

# Community capacity support to advance racial equity

## Budget Note Response Form

Submitted to Metro Council on Tuesday, February 18th, 2020.

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### **Executive summary**

Metro Council instructed Metro staff to propose a program that would support long-term partnerships with community-based organizations serving communities of color to expand their civic and community engagement capacity. This budget note is, in part, a result of the expansive work of Metro's multiple investment measures that seek to improve livability and racial equity outcomes across the greater Portland region and the growing demand this places on community partners to ensure communities of color are represented in their design, decision-making and implementation. In response, Metro's DEI team led a co-creative process with non-profit organizations led by and for people of color to design a pilot community capacity building program to meet this growing demand. We outline this three-year pilot program in this budget note response.

Metro Council's investment in a Community Capacity Building for Racial Equity pilot program would build the capacity of community partners to work on our mutual regional equity goals. It would do this through multi-year grants to build capacity for civic and community engagement and support a cohort of partners to meet their shared needs around technical assistance, topical education and staff development. Together, these investments would work to build sustained capacity among community-based organizations to advance racial equity across Metro priorities and within Clackamas, Washington and Multnomah counties. When these CBOs succeed in their mission, they advance livability in the region for everyone. This pilot program represents a strategic investment in the relationships between Metro, its community partners, and communities of color – relationships that are currently difficult to sustain and are not likely to deepen through Metro's existing suite of community partnership activities.

### **Program Design Committee Recommendation**

The Program Design Committee recommends Metro Council invest in a community capacity building program for racial equity to meet the urgent needs of Metro's CBO partners and invest in the long-term success of Metro's initiatives. The Committee recommends implementing a grant program with additional program resources to support coalition-building, which aligns with staff-generated options 2 and 3 outlined in this proposal. Annual costs for these options range from \$600,000 - \$800,000.

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## Summary of budget note

Metro Council's budget note directed Metro staff to propose a Metro-wide program that would:

- develop long term strategic partnerships to advance racial equity in greater Portland;
- leverage and expand upon existing Metro-wide community partnerships to support community capacity building efforts;
- address increased demand on community partners to participate in regional initiatives;
- strengthen and sustain the ability of community partners to advocate for racial equity in Metro programs, policies and practices.

## The challenge

### The region is changing and Metro's role is expanding

The greater Portland region is becoming more racially and ethnically diverse, and Metro's work in advancing racial equity and livability is expanding through its investment measures and ongoing policies, programs and plans. Metro must ensure that Black, Indigenous, and other communities of color benefit from these efforts through expanded commitment to inclusive governance. Communities of color -who have been systematically denied access to political power, decision-making processes and the resources that stem from these decisions - should have *opportunities* to shape their own communities and the *ability* and *capacity* to do so.

### Community-based organizations are vital partners in advancing racial equity

Community based organizations (CBOs) who serve Black, Indigenous, and other communities of color continue to be critical drivers of power building in their communities and engage in a broad array of activities that support civic and community engagement. When these CBOs succeed in their mission, they advance livability in the region for everyone<sup>1</sup>. They are vital partners in Metro's efforts to achieve its mission, meaningfully engage Black, Indigenous, and other communities of color, and provide oversight and hold Metro accountable to its commitments. Their partnership is invaluable because Metro relies on these organizations to connect to – and build trust within – these communities where many people harbor distrust due to histories of governmental structures, processes and policies rooted in white supremacy.

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<sup>1</sup> Metro's Strategic Plan to Advance Racial Equity, Diversity and Inclusion states that "by addressing the barriers experienced by people of color, we will effectively also identify solutions and remove barriers for other disadvantaged groups. The result will be that all people in the 25 cities and three counties of the Portland region will experience better outcomes." (p8)

### **The problem – CBOs are under-resourced to do long-term civic engagement work**

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<sup>2</sup>. These increasing requests to engage with Metro have a side effect; Metro is outstripping CBO’s ability to engage with us in terms of the demand for their time and, more significantly, the expertise of these organizations’ leadership 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. Short-term models of resourcing partnerships also create challenges for implementing decades-long projects. For example, our Regional Waste Plan or investment measure implementation will take 10 or more years of work to complete and yet our community partnership grants and contracts usually only span a year or less.

### **The proposed solution**

#### **Invest in CBOs as long-term strategic partners**

Metro and CBOs that serve Black, Indigenous, and other communities of color share elements of a vision of, and commitment to, advancing racial equity, building transformative rather than transactional partnerships, and meaningfully engaging communities in every part of our region. Because of this shared commitment, the role CBOs play in successfully implementing Metro’s investment measures and long-range plans, and the challenges CBOs are facing in expanding and sustaining community and civic engagement across the tri-county region, the Program Design Committee<sup>3</sup> recommends that Metro Council create a Community Capacity Building for Racial Equity pilot program.

#### **Program goals**

1. Supports the mutually-beneficial, long-term viability of greater Portland’s community-based organizations who serve Black, Indigenous, and other communities of color and strengthens Metro’s strategic partnership with these organizations;

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<sup>2</sup> Namely, in Goal B – “Metro meaningfully engages communities of color” – but also crucial in supporting Goals A, D and E.

<sup>3</sup> The Program Design Committee included staff from Metro and CBOs. For a full list of members see page 10.

2. Strategically supports CBOs in developing and sustaining civic and community engagement capacity and infrastructure for Black, Indigenous, and other communities of color to meaningfully inform and impact policy and financial decisions, both at Metro and beyond;
3. Creates a vehicle for strategic investment in community capacity in geographic areas and topic areas of interest in anticipation of expanding needs or emerging priorities;
4. Advances Metro's commitment to regional leadership by growing additional investment from its local government and philanthropic partners;
5. Supports, through coordination and facilitation, ongoing changes to Metro systems and processes that build trust, reduce harm, and repair past harms in its relationships with Black, Indigenous, and other communities of color;
6. Supports Metro-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; and
7. Supports Metro advisory and oversight committee recruitment and advances the diversification of these committees through intentional training and recruitment in communities of color, in partnership with community-based organizations.

## Program design

The Program Design Committee recommends a program with one or more of the following program elements, outlined here in order of relative importance:

### **I. Flexible capacity building grants tailored to the needs of the community organization**

The strategy most likely to meet the program objective is multi-year grants to community based organizations (CBOs) serving communities of color to support their capacity for civic and community engagement. Metro staff recommend three-year grant cycles. CBOs, during the grant application process and (if selected) the co-creation of a contract, would determine how these grants could best support their needs within Metro's parameters. Examples of how these grants might be used include:

- Growing programming in East Multnomah, Washington and Clackamas counties;
- Hiring and retaining staff responsible for civic or community engagement;
- Training or professional development for staff or community members;
- Supporting leadership development programming;
- Supporting general operations to advance an organization's civic engagement capabilities.

## **II. Program resources**

A secondary potential program element would be resources to support a cohort of grantees as a collective. The Program Design Committee recommended this element in addition to, not instead of, capacity building grants. The use of these funds would be directed by the grant cohort, and could include uses such as:

- Convening for trainings and professional development;
- Funding to convene and strengthen coalitions;
- Technical support (e.g. software, training, or evaluation and assessment support);
- Organizational strengthening (technical or equity-based trainings); and
- Peer-to-peer knowledge sharing or mentorship.

## **III. Direct department support**

A final component of a capacity building program could be direct support and resources supplied by Metro's departments and visitor venues. This could advance the knowledge and skills of the cohort around Metro priority areas and could include activities such as:

- Topic education or technical assistance;
- Development of standard curriculum and materials for topic education;
- GIS and data accessibility and visualization;
- Facilitate relationships with Metro decision-makers;
- Recruit and place community members in Metro advisory and oversight committees;
- Metro-hosted trainings for both Metro staff and CBO partners.

## **Continued program design**

In addition to the proposal outlined here additional program details, such as the exact parameters and restrictions for grant use, grant selection criteria, application process and the makeup of the grant selection committee have yet to be developed. If funded, the program team would work with CBO partners to identify ways to set clear expectations for funding duration and strategies to support grantees that are ramping down program funding.

Again, these program details would be co-created with community partners, mirroring the process used for the development of this proposal. Metro Council would have an opportunity to engage in this process before the details of program administration are finalized.

## Program administration

Metro staff recommend the pilot program be housed in the Office of the Chief Operating Officer, within the Diversity, Equity and Inclusion (DEI) program. Metro staff believe the program would best be served by the proximity to Metro leadership and Metro elected officials – who can best facilitate relationship building between community partners and Metro elected and non-elected decision makers across departments and visitor venues. Furthermore, the Office of the COO and DEI are well positioned to convene internal leaders across the agency to improve communication and coordination. Housing the program in the COO office also supports implementation of reporting, oversight and program refinement and process improvement over time.

Metro staff expects program administration to require 1.0 FTE, which will include additional responsibilities beyond program design and implementation, including but not limited to:

- supporting Communications and other Metro departments in coordinating partnership work and relationship management across the agency;
- convening Metro practitioners and community partners to share best practices to maximize the impact of partnerships while reducing harm and administrative burden to CBOs;
- supporting deeper integration of community engagement and community partnership outcomes into Metro decision-making processes;
- connecting CBO partners, their staff and constituents with Metro opportunities on agency wide advisory and oversight committees;
- ensuring effective communication and coordination happens between community partners and Metro elected officials and Metro staff.

### **Accountability**

Metro is strongly committed to building public trust through practices of accountability and transparency, ensuring the responsible and effective use of public resources. Metro's community partners share this commitment and already work to advance our mutual equity goals in effective and transparent ways. We recognize that accountability is a dynamic, two-way process, whereby both parties should engage in reflective practice and honest dialogue around their role in advancing an effective partnership. Metro staff also recognize that CBOs have experience creating and optimizing programs and measuring their impact. This program would feature systems of accountability co-created with CBO partners. Grantees would work with Metro to define success for that particular partnership, and how best to measure and evaluate impact on equity outcomes. Impact would be measured both through stories (qualitative) and numeric (quantitative) metrics of success.

## Program investment options

Metro staff recommend the following options for consideration. Costs associated with direct department support, described above, are not included in this budget proposal because Metro staff believe the scope and nature of this work should be co-created in the first year of this program so that it can best meet the needs of community partners while advancing Metro's priorities. Staff resources to implement the program will be re-assigned from existing FTE, adding no additional cost to the program.

**Table 1.** Staff-generated program funding 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 (\$800,000/yr.)

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 (\$600,000/yr.)

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 (\$500,000/yr.)

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 program objectives and supports strategic geographic investments region-wide.
- 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 recommendation

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.

## Background

### Process – how the program was developed

Metro Council's budget note directed Metro staff to determine the most effective ways to support community capacity building for racial equity through expanded partnership with community-based organizations. Because community partners know their barriers and needs the best, Metro's DEI team convened a Program Design Committee made up of culturally-specific community-based organizations and Metro staff from across Metro 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. The organizations that participated on the Program Design Committee included<sup>4</sup>:

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

This proposal for a three-year pilot program reflects the intent and direction agreed upon by the Program Design Committee and the CBO's that participated. Additional content for this proposal was developed by Metro's DEI team in partnership with other Metro staff and Metro leadership and vetted with the Program Design Committee before submission.

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<sup>4</sup> Community Alliance of Tenants, Momentum Alliance and Bienestar provided input outside of the committee process. Native American Youth and Family Center (NAYA) and Causa were invited to participate but did not have the capacity to do so.

## Metro's current investments in community partnerships

Metro works with community-based organizations (CBO) who serve communities of color in a variety of ways. However, no Metro-wide program exists with the explicit intent of building capacity of CBO partners, though a few examples have recently emerged at the department level. This section details the types of partnership work currently in progress at Metro to highlight the breadth, scale and momentum of this work, and illustrate the array of deliverables and outcomes Metro is requesting of community partners. This section also defines the types of community partnerships and illustrates the relationship between them to help set the context for how a capacity building program could amplify the impact of existing partnerships.

### **Types of community partnerships**

Community partnership work takes a variety of forms at Metro, and has grown in scale and depth over the past five years. The chart on the following page (Figure 1) shows the four community partnership models used at Metro, accompanied by examples of existing or past work.

### **Characteristics of existing partnership work**

Most of Metro's existing community partnerships share a few characteristics. It is generally short-term (a year or less), task-specific and include a scope of work with work deliverables. This is often the right type of work to meet Metro's immediate needs and generate our desired outcomes. While these partnerships advance Metro's regional outcomes and goals at the program level, they don't address community partner needs to build long-term capacity and relationships in the communities they serve. This, in turn, jeopardizes Metro's ability to partner with community organizations to facilitate meaningful engagement with communities of color across greater Portland and to effectively advance racial equity across the region. Two exceptions to this type of work, however, include (1) Communication's Community Partnership program which advances long-term partnerships with Momentum Alliance and the Coalition of Communities of Color to support institutional changes and (2) WPES' new contract with Unite Oregon, which attaches capacity building resources to a community engagement services contract in order for Unite Oregon to build capacity in Clackamas County.

## Community partnership models

<p><b>Partnerships for community impact</b></p> <p>Invest through project and programs to make a direct impact in communities and help build trust with community organizations and the people they serve.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Regional Travel Options grants</li> <li>• PILOT grants</li> <li>• 2040 grants</li> <li>• Community enhancement grants</li> <li>• Investment and innovation grants</li> <li>• RID workforce transition program</li> <li>• Nature in Neighborhoods community grants</li> </ul>
<p><b>Partnerships for community engagement</b></p> <p>Engage communities as projects or plans are developed, decisions shaped and implementation supported. This may include specific partnerships to expand education or other service programs.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Transportation funding measure development</li> <li>• Southwest Corridor Plan youth-led anti-displacement cohort</li> <li>• Southwest Corridor Equitable Development Strategy</li> <li>• Housing bond implementation</li> <li>• 2030 Regional Waste Plan development</li> <li>• Multifamily recycling service standards development</li> <li>• Solid waste facility siting and development</li> <li>• Waste Prevention and Environmental Services co-created community partnerships</li> <li>• Parks bond development</li> <li>• Chahalem Ridge Nature Park planning</li> <li>• Parks and Nature Community Partnerships: Metro-led program support</li> <li>• Parks and Nature Community Partnerships: partnership innovation funds</li> <li>• Parks and Nature Community Partnerships: co-created community partnerships</li> </ul>
<p><b>Partnerships for institutional change</b></p> <p>Develop and sustain honest, open and direct relationships with community partners that challenge Metro's assumptions and processes to create a more equitable institution.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Momentum Alliance/Bridges cohorts: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>◊ Equitable and culturally responsive partnership practices</li> <li>◊ Community engagement and decision-making process improvements</li> <li>◊ Youth-led equity training for Metro leadership</li> <li>◊ Hiring process and work environment improvements</li> <li>◊ Trauma-informed engagement and work environment</li> </ul> </li> <li>• Solid waste operations workforce equity partnerships</li> <li>• Household hazardous waste collection event service equity partnerships</li> </ul>
<p><b>Partnerships for community priorities</b></p> <p>Invest in community-led programs and activities to support community priorities and initiate or sustain community relationships.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Agency/department sponsorship programs</li> <li>• Community Placemaking grants</li> <li>• Environmental Promoters program partnerships</li> <li>• Waste Picker Collaborative</li> <li>• Parks and Nature Community Partnerships: community-led programming</li> </ul>

Figure 1. Metro's types of community partnership work, with past and present examples.

### Role of capacity building

If directed by Metro Council, a new capacity building program would not replace existing partnership work. Rather, a program such as the one outlined here would bolster the capacity of community based organizations to continue and expand partnership work with Metro on topics like waste reduction, transportation planning or use of regional parks. It would enable Metro to strategically invest in

partnerships of agency-wide importance to advance regional equity, ensuring the long-term vitality of CBO partners while building and sustaining community capacity, relationships, knowledge and skills around key Metro priorities at the same time.

### **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 capacity building funding for racial equity in their FY20/21 budget.

### **Risk analysis**

#### **Political**

By implementing this program, Metro may be vulnerable to objection from some local jurisdictions and stakeholders who are uncomfortable with this innovative use of public funds. This program is not without precedent, however – the City of Portland and King County, Washington have similar programs to invest in long-term community capacity building in communities of color. By not implementing this program Metro risks failing to follow through with our commitments to communities of color, and damages our ability to deliver on equity outcomes outlined in our regional investment measures.

#### **Financial**

The program's multi-year financial commitments to community-based organizations do pose a risk if Metro's financial situation or priorities were to change. However, not implementing the program may also have financial risks. Investing in community capacity through a reactive and piecemeal approach as community engagement needs arise may mean inefficient investments and project delays.

#### **Policy**

By investing in a community capacity building program to advance racial equity, Metro would increase its capacity to deliver on a range of commitments, aspirations, and legal requirements including:

- The Strategic Plan to Advance Racial Equity, Diversity, and Inclusion:
  - Goal A: Metro convenes and supports regional partners to advance racial equity
  - Goal B: Metro meaningfully engages communities of color

- Goal D: Metro creates safe and welcoming services, programs and destinations
  - Goal E: Metro's resource allocation advances racial equity
- The Regional Waste Plan's three principles of community restoration, community partnership and community investment, as well as actions outlined in:
  - Goal 4, which directs Metro to "increase the diversity of the workforce in all occupations";
  - Goal 6, which directs Metro to "reduce product environmental impacts and waste through educational and behavioral practices", in particular actions 6.1, 6.2 and 6.4;
  - Goal 9, which directs Metro to "increase knowledge among community members about garbage, recycling and reuse services", in particular action 9.3;
  - Goal 11, which directs Metro to "address and resolve community concerns and service issues", in particular action 11.1;
  - Goal 13: which directs Metro to "invest in communities that receive garbage and recyclables from the Metro region so that those communities regard solid waste facilities as assets", in particular actions 13.1, 13.2 and 13.3.
- The Regional Transportation Plan's Goal 9 (Equitable Transportation): "the transportation-related disparities and barriers experienced by historically marginalized communities, particularly communities of color, are eliminated".
- The Metro Housing Bond's core value of leading with racial equity.
- The Parks and Nature System Plan's mission-critical strategy of ensuring that Metro Parks and Nature programs and facilities support the needs of underserved communities, including communities of color, low-income communities and young people.
- The Parks and Nature Bond Measure's commitment to making Metro parks and natural areas safer, more accessible and welcoming, especially for low-income families and communities of color.
- Goal 1 of Oregon's statewide planning goals, which requires us to provide opportunities for community members to be involved in all phases of planning processes.