



Investing in our future
portland
children's
levy

Request for City Council Approval

Background

In November 2002, Portland voters approved the Portland Children's Levy (PCL). The Levy was approved by voters for a five-year renewal in fall 2008 and again in spring 2013. The Levy generates \$10 -15 million annually for programs benefitting Portland children in early childhood, after-school, mentoring, child abuse prevention and intervention, foster care and hunger relief. Administrative costs for the fund are capped at 5% of revenues and the fund obtains annual audits to assure compliance with the administrative cap. A copy of the 2013 ballot language for the Children's Levy is attached as "Exhibit A: Children's Levy 2013 Ballot Language."

An Allocation Committee governs PCL and grants funds to programs serving children and families residing in the City of Portland. The Allocation Committee is comprised of a City Commissioner (Dan Saltzman), a County Commissioner (Deborah Kafoury), a representative of the Portland Business Alliance (Mitch Hornecker), a citizen member appointed by the County Board (Serena Stoudamire-Wesley), and a citizen member appointed by the City Council (Julie S. Young).

This memo outlines 4 allocations totaling \$1.675 million made by PCL Allocation Committee in October 2017.

Additional Revenues

In 2014, PCL made, with Council's approval, grants totaling \$32.8 million over three years. Those grants were made after an extensive public-input process to identify community needs and priorities and to set funding goals for the current 5-year levy. The grants included a provision to renew funding for an additional two-years under the current Levy, pending grant performance and available revenue. Council approved the Allocation Committee's decision to renew those grants this past summer. Amounts invested were based on revenue projections from the city economist.

The Levy's actual revenues the past 3 years, however, have exceeded projections by the city economist. PCL's Allocation Committee has, with Council's approval, allocated accrued revenues of over \$12 million in the past 2 years based on policy priorities informed by 2013-14 public input process, current levy goals and strategies, an additional competitive funding round, and current data. Council has approved Allocation Committee decisions to invest accrued revenues in expanding some current grants and funding new grants. At the close of FY16/17, there was a balance of \$1.6 million in accrued revenue remaining for allocation during the current levy period. In October 2017, the Allocation Committee decided to allocate the remaining accrued revenue to increase three existing PCL grants aimed at improving the quality and affordability of childcare in the city, and expanding availability of Early Head Start services.

Childcare Initiative and Early Childhood Services

PCL has prioritized early childhood investments since its inception based on considerable and ongoing research that shows investing early provides the greatest level of return in child outcomes. Moreover, opportunities for quality early learning experiences have been shown to mitigate disparities in child development outcomes for children of color.

When revenues exceeded projections during the first levy period, the Committee approved a five-year, \$2 million child care initiative focused on improving affordability and quality of care for low-income families. Professional evaluators of the child care initiative concluded that the efforts resulted in improved stability of child care arrangements for children from low-income families, and improved quality of care. Nearly 400 children and over 50 childcare providers (both centers and family childcare homes) participated and in the program.

When additional revenues became available in January 2015, the Allocation Committee once again voted to prioritize investment in affordability of quality childcare and in early childhood programming. Specifically, they voted to re-start PCL's Community Childcare Initiative (which had been discontinued in FY 2012 due to a sharp decline in revenues that year), and to increase the availability of Head Start/Oregon Pre-Kindergarten slots in Portland where providers typically have long waiting lists of eligible children.

In October 2017, the Allocation Committee voted to expand its commitment to the Community Childcare Initiative, by providing an additional \$1.1 million over 20 months toward the project. Of that total investment, \$780,000 over 20 months will go toward serving an additional 100 children annually and helping offset the impact of state funding cuts to the Employment-related Day Care childcare subsidy program for low-income, working parents. In addition, the Committee voted to invest \$380,000 over 20 months toward supporting 5 childcare provider networks. Each network is composed of 12-15 culturally specific family childcare providers, and strengthens childcare quality through coaching to enroll in the state's childcare quality initiative and rating system, SPARK. PCL's Community Childcare Initiative grant is administered by Childcare Resource & Referral of Multnomah County based at Mt. Hood Community College.

PCL has funded Early Head Start services since its inception. In January 2015 the Committee decided, and Council approved, expansion of PCL investment in Head Start/Oregon Pre-Kindergarten preschool services for children ages 3-5. Like Head Start, demand by families for Early Head Start services, which support infants and toddlers, far outpaces supply. The Allocation Committee has voted to expand its investment in Early Head Start service by up to \$500,000 over 2 years to provide one additional Early Head Start classroom at Albina Early Head Start, and one at Mt. Hood Community College Early Head Start.

System Building and Supporting System Partners

PCL works with various system partners on policy and service coordination where these efforts share goals similar to Levy goals, and in an effort to coordinate, build and/or improve the systems in which Levy grantees operate to serve children and families.

In July 2015, City Council approved PCL's allocation of \$200,000 in accrued revenue to support system partners in working to build and improve systems that affect children and families. The Allocation

Committee recently voted to invest the \$75,000 balance of that \$200,000 in piloting development of a specialized training certificate for the early childhood workforce, based on the locally developed Community Education Worker model.

The Community Education Worker (CEW) model grew out of a community planning, collective impact process convened in 2012-13 through Social Venture Partners Portland and All Hands Raised. Its focus is to address racial disparities in early learning service access and outcomes associated with kindergarten readiness. The project is modeled after Community Health Workers, an internationally recognized approach to promoting health education and behaviors.

During 2016-17 seven CEWs who identify as people of color and/or immigrants and refugees from the following communities served members of their own communities: Latino/Spanish-speaking, Native American, African American, Somali, and Zomi (and other cultural groups from Myanmar). Collectively, they provided over 260 children with home visits, parent/child groups, developmental screenings, family advocacy in public systems, and resource referral. The CEWs specialize in helping families connect to and navigate their local public school as they enter kindergarten, mitigating the institutional challenges often experienced by families marginalized in public systems. Evaluation of the CEW project shows positive outcomes for children and families associated with school and kindergarten readiness (e.g. increases in: confidence to help children be school-ready, engagement with school and health care systems, personal empowerment/advocacy and social supports).

Building on the success of the CEW project and the training curriculum developed with state funding to train the first cohort of CEWs, PCL funding would support planning and development of a training certificate for other early learning professionals interested in incorporating CEW model into their services. The CEW certificate pilot would provide 60-hours of training focused on social determinants of health, early brain development and developmental screening, community organizing, home visiting skills, system navigations and advocacy, and other topics related to culturally specific and responsive practices in early childhood services with families. The project would also produce a report with recommendations for how a CEW certificate could become institutionalized into existing, recognized professional development systems such as the Oregon Registry for childcare workers and/or Oregon Health Authority's registry for traditional health workers. The 18-month project is collaborative effort and partnership between current CEW agency partners, Latino Network, IRCO, NAYA, Urban League and Multnomah County Health Department; Latino Network is the fiscal agent and lead partner for the grant.

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PCL is requesting that City Council accept these recommendations of the Allocation Committee to fund:

- \$1.1 million to Mt Hood Community College, Childcare Resource & Referral of Multnomah County for expansion of the Community Childcare Initiative;
- \$250,000 to Albina Early Head Start for expansion of Early Head Start services;
- \$250,000 to Mt Hood Community College Early Head Start for expansion of Early Head Start services;
- \$75,000 to Latino Network to pilot a CEW training certificate.

Exhibit A: 2013 Children's Levy Ballot Measure

Ballot Language for PCL Renewal in May 2013

Question: Shall Portland continue abuse, neglect prevention, children's programs; five-year levy \$0.4026 per \$1,000 assessed value beginning 2014; require audits? This measure renews current local option taxes.

Summary:

Renews the Portland Children's Levy; supports proven programs designed to prevent childhood hunger, prevent child abuse and neglect, help children arrive at school ready to learn, provide safe constructive after-school alternatives for kids and help foster children succeed.

Funds can only be used for:

- **Preventing childhood hunger:** giving hungry children healthy, nutritious meals and food.
- **Child abuse prevention and intervention:** addressing juvenile crime, school failure, drug and alcohol abuse, homeless youth.
- **Early childhood programs:** making childcare more affordable and preparing children for success in school.
- **After-school, summer and mentoring programs:** promoting academic achievement, reducing the number of juveniles victimized by crime, increasing graduation rates.
- **Children in foster care programs:** helping foster children who have been abused and neglected succeed.

Accountability measures include:

- Investments subject to annual audits.
- Programs funded must be cost effective and have a proven record of success.
- Investments subject to oversight by a citizen committee.
- Administrative costs cannot exceed 5 percent.

It is estimated the levy will raise an average of \$10.56 million per year for five years.