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Portland to vote on \$111 million in clean energy grants next week

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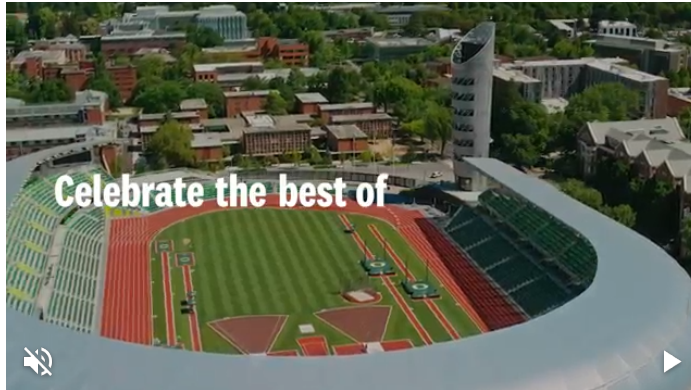
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By [Nicole Hayden | The Oregonian/OregonLive](#)

The committee that governs Portland's voter-approved clean energy grants program released its recommendations Wednesday for \$111 million across 66 awards aimed to improve environmental equity.

The fund is intended to provide money to reduce carbon emissions, create jobs and help vulnerable residents who face some of the most severe impacts from climate change, such as the more than 60 people who died during last summer's heat wave. The fund is also meant to prioritize people of color and other historically marginalized communities.

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The latest proposed round of grants represents significantly more spending as the fund has awarded to date, after voters overwhelmingly approved creating the fund in November 2018. The Portland City Council is slated to vote on the committee's recommendations Wednesday.



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The organizations that the panel recommended receive the most funding during this round include:

- The Community Energy Project, a three-decades-old nonprofit focused on home energy efficiency upgrades for low-income residents of color, which would get \$10 million.
- Low-income housing provider Hacienda Community Development, which would get \$9.4 million.
- Constructing Hope Pre-Apprenticeship program, which specializes in job training for people of color, people coming from incarceration and low-income adults, which is up for \$7.2 million.
- And homelessness, low-income housing and social services provider Central City Concern and the Native American Youth and Family Center, which would each receive \$5.5 million.

Community Energy Project would use their funding to upgrade heating and cooling units for 40 to 50 low-incomes households per year over a five-year period with at least half of those recipients being households of color.

Hacienda Community Development Corporation, which builds affordable housing, would use their funding over a four-year period to remove gas-powered heating from buildings and install solar panels, heat pumps, cooling devices and LED lighting. This would impact 1,000 Portland residents across six apartment buildings.

Constructing Hope would use their funding over a three-year period to provide outreach, job training, life skills development, case management and career placement through four community-based pre-apprenticeship programs. The program will help low-income people of color and women move into clean energy construction jobs.

Central City Concern plans to use their funds over a four-year period to upgrade air-conditioning units at four low-income apartment properties in Old Town.

Native American Youth and Family Center has two proposals. One would serve Native American families experiencing homelessness by installing energy-efficient heating and cooling, among other high-performance energy saving upgrades, to a 58-unit affordable apartment complex. Their second proposal would include creating a healthy food equity project.

The proposal to divvy up \$111 million among five dozen nonprofits comes six months after the city rescinded a five-year \$12 million grant from this same fund to nonprofit Diversifying Energy following [an Oregonian/OregonLive investigation](#) that documented its leader's extensive history of financial misdeeds and unpaid taxes.

The nonprofit was slated to purchase, deliver and install portable cooling units inside thousands of homes for low-income residents such as seniors who are most at-risk for heat illness. The city subsequently awarded a less expensive contract to another nonprofit to do that work, which is underway this summer.

Other recommended winners of new grants include groups focused on helping Black businesses, Native Americans looking to start green energy careers and people experiencing homelessness.

If approved for a \$4.7 million grant, Williams & Russell CDC would use their funding over a four-year period to construct a communal office space to be used as a workforce training center, business accelerator, affordable office spaces for Black businesses and an outdoor plaza that would tell the history of the Albina community. The project would include solar panels, heat pumps, above-code insulation and windows, and high-efficiency lighting and water fixtures.

Affiliated Tribes of Northwest Indians plans to use \$3.7 million over a three-year period to create a Tribal Solar & Renewable Energy Training Program that would lead 30 students to receive a two-year associate of applied sciences degree and a limited renewable technician's license. Additionally, 15 students would have the opportunity to earn a one-year renewable energy technology career pathway certificate, five residential solar installations would be completed and the program would support the development of three Native-owned solar contracting businesses.

Forth, a decade-old Portland-based non-profit that focuses on providing electric and shared transportation, would use a \$3.6 million grant to install solar panels at Bybee Lake Hope Center, which is a high-barrier homeless shelter, to offset annual electricity costs. It would also purchase of three electric passenger vans to be used as community shuttles, charging stations and 30 electric bikes.

The Black United Fund of Oregon would devote \$3.6 million to construct a new headquarters building that would be a gathering space for BIPOC- and women-owned organizations. The building would have high energy efficiency systems installed, solar panels, green infrastructure and sustainable building materials.

Metropolitan Family Service plans to use \$3.5 million, if approved, to expand their auto-loan program to match funds to help selected people buy electric vehicles and e-bikes along with offering credit counseling and expanding the roles of AmeriCorps members to include climate education and outreach.

Among the many other proposals include many smaller asks such as funding to outfit homeless nonprofit Street Roots' new headquarters with energy efficient cooling, many solar upgrade projects on apartment buildings and other complexes, workforce development projects, gardens and a handful of other grants that would support Indigenous communities.

The community fund is bankrolled by a surcharge on Portland retailers that have annual sales of \$1 billion or more in the U.S. or \$500,000 or more within Portland. The fund is administered by the Bureau of Planning and Sustainability.

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