

Sweetened Beverage Tax Community Advisory Board

Date: August 21, 2018

To: Mayor Jenny Durkan

From: Sweetened Beverage Tax Community Advisory Board (CAB)

cc: Councilmember Bagshaw, Councilmember González, Councilmember Harrell, Councilmember Herbold, Councilmember Johnson, Councilmember Juarez, Councilmember Mosqueda, Councilmember O'Brien, Councilmember Sawant, Dwane Chappelle, Jessica Finn Coven, Patty Hayes, Jason Johnson, Ben Noble

Subject: Recommendations for Request for Proposals funded by Sweetened Beverage Tax revenues

Dear Mayor Durkan,

Please accept this letter as an integral supplement to our 2018 and 2019 budget recommendations, transmitted on July 5, 2018. The Sweetened Beverage Tax Community Advisory Board (CAB) believes that the people and communities most impacted by health and other disparities should be at the forefront when it comes to designing and implementing activities and services supported by the Sweetened Beverage Tax (SBT) revenues. This is why the CAB has spent considerable time and energy to develop additional recommendations focused not just on *what* should be funded with SBT dollars, but the processes for *how* funds are granted and contracted to community-based organizations.

Institutional practices often reinforce and perpetuate racial inequities. A November 2017 study by Equity Matters and commissioned by the City of Seattle Office of Sustainability & Environment/Equity & Environment Initiative reported the following about the City's current grantmaking processes and practices: *City processes center the City over communities of color; are burdensome for communities of color; practice racial equity in name only; and while there is high trust in individuals working in City government, there is low trust for the institution.*

We recognize that doing the work of structural change towards racial equity is complex, will take time to achieve, and it is something the City is working on. The CAB affirms the City's efforts and offers these recommendations as a strategy to advance race and social justice within the City's funding processes and in the programs and services supported with SBT revenue.

Sincerely,



James Krieger, MD, MPH
Co-Chair



Christina Wong,
Co-Chair

Recommendations for Request for Proposals / Request for Information funded by Sweetened Beverage Tax revenues

The following recommendations focus on the process for granting Sweetened Beverage Tax funds to community-based organizations and the role of the Sweetened Beverage Tax Community Advisory Board (CAB) in this process.

Size and scale of community grants:

- To attract a range of applicants and ensure that organizations of a similar size and capacity are in competition with one another, use two funding tiers. One tier should be designed for smaller, lower-barrier grants (e.g. grants that are \$25,000 to \$50,000 per year, use shorter and easier grant applications, have fewer administrative requirements, etc.). The other tier should be for larger grants (e.g. \$100,000 per year and above) and intended for organizations with higher capacity.
- It should be allowable for SBT grant funds to be used for general operating funds, so long as organizations can demonstrate that their use of the operating funds is related to the activities and projects supported by the SBT grant. This is important from the perspective of equity and implementation. Since these are programmatic grants, organizations may under-fund their operating funds.

Duration of community grants:

- For higher-capacity grantees, grants should be two-year awards.
- For newer grantees, grants should be 2.5-year awards to enable a 6-month planning, training, development or testing phase. Grantees that may not have the available cash flow to support planning and programming (see *Contracting* section below) should be able to receive 6-12 months of funding upfront.
- The City should be equipped to provide—or contract with a consultant to provide—meaningful and responsive technical assistance and support to the grantees during the planning phase (see *Learning and Evaluation* section below).

Foundational principles:

The following principles should guide the RFP design, process, and investments:

Priority populations: All programs and activities should focus on reaching communities of color, immigrants, refugees, people with low income, and individuals with limited English proficiency. Youth from these communities are also a priority and should be supported to participate in programs and activities. These are also populations that are disproportionately targeted by the sugary drink industry.

Place-based focus areas: Programs and activities should focus on areas where communities of color, immigrants, refugees, people with low income and individuals with limited English proficiency live.

Community-driven: Programs and activities should be led or guided by community-based organizations with authentic connections to the focus community. Include explicit requirements

for collecting, using and documenting community input in the design and selection of activities included in proposals. (Authentic connections to the focus community is further defined in our selection criterion for Equity (see *Selection Criteria* section below).

Culturally-responsive: Programs and activities should be culturally responsive and delivered in ways that are accessible and comfortable for the focus population (or community).

Prevention-oriented: Programs and activities should focus on prevention of sugary drink consumption and the chronic conditions caused by sugary drinks.

Application materials and process:

- The RFP should not tell applicants *how* to do the work. That is for the community to determine.
- The application should include questions that can be used to gauge how race and social justice would be explicitly addressed in project design and implementation.
- The process should use a simple application that is short and requires the minimum information needed to allow informed proposal review. Likewise, the process should use a simple budget template (e.g. see new budget template in use by the county’s Best Starts for Kids initiative).
- The City should consult or contract with community grant makers with a focus on racial equity and racial justice when designing the RFP processes.
- The City should pay close attention to the language access needs of linguistically diverse potential applicants, especially from immigrant and refugee communities. For example, all information and materials about the RFP should be available in Seattle’s top tier languages. This includes using in-language recruitment provided through a separate consultant; in-language/multi-lingual materials to announce and promote the RFP; in-language interview option with interpreter during the review process; and translated guidelines and application. We also recommend taking advantage of ethnic and community media (e.g. newspapers, radio, neighborhood online magazines) to solicit proposals.
- The RFP should include an authentic engagement process, including sufficient notice of the meetings so that those most impacted have sufficient time to review the RFP ahead of time. Meetings and events should be held in community-based, culturally appropriate and comfortable spaces and enable potential applicants to engage with staff– with translators if necessary – to explain the work and answer questions.
- The City should provide free technical assistance during the application process (see *Learning and Evaluation* section below). Technical assistance should include guidance for newer grantees on how to include and document indirect costs in their grant applications.

Role of CAB in the RFP design, application, and selection process

- The CAB should have ample opportunity to review and provide feedback on all the RFP materials and processes (e.g. the announcement, application materials, scoring criteria, selection process, etc.).
- The selection panel should consist of CAB members and other community members who are leaders or experts in the program area, represent priority populations, and who are residents of the City of Seattle or work within the boundaries of the City of Seattle. Racial equity training should be required for all selection and review panelists.
- A selection panel reviewer should not be an application reviewer if:

- The reviewer is named on the application in a major role;
- The reviewer (or close family member) would receive a direct financial benefit if the application is funded;
- People on the application with a major role are from the reviewer's organization;
- Within the past three years, the reviewer has been a collaborator (e.g. board member of applying organization, employee of applying organization) or has had any other professional relationship (e.g. served as a mentor) with any person on the application who has a major role;
- The reviewer wrote a letter of support for the proposal.
- Any CAB members who are applying must recuse and remove themselves when applications in the strategy area in which they applied are being considered.
- Community members should be paid a consultation fee for their time spent participating in the selection panel.

Eligible and Priority Applicants:

- The application should be open to a range of entities including nonprofits, coalitions, neighborhood groups, cultural or language groups, and youth and senior groups.
- Organizations led by people of color and serving communities of color and/or low-income communities should be given higher priority. For example, assign extra points to applicants that demonstrate they are led by people from the focus community.
- To diversify grantees and contractors, the City should consider an organization's funding history and whether or not the applicant has ever received a City grant before or is relatively new to City funds.
- Organizations that include youth in program design, delivery, and leadership, where applicable and appropriate to do so, should be given higher priority.

Selection criteria:

- Grant making should be guided by selection criteria that aligns with the foundational principles described above (see also *Selection Criteria* below). Additionally, the selection panel should think holistically about its funding decisions and strive for a portfolio of investments that strike a balance between projects that can achieve fast outcomes and results and projects that may need time to mature and which are led by organizations that require capacity-building support.

Learning & Evaluation:

- During the planning and implementation phases of the grant, the City should contract with a consultant or be equipped to offer and respond to grantees with meaningful and responsive technical assistance and capacity-building support that reinforces the community-led process. Every funder-grantee relationship has power dynamics and these become especially important when establishing efficient and responsive technical assistance and capacity building services.
- We recommend hosting annual or semi-annual workshops with grantees, to foster peer learning and networking, so long as these workshops are intentionally designed to be meaningful and responsive to the interests of grantees.
- Required progress reporting should be limited to 1-2 times per year.

- The evaluation efforts associated with these activities should be pragmatic, low-barrier, use community-based participatory methods, and be implemented in ways that intentionally increase the capacities of the grantee to evaluate their own performance and outcomes.

RFP Name and Branding:

- The RFP and funds should be named and branded in such a way that maximizes awareness that these grants and projects are supported by Seattle’s Sweetened Beverage Tax revenues.
- Grantees should be required to include the City logo and a funding acknowledgement statement (e.g. *“This project is supported by the Sweetened Beverage Tax”*) in all materials and publications (see also *Contracting* below).

Contracting

- For smaller organizations that may not have the cash flow to support programming upfront, funds should be disbursed upfront.
- Contracts and the process-related deliverables associated with these grants should be flexible. For example, while there should be clear outcomes and goals established, the interim milestones and timelines should be flexible to account for changes or challenges that inevitably arise.
- Contracts should include a provision about a funding acknowledgement statement (e.g. include *“This project is supported by the Sweetened Beverage Tax”* in all materials and publications).

Selection criteria

<p>1. Equity</p> <p><i>External Equity</i></p> <p>Does the activity reduce disparities/advance equity? The activity focuses on a population subgroup as defined by race/ethnicity, income, geography or language that is more impacted than the more privileged group and the activity is designed to reduce disparate outcomes or impacts.</p> <p><i>Internal Equity</i></p> <p>The activity is led by organizations with authentic connections to the community that is the focus of the activity. The organization’s leadership and project staff reflect the culture and demographics of the focus community or seek and incorporate feedback from the community they serve.</p>
<p>2. Impact</p> <p>The proposed activities are likely to exert a sustained, powerful positive influence on the outcome of interest because it has a meaningful effect on people it reaches and it reaches a large number of people in the focus population (impact = reach x effect).</p> <p>Information shows that the activity is effective (“it works to produce the desired outcome”). Information can include experience from community with activity, program evaluations or scientific research.</p>
<p>3. Community interest and appropriateness to community</p> <p>The activity is appropriate for or can be adapted to fit the needs, assets, and preferences of the community.</p>
<p>4. Builds capacity</p> <p>The activity builds/strengthens the capacity of community leaders and organizations to lead, develop, implement, and sustain solutions to improve healthy food access and early learning outcomes.</p>
<p>5. Addresses current gap, need and/or builds on community assets</p> <p>The activity complements existing activities, i.e. it fills a gap in existing activities and does not duplicate existing activities, and/or the activity builds on community assets.</p>
<p>6. Feasibility</p> <p>The activity passes the following feasibility factors:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• a clear path to implementation exists either by replicating a proven model or describing a practical path for implementing an innovative approach;• the organization’s plan for resourcing and implementing the program is realistic• there are sufficient resources and expertise available to successfully implement the activity;• current laws allow the activity to be implemented.
<p>7. Additional criteria/considerations</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Does the applicant have the capacity (staff, skills, qualifications and track record) to successfully complete proposed activities? (This criterion should be applied differently to small and large grant applicants)• Is the budget realistic and sufficient to successfully complete proposed work?• Is the rationale for proposed work/selection of approach well described and compelling?• Proposed activities are clearly described (in terms of who will do them, what they consist of, whom and how many people they will reach, etc.)• Is community input/engagement clearly described and adequate?

END

Staff Contact Information:

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