

**Portland Children's Levy
Allocation Committee Meeting Minutes
June 18, 2025, 1:00 p.m.
Location: 1900 SW 4th Ave – second floor**

The full record of the meeting may be viewed on the Portland Children's Levy website: www.portlandchildrenslevy.org or YouTube at: [Portland Children's Levy Allocation Committee Meeting 06/18/25](#)

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

All presentation slides are appended to these minutes.

Attending: Dan Floyd, Charity Kreider, Meghan Moyer, Dan Ryan (chair), Felicia Tripp (appeared remotely)

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

Minutes of April 23, 2025, meeting – approved without revision.

FY 2024 Audit Report

Daniel Whitmore from **Merina & Co.** presented the annual compliance audit. The audit found that the Children's Levy appears to be in compliance with its authorizing legislation and is within the 5% administrative cap.

*The full audit report can be found on the Children's Levy website here:
<https://portlandchildrenslevy.org/about/reports/annual-independent-audit-reports/>*

Community Report

Yuxing Zheng presented the 2025 Community Report. It can be found on the PCL website here:

<https://portlandchildrenslevy.org/about/reports/community-reports/>

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Small Grants Funding Round

The PCL Small Grants Fund was established in 2020 in response to feedback from community engagement in previous funding rounds. The purpose of the Small Grants Fund is to increase access to PCL funding for programs of small organizations that arise out of the communities they serve. Smaller organizations often struggle to compete with large organizations in funding

processes. Maintaining a small grants fund ensures funding for smaller organizations to grow their capacity to serve their communities.

PCL staff began planning a small grants funding round in late 2024 with the intention of running the round in FY 2025-26. PCL publicly stated throughout the large grant funding round that the small grants funding round would begin later in 2025 and received many inquiries from small organizations about the timing of the process. Small grants are for organizations with annual revenues below \$750,000.

Staff is intending to move forward with the small grants funding round at some point in the next fiscal year to run concurrently with reconsideration of the large grant funding decisions to ensure access to funding by small organizations that were not eligible to apply in the large grant funding round. Current small grants expire on June 30, 2026.

Staff will incorporate whatever instructions City Council provides on the remand of the large grant funding decisions into the small grants funding round design. Priority populations for services will remain the same as for large grants: children, youth and families who identify as Black, Indigenous and of color, immigrants and refugees, LGBTQ2SIA+, and with disabilities.

Large Grants Funding Round

PCL 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. 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. PCL staff, the Community Council, and the Allocation Committee wrestled with hard questions in a funding round with 21% less money next fiscal year than this year, and more than \$3 requested for every \$1 available. Key issues included how to balance funding for:

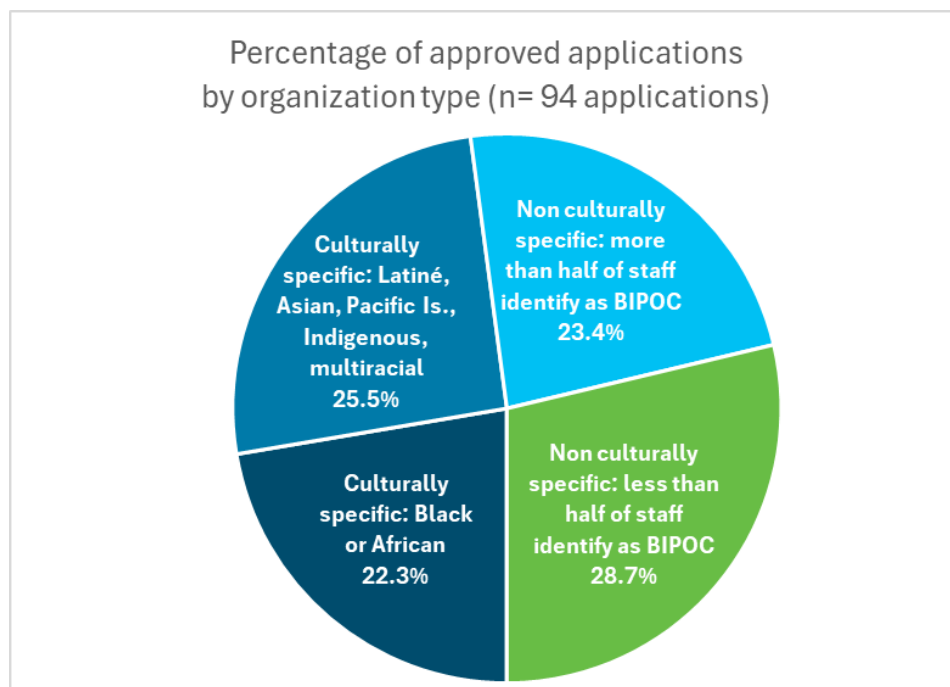
- Current PCL grantees versus organizations that haven't previously received PCL funding
- Organizations of varying sizes, with annual revenues from \$750k-\$6M, \$6-\$18M, and \$18+M
- The diversity of PCL's priority populations listed above, their needs, and their service priorities

The following two charts highlight some of the results of the Allocation Committee's decisions.

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	77.3%

Culturally specific: Latiné, Asian, Pacific Is., Indigenous, and multiracial	15	11	73.3%
Non culturally specific: more than half of staff identify as BIPOC	22	13	59.1%
Non culturally specific: less than half of staff identify as BIPOC	51	23	45.1%
Total	110	64	58.2%

64 organizations had 94 total applications approved for funding. The pie chart on the next page shows the portion of approved applications by type of applicant organization.



Ultimately, the Allocation Committee made large grants funding decisions that resulted in:

- 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.
- 94 total applications were approved for funding and 71.3% of those applications were to organizations with majority BIPOC staff. This includes culturally specific organizations and non-culturally specific organizations.

- Many of the non-culturally specific organizations with applications selected for funding:
 - Serve other priority populations, such as LGBTQIA2S+, houseless youth, and justice-impacted youth (e.g. Lewis & Clark TransActive; Outside In, p:ear, New Avenues for Youth, The Pathfinder Network);
 - Offer specialized services, such free legal support for academic rights of youth in the foster care and juvenile justice systems; referrals for family support services from the child abuse hotline; teen parent services; relief nursery services; child abuse evaluation and support services; and arts education and sports/recreation; (Youth, Rights, and Justice; LifeWorks NW; Janus Insights Teen Parent Program; CARES NW; Bravo Youth Orchestras, Portland Tennis & Education; My Voice Music); or
 - Provide long-standing programming that is culturally specific, such as domestic violence survivor advocacy and shelter, and early childhood home visiting (Bradley Angle's Healing Roots; YWCA's Healing Together; and Morrison Child & Family Services Listos Para Aprender)
- 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.

After the Allocation Committee made funding decisions on April 23, PCL requested City Council approve the Committee's decisions, as required by the Act authorizing PCL. After the Allocation Committee made its funding decisions, applicants and community members were welcome to contact city councilors to advocate for funding and have continued to do so throughout this stage of the process. Staff has responded to questions from Council offices about the funding process and the reasons for various decisions as requested.

Under the terms of the Act, City Council has the power to approve the Allocation Committee's decisions or remand them 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.

PCL staff appeared before Council at three meetings:

- **May 13 work session** where staff presented information on the funding process, and Council members asked questions. No testimony, verbal or written is accepted at work sessions. 10 of 12 Council members were present.
- **May 21 first reading** of the proposed ordinance approving the Allocation Committee funding decisions. Staff briefly reviewed the funding process for Council members.

Verbal public testimony was heard, written testimony was submitted, and staff answered questions. Council considered remanding decisions at the hearing but ultimately moved the ordinance to a second reading. Council members requested more information on a range of issues, and staff provided that information on May 30 before the second reading. A copy of the questions and staff responses was emailed to Allocation Committee members on June 3.

- **June 4 second reading** of the ordinance that included extensive discussion before the vote. Based on input from applicants and community members, Council raised concerns with different parts of the funding process and the criteria used for funding decisions. They voted 7 to 5 to remand all funding decisions back to the Allocation Committee for reconsideration.

Conflicting concerns

City councilors expressed a variety of concerns – both about the outcomes of the process and use of the selection criteria. Some of their concerns conflict with one another and are 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.

Summary of funding process concerns and staff responses to City Council

Some city councilors expressed concern about how the funding process was conducted. The following is 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 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 who asked why the application was not recommended for continuing funding that the corrected data submitted, a current grantee, was actually for the annual performance report for July 1, 2023 to June 30, 2024 – not the grant application that was scored by 4 community reviewers. 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 agency contacted PCL staff to request substantial changes to previous performance data but without providing any supporting documentation.

The applicant included the corrected 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.

Staff informed all councilors in writing of the specific performance issues with the grant based on the data originally reported in the FY24 annual and FY25 midyear reports sent.

Application review: 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 per application. Median scores were used.

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 included 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.

Testimony: 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.

Grantee performance: 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.

Demographic data in applications: 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 from 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 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 any disaggregated data on clients, staff, or board members. PCL staff could not provide disaggregated data for councilors due to the limitations in applications.

Concerns about individual funding decisions: An applicant in mentoring and child abuse prevention: Councilors expressed concerns that one application for a mentoring program not currently funded by PCL wasn't recommended for funding, given their excellent reputation in community.

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

Staff response:

In Hunger relief, one application not approved because they scored last (23 of 23) and no application that scored last was approved

In Mentoring, one application not approved because didn't meet some of Community Council's priorities

In after school, one application not approved because they were a current grantee providing a program with significant performance concerns

Staff shared that Community Council deprioritized funding new programs proposed by current grantees, and applications from large organizations (annual revenues over \$18M). In mentoring, applications from 6 Black-led organizations were approved for funding: 3 applications that scored higher than the one application and 3 that scored slightly lower (3-4 points).

In child abuse prevention and intervention, staff provided detailed information on specific performance issues that led to the decision not to recommend continuing this grant. As

context, the agency applications in after school and foster care were approved for continued funding for a combined total of more than \$1.9 million.

One application in after school: Councilors expressed concerns that a high-scoring, Black-led current grantee of PCL didn't get approved for continued funding.

Staff shared that the grantee had significant performance concerns in the previous two years, only reaching 53% of service hour goals and 10% of program attendance goals in the 23-24 program year. 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. Staff did not change the recommendation when the agency requested on March 25, 2025 to correct the data they submitted in their 2023-24 annual PCL grant report and 2024-25 midyear PCL grant report, as discussed above. The corrected information was provided as testimony to the Allocation Committee for their consideration.

A slide was shown with the names of the organizations and programs that will not be funded in FY26 due to City Council decision.

Staff appreciates the effort and disappointment of these agencies.

Large grant extension

In addition to remanding all funding decisions to the Allocation Committee for reconsideration pending further instructions from Council, Council also voted to extend current grants for one year beginning July 1, 2025, with reductions to current year funding of up to 25%.

Staff has notified applicants and current grantees of Council's decision and is working presently to amend all current large grant agreements to extend them at 79% of current funding level (21% reduction). Levy revenues are projected to decline 21% as compared to current year, and all grantees have been given a maximum annual budget that is 79% of their FY25 budget.

Remand procedural steps

At this juncture, we are working on how we can receive further instructions from Council for the Allocation Committee's reconsideration. Based on conversations to date with the Deputy City Administrators for Vibrant Communities and Community and Economic Development (current and future service area assignments for PCL), it's likely we will need to request another work session with Council to get their instructions. Work sessions are requested and scheduled at the consent of the Council President. Staff will work with our Deputy City Administrator to request a work session for Council to provide instructions for reconsideration of funding decisions, and we will keep the Committee and applicants informed as we learn more.

It is not clear at this point whether Council will ask PCL to re-do major parts of the process or ask the Allocation Committee to make different selections and different funding amounts based on Council's considerations.

Allocation Committee members all spoke with concerns about the remand by the City Council.

Ryan: PCL staff work is a best practice for this type of funding. I appreciate your work.

There has been remorse I have heard from a few members of City Council.

We are in the middle of our budget season, so we are busy. This is likely to move forward into July or August.

I do not want to give up on the good work you did. We need a revote by City Council.

Moyer: I was shocked as well. I did not receive any questions from City Council, so did not schedule to appear. I regret that. I wish I was there.

I feel strongly about this process. I would have loved to have the level and quality of review that was included in these recommendations. This is much better than any budget process I have ever been through.

I did take offense to some of the accusations brought forward. I have highly qualified staff who helped me to review the applications. We spent many hours working on this process.

I was very careful not to favor organizations for political reasons. I was very careful in my review. Staff explanations for

I am profoundly disappointed in the City Council for not asking more questions and instead deciding what flaws in the process were without discussion. I am curious what they want us to do. I am unwilling to participate in a process that wants me to put my finger on the scale for more politically connected organizations. I do not know what they wanted us to do differently, that I can live with.

Tripp: I too am befuddled by City Council response. All the questions they have asked show that they did not take the time to review our process, which I find unacceptable. I too do not see anything I would change in this process. I want them to tell us 1.) why they did not review our process, and 2.) why do you not respect what community has asked for. They do not seem to know the history of PCL. We take very seriously that this is taxpayer dollars. We have spent countless hours working on this process. They clearly did not take time to review the materials before voting. I find that unacceptable.

Floyd: I watched the City Council meeting. I witnessed the PCL staff respond well to the questions. I took notes at the meeting. Offering the one-year extension did feel like the only solution.

I am still not clear on the issues that City Council had with the process. The City Council approved funding with only a 2 and 1/2 hour process.

Kreider: Everything that is being said resonates with me. It is very disappointing. I care about the integrity of the process. I do not believe the City Council members acted with integrity.

I am proud of the PCL staff and Allocation Committee members.

There is a trust problem. I think we need to get at that. All the evidence points to funding what was recommended.

I have a question about the organization with performance concerns with the previous grantee. Will they be funded this next year despite their poor performance?

Pellegrino: Yes.

Kreider: There is nothing in the bylaws that allows us to allocate those dollars differently?

Pellegrino: The current ordinance says we will extend all the grants.

Public Comment

The following people testified before the Allocation Committee:

- **Madison Reiling-Mullins** from The Dougy Center
- **Eric Knox** from HOLLA Mentors
- **Asia Green-Rhodes** from Triple Threat Mentoring
- **Demetrius Rhodes** from Triple Threat Mentoring
- **Hailey Rhodes** from Triple Threat Mentoring
- **Kaleb Bird** from Triple Threat Mentoring
- **Taylor Greene** from Triple Threat Mentoring
- **Josiah Greene** from Triple Threat Mentoring
- **Yonas Kassie** from Ethiopian and Eritrean Cultural and Resource Center
- **Alix Sanchez** from YWCA of Greater Portland) – via Zoom
- **Lydia Moges** from Ethiopian and Eritrean Cultural and Resource Center

The content of public comment can be heard on the YouTube video.

Ryan: Thank you for your testimony. I would ask that folks reach out to the entire City Council.

I think the City Council needs to vote again on this issue. My opinion is that one year is too long to wait.

Your work was flawless. Hearing from City Council that we did not do our homework was ridiculous.

I would like to hear that we should lobby for a revote. Are we all on the same page?

Tripp: I would like to hear from City Council about what they think we did not do. I am representing many communities in this role. It is sad that City Council did not do their work.

Kreider, Floyd, Moyer: Yes, we agree.

Ryan: I will work to get this in front of City Council again. City Council needs to hear more of this testimony. Does staff need anything from us?

Pellegrino: Procedure is the difficult step for us.

Ryan: That is my job. We will figure that out.

Next Meeting is not yet scheduled.

Adjourned 2:30 pm.