

This is a report of the Portland Clean Energy Fund (PCEF) Committee’s first year and its inaugural funding recommendations.

The Portland Clean Energy Fund (PCEF) is a beacon and testament in our community’s belief in doing things a different way. PCEF centers and elevates climate leadership and climate solutions from our communities that bear the greatest impacts of climate change: communities of color and people with low incomes. As the first ever climate fund in the US that was created and led by communities of color, it is a model for advancing climate action, and racial and social justice by leveraging the innovation, grit, and ingenuity within our communities. It is an understatement to say that PCEF is groundbreaking. It is a gift to the City- the outcome of thousands of volunteer hours gathering signatures, knocking on doors, and dreaming about the possibilities. As a result, our DNA is different. This is a summary of our first year, the foundation we laid, and the path we are on.

In framing our first year, we note that this is a critical learning year in a learning program, developed in the midst of a momentous time. This year has also brought incredible pain, suffering, and an awareness of the necessary changes long overdue. While the past year has exposed deep scars and healing opportunities, the year and the next several years will be a period of continual reflection, adjustment, adaptation, trial, error, and triumph. It bears repeating that PCEF has not been done before. There are no benchmarks or roadmaps for what PCEF can be. We honor this and rely on good process that elevates the wisdom and expertise in our community to invest in climate action that advances racial and social justice.

The Committee’s inaugural funding recommendations in this packet are the result of hundreds of hours listening to community members, dozens of public Committee work sessions, many working nights and weekends, and an enthusiastic community response. In the following pages, we list some of the efforts that led to this process and acknowledge that this is only part of the story. We look forward to providing a more thorough update next year as we look back on funded projects.

The people behind PCEF:

Central to the community’s vision for PCEF is the [PCEF Committee](#), a cohort of nine community volunteers that reflect the racial, ethnic, and economic diversity of our City. They are the heart of PCEF; they are the people who have collectively put in hundreds of hours over the past year to get us here. While the Committee is tasked with several roles, a central role is making funding recommendations to the Mayor and City Council.

Whereas the Committee is the heart, staff are the backbone that help bring the Committee’s vision to life. From six employees in September 2020 at the release of our first request for proposals, staff have grown to 11 employees ready to usher the program into its next phase.

<implementation timeline graphic here>



Community collaboration: Community collaboration, engagement, and outreach is a life force that courses through every element of PCEF, from staff hiring panels, to our grant scoring criteria, community has informed every step of PCEF’s implementation. This happens through one-on-one check-ins, general workshops, targeted workshops, and public comment periods, to name a few. It is impossible to show the full depth of our community engagement, however, we’ve listed a handful of figures on page 5 to provide a sense for our approach and reach.

Shared knowledge: Each Committee member is valued for the depth of expertise and lived experience they bring to the Committee. However, it was also critical that we provide a baseline understanding of PCEF funding areas and existing relevant work occurring in the community. Soon after the City Council appointed the full Committee in November 2019, the program invested in building a foundation of shared knowledge across the Committee. From November 2019 through March 2020, community experts spanning government, mainstream non-profit, and community-based non-profit organizations shared their perspectives and advice with the Committee in climate action, energy efficiency and renewable energy, green infrastructure, regenerative agriculture, affordable housing, and workforce and contractor development.

Guiding principles: Between February 2020 and April 2020, the PCEF Committee developed its guiding principles, which describe the values by which the PCEF program is administered. The guiding principles state that the program will be focused on climate action with multiple benefits, justice-driven, community-powered, and accountable. The guiding principles complement the legislative code ([PCC 7.07](#)) and help ensure that decisions are made in a way that aligns with the vision and values of the Committee and the community. Click [here](#) for the complete guiding principles.

Scoring criteria development: between January 2020 and April 2020, the grants process and review criteria subcommittee, comprised of four Committee members and staff met weekly (17 meetings in total) to collect information, research best practices, and develop ideas and recommendations for key areas of the grant application process and scoring criteria. Scoring criteria would be used to assure transparency in how the program would evaluate grant proposals against criteria related to program goals such as greenhouse gas emissions reductions, household energy bill savings, and

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.
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.

the percentage of beneficiaries from priority populations. This laid the foundation for 16 meetings with the full Committee between March 2020 and August 2020 where scoring criteria were iteratively adapted in a process that involved Committee meetings, a four week public comment period (see summary public comment [here](#)), numerous staff revisions, input from organizations led by and serving priority populations, and Committee revisions before the Committee adopted the final grant scoring criteria on August 12, 2020. Staff incorporated the scoring criteria into the request for proposals (RFP), which the Committee approved on September 9, 2020, releasing the [inaugural RFP](#) on September 16.

Committee member recruitment: Climate justice without our Native American communities can never be realized. Early in its tenure, the Committee acknowledged the program's failure in lacking Native American representation in the inaugural Committee. To create space for this perspective, Committee member Andrea Hamberg decided to resign her Committee membership upon appointment of a replacement Committee member. Staff, with input from the Committee, conducted a targeted recruitment from April 16, 2020 through May 27, 2020, resulting in the nomination and appointment of Amanda Squiemphen-Yazzie, a Committee member who brings great depth in civic engagement in the Native American community, grassroots organizing, advocating for under-served communities and for Mother Earth.

Application support grants: in May 2020, the PCEF Committee recommended that City Council allocate \$200k to support small, community-based nonprofit organizations serving PCEF priority populations access resources (up to \$5k each) to prepare grant proposals addressing climate change, racial and social equity. The application support grant program was developed in response to community input regarding barriers to generating grant proposals – particularly for small organizations serving Black, Indigenous and People of Color (BIPOC) communities. In August 2020, PCEF [announced](#) that 40 organizations (of the more than 120 that applied) had been awarded application support grants, several of which submitted proposals in the inaugural RFP.

September 2020 request for proposals: on September 16, 2020, the inaugural RFP was released. During the open application period PCEF staff hosted six webinars and six trainings on grant narrative and budget development. 170 unique organizations participated in the webinars and trainings. Interested parties could ask questions during webinars, via email or by calling program staff; answers to all questions were posted weekly on the project website. When the application period closed on Nov. 23, 2020, 140 applications had been submitted. An eligibility and technical feasibility screening brought the number of applications sent to scoring panels down to 133. These applications were sent to nine scoring panels comprised of three people each; one Committee member, one subject matter expert and at least one staff person. Each scoring panel was majority people of color/non-white identifying and all panel members received grant scoring and anti-bias training. Scoring panel members first scored independently and then came together in facilitated conversation to finalize scores. These scores are the basis for ranking applications within each of the funding categories identified in the code and for which the Committee published targets for this round of funding.

Looking forward: As we look forward to our next year, we move with humility and appreciation for all those who have come on this journey with us and for all those who made PCEF a possibility. We

stand ready to learn in community, to support our grantees, and to support those whom were not fortunate to become our grantees. PCEF is a statement of love, hope, and possibilities for our communities and for our future. The foundation has been laid for more love, more hope, and more possibilities on the road ahead.

<PCEF by the numbers: 1-page graphic in development>