



600 NE Grand Ave.
Portland, OR 97232-2736
oregonmetro.gov

Metro Central Community Enhancement Program Committee interest form

Please return completed two-page application to:

Metro Regional Center

Attn: Rob Nathan

Email: rob.nathan@oregonmetro.gov

Questions? Call 503-797-1691

Information

Name: Derron Coles

Organization or business (optional): DRC Learning Solutions

Mailing address: 8802 NW Shepherd Street

City: Portland State: Oregon Zip: 97231

Preferred phone: (541) 908-1594 Email: derron@drcLearningSolutions.com

Residential address: 8802 NW Shepherd Street

Check one:

☐ Forest Park Neighborhood Association

☐ Friends of Cathedral Park

☐ Linnton Neighborhood Association

☐ Northwest District Neighborhood Association

☒ Northwest Business Owner

Metro strives for membership on its committee that reflects the diversity of the Portland metro region.

The following demographic information is optional:

Gender: Male Age: 40 Race or ethnicity: African American

Briefly describe your interest in the Metro Central Enhancement Committee and why you would like to serve.

My interest in serving derives from my identity as a Black environmental steward. I have devoted my career to diversifying the green sector, while correcting the environmental injustices placed on low-income residents and communities of color. I continue to accomplish this goal through nonprofit workforce development programming (The Blueprint Foundation) and for-profit JEDI (justice, equity, diversity, and inclusion) assessment and training for green sector companies (DRC Learning Solutions). My work for both entities occurs in or near the project area and encompasses the community needs outlined as justification for the MCE grants; namely, community enhancement and wildlife area restoration, environmental literacy education and improving access to nature-based activities. Given this



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alignment of goals, I look forward to contributing to the successful launch of similar efforts that can add to our collective impact.

Members of the Metro Central Enhancement Committee offer a wide variety of complementary skills and experiences. Please describe your relevant knowledge and experience.

I would describe myself as a learning strategist with over 18 years of experience designing learner-focused competency development training. My curriculum design portfolio is wide-ranging, running the gamut from learning solutions for technical topics, like a globally utilized online training on river system analysis, to interpersonal skills training, such as his award-winning cultural competency curriculum.

I have a bachelor's degree in mechanical engineering from University of Maryland, Baltimore County, and a masters and doctorate in civil engineering with a water resources focus from Oregon State University. For the last 5 years, I have been executive director of the Blueprint Foundation, where I implement extracurricular programming for environmental science and green building that uses a model for student development called **WISE** (Witness, investigate, solve, educate), where students witness the beauty and benefits of nature, investigate environmental issues in their neighborhood and watershed, contribute to a solution (e.g., building a bioswale), then educate their community about what they learned. All programming is culturally responsive and takes into account the inequitable environmental burden placed on Black, Brown Indigenous and low-income communities.

Please explain how you keep informed and aware of the community's diverse needs and priorities. Summarize any relevant experience working with people of varied backgrounds

The Blueprint Foundation is, at its core, built upon relationships. These relationships are interwoven between TBF staff, the mentors we employ, the organizations and community members we partner with, and most importantly, the youth and their families that we serve. A key component of nurturing and strengthening these relationships is to give voice and agency to those we serve by formally and informally soliciting their feedback. This is done directly during group and one-on-one discussion sessions, via written pre/post assessments of learning and service activities, as well as routine surveys and questionnaires through the web-based Survey Monkey software. Feedback and data from these inquiries gauge impact and effectiveness of our learning activities, as well as identify activities, skills, and knowledge most valued by program participants.

I also learn of community needs and priorities through DRC Learning Solutions, as I provide program evaluation and strategic planning consulting to various community-based organizations, governmental entities, and private businesses. The focus of my company is JEDI; consequently, the goal of my assessments and planning assignments is usually determining the needs of historically marginalized communities and people.

Do you anticipate any conflicts of interest that might require you to excuse yourself from the review of any potential project? For example, do you or an immediate family member staff or sit on the board of an organization that might seek a grant from this program? Are you a consultant that might be interested in submitting a proposal for the type of work that this program funds? Please explain.

The Blueprint Foundation does have work that aligns with this program. We have not previously sought out funds from this grant program. If we decide to do so in future, I would excuse myself from the scoring and discussion of that project. Similarly, I would do so if one of our partner organizations applies. I have previously served on a Metro grant selection committee where the latter has occurred.
