

**Portland Children's Levy  
Allocation Committee Meeting Minutes  
April 08, 2019 2:00 p.m.  
Location: Portland City Hall Council Chambers**

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*The full record of the meeting may be viewed on the Portland Children's Investment Fund website:  
[www.portlandchildrenslevy.org](http://www.portlandchildrenslevy.org)  
or YouTube at: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=jByAtCb5Lnw&feature=youtu.be>*

**Attending:** Mitch Hornecker, Felicia Tripp-Folsom, Ted Wheeler (Chair), Julie S. Young; absent Jessica Vega Pederson

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

**Approval of minutes from March 18, 2019 meeting**

**Young:** So, moved

**Hornecker:** Second

**Vote:** All in favor

**Public Comment**

None

**Community Engagement**

**Hansell:** Before we move to the presentation, I'll provide a brief background about the community engagement work for those with us here today and those at home who may not be familiar with this effort.

- Every 5 years, the Levy undertakes a community engagement process to inform funding priorities and strategies for the next Levy period.
- In the past, Levy staff designed & implemented the community engagement processes.
- Lots of info from service providers & stakeholder groups, limited engagement with community members.
- To address the diverse needs of Portland's children, youth and their families the Levy recognizes the need to engage the broader diversity of the community—especially people who we haven't heard from in the past.
- The Levy felt the best way to accomplish this was to partner with a consultant team that has established relationships with diverse communities.
- Last summer, the Levy issued an Intermediate Request for Proposals, seeking a consultant to plan and conduct the community engagement process.
- Empress Rules, with Kheoshi Owens as principal, was chosen as the consultant to carry out this work.

Kheoshi Owens and her team are here to present findings and highlights of what they heard from the community about needs, challenges and community solutions.

The Committee received a copy of the Executive Summary in advance of the meeting and copies are available today for the audience. The full report and Executive Summary will be sent to the Levy database as soon as the report is finalized; both documents will be available on the Levy website.

I welcome Kheoshi and her team to introduce themselves and share what they heard with you.

Staff from the firm **Empress Rules Equity Consulting** a presented to the Allocation Committee.

*The Report on the Community Engagement Process is on the Portland Children's Levy website - <http://www.portlandchildrenslevy.org/community-engagement> The full report, executive summary and appendix are all available there.*

**Kheoshi Owens:** Thank you for giving us the opportunity to engage in this process and to present our findings to you. Thank you to the Levy staff for their cooperation in this process.

Staff that participated in the project are: **Afrita Davis, Danise Elijah** (unable to attend the meeting), **Nikia Solbjor, Emma Cisneros, Sumiko Taylor-Hill,** and **Nicole Cerra** from **RMC Research**

Why are we here? To hear community perspectives for the neediest children and families; to present community solutions to improve outcomes for children and families; to cultivate community relationships; and to promote the understanding of the Portland Children's Levy and their services.

Why are we really here? The Children's Levy is a kind response a culture of white supremacy. I thought it was important to include some of the problems before discussing solutions. White supremacist culture and values excluded African Americans and others for many years in Oregon; land grants to white males at the expense of the indigenous population; exclusion of immigrants who could not read; housing inequities and discrimination against people of color. Currently, the 53% racial achievement gap between white students and students of color.

#### Collecting Community Input

The project team used 3 methods to collect community input over 4 months:

- Interest Questionnaire 500 community members completed the questionnaire, providing information about their interests, experiences, and demographics.
- Surveys 500 community members including parents, foster parents, service providers, and others provided information about most needed services. That included 405 community members and 95 service providers.
- Focus Groups 85 community members participated in 8 focus groups including 2 for youth, 1 for community members impacted by disabilities, 1 for community members impacted by foster care, 1 for immigrants and refugees, 2 for Spanish speakers, and 1 for service providers.

The Empress Rules team presented the demographic information of those who participated in the community engagement process. The team also outlined the process of gathering the information in greater detail. That information is available in the report.

#### Levy-wide findings

Across all program areas, community members expressed a desire for access to high-quality programming with flexible hours of operation, low- or no-cost food, transportation to and from programming, and centralized access to services and supports. Community members also described a need for more culturally responsive services. They requested, for example, more service providers and teachers who are people of color and represent the races and ethnicities—and speak the languages—of the communities they serve. Community members described a need for professional development for service providers and teachers, including trainings on cultural humility, unconscious bias, and the impact of trauma and racial injustice on children.

## Funding Allocation

405 Community survey respondents were asked to rank which program area should receive the most funding out of the 6 Levy program areas. Early Childhood was ranked highest to receive priority funding out of the 6 Levy program areas with a ranking of 4.29. Hunger Relief ranked 2nd with a ranking of 3.71; Child Abuse Prevention and Intervention ranked 3rd with a score of 3.57; After School ranked 4th at 3.25; Mentoring ranked 5th with a score of 3.11 and Foster Care ranked 6th with a score of 3.07. Service providers were not asked this question.

**Nicole Cerra** from **RMC Research** did the analysis of the focus groups. She noted that the focus groups were very well run and participants were very open.

### Early Childhood areas of focus:

- Culturally relevant services;
- high quality childcare and preschool;
- family and parent support;
- kindergarten readiness; effective information dissemination;
- resources for children with disabilities;
- support for early childhood service providers;
- systemic issues

### Hunger Relief areas of focus:

- Access
- Meal prep classes
- Food boxes/food pantries
- Transportation/mobile food banks
- School/community-based food programs
- Awareness of services
- Shame/stigma/releasing personal information

### After School areas of focus:

- Academic support/homework help
- Healthy relationship building/behavioral support
- Culturally relevant/engaging classes and services
- Enrichment activities

### Mentoring areas of focus:

- Academic support
- Culturally responsive/shared experience
- Recreation/sports
- Trained and experienced mentors
- Relationship building/support
- Community based mentorship/referrals

### Child Abuse Prevention and Intervention areas of focus:

- Parent Support
- Parenting Classes
- Wraparound support services/support plan

#### Foster Care areas of focus:

- Culturally relevant/responsive
- Foster parent/family support/reunification
- Consistent relationships
- Trauma-informed care
- Transition support
- Behavioral support

#### Successes and Challenges

- Language barriers – interpreters used
- Cross cultural differences
- Access to technology issues
- Systems issues

#### Lessons learned

- Involve community members in the planning process
- Attend events that are already happening
- Build strong relationships with community liaisons
- Data limitations: race/ethnicity
- Time and budget constraints
- More Vietnamese and male representation
- Confusing questions

#### Some things to think about:

- Deeper Partnerships
- Food Pantries
- Farmers Markets
- Law Enforcement

#### Other suggestions

- Advocate for families to receive housing vouchers
- Advocate for policy change in mass incarceration and immigration
- Advocate for school policies that support healthy and free options for children living in poverty
- Bring fresh food banks/pantries to where people live or visit frequently
- Change the Levy mission to “End racial disparities” instead of “reduce”
- Connect with immigrant/refugee communities
- Create parent groups centered on engaging fathers
- Create smaller grants for community-based individuals/small businesses who are already doing the work for free
- Examine Levy staff capacity
- Facilitate an assessment of average transportation costs for communities in specific neighborhoods
- Fund, promote, and facilitate training for teachers and providers centering on racial equity, cultural inclusion and trauma-informed care
- Hire people from the community to be a part of the Portland Children’s Levy
- Hold cross cultural events
- Invest in community-based research training and activities
- People of color need to be given positions of power within agencies that are offering these resources
- Subsidize affordable, high-quality child care
- Transparency

- Create a community-led advisory committee

Something to think about:

#### Normalize Equity

- Use a racial equity framework: Jurisdictions must use a racial equity framework that clearly articulates racial equity, implicit and explicit bias, and individual, institutional and structural racism.
- Operate with urgency and accountability: While there is often a belief that change is hard and takes time, it has been repeatedly seen, that when change is a priority and urgency is felt, change is embraced and can take place quickly. Building in institutional accountability mechanisms via a clear plan of action will allow accountability. Collectively, greater urgency and public will must be created to achieve racial equity.

#### Operationalize Equity

- Implement racial equity tools: Racial inequities are not random; they have been created and sustained over time. Inequities will not disappear on their own. Tools must be used to change the policies, programs and practices that are perpetuating inequities. New policies and programs must also be developed with a racial equity tool.
- Be data-driven: Measurement must take place at 2 levels – first, to measure the success of specific programmatic and policy changes, and second, to develop baselines, set goals Community Engagement Report 51 and measure progress towards goals. Use of data in this manner is necessary for accountability.

#### Organize around Equity

- Build organizational capacity: Jurisdictions need to be committed to the breadth and depth of institutional transformation so that impacts are sustainable. While the leadership of elected and top officials is critical, changes also take place on the ground, and infrastructure that creates racial equity experts and teams throughout local and regional government is necessary.
- Partner with other institutions and communities: The work of local and regional government on racial equity is necessary, but it is not sufficient. To achieve racial equity in the community, local and regional government needs to work in partnership with communities and other institutions to achieve meaningful results.” (Office of Equity and Human Rights, 2011)

**Wheeler:** Thank you to Kheoshi and the whole team at Empress Rules. I am impressed with the process you engaged in. Collecting the data and crunching the numbers is a big help. Helping us to understand priorities.

Lack of coordination of services struck me. We have the Oregon Food Bank, but folks are still struggling to access services.

Where do we draw the line between, myself being in the community and being told we do not want you, we want a culturally specific organization that already has the ear of the community and knows and trusts the community? Where is the mesh point that is both respectful of the desire of the community to have its institutions outward facing, versus our role as the funders of this program? Where is our right place in all of this?

**Owens:** As a supervisor, my role is to facilitate and support my staff. I try to make the least amount of decisions possible. I engage my team. It looks like the community getting together and getting organized, saying okay this is what we need. And then, maybe you come over and they tell you and you go facilitate it.

Wheeler: Is it possible for us to inadvertently blind ourselves from the needs of the community by contracting others to be our eyes and ears in the community? What structural recommendations would you make to us?

**Cisneros:** I do not think it needs to be an either/or. It does come with deep listening. You are sending appropriate people into the community to listen. Your job is to listen deeply and to make happen what comes back from the listening.

**Wheeler:** One advantage of us contracting is that we can go a lot broader by engaging organizations to gather input. I am mindful of the question of how far we go before people feel disconnected.

**Davis:** Where do you feel like you see the disconnection?

**Wheeler:** I want to be clear about my bias. I am bringing my budget hat into the room. We have had a sharp increase in reported hate crimes. We have empowered a broad coalition to help us ascertain where these issues are happening; who are they happening to; how many are happening; how can we best respond. Other cities have said, no we will take that process and bring it internal because the community wants to see that we are personally engaging in this issue. We are having this conversation about how to best address the issue.

**Owens:** Sounds like an assessment needs to be made. I love talking to racist people. I want to understand their perspective. Maybe I can ask them the essential question. Where did that come from? How many black people do you have deep relationships with. People don't know the history. People have been racially isolated. Divide and conquer has been used. More education and events can help us have honest dialogue. I invited white people to ask questions. People got real answers. Nobody is offering spaces for people. People are isolated. Creating spaces for that would be great.

**Young:** I appreciated your thorough work of going into the communities and bringing it back to us. I appreciate how this goes back to the service providers. Some of the recommendations are already being done. More can be done. Providers will be able to see the report and respond to it.

**Tripp-Folsom:** Kheoshi, if you had one priority of all of the recommendations, what would it be? What can the Trustees on this board do?

**Davis:** I have a question in response. How much attention are we paying to where communities and government programs are intersecting. We see our contracts, obligations and outcomes. There is relationship at the core of that. How do we put more attention to the relationships between communities and government? The Mayor may not come into my community and say what's up, but he may have a relationship with someone who helps him connect to that community. Paying attention to that relationship is important.

**Owens:** Including communities in the planning process is the key. Hiring more people from the communities being served. It is about that direct connection.

**Hornecker:** Some of your suggestions are systems level. Most of what you talked about is program level. You have spent time with the communities we serve. I would like to see if there is a way that does not add burden to front line staff in our program areas. I would like to see your team sit with the providers. It can inform services we are already paying for and they are already providing. I don't know what that would look like, but we should think it through.

**Wheeler:** Great presentation. Thank you.

**Public Testimony: None**

Small Grants Proposal

**Pellegrino:** You charged us with outlining what a small grants fund could be.

## Background

- Draft parameters per PSU report recommendations to give better equity of access
- Looked at other governments and foundations that give small grants to understand purposes and size
- Big range of what is small – project/event based to grass roots groups and individual usually smallest grants; grants meant to fund ongoing services usually larger.
  - All Hands Raised grants funding school staff typically range from 20-50,000
  - Beaverton gives social service fund grants, up to 20,000
  - Oakland: different designation rather than separate fund – different rules apply to small and emerging organizations; focus of fund is smaller and grass roots organizations, up to \$100,000
- Total resources of fund and whether goal includes funding many organizations/projects could also influence size of grants given thru “small” grants funds

## Purpose of Fund

- Improve equity of access for smaller organizations that can’t successfully compete for larger levy grants
- Fund organizations growing out of particular communities; consider populations Levy programming may not be reaching (such as smaller immigrant groups)
- Reach children/families that programs funded in regular competitive round isn’t reaching
- Build capacity in smaller organizations to improve data collection/reporting to help them compete for larger PCL or other grants in future

## Proposed Size of Fund

- \$1-1.5 million over life of current Levy (2019-2024) = 1% - 1.25% of total revenues projected available for grants over current Levy
- Pilot and see whether meets objectives and evaluate cost against benefit

## Startup Timeline/Constraints

- Project needing an additional 0.9-1.0 FTE. Given city process, will likely take 2-4 months from decision to move forward to bring someone on board. Project fall start date for new person.
- Likely require most of rest of next fiscal year to prepare to launch fund: will take some research and decisions by committee to structure new fund, grant application and process. Depending on those decisions, process could possibly start in last quarter of next fiscal year, or first quarter of FY 20-21.
- New grants likely starting between 1/1/21-4/1/21

## Grant Size

- Will likely raise minimum annual and 3-year grant amounts for regular round (adjust for inflation).
- Anything under \$60,000 could be, but doesn’t have to be, considered small
- Consider reporting requirements and need for increased capacity in determining size
- Consider level of support needed and ability of PCL to provide support for developing organizations in sizing of grants. Total number grants given can be important.

## Type of Organization and Service Population

- Research needed on organizations providing services in Levy program areas, not currently funded and at right stage of development
- Given legal requirements around reporting, could aim for organizations that deliver services currently, have some staffing (not run by volunteers), receive some funding from other sources (i.e. can meet 30% rule – Levy cannot provide more than 30% of an organization’s funding), and are seeking to provide better/more services to population they serve.
- No funding for organizations that receive funding in regular competitive round.

## Levy Legal Requirements

- Organizations funded would need to provide services in PCL program areas

- Grants could include funds/supports to assist with data collection, tracking and reporting
- 30% rule would still apply – PCL as no more than 30% of annual funding of organization
- Smaller organizations are not necessarily less likely to use “proven” interventions than larger organizations.
- All organizations supply a range of data to support applications made in regular competitive funding rounds including evidence that supports efficacy of particular models regardless of whether the applicant has implemented the intervention in the past; past data on programs that may be similar to proposed programming; other experiential data that indicates efficacy of proposed program with population served. Anybody can fail on implementation, no matter how proven the method.

**Hornecker:** Thank you for the great work. I am more open after hearing from you. We do need more precision in what we are focusing on. My focus is on the third bullet – reach children/families that programs funded in regular competitive round isn’t reaching. To me, that is a north star. What is the size of that pool? What are the demographics of that pool? We need to know who we want to reach before we design a program to reach them.

Now that we know the pool, how do we want to prioritize. We would do that based on program. I am sure we are talking about kids and families of color. Why are our current culturally specific and culturally responsive programs not reaching these people? Are they not reaching them because they can’t find them? Do they not know how to engage them? Or are they not reaching them because they don’t have the resources? Those are the kinds of things we should explore to help us design the program.

**Pellegrino:** I would guess there are kids and families in multiple demographics who are not being reached. Levy programs serve about 8% of the children in City of Portland. There are many reasons why any group may not be served by any programs you are offering. I agree that we can be more precise. I do not know that we can be definitive about that.

**Wheeler:** I would want to know the nature of the organizations we might fund. Are they newer organizations or small organizations with fewer controls in place. This Levy has to go back to the voters for approval. Anything we do that creates a problem or a perceived problem, or if there is an oversight issue, or if there is a conflict of interest that we don’t discover, that could impair our ability to get this Levy renewed. I want to be aware of the tradeoff of working with a smaller organization that might not have the administrative ability that a larger, more established organization would have. And, can one FTE reasonable provide the oversight.

**Pellegrino:** I agree those issues are important. I believe one FTE can provide the oversight needed.

**Wheeler:** Once we identify who we want to serve, why can’t they be served by currently funded organizations.

**Pellegrino:** There are many opinions about those questions. It depends on the community and the organizations involved. You will get different answers, depending on who you ask. Part of what we heard in the PSU report is that there is equity issues in access to funding. Helping organizations rise to the level of being able to compete for our funds is part of the idea. It is about who is being served, but it is also about the organizations who do the serving, who are growing up out of the community. The quite in the PSU report was, who is the next SEI. There are many opinions about who should receive funding. This is an attempt to address the differing opinions.

**Young:** I am hearing you say that it is similar to the City contracting with minority owned businesses. It has to do with making more opportunity in the broader community, which has value. It may have to do with people having trust in an organization that may not be one of the larger organizations. It may help us improve access. We won’t know that unless we try it.



**Wheeler:** It sounds like you are approaching this as a pilot project. I like that idea. I have a concern. Smaller organizations can be dependent on a founder. When the founder leaves, there is trouble. Succession planning is critical to building capacity. I would like us to focus on that.

**Tripp-Folsom:** I am a fan of a small grants program because I see it as the equitable thing to do. What I see as a person of color, what I see coming out of a small grants program is innovation. And being able to serve communities that you don't know that you are not serving. When they look at the process we have, it can be daunting. I really feel like if we have a smaller grants program, we will be able to serve something like the Tongan community, like Empress Rules just pointed out. As being on the board of All Hands Raised, our small grants program is all about equity. I also help administer Nike's community fund and I see organizations I have never heard of coming from there. That small fund recipient can become a new organization doing amazing things. As you said, the Children's Levy is only reaching 8% of children. If we can find a way to increase access, that is critical. One percent of our budget as a pilot to address an urgent need makes sense to me. This is a way for us to be able to respond back to the Empress Rules report. I think you need additional staff to do it. I think it might need a full staff person. I think the community should be part of this process.

**Pellegrino:** That is time as was pointed out. I am hesitant to dictate too much at the front end. We want the new person, who will run this process, to work with the community so they come back with genuine information from the folks who are living it. You don't know what you don't know. I don't know that we as staff will have the answers before you commit to try it. I do think it is worth trying to understand it better. I think that person working in the community will come up with those answers. You could try and fail. It is possible. I think it has a decent chance of success. It is something we should be looking at as a way to offer more equitable access.

**Tripp-Folsom:** I think we have a roadmap with our report here. If we went back to these same groups, they could really help us with this small grants program. We must make sure that whoever we hire, they must do this with the community. It will help us as trustees as well. It will add more validity for the voters to see that this small grants program was created by the community.

### Public Testimony

**Kheoshi Owens** from **Empress Rules**. Thank you for investing in me. As a small business, I would appreciate an entrepreneur pipeline. Because we have been excluded from opportunities in leadership, how to write grants, all those things we have been excluded from, but we have been doing the work. We know how to do the work better than anybody else. But, how do we get the grants. How do we do our business taxes? If you mess up on your taxes, that is another way you can go out of business. If we had a social entrepreneurship pipeline, where people in the community who are already doing the work but don't have the paperwork aspect of it down. If they could get support for that, then they are more likely to have longevity. Working where I used to work, when I came in the program it was 60% on track to graduate; when I left it was 97%. It is still thriving because I empowered my team. It wasn't something patriarchal. We have to decenter, so it is more collective. When someone does decide to leave, the next person already knows what to do. They already know how to continue the legacy.

The 30% is scary. We need help with fundraising. We don't know how to do that. If I really want to build capacity, I need to get how much money in order for you to give me \$30,000? My friends aren't white. I don't have rich, white people I can call and say hey can I get some seed money. If you look at the headlines today, women only get like 2% of seed money. We need support.

I think the grant is an excellent idea. You will be able to reach people you never reached before.

**Wheeler:** This is an excellent point you are raising. It raises a question. Looking at the role of this levy, where does capacity building come in?

**Pellegrino:** You heard from Linton last meeting. We are doing great work in our community. We would love to serve more children in our preschool program, but we don't have the money. That is an example of an organization that would need support to build capacity.

**Wheeler:** I don't think one FTE is going to cut it. I need help with administration, fundraising, and the other things that are needed to run an organization. Do you want to be doing that?

**Pellegrino:** There is a limit to who we can take on. The most grass roots organizations are not going to be a target for this fund. There are city contracting issues. The City of Portland does offer some very small grants. There are ways to do it. There is something in between the most grass roots and being able to handle \$60,000 per year. That is where we would be aiming. That is what I am imagining now.

We propose shopping this idea in a larger group, then bringing that feedback to you at our next meeting.

*The Allocation Committee agreed to this proposal.*

#### Public Testimony

My name is **Louise Williams**. I was born in Portland, Oregon. I graduated Beaverton High School. I was a victim of child abuse. It is from all populations. I was able to start a charitable trust in India for the prevention of child abuse. I had to retire for health reasons. I understand that a charitable trust needs to be set up with a successor. I have become a peer support specialist. My focus is on education. We need to treat each population equally. I think it is wonderful what you are doing. I would be very happy to help. Common Sense Parenting is the very best program.

Pellegrino: We will handle testimony at the next meeting.

Adjourned 4:00 pm