

**Date: February 10, 2020**

**To: Metro Councilors**

**From: Marcus C. Mundy, Coalition of Communities of Color  
Glenn Montgomery, Vision Action Network**

**Re: Metro Capacity Building Budget Note**

This brief note is to summarize our thoughts and reflections, as co-chairs, of this Metro conceived and implemented capacity building exploration for community-based organizations and, just as important, a group of organizations representing minority, LGBTQ, low income, immigrant and other resource and access challenged populations in the Metro catchment area.

Vision Action Network (VAN) and the Coalition of Communities of Color (CCC), in our role as convening organizations, were both represented by our respective Executive Directors, as were many of the participating organizations (Adelante Mujeres, APANO, Basic Rights Oregon, Centro Cultural, Latino Network, OPAL, PAALF, Unite Oregon, and Verde).

We were proud to serve as co-chairs of Metro's program design committee for the response to the community capacity building budget note. We accepted these roles because our organizations are conveners in Multnomah and Washington counties. We have also experienced first-hand the challenge of inadequate organizational capacity that plagues community-based organizations who serve communities of color. We know what it means for the communities we serve – they go unrepresented at decision-making tables, they don't see themselves in the region's future plans, and they feel harmed, rather than strengthened, from the investments. As such, we encourage Metro Council to implement the program co-created by the committee so that the organizations we serve, and others, can expand their work with Metro to advance racial equity in every part of our region.

Metro brought together a host of community partners, all having a solid record of delivering programs and services to the community in under-resourced platforms, to assess what was most needed and how to further these efforts in a community-centric and culturally specific manner. Throughout the process, our group tackled accountability, reporting structures and systems (and how Metro could help community), distribution of grant funds versus programmatic funds, and how best to further the development of stronger agency/community relationships.

In the last session, Councilor Chase participated most of the day and heard directly from the community about their needs, as well as their opinions on how any potential Metro funding for ongoing capacity building work should be distributed.

This exercise was well thought out and well implemented, and it could serve as a prototype for future engagements with the community. While the proof is in the pudding, including how these funds are ultimately distributed with clearly defined guardrails on their use, it is key to note that throughout the process, Metro communicated transparently, brought in facilitation and site resources to support the work, held the sessions in culturally specific, non-Metro, community-based organizational spaces, and essentially lived up to its own equity and mission statements – something not all jurisdictions do.

Beyond sharing our reflections, we also want to thank the Metro team writ large for such an inclusive, open and honest process, and more specifically the Metro Councilors who approved this work, and Councilor Chase for championing it. In every single session we had tremendous participation from not only the Diversity, Equity and Inclusion (DEI) staff of Metro, which was significant, but from an array of other departments and leaders in the organization. They engaged with our group, listened, participated, and received a more clear understanding of the intersection of DEI work with their own (which is to say that ALL of the team's work, and ALL of Metro's work, is DEI work).

It is noteworthy that Metro is considering an investment of hundreds of thousands of dollars for a group of entities who are perennially constrained. That you are doing so with an equity lens in an unapologetic manner is a breath of fresh air.

We experienced this through our participation in the three offsite meetings, reinforced by the feedback we received from virtually all participating organizations.

Thanks again to Councilor Chase, Raahi Reddy and her amazing team, our facilitators, and Metro for commissioning this crucial exploration. Whether the initial investment is \$400,000, \$500,000 or more, the community will be served well by the work we have done together.

Warm regards,



Marcus C. Mundy, Executive Director



Coalition of  
Communities of  
Color



Glenn Montgomery, Executive Director



**Vision  
Action  
Network**

Cc: Raahi Reddy, Metro