

## INDEPENDENT ACCOUNTANT'S REPORT

To the Allocation Committee  
Portland Children's Levy

We have examined the Portland Children's Levy's compliance with laws and regulations outlined in Measure 26-197, the five-year levy renewed by voters in November 2018, for the year ended June 30, 2023. Portland Children's Levy's management is responsible for Portland Children's Levy's compliance with those specified requirements in accordance with Measure 26-197. Our responsibility is to express an opinion on Portland Children's Levy's compliance with the specified requirements based on our examination.

Our examination was conducted in accordance with attestation standards established by the American Institute of Certified Public Accountants. Those standards require that we plan and perform the examination to obtain reasonable assurance about whether Portland Children's Levy complied with the specified requirements of measure 26-197, in all material respects. An examination involves performing procedures to obtain evidence about whether Portland Children's Levy complied with the measure 26-197 requirements. The nature, timing, and extent of the procedures selected depend on our judgment, including an assessment of the risks of material noncompliance, whether due to fraud or error. We believe that the evidence we obtained is sufficient and appropriate to provide a reasonable basis for our opinion.

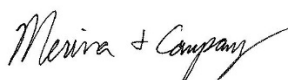
We are required to be independent and to meet our other ethical responsibilities in accordance with relevant ethical requirements relating to the engagement.

Our examination does not provide a legal determination on the Portland Children's Levy's compliance with specified requirements.

In our opinion, the Portland Children's Levy for the year ended June 30, 2023, complied with the measure 26-197 requirements, in all material respects.

This report is intended solely for the information and use of the Portland Children's Levy and the Allocation Committee and is not intended to be and should not be used by anyone other than these specified parties.

A summary of procedures performed, findings, and recommendations is attached.



Merina+Co  
Tualatin, Oregon  
March 27, 2024

# Portland Children's Levy

## Summary of Procedures Performed, Findings, and Recommendations

### For the Year ended June 30, 2023

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## **EXECUTIVE SUMMARY**

### **Overview**

In 2018, Portland voters passed Measure 26-197 renewing the Portland Children's Levy (the Levy) for five years. The Levy was also approved by voters in 2002, 2008 and 2013. The Levy is funded through property tax assessments from Multnomah, Clackamas, and Washington County, to provide approximately \$100 million over a five-year period to support programs for children.

The Portland Children's Levy has contracted with Merina+Co (MCO) to examine the Levy's compliance with Measure 26-197 and to perform the following procedures:

1. Gain an understanding of the organizational philosophy, objectives and policies for operating the Fund, as well as significant regulatory and accounting matters.
2. Review, and test for compliance with, the governing and key documents including the ballot language, intergovernmental agreements, requests for investments (grants), grant agreements, and external contracts.
3. Review and assess the adequacy of internal controls including those over recording grant payments, grantee reporting, record-keeping over grants, approval of the disbursements to grantees, administrative budgeting, and reimbursement of administrative expenses, grantee reporting and reimbursement.
4. Audit a sample of selected grants, reviewing each grant document and identifying any issues or conflicts including whether reimbursed expenses matched agreed upon budgets and are for allowable costs.

### **Compliance Requirements**

Merina+Co obtained and reviewed the ballot language in Measure 26-197 and identified following requirements as key:

1. Funds may only be expended for the following areas:
  - a. **Early Childhood programs:** these programs offer early childhood education and intervention, parenting education and home visiting so Portland's at-risk children reach kindergarten healthy and prepared to succeed.
  - b. **Child abuse prevention and intervention programs:** these programs provide services to reach children affected by neglect, family violence, parental drug and alcohol use and homelessness. They also support stressed families most at-risk for abuse and neglect by providing intensive case management, therapy, counseling, respite care and parent education.

Portland Children's Levy  
Summary of Procedures Performed, Findings, and Recommendations  
For the Year ended June 30, 2023

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- c. **Foster care programs:** these programs provide intensive academic support education advocacy for youth in foster care, work to help foster children develop a plan for the future and provide services to help youth establish permanent connections.
  - d. **After school and mentoring programs:** these programs provide at-risk children with safe, constructive activities that promote academic achievement and provide positive and consistent adult and peer role models.
  - e. **Child hunger:** programs to improve children's access to nutritious meals, leading to improved health and academic success.
2. Accountability measures include:
- a. Costs spent administering the Levy cannot exceed 5% of cumulative tax revenues, including interest.
  - b. The Levy is subject to an annual compliance audit (examination).
  - c. Programs funded must be cost effective and have a proven record of success (**not tested as part of this examination**).
  - d. The Levy is subject to oversight by a citizen committee of at least five members (**not tested as part of this examination**).

**Methodology**

Based on the contract requirements and the compliance requirements as outlined in Measure 26-197, Merina+Co has organized their compliance audit (examination) into three key sections:

- Assessing the adequacy of the Levy's internal controls.
- Testing administrative expenses.
- Testing the Levy's administration of grants and the grantee's compliance with contract requirements.

# Portland Children's Levy

## Summary of Procedures Performed, Findings, and Recommendations

### For the Year ended June 30, 2023

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## **ASSESSING THE ADEQUACY OF INTERNAL CONTROLS**

### **Objective**

To review and test the adequacy of the Levy's internal controls over reimbursement of administrative expenses and administrative budgeting, as well as over recording and approving disbursements to grantees, and grantee monitoring.

### **Overview – Administrative**

The Levy has three main types of administrative expenses; (1) External costs, which consists of all payments made to vendors outside of the City of Portland, (2) Internal costs, which include General Fund overhead allocation (amount is fixed annually), Bureau Technology Services (annual fixed amount plus billable expenses), Communications, and Printing and Distribution, and (3) Payroll expenses.

*External costs* are typically incurred in one of three ways: a contract, an expense reimbursement, or a P-card transaction. All expenses that exceed \$10,000 must have a contract that has been approved by Portland City Commissioner Dan Ryan, Chair of the Levy's Allocation Committee. All other administrative expenses are reviewed by the Levy's Fiscal and Administrative Specialist and approved by the Levy's Director. Once approved, these administrative expenses are entered into the City's accounting system (SAP), and the City's accounting department issues disbursement checks. All checks are then reviewed and mailed by the Office of the Auditor.

*Internal costs* are charged by specific internal service agency of the City of Portland and are billed through SAP.

*Salaries* are pre-determined by the City of Portland for each of the Levy's employees. Employees have a maximum amount of hours they are eligible to work each pay period, and no overtime is granted. Time cards are reviewed and approved each pay period by the Levy's Director. Paychecks are processed through the City's accounting departments.

### **Overview – Grants**

The Levy has a five-member Allocation Committee that approves all grants and determines funding amounts. Once funding amounts are established, the Levy obtains a grant contract which must be approved by Commission Ryan, the City Attorney, and the Grantee. Grant Managers will then work with the individual grantee to establish a budget, not to exceed the amount awarded by the committee. The Levy's staff review reimbursement requests quarterly and compare them to the approved budget. In order for a request to be paid, it must be approved by the Grant Manager, and by the Fiscal and Administrative Specialist. The City's accounting department is responsible for processing the payment, and the Office of the Auditor reviews, prepares, and mails the checks to the grantees.

### **Results**

- The internal control procedures appear to be adequate and provide a sound structure for processing administrative expenses and ensuring that disbursements are authorized and allowable.

# Portland Children's Levy

## Summary of Procedures Performed, Findings, and Recommendations

### For the Year ended June 30, 2023

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- Having the Levy's payroll, administrative, and grant disbursements processed by other City Departments provides segregation of duties and controls that would otherwise be difficult to institute in an organization with limited staff.
- The application of internal controls over administrative expenses appears to be operating effectively.
- We noted that internal controls over approving grantee reimbursements appear to be effective.

## **ADMINISTRATIVE EXPENSES**

### **Objective**

To review administrative expenses to determine that they were less than 5% of cumulative tax revenues (including interest) and that administrative expenses were ordinary, necessary, and approved.

### **Methodology**

We selected a random sample of 15 external administrative, 10 internal administrative, and 5 Training and TA expense to test that they were:

- Authorized by appropriate personnel.
- Recorded in the proper period and for the correct amount.
- In agreement to supporting documentation.
- Services for over \$10,000 were approved by contract.

We compared total annual payroll expenses to budgeted payroll approved by Commissioner Ryan and the City Commissioners to verify that:

- Total payroll was allowable and did not exceed budgeted amount.
- Payroll was appropriately classified as an administrative expense.

We also calculated the maximum amount of administrative expenses allowed (5% of cumulative tax revenues including interest).

### **Results**

- We noted that disbursements selected for testing were authorized by appropriate personnel.
- Disbursements appeared to be recorded in the proper period and for the correct amount.
- Supporting documentation appeared adequate and agreed to payment.
- We noted that total personnel expenses did not exceed the budgeted amount.
- We determined that payroll was appropriately classified as an administrative expense.
- We determined that the Levy's cumulative administrative expenses were \$13,905,650, which is \$804,211 below the maximum 5% threshold.

# Portland Children's Levy

## Summary of Procedures Performed, Findings, and Recommendations

### For the Year ended June 30, 2023

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#### **Documents Examined**

- Disbursement log prepared by Levy staff for internal, external, and training expenses
- Invoices/purchase orders/receipts
- Contracts, where applicable
- SAP fund 216000 Budget to Actual report as of June 30, 2023
- City of Portland ACFR
- Ballot 26-197

## **ADMINISTRATION OF GRANTS & GRANTEE MONITORING**

#### **Objective**

To review key documents such as the ballot language, requests for investment, and grant agreements and determine compliance with these documents. Also, to test the Levy's compliance with grant monitoring requirements and the adequacy of internal controls.

#### **Methodology**

We selected a total sample of 25 random grantees and performed the following procedures:

- We compared the request for investment to the approved grant document.
- We reviewed the signed grant contract for proper approval.
- We compared the grant budgets to the approved award amount to ensure agreement.
- We verified grant reimbursement requests had proper approval and were for allowable costs.
- We compared grant reimbursements to the approved budget.
- We verified that grantee administrative costs reimbursed by the Levy did not exceed the allowed amount.
- We reviewed quarterly advances to verify they were less than 25% of the total grant (as outlined in the grant contract).
- We examined grantee files to determine reports and other required documents were submitted and submitted timely.
- We examined grantee files to determine if the grantee had the required insurance at the time the contract was initiated and approved by the City Attorney.

#### **Results**

- The grants tested all appear to be for a program area allowable based on the ballot language.
- We noted that all grants tested appeared to have contracts signed by the appropriate personnel.
- The approved budgets do not appear to exceed the approved award, for the grants tested.
- The reimbursement requests appear to be properly approved.
- It appeared that of the grantees tested, no grantee exceeded their approved budget.
- It appeared that of the grantees tested, no grantee's administrative costs exceeded the allowed amount.
- It appeared that advance requests did not exceed 25% of the approved budget.

# Portland Children's Levy

## Summary of Procedures Performed, Findings, and Recommendations

### For the Year ended June 30, 2023

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- It appeared that of the grantees tested, seventeen did not submit their annual audit/review to the Levy timely; however, all other required documentation was submitted to the Levy timely.
- It appeared that of the grantees tested, seven grantees submitted quarterly invoices and expense reports after the due date.
- It appeared that of the grantees tested, all held adequate insurance that was reviewed and approved by the City Attorney at the time the grant contract was initiated.

#### **Documents Examined**

- Requests for investment
- Signed contract
- Approved budget
- Reimbursement and advance requests
- Annual outcome report
- Demographic report
- Participant list
- Submitted audit/review
- Levy's tracking form