

Portland Clean Energy Community Benefits Fund (PCEF) Roundtable

Key Takeaways

Energy efficiency and renewable energy upgrades in regulated multi-family affordable housing Meetings #1 & #2

January 12, 2023, 1 p.m. – 3 p.m.

January 26, 2023, 1 p.m. – 3 p.m.

Key Takeaways

- Providers and developers need to understand how much funding is available for Phase 2 projects. A high-level breakdown of what funding is available for strategic programs and community-responsive grants would be helpful for applicants.
- Keep the application process simple and the administration of the program simple. Grant fatigue is present in the community.
- PCEF can increase the length of livability through investments like air conditioning, recirculated air and pragmatic funds for resident educational opportunities.
- Frame ventilation as an air quality goal: Require balanced ventilation with filtration for each unit and a requirement for sufficient mechanical ventilation and require the latest ASHRAE 62.2 ventilation standard.
- Lower the energy burden for families and ensure reduced utility costs trickle down to tenants.
- PCEF will need to know how Oregon's inclusionary zoning law impacts this program.
- For funding eligibility, PCEF should be explicit about project requirements. Funding should be available to all non-profit/for-profit developers providing affordable housing.
- Smart home technology such as light timers are beneficial to the disability community.
- Use a prescribed list of measures to work on building out a workforce to build units and incorporate minority contractors in a long-term way to build out job and training opportunities.

Existing Conditions

- Most builders are building to silver or gold Earth Advantage standards.
- Operating budgets for housing development organizations are stretched thin.
- Most buildings in Portland are not climate-adaptation friendly or user-friendly.
- BIPOC populations are disproportionately impacted by sub-par housing.

Desired State

- Goals shared included improving quality of life.
- Investments should be driven to non-profits and community organizations that have a proven track record and history of working with priority populations.
- Projects should be sustainable after 5 -years.
- Include end-use strategies that contribute to higher performance by designing strategies that get a desired EUI.

- Consider climate impact and look at what type of energy is used vs how much energy is used.

Key Opportunities/Strategies

- Administer funding through OHCS or PHB. Allow more time for compliance and review periods.
- Find ways to prioritize and incentivize non-profits and community organizations.
- Money received by projects should cover the total cost of increases associated with implementing sustainability measures.
- Ensure a baseline incentive is reflective of incremental costs related to added requirements.
- PCEF should inform developers about how close they came to achieving the sustainability goals outlined in their proposal.
- Build a feedback loop into Phase 1 that will inform what will be built into Phase 2.
- Maximize capacity building as much as possible.
- Find opportunities for project management support, training in operations and support beyond code.

Barriers

- Some firms are not getting certified because of cumbersome paperwork and language barriers. This disproportionately impacts minority-owned contractors.
- Projects are in different stages and the funding timeline will need to be clarified to accommodate projects that are still in development and eligible for funding.
- Understand the potential volume of projects over the 5-year timeframe for the CIP.
- Electrification upgrades are costly and expensive.

Program design elements

- PCEF should use the life cycle cost analysis to quantify energy analysis.
- PCEF should incentivize builders to be more clean/green.
- Make regulatory requirements easy to achieve by using OHCS's COBID certification and MWESB requirements.
- PCEF should recognize WA state and federally designated firms to allow for certifiable firms.
- NOFAs could be an additional pot of money for how projects will implement PCEF aspirations.
- Create requirements around decarbonization.
- Consider expanding the language around "marginal cost of measures" to include "marginal cost of measures and integrated design strategies.
- Align metrics to understand incremental costs and differences in requirements in PCEF code.
- Maximize the benefit for regulatory burden.
- Consider where PCEF can leverage existing work/analysis that can prevent PCEF from reinventing the wheel.
- Prioritize representative boards.
- Consider an incentive for people who have already applied for PHB funds.