

Portland Clean Energy Community Benefits Fund (PCEF) Grants Committee

September 15th, 2021 MINUTES

Committee members present:

Maria Sipin, Robin Wang, Ranfis Villatoro, Shanice Clark, Megan Horst, Amanda Squiemphen-Yazzie, Faith Graham, Michael Edden Hill, Jeffrey Moreland Jr.

PCEF staff: Sam Baraso, Jaimes Valdez, June Reyes, David Grandfield notes, Cady Lister, Jay Richmond

Public comment:

One public comment was given to emphasize that the time is now for community organizations to start capacity building for resiliency work. It can be done, but it needs to start now, not some time in the future when the “emergency” comes.

PBEM presentation - Jonna Papaefthimiou, Chief resilience officer and interim director of PBEM provided an overview of the agency operations, budget and priorities to help Committee members better understand what PBEM is able to do in response to major heat events.

Community Alliance of Tenants presentation - Kim McCarty, Executive Director provided an overview of the Community Alliance of Tenants work and noted some of the issues that come up specifically around major heat events.

- Tenants should have rights to affordable AC
- Most rentals don't have managers on site. This means that in most instances no one was aware that the inside of some units were over 100 degrees
- Policy work, members are asking for policy to provide AC in rental units
- Should property owners take more responsibility of monitoring air quality and temperature.

Committee member discussion

- Michael: question for Kim regarding PCEF heat response proposal, does Kim have any feedback or concerns about potential program.
 - Kim – Warehousing materials may be a challenge but they would want to partner with agencies and others doing the work.
- Robin: Can surprise electricity bills and increasing energy burden do more harm than good?
 - Kim - we heard the heartbreaking stories of folks who did not turn on their units because of cost. There is a lot more that energy providers can be doing to relieve the expense of these bills
- Ranfis: Utilities need to play a key role in insuring that renters do not have to pay for extreme climate events. Also hope that this effort is paired with future federal investments
- Megan: question for Jonna. Has data been analyzed? Who was affected by the last heat event?
 - Jonna - It was people over 70, people who lived alone, people without AC, people in mobile homes, people on upper floors of apartment buildings and primarily in outer east and downtown.
- Ranfis: what role will PBEM play in distribution?
 - Jonna: PBEM thinks their role is to help connect PCEF to nonprofit and community networks. Providing information to people. People who do “direct service” should be the ones to do the actual distribution.
- Ranfis: Kim, is there organizational capacity from frontline communities to actually do this work?

- Kim – depends on the organization. In terms of CAT, they would have the capacity to work with their current and established members, 200ish households in SW Portland

Heat response proposal discussion:

PCEF staff provided the committee with an outline of a heat response program in which the program would have a procurement partner and an RFP for distribution partners. Timeline is compressed because of the lead time needed to procure large numbers of cooling units.

- Robin: confused about what is being asked of them. Are you asking us to approve an RFP?
 - Jaimes: were looking for authority to go forward for RFP to find distribution partners.
- Michael: sounds like if we say go ahead then we are fully committed to this. Feels like funding infant to adulthood. There are a lot of answers to get.
- Faith: is this aligned with PCEFs mission, should we pursue this? Yes. Some of the hesitancy is around the RFP, we need some definition of what the RFP will be. We also want to hear from the community about what their ideas are as far as distribution.
- Maria: understands the need for distributors RFP, a lot of missing details make me uncomfortable. Do PCEF staff have the capacity to do this work?
- Jeffrey: believes that this is aligned, but needs more information.
- Amanda: thinks they need to take their time on. Doesn't understand the sense of urgency. They need more time for conversation, understands the high need, but doesn't want to make the wrong decision on something that's this big. Doesn't want to be part of a decision that might harm us in the long run. Would appreciate more conversation on this if possible.
- Shanice: it's helpful to hear from the folks tonight, and some of the limitations there. Stuck on emergency planning. Would like to remove short and long-term commitments. Would be great to have this conversation with more folks.
- Megan: appreciates the good conversation and the weight and urgency.
- Ranfis: appreciates Faiths framing of this conversation. How to analyze this, we are just reacting to an emergency and there are aspects that do and do not align. But the community deserves a response in leadership. If we are tasked with that leadership, we should step up.
- Michael: understands that we need to start the procurement process sooner than later but want to see more developed RFP.

Committee agree to reconvene on Oct. 6 to hear additional information from staff and potentially make a decision about what the heat response will look like.