

COMMUNITY CAPACITY TO SUPPORT RACIAL EQUITY
BUDGET NOTE RESPONSE

Date: 2/18/2020
Department: COO & DEI
Meeting Date: 2/25/2020

Prepared and presented by:
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Length: 30 min

ISSUE STATEMENT

Staff is reporting back to Council in response to the *Agency-wide community capacity support to advance racial equity* FY20 budget note introduced by Councilor Chase. The budget note directed the COO to propose an agency-wide program that would:

- leverage and expand upon existing agency-wide community partnerships to support community capacity building efforts;
- develop long term strategic partnerships in progressing Metro's work to advance racial equity in greater Portland;
- address increased demand on community partners in supporting Metro on its regional initiatives;
- foster sustained community-based capacity to strengthen their ability to advocate for racial equity in Metro programs, policies and practices.

ACTION REQUESTED

Staff is sharing program options and cost estimates for consideration in the FY20-21 budget.

IDENTIFIED POLICY OUTCOMES

The proposed capacity building pilot program, co-created by Metro staff and community partners, would support civic and community engagement capacity among community-based organizations (CBOs) who serve communities of color. This program would address the increasing demand Metro is placing on CBO partners and would strengthen coalition building so together we can deliver on Metro's region-wide efforts to advance livability and racial equity, including Metro's:

- Strategic Plan to Advance Racial Equity, Diversity, and Inclusion
- Regional Waste Plan
- Regional Transportation Plan
- Parks and Nature System Plan
- Housing Bond
- Parks and Nature Bond

POLICY QUESTIONS

- Should Metro implement a pilot community capacity building for racial equity program?
- Does the program outlined here meet Council's expectations and desired outcomes?
- Are there particular outcomes Council would prioritize?
- If interested, what level of investment would Council direct the COO to pursue?
- Is there any additional information Council would like to receive?

POLICY OPTIONS FOR COUNCIL TO CONSIDER

The challenge - Metro has been rapidly expanding and deepening its work with CBO partners, as directed by Metro's Strategic Plan to Advance Racial Equity, Diversity and Inclusion. These increasing requests for partnership are outstripping CBOs' ability to engage with us because of the demand for their time and, more significantly, the expertise of these organizations' leadership, staff and members. Furthermore, current models of partnership and engagement –often short term, project-based and narrowly focused – do not necessarily address the longer term demand for these organizations' capacity needs. While they are important to advancing mutual interests, they are unable to fully build long-term trust and relationships, support leadership development, or provide the technical and topic-specific education needed, all of which are necessary bedrocks of meaningful community engagement and civic participation. Many areas of the region – Clackamas, Washington and East Multnomah counties in particular – lack stable funding required to sustain the civic engagement infrastructure Metro requires to advance racial equity.

The proposed solution - The Program Design Committee recommends that Metro implement the capacity building program proposed in Exhibit A to meet the challenges outlined above. The objectives of this program would include:

- Strategically support CBOs in developing and sustaining civic and community engagement capacity for Black, Indigenous, and other communities of color to meaningfully inform and impact Metro's policy and financial decisions;
- Create a vehicle for strategic investment in community capacity in geographic areas and topic areas of interest in anticipation of expanding needs or emerging priorities;
- Support, through coordination and facilitation, ongoing changes to Metro systems and processes that build trust and reduce harm in its relationships with Black, Indigenous, and other communities of color;
- Support agency-wide best practice sharing, relationship management and deeper integration of community partnership and engagement outcomes into Metro decision-making to maximize the impact of existing partnership work;
- Support Metro advisory and oversight committee recruitment and advance the diversification of these committees through intentional training and recruitment in communities of color across the tri-county region, in partnership with community-based organizations.

Program design - The Program Design Committee recommends using three program elements to meet these objectives. They are, in order of priority:

1. Flexible capacity building grants: Three-year grants to CBOs serving communities of color to support capacity for civic and community engagement.
2. Program resources: Resources to be used by the grant cohort to meet shared needs – could include training and professional development, convening to share best practices and strengthen coalitions, technical support, etc.
3. Direct department support: support provided by Metro's departments and visitor venues that advance the knowledge and skills of the grant cohort and their organizations. - could include services such as topic education or technical assistance, GIS support or access to data, etc.

Staff-generated program options

	Program elements	Details	Ongoing annual cost
Option 1: Grants only	Grants	5 partnerships	\$500,000
Option 2: Grants plus program resources	Grants + program resources	5 partnerships and \$100,000 in program resources	\$600,000
Option 3: High-investment	Grants + program resources	7 partnerships and \$100,000 in program resources	\$800,000

Rationale

Option 3: High investment

This option sends a strong signal to Metro's community, government and philanthropic partners that Metro will continue its leadership in advancing racial equity in the region through partnership with community-based organizations who serve communities of color. This option allows for a wider array of partnerships across Metro's topic areas and geographic areas of interest. It also supports the cohort by providing program resources intended to fill collective needs of grantees and create spaces to share learning and advance knowledge and skills in Metro topic areas. Community partners involved in developing this program expressed strong desire for program resources to support a cohort of grantees.

- Pro: Maximizes impact across geographic areas, topic areas and racial/ethnic groups.
- Con: Places a higher financial burden on Metro.

Option 2: Grants plus program resources

The need for capacity building is significant and urgent, especially as Metro ramps up investments through its regional investment strategies. The Program Design Committee recommends a minimum annual investment of \$500,000 across five partnerships to address this need. A minimum cohort of five CBO partners also adds value to the program through best-practice and knowledge sharing across organizations. This option includes a smaller number of grants than Option 3, but should enable Metro to test the efficacy of the program for building community capacity across multiple communities, geographies and topic areas of interest. It also retains program resources to support the cohort of grantees.

- Pro: Program resources maximize the value of convening a grant cohort.
- Con: Increased costs to Metro.

Option 1: Grants only

This option removes the program resources, focusing solely on capacity building grants, but retains the minimum investment of \$500,000 across five partnerships.

- Pro: Achieves core objectives of the program and supports strategic geographic investments across the region.
- Con: Reduces Metro's ability to build knowledge around key areas of interest and does not support shared learning across our partners through the cohort model.

PROGRAM DESIGN COMMITTEE RECOMMENDATIONS

The Program Design Committee recommends Metro Council invest in a community capacity building program for racial equity to meet urgent needs of Metro's CBO partners and invest in the long-term success of our initiatives. The Committee also sees value in allocating program resources to complement capacity building grants in order to support shared learning and coalition-building. Staff-proposed options 2 and 3 meet these criteria, while option 3 best addresses the urgency and scale of the problem articulated by the Committee.

A variety of reasons suggest the program is best implemented at scale rather than in smaller increments. First, for Metro to see outcomes across geographic areas of highest need – Clackamas, Washington and East Multnomah counties - and across many of its topic areas of interest, more than a few grants are required. Furthermore, the amount of resources, time and energy needed to develop this program with community partners, and the staff time necessary to administer the program, only make sense if more than a few community-based organizations can benefit.

The Program Design Committee also recommends assigning one FTE to this program to support not only continued program design, administration and improvement, but also Metro-wide (1) relationship management and community engagement coordination, (2) advisory and oversight committee recruitment and (3) best-practice sharing to maximize benefit and reduce harm.

STRATEGIC CONTEXT & FRAMING COUNCIL DISCUSSION

Landscape of existing partnership work

Metro works with community-based organizations who serve communities of color in a variety of ways and with a diverse array goals. With a few exceptions, this work is short-term (a year or less), task-specific and revolves around specific project deliverables. This is often the right type of work to meet Metro's immediate needs and generate our desired outcomes. However, the nature of this work makes it difficult for community partners to build long-term capacity and relationships in the communities they serve, which in turn, jeopardizes their ability to deliver quality outcomes and Metro's ability to meet its commitments. This capacity building program would support Metro's existing investments in community partnerships by adding capacity for community partners so they can more effectively meet our shared needs and achieve our shared vision for equity in the region.

Regional collaboration

The program being proposed reflects a growing consensus among Metro's public sector and philanthropic peers that building capacity for civic engagement in communities of color should be a priority. Metro's DEI team has been in conversations since the fall of 2019 with City of Portland's Office of Civic Life, Meyer Memorial Trust, NW Health Foundation and North Star Civic Foundation about impacts of a this type of work region-wide and what future collaboration could look like. The DEI team is also in talks with other jurisdictions, including Washington County who approved of \$250,000 for community capacity building funding for racial equity in their FY20/21 budget.

Anticipated effects

- Trust built with communities of color across the region
- Stronger long-term partnerships with critical community partners,
- Community partners better able to meet Metro's increasing and evolving needs
- Communities of color more meaningfully included in Metro processes
- Stronger community networks and capacity in geographic areas of interest (in particular, Clackamas, Washington and East Multnomah counties)
- More robust capacity for CBOs and the communities they serve to engage around Metro priority issues (e.g. waste reduction, transportation planning, or access to nature)
- More racial, ethnic and geographic diversity on Metro advisory and oversight committees
- More community leaders serving on advisory and oversight committees and in leadership roles

Financial implications

Metro staff suggest that the resources for program implementation come from the following sources, recognizing this program's agency-wide benefit:

- \$250,000/yr. in ongoing M&S from WPES and Parks & Nature
- \$250,000/yr. (Option 1) – \$550,000/yr. (Option 3) in ongoing M&S from Metro's general fund (which could include existing funds from the Office of the COO, DEI, Communications and Visitor Venues).

BACKGROUND

Metro's DEI team convened a Program Design Committee comprised of culturally-specific community-based organizations and Metro staff from across the agency to co-create this budget note response. This committee met three times for facilitated half-day workshops to define potential objectives and components of a program. Metro leadership and staff from Parks and Nature, Waste Prevention and Environmental Services, Planning and Development, Communications, DEI, GAPD, the Office of the COO and the Council Office participated.

Community-based organizations with staff on the Program Design Committee include:

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| • Adelante Mujeres | • OPAL Environmental Justice |
| • Asian Pacific American Network of Oregon (APANO) | • The Portland African American Leadership Forum (PAALF) |
| • Basic Rights Oregon | • Unite Oregon |
| • Centro Cultural de Washington County | • Verde |
| • Coalition of Communities of Color | • Vision Action Network |
| • Latino Network | |

ATTACHMENTS

Exhibit A: Budget Note Response Form

Exhibit B: Letter of Support from Program Design Committee Co-chairs

- Is legislation required for Council action? ☐ Yes ☒ No