



February 26, 2024 Community Council Meeting Summary

Meeting recording: youtu.be/XxF0CeCh14M

Attendance: 8 of 12 members present the day of the meeting, 1 absent member responded to discussion prompts in advance

Meeting Outcomes

1. Community Council provides feedback on application scoring criteria, especially assessment criteria and point distribution, and suggestions for application improvements.
2. Community Council generates strategies for how to address considerations of the grant review process.
3. Community Council generates options for how to conduct the grant review process.

Meeting Summary

In advance of the meeting, PCL staff shared the draft grant application for the 2025-2029 large grants cycle, scoring criteria, and a list of grant review process considerations and constraints. At the meeting, PCL staff facilitated a combination of small group discussions and large group share outs to generate feedback on how to improve the application and scoring criteria, and how to run the grant review process. PCL used the following prompts:

- Please give us your feedback on the scoring criteria. Are there criteria that you don't want? Are there criteria that are missing?
- Does the distribution of points across the three sections (program, organization, and budget), and within each section, reflect your priorities?
- What 1-3 changes do you suggest to improve the application? Please focus on big concepts, not detailed edits.

- Pick out the review process considerations that are the most important to you, and focus your discussion on those. Generate strategies to address these considerations.
- Generate potential grant review processes that integrate the strategies you drafted.

What follows are the top suggestions from council members.

Application & Scoring Criteria Feedback

Overall, many council members were reasonably satisfied with the application and saw their previous feedback reflected in the draft. Feedback that was repeated by two of the three small groups has been bolded below to reflect the weight behind the suggestion.

Application feedback

- **Continue to simplify the language**
- **Clarify the community voice question – the application question isn't aligned with the evaluation criteria**
- Reduce redundancy in questions and the number of compound questions
- Council members provided copy edits to questions to increase accessibility for folks who speak English as a second language
- Council members expressed divergent opinions about whether to include a question about the sustainability of the program beyond PCL funds
- In the organization section, increase the emphasis on experience, skills, and ability to serve children & families
- Add a question to the program section to understand how the organization decided to serve a specific community, determined a specific need, and is addressing that need
- Council members noted that the budget section of application has improved

Scoring criteria feedback

- **Review wording of scoring criteria alongside corresponding questions to ensure that there is consistency between what is asked and how it's being evaluated**

- Create a rubric to improve scoring consistency
- Provide space in the scoring form for reviewers to take notes and explain why they gave the score they gave
- Revisit bolded subsection titles to evaluate alignment with questions and bold or underline key words related to application questions
- In the program section, subsection D, add criteria that evaluates the activity's ability to identify and address the stated need
- In the budget section include criteria that evaluates return on investment and outcomes

Point distribution feedback

- **Increase point value of 'Organization purpose, goals, and community collaborations' in organization section to 20**
- Increase point values of 'Equitable Outcomes' and 'Community Engagement' in program section
- Increase the budget section's total point value
- In the organization section, redistribute points in subsections from highest to lowest according to this order: B, C, A, and D (with B getting most points and D getting the least)

Other feedback

- Include examples to applicants of finished products such as a budget and responses to questions such as demographics and a budget narrative
- Give word count limits and vary word count depending on each question's complexity
- Use information from the new/ongoing/expanding program area question to track changes over time

Grant Review Process Feedback

All council members suggested PCL continue working with volunteers to review and score grant applications. In addition, they prioritized the following considerations and offered strategies to address these concerns. Once again, suggestions in bold were mentioned by 2 of the 3 small groups.

Reviewer bias

- **Conduct implicit & explicit bias training**
- Evaluate existing bias training to identify areas for improvement
- Ensure reviewers don't have close relationships with the applicant they are reviewing to mitigate conflicts of interest

On group size & management, council members offered divergent suggestions

- **Desire to have more reviewers per application over fewer**
- **Reduce the number of reviewers per application down from 5**
- Conduct one or more check-ins with reviewers to build collective understanding, answer questions, and increase accountability

Score variance

- On applications where score variance is high appoint an additional volunteer or PCL staffer to serve in a quality assurance role of reviewing and problem-solving
- On applications where score variance is high bring in another reviewer or reviewers to do an additional review
- Increase the # of reviewers to 7-12 and drop the highest and lowest scores
- Create a scoring rubric that has clearly defined examples of how to score
- Convene reviewers to debrief reasons for scoring and provide an opportunity to update scores

On reviewer transparency & safety, council members offered divergent suggestions

- Make reviewers anonymous
- Put reviewers & their bios on the PCL website

Reviewer compensation

- Adjust stipend to reflect # of applications reviewed, offering more money as more applications are reviewed
- Make the stipend optional

Confidentiality concerns

- Deploy a virtual portal and permissions settings whereby users can't download documents and can only edit them within the program

Reviewer experience & qualifications

- Recruit for a diversity of representation, including but not limited to lived experience, experience receiving services, professional experience, and budget experience

Point of power-sharing & decision-making

- Train volunteers on what this means
- Trust people closest to the issues to be problem-solvers