

**Portland Clean Energy Community Benefits Fund (PCEF) Grants Committee
May 5th, 2021 – MEETING MINUTES**

Committee members present: Shanice Clark, Maria Sipin, Robin Wang, Michael Edden Hill, Jeffery Moreland, Faith Graham, Megan Horst, Ranfis Villatoro,

PCEF staff present: Sam Baraso, Cady Lister, Janet Hammer, Jaimes Valdez, June Reyes, Jay Richmond, Lokye Au, Angela Previdelli. Jason Ford

Opening. Maria Sipin. Acknowledgement of Missing and Murdered Indigenous Women and Girls and Two Spirited People.

Meeting minutes approved: 1/4, 2/24, 21, 3/3, 3/17 and 4/14 (all 2021)

Update: Michael Eden Hill and Maria Sipin, PCEF Co-Chairs, will be reaching out to Committee members to touch base one-on-one.

Mini-grant program presentation: Angela Previdelli, PCEF staff, presented proposal for running the \$400,000 mini-grant program approved by City Council, with a review after one year. The program would run in quarterly cycles disbursing \$100,000 per cycle in grants of up to \$5,000 each. The program would prioritize small organizations (3 or fewer FTE) in recognition that they typically have more limitations accessing resources. Applicants will be screened for eligibility and separated into groups (small, large, grantees who have received a mini-grant award in past year). Then, randomly selected from priority 1 group (small, have not received a mini grant in past year), moving on to lower priority groups if funding is still available. Mini-grant program design is informed by community feedback: brief survey sent to 45 organizations; 17 organizations responded, ranging in size. Identified priorities of these respondents include staff time internal/external as most important needs. Folks think it will be useful and will apply. Feedback from application support grant (ASG) grantees is that the need for application support resources is a regular need. Insurance requirements are a challenge to navigate.

Committee mini-grant program discussion:

- Michael – why only \$5,000 per grant? Can apply for another, but not to add on to each other, correct?
- Megan - three questions: Do the category buckets cover what folks want to apply for? Why not prioritizing priority populations? Will it be hard to message about ASGs within mini-grants?
 - Angela – the Committee decided last year to not include priority population in mini-grant review for the sake of simplicity. We would have to ask for a lot more information in the application to do justice to that process. Let's try to keep it simple and track who comes through and is selected and review to see if those coming through are reflective/aligning. Revisit/modify if not.
 - ASG was a one-time process. The spirit lives on within mini-grants. It is one of the eligible expenses within mini-grants.

- Ranfis - Given that folks are wanting to spend money on staff time, \$5k is not enough to do that. Even for a contractor, \$5k isn't much. If we want to be responsive and help organizations add capacity, then the amount would look different. Would want to hear more from community about this. Also wonder how to prioritize and also do random? And maybe a longer-term question about how to elevate BIPOC organizations. Look at disparities.
 - Sam - The \$5k limit is based on City code – above that have to go to City Council for approval. Perhaps in a future ordinance that could be addressed. If we want to move fast we need to stay at that number or else go to Council each time. Have an eye to revisiting that.
- Faith – Love that this bucket exists and want us to be nimble and flexible. Do think we should prioritize BIPOC led organizations and if this won't work we shouldn't proceed. And capacity building is a bigger conversation. How to get to larger amounts and over time? Some additional questions: why can't we add funds to an existing grant with mini-grants? How many per cycle can be proposed? Can someone increase their chances by submit 10 applications for the random draw? Eligibility feels subjective. Are you serving PCEF goals is a subjective determination so there is some work associated with that. Selection criteria –are there set numbers per priority group or fully fund each category in a waterfall? What does random selection mean?
- Maria - Feels like there are a lot of nitty gritty questions. Suggest they are sufficiently meaningful to work through. What are the consequences of not voting yes tonight?
 - Cady – it just bumps the timeframe to whatever it takes for you to feel comfortable making the decision. One thing we have an eye is to try to have money out so that it can be used to put applications together for next RFP. It is okay if this moves out by a few weeks.
- Robin – Has a number of questions as well. Why just \$400k - is that sufficient to meet demand? When we reviewed the grants there were a number that were not aligned with PCEF mission even if they were good. How will we screen for that? Is there some reporting? Would like to hear more about lessons learned from application support grant experience.
- Michael – Maybe each quarter there can be fast reporting on who applied and who was awarded.
- Cady - suggest that staff take these questions, and any others Committee or the public sends in, and bring back information to next meeting.
 - Committee agreement
- Faith – Recognize there may not be perfect solutions, it may be fine to move forward and then pause after one or two rounds to understand what we received and then adjust if necessary. Would like to reflect earlier in the process before committing \$400k with little discussion.

RFP 2 planning presentation: Sam updated Committee on funds received and available, timeline for releasing RFP 2 at the \$60 million level, considerations regarding staff capacity and implications of moving from \$8.6 to \$60 million. After the next RFP staff would like to move to two RFPs annually spaced 6 months apart. This allows applicants to resubmit unfunded proposals waiting a full year, accommodates seasonality and busy period for some sectors and organizations and allows both applicants and program staff to plan. Recommend one RFP of \$60 million in September and then move to a 6-month cycle (RFP 3 would be March 2022).

Committee RFP 2 planning discussion:

- Michael – if we change the grant caps does that change the threshold for prevailing wage and workforce reporting requirements?
 - No, \$350 threshold for prevailing wage.
- Robin – will there be discussion of allocation by grant size?
 - Sam – to right size our ability to administer the grants we'll need to signal an expectation for large grants, in the future we can discuss what that looks like.
- Michael – is the 5% admin cap on admin influencing this?
 - Sam – the admin cap does impact our ability to administer the program, but there probably wasn't ever the idea that PCEF would be administering 300 grants a year. Around 75 new grants per year feels like a lot but doable without losing our ability to provide good service to grantees.

Breakout: Committee members broke into two groups to discuss the prompts below

1. What actions can we take to ensure that we transition over time to a place where all grant funds are moving through organizations that reflect the priority populations they are serving? What people or groups of people should we consult in trying to answer this question?
2. What actions can we take to ensure that grant projects administered by mainstream organizations are implemented in a way that is culturally appropriate and not do harm? What people or groups of people should we consult in trying to answer this question?

Summary notes from breakout groups

- Give support to organizations to make sure they are capable and comfortable going after the large grants. Give people planning resources, let them know what they can do, support ideation resources. Have staff and consultants available to brainstorm.
- Find root cause of barriers - what are the limitations.
- Applicants may be do competition calculus based on allocations if by grant size. Which one am I going to be more likely to get?
- Priority populations, we broke it down in this round of grant criteria - leadership, staff, then people served. We should talk through and think about each of these.
- We didn't fund any disability serving orgs. This is a big gap. There is a huge amount of engagement to do there.
- Transportation may be a big space for disability to really show up.
- Committee members are removed from the experience of the community groups who are applying.
- Wishing the community groups in attendance could speak to these questions.
- Many nonprofits do what they do great but they don't have the capacity to branch out. We miss the opportunity to fund those types of groups. Lots of orgs may hear Clean Energy Fund and not see themselves. The title may not relate to groups doing community building work.
- Grassroots projects, not associated with nonprofits, have great work happening. They may not be eligible but we should think about how to get them engaged.
- We were clear that we were giving full points to orgs led by and serving priority populations. How can we make this even more front and center?
- This is outside of PCEF scope, but there are probably orgs who do nonprofit leadership development and make sure they are nurturing orgs. We should be connected to those efforts to make sure we are on the same page.

- How are coalitions emerging as some of the most viable and competitive groups to get PCEF funding.
- Ensure that applicants have a real connection to community if staff reflects. If the staff does not reflect then they need to be involved in community and have community help them. Check with CBOs and make sure the organizations are actually in the community and have a track record of working with and assisting the community.
- Mainstream organizations should have community partnership and the partnership would be based on just principles of partnerships; we could provide examples what that looks like.
- Commitment by mainstream orgs to capacity building of community partners. Mechanisms to ensure they are not taking over the community and partnership.
- Would like to change the culture of how staff and the public that attends meetings engages with Committee so we can hear from them more. Format of sharing testimony is outdated.
- Potential for displacement due to public investments. Include voices of tenants and workers. We have missed voices of workers. And engage with First Nations/tribal communities.
- PCEF should be partnering with other orgs to advance equity in workforce and businesses and staff. What are rest of city, port, pcc, and others doing? If they are not in line with our work then it's for nothing. Leverage PCEF dollars to work toward some of these goals.
- A lot of doubts about where we are heading right now, especially the \$10 M large grant cap, understand staffing problems and need to keep grants to a reasonable level. Concern this will be an opportunity for large NGOs to steamroll over community organizations and not listen and get feedback. Would like to hear from the drafters of the legislation. Is our new target going to be 20%. Possibility that we will take it and run it into a bad place real quick just to expedite money out. Money to the wrong places.
- Want to challenge that BIPOC orgs can't administer those funds. Built parks and affordable housing.
- Nothing inherently problematic with money going to mainstream orgs. But how to ensure good partnership and BIPOC benefit. Want to hear more from community. Challenge ourselves and perceptions. A \$10 M grant could empower communities to do something different.

Report out on breakout discussion

Group 1 – want to identify and provide appropriate support to organizations led by priority populations so they can access more of the funds available. A lot of discussion about capacity building – what is it, who is delivering, name clean energy fund not something they might relate to. Would like to know who program staff are already in conversation with about these issues.

Group 2 - concern about scaling up and also optimism. Being intentional about how we engage with tenant activists, workers, first nations, etc. Would like to hear thoughts of staff and broader community. Need to engage with other organizations to align efforts. There is a conflict between the 5% admin cap and the true engagement we expect. The relationship with community is with staff and if we don't have the capacity to be there then we are not stewarding these dollars well. And how PCEF is staffed is nowhere near where other funding institutions are staffed. Should not assume that more money will go to mainstream organizations.

Committee member comments

- Maria – would like to identify roles and skills within the committee, where are we contributing and where workload could be.
- Megan – appreciation for break out opportunities for discussion.

Meeting close – 8:30 pm