MASON FRANCISCAN HEALTH**

*The funds will be used to expand learning and wellness programs for children and youth in low-income households*

**TACOMA, WA – March 13, 2026**—Tacoma Housing Authority (THA) and its nonprofit subsidiary, Tacoma Housing Development Group (THDG), announced an \$80,000 grant from Virginia Mason Franciscan Health (VMFH) to support the expansion of the Expanded Learning Opportunities (ELO) Project - a comprehensive initiative designed to advance academic success, social-emotional development, and mental health for young people living in THA communities. VMFH recently announced a commitment of \$1.8 million to 29 local nonprofits, awarded through its 2026 Community Health Improvement Grants program; THA was among the 29 grant recipients.

The grant will help scale ELO's proven summer enrichment model into year-round learning. During the 2026–2027 program year, ELO will expand from a five-week to an eight-week summer program and introduce after-school learning sessions for children and youth ages 5–18 across multiple THA properties.

### **Addressing Urgent Community Health and Education Needs**

Youth living in low-income households often face systemic inequities, trauma, and limited access to safe, high-quality learning environments. The ELO Project aims to reduce these barriers through consistent exposure to caring adults, structured activities, supportive peer relationships, and opportunities for creativity and joy.

The ELO Project is a collaborative partnership between Tacoma Housing Authority, SOP Projects (Seeds of Peace), and Greentrike. Together, these organizations will serve more than 2,400 children and youth, focusing on those experiencing academic disengagement, social isolation, trauma, or behavioral and mental health challenges.

### **Programming will include:**

- Social-emotional learning (SEL) skill building
- Mental health supports and wellness workshops
- Academic tutoring and enrichment

- STEM and arts activities
- Mentorship opportunities
- Physical activity and play based learning

THA will provide grant oversight and program management, ensuring success for its properties and residents. SOP Projects (Seeds of Peace) will lead SEL, conflict resolution, youth led coordination, and mental health awareness initiatives—including training youth leaders in Teen Mental Health First Aid. Greentrike will provide curriculum development, staff training, and support to ensure equitable, inclusive, and developmentally appropriate learning experiences.

“This investment allows us to provide year-round programming that strengthens emotional resilience, builds academic confidence, and nurtures the unique potential of young people in our communities,” said THA Executive Director April Black. “We are deeply grateful to Virginia Mason Franciscan Health for recognizing the importance of prevention-focused, community-rooted development for young people.”

The expanded ELO Project will help ensure that the program is fostering long-term wellbeing, reducing summer learning loss, and helping close opportunity gaps for THA youth.

### *About Tacoma Housing Authority*

Established in 1940, Tacoma Housing Authority provides high-quality, stable and sustainable housing and supportive services to people in need. It does this in ways that help them prosper and help our communities develop equitably. THA develops and manages real estate and provides rental housing. In partnership with thousands of private landlords, it helps families pay the rent in the private rental market. It delivers supportive services to help families succeed as “tenants, parents, students, wage earners and builders of assets who can live without assistance.” THA seeks to do its work in ways that help our community be an “attractive place to live, work, attend school, shop and play,” and that help Tacoma be “safe, vibrant, prosperous, attractive and just.” Learn more at [www.tacomahousing.org](http://www.tacomahousing.org).

### *About SOP Projects (Seeds of Peace)*

SOP Projects (Seeds of Peace) empowers young people to organize and activate service projects and events rooted in their passions, fostering intergenerational partnerships between youth and adults. Guided by its community-powered, youth-driven vision, the organization creates safe spaces through programming, mentorship, leadership development, and advocacy.

### *About Greentrike*

Greentrike is a nonprofit that advocates for and models equitable access to playful experiences for children, youth, and families — because play is essential for learning, joy, and a thriving community. Greentrike powers the [Children’s Museum of Tacoma](#), the [Children’s Museum at JBLM](#), [Play to Learn](#), [Preschool Powered by Play](#), [Expanded Learning Opportunities](#), [Cares Kits](#), [the Monarch Diaper Bank](#), and many [play-based learning experiences](#) across Pierce County.

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