

Recording of meeting: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=THJU5W9XA7o>

Attendance: 10 of 13 members attended

Agenda objectives:

1. Continue discussion of future PCL grant application and scoring criteria
2. Work toward further simplifying the application
3. Understand design of previous PCL grant review process and design options

Staff and Council welcomed members. Staff reviewed group agreements.

Developing Funding Application

At Council's 9/20/23 meeting, they worked on an exercise intended to start simplifying PCL's funding application. Council brainstormed answers to 2 questions:

- What are the most *important qualities of an organization* that should receive PCL grants? Why?
- What *important information is needed about the program (services)* an applicant wants funded to decide whether to fund it?

Staff created a Crosswalk comparing Council's brainstorming in September to sections from PCL's 2019-20 funding application. Staff copied/pasted sections from the last PCL funding application that most fit with Council's brainstorming. Staff has also noted issues included in PCL's past application did not come up in Council's brainstorming.

At Council's November meeting, they worked in small groups to discuss the following questions:

1. What do you want to keep? What do you want to eliminate/delete? What do you want to change or add?
2. Of the 6 organization topics brainstormed by Council last time, how would you prioritize them from most important to least important? (ranking them from most important to least important).
3. Of the 7 program topics brainstormed by Council last time, how would you prioritize them from most important to least important? (ranking them from most important to least important).

Small groups reported out and the large group discussed reflections. Results of the discussions suggest the following basic structure for PCL's next funding application questions. Groups' rankings of importance on application sections varied so this summary does not include rankings.

Organization Qualities of PCL Applicants

- Purpose/mission of the organization; its history and current goals.
- How its purpose aligns with and is reflected by clients served, staff who provide the services, and board. How its purpose aligns with community partnerships. Request both qualitative and quantitative data.
- How the organization understands and responds to the needs of communities they serve. Methods they use for understanding their impact. Examples of impact so far. Staff/workforce training based on responding to community needs. Narrative and storytelling focus in this section.
- Fiscal responsibility of the organization.

Ask for racial equity, diversity, inclusion considerations in all 4 of those areas.

Program Activities of PCL Applicants

- Overall program plan: need for program and how applicant knows it's a need, who will be served and community engagement to offer access to program, program activities to be funded by PCL, staffing to deliver program to be funded by PCL. Ensure applicants have way to indicate intensity of services so that reviewers can understand breadth vs. depth of services with number of clients to serve and costs.
- Equitable outcomes: intended impacts of program, and how program will engage with community to understand impacts of program.
- Program Budget- simplify budget form and instructions; is 15% too low of an admin rate?

Ask for racial equity, diversity, inclusion considerations in program plan and outcomes.

Overall issues in the application:

- Application should have definitions of: racial equity, diversity, inclusion; accessibility; services and being served
- Careful with uses of tables. They help ensure information is "apples to apples" but may create barriers if too technical. Offer opportunities for narrative with tables.

- Want to know if program is “new” or “expansion of current work” or “continuing current work”-not as matter of scoring but as context for understanding program.
- Scoring criteria and point values still need to be developed and vetted with Council.

Developing the Review Process

After discussion of the application, PCL staff presented to Council on the past review process used to score grant applications. In 2019-20, staff recruited and trained 65 community volunteers to read/score grant applications. Volunteers received a stipend of \$200- \$250 depending on the number of applications they reviewed. Staff presented other details of the process, including satisfaction of reviewers with their involvement in the process and challenges staff encountered. Staff offered the Council to consider review process options for the next funding process. Council discussed pros/cons of two options: continuing to have community volunteers review applications or hiring a diverse cohort of 12- 15 contractors to read/score applications.

Stipended, Community Volunteers as Reviewers: Council suggested pros for volunteers include: grow awareness of PCL in the community; increase community investment in what PCL does; may provide a professional development opportunity for community members; and the stipend may attract people to participate who could use it (rather than expect unpaid volunteer time). The main con Council identified is number of volunteers needed is high workload for staff.

Short-term Cohort of Contractors as Reviewers: Council suggested pros for cohort of contractors include: assuming they are representative of the community then could have more intensive training and increased interrater reliability; higher wage paid to contractors might get more representative group doing review; could more easily convene contractors to address score variation; higher wage may ensure contractors complete the review work. Cons identified by Council included: Contractors who work in the youth/family services sector in Portland might have biases because they know certain people/programs; reluctant to have process that favors “experts” as reviewers rather than community voice and perspective.

A council member suggested considering a combination of stipended volunteers and short-term contractors together. Pros noted included paid contractors more

likely to complete the review process and to minimize relying on “unpaid labor.” Several members noted interest in this option.

Council members also raised questions for information they’d like next time to further discuss and develop the review process. Questions included: How long would contractors be working and paid how? What types of training would be provided to volunteers or contractors to reduce variation in scoring? From the survey PCL did of applicants in 2019-20, what types of suggestions or criticism did they have of the review process specifically, if any?

Next Steps

- **2024 Meeting Schedule:** Council’s meeting schedule for 2024 is still being planned. PCL staff will be in touch during December to get Council input on a draft meeting schedule.
- PCL staff are using Council’s work on the application to draft a new application and scoring criteria. Staff will send those drafts out to potential applicants during January with a short survey for feedback. The draft and feedback will be provided to Council at its first meeting in 2024.
- Next meeting will focus more on developing the grant review process.

Meeting Feedback

Council provided the following feedback at the end of the meeting.

- Liked working in small groups, and changing group members
- Small group work was good, but too pressed for time- need more time/less packed agenda
- Spend agenda unpacking one thing at a time to really dig deep
- Try to leave time at end of large group for members to jot down last thoughts at end of the conversations
- Appreciated materials in advance- have more clarity on prework instructions (e.g. didn’t realize needed to rank topics).
- Room too cold
- Name cards names on both sides