



## Feedback Submitted to PCL on Proposed Strategies, RFI and Review Process

PCL invited public feedback on various aspects of [PCL's 2019-20 funding round](#). We sent e-news communications to PCL contacts database, invited feedback via PCL social media channels, and posted the documents on PCL's website. Public feedback options included: 1) four short, open-ended questions on Survey Monkey for anonymous response; 2) a specialized email address to PCL, and 3) time for public testimony during the Committee's 5/13, 5/30 and 6/3 meetings.

Eight individuals provided feedback during the 4-week comment period: 5 responded to questions on Survey Monkey, 2 grantees sent emails, and one funder sent an email. Staff summarized the feedback and shared it with the Allocation Committee for consideration during their June 17, 2019 meeting. Feedback resulted in one change as outlined in the first bulleted item below. Otherwise, feedback did not result in changes to PCL's adopted strategies, RFI template, or application review process. PCL staff did not ask respondents if their feedback could be shared publicly in its raw form, so staff paraphrased it for this document. In the future, we will ask for consent to share comments publicly.

We appreciate the time people took to share their concerns, questions and perspectives. Thank you!

### Public Feedback on Draft Strategies and PCL Staff Responses

*Seven people provided feedback on the draft strategies; 5 anonymously and 2 grantees. No clear themes emerged from the feedback; all of it focused on unique issues.*

- **Racism in child-serving systems and Rationale for program area strategies**  
Survey respondent referred to data cited in rationale for a strategy in Child Abuse Prevention & Intervention and in After School program areas. Respondent expressed concern that data used in the rationale implied blaming children of color for outcomes in systems that serve them and perpetuates racism. Respondent noted that while strategies focus on supporting children to overcome those challenges, PCL strategies do not address racism in systems. **Response:** PCL acknowledges that institutional racism through policies and practices over generations have caused the inequities experienced by children and families today. PCL seeks applicants with experience, intentionality and success working to mitigate and prevent the harm these systems cause to children and families of color and other populations marginalized. Staff has removed the referenced data from the strategy rationale, regrets the implications it made, and apologizes for the harm caused.
- **Organization/Program Staff speaking Languages of people served**  
Survey respondent expressed that child abuse prevention/intervention programs may have difficulty finding staff who speak the diversity of languages spoken by children/families to be served in the programs. **Response:** PCL acknowledges this workforce issue in any of PCL's program areas and understands that organizations may struggle to find bilingual or multi-lingual staff who also have the programmatic experience desired. Still, community engagement results from 2019 (and from 2013) highly prioritized program staff speaking the language of families served. The priority also aligns with city equity goals and strategies, particularly around service accessibility. PCL has constructed

the RFI to reward organizations with greater success in building language accessibility and workforce diversity into their services. PCL will support workforce development and training for grantees.

- **Transportation Costs**

Grantee noted that desired features for after school programs include providing or assuring transportation for children. Grantee outlined costs of transporting children home from a multi-site after school program. Calculations indicated a bus typically costs \$300 per afternoon, and programs providing transportation after each session at many schools could cost well over \$100k per year (\$300 x 10 schools x 40 sessions per school/year). **Response:** This feature remains in the strategies and staff added a clarifying statement to the strategies document that the program features “emphasize priorities but are not requirements.” Staff recognizes the major cost implications of applicants providing transportation. Staff will include information on the transportation arrangements proposed by applicants, including cost, in the summary materials it prepares for the Committee to help weigh competing policy goals in the programs it chooses to fund.

- **Basic needs resources for families**

Grantee suggested that the Child Abuse Prevention & Intervention strategy of “connect families to needed resources and supports for stabilization” be included in all program areas and include “access to resources and skill building around economic empowerment.” Grantee specifically suggested that PCL have a goal of assuring greater access to the Earned Income Tax Credit (EITC) by all families enrolled in PCL-funded programs. **Response:** Staff understand the rationale for this feedback but did not recommend implementing the suggested changes for several reasons. This strategy is included in the Child Abuse Prevention program area specifically because community engagement results prioritized it to address family circumstances often seen as “neglect” in Child Welfare practice. Families experiencing poverty need access to resources, and the proposed strategy focuses on making those connections to minimize the risk of children being removed from their homes for “neglect.” Improving usage of EITC by low income families is important, but it did not surface in community engagement as a desired service strategy.

- **Volunteer Mentors and Programs with Staff as Mentors**

Grantee suggested the mentoring strategy be broadened to include programs with volunteer mentors, rather than focus on programs with staff that serve as mentors. **Response:** As noted above, the program features emphasize priorities, based on strong preferences that surfaced in community engagement, but are not requirements. Volunteer mentoring programs could still apply for funding. That said, in PCL’s experience, volunteer-reliant mentoring programs have struggled to: recruit and retain volunteers; assure mentors complete training; and provide substantial hours of service to youth. Community engagement results highly prioritized mentors who have ongoing support and training to deliver quality mentoring experiences, and who reflect the cultural identity and experiences of youth in mentoring programs. Programs with experience and success recruiting, training, and retaining volunteer mentors who reflect the diversity and experiences of the youth will provide most, if not all, of the desired program features.

## **Public Feedback on Draft Request for Investment and PCL Staff Response**

*Eight people commented on the draft RFI; PCL staff solicited input directly from the City's Office of Equity and Human rights and from a funder, 5 people responded anonymously to Survey Monkey, and one grantee via email.*

- **Scoring Demographics of Applicant's Staff**

Three people raised an issue of fairness to large organizations in how the section on demographics of the organization's staff is scored. This section provides more points for organizations where a majority clients, staff and board identify as a person of color. The feedback referenced examples where large organizations may have difficulty meeting this threshold overall, yet a smaller unit of the organization provides programming to a particular population, and unit staff reflect the community served. **Response:** Staff recognizes this challenge for large organizations, however the entire organization section of the RFI provides applicants opportunities to explain their unique organizational efforts and commitment to racial equity, diversity and inclusion. Six of the 36 total points in the section relate directly to the demographics of the organization's clients, staff, and board. The remaining 30 points ask the applicant to discuss myriad other ways the organization functions, especially in its commitment to racial equity, diversity, and inclusion. PSU recommended that PCL improve equity by prioritizing organizations that reflect the population served. PCL's RFI template follows PSU's recommendation, and honors community engagement results along with city equity goals, as part of our overall effort to improve racial equity, diversity, and inclusion in funding.

- **Accuracy of Demographic Data in applications**

Two people noted concerns with the accuracy of applicants' data on client and staff demographics. They indicated that clients and staff have the option, not requirement, to provide those data to organizations serving them or employing them, and some people fear disclosing some types of information (race/ethnicity, LGBTQ+, disability). **Response:** Staff acknowledges that applicants may not have complete or accurate demographic information. The RFI template asks that applicants discuss how they gathered the demographic information presented so that reviewers can understand how people are asked to provide the information, whether any estimating is done, and if so on what basis. Although these methods are imperfect, most of the feedback received through PSU and community engagement, along with consideration of city equity goals and strategies, highlight the importance of asking for and considering this information.

- **Other uniquely identifiable populations**

During the 6/3 meeting, the committee heard testimony from a grantee who suggested that the justice-involved population has unique considerations and experiences that affect the way organizations and programs serve them. He advocated for applicants to have the option to identify that population in the demographic data they provide in response to the RFI. **Response:** The RFI, Section I, part H, currently provides applicants the option of adding demographic data on unique populations into the demographic form and their applications overall. Staff appreciate the grantee's rationale and assert the RFI leaves applicants the ability to discuss specific populations that PCL may have overlooked. The Allocation Committee adopted the RFI's focus on racial equity, diversity, and inclusion because these priorities come from PSU recommendations, community engagement, and city goals.

- Plain Language**

Feedback from a fellow funder advised revising the draft RFI to improve use of plain language and define terms. “Plain language” includes practices supported by the federal and state government to make public documents easier to read and understand. This funder has a consultant review all application materials for plain language and argued that it improves the accessibility and understanding. **Response:** Staff has included plain language revisions (shorter, simpler sentences, fewer clauses, active voice) on the RFI template, and added definitions of terms (diversity, inclusion, best practice, evidence-based).
- Request for Example Responses**

Two people requested clarification on some RFI questions. One posed many questions that staff can answer through developing general guidance for applicants and an FAQ document. Another respondent asked that PCL provide example responses to questions to help applicants understand how best to respond. **Response:** PCL plans to do this and provide information on its web site and at the bidders’ conferences.
- Consequences of RFI priorities for Racial Equity, Diversity, and Inclusion**

One respondent raised questions about whether the EDI priorities in the RFI will result in major changes of which organizations receive Levy funding, and how that will impact currently funded programs. The respondent asked whether PCL had considered the consequence of a potentially large transition in funded programs. **Response:** Staff appreciates this concern and the impact that potential changes have on families who use the services, staff in the programs, and organizations that manage the changes. Each time PCL runs its large competitive funding process, some organizations and programs will lose funding while others receive new funding. PCL staff structured the current RFI questions and scoring criteria around recommendations from PSU, community engagement results, and City of Portland racial equity goals and strategies. For the past several years, approximately 70% of children served by PCL programs identify as a child of color. PCL staff assert that all families in Portland deserve the best opportunities to support their children’s development and well-being, and institutional policies and practices have resulted in unequal access to opportunities over time, causing health and educational inequities for children and families of color. PCL’s RFI asks organizations to discuss their commitment to racial equity, diversity, and inclusion so that all children and families served with PCL funds can experience safety, belonging, and success.

**Public Feedback on Proposed Review Process and PCL Staff Response**

*Two people provided feedback about the review process; 1 anonymously and 1 grantee.*

- Reviewer Scoring**

One person sought clarification regarding the information reviewers use to score applications. **Response:** PCL staff instruct reviewers to score applications based only on the information provided in the application and to not let outside knowledge about organizations and programs influence their scoring. Staff will stress this requirement in training and in practice scoring.
- Reviewers Score Full Application**

One person supported the option for reviewers to score the full application stating they think it will provide the best result.