

**Portland Children's Levy
Allocation Committee Meeting Minutes
October 6, 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 <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=t51Tv5iJBS0>*

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 (appeared remotely), Dan Ryan (chair), Felicia Tripp (absent)

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

Minutes of June 18, 2025, meeting – approved without revision.

1. Small Grants Funding Round Plan

Funding Allocation

In June 2024, the Committee allocated projected resources for large grants, small grants, the Childcare Initiative and grantee training for the next three fiscal years (FY25-FY28). \$1.5 million was allocated for the Small Grants Fund to cover the current small grants for their final year (\$437,000 for FY26), and \$1 million for funding 2 years of new small grants.

At this juncture, 4 of the 7 small grantees received large grants which terminated their current small grants. This means that PCL will pay a maximum of \$177,000 to continuing small grantees in FY26, leaving an unspent balance of \$260,000. Staff recommends allocating this balance to the new small grants funding round and allocating an additional \$240,000 to fund the new small grants funding round at \$1.5 million for the next 3 fiscal years (FY26-FY29). A slightly higher underspending rate in FY25 (compared to projections in June 2024) will cover this additional allocation to the small grants fund.

Vote – All in Favor.

Background: Small Grant Fund launch in 2020

PCL launched the Small Grants Fund (SGF) in 2020 in response to extensive community feedback from 2018- 19. The purpose of the SGF is to increase access for smaller nonprofits to

PCL funds and strengthen their capacity to serve children, youth, and families, including Black, Indigenous, and children of color, and children with disabilities.

In 2020, staff worked with an ad-hoc advisory committee of community members with lived and professional experience in PCL's program areas to create the application process based on feedback from small organizations.

They helped staff develop a two-step application process. Step 1 was a brief written application from all applicants. A portion of applicants were selected to move to a second step, which was a more detailed written application, grant budget, and interactive component. The interactive component was intended to help organizations share about their work and reduce barriers in a written-only process. Due to the pandemic, staff and reviewers held virtual interviews with selected applicants.

The Allocation Committee allocated \$1 million over 3 years for the first SGF. PCL received 31 applications requesting \$4.4 million, and PCL awarded 7 grants to applicants for January 1, 2020, to December 31, 2023. The Allocation Committee renewed current small grants through June 30, 2026.

Successes and lessons learned in the first Small Grant Fund

The SGF has been successful in building capacity for small organizations, including increasing access and inclusion of children with disabilities in funded services. In addition, six of seven SGF grantees applied for a large grant in the 2024-25, and four were awarded large grants.

Based on staff experience and feedback from applicants and reviewers, key strengths and suggested improvements from the 2020 small grants process were:

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 didn't overburden small organizations
Community reviewers' involvement in both scoring and recommending applications helped staff integrate community voice into funding recommendations.

Suggested improvements:

Include an interactive component with all applicants, along with a written application. In 2020, only applicants selected to move to Step 2 were interviewed. 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. Scheduling 2 reviewers, PCL staff, and applicants for the interview proved difficult, and a few applicants and reviewers indicated the interview format itself wasn't optimal.

Small Grants Fund Process and Design 2025-26

The following outlines key features of the 2025-26 Small Grants funding process, including building on the lessons learned.

Grant size and organization size eligibility requirements

Organizations must have annual revenue in the last closed fiscal year between \$90,000 to \$750,000 to be eligible to apply for a small grant. In 2020, applicants were eligible with annual revenue between \$10,000- \$1 million. Based on staff's experience with the first cohort of small grants, organizations with annual revenues below \$90,000 may not have the organizational infrastructure to manage the requirements of a three-year city grant. organizations with revenue between \$90,000 to \$750,000 will benefit the most from the capacity-building opportunities available in the SGF. Organizations below the \$90,000 threshold are still eligible to receive \$500 event sponsorships from PCL.

Online application with short written component and video component

Given lessons learned from 2020, the Small Grants application will have two components for all applicants to complete:

- a short, written application (48 points)
- a video component (28 points)

This approach allows PCL to honor applicant feedback to provide a visual/story-telling element for all applicants. PCL's Community Council advised on the questions in the video component of the application.

Organizations will apply in WebGrants, the city's online grants management system. They will answer basic eligibility questions, select one of PCL's program areas, provide organization budget documents and staff/board demographics, and upload a short narrative about the organization's mission, experience serving the population they propose to serve, the program design, experience serving children and families, program outcomes, and grant budget. The video component gives applicants an opportunity for storytelling about the unique strengths of the program and its successes.

Staff focused on keeping the application short to limit barriers for applicants. Staff also adapted and simplified a set of basic questions and scoring criteria developed by PCL's community council for the large grants process.

PCL's current Funding Priorities based on community engagement results

Staff plan to use the same funding priorities for the small grant funding round as were used in the large grants. You may recall that during spring 2024 PCL's Community Council and Allocation Committee created funding priorities for each program area Portland Children's Levy 2024-29 funding priorities based on the community engagement results reported by Camille E. Trummer LLC. The priorities will be included in the application and on the PCL website.

Outreach, applicant information sessions, weekly questions/answers

PCL staff have continually updated a small grants outreach list of organizations serving children and families in PCL program areas. Funding announcements will be sent directly to small organizations on the outreach list and the general PCL mailing list and will be posted on the PCL website and social media. The announcement will also be shared with Community Council and Allocation Committee members to share with their networks.

PCL will host two Applicant Information Sessions to provide applicants with information about the funding process and the opportunity to ask staff questions directly. A recorded presentation of the Applicant Information Session will be available on the PCL website, and questions from the applicant session will be posted in a question-and-answer section of the website. Applicants will be able to email staff with questions, and staff will respond to applicants and share the content of the questions/answers weekly on PCL's website for transparency and support for all applicants.

Application Review and Scoring, including Community Council

Community Council members will review and score all video submissions in the application. PCL staff will train Community Council members in small group meetings during the first two weeks of December. PCL staff will review and score all written applications. Each application will receive three scores: the median score from their written application, the median score for their video submission, and total score.

Funding Recommendations, including Community Council

Building on previous success involving community volunteers in funding recommendations, Community Council will advise staff's funding recommendations for small grants. Staff will create a draft of recommendations for their consideration, and Community Council will meet in late February 2026 to review staff's suggestions and finalize funding recommendations for the Allocation Committee's consideration.

The final funding recommendations will be sent to the applicants the week of March 3rd, and applicants will have two weeks to submit written testimony in response to the recommendations. The Allocation Committee will have approximately 4 weeks to review the funding recommendations and 2 weeks to review the written testimony. Staff will also provide the Allocation Committee with access to all videos submitted with the applications.

Allocation Committee funding decisions and City Council consideration

Staff plans to schedule the Allocation Committee to meet in April 2026 to make funding decisions. We hope to send the Committee's funding decisions to the City Council in mid-April to mid-May. Staff will make every effort to present the Allocation Committee's decisions to City Council as early as possible in the spring to avoid coinciding with the city budget hearings.

Grants will begin on July 1, 2026.

The table below outlines key steps and dates in the funding process

October 15	Tentative: Publish small grants application
October 27, 1:30pm-3:00pm	Applicant Information Session 1
October 29, 9:30am-11:00am	Applicant Information Session 2
November 14	Final date to register in WebGrants
November 21	Last date to contact PCL with application questions
December 1	Applications Due
Late February	Community Council advises staff's funding recommendations for Allocation Committee
Week of March 3	Funding recommendations sent to applicants
Mid-March	Deadline for applicants to submit testimony to Allocation Committee; Committee receives testimony
April	Allocation Committee funding decisions
April to Mid-May	City Council meetings for consideration of Allocation Committee funding decisions
Mid-May to June	Grant negotiations
July 1, 2026	Grants begin

Feedback on draft application questions and scoring criteria

Between August 28 and Sept 18, PCL staff emailed the draft Small Grants application questions and scoring criteria three times to 50 people at over 40 small organizations. A brief feedback survey was included with the draft application and scoring criteria. The feedback survey asked four Likert scale questions about whether respondents understood the questions and the scoring criteria, and whether questions and criteria are reasonable for each part of the application. Respondents could also provide narrative feedback on questions and criteria.

Nine people responded to the survey.

- All respondents agreed that they understood the questions and scoring criteria for the written and the video parts of the application.
- All respondents agreed the questions and scoring criteria were reasonable for the written application.
- Eight of nine agreed that the video portion questions and scoring criteria were reasonable, and one was neutral.

Three respondents wrote narrative comments that indicated positive support for the application questions and scoring criteria.

Vote – Allocation Committee approved staff recommendations for Small Grants Fund application and process.

2. Preliminary Reflections on Large Grant Funding Round

After each funding round, PCL has a standard practice of gathering feedback on its funding process. PCL staff have surveyed community reviewers and applicants and have debriefed with Community Council during their July meeting and in 1:1 interview to hear perspectives on the large grant funding round. Feedback includes both quantitative and qualitative data. Due to prioritizing contracts and budget negotiations this summer, staff have not fully analyzed all the data. We have completed a basic analysis of the quantitative data and will present preliminary results at the meeting. We ask that Committee members consider the data and reflect on the following questions:

- What questions or curiosities do these data raise for you?
- How do the data compare to your experience of the funding round?

Data presented is shown in the slides appended to these minutes.

Staff will look into the qualitative data over the next month to further inform a final report and improvement recommendations for the next PCL large grant round. The final report will be posted to PCL's website as we've done in the past.

Apart from PCL's typical process improvement practices, you may recall that in the ordinance city council passed approving the Committee's large grants funding decisions, council directed the Committee to prepare a report addressing their concerns raised during the remand. PCL staff will consult with Committee members as we draft that report and plan to arrange to present the report to Council in the months ahead on a date when one or two Committee members are available to join.

Commissioner Ryan requested further information on the demographics of survey responses based on whether respondents are current grantees.

Charity Kreider asked whether the question of understanding and agreeing to the rationale of AC decision-making was clear. Comments might make this clearer.

Katrina Peterson presented information from the Community Council regarding their role in the large grants process. *These comments are summarized on the slides.*

Next steps are summarized on the slides.

3. City of Portland Update

Staff provided updates on City of Portland policy and structure changes that affect PCL.

Mayor Wilson's Executive Order

On July 31, 2025, Mayor Wilson issued an executive order providing the following:

"Notwithstanding any conflicting provision of City code, City ordinance, City resolution or bureau policy, and notwithstanding any contrary City or bureau practice, City employees, programs and services are required and directed to comply with all applicable federal civil rights and nondiscrimination laws, including but not limited to the Civil Rights Act of 1964. By

complying with these laws, City programs and services will provide services, programs and benefits without regard or preference based on protected class status, consistent with our ongoing commitment to complying with federal nondiscrimination laws.”

Federally “protected classes” include race, gender and disability, among others. City services/programs are not permitted to provide preferences based on these categories. Program preferences for people experiencing poverty, living in a geography and/or attending schools with high poverty rates are permitted.

The mayor directed the City Administrator to work with City bureaus and offices to review programs and services for ongoing and continued compliance with the Executive Order, including undertaking disparity studies as appropriate to identify historical discriminatory actions taken by the city that continue to need remedy and repair.

PCL has been directed to review and identify any policies and practices that may violate the terms of the Executive Order. The city remains committed to pursuing equity, diversity and inclusion goals through programs designed to help all Portlanders, including people of color, immigrants, women, people with disabilities and those who identify as LGBTQIA2S+. PCL remains committed to eliminating racial/ethnic disparities in children’s outcomes.

Community and Economic Development Service Area (CEDSA)

With the change in Portland’s form of government, all City bureaus and offices, including the Office of the Portland Children’s Levy, have been integrated into a central administrative structure. As of July 1, 2025, PCL is part of CEDSA. PCL staff are now participating in CEDSA teams meeting regularly on budget preparation and modification, communications and leadership.

Changes to City Communications and Community Engagement Structure

The city is currently implementing a realignment of communications personnel and structures across City bureaus and offices under a Chief Communications Officer for the City. Under the new structure, PCL communications staff will report to a Media and Strategic Communications Manager for CEDSA and will no longer report to PCL’s Director. Planned changes will take effect before the end of the calendar year. Whether and how much these changes will affect PCL financially is not yet clear.

A similar realignment is moving forward for community engagement personnel and structures across City bureaus and offices under the City’s new Chief Engagement Officer. The realignment process is still underway, and PCL is providing input to senior leadership as they plan structural and reporting changes across the City. At this point, we don’t know how PCL community engagement staff will be affected.

As part of the city-wide community engagement realignment process, the City is also conducting an Advisory Bodies Enhancement Process. Goals of the project include aligning the advisory board program with the rules governing Portland’s new governmental structure. The project leaders are working with advisory board liaisons across the City to create a classification

system for all city advisory boards, guidelines for establishing, operating, recruiting and confirming appointment of members, service expectations and dissolution of advisory boards. PCL is participating in the stakeholder workgroup providing input to project leaders related to PCL's two advisory boards (the Allocation Committee and Community Council). Staff will keep you updated as decisions are made and effects on PCL become clear.

City Budget Update

The City adopted a budget in June that included substantial cuts due to projected revenue declines. In September 2025, the City announced that revenues had further declined by \$16 million which will necessitate further cuts across City bureaus in fall and spring budget adjustments. Whether and how much these general fund cuts will impact PCL is not yet clear.

Portland Children's Levy will receive updated revenue projections in December.

Next Meeting is not yet scheduled.

Adjourned 2:30 pm.