

Report: Feedback Survey on proposed PCL Community Advisory

Introduction

This brief report outlines findings from a survey inviting feedback to PCL staff and Allocation Committee on the proposal to start a community advisory committee. PCL staff outlined a draft proposal to create a community advisory committee. [The proposal](#) arose out of recommendations from [PCL's community engagement process](#) led by Empress Rules Equity Consulting. It was [echoed in recommendations](#) from PSU's Center for the Improvement of Child & Family Services and feedback in PCL's recent Small Grants funding process. The PCL Allocation Committee offered preliminary feedback about the advisory committee idea during its June 15, 2021 meeting.

PCL staff invited over 300 stakeholders to provide feedback on the proposal through an anonymous online survey via Survey Monkey. Stakeholders included grantee partners, community partners, and past volunteer reviewers. The survey was open for 2 weeks. It asked 5 questions, only in English: 2 Likert-scale questions, one about purpose/structure of the advisory and about advisory membership; one open-ended question inviting any additional comment; and 2 questions about respondent demographics.

Survey Findings

The survey had 69 respondents (approximately 22% response rate). The majority identified as PCL grantee (57%), others as community member (25%) and PCL community partner (18%); 3% did not answer the question. In addition, 49% identified their racial/ethnic identity as white, 42% as an identity categorized as Black, Indigenous, or other People of Color (BIPOC), and 9% did not answer that question. (For more race/ethnicity identity details, see appendix to this report).

Overall, respondents favored the proposal. Of the 69 respondents, 87% of them strongly agreed/agreed that they:

- Support the proposed purpose and structure of the advisory committee; 8.7% disagreed/strongly disagreed; and 4.3% weren't sure.
- Support the proposed membership considerations for the advisory committee; 5.8% disagreed/strongly disagreed; and 7.2% weren't sure.

There were minimal differences in support between respondents by race/ethnicity. Among all respondents:

- 74% gave all “strongly agree/agree” responses with no variation between questions (for example they did not “agree” on one but “disagree” or “not sure” on another). This group’s race/ethnicity demographics were: 51% white, 41% BIPOC, and 8% not given.
- 22% of respondents had answers that varied between agree/disagree/not sure. This group’s race/ethnicity demographics were: 53% white, 33% BIPOC, and 13% not given.
- 3% of respondents answered “strongly disagree/disagree” on all Likert questions and 1% answered “not sure” on all Likert questions; these respondents all identified as BIPOC.

Respondent comments provided additional insight and feedback for PCL Allocation Committee and staff consideration.

Positive comments: 17 respondents provided positive comments in support of the proposal; 8 comments were general. Four comments focused on the advisory providing more community oversight to PCL and emphasized values desired in the work. Three comments focused on membership- in support of the proposed diversity among members, member training, and stipends. (See Appendix for specific comments).

Constructive comments: 25 respondents, including several that support the proposal, also raised concerns or issues for further clarification by PCL.

- 8 respondents mentioned wanting *greater clarity on the goals, powers, and accountability for the advisory*. A quote that illustrates some issues raised, “This is very high level and leaves a lot of questions unanswered. Some important ones from my perspective: - who approves committee participants? - what are the guiding values the committee would use in performing its functions; in other words, what problem does this new structure seek to solve? - how will the committee make funding recommendations with so little time spent, given staff have normally done this based on their tremendous in-depth knowledge of the sector and individual organizations? - what weight would be given to the committees funding recommendations in the final allocation decisions?”
- 6 respondents offered suggestions for *assuring representative membership on the committee*. Two focused on loosening the requirement for members to not have had employment/participation with PCL the past 2 years; three focused on other factors for membership (membership by people experiencing poverty; designate a percentage of spots for past

participants PCL services, at least 6 instead of 5 members from N & E Portland; members who have lived experience with homelessness, foster parents; members who are housing advocates and food security advocates)

- 4 respondents expressed concern about the *projected 12-15 hours/year of work by the committee*, and some felt it too little while one felt it too much. A quote that highlights the concerns that it is too little time, *“I think the commitment is not enough. Not only should they be meeting monthly, but they should also be a part of subcommittees, and the stipend should be higher. It cannot be in the same board structure if you want a different result. All of the other elements/goals, I appreciate. I don’t know if three trainings is enough. Protocols, agreements, and a shared language needs to be developed. People need to have a foundational understanding of the history of racism, how it showed up then, and how it shows it now.”*
- 5 respondents mentioned *accessibility issues for members* including interpretation/translation needs of members, technology skills/computer access needed by members, whether training/onboarding planned is sufficient, and whether 2-year commitment is too much to ask. One suggested the stipend be larger or that PCL find other ways to compensate members for their work; the other respondent asked why the stipends would be offered at all.

To see each comment provided by survey respondents, see the Appendix to this report.

Conclusion & Implications

Overall, PCL staff feel grateful to the survey respondents for their constructive and supportive feedback. Key questions raised through this feedback include:

1. What additional clarity is needed on the advisory’s purpose, goals, and powers?
2. What implications does this have for the hours of work projected for the advisory?
3. What changes do we want to make to membership requirements and accessibility based on how we answer questions 1 and 2?

Appendix

This is a technical appendix to this report. It features tables showing quantitative data for questions asked in the survey. It also shows all qualitative responses given by respondents and has grouped them by topic/theme.

Responses to Likert Scale Questions; number of respondents per answer

	Strongly Agree	Agree	Not Sure	Disagree	Strongly Disagree	Total
Q1a. In general, this seems like the kind of purpose & structure that PCL should have a community advisory committee.	23	36	4	5	1	69
Q1b. In general, I support this proposed purpose & structure for a community advisory committee to PCL.	26	34	3	5	1	69
Q2a. In general, this seems like the kind of membership that PCL's community advisory should have	26	32	5	4	2	69
Q2b. In general, I support this proposed membership proposal	27	33	5	3	1	69

Respondent demographics

Survey asked respondents one open-ended question, “how do you identify your race/ethnicity?” Using answers provided, PCL staff coded respondents’ identities shown into the categories listed in the table. Some survey details excluded for respondent privacy.

Identity Category	Number of Respondents	Percent of Total Respondents (n=69)
BIPOC	29	42.0%
<i>Asian</i>	4	Asian, Asian Vietnamese
<i>Black</i>	4	Black, Black American
<i>Latinx</i>	10	Chicano, Hispanic, Hispanic/Latino/White, Latina, Latine, Latinx, Mexican
<i>Middle Eastern</i>	1	Middle Eastern
<i>Multiracial</i>	8	Asian & Caucasian, Bi-racial, Mixed (Black, white, Native America), Mixed, Multicultural (White and Native American), Multi-racial, Native American and white, 2 or more races
<i>Native American</i>	1	Native American
<i>Pacific Is.</i>	1	Palauan (Pacific Islander)
No response	6	8.7%
White	34	49.3% White, Caucasian, Slavic, white/non-Hispanic, White/non-Latino, White/mostly Western European ethnic, White/Hispanic decent

Near Parity in “Strongly Agree/Agree” responses demographics and all respondent demographics

74% of respondents provided all “strongly agree/agree” responses to the 2 Likert-scale questions on the survey. Moreover, BIPOC respondents comprised 42% of total respondents to the survey and they were 41% of the respondents that had all “strongly agree/agree” answers to the Likert questions. In other words, there was near parity between their participation in the survey and their support for the proposal. Similarly, white respondents comprised 49% of total respondents to the survey, and they were 51% of respondents that had all “strongly agree/agree” answers to the Likert questions. For 9% of all survey respondents, they didn’t provide any race/ethnicity identity information, and they also comprised 8% of the “strongly agree/agree” group. In other words, there was not disparity by race/ethnicity identity between total respondents and those supporting the proposal.

Positive Comments (15 responses)

Generally positive/supportive comments (8 responses)

- Having a committee will be beneficial
- much gratitude to you all for moving in this direction.
- Good luck, important work
- I like the idea.
- I appreciate this move towards having a advisory committee created.
- This seems really great and like a really awesome opportunity to continue involvement with the Portland Children's Levy.
- Overall we are happy with the partnership that we have with PCL. It appears the staff we are working with has bigger vision and plan with Purpose.
- I think this is a great plan and look forward to hearing more about this as it unfolds.

Purpose & structure: Values and Community Involvement in PCL (4 responses)

- PCL is headed in the right direction with forming an advisory committee. Oversight and transparency should be included as guiding principles.
- I support the idea of creating advisory committee, as long as its membership and practices will help support and advance principles of diversity, equity and inclusion among all of the communities served by PCL
- It provides another layer of insight and oversight for the PCL decision-makers in the Allocation Committee
- If they do not like a proposal, they could have input on what would make that proposal stronger.

Membership (3 responses)

- I think it's very important to have members that represent the communities that PCL will be supporting.
- I think providing training and stipends is a great way to encourage and grow members of the committee.

- I think it's important to have solid training to combat bias, especially reading applications from organizations for and by historically underserved communities. I liked that in my grant reviewing experience with PCL, there were good conversations about how errors in spelling/grammar in a grant application are not indicative of an organizations impact, but rather shows how grant reviewers have been groomed to expect everyone has the same access to dominant languages and how that is a bias that hinders a reviewers ability to see the success of an organization.

Constructive Comments (25 responses)

Purpose & Structure: Clarity of goals, power, accountability (8 responses)

- Clear objectives for an advisory board and clarity around decision making power seems like an important part of the advisory council.
- In theory I always support advisory committees. I believe these are important and create change. I would like to see a heavy commitment to "accountability", as part of the work mentioned in the first piece so results are achieved that are intended.
- On it's face, the idea of having a committee (COL) that informs another committee (Allocation) all with the support of staff - it seems like a lot. But, getting more community input and compensating people wouldn't hurt.
- I think it's a good idea - just a bit weary/skeptical of yet another parent/community advisory committee
- This is very high level and leaves a lot of questions unanswered. Some important ones from my perspective: - who approves committee participants? - what are the guiding values the committee would use in performing its functions; in other words, what problem does this new structure seek to solve? - how will the committee make funding recommendations with so little time spent, given staff have normally done this based on their tremendous in-depth knowledge of the sector and individual organizations? - what weight would be given to the committees funding recommendations in the final allocation decisions?
- I am wondering why you would not seek to get this type of advice and lived experience from the PCL staff? Feels like a work-around to accommodate the majority white staff that you have. Maybe I don't fully understand the problem you are hoping to solve with the advisory committee. I am also concerned with spending PCL funds on another position when these are funds that could go to nonprofits.
- I'm not sure that the committee should make funding recommendations. I think it will be hard to find people who can be unbiased and not for one group or another.
- This feels typical of Portland - bylaws, charters, trainings. This structure feels very rooted in White dominant culture.

Membership: Member Qualifications & Representation (6 responses)

- Take out the 2 year employment with grantee agency and replace with, not currently employed with PCL grantee agency and no conflict of interest with current agencies.
- If membership cannot include anyone who has been a PCL grantee staff/volunteer/participant (?) within 2 years, and the reach of PCL grantmaking grows,

that can potentially limit the ability of the advisory to include the desired representation and participation of priority community members.

- The membership should reflect the population most impacted by the activities of PCL funded programs. In other words, it should be based on the demographics of those experiencing poverty in COP. Otherwise it will be 70% white. A significant percent of the committee should be people with lived experience of poverty and/or homelessness.
- I would like to see a commitment to including a percentage of members who have utilized PCL services.
- Representation from foster parents, housing advocates, food security advocates
- It would be more representative of the recipients of PCL funded programs if at least half of the members of the community advisory committee came from a combination of North and East Portland (at least 6) rather than 5. It would also be beneficial to see some diversity in social economic status of committee members along with other demographics.

Membership: Amount of time needed for Work (4 comments)

- The number of hours required seems large. I am not sure if this is monthly or quarterly, but I would advocate for longer amount of time less frequently. Also I know that there are current members on the committee who already represent these groups. Why not just add more members to the actual allocation committee?
- The annual hour commitment listed seems incredibly low for what's planned. I could see 12-15 hours in committee, but imagine many additional hours being needed outside of committee times.
- The 12-15 hour/year estimate seems too short, and could be insufficient to the expected work.
- I think the commitment is not enough. Not only should they be meeting monthly, but they should also be a part of subcommittees, and the stipend should be higher. It cannot be in the same board structure if you want a different result. All of the other elements/goals, I appreciate. I don't know if three trainings is enough. Protocols, agreements, and a shared language needs to be developed. People need to have a foundational understanding of the history of racism, how it showed up then, and how it shows it now.

Membership: Accessibility for Members (5 comments)

- Might be nice to mention advisory members need some computer/tech skills?? Also, I assume interpreters will be provided if needed.
- 2 year commitment may be hard. I hope the trainings and meetings structures are conducive to translation and interpretation, which should be offered.
- Feels like there should be more onboarding and training opportunities to make this feel truly accessible. Would be great to make this a real skill building opportunity along with and advising opportunity.
- I understand that the city is trying to avoid issuing 1099s, but \$500 a year in compensation for the amount of emotional and physical work these folks will have to do on behalf of PCL feels extractive and exploitive, to be honest. I participate in equity

advisory groups that compensate people \$200-\$400 per meeting (plus meals) and I myself compensate my own advisory committee members \$500 per day-long meeting. If cash payments are an issue, then figure out a way to compensate with gift cards or other methods.

- Questions: Why would a board member receive a stipend? Is it to request reimbursement for travel or unexpectedly incurred office expenses? It is used to create equity among members?

[Comments opposing proposed Advisory \(2 responses\)](#)

Two respondents had Likert answers indicating no support for the proposal and their open-ended responses included:

- The PCL has enough oversight and does not need another layer of administration, especially from a group that only understands what the PCL does through their own meaningless feelings, arbitrary perceptions and inexperienced gaze.
- PCL has been doing great work for 2 decades without an advisory committee. The advisory committee is the Council and voters who have renewed the Levy multiple times. This seems unnecessary.