



Turning a Job into a Career

Career Planning for Workforce Retention

TACOMA  **WATER**
TACOMA PUBLIC UTILITIES

Who We Are



Claire Litsky

Workforce Development Analyst

- Consulting and data reporting related to the development of the workforce
- 4 years with Tacoma Water
- PNWS YP Board Member / South Sound Board



Shantel Broussard

Apprenticeship & Internship Programs Manager

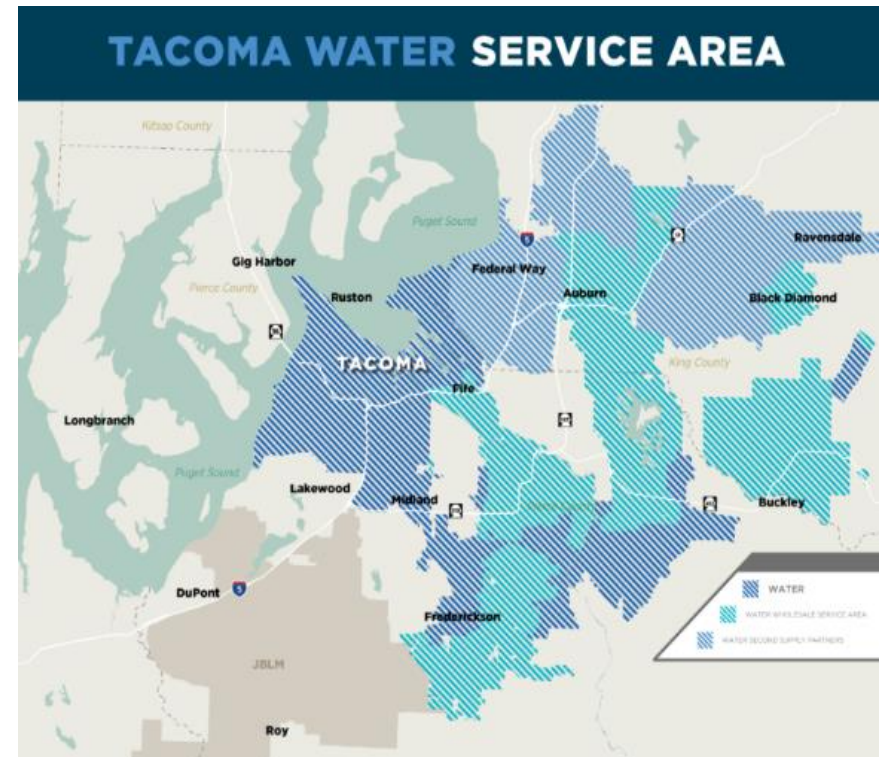
- Managing programs that foster development and create exposure to careers in the water industry
- 13+ years with Tacoma Water
- PNWS South Sound Chair, PAC Secretary

Tacoma Water Overview

Tacoma Water has a proud tradition of operating and maintaining one of the country's oldest municipally owned water systems. We provide high-quality water at very competitive prices.

We provide direct service to more than 300,000 people throughout Pierce and King counties.

- **Basic stats:**
 - 119 square miles of service area
 - 101,197 residential customers
 - (61% inside city limits; 39% outside city limits)
 - 6,945 commercial and industrial customers
 - 1,428 miles of water mains



Organizational Overview

- **295 full-time employees**
- **Six sections**
 - Administration
 - Business Services
 - Customer & Employee Experience
 - Workforce Development
 - Maintenance & Construction
 - Planning & Engineering
 - Source Water & Treatment Operations
- **Typically fill around 65 positions a year**
 - Backfills from retirements, promotions, separations, and additional new positions
- **140 employees are eligible for retirement**



TW staff in December 2022

Workforce Development Retention & Planning for the Future



- **There is an industry concern to retain our employees and develop our workforce for the future.**
 - AWWA State of the Water Industry 2023 – [Executive Summary](#)
 - Top-ranked issues facing the water sector in 2023
 - #6 Aging workforce/anticipated retirements
 - #12 Talent attraction and **retention**
- **How do we keep employees engaged in the industry and help them establish their career?**
 - We provide them opportunities to experience development, growth, and vision for where they can promote.
 - We create an environment where they feel connected (sense of belonging) and validate their value and experiences.
 - We connect them with the mission to provide clean, reliable water.

How do we keep employees engaged in the water industry and help them establish their career? *We provide them opportunities to experience development, growth, and vision for where they can promote.*

Career Paths for Field Staff - Internal career fair to highlight promotional opportunities

- Casual event to hear directly from employees who have advanced throughout the organization.
- Forming connections with seasoned staff for advice and direction.

Tacoma Water Apprenticeship Program

- Water Utility Worker classification
- 47% of our workforce started as WUW
- 2 years – approx. 3,000 OJT hours
- 11 after-hours classes
- Review meetings every 3-months
- Opens 14+ journey-level opportunities



JATC JOURNEY

EDUCATE • EXPOSE • EXPERIENCE

Educate:

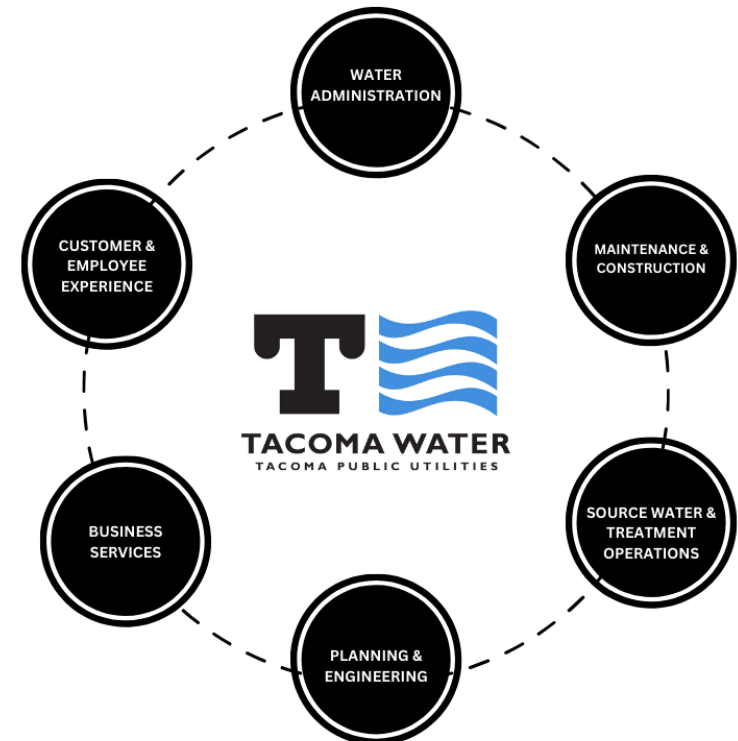
- Educate on how each department works together and how we impact each others work

Expose:

- Expose them to other career opportunities around the organization

Experience:

- Experience the day to day in these positions



Learning and Development Programs



How do we keep employees engaged in the water industry and help them establish their career? *We provide them opportunities to experience development, growth, and vision for where they can promote.*

SAT/Core Conversations

- SAT – Supervisor Advisory Team. Quarterly opportunity to equip all supervisors with united training to develop employees.
- Core Conversations – Quarterly check-ins between supervisor and employee for consistent, intentional development. Separate from 1:1s.
 - Q1: Role Clarity and Path to Success
 - Q2: Career Development
 - Q3: Two-way Feedback
 - Q4: Year-End Success and Future Growth Areas

TPU Development Programs

- TPU Mentorship Program
- Executive Mentorship Program



City of Tacoma Development Programs

- L.E.A.D. - Leadership, Engagement, and Development classes
- Outward Mindset, EEO, Continuous Improvement trainings

People Programs



How do we keep employees engaged and prepare them for the future? *We create an environment where they feel connected (sense of belonging) and validate their value and experiences.*

Water Orientation

A cohort of new hires meets with each senior leader to understand how all our sections interact and connect.

Water Equity Committee

BIPOC Connection Network

Women and Non-Binary Employees Group



Affinity Groups

Citywide connection groups



Mission: Clean, Reliable Water



TACOMA WATER DAY

Connection with the mission
to provide clean, reliable water.



Your Path to Success - Leadership



As a leader, you are equipping and inspiring employees to grow within your organization and contribute to retention by

Connecting with the mission – the value of our industry.

- You can't live without water!

Providing opportunities to experience development, growth, and vision for where they can promote.

- Prioritize exposure to new skills and opportunities.

Creating an environment where they feel connected and as though they belong.

- Hear what your staff, especially young professionals, are experiencing.
- Intentional introductions and check-ins with staff.

Your Path to Success - YP



As a young professional, invest in your own development, align your values, and ask questions.

Find a mentor or advocate in an area you want to explore.

- Regularly check in with someone who encourages your growth and/or someone who can help you navigate opportunities in that specialty.
 - PNWS mentorship program

Set goals and intentionally plan how to get there.

- Quarterly, annual, five-year track

Join groups or professional organizations within the industry.

- Find a community that makes you feel connected and purpose-filled.
 - PNWS YP Committee
 - Groups at your organization

Your Path to Success - YP

Engage in opportunities offered to you, or propose learning opportunities

- **Introverts – push yourself! Say YES & have FUN!**



Thank you for Attending



Audience Questions or Comments



Claire Litsky
Workforce Development Analyst
clitsky@cityoftacoma.org



Shantel Broussard
Apprenticeship & Internship Manager
sbroussard@cityoftacoma.org