



City of Arts & Innovation

# News Release

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**Contact:**

Phil Pitchford

Public Information Officer

951-826-5975

[ppitchford@riversideca.gov](mailto:ppitchford@riversideca.gov)

## **City of Riverside Helps Young People RISE and GROW**

*Two programs heralded for advancing commitment to workforce development*

RIVERSIDE, Calif. – The City of Riverside is investing in its youth – and future employees – through two workforce development programs known as RISE and GROW.

The programs represent an enhanced effort to develop the next generation of workers, both for the City and area businesses, by encouraging young people to begin thinking early about possible career paths. That commitment is matched with internships, mentoring and life skills training.

“We know from our existing workforce that many of our best employees are right here in Riverside,” Mayor Patricia Lock Dawson said. “These programs help us develop our future workforce and ensure we will continue to benefit from the local talent here in town.”

GROW (Guiding Riverside’s youth towards Opportunities in the Workforce) is a comprehensive workforce development program designed for high school juniors and seniors. It aims to equip students with essential job readiness skills, knowledge, and experiences to help them thrive in their future careers. Through a combination of classroom learning, hands-on training, job-shadowing, and mentorship, GROW prepares students for success in various industries. The ultimate goal of GROW is to help Riverside businesses by creating a pipeline of entry level candidates that are ready to work.

The first cohort included 15 high school juniors and seniors. The 20-week paid program included 120 hours of training, guest speakers, site tours, and on-the-job work experience. The program provided participants with opportunities to explore various city departments, apply for part-time positions, and obtain a certificate of completion to help meet standards required for employment, pre-apprenticeships and/or CTE programs.

Employment is not guaranteed, but the program gives participants a “advantage” in their employment journey. The City works with local school districts, colleges, and universities to recruit candidates who build their resume while learning job-readiness skills, such as:

- professionalism, problem-solving, and workplace etiquette.

- how to dress appropriately for an interview.
- the importance of developing a personal brand.
- how to create a dynamic profile on LinkedIn.
- how to create an email address that is appropriate for interacting with a potential employer.
- the importance of firm handshakes and maintaining eye contact during interviews.
- CPR/First-Aid Certification

“Employers who are eager to fill positions may not have the time to explain to applicants how they may have fallen short of an employer’s expectations,” Mayor Pro Tem Jim Perry said. “This program helps young people be ‘ready to hire’ by eliminating some of those potential barriers on the front end.”

GROW participants get a career exploration tour by visiting various City departments and locations where they might want to work in the future, including City Hall, the Riverside TV studio, the Traffic Management Center, the One-Stop Shop, and the Bourns Family Youth Innovation Center. The Riverside TV studio, for example, could spur interest in careers in video production, engineering, editing, and management. Future GROW cohorts will also have exposure to local Riverside jobs and businesses.

The GROW program is part of a larger effort called RISE, which stands for Riverside Intern Skills Engagement. The RISE umbrella effort includes a wide range of age groups and is available to anyone interested in interning. Approximately 60 people have been placed as interns in a variety of City departments, including Public Works, General Services, Human Resources and more.

The RISE program includes paid fellows who work 1,000 hours through the state’s [#CaliforniansForAll](#) Youth Job Corps program, as well as students working for school credit. Work schedules are built around what participants can balance against other commitments, including school.

The next cohort of GROW will begin in summer 2025 with participant recruitment beginning in the early spring.