

Portland Clean Energy Community Benefits Fund (PCEF) Grants Committee

December 1, 2021 - Meeting Minutes

Committee members present:

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

Committee excused: Amanda Squiemphen-Yazzie

PCEF staff: Sam Baraso, Jaimes Valdez, Wendy Koelfgen, Angela Previdelli, Cady Lister, June Reyes, Janet Hammer, Jason Ford

Opening Inspiration – Maria introduced video of PCEF project from DePave

Program updates

- RFP 2 - 160 applications received requesting roughly \$250 million. Requests generally line up with funding percentage allocations in code with slightly more for workforce development and contractor support grants and about \$3.6 million in planning grant requests.
- The Heat Response Community Development Partner RFP closed yesterday. Received a modest number (11) of proposals and will be reviewing and evaluating capacity to align with goals of program. Smaller response than hoped and we will evaluate to identify gaps.
- City Council approved Diversifying Energy for Heat Response Equipment Purchasing Partner role.
- New PCEF staff positions being posted soon, starting with Admin Specialist.
- In next couple weeks we will start recruitment for the high-road advisory council.
- Reviewing an RFP for proposals for a market study to help inform availability of workforce opportunities, and contractor equity agreements and grants. Ranfis is on the review committee.
- Outreach Cohort has been convening with support from June and David. Just had 4th meeting.

Mini Grants program update - provided by Angela Previdelli

- Timeline
 - Designed April 2020-21, got feedback April May 2021, Outreach in May 2021, have since selected first and second round, third round is open now.
- Program Purpose/ Overview
 - Respond to small, time sensitive needs. Create PCEF onramp. Grow universe of nonprofits doing climate justice work.
 - \$5k grant cap, priority for small orgs (3 FTE), 2 staff do screening, prioritized random selection. Simple application and scoring process. Process evaluation will happen after 3 quarters, full review after 5th quarters.
 - First year is intended to test capacity and demand.
 - Eligibility criteria is available on website
- Current Results – 2 funding rounds
 - August cycle - 85 applications, 20 selected, all from Group 1 (small orgs serving and reflecting priority populations)
 - October cycle – 41 applications, 20 selected – 14 from Group1, 6 from Group 2.

- 100% of grant awards have been to organizations that reflect PCEF priority populations, 85% have been small organizations.
- Requests have been for grant writing/small projects/attendance costs/ workshops/ education.
- Project examples – education, environmental justice assessment, youth environmental leadership, attend trainings on climate change and resilience, indigenous-led festival about restoration, grant writing and lots more! Small amounts of \$ making a big impact.
- Observations
 - Mix in types of request. Outreach is key to getting applications. Staff capacity limits 1-1 assistance. Simplicity of application and demographic questions limit ability to clearly identify how applicants reflect community.
 - Process improvements: Staff edited demographic questions to get more information. Planning for more focused outreach events and communications to promote program.
 - Megan requested information about organizations that serve people who experience disabilities. There is some limitation in how much information we have since the application offers an aggregate checklist for communities served. In first cycle, 32 applicant and 6 granted organizations served people who experience disabilities. In second cycle 17 applied and 8 granted organizations served people who experience disabilities. The program has also modified application material to incorporate feedback we received from the disability community. For disability-serving organizations, a couple more elements added to application, specifically for organizations that serve people with intellectual and/or developmental disabilities.
- Next Steps
 - Third cycle closing January 1, 2022. Program evaluation and recommendations for year two will happen prior to spring 2022 City Council ordinance, which will need to include mini grant funding recommendation. Summer 2022 – evaluate grantee performance
- Committee questions/comments
 - Megan – Questions for evaluation: who are we still missing and what types of supports are needed for applicants/grantees?
 - Robin – One intention is that these grants could be springboard for organizations to grow over time. Would like to track if that is happening.
 - Anecdotally, we are definitely seeing mini grant recipients in current RFP.
 - Michael – Really impressed by how far \$5k can go for a small org. Can impact lots of people, and thank you for reminding us that a small amount of money can make a big difference.
 - Maria – interested in learning how grantees might have been able to use the funds for COVID related challenges.
 - Ranfis – Is \$5k working, and what other pieces of support can we provide?

Committee recruitment

- Sam:
 - Amanda and Jeffrey are both stepping off the Committee. Jeffery will stay on through RFP 2 review. Expect to do recruitment around new year, and then go to council around same time as RFP 2 recommendations.
 - Committee will need someone who has experience with minority-owned businesses to replace Jeffrey and experience serving the Indigenous, Native American community to replace Amanda.
 - Request for committee members to serve as part of a recruitment committee.

- Ranfis – want to thank Jefferey and glad will have more time. Valuable perspectives and input. Hope that we can continue to have representatives from Indigenous community and from minority/BIPOC contractor community. hope that we can also challenge the “conflict of interest” vs “perception of conflict” standard in the future. Folks that have experience applying could add substantive value.
- Jeffery – Gratitude to all, and would want to be part of the subcommittee for replacement.
- Megan – Curious if we can make practice of exit interview with Committee Members?
 - Sam – will incorporate exit interviews.
- Michael – It is important for us all to cultivate people who are interested in this role, who have same expertise, who can replace us when we roll off.

Staff closing comments

Near term future meetings will cover high-roads council recruitment, committee recruitment, subcommittee work including reporting and evaluation subcommittee work and working agreements.

Committee member comments

Ranfis – Happy to support efforts around recruiting, in any role needed.

Meeting close