

**Portland Clean Energy Community Benefits Fund (PCEF) Grants Committee**  
**August 10, 2020 - MEETING MINUTES**

**Committee members present:** Jeff Moreland Jr., Michael Edden Hill, Ranfis Villatoro, Robin Wang, Maria Sipin, Megan Horst, Faith Graham, Andrea Hamberg, Shanice Clark

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

**MEETING DECISIONS/ACTION ITEMS**

- Committee accepted July 29 Meeting Minutes.
- Staff will adjust small and large grant scoring and bring back to Committee.
- Staff will bring suggested options for funding allocation.

**Open and Tribute to Tony Lamb**

Staff gave a tribute to Tony Lamb, a shining light, a dear friend, and a colleague, who pass on 7/30/2020.

*Do not get lost in a sea of despair. Be hopeful, be optimistic. Our struggle is not the struggle of a day, a week, a month, or a year, it is the struggle of a lifetime. Never, ever be afraid to make some noise and get in good trouble, necessary trouble. - John Lewis, 2015*

**Public comment**

None

**Program updates**

Application Support Grants update - Over 100 organizations applied; many small, community-based organizations that we haven't yet heard from. Prioritizing applicants that serve priority populations starting with the smallest organizations. First round of grants should be announced the week of August 10. Also working on developing training resources.

Replacement of Committee member Andrea Hamberg update – Committee received recommendations from the subcommittee working on recruitment, staff is available to discuss if anyone has questions, could make a decision as early as meeting next week.

Letter to Mayor and City Council regarding racist incident at 4<sup>th</sup> and Montgomery update – there has been some correspondence with the City, this can be shared with the Committee.

- Ranfis – it was positive to hear back. Main thing to highlight – the response did not meet community's timeline. Some next steps include City commitment to fair contracting forum in September. Suggest a meeting with Lester Spittler, chief procurement officer for the City, and staff would be a good next step.
- Megan – thank you for tracking and communicating. Sounds like a good opportunity to have that conversation. We will need to clarify our goals for the meeting, but a good idea.

**Presentation and discussion – Planning and small grants**

Sam – reviewed where we've been and where we're heading. Tonight we are looking for approval of planning and small grants. Acknowledge the work of staff, subcommittees, and committees. We heard feedback on the draft from 100+ respondents, 26 percent were BIPOC-led organizations. We then worked through solutions to

the feedback with a cohort of BIPOC-led organizations and then worked with Committee to refine the large grant criteria. Through the application support grants we have done a phenomenal job bringing in new organizations. With the simple 10-minute application, there are still lessons learned. We'll share those after the process is closed. If even a fraction of the awardees proceed with a full application that will be a great change.

### **Small and planning grants**

Staff provided an overview of changes made to the small and planning grants based on committee feedback. One area where feedback was received but substantive changes were not made was around community engagement. Year one approach is to lean more heavily on the scoring of organizations reflecting the communities they serve; by putting weight there we prioritize those communities and trust that they know best how to engage their communities. Trust that they know, but also recognize that folks will come in that don't reflect those communities and we may miss some of that, though it is addressed some in questions and scoring.

Planning grants – biggest change was removed points associated with the future project. It is the most uncertain part of the application/least defined. Giving points for the future project favors organizations that have resources to define things upfront and we heard from small and culturally specific organizations that they don't typically have resources for that. Didn't want point structure that favors larger and better resourced organizations. This criteria may have also been asking folks to know things they should discover through a planning grant. Per Robin's question about how climate shows up – we did make some refinements. Included in the eligibility section, and also included more explicitly in the scoring (addresses climate and social justice).

- Ranfis – clarifying there is no requirement that planning grants lead to a physical project. (this is correct)
- Faith - Is there a real/practical threshold one would need to get to advance?
  - Cady – No, however technical review should screen out projects that are not technically viable.
- Faith - Thinks these should be prioritized to folks who don't have resources to do planning. Wonders what other committee members think?
  - Megan – concur to a degree. That said, hard to say who has capacity. Even some larger organizations don't have the "capacity." How would we filter?
  - Jeff – agree not to have a cap, but do believe that we are putting folks in need at the forefront. And whatever is left can go to other organizations.
  - Michael – it depends on what you're looking at. A small org might do large projects budgetarily but are stretched and could do a lot more with capacity. Thinking about some of the CDCs.
  - Ranfis- Echo what's been said. Sometimes capacity is subjective and hard to nail down. The need to do planning is always there for med/large/small.
- Robin – Looking at project description and scope. Seems some significant changes – consolidated and reallocated. Can you speak to some of the changes?
  - Removed future project points. Explicitly incorporated climate and equity into opportunity statement score to reinforce that these must all lead to climate and social justice projects. Folded timeline criteria into overall scope. Project description and scope now three criteria 15 points each covering 1) Why are you doing this, 2) what are you going to do, and 3) who are you doing it for.

Small grants – different scoring criteria apply depending upon type of project (physical improvement or not). Reallocated a few points to ensure enough were going to benefit applicants who reflect communities they intend to serve. Didn't eliminate any criteria. Aim to align with large grants and planning grants.

- Shanice – don't recall this as a conversation in large grants; what is the rationale for difference of what grants do here vs other grants?
- Sam – Not sure this is so different than the large grants. Different elements in the large grant, but a similar thing that happens in large grants that don't have a physical improvement as well.

Note – the pie charts displayed showed points not percentages, which caused some confusion and a lengthy conversation about points and percentages. One chart had a pie where the numbers added up to 100 points so the numbers on the figure could be accurately read as either numbers or percentages. The other chart had proportional wedges but the numbers in the wedges were again points for the category and totaled 70 so could not be read as percentages.

- Shanice - Curious why project description and scope is smaller and makes me wonder what a nonphysical project looks like.
  - Cady – We don't know what will come in but presume that over time the majority of projects that don't have a physical improvement will be in workforce and contractor training. Most of those don't have an installation piece.
- Michael – Continuing Shanices's point, I think that with workforce, priority populations is even more important. Would add points to weight it heavier and would drop from budget and project description. Would like to see the weighting of priority populations be bigger for projects without physical improvement.
- Ranfis – Can you clarify physical here?
  - Sam - intent is meant to be construction/building things. Capital improvements to a site. Not an education program, not a workforce development. If ag or green infrastructure and there is no capital piece you would not answer questions about workforce.
- Shanice – Helpful to hear this process a bit more and the notion of construction being associated with how we are thinking of allocations especially for priority populations. I think I am having some dissonance and understand at the same time, need to focus in a specific way how projects manifest for our beneficiaries. Like CEP might do community education or training for multilingual families – projects outside of construction that have different levels of impact. Ultimately, in a pool of other grant applicants would want to prioritize similarly, to our beneficiaries. I'm struggling with not putting as much weight there across the board. Others?
  - Sam – Can adjust to get at what you're talking about. Note that the points to reflecting and serving are 45% for project with Physical improvement and 43% for the others, it's close.
- Michael – where does innovation and possible land acquisition show up/fall in?
  - Cady– land acquisition would fall within the project of what they intend to do with the land; land for wind turbine would be clean energy with physical; if ag regenerative ag. Innovation tricky because we just don't know what we'll get.
- Megan – I think I'm hearing a preference to get the priority piece of the pie to be similar across the types of grants. Can overall percentage be the same even if items are different?
  - Sam – this was a point of debate, when we go from projects over \$500k on a single site to below; would we give 20 points for answers to just one question vs an application that addresses many questions. Tried to align points to level of effort/number of questions.
- Shanice – I align with Megan on this piece; not feeling there is a strong reason to allocate points differently. There's some pretty strong space PCEF holds and lens we bring to funding these projects.

Suggesting to hold the size of distribution constant regardless the number of criteria for serving priority populations, and understand nuances with some of the others.

- Michael – Would like to see more to priority populations, especially for workforce (no physical) projects. Gets why environmental benefit is different for a training project.
- Jeff – the only difference seems to be the percentage serving priority is 45% vs 42%. We're talking adding 1 or 2 points to make them match. Seems like that could be fixed.
  - Michael – it's the optics. It looks like serving priority is less important in workforce. It's just a few points but looks like more. If we are sending these out to the public I want that to be different.
  - Sam – will adjust get the percent the same in priority population and bring back to you.
- Maria – Understand the comments; the graphics are faulty. To look at with percentages compared with other percentages. Compare pies with percentages, not points. This threw a wrench in how we process in public.
- Andrea – Would like to see some weight of that moved to serving priority population. De-emphasize budget (and hold constant) and emphasize target populations.
- Ranfis – Strong agreement as we think of the adjustments. Only thing still sticking out, when we first set out to design small grants was to be inclusive of small and emerging orgs. In planning we give points for these groups but here and in large we don't. To me that feels inconsistent.
- Sam - Suggests we will come back next week with draft that holds budget at 10% across all grant types and reflecting community/serving priority population will equal at least 50% and ask for flexibility across the others.
  - Committee Agreement.

### **Funding area allocation – summary of discussion**

Staff presented two potential options for funding allocations in year one with pros/cons for each. Current allocations made by Committee are: \$1.5 million planning; \$400k mini, and \$200k for application support grants.

- Option 1 – no annual allocation; review after three years and review to see how the portfolio looks like and consider how we are hitting the targets and then adjust through portfolio balancing and targeted solicitations.
- Option 2 – set minimum allocations, e.g., for each target area fund at least 50% of the higher range of the target.

### **Committee Discussion**

- Robin – high level thoughts; for first year seems important to be as flexible as possible, but with some amount. Maybe a third option. Not sure the number but something to give a sense of some funding commitment. Would like to review each year at first until more stabilized.
- Faith – Largely agree with Robin. It sends an important indicator to applicants. One barrier for us year one could be not getting all the money out the door. Like ultimate flexibility this year, and maybe one more year when we have a larger grant pool. Want to revisit before next round of applications.
- Michael – if there aren't applications for a segment we should be able to move the money but should have some minimum amounts we set aside as a starting place.
- Megan – like a hybrid, modify option 2 to help make sure we can get the money out the door.
- Ranfis – lean toward #2. As a grant writer I would want to know how many dollars and how many groups you will fund. This provides more clarity.

- Andrea – encourage us to think long term. Maybe at first a lot goes to workforce b/c that needs to be created and over time more goes to another category.
- Ranfis – maybe create ranges for the categories – what we expect to fund but build in flexibility. A range for each category.
- Faith – swayed me from flexible as possible. Encourage us to keep this as simple as possible. If the purpose of allocation is to give some certainty, then scales and things might not provide that.
- Michael – If we get more than our \$6.5 million in great applications would we roll them into next year? Not expecting an answer.
- Sam – that will be a discussion for you all as there are many ways we can think about this question and many considerations. And no doubt we will make some changes that may make application a little different. Given where funding levels are this year – folks are taking that into account. And folks scaling for what they think they can get this year and then come back next year.
- Ranfis – Expect more applying than we can fund. Do want to lay out a systemic issue here, as we break these into scoring panels, re consistency about how we score. The way I score may be different than another. Important thing is consistent scoring.

#### **Committee member closing comments**

- Megan – Circling back to Jaimes' presentation about the application support grants. Thank you for the outreach. Sounds like a great success. Want to say kudos.
- Ranfis – Extend appreciation to staff, building a grant program in a small amount of time in a pandemic. You make us feel listened to. A great culture the team is building. Continue to wish you good self-care and thank you for the hard work.

**9:00 pm - Meeting adjourned**