



**ARIKA**

Good afternoon. For the record, I want to introduce the team who will be providing this presentation today.

I am Arika Bridgeman, Grants Manager at PCL.

Joining me today is Alix Sanchez, a member of PCL's Community Council, helping shape the entire large and small grants process.

And, Katrina Peterson, PCL's Community Engagement and Policy Coordinator, who staffs and facilitates the Community Council.

This afternoon our presentation will include the following information:

- Key steps in the small grants funding process, including Community Council's funding recommendations
- Data on the small grants applicant pool

- Overview of the process used for Community Council's funding recommendations

Meg McElroy, PCL Interim Director, will join us at the end of the presentation to help facilitate the Allocation Committee through discussion and voting on small grants funding decisions.

## Appreciation

- Thank you to applicants, Community Council, Allocation Committee and staff
- All applicants doing important work with Portland children and families
- Competitive processes are challenging
- Gratitude for time, energy, effort by applicants



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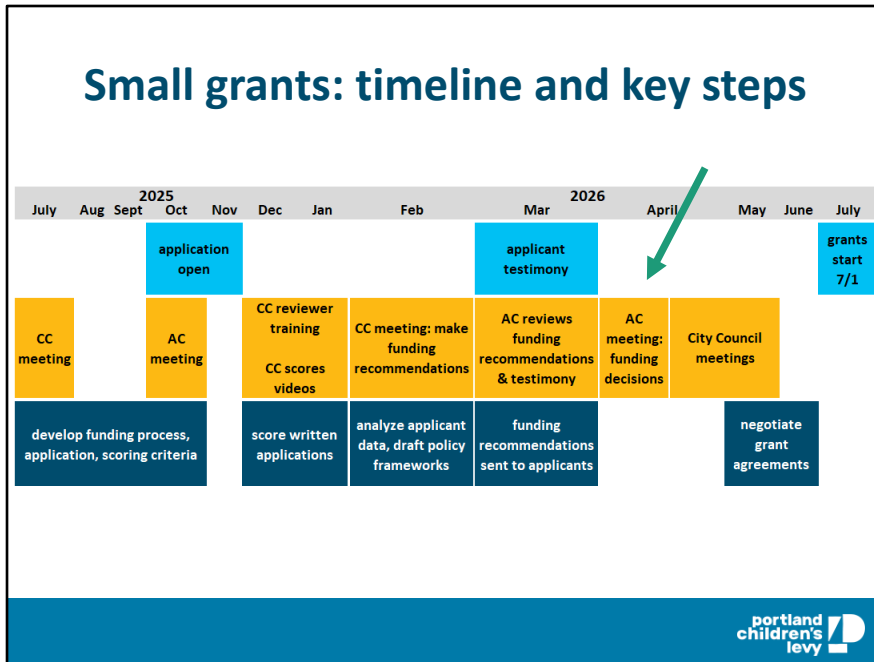
Before we get into our formal presentation, we want to thank everyone involved in this small grants process– the applicants, our Community Council members who are all volunteers; our Allocation Committee which includes both elected officials and volunteers, and the members of our staff who have supported development and implementation of this process.

We want to recognize that all applicants for PCL grants are doing important work and are valued for the ways they serve children and families each day.

We want to acknowledge that competitive processes are difficult and can create a range of feelings.

We want to honor and appreciate the time, energy, and effort of the applicants in this process. We launched the application last fall, and they have been gracious and patient, and we thank them for the participation in this process.

## Small grants: timeline and key steps



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As we get started today, we want to review the small grants funding process key steps and timeline, which are outlined in this visual.

- The top light blue bar shows actions that applicants have taken.
- The middle orange bar shows actions related to recommendations and decision-making by Allocation Committee, Community Council, and City Council.
- The bottom dark blue bar shows actions that staff have taken to develop and facilitated the funding process.
- The green arrow highlights where we are today- the Allocation Committee’s funding decisions.

As part of this presentation, we’ll look more closely at the work that occurred between December and March on this timeline.

After today’s decisions by the Allocation Committee, the entire package of grants will go to City Council for consideration in April or May; the dates are still being confirmed.

Under this timeline, staff hopes to begin grant negotiations with small grants recipients in mid-May and June, with grants beginning July 1, 2026.

## Small grants: lessons learned

### Strengths

- Written and interactive component
- Short, easy to complete application
- Community reviewer involvement

### Suggested improvements

- Include interactive components
- Consider other ways to include visual and storytelling elements.



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PCL's Community Council and Allocation Committee shaped the small grants process this time based on feedback from applicants and reviewers involved in PCL's 2020 small grants process.

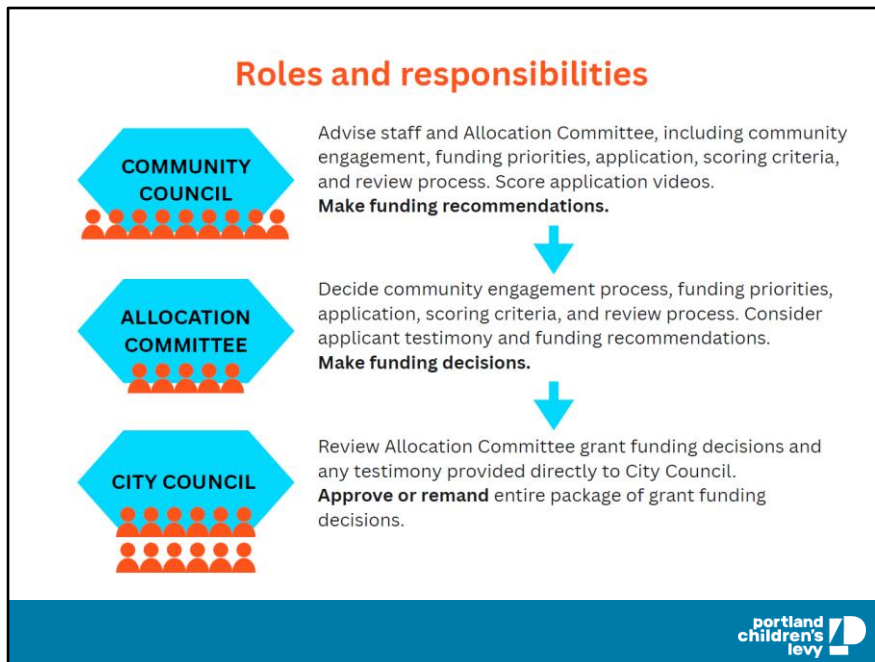
Strengths of the previous process were having both a written and interactive component to the application, and community reviewers' involvement in recommending applications for funding to PCL's Allocation Committee.

Areas for improvement focused on simplifying the interactive component for all applicants. The 2020 small grants process had a two-step application, and only those moving to second step had the opportunity to do the interactive component—an interview. The interviews were time-consuming for staff, applicants, and reviewers, and they proved difficult for reviewers to score.

Based on these lessons learned, PCL

- continued a short, written component to the application
- included the interactive component by asking all applicants to complete a short, basic 5-minute smartphone video
- Continued community reviewer involvement in the form of Community Council members, rather than a separate cohort of community reviewers, to review the videos

- Developed a process for Community Council to select applicants to recommend for funding



## ARIKA

We want to ensure for the record that applicants and the public understand the 3 groups with different roles and responsibilities for the small grants process.

PCL's Community Council advises staff and the Allocation Committee on the design of the funding process. They met in public meetings over the past 3 years to advise on: PCL community engagement process and funding priorities resulting from community input; and on application questions, scoring criteria, and review process. For small grants specifically, they also scored the video component of the applications, which you'll hear more about shortly. They also met in February 2026 to recommend small grants applications to the Allocation Committee for funding. The Community Council is a newer group to PCL, formed in 2022 in response to community feedback.

The Allocation Committee is responsible for all funding decisions, including allocations of PCL resources and design of the funding process. The Committee is required by the ballot measure authorizing the Levy since the Levy began in 2002 and with each of its 4 reauthorizations. The Allocation Committee meets in public meetings to consider advice and recommendations from Community Council, staff, and public testimony. They decide all aspects of PCL's funding processes, and they decide which applications to fund and grant amounts.

As part of the Levy's legislative requirements, grant decisions made by the Allocation Committee must go to City Council for final approval of the entire package or remand of the whole package back to the Allocation Committee to redo the process, if Council finds that the Allocation Committee did not follow its requirements to "make funding decisions in a public meeting based on application

scores and other community conditions to foster a balanced and integrated citywide system of services.”

## Small grants growth

Metrics	2020	2025-26	% change
Number of applications received	31	55	77%
Number of applications to fund	7	12	71%
Total \$ requested (3 years)	\$4.4M	\$10.4M	136%
Total PCL small grants \$ (3 years)	\$1M	\$2.5M	150%



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Now that we've reviewed the overall funding process phases and groups responsible, we'll look more at the small grants applicant pool and the steps leading to the Community Council's funding recommendations.

First, we offer context for this current small grants process compared to the only previous one in 2020. PCL launched the small grants at that time in response to community feedback. The purpose of small grants is to increase access to PCL funds for smaller nonprofits and strengthen their capacity to serve children, youth, and families. The grants focus on increasing opportunities for children, youth, and families in neighborhoods or schools with unmet needs. The grants are for specific program services and not for general operating support.

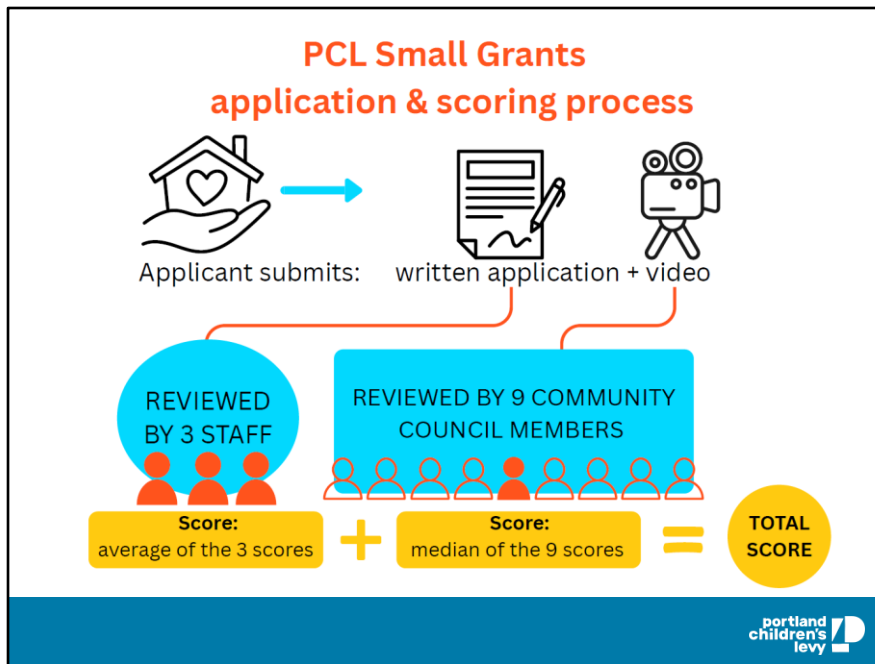
We've seen growth in interest for small grants from when they were made during the pandemic in 2020.

For this current small grants process:

- PCL received 55 total applications, a 77% increase over the first funding round in 2020.
- PCL plans to make 12 small grants, a 71% increase over the first funding round.

- PCL received applications requesting a total \$10.4 million over 3 years, more than double the amount requested in 2020. However, the ratio of demand has remained approximately \$4 for every \$1 requested.
- PCL has \$2.5 million to grant over 3 years for small grants. This is an increase compared to the \$1.5 million the Committee had originally planned. In December 2025, the city economist updated PCL's revenue projections, and PCL will have about \$6.5 million more in projected revenue over the next 3 fiscal years. The Allocation Committee voted unanimously to add \$1 million to small grants, bringing the total to \$2.5 million over three years. This is a 150% increase in funds available for small grants compared to 2020.

Based on the grant amounts requested and staff capacity, PCL can support up to 12 small grants.



## ARIKA

Keeping in mind the overall funding process steps and timeline we reviewed earlier, we'll now look more closely at the steps leading to the funding recommendations for the Committee's consideration today.

This slide helps explain the small grants application scoring process.

PCL published its small grants application on its website and WebGrants, the city's online grants platform, on October 15, 2025.

The application included 2 components, as we mentioned earlier:

1. Written questions focused on the organization's experience with children/families, proposed program services, and annual grant budget.
2. Smart phone video up to 5 minutes addressing the applicant's unique strengths, successes, and proposed uses of PCL funds.

As you heard earlier, the video component was offered to help applicants tell their story conversationally. All applicants completed both components, and all scoring criteria were listed in the application.

Reviewers completed training on anti-bias, intra- and inter-rater reliability, understanding the scoring criteria, and completing scoring forms in WebGrants.

The review and scoring process occurred in Dec- Jan. Three PCL staff scored the written component, and 9 Community Council members scored all videos. The total score on each application was the sum of the average of 3 written scores, and the median of 9 video scores.

Among the 12 people reviewing—staff and Community Council members-- 67% identify as Black, Indigenous, and people of color and 33% as white, 33% as LGBTQIA2S+, and 25% as having a disability.

## Application score results

- Total available points = 76
- Median total score = 54
- Several applications had same total score  
Example: 5 applications scored 59

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A total 76 points were available for an application; up to 48 from the written component and up to 28 from the video component.

Applications scored between 39 to 68 points total. The median score was 54.

Many applications received the same total score. For example, two applications received the same highest total score of 68, another two the score of 63, another two the score of 60, and five the score of 59.

## Small Grants applicant pool, 2025-26

Program area	# apps rec'd	3-year request	Apps scoring median (54) or higher
After School	23	\$4.6 M	17
Mentoring	19	\$3.4 M	7
Hunger Relief	8	\$1.5 M	6
Early Childhood	3	\$480k	2
Foster Care	1	\$240k	1
Child Abuse Prev. & Interv.	1	\$147k	0
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>55</b>	<b>\$10.4 M</b>	<b>33</b>

### ARIKA

This table shows the total small grants applications received and their total 3-year funding requested in each of PCL's 6 program areas.

We received the most applications in the after school program area, comprising over 40% of all applications and all dollars requested.

This slide also shows the number of applications that scored median or higher, by program area.

Among the 33 applications that scored at the median or higher, over half were in the after school program area.

In sum, we saw the highest demand in the after school program area, and most of those applications scored at or above the median total score.

## Community Council: policy frameworks

- Tools for Community Council
- 15 applications per framework
- All frameworks considered score

Score order	After school focus	Balance program areas
<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Typical grantmaking approach</li></ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• High demand, high number score median/above</li><li>• Few resources for after school programs</li></ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Meet range of needs</li><li>• More community engagement priorities</li></ul>

### KATRINA

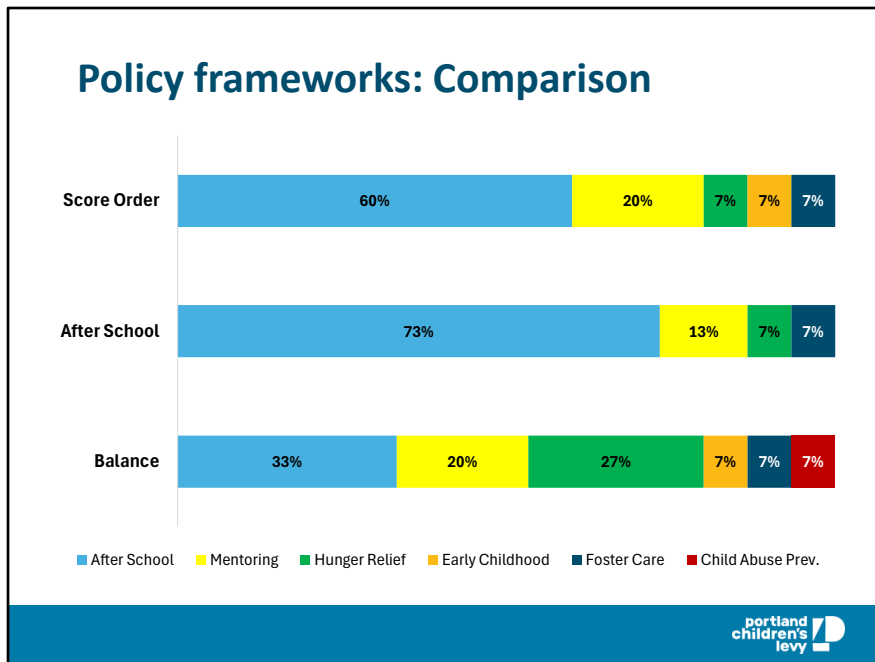
In preparation for making recommendations, staff provided Community Council with descriptive data on each application, including scores (total, written, video), program area, and PCL funding priorities.

Staff created three policy frameworks to help the council consider applications to select for funding, especially in cases where applications had the same total score, or scored only 1 point apart. Each of the 3 frameworks contained 15 applications. Frameworks were:

- Score order: using only score is a typical approach in grantmaking and/or funding processes.
- After school focus: this program area had the greatest number of applications overall and most applications that scored at/above median. This trend is consistent with historic patterns at PCL, likely because there are minimal other resources for after school programming.
- Balance by program area/funding priority: PCL has multiple program areas and funding priorities. As a reminder, funding priorities are the types of services Portlanders prioritized in PCL's community engagement. Staff wanted to offer a framework that addresses a range of needs and provides a variety of opportunities across the age spectrum that PCL serves, including across community engagement priorities.

Across all frameworks, staff prioritized score and score order. Score is important because it reflects both the video component and the written component.

For the two frameworks that don't solely follow score order, staff used factors such as: PCL program areas, community engagement priorities, video score as a way to lift up community voice where applications had similar characteristics and/or the same total score, and trying to create differentiation amongst high-scoring applications between the 3 frameworks.



**KATRINA**

As a reminder, staff did not ask Community Council to chose a framework. Staff provided the frameworks to the Council as ways to think about and make selections across the variety of applications, including those with similar scores.

This slide shows a visual of how the frameworks compare by program area. Each framework’s 15 applications are represented as a portion of each bar on this slide, according to their program area. For example, the score order framework and after school frameworks had more after school applications compared to the other program areas. The balance framework had more of a mix across the program areas.

The frameworks were meant to help Community Council consider policy tradeoffs such as:

- Do you want to consider applications at only a certain score and above? Why?
- Do you want to emphasize one or some program areas more than others? Why?

## Community Council voting process

- Individual, small group, and large group discussion
- Vote individually on 12 applications among 55
- Applications with majority of 9 votes
  - Tie among 3 apps with 4 of 9, for 12<sup>th</sup> place
  - Rounds of small/large group discussion
  - Second vote result had 1 app receive 5 of 9
- Ballot asked factors that most influenced votes
  - 7 of 9 said score was “highly influential”

### **ALIX**

During our Feb. 23 meeting, Community Council received an electronic ballot with all 55 applications. The 9 council members who scored the videos each voted for 12 applications. The first round of votes resulted in 11 applications selected, and a tie among 3 applications for the 12<sup>th</sup> place -- each of those 3 applications received 4 of 9 votes.

A second round of voting was used to break the tie and focused only on those 3 that had tied for 12<sup>th</sup> place. The second round of voting resulted in one application receiving 5 of 9 votes, one receiving 4 of 9 votes, and one receiving no votes.

In general, Community Council prioritized total score on the applications. Applications recommended for funding scored 59 and above; some applications that tied for 59 were not recommended. On our ballots for voting, members were asked which factors influenced their votes: score; balancing across program areas; prioritization of a particular program area/funding priority; or other. Of the 9 members voting, 7 said score was “highly influential,” and the other factors were less influential.

A list of the recommended applications is available at [portlandchildrenslevy.org/events](https://portlandchildrenslevy.org/events), linked to today’s meeting agenda for those tuning in virtually and available as a handout to those attending today’s meeting in person.

## Recommendations to applicants and applicant testimony

- March 3: applicants received
  - Guide summarizing recommendations and process
  - Individual recommendation info
  - List of all applicants with recommendation/vote results
- March 3- 17: Applicants had opportunity to submit written testimony in support of their application.
- March 19: Testimony to Allocation Committee

### MEG

On March 3, PCL Staff sent individual funding recommendations to each applicant, along with a guide explaining the recommendations and instructions to submit optional written testimony to the Allocation Committee. Staff also sent the recommendations materials to the Allocation Committee. The individualized communications were created in response to feedback from PCL's large grants process.

Previously on Feb. 13, the Committee received materials on the full applicant pool, including links to all applicant videos.

Each applicant had the option to submit testimony in support of their application between March 3 and 17.

Applicants could submit up to about 400 words of written testimony in any language to support of their application.

Testimony was submitted in support of 25 out of 55 applications.

PCL staff compiled all submitted testimony and provided it to each Allocation

Committee member on March 19.

## Small and large grants: context

Program Area	Small grants 3-yr recomm.	Range: % allocation large grants	Large grants 3-yr awards (millions)	% allocations w/ SG recs + current grants
After School	\$1.05M	15% - 18%	17%	18%
Mentoring	\$885k	14% - 17%	18%	18%
Early Childhood	\$240k	18% - 20%	19%	19%
Foster Care	\$240k	12% - 13%	12%	12%
Hunger Relief	\$140k	15% - 17%	14%	14%
Child Abuse Prev.	\$0	19% - 24%	19%	18%
<b>Total</b>	<b>\$2.55M</b>	---	---	---

### MEG

This table shows the amounts for the 12 small grants the Community Council recommended for funding by PCL program area (second column).

PCL staff, not the Community Council, determined the funding amounts per recommended application. Staff used the 3-year funding amounts requested by applicants. If fully funded at the requested amounts, the 12 recommended applications total \$2,550,000. This would be \$50,000 over the current \$2.5 million allocation for small grants. However, PCL would be able to cover this due to higher than projected compression offset payment from the Parks Levy – in the amount of \$69,000-- received in February 2026.

This table also provides additional context on the Allocation Committee's projected funding range of resources for large grants among each of PCL's six program areas (remaining columns).

The funding range allocated for each program area was based on the Committee's policy priorities, and historical funding demand in each program area. The Committee decided on those ranges in June 2024 (third column) in advance of the large grants funding round.

After the Committee made large grants (fourth column), Child Abuse Prevention and Intervention and Early Childhood had the highest portion of large grants funding, each at 19%.

This table (last column) shows allocation percentages by program area if we combine all large grants funding and the 12 small grants the Community Council recommended for funding. These data suggest that no matter which applications the Allocation Committee selects for small grants, none of PCL's program areas would be close to the 35% limit for a program area as set by the Act governing Levy operations. The table also shows that small grants funding would be unlikely to change any program area allocation by more than 1%.

## Demand in PCL program areas

Program Area	# of small grants apps rec'd	# small grants apps recomm.	# large grants apps rec'd	# of large grants
After School	23	5	45	21
Mentoring	19	4	39	19
Hunger Relief	8	1	23	14
Early Childhood	3	1	19	11
Foster Care	1	1	18	12
Child Abuse Prev.	1	0	24	17
<b>Total</b>	<b>55</b>	<b>12</b>	<b>168</b>	<b>94</b>

### MEG

This table shows application demand in small and large grants, by PCL program areas.

It shows how the small grants applicant pool (second column) compares to the 12 small grants recommended for funding by the Community Council (third column).

The table is in descending order by number of applications received in small grants (second column).

The table also provides context on last spring's large grants applicant pool and grants funded, including total large grants applications received (fourth column) and total applications funded in large grants (last column).

In both small grants and large grants, after school and mentoring program areas had the highest number of applications.

Some program areas, such as Child Abuse Prevention and Intervention and Foster Care, had higher rates of large grants applications funded compared to other program areas like After School and Mentoring. The number of applications funded was in alignment with the funding allocation ranges that the Allocation Committee had set for the program areas.

## Facilitation of funding decisions

- AC members each provided individual funding preferences to staff
- Staff aggregated preferences to facilitate today
- Committee members will share reflections on their preferences
- Order discussion based on applications where Committee members have similar preferences, then to different preferences
- Vote on funding applications, and staff tracks balance as decisions are made



### MEG

In advance of today's meeting, each Allocation Committee member reviewed summaries of all applications submitted including videos, application score, the funding priorities addressed by the proposed program, the funding recommendations, and the testimony submitted by applicants.

After you reviewed that information and to prepare for facilitation today, staff asked you to provide us with your individual funding preferences using an Excel worksheet that listed all 55 applications. In addition, you also prepared your own reflections on your preferences, and we will invite you to share those before we begin discussion and voting.

Staff aggregated your individual funding preferences to help facilitate today's discussion.

Staff will start your discussion with the highest scoring application where you have similar preferences regarding the recommendations. The Committee will vote on each application. The Chair will call for a motion and second, and discussion. We will proceed in this way with discussion based on score, in descending order, and focused first on applications where you have similar funding preferences.

Then we will move on applications where you have different funding preferences, and any applications where a member indicated an abstention due to a conflict.

Our approach will flow as follows:

- We will say the name of the applicant organization
- The number of Committee members out of 5 who indicated a preference to fund the application
- The funding amount
- Whether anyone abstained from stating a funding preference for an application.

Then staff will turn consideration of the application over to the Chair to facilitate voting, using the process I just described.

PCL fiscal analyst John Kelly will use a spreadsheet to track your decisions as you make them. He will update us on the balance as you make decisions.

If no Committee member indicated an interest in funding an application, it is unlikely to be discussed today.

As a reminder, the list of the applications recommended for funding by the Community Council is available at [portlandchildrenslevy.org/events](http://portlandchildrenslevy.org/events), linked to today's meeting agenda for those tuning in virtually.

## Conflicts of interest disclosure

- Committee member, or immediate family member of Committee member with financial relationship, or appearance of financial relationship with an applicant
- Financial relationship includes working for or contracting with an applicant organization
- Family members include spouse, domestic partner, child, sibling, or in-law

### MEG

I want to remind Allocation Committee members that they are required to disclose conflicts of interest.

- A conflict of interest refers to a financial relationship between a committee member or immediate family member of the Committee member and the applicant organization
- A financial relationship includes being an employee or a contractor of an applicant organization
- If you volunteer for an applicant organization, you are not required to disclose that as a conflict. You may disclose your connection if you choose.
- Committee members with conflicts of interest will abstain from voting on applications where they have a conflict.

If anyone has a conflict of interest with an applicant organization, please state the conflict now, and again if the application is considered for funding.