

Portland Clean Energy Community Benefits Fund (PCEF) Grants Committee
July 8, 2020 - MEETING MINUTES

Committee members present: Andrea Hamberg, Jeff Moreland Jr., Ranfis Villatoro, Robin Wang, Faith Graham, Maria Sipin, Shanice Clarke

Committee members excused: Michael Edden Hill and Megan Horst

PCEF staff present: Sam Baraso, Cady Lister, Jaimes Valdez, Janet Hammer, Wendy Koelfgen

MEETING DECISIONS/ACTION ITEMS

- Committee accepted June 17th meeting minutes.
- July 15, 2020 meeting will be 6:00 to 9:00pm

MEETING SUMMARY NOTES

Program Announcements

- Go-live tomorrow for capacity building grants, three weeks to respond
- Recruitment for Committee member, meeting of recruitment subcommittee next week

Opening inspiration

Frederick Douglass, “What to the Slave is the Fourth of July” speech read by Douglass’ descendants.

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=NBe5qbnkqoM>

Public Comment

Jay Ward, Energy Trust of Oregon

- Energy Trust, non-profit, incentives available to all Portlanders. Want underserved populations to access incentives. Hosting information session July 16th. Will seek to better understand PCEF applicant needs, and share information about assistance to leverage our programs. PCEF sent out an email to the ETO event Link: <https://energytrust.org/event/information-session-on-clean-energy-project-and-funding-support/>

Discussion of improvements to application and scoring criteria to address public input

Staff provided a summary of public feedback provided during the public comment period including key findings across all responders and highlighting key findings from BIPOC-led responders. Feedback came from a combination of all public input sources, and responders included non-profit organizations, a small handful of individuals, some members of business community, and a couple from other government agencies.

- Clarifying question from Robin as to definition of BIPOC-led organizations. Staff explained that these were organizations where the majority (or at least 50%) of executive staff leadership and board identified as Black, Indigenous or people of color.

Staff presented multiple potential approaches to consider in responding to the feedback we received. Methods to create improvement might manifest in changes to grant application(s), changes to scoring criteria, taking questions out of application and shifting to grant agreement, and addressing issues around communication and design. Considerations for all changes include thinking about what information we are losing, are changes consistent with code and guiding principles, are we getting enough information to be able to differentiate

between project applications, etc. One step staff has already taken is to convene a work session with the BIPOC-led organizations that provided the most detailed feedback. The purpose of this work session and another that is upcoming is to ensure that we fully understand the concerns that were raised so that we can develop appropriate solutions.

Committee discussion

- Andrea – mentioned consistency with code and guiding principles, what role are City contract requirements playing?
 - Cady – at this point, not an enormous amount, they will come into play at the other end when setting up the actual grant agreements. In terms of the scoring criteria, not a lot.
- Robin – key themes on all responders, about application being too complex - was there different feedback between large and small grants? Define small or not well established?
 - Cady – responders focused on the large grants, with a handful only interested in planning grants. Regarding defining “small” or “not well established” – the comments were from other people so not sure what they meant by small/not well established. The feedback from more established organizations was that they could do it but thought it would be a heavy lift for small/new organizations.
 - Jeffrey – it did appear the feedback was focused on large grants. We want to graduate people and also be inclusive at the big grant level.
- Shanice – appreciate the work to think about solutions that shift criteria. There might be an inherent role to do in capacity building. Applying that lens in this moment, how we might describe an organization’s condition. Typical white led dominant organizations should not be positioned to benefit. There are also ways we can think about framing the program intentions. An introduction of the values and context behind the fund. Talking about that in a way that is removed but paired with the application/criteria.
- Sam – would add that there is a lot to learn in year one and that disbursing \$8 million is different than \$40+ million. Building capacity and bringing accountability into the program, staff will work with organizations to support their success and we will need to look at what that means for program administrative cost.
- Ranfis – my north star is that we build an application that empowers community to approach developers and propose good projects.
- Faith – disappointed that we didn’t get it more right, comments were right on and appreciate the detail, summary is well organized, biggest takeaway is that we need to be sure that target applicants feel like this is their application.

Recommended draft improvements to application and scoring criteria

Staff began working through a document with recommended draft changes to the application and scoring criteria for each of the sections within the application. The Committee made it through the Organizational Capacity and Project Description and Scope sections and will pick up with the remaining four sections at the next Committee meeting.

Committee discussion

- Jeffrey – regarding the removal of questions related to demonstrating racial and social justice, diversity, equity and inclusion for programs/services as well as internal. What did we hear from comments:

- Sam – The question is being addressed in other ways; not quite “removed.” If you reflect the community you serve, that is one place where it should show up in your program makeup, added question about focus and time on priority populations which asked in a more simplified way what we wanted to know from that question. BIPOC led orgs have not been resourced to develop those plans and mission statements often don’t specify focus on target populations for historic and racist reasons. But the commitment will show up in board and staff (including staff leadership) demographics and in how they have and currently serve priority populations.
- Ranfis – what is the goal of the question around health benefits for applicant organization employees?
 - Cady - emphasis on providing benefits to workers. We cover that for people in the trades in the workforce section so this is for workers of the non-profit applicant.
 - Ranfis – this won’t apply in different scenarios, underfunded orgs will struggle pre-funding but may have intention to offer benefits if resourced. Could we ask “If you had PCEF resources would you do this?”
 - Cady – if PCEF is not 100% of applicant organization funding that could be a challenge. Note that full points is health insurance and one other thing.
 - Sam – we did hear that points for health benefits has given small non-profits incentive to provide them.
 - Note that paid sick leave is required by state law for organizations with 6 or more employees in a Portland location but PTO for other purposes is not.
- Shanice – can we connect application question and scoring criteria related to community outreach and organizing to our guiding principles?
- Robin – is there a criteria or screen for non-profits with \$100k operating budget that wants a \$5 million grant, is this in the criteria?
 - Sam – the way we have shifted focus it will make more sense for BIPOC org to be lead applicant. This may increase demand for time/attention from program staff who manage those projects.
 - Cady notes that she has worked very small organizations that were able to successfully administer large grants. We look at capacity to administer but do not include a cap on grant amount as percent of organization budget.
- Andrea – community organizing/engagement should include community leadership and leadership development.
- Sam – we initially pushed out RFP release to August 10th and we will push it out a few more weeks but still aiming for August, we would love to hear your thoughts on three-hour meeting next week, silence is affirmative (6-9 next week).

Response to racist incident at Montgomery building construction site

- Ranfis – discussed letter (shared last meeting) drafted by Oregon Tradeswomen about a construction site act of racism. Hostile work environment in construction is not a new thing. Creating pathways into clean energy jobs, a hostile work environment for women and POC will be our biggest barrier. Would like to draft a letter from the Committee. Why we would respond: PCEF mission/guiding principles, site specific changes/improvements, calling attention the need for industry-wide reform, system that protects POC, reflects experience of the Committee in the industry. Would like Committee to review and discuss at next meeting.
- Shanice – I resonate with this strongly. It is our role to think about how black people are failed in these industries, note comments from Michael and Jeffrey in that this is a daily thing in the industry.

- Jeffrey – appreciate Ranfis bringing this to the group, this is prevalent in the industry, has to be a unified front and all of our voices speaking out, unified voices bring change.
- Robin – is there an element of holding the prime accountable for these incidents?
- Shanice – some of the demands in the letter from Oregon Tradeswomen could be interesting for us to sit with, very tangible steps, in the context of our work and how we can think about that and connect with these folks.
- Ranfis – we can include an element on primes/owners/subs responsibility, it's everyone's problem
- Jeffrey – sets the tone that this will not be tolerated in PCEF grants.
- Maria – repercussions and consequences are important. We should also think about the papercuts that happen every day to BIPOC people in these spaces and work to elevate those as well.
- Sam – letter will be from Committee to City Council. Staff can take first go at pulling together, Ranfis first read, present to full committee in next meeting.
- Shanice – valuable to hold some space to call out Black lives, collective impact, in this moment, nooses and Black people dying, being explicit about that in the letter will be important.
- Maria – agree with Shanice, amplify the needs and types of justice we need to bring to BLM and immigrant and undocumented workers who are not often mentioned.

Committee member closing comments

Andrea – Ranfis, thank you for bringing this back and reminding us why we should respond and what that response should be.

Meeting adjourned 8:00 p.m.