

## Memo

**To:** The Honorable Mayor & Members of the City Commission

**From:** Deborah Bowie, Interim City Manager



**Date:** January 24, 2019

**Re:** Update Regarding the Proposed Lawn Care Academy Pilot Program

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In November 2018, the Office of the City Manager presented to the City Commission at a General Policy Meeting a proposal to launch a pilot program called the "Gainesville Landscape Lawn Care Academy." The pilot was a collaborative effort between the City, CareerSource of North Central Florida, Santa Fe College, the Institute for Workforce Innovation's Youth Build Project and Gainesville Police Department. Each organization brought with it an opportunity to leverage the City's \$50,000 investment via additional in-kind donations to cover internship hours, OSHA training, CPR courses and instructional courses at Santa Fe every Friday morning. The classwork would include bookkeeping, marketing, customer skills training and entrepreneurship. Eligible participants in the City's BOLD program in addition to graduates of Project YouthBuild would be selected for the pilot.

There were concerns raised at the GPC meeting about the pilot and its application to the City's expressed desire to end its inmate contract labor arrangement with the Florida Department of Corrections. After a review of those concerns, and a follow up with the identified partners, city staff has determined a need to separate the pilot from ongoing discussions about inmate labor, particularly since the program may not provide immediate opportunities to scale down or sever the current contracts with Department of Corrections. It is hoped the pilot will inform the City, instead, of opportunities to increase employment for underemployed residents.

We are currently investigating a pilot model that may include a customized jobs training component and a focus on vocational skills in addition to lawn care. We respectfully request an opportunity to meet with partners with the goal of presenting the pilot at a future GPC meeting in the spring.

CC: Dan Hoffman, Assistant City Manager

Fred Murry, Assistant City Manager

Tony Jones, Chief of Police

Robert Woody, Youth, Community & Services Bureau Director