



Community Council Meeting  
July 28th, 2025

### **Katrina speaking**

#### **Welcome**

- Welcome all!
- Thank Oregon Department of Administrative Services for hosting us
- Name bathroom locations

## Meeting outcomes

1. Provide input on the Community Council's role in the upcoming small grants funding process.
2. Advise staff on whether an organization can reapply for funding in the small grants funding round if they previously received funding.
3. Generate prompts for the video component of the small grants application.
4. Provide staff feedback on the large grants funding process.



### Katrina speaking

#### Meeting Overview

Currently, the Levy has two big bodies of work moving: issuing large grants per City Council's decision on June 25<sup>th</sup> and planning for the small grants funding process this upcoming fall – winter – spring. Today we will be discussing both funding processes.

We have 4 outcomes for this meeting. They are for you to:

- Provide input on the Community Council's role in the upcoming small grants funding process
- Advise staff on whether an organization can reapply for funding in the small grants funding round if they received funding during the last small grants funding cycle.
- Generate prompts for the video component of the small grants application.
- Provide feedback to staff on the large grants funding process.

Please take a look at the agenda before you. We'll work through these outcomes by:

- Spending the first 2 ½ hours on small grants items:
  - We'll orient you to the small grants funding process, timeline, and proposed Community Council role
  - Gather your feedback through large group discussion
  - Discuss and vote on the policy question of whether organizations that previously received PCL small grants funding would be eligible for funding this round
  - And work in small groups to brainstorm prompts for the video component of the small grants application.
- We'll then spend the remainder of the meeting on the large grants funding process.
  - Staff will provide an update of what's happened since we last convened in March
  - You'll have open space for large group discussion and questions
  - We'll close with solo time to complete an evaluation of the large grants funding process
  - We'll finish up with our standard wrap-up and meeting evaluation

There will be two 10-minute breaks today, the first around 2:05 and the second around 3:15. We're currently scheduled to end around 4:45. I built the agenda knowing that some items might take more or less time than planned, and will manage our time to ensure that we conclude by 5p.

Do y'all have any questions about the meeting outcomes or agenda before we move on?



### **Arika speaking**

In this section we will orient you to the Small Grants Fund: why it was established, the priorities and purpose of the fund, the 2020 Small Grants Funding process and the lessons learned from that process.

## Small grants: orientation

- SGF launched in 2020; a result of feedback from 2018 grant improvement processes and 2019 community engagement.
- **Purpose:** To increase equity by investing in programs of small organizations arising from marginalized communities that serve children, youth, and families who identify as Black, Indigenous, People of Color, immigrant and refugees, LGBTQ2SIA+, people with disabilities and other marginalized groups



### Arika speaking

The Small Grants Fund was created in response to community feedback. In 2018, PCL contracted with Portland State University's Center for Improvement of Child and Family Services to review its 2014 grantmaking process and recommend improvements in advance of its 2019-20 competitive grant round. The team led focus groups and interviews with funded and unfunded applicants. The report had 30 recommendations, including creating a small grants fund for organizations that have not had access to PCL funds. PCL also contracted with Empress Rules Equity Consulting to conduct a 9-month community engagement process to inform PCL's 2019-20 funding priorities. Empress Rules engaged over 500 community members and service providers. They also recommended that PCL create small grants opportunities. The Small Grants Fund launched in 2020.

**Purpose:** The purpose of the fund is "to increase equity by investing in programs of small organizations arising from marginalized communities that serve children, youth, and families who identify as Black, Indigenous, People of Color, immigrant and refugees, LGBTQ2SIA+, people with disabilities and other marginalized groups." Small Grants Funds support the capacity of these organizations to improve the quality of service, increase the number of children, youth, and families served, and be more inclusive of children with disabilities.

## Small grants: orientation

- 2020 2-step process developed by a Design Team of 6 community volunteers
- Step 1: short, written application describing the organization and program
- Step 2: written application with budget and program info + interview with community reviewers and staff
- Design team and reviewers recommended applications for funding

### Arika speaking

The 2020 small grants application process included 2 steps. It was led by an ad hoc group of 6 community volunteers called “the Design Team.” The first step involved a short, written application describing the organization and program. Design Team reviewed all written applications and recommended about 1/3 of applicants move forward to a second step. It included a written application with budget and additional program information, and an interview with community reviewers and staff.

## Small grants: orientation

### Lessons learned: strengths

- Written and interactive components to communicate program's work
- Short written component with low barriers
- Reviewers scored and recommended applications

### Lessons learned: suggested improvements

- Interactive component w/ all applicants
- Other options for visual/storytelling rather than interview



### Arika speaking

**Lessons Learned:** Based on staff experience and feedback from applicants, reviewers, here are some key strengths and suggested improvements from the 2020 small grants process.

#### ***Strengths:***

- An application with both a written portion and interactive portion. This gave applicants different opportunities to communicate their work.
- A short, easy to complete written application that was low burden on small organizations
- Design team and reviewers' involvement in both scoring and recommending applications helped staff integrate community voice into funding recommendations that went to the Allocation Committee for decision.

#### ***Suggested improvements:***

- Use an interactive component with all applicants, alongside the written application. In 2020, the interactive component was only utilized with applicants selected to continue from step 1 to step 2, at which point they participated in an interview. Using a storytelling opportunity for all gives each applicant culturally relevant ways to highlight their strengths.
- Consider other ways to include visual or storytelling elements to the application other than interviews. It was logistically difficult to schedule 2 reviewers, PCL staff, and applicants, and a few applicants and reviewers indicated the interview format itself wasn't optimal.

## Small grants: orientation

### Upcoming small grants round

- 1 short written application and 1 video component – all due at same time
- \$1.5 million total available over 3 years
- Potential roles of Community Council:
  - Review/score videos
  - Participate in funding recommendations

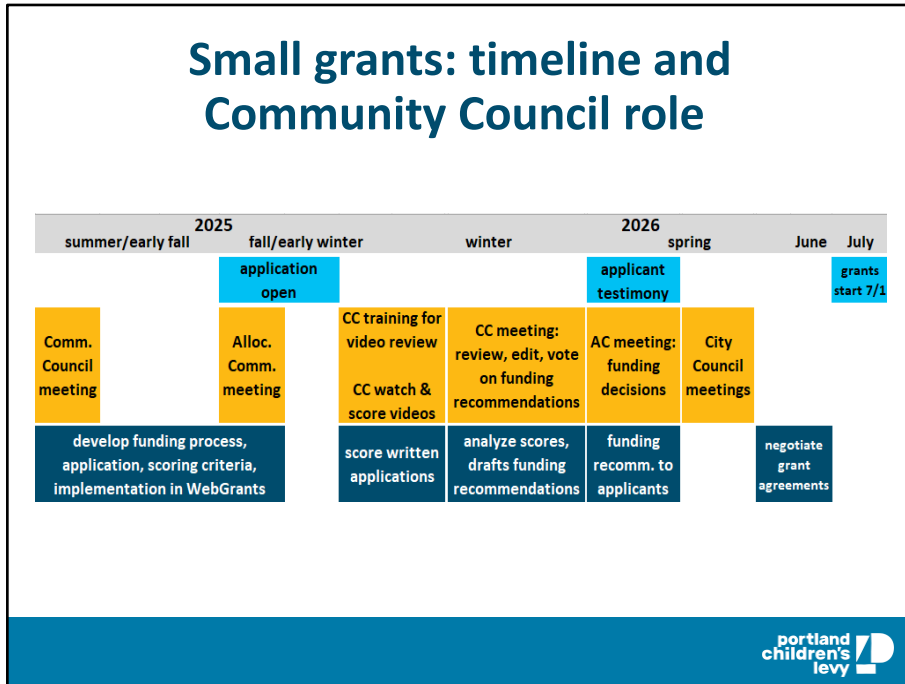


### Arika speaking

Next, we will go over the timeline for the SGF funding round and your potential role in the process. These dates will likely shift based on when Allocation Committee, Community Council, and City Council meetings are scheduled, as well as your feedback today.

Given lessons learned from 2020, the Small Grants application will have two components for all applicants to complete and submit on one due date. There will not be separate steps for only some applicants. The two components are: a short written application and a video component. This approach allows PCL to honor applicant feedback to keep a visual/story-telling element, especially for all applicants. It also streamlines the funding process, and aims to right-size it to match the \$1.5 million available to grant over 3 years.

## Small grants: timeline and Community Council role



### Arika speaking

We are proposing that the Community Council play two roles in this small grants funding process:

- First, review and score the video portion of the SGF applications.
- Second, participate in making funding recommendations. While this decision-making process is still being drafted, we are currently thinking that staff could bring initial funding recommendations to the Community Council to evaluate and revise. Once the Community Council has made their recommendations, they would be released to the applicants and be brought to the Allocation Committee for approval, before going to City Council for final approval. In order to participate in the decision-making meeting, Community Council members need to have watched and scored all application videos.

This timeline represents our current plan and is subject to change. The light blue top bar represents actions taken by the applicants. The yellow middle bar represents actions taken by the Community Council, Allocation Committee, or City Council. The dark blue bottom bar represents actions taken by staff.

- We are currently in the application development and approval phase. Staff has drafted a written application which you've received. Staff will edit that written application, create video submission guidance and scoring criteria based on today's feedback, and circulate the application and scoring criteria to potential applicants for feedback. Staff will integrate feedback, and then the Allocation Committee will review and approve the funding process including the written and video components of the application, scoring criteria and overall



timeline in early October.

- The application period is from mid-October to early December.
- If you decide you want to review the videos, we will hold reviewer trainings sometime this winter, and reviews would be due about 4 weeks later.
- Simultaneously, staff will review and score the written portion of the application
- Staff would use the scores generated by the Community Council and staff, along with the other criteria listed in the application, to make initial funding recommendations
- The Community Council would meet sometime in the winter to evaluate and revise staff funding recommendations. To participate in this funding decision-making meeting, Community Council members will need to have watched and scored all application videos.
- Your funding recommendations would then be released to applicants, who will have the opportunity to submit testimony.
- The Allocation Committee would review all applicant testimony and meet in the spring to make funding decisions.
- The grant portfolio would then move to city council for final review and approval. This could take 2-3 meetings, or more.
- The goal is for small grants funding to begin on July 1, 2026.

## Small grants: policy question

Are organizations that previously received small grants funding eligible for funding this round?



### **Arika speaking**

At this point, we're going to pivot and discuss an application eligibility question. The question we are seeking to answer is "Are organizations that previously received small grants eligible to reapply for funding this round?" We will begin with some context.

## Small grants: policy question

### PCL small grants requirements

- Funds allocated in PCL's 6 program areas
- PCL funds comprise no more than 30% of org's annual revenues
- Grants made through competitive process
- Staff monitor and evaluate grant performance
- Organizations with annual revenues \$90k- \$750k
- Minimum annual grant \$30k, maximum grant \$80k



### Arika speaking

Small Grants Fund must comply with PCL's authorizing act. The act requires that:

- grant funds are allocated in PCL's 6 programs areas,
- PCL funds comprise no more than 30% of an organization's revenues,
- grants are made through a competitive process, and
- Staff monitor and evaluate funded programs for performance.

Additionally, organizations must have annual revenues between \$90,000- \$750,000 to be eligible. The Allocation Committee allocated \$1.5 million over three years for the small grants fund. The minimum and maximum annual grant size is \$30 - \$80k.

## Small grants: policy question

### Additional small grants context

- 2020 round open only to orgs without PCL funds and serving priority populations
- PCL awarded 7 grants to small orgs
- Over the past 5 years, 6 of the 7 small orgs grew their annual revenues to be eligible for the 2024 large grants funding round
- PCL estimates awarding 6 – 10 small grants in 2026



### Arika speaking

#### 2020 Funding Round

- The previous Small Grants funding round was open to organizations without Levy funds that also served communities that have been historically underserved by the Levy. As a result, 100% of the 7 grantees were new to Levy funding.
- Among the 7 small grants fund grantees, 6 grew their organizational revenue to a point where they were eligible to apply for a PCL large grant, and are no longer eligible for a small grant. One organization remains eligible for a small grant.
- Based on the new minimum/maximum grant amounts, PCL estimates that 6-10 small grants could be awarded.

## Small grants: policy question

### Allowing orgs to reapply

- Allows grassroots orgs to grow at own pace
- Gives grassroots orgs the same reapply option that large grants orgs have

### Restricting access to one-time funding

- Prioritizes access to PCL \$ for as many orgs as possible
- Works well for orgs with higher revenues amongst small grants peers and who can grow their capacity to compete for PCL large grants

### Arika speaking

#### Considerations & Tradeoffs:

- Allowing organizations to reapply creates space for the smallest grassroots organizations that previously received SGF funds to grow at their own pace; receive ongoing, reliable funding; and benefit from PCL's support including training and capacity-building efforts for financial systems. These organizations may be partly volunteer-run or have a fiscal sponsor at the time of application. They may need multiple small grants from PCL to grow to the size of organizations that are eligible for larger grants. Or in some cases, they choose to remain small.
- Allowing organizations to reapply gives small grants recipients the same opportunity for continued access to PCL funds as large grants have, rather than place a limitation on them that large grants orgs don't have with PCL funds.
- On the other hand, restricting small grants resources to one-time funding would prioritize access for organizations who haven't received PCL funds.
- Based on PCL's experience with small grantees so far, restricting small grants resources to one-time funding works best for organizations with more capacity and revenues on the higher end among their small org peers. These orgs are better positioned to take full advantage of the capacity building opportunities PCL offers and can likely grow enough to apply for PCL's large grants after only a few years.

## Small grants: policy question

Are organizations that previously received small grants funding eligible for funding this round?



### Katrina speaking

To get your guidance on this question, we're going to do a round of pair work, have some large group discussion, and take a vote. Depending on how the process goes, we might loop back after the vote to hear more about your reasons for voting how you did.

The question you will vote on is: *Are organizations that previously received small grants funding eligible for funding this round?* You will have the option to vote yes or no. Whichever option receives a majority of the votes will be the policy staff implement in this upcoming small grants funding round.

Does anyone have any questions about process before we move into pair work?

## Small grants: policy question

Pair work (10 min)-

1. What factors are you weighing as you consider this question?
2. If you are leaning towards a specific position, share why.
3. Ask clarifying and curious questions of your partner.
4. Any questions for staff?



### Katrina speaking

Joel will move everyone who is attending virtually to a break-out room with a laptop here in person so folks who are attending virtually can connect 1-1 with folks attending in person. Since we have an odd number of attendees, Joel will group Karina with another virtual attendee and move them to an in person laptop so we'll have one group of three. We should have 3-4 hybrid pairs and 1-2 in person pairs.

You'll have about 10 min in your pairs. Please use the following prompts to guide your conversation:

- What factors are you weighing as you consider this question?
- If you are leaning towards supporting a specific position, share why.
- Ask clarifying and curious questions of your partner to better understand their position or address your confusions.
- What questions do you have for staff?

## Small grants: video prompts

Brainstorm prompts for the video component of the small grants application. Do so from two perspectives:

1. Imagine you're an applicant to the small grants fund. What prompts would help your program and organization shine?
2. Imagine you're a reviewer and scorer. What information would you want to learn from the video?

### Arika speaking

Now we are going to move on to addressing the video component of the application. After I provide some context for your discussion, you will brainstorm prompts for the video component of the SGF application from the perspective of the applicant and that of the reviewer.



## Small grants: video prompts

### 2 components to SGF application

- **Written:** eligibility screening, program area and funding priority, staff & board demographics, org mission, program description, racial equity & disability inclusion, budget.
- **Video:** Tells the *story* of the applicant and highlights unique strengths; 5 mins, uploaded to video sharing website

### Arika speaking

The Small Grants Application will have 2 scored parts.

- The first is the written application. The written application covers eligibility screening, program area and funding priority, staff and board demographic information, organizational mission and history, program description, approach to racial equity, approach to disability inclusion, and budget information.
- The second part is the video which is the interactive component of the application for this funding round.
- The purpose of the video component is to give the applicants an opportunity to tell the *story* of their program and organization in a way that allows their unique strengths to shine. Applicants would submit videos that are no longer than 5 minutes, limit background noise and camera movement when recording, and upload the file to a file sharing site such as YouTube or Vimeo. Videos can be submitted in languages other than English, and PCL staff will arrange for a City of Portland contractor to transcribe and translate the testimony in the language spoken in the video.
- We are asking you to help us generate prompts that will help the applicants tell their stories in a meaningful way and help the reviewers to be able to score the videos. If there are prompts you want covered in the video, that we have already covered in the written application, we can edit the written application to accommodate that change. The application is not finalized until we have secured Allocation Committee approval.

## Small grants: video prompts

Brainstorm prompts for the video component of the small grants application. Do so from two perspectives:

1. Imagine you're an applicant to the small grants fund. What prompts would help your program and organization shine?
2. Imagine you're a reviewer and scorer. What information would you want to learn from the video?



### Katrina speaking

For this activity, we'll separate you into 3 small groups of 3-4. In your small group, you'll be joined by a staff member who will take notes and help facilitate the conversation if need be. If you're virtual, we'll break you out to an in-person laptop and we'll move that laptop to a small group.

*In your small group, you'll focus on generating prompts for the video component of the small grants application. You'll do so from two perspectives. First, imagine yourself as an applicant to the small grants fund. What prompts would help your program and organization shine? Second, imagine yourself as a reviewer and scorer. What information would you want to learn from the video?*

After this meeting, staff will use the content you generated to craft and finalize the prompts for the video component of the small grants application.

Does anyone have any questions before we break out into small groups?



**Large grants funding process**

### **Katrina speaking**

We'll transition at this point in the meeting to review and discuss the large grants funding process.

## Large grants update: PCL purpose

- Increase opportunities for all Portland's children
- Prioritization of the following communities through community engagement:
  - BIPOC children & families
  - Children with disabilities
  - Youth who identify as LGBTQ2SIA+
  - Immigrant and refugee children & families
  - Families earning low-incomes
  - Children & families who live in east and north Portland



### **Katrina speaking**

We'll begin by recentring in the purpose of the Portland Children's Levy. The Levy grew out of a need to increase opportunities for all Portland's children. Historical policies and practices have a direct relationship with disparities in outcomes for children navigating poverty and children of color. Y'all – the Community Council – and community engagement prioritized limited resources for Black, Indigenous, and children and families of color (BIPOC), children with disabilities, youth who identify as LGBTQ2SIA+, immigrant and refugee children and families, families earning low incomes, and children and families who live in East Portland or North Portland.

## Large grants update: decreased resources & increased demand

- 45% increase in total applications received
  - Over 200% increase in applications from organizations that don't have current PCL grants
- 21% reduction in resources available for large grants
  - Not enough resources to continue funding FY 24-25 grants at same levels
- Over \$3 requested for every \$1 available
  - Most applications approved for funding received far less than requested

### **Katrina speaking**

This funding round saw a significant increase in demand while resources are substantially declining.

- The number of applications received increased 45% from the last large grants round in 2020, and PCL had a 200% increase in applications from organizations that did not have PCL grants.
- PCL resources for large grants that started July 1 are down 21% compared to FY24-25 funding levels, due to declining levy revenue and spending down of PCL fund balance. This decrease means there are not enough resources to continue all of PCL's grants at their FY24-25 level, never mind fund new grants.
- In total, applicants requested over \$3 for every \$1 available. This means most applications approved for funding received far less than requested.
- The combination of these factors created numerous competing priorities in this funding round.

## Large grants update: competing priorities

PCL staff, the Community Council, and the Allocation Committee wrestled with:

- Balancing continuing PCL funding for programs with positive performance with allocating funding to organizations without PCL funding who are meeting emerging or underserved community needs.
- Balancing the diversity of PCL's priority populations, their needs, and their priorities.

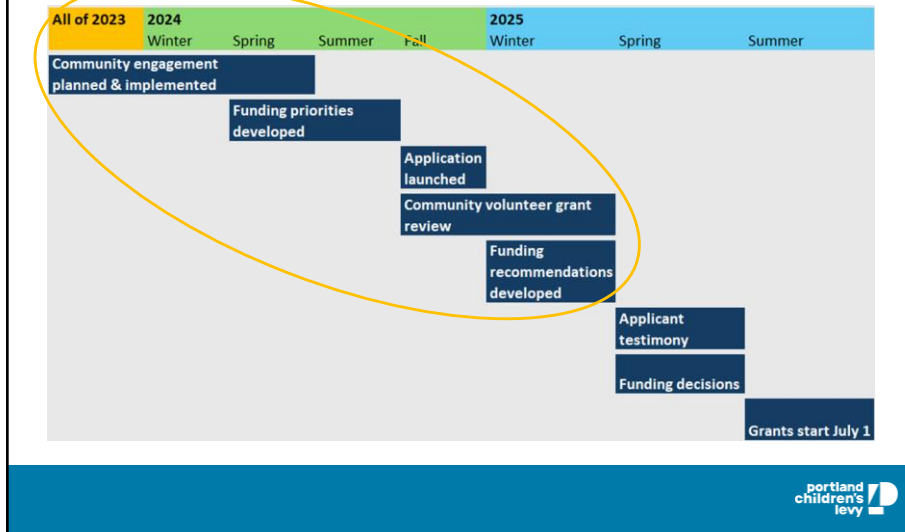


### **Katrina speaking**

PCL staff, the Community Council, and the Allocation Committee wrestled with hard questions in a funding round with decreased resources and increased demand. Some of these questions included how to balance:

- Continuing PCL funding for programs with positive performance with allocating funding to organizations without PCL funding who are meeting emerging or underserved community needs.
- Funding for different-sized organizations, including consideration for smaller organizations which face more disadvantages compared to large organizations with grantwriting capacity and experience in competitive grantmaking processes.
- The diversity of PCL's priority populations, their needs, and their service priorities

## Large grants update: Community Council role



### Katrina speaking

You all have been involved in the recent large grants funding process from the beginning.

The process began with the launch of this body in 2023 with the purpose of advising our bureau on policy and processes, and to strengthen our accountability to community priorities. 13 of our meetings between 2023 and now were used to advise staff on the large grants funding process. Y'all:

- Identified goals for community engagement, priority topics for community input, and priority communities to engage
- Shaped the application and scoring criteria
- Recommended we recruit and train community members to read and score applications
- Edited and approved funding priorities for services that PCL would fund, based on community engagement with over 700 community members from PCL priority populations.
- Provided guidance on which types of applications to fund, which to deprioritize if they scored above the median, and which to prioritize if they scored below the median
- And selected one of two anonymous portfolios to recommend for funding

## Large grants update: What happened after March CC meeting?

- Portfolio A recommendations released to applicants and AC
- Applicant testimony
- Allocation Committee meeting on 4/23: unanimous approval of recommended applications
- Full list of approved applications on PCL's website: <https://portlandchildrenslevy.org/grants/2024-25-funding-round/allocation-committee-grant-decisions/>

### **Katrina speaking**

At March's meeting y'all voted to recommend Portfolio A for funding. Those funding recommendations were released to applicants and the Allocation Committee. Applicants were invited to submit written, video, or audio testimony over 3 weeks. Staff provided all testimony to the Allocation Committee, who had over 2 weeks to review it. The Allocation Committee met on April 23rd to review and discuss recommendations. They unanimously approved the recommendations. You can find the list of approved applications and award amounts on our website. The next slides summarize high level data about the approved applications.



## Large grants update: funding decisions data

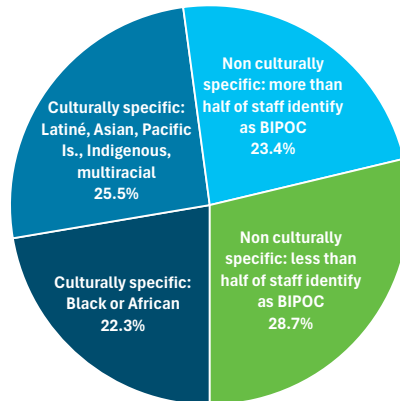
Type of organization	# orgs that applied (n=110)	# orgs with apps approved (n=64)	% of orgs approved out of # applied
Culturally specific: Black or African	22	17	77%
Culturally specific: Latiné, Asian, Pacific Is., Indigenous, and multiracial	15	11	73%
<i>Subtotal: culturally specific orgs</i>	<i>37</i>	<i>28</i>	<i>76%</i>
Non culturally specific: more than half of staff identify as BIPOC	22	13	59%
Non culturally specific: less than half of staff identify as BIPOC	51	23	45%
<i>Subtotal: non culturally specific orgs</i>	<i>73</i>	<i>36</i>	<i>49%</i>

### Meg speaking

- This table looks at the total number of organizations that applied (regardless of the number of applications they submitted) by their cultural specificity and the diversity of staff. It shows the percentage of organizations with applications approved for funding, out of the total number of organizations that applied. A total of 110 organizations applied, and 64 had applications approved for funding.
- The Allocation Committee made large grants funding decisions that resulted in:
  - Approving a greater portion of culturally specific organizations compared to non culturally specific organizations.
  - 76% of culturally specific organizations that applied had applications approved for funding, compared to 49% of non-culturally specific organizations that applied.
    - Among culturally specific organizations, 17 of 22 Black or African-organizations were approved for funding, and 11 of 15 Latiné, Asian, Pacific Is., Indigenous, and multiracial organizations were approved for funding.
- Using data provided in applications, we can look at the diversity of staff in non culturally specific organizations as well.
- It is worth noting that some non culturally specific organizations are also led by people who identify as Black, Indigenous, and people of color, and for several, over half of their staff also identify as people of color.
- Non culturally specific organizations with less than half of their staff identifying as BIPOC comprised the largest part of the applicant pool, yet they had the lowest portion of organizations selected for grants.
- PCL funds are public dollars. Regardless of type of organization funded, PCL-funded services are open to any child or family seeking services.

## Large grants update: funding decisions data

Percentage of approved applications  
by organization type (n= 94 applications)



### Meg speaking

The previous slide looked at the 64 organizations with applications approved for funding. This slide focuses on the 94 approved applications by type of organization.

- Among the 94 applications approved for funding, 71% of those applications were to organizations with majority BIPOC staff. This includes culturally specific organizations and non-culturally specific organizations. These are the three blue slices on this pie chart.

## Large grants update: funding decisions data

- 50% of organizations approved for funding are smaller organizations with annual revenues between \$750,000 - \$6 million.
- 42% haven't previously received PCL funding, and over half of those are culturally specific organizations.

### **Meg speaking**

- In addition, 50% of organizations approved for funding are smaller organizations with annual revenues between \$750,000 - \$6 million.
- 42% haven't previously received PCL funding, and over half of those are culturally specific organizations.

## Large grants update: non-culturally specific organizations' services

- Job training, GED completion, BIPOC & LGBTQ+ mentors for houseless youth
- Mentorship services for transgender youth and caregivers
- Mentorship services for children of criminal justice-impacted parents, and after school enrichment for youth in juvenile detention.
- School-based food pantries serving 4 school districts
- Weekend food bags for houseless children
- Grocery delivery for families with medical conditions, disabilities, and other barriers
- Relief nurseries
- Grief support for foster youth
- Legal advocacy for foster youth in school settings
- Technical child abuse evaluation and therapeutic services
- Arts and sports education

### **Meg speaking**

These are examples of services that were awarded by the Allocation Committee that are provided by organizations that are not culturally specific.

- Many of these service are specific to other PCL priority populations such as houseless and LGBTQIA2S+ youth, justice-impacted children and families, houseless youth, and children and families with disabilities. In fact, this was the first time applications for LGBTQIA2S+ mentoring services were selected for funding.
- Many of these services include programs that PCL is currently funding, have had positive performance, and demonstrated success engaging children and families of color.

## City Council role

City Council's role is to review Allocation Committee funding decisions and either:

- Approve Allocation Committee funding decisions, OR
- Remand decisions by funding category if the Allocation Committee did not make funding decisions based on procedural and substantive requirements

City Council does not have the authority to substitute its own decisions for the decisions made by the Allocation Committee.



### **Brian speaking**

After the Allocation Committee unanimously approved funding recommendations on April 23, the package went to City Council for final approval.

- The Act that governs PCL operations requires that City Council approve Allocation Committee funding decisions or remand by funding category.
- The authority to remand by funding category means that Council may send the Allocation Committee decisions in an entire program area back to the Allocation Committee for reconsideration if those decisions were not made based on the application scores and other community conditions to foster a balanced and integrated citywide system of services.
- City Council, as the remanding body, does not have the authority to substitute its own decisions for the decisions made by the Allocation Committee.

## Large grants update: City Council decision timeline

May 13: City Council 2-hour work session on PCL funding process

May 21: City Council first reading of ordinance to approve Allocation Committee's funding decisions

June 4: City Council second reading – voted 7-5 to remand Allocation Committee funding decisions and extend current grants by 1 year

June 18: Allocation Committee meeting

June 25: City Council meeting – voted 12-0 to reverse their remand and approve Allocation Committee funding decisions



### Brian speaking

- On May 13th, City Council and PCL staff met for a work session. City council does not take verbal or written testimony at work sessions. Staff presented about the funding round process, and councilors were able to ask questions or raise concerns.
- On May 21<sup>st</sup>, City Council had a first reading of the ordinance to approve the large grants funding decisions of the Allocation Committee. Verbal and written testimony were accepted during the May 21st first reading with council. Council considered a remand during the first reading, but the ordinance moved to a second reading. Council members requested more information on a range of issues. PCL staff prepared written responses to the concerns Council raised and sent them to Council prior to the June 4 second reading of the ordinance.
- On June 4th after an extensive discussion of the awards, the council voted 7-5 to remand all of the Allocation Committee's decisions. They then voted unanimously to extend the FY24-25 grants for one year while developing instructions for the remand and next steps.
- In the wake of the remand, City Council and PCL staff received advocacy and testimony asking if it would be possible for the City Council to reconsider and revote on their decision.
- On June 18th, the Allocation Committee met, and staff presented an update of City Council discussion and decisions. The Allocation Committee heard testimony from

organizations who were not receiving PCL funds who would have received money starting July 1 had the City Council approved Allocation Committee decisions.

- On June 25th, City Council heard testimony from organizations impacted by their June 4th decision, reconsidered their decision, and ultimately voted 12-0 to reverse their remand and approve the Allocation Committee funding decisions made on April 23rd. Funding for the new large grants started July 1, 2025.

## Large grants update: City Council's conflicting concerns

- Concern that orgs w/o PCL funds favored over current grantees - particularly legacy, Black-led orgs - in tension with concern that smaller orgs and orgs w/o current PCL funding faced undue barriers
- Concern that lower-scoring applications recommended over higher-scoring applications in tension with concern that lowest-scoring hunger relief application wasn't approved for funding
- Desire to fund effective, proven programs in tension with concerns about why programs with performance issues weren't approved for continued funding

### Brian speaking

City councilors expressed a variety of concerns when they initially voted to remand the Allocation Committee funding decisions – both about the outcomes of the process and use of the selection criteria. Some of their concerns conflict with one another and were about whether the Allocation Committee struck the right balance among different priorities. For example:

- One councilor expressed concerns that organizations without PCL funds were favored over current grantees, particularly legacy, Black-led organizations. Other councilors expressed concerns that smaller organizations and organizations without current PCL-funding faced undue barriers.
- One councilor expressed concerns that lower-scoring applications were recommended over higher-scoring applications. Other councilors expressed specific concerns that the lowest-scoring application in hunger relief was not selected for funding.
- Some councilors expressed a desire to fund effective, proven programs while others questioned why specific current grantees with performance concerns did not have applications approved for those same programs.



## Large grants update: funding process concerns - application submission

**Councilor concern:** that staff prevented an after school applicant from correcting an application, and that the application was not funded because they were prevented from correcting it.

**Staff response:** an applicant requested to correct annual and midyear program data submitted to PCL in July 2024 and January 2025, not an error on the application. The correction request was not made until March 2025 after funding recommendations were sent to applicants.



### Joel speaking

Some city councilors expressed concern about how the funding process was conducted. The following slides are a summary of their concerns, along with information staff provided in response:

**Application submission:** Based on feedback received from an applicant, Councilors expressed concern that staff prevented an after school applicant from making a correction to an application, and that the application was not funded because they were prevented from correcting it.

- Staff informed councilors in writing that the corrected data submitted by the applicant, a current grantee, was actually for the annual performance report for July 1, 2023 to June 30, 2024 – not the grant application.
- PCL staff met with the grantee and communicated the performance concerns verbally and in writing multiple times throughout fall 2024 and winter 2025. Grantee had multiple opportunities to correct inaccurate information but did not do so until after recommendations were released.
- On March 7, 2025, PCL staff recommendations were released to all applicants, and performance concerns were cited as a reason for not recommending the grantee's application for future funding. On March 25, 2025, the applicant contacted PCL staff to request substantial changes to previous performance data.

- Staff declined to allow past data reports to be corrected or to change the funding recommendation given the timing of the request, past opportunities provided to correct data, earlier notification of performance concerns, and no documentation submitted to support new data.
- The applicant included the performance data in written testimony that was considered by the Allocation Committee as part of their decision-making process. (For current grantee partners, performance from July 1, 2022 to Dec. 31, 2024 – the 2.5 years after the pandemic – was taken into consideration as part of PCL staff funding recommendations.)
- No current grantees were offered the opportunity or permitted to correct previously submitted data reports after funding recommendations were sent to applicants.

## Large grants update: funding process concerns - application review

**Councilor concern:** that reviewers were not diverse and representative of applicant demographics, lacked knowledge about the organizations submitting the applications, and that reviewers overweighted the quality of grant writing.

**Staff response:** reviewers had extensive lived and professional experience with PCL's program areas and racial equity, diversity and inclusion.

### Joel speaking

Councilors expressed concern that reviewers were not diverse and representative of applicant demographics, biased, lacked knowledge about the organizations submitting the applications and the relationships they have with communities served, and that reviewers overweighted the quality of grant writing, which unfairly disadvantaged less experienced applicants. One councilor was concerned that an application selected for funding was not scored at all.

Staff informed councilors that all applications were scored. 4 reviewers read and scored each application and the application score was the *median* of the 4 reviews. Using the median mitigated the impacts of the outliers scores. Staff also shared that reviewers had extensive lived and professional experience with PCL's program areas and racial equity, diversity and inclusion.

- 88% had professional or lived experience in one or more program areas
- 59% had direct experience working in racial equity, diversity and inclusion, and 24% had direct experience working in disability inclusion.
- at least 54% identified their lived experience as a person of color, immigrant/refugee, living with a disability, navigating poverty, survivor of abuse, or with experience in the foster care system. Reviewers were not required to disclose their demographics on the sign-up form because selecting volunteers (or employees) based on demographics is illegal. Many still chose to include details about their lived experience when discussing their qualifications.
- PCL staff provided training – including on bias mitigation – to all reviewers as part of their onboarding.

## Large grants update: funding process concerns - testimony

**Councilor concern:** that Allocation Committee members may not have reviewed the submitted testimony from applicants.

**Staff response:** Allocation Committee members received testimony and had more than two weeks to review it before their April 23 meeting to make funding decisions.

### Joel speaking

Some councilors were concerned that Allocation Committee members may not have reviewed the submitted testimony from applicants.

Allocation Committee members received testimony and had more than two weeks to review it before their April 23 meeting to make funding decisions.

## Large grants update: funding process concerns - grantee performance

**Councilor concern:** regarding the consideration of grantee performance in decision-making, especially from COVID years

**Staff response:** staff only considered performance data of current grantees from July 1, 2022 – Dec 31, 2024

### Joel speaking

Some councilors expressed concern regarding the consideration of grantee performance in decision-making.

- One councilor was concerned that current grantees were penalized for poor performance during COVID, and that organizations without PCL funding were favored because they didn't have previous performance records with PCL.
- Other councilors expressed the desire to fund effective programs.
- Staff shared that we accounted for the impact of the COVID pandemic on all current grantees by only considering performance data from July 1, 2022 to Dec. 31, 2024 – the 2.5 years after the pandemic.

## Large grants update: funding process concerns - demographic data in applications

**Councilor concern:** applicants should provide disaggregated data on the demographics of their board, staff and clients.

**Staff response:** In the 2019-20 funding round, PCL required applicants submit a detailed form to provide this data. Based on feedback from that funding round and input from Community Council, PCL eliminated the detailed form from the application and requested the data in a narrative format.



### Joel speaking

Some councilors suggested that applicants should provide disaggregated data on the demographics of their board, staff and clients.

- Staff shared that in previous funding rounds, a chart was included in applications that tracked these data.
- It was not included in applications in this funding round based on feedback after PCL's previous funding round and recent input from PCL's Community Council.
- They advised that the level of detail was burdensome for applicants, particularly for smaller organizations and those that currently do not have PCL grants.
- Instead, the application requested disaggregated demographic data on clients, staff, and board members, including race/ethnicity, primary language, gender, and disability status in a narrative format, giving applicants flexibility on how to include it.
- Applicants provided this information in varying ways and with varying specificity. For example, many small organizations did not provide detailed data on all race/ethnicity identities for clients, staff, and board members.
- PCL staff could not provide disaggregated data for councilors due to the way applicants provided the data in applications.

## Large grants update: individual funding decisions

**Councilor concern:** Councilors expressed concern that 3 applications from Black-led organizations weren't approved for funding

**Staff response:**

- Hunger relief: one application not approved because they scored last (23 of 23) and no application that scored last was approved
- Mentoring: one application not approved because didn't meet some of Community Council's priorities
- After school: one application not approved because they were a current grantee providing a program with significant performance concerns



### Lisa speaking

Councilors expressed concerns that 3 applications from Black-led organizations weren't approved for funding.

- In hunger relief, one application wasn't approved for funding because they scored last (23 of 23). No application that scored last in any program area was approved for funding. The applicant and some Councilors expressed concern about the comments made by one of the reviewers that scored the application, which were focused on writing quality not content. However, all 4 reviewers scored the application low (the lowest or second lowest among the 7 applications the reviewer panel scored), and the same panel scored other applications submitted by Black-led organizations that scored higher and were selected for funding.
- In mentoring, one application wasn't approved because the Community Council deprioritized funding applications from current grantees for programs not currently funded by PCL in favor of providing access to PCL funding for a broader diversity of organizations and services. Community Council also prioritized increasing access to funding for applications submitted by smaller organizations (annual revenues over \$18M), and this application was submitted by a current grantee organization with annual revenues over \$18 million. The organization that submitted this application was approved for continued funding in after school and foster care for a combined total of more than \$1.9 million over 3 years.
- 6 applications from other Black-led organizations were approved in mentoring. These applications met Community Council's priorities for funding small organizations and organizations without PCL funds.
- In after school, one application wasn't approved because the program was a current grantee who had significant performance concerns in FY 24, providing only 10% of the contracted hours of service for elementary school children, 53% of contracted hours of service to middle school

youth, and with only 7% of youth served meeting program attendance goals. Due to these concerns and a January 2025 midyear report showing similar problems and data trends, staff did not recommend the program for continued funding.

- After receiving staff funding recommendations, the applicant requested on March 25, 2025 to correct the data they submitted in July 2024 and January 2025 reports without supporting documentation. Staff did not change their recommendation. The information the applicant wished to submit was provided as testimony to the Allocation Committee for their consideration.



## Large grants update: next steps

- Grant contract and budget negotiations
- Prep for grants management in Web Grants
- Process improvement and report to City Council
  - Ordinance approving grants also directed Allocation Committee to provide a "summary of how it addressed or plans to address concerns raised by Council during remand process..."
  - Feedback from different audiences: reviewer survey, applicant survey, reflections from staff, Community Council, Allocation Committee; data from process



### Lisa speaking

PCL staff are working to negotiate grant contracts and budgets, including orienting 27 organizations new to PCL funding and city grants management processes. We are also setting up forms and processes to manage grants in Web Grants, the city's new online grants management system. We used it for the first time this year for large grants applications and review process.

Staff will also be working on a process improvement report to City Council. In the ordinance passed by City Council approving the Allocation Committee's funding decisions, it said that Council "*Directs the Allocation Committee to include a summary of how it addressed or plans to address concerns raised by Council during the remand process, including consideration of racial equity impacts, scoring inconsistencies, and testimony from applicants. The summary should also describe how the Allocation Committee assessed whether the programs serve a majority of the intended demographic population, defined as more than 51%, particularly in the case of culturally specific or responsive grants. The Committee shall also include a plan to discuss how to clearly assess and value the extent to which an applicant's leadership and board composition reflect the populations they intend to serve.*"

After a funding round, staff has typically gathered feedback from multiple audiences. We use their input and data we've analyzed on the funding process to identify process strengths and areas for improvement. We plan to continue our usual efforts such as an applicant survey, reviewer survey, and reflections from staff, Community Council, and the Allocation Committee. We'll use that information to learn more and we'll integrate those perspectives, along with data like we presented today, to respond to Council's concerns and present them with a report, as directed.

## Closing

- Staff to integrate today's input into small grants funding process
- Next meeting TBD
- Katrina will be in touch to schedule 1-1 check-ins
- Evaluation & stipend invoice

### Katrina speaking

Thank you all for your time today and for the robust discussion.

In terms of next steps, staff will take your input on the small grants funding process and integrate it into the project plan, application eligibility criteria, and application prompts. Our next full Community Council meeting will be sometime this winter to train y'all to watch and score small grants funding applicant videos. Between now and then, I'll reach out to schedule 1-1s with everyone to check-in and touch base about the feedback that came out of today's meeting.

### Before you leave

- Evaluation: <https://forms.office.com/g/YLwZNzX19r>
- Stipend invoice (in person or in email)

Make sure to give Katrina both the evaluation and stipend invoice before you depart

I'll hang out if anyone has any further questions, otherwise, thank you all for your time today!