

**Portland Children's Levy  
Allocation Committee Meeting Minutes  
June 13, 2023, 3:00 p.m.  
Location: City council Chambers – hybrid via Zoom**

---

*The full record of the meeting may be viewed on the Portland Children's Investment Fund website: [www.portlandchildrenslevy.org](http://www.portlandchildrenslevy.org) or YouTube at: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=eBIPp8xhIG0>*

*For further detail, all are invited to reference the meeting video on YouTube, linked above.*

*All presentation slides are appended to these minutes.*

**Attending:** Mitch Hornecker, Traci Rossi (virtual), Dan Ryan (Chair), Felicia Tripp (virtual); Julia Brim-Edwards

**Welcome/introduction of Allocation Committee and Children's Levy staff**

**Minutes of April 18, 2023, meeting – approved without revision.**

**Disability Training for Small Grants Recipients**

PCL staff retained two consultants to build the capacity of Small Grants grantees to effectively serve children with disabilities and reach their disability inclusion goals. The consultants provided training for three grantees that identified the need for additional training for staff, volunteers, and/or parents in their organizations.

**Saara Hirsi and Tamyca Branam Phillips** presented on the disability training work that they have completed with the first two grantees, and the training that is planned for the third grantee in June 2023.

Staff will present additional information about disability inclusion goals at the October 17<sup>th</sup> Allocation Committee meeting.

Public Comment - none

**Small Grants Renewal Process and Timeline**

PCL developed and launched its Small Grants Fund in 2019-2020 as the first year of the pandemic unfolded. All small grants began January 1, 2021, and will end on December 31, 2023.

### **Proposed Renewal Period**

Staff proposes a 2.5-year renewal period from January 1, 2024 through June 30, 2026, slightly longer than the typical 2-year renewal grants. Due to the start-up time creating and running the first small grants funding process, these grants did not start at the beginning of a fiscal year. Administratively, it's preferable to keep all grants on the same fiscal year so that data is reported for the same annual periods and can be aggregated across all PCL grants. Allowing a 2.5-year renewal grant will move small grants to the same fiscal year schedule as large grants and simplifies administration. In addition, a longer renewal period provides additional time for the Community Council and Allocation Committee to review data on the pilot project and address key policy questions about the next Small Grants application process. Additional time will be helpful because the Council and Committee will also be considering policy and process options for the next large grant competitive funding round.

### **Proposed Method for Developing Recommended Renewal Funding Amounts**

Consistent with the recent renewal of PCL's large grants, staff will use the same approach for calculating "up to" renewal amounts for small grants: 40% of the total 3-year grant with a 4% COLA compounded each year to support inflation of program costs and staff retention. As with large grants this spring, staff may recommend reduced funding for any small grantees where there are significant issues meeting grant agreement goals and/or underspending.

### **Grant Renewal Process Timeline**

1. **June Allocation Committee Meeting:** Staff outlines the small grants renewal process, including funding formula, renewal steps, and timeline.
2. **June- August**
  - **Small Grants Fund Fiscal Review Concludes:** As part of the SGF's commitment to capacity-building, PCL contracted independent auditors, Merina and Co., to provide grantees with technical assistance to complete an Independent Financial Review of their financial statements and processes. The review will provide staff with information about the financial health of current SGF grantees and is a contract requirement in lieu of a financial audit.
  - **Annual Report Review & Analysis:** Staff will review all SGF grantee annual reports on service delivery for FY23. This data will be analyzed together with data from FY22 to determine the overall performance of the grantee regarding the program, service delivery, and disability inclusion goals.
3. **September- October**
  - **Staff develops renewal recommendations:** Staff will provide grantees with funding recommendations and rationale by mid-September. Grantees will have the opportunity to comment on the recommendation. Staff will provide the Allocation Committee with funding recommendations and any grantee comments in preparation for its October 17<sup>th</sup> meeting by Friday, October 6<sup>th</sup>

- **October 17<sup>th</sup> Allocation Committee Meeting:** Staff will present SGF annual performance data and renewal funding recommendations for all small grants fund grantees. Staff will also present key themes and lessons learned from the Small Grants pilot as we move into community engagement and prepare for future funding rounds. Allocation Committee makes renewal decisions on small grants.

### Community Engagement Process

Thanks to Portland voters, the Levy was renewed for 5 years (July 1, 2024 – June 30, 2029) in the May election. The Levy's current large grants run for the next two fiscal years. Before beginning the next competitive funding process, the Act that governs Levy operations requires that we create program area goals and strategies for funding that are informed by a community engagement process. The Act further requires that the engagement process include a range of engagement strategies such as surveys, focus groups, key stakeholder interviews and meetings open to the public.

### **2018-19 Community Engagement Process & Lessons Learned**

Before creating the funding priorities and application in the large grant funding round, PCL hired Empress Rules Equity Consulting to engage community members and service providers around community needs, preferred services and methods of delivery, and barriers to access. Empress Rules engaged 405 community members and 95 service providers through an online survey and conducted 8 focus groups with 85 community members. Community members who responded to the survey were diverse and included youth and parents/caregivers with the following lived experiences: with disabilities, LGBTQIA2S+, houselessness, immigrants and refugees, low income, and youth and parents/caregivers that spoke languages other than English at home, who identified as Black, Indigenous, African, Native Hawaiian or Pacific Islander, Asian, Slavic, and Middle Eastern.

Focus groups included 2 groups of youth and 6 of adults/parents with lived experiences in the foster care system, with disabilities, Spanish-speaking, and as immigrants/refugees. Survey and focus group participants received participation incentives to recognize their time and input.

Reflections on the 2018-19 process yielded some lessons learned. The pieces that went well and should be incorporated into the next community engagement process include:

- Conducting outreach to community members and attending community events
- Gathering input through multiple methods including surveys and focus groups.
- Providing incentives like gift cards to community members to complete surveys and participate in focus groups.
- Using an outside contractor (not Levy staff) to do outreach, surveys, focus groups, and to report findings.

- Using different surveys questions for community members and service providers

Elements of the past process that were less effective and we expect to change in the next process were:

- Asking community members to complete an “interest questionnaire” before being asked to complete a survey or participate in a focus group. People found it confusing and thought they had already completed a survey.
- Language-specific focus groups were more effective than translated surveys to engage people in their home language.
- We didn’t include a feedback loop to participants in the process to understand if they felt their feedback was heard and well used.

### **Roles of Staff, Community Council and Allocation Committee**

Since the last community engagement process, we’ve created a Community Council to provide ongoing advice and recommendations on PCL policy and processes. Their role in the next community engagement process will be to set goals for the process, advise on the topics to seek community input on, and advise on focus communities for engagement. The Council will also consider the results of the community engagement process and recommend funding strategies and priorities to the Allocation Committee. Council has made its first round of recommendations on these elements to be considered by the Allocation Committee at this meeting. Staff’s role is implementation and logistics such as engaging contractors to carry out the process and collaborating with them to design and implement the plan. The Allocation Committee’s role is to consider recommendations from Council and the community engagement report and make decisions.

### **Current Status and Timeline**

Staff has begun looking for a community engagement contractor to assist in creating and implementing a detailed plan informed by Community Council and Allocation Committee recommendations. Staff has reached out to several COBID-certified firms (minority-owned/women-owned or emerging businesses, certified by the State of Oregon) to discuss their interest and availability for the project and hope to hire a contractor this summer. We also plan to partner with the City’s contracted Community Engagement Liaisons (CELS) to engage a range of cultural communities. The liaisons are members of the communities they engage (Latinx, Black, Indigenous, West African, Somali, Karen, Burmese, Nepali, Zomi, Chuukese, Arabic, Russian, Ukrainian), are bilingual, can collaborate on culturally responsive survey design and support completion of language-specific surveys with community members. Our planned timeline includes engaging a main contractor as soon as possible, creating a detailed scope of work for CELS in collaboration with the main contractor, completing the community

engagement processes in winter 2024 and a report with recommendations for the Allocation Committee by spring 2024.

### Community Council Recommendations and Update

#### **Planning Community Engagement: Recommendations to Allocation Committee**

In April, PCL staff facilitated small, optional meetings with individual council members to gather their input for planning 3 key features of PCL's upcoming community engagement process: goals of the process, priority topics for community input, and priority communities to engage. Seven of council's 11 members attended a meeting. Staff asked members 3 questions about those features and used members' responses to prepare and frame draft recommendations presented to council at the May 24 meeting.

Staff presented results from the April meetings and a set of draft recommendations to the council. Council worked in 2 smaller groups to discuss and modify the draft recommendations. The Council unanimously adopted the recommendations below (6/6 members present at the meeting).

#### **Recommendation 1: Goals for 2023 Community Engagement Process**

- Learn from diverse stakeholders about the most effective and needed services for children, especially children most affected by historical inequities and disproportionately impacted by COVID-19.
- Identify community solutions to improve outcomes for children and families, including culturally informed emerging grassroots strategies and pandemic recovery practices in PCL's program areas.
- Build positive relationships with marginalized communities by incorporating the city's core values.
- Promote community understanding and awareness of Portland Children's Levy's work including the funding processes, services funded, and demographics of children and families served.
- Improve transparency in the community engagement process and ensure that community members who engage in the process receive ongoing communication about PCL and how it uses community feedback.

#### **Recommendation 2: Topics for community engagement/community input**

##### **Mental health topics:**

- Barriers that youth and families experience accessing mental health resources; access to self-care and emotional regulation supports.
- Culturally specific approaches to mental health and/or social and emotional well-being for youth and families

- Variety of options for mental health supports in PCL program areas.
- Aligned training for PCL-funded providers in social-emotional well-being and healthy relationships
- Effective practices for supporting children/families with intellectual and developmental disabilities.

**Mentoring topics:**

- Social-emotional focus on confidence, self-sufficiency, and self-regulation; culturally specific; for youth aging out of foster care.

**Other topics:**

- Digital literacy support needs for families as we emerge from COVID-19 emergency.
- Culturally specific and responsive strategies for addressing violence prevention and trauma.
- Support services for youth and families experiencing housing instability.
- Childcare affordability gaps and barriers
- Community-identified topics

<p><b>Recommendation 3: Priority communities to engage.</b></p>
---

- Very low-income families & single heads of household/single parents
- LGBTQ2SIA+ youth, including BIPOC youth & African immigrant youth.
- Youth and families from the following communities\*: Black/African American, African immigrants & refugees, Southeast Asian, Pacific Islander, Latinx/e/o, Native American & Alaska Native, Ukrainian, Russian, and Middle Eastern communities, immigrants and refugees
- Youth and families with the following lived experiences:
  - Trauma/violence
  - with disabilities
  - housing instability
  - multigenerational homes
  - aging out of foster care, ages 16-24
  - teen parenting

**Vote: Allocation Committee unanimously approved all 3 recommendations**

**Council Membership Update**

One member resigned, due to ongoing schedule conflicts, in the week before the meeting, leaving 11 total members (which still meets total membership of 11-13). PCL staff will plan steps to fill this position and keep council's 11–13-person membership full.

## 2023 Community Report

PCL staff presented highlights from the 2023 Community Report published in April, and recent stories shared during child abuse prevention, foster care awareness, mental health awareness months and week of young child.

## Mitch Hornecker Final AC Meeting

Allocation Committee Members and Staff thanked Mitch Hornecker for 8 years of service on the Allocation Committee.

**Next meeting is October 17 at City Council Chambers**

Adjourned 4:25 pm.