

# Application Handbook Content

Thank you for your interest in applying for a grant from the Portland Clean Energy Community Benefits Fund (PCEF). This handbook provides background on the PCEF program and can be used to help guide you through the grant planning and writing process. There are three types of grants being funded under this Request for Proposals (RFP). Grant applications should be submitted using the online application form <link>. However, if you would prefer to submit your application by emailing electronic application material or by mailing in hard copies, those are also acceptable options.

## Contents

About PCEF .....	2
PCEF priority populations .....	2
Important Dates.....	3
Eligible applicants - who can apply for a PCEF grant.....	3
Funding categories.....	3
Grant types .....	4
Restrictions on funds .....	4
Webinars and technical assistance.....	6
Application review process.....	6
Receiving a grant .....	7
Reporting requirements.....	8
Frequently Asked Questions (FAQ).....	10

## About PCEF

The Portland Clean Energy Community Benefits Fund is an historic initiative created and led by communities of color and passed by Portlanders in November 2018. It provides dedicated funding for climate actions that advance racial and social equity. The full text of PCEF's enabling legislation (legislative code) can be found at <https://www.portlandoregon.gov/citycode/78811>.

PCEF is guided by a nine-member Grant [Committee](#) of diverse Portland residents. The Committee developed a set of principles to guide the program. These [Guiding Principles](#) describe the values by which the PCEF program is administered. The Guiding Principles complement the legislative code and help ensure that decisions are being made in a way that aligns with the vision and values of the Committee and the community.

The guiding principles are:

- **Justice driven.** Advance systems change that addresses historic and current discrimination. Center all disadvantaged and marginalized groups – particularly Black and Indigenous people.
- **Accountable.** Implement transparent funding, oversight, and engagement processes that promote continuous learning, programmatic checks and balances, and improvement. Demonstrate achievement of equitable social, economic, and environmental benefit. Remain accountable to target beneficiaries, grantees, and all Portlanders.
- **Community powered.** Trust community knowledge, experience, innovation, and leadership. Honor and build on existing work and partnerships, while supporting capacity building for emerging community groups and diverse coalitions. Engage with and invest in community-driven approaches that foster community power to create meaningful change.
- **Focused on climate action with multiple benefits.** Invest in people, livelihoods, places, and processes that build climate resilience and community wealth, foster healthy communities, and support regenerative systems. Avoid and mitigate displacement, especially resulting from gentrification pressures.

## PCEF priority populations

The PCEF legislative code identifies two "priority populations":

### 1. **Priority populations for clean energy, green infrastructure, and regenerative agriculture projects**

People with low income and people of color are priority populations for grants that address clean energy, green infrastructure, and regenerative agriculture. Historically, these populations have had less access to the benefits of green investments, and at the same time they are more vulnerable to extreme heat, wildfire smoke, vector borne diseases, flooding and other climate-related impacts.

### 2. **Priority populations for workforce and contractor development projects**

Women, people of color, people with disabilities, and people who are chronically underemployed are identified as priority populations for grants that address workforce and contractor development. These populations have

not had equitable access to workforce and contractor opportunities associated with the clean economy. Developing a diverse and well-trained workforce and contractor pool in the clean energy field requires reaching these populations and addressing the barriers that have prevented their full participation in this field.

## Important Dates

RFP released: DATE

Questions about RFP due: DATE

Applications due: TIME AND DATE

Awards announced: DATE

## Eligible applicants - who can apply for a PCEF grant

Qualified nonprofit organizations are eligible for PCEF grant funds and must meet all of the following requirements:

- Designated by the Federal government as a 501(c) or 521(a) nonprofit entity.
- Registered and certified with the Oregon Secretary of State as a nonprofit organization. <https://sos.oregon.gov/business/Pages/nonprofit.aspx>
- NOT on the Oregon Department of Justice list of Disqualified Charities. <https://www.doj.state.or.us/charitable-activities/wise-giving/disqualified-oregon-charities/>.

Organizations or groups may apply with a fiscal sponsor, which is a qualified nonprofit organization that provides organizational infrastructure and administrative support for managing a grant.

## Funding categories

Approximately \$8.4 million will be available for funding grants under this request for proposals. Beginning next year (2021), there will be approximately \$40-60 million available per year. Organizations that receive a grant award this year *are* eligible for funding in future funding cycles.

PCEF funds can be used to support work in four broad categories. Project proposals (applications) may address more than one of these funding categories:

- **Clean energy.** Includes renewable energy and energy efficiency projects for residential, commercial, and school properties. At least half of the projects under this category must specifically benefit low-income residents and people of color. This year the expected funding for this grant category is \$3.4 to \$5 million.
- **Green infrastructure and sustainable agriculture.** Focuses on projects that reduce greenhouse gases, improve water quality, and create a healthier urban environment. Expected funding for this grant category is \$840,000 to \$1.3 million.

- **Green workforce development and contractor support.** Includes job training, apprenticeship programs, and business technical assistance, with a focus on economically disadvantaged workers and businesses. Expected funding for this grant category is \$1.7 to \$2.1 million.
- **Innovation and other.** Includes projects that do not fall into one of the above categories but supports climate action goals in a way that advances racial and social equity. A funding level for this grant category has not been defined for year one.

## Grant types

There are three types of grants being funded under this solicitation – planning, small and large. There are differences in the application and scoring depending on the type of grant. Information about each grant opportunity is available on our website and is linked below.

- **Planning grants.** Up to \$100,000 per application. Planning grants help organizations complete assessment or planning that may be needed to develop a full project proposal. Eligible activities include, but are not limited to, research and learning, feasibility/technical evaluation and consultation, community outreach and education, and collaboration and partnership building. Planning resources cannot be used for acquisition of land, materials, supplies, or doing actual project implementation work. Planning grants are intended to help organizations prepare for submitting a full application but getting a planning grant does not guarantee future project funding. An organization can apply for more than one planning grant, but each would need to be for a distinct project. This funding round, approximately \$1.5 million has been allocated for planning grants. Planning grant activities are expected to be completed within one year but applicants may request more time with justification. Application information and resources for planning grants are on the website <link>
- **Small grants.** Less than \$200,000 per project. The application for small grants is similar to large grants but requires less information, and the scoring has a level of flexibility appropriate to smaller projects. Work funded by small grants must be completed within three years. Application information and resources for small grants are on the website <link>
- **Large grants.** \$200,000 to \$1,000,000 per project. The application for large grants is more rigorous. Work funded by large grants should be completed within five years. Application information and resources for large grants are on the website <link>

Note: Funding levels for each type of grant may be different in future years.

## Restrictions on funds

This section includes information about funding limitations for certain types of expenses, as well as information on expenses that are not typically allowed in traditional climate project funding, but may be critical to addressing climate issues in a way that advances racial and social justice. We are calling these out so that applicants will: 1) know that they are allowed, and 2) be encouraged to think creatively about how to meet environmental, racial and social justice goals.

- Project reporting: In addition to traditional reporting, which will be required of all PCEF grantees, PCEF applicants are encouraged to integrate culturally appropriate and meaningful ways of communicating and reporting about their project. Examples could include works of performance or visual art, etc.
- Reports, plans and other material developed using grant funds are an allowable expense and considered public information.
- Purchasing materials and services: PCEF does not require lowest cost budget; applicants should consider the social, economic and environmental impacts of purchasing choices.
- Materials, supplies and equipment: Purchases of materials, supplies and equipment must be in service of implementing the proposed project. Goods that will become the property of the grantee cannot be resold during its useful life. If ownership changes in the future, the grantee must notify the City in writing and receive approval of the transfer of ownership.
- Land acquisition is an allowable project expense.
- Building repairs that are not directly related to efficiency, renewable, or green infrastructure measures are an allowable project expense, but they may not exceed 30% of the total construction budget on each site and must address life, health, or safety issues.
- Expenses associated with maintaining an investment over its lifetime are allowable expenses: Examples include, but are not limited to, prepayment of a service warranty, HVAC maintenance contract, and sending a reminder about watering trees.
- Reimbursement for items procured or work completed prior to the effective date of the grant agreement are *not* an allowable expense.
- Items necessary to support recruitment, retention, and success of participants in a workforce development program are an allowable expense including payments to or on behalf of a participant. Examples of participant payments include, but are not limited to, assistance with payment of housing, transportation, childcare, tools, union dues, and participation stipends. Need for participant payments should be established (e.g., with income eligibility requirements), and payments should be proportional to the level of program participation (e.g., if the program is one day per week, payments would cover costs for that day).
- Items necessary for businesses starting or scaling up in the clean energy sector may be an allowable expense for a contractor support grant.
- Capitalizing a loan program to support activities that address climate change and advance racial and social justice may be an allowable expense.
- Insurance costs that are additional and a direct result of requirements associated with the PCEF grant are an allowable expense.
- Fiscal sponsors: Organizations that apply for PCEF funds with a fiscal sponsor may allocate up to 10% of project expenses for fiscal sponsor fees.
- Overhead costs (also sometimes called administrative costs) refer to general costs of operations such as rent, utilities, administrative staff, insurance, legal, website and telecommunications. Overhead is an allowable expense for PCEF grants. Overhead for travel, materials, and contract costs must not exceed 10%. Overhead on all other costs including personnel, must not exceed 20%.

- Note that applications with a fiscal sponsor may have a combined overhead rate up to 25% but must provide justification of overhead charged by the applicant.

## Webinars and technical assistance

We recognize that participation in this program requires skills and capacities that range from grant writing and project management to climate justice and collaboration. Staff will be available during the application period to answer questions and provide assistance to applicants. We have also built in a number of mechanisms to help applicants succeed with their PCEF project ideas. These include:

- Information about each of the areas of funding – clean energy, green infrastructure, regenerative agriculture, and workforce and contractor development – as well as information about priority populations can be found in the resource section of our website <link>.
- Webinars will be hosted during the application period to help organizations understand the application and guidance. Webinar dates and information will be posted on our website <link>.
- Workshops and virtual trainings on specific topics to build organizational capacity will be offered to assist potential applicants. Dates and information about these trainings will be posted on our website <link>.

## Application review process

PCEF's application review process was designed to support equity, reliability, and transparency. There are five steps in the review process for small and large grants (Planning Grants skip the technical review step of the process):

- **Eligibility screening.** Program staff will review each application to ensure the organization and project are eligible for funding. Eligibility criteria are informed by PCEF legislation as well as City contracting and legal requirements.
- **Technical feasibility review.** Each application that passes the eligibility screening will be reviewed for technical viability. The technical review does not count toward the project score; rather, it serves as a screen to eliminate projects that are not technically feasible. Projects do not need to be fully designed to pass the technical review; however, they must be technically feasible.
- **Scoring panel review.** Each application that passes the screening for eligibility and technical feasibility will be assigned to a scoring panel. Each scoring panel will include three to five people drawing from PCEF Committee members, program staff and subject matter experts, with a minimum of one Committee member and one staff. Efforts will be made to include a majority people of color and gender balance in the panel composition. Scoring panelists (reviewers) will receive training on the scoring criteria and anti-bias awareness. Reviewers will be asked to refrain from communicating with applicants during the review process. The scoring panel review includes three steps:
  1. Each reviewer will individually score applications. Reviewers will be provided with scoring criteria guidance and technical review information. Scoring criteria guidance for each grant type is on our website <links to Planning, Small and Large grant scoring guidance>

2. PCEF staff will average the reviewers' scores for each criterion and provide that to the project applicant. The scoring panel may also include simple clarifying questions for the applicant. Applicants will have the opportunity to respond to their score and answer clarifying questions posed by the reviewers. Applicants can respond in writing or by video or audio recording. Directions regarding length and format of the applicant response will be provided to ensure consistency across all applications. Applicant responses will be provided to the scoring panel for consideration.
  3. The scoring panel will meet to discuss their individual scores and applicant responses, and reviewers will have the opportunity to change their scores. At the end of this meeting, a final score will be awarded for each application. If the scoring panel recommends to the PCEF Committee that an application not be funded, they will provide a reason for that recommendation.
- **Committee review.** For each application that passes the eligibility and technical review screens, the full Committee will receive a packet that includes a brief summary of the project, the review panel score, the applicant response (if provided), and explanation if there is a recommendation to not fund the application. The applications will be ranked based on the final score assigned by the scoring panel. In order to create a balanced portfolio, the Committee may consider the following, in addition to the review panel score, when making final funding recommendations:
    - a. Funding targets defined in PCEF legislation:
      - i. 40-60% of funding to renewable energy and energy efficiency projects, with at least 50% of these projects serving low income households and people of color.
      - ii. 20-25% of funding to clean energy workforce and contractor development.
      - iii. 10-15% of funding to regenerative agriculture and green infrastructure programs that result in sequestration of greenhouse gases.
      - iv. 5% of funding to other/innovation.
    - b. Geographic distribution
    - c. Legislative target to award at least 20% of funds to organizations with a track record of providing programs that benefit economically disadvantaged community members, including people of color, women, people with disabilities, and the chronically underemployed.
    - d. Applicant responses and scoring panel recommendations.
    - e. Alignment with PCEF [Guiding Principles](#).
  - **City Council Approval.** The Committee's final recommendations will be sent to City Council for approval. Council is generally expected to accept the Committee's recommendations. If Council rejects a funding recommendation, they must provide a written explanation of the decision.

## Receiving a grant

Each grantee that is awarded funds will be assigned a PCEF staff contact (PCEF Project Manager). The first step in finalizing the grant agreement will be to participate in a kick-off meeting to review and finalize grant scope and requirements, including the following elements:

- Reporting requirements

- Insurance requirements
- Workforce and contractor equity agreements
- Financial management and payment
- Workforce and contractor utilization, if applicable
- Other items that need to be signed off (e.g., relevant compliance, purchases conditional on completion of a prior step)
- Scope of project management plan. This item will be the first deliverable for most grants and will include the following components:
  - Project management roles and responsibilities
  - Project communications for grant recipient, partners, and City staff
  - Finalize schedule of milestones and major deliverables.

After all grant elements are finalized the PCEF Project Manager will draft the grant agreement for signature. The City will sign the grant agreement only after the grantee has signed and after all required insurance and other documentation has been provided. An example of what the grant agreement might look like is available here <link>.

### Reporting requirements

Reporting requirements will be different depending on the type, size, and timeframe of the grant. Applicants who are awarded funds will develop final reporting requirements in collaboration with their PCEF Project Manager, including type and frequency of reporting and required documentation. Reporting requirements will be designed to fit the project and provide meaningful information and accountability while striving to reduce burden on the grantee. Some grant information will be reported in a standard format, such as templates or online platforms.

We do not expect grantees to absorb the costs associated with reporting required by the program. There will be no fee to access PCEF reporting platforms and associated trainings. In addition, applicants (and their contractors) are encouraged to include in their budgets an appropriate amount of staff time for reporting, as well as costs associated with producing reports or other materials to communicate about the project outcomes.

The bulleted lists that follow provide, at a high level, the kind of universal and project type-specific reporting requirements that may apply if you are awarded a PCEF grant.

#### **Reporting requirements for ALL grantees:**

1. Financial expenditures and budget tracking
2. Progress toward milestones/deliverables
3. Workforce and Contractor Equity Agreement (see templates <link>)
4. Final report including financial accounting, location of physical improvements, number and demographics of project beneficiaries, and other relevant quantitative and qualitative information depending on project specifications.

## Reporting measures that are specific to project type (all metrics reported only as applicable):

1. Regenerative agriculture
  - a. Area of agriculture project (acres or square feet)
  - b. Estimated volume of annual harvest (pounds)
  - c. Location of agriculture project:
    - i. Zip code location for projects on residential properties
    - ii. GIS for projects on non-residential properties
2. Green infrastructure
  - a. Number and type of trees/plant material
  - b. Area of project (acres or square feet and linear feet)
  - c. Location of green infrastructure project:
    - i. Zip code for residential properties
    - ii. Street address for commercial properties
    - iii. Street address or latitude/longitude for others
3. Workforce and contractor development
  - a. Completion (number and percent of participants that finish or graduate)
  - b. Outcomes as applicable (e.g., number of participants that got a job, retained a job, or advanced in their job; for school or camp programs, appropriate program evaluation measure)
  - c. Number of businesses assisted
  - d. Hours of assistance provided
  - e. Type of assistance (e.g., legal, finances, accounting, technical, certifications, HR, marketing)
  - f. Outcomes (e.g., business open, stabilized, growing)
  - g. Types of businesses assisted (e.g., solar, weatherization).
4. Clean Energy
  - a. Energy efficiency
    - i. Square footage, use and number of occupants for each site
    - ii. Energy use before and after improvements
    - iii. Location: physical address for commercial properties, zip code for residential properties
    - iv. Type of efficiency measures installed
    - v. Type of non-energy efficiency improvements
  - b. Renewable energy
    - i. Total installed capacity at each site
    - ii. Location: physical address for commercial properties, zip code for residential properties
    - iii. Type of non-renewable energy improvements

## Frequently Asked Questions (FAQ)

### 1. Can my organization apply for more than one grant?

Yes, there are no limits on the number of grants that an organization can apply for or be a part of. However, different grant applications must be for distinctly different projects or programs.

### 2. Is leverage required in order to get a PCEF grant?

No, leverage (contributions to the project from another source, also called match) is not a requirement for PCEF funding. The application includes a question about leveraged resources in order to consider how to maximize the impact of limited dollars. There are points awarded for leverage for small and large grants but no additional points possible for planning grants.

### 3. Some of the questions or criteria don't seem to apply to my project. Will that affect my score?

For planning grants, all criteria will be scored for all applications. For small and large grants, the questions and scoring vary depending on project type. Please refer to the Scoring Tables for the type of grant you are interested in [<link to Planning, Small and Large scoring tables>](#) to determine which scoring criteria will be used to evaluate your application. Scores are based on the questions that apply to your project type; questions that don't apply to your project type will not affect your score.

### 4. My organization is not strong on some of the measures. Can we still get funded?

We understand that each project is unique and recognize that some projects might not be strong on every measure. If the proposed project advances climate action in ways that benefit PCEF priority populations and meet eligibility criteria, they are likely to be considered for funding.

The review process is designed to accommodate projects of different sizes and types as well as organizations of varying levels of experience and capacity. In addition, while the application process aims to ensure accountability of public dollars, it also recognizes the need to foster the innovation, experimentation, and learning required to support new programs and organizations that are new to this work. We understand that certain types of projects may score differently and are taking that into account by reviewing categories of projects together to help ensure we compare "apples to apples" (e.g., consider the score for a regenerative agriculture project in relation to the scores for other regenerative agriculture projects, rather than comparing to clean energy projects).

### 5. How does PCEF support worker safety and equity?

Worker well-being is of central importance to PCEF. One way that we center workforce equity is by considering whether proposed projects will employ a diverse workforce that includes people of color, women, people with disabilities, or people who are chronically underemployed. We also require that each grantee sign a Workforce and Contractor Equity Agreement that includes requirements around compensation and creating a workplace environment that is safe and welcoming to diverse populations that have historically been left out of the climate economy. Please see the Sample Grant Agreement [<link>](#).