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Metro
Parks and Nature
2018 Nature Education and Outdoor Experiences Grant
3/6/2018 deadline

Portland Opportunities Industrialization Center Inc. Student Crew Leadership Training Program (SCLTP)

\$ 30,000.00 Requested
\$ 254,871 Estimated Match

Submitted: 3/5/2018 11:41:19 AM (Pacific)

Project Contact

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Application Questions

1. Program summary (one paragraph, 255 characters)

Provide a brief summary that describes your program.

Through the Student Crew Leadership Team Training Program (SCLTP), POIC+RAHS, Friends of Trees (FOT), and others provide minority and low-income youth with the opportunity to engage in project-based education and career-track natural resource mentorship.

2. Fiscal agent

If different than the lead organization. If no fiscal agent, please write "not applicable".

Not Applicable

3. Program partners

Committed partner organizations.

Partners include POIC+RAHS, FOT, Portland Parks & Recreation, Columbia Slough Watershed Council, Friends of Columbia Children's Arboretum, Ecology in Classrooms & Outdoors, and the Xerces Society.

4. Potential partners

Potential partner organizations.

At this time, all partners are committed.

5. Program length

(Select only one)

- ☒ One year
☐ Two years
☐ Three years

6. Program narrative (up to one page, 4000 characters)

Provide a narrative that describes the program. Explain why the program is important for your community and organization, such as how it fits your organization's strategic plan or mission.

Need & Background

Project-based environmental education programs tailored to youth of color and low-income youth are rarely available, and other programs offered locally can be cost-prohibitive. As a result, people of color and low-income communities lack the information necessary to navigate governmental systems and influence decisions that impact their natural environments. This means that “communities of color often reside in neighborhoods with worse air quality, more environmental hazards, and fewer health-promoting environmental amenities such as parks” (American Journal of Public Health). This lack of access to environmental amenities makes it difficult for minority and low-income youth to fully interact with nature, both at home and school.

Ten years ago, POIC+RAHS and FOT identified this ongoing need, resulting in SCLTP. SCLTP creates opportunities for historically underserved communities to play an active role in their community’s health by developing academic, employment, and leadership skills focused on natural resource education. Students are compensated for their time leading site restoration and maintenance, as well as engaging in community outreach. Funds earned through SCLTP support students in paying for food and other basic needs.

Mission Alignment

POIC+RAHS is committed to the future success of at-risk youth through the age of 25, providing the highest quality services in education, mentoring, family outreach, employment training and placement. SCLTP directly aligns with this mission by educating students at POIC’s four RAHS campuses and other low-income and minority youth through hands-on environmental education. RAHS is an accredited alternative high school delivering high school and general education diploma (GED)-track programming for students who, for a variety of socio-economic reasons along with health, exposure to violence and trauma, and involvement in the justice system, have not thrived in traditional school settings. Participants are also exposed to career options within the natural resources field, informing them of professional tracks.

Overall, SCLTP enriches the lives and expands the futures of underserved youth by providing them with:

- 1) Increased awareness of, and skills in, managing natural areas.
- 2) Experience in community outreach, leadership, environmental education and justice.
- 3) A deepened connection to their community.

Program Activities

Culturally-Tailored Education: this includes classroom learning about restoration, community outreach, environmental justice, and crew leadership. 20 instructional hours are dedicated to native vegetation identification and selection, invasive plant and animal species, native landscape design, plant propagation, and natural resource careers. In addition, students learn about how different cultures view and interact with the natural world.

Outreach & Volunteer Recruitment: students recruit and train volunteers for Columbia Children’s Arboretum (CCA) and Columbia Slough Natural Area (CSNA) restoration events; work with FOT to prepare volunteers for Neighborhood Tree Plantings; and lead or assist volunteers in restoration and planting projects.

Site Restoration, Neighborhood Planting, and Pruning

CCA Habitat Restoration: students complete a site assessment and restoration plan; lead volunteers in removing invasive plants and planting native trees and plants; and return throughout the summer to monitor and mulch.

FOT Neighborhood Tree Planting and Care: neighborhood tree planting, pruning, and summer inspections.

CSNA Habitat Restoration: students complete a site assessment and restoration plan, perform invasive species removal, spot-mulch, and plant native trees and vegetation. They also evaluate the previous year’s results and make modifications to the site plan.

40-Mile Loop Trail: students weed and repair the path linking two trail segments and return throughout the summer to monitor, maintain, and mulch.

7. Goals (up to one page, 4000 characters)

Describe how the program addresses the Nature in Neighborhood nature education and outdoor experiences grant’s purpose and goals.

Nature in Neighborhoods Goal Alignment

Because this program offers multiple components (classroom education, site- and community-based activities, and career-track mentorship), SCLTP directly aligns with all three of Metro’s goal areas within the Nature in Neighborhoods grant program. Specifically, SCLTP meets Metro’s goals in the following ways:

Cultural Equity

SCLTP is led by a designated culturally-specific nonprofit, offering equitable opportunities for underserved youth to participate in local environmental education and conservation efforts. This work builds POIC+RAHS’ capacity to include conservation in the menu of services they offer to minority and underserved youth.

SCLTP effectively increases the number and diversity of visitors and programs offered at the Columbia Children’s Arboretum

and the Columbia Slough Natural Area via SCLTP's internal educational programming and other community-wide volunteer restoration activities (such as tree planting events).

Environmental Equity

SCLTP integrates classroom-based environmental education with hands-on, site-based activities to maximize learning for SCLTP's minority and low-income students. Specifically, programming focuses on urban forest and watershed conservation.

Utilizing Crime Prevention through Environmental Design, the safety, accessibility, and quality of CCA and CSNA are improved through Territorial Reinforcement (students plant native vegetation, demonstrating ownership of the areas), Activity Support (students plan and implement community volunteer activities at the sites), and Natural Imperatives (students enhance the community's tree canopy and watershed quality by planting and maintaining thousands of native plants and trees).

Economic Equity

This program develops students' practical understanding of the site restoration cycle including initial evaluation, invasive species removal, planting, maintenance, and monitoring.

Students are paired with natural resource professionals who volunteer to mentor SCLTP students and discuss potential career paths. Each year, a minimum of 16 students are exposed to careers within the natural resources field and given opportunities to explore their options for higher education related to environmental education.

During the program, students meet with elementary students in east Portland, often from a title I school, to educate them on watersheds, local ecology, and planting best practices. SCLTP students are paired with elementary students at a 1:4 ratio. Together, SCLTP students and the elementary students plant 100 native plants.

Outcomes & Success

Participant outcomes include increased: awareness of the importance of protecting and managing resources at the community level; appreciation of urban tree canopies, watersheds, and other natural resources; understanding of the impact of natural resources on society and vice versa; and knowledge of urban forestry and local ecology.

Community outcomes/benefits include increased: public and private trees in the canopy; public awareness of urban forest and watersheds; community involvement in conservation efforts; and environmental health within East Multnomah County.

For 2018, success will include: students educate at least 400 community volunteers at planting events; students engage 30 elementary students in planting 100 native flora; at least 85% of students engage in each step of the site restoration and outreach, planting, and maintenance; 15 students display knowledge of the urban forest and its importance by educating 30 elementary students and other community members at volunteering events; and four students will each lead a public tree pruning crew, pruning a total of 50 neighborhood trees per crew.

In total, students plant 1,400 trees, remove three cubic yards of invasive species, install 400 ft. of walking trail, and mulch 700 CCA, CSNA, and neighborhood sites, prune 240 neighborhood trees, and inspect 90 neighborhood trees.

8. Partnerships (up to one page, 4000 characters)

Show how partnerships and collaboration with other individuals, organizations and groups in your community will be formed, strengthened and extended through this program.

FOT, POIC+RAHS' largest program partner within this initiative, facilitates a large portion of the student education and training, including Crew Leader Training and Pruning Training, among others. FOT is also actively involved with project implementation. Their Green Space, Neighborhood Tree Planting, and Community Tree Care programs coordinate and provide program staff; supply resources for community outreach and volunteer events; and offer site and tree monitoring. In total, FOT contributes approximately 500 hours annually to SCLTP.

Portland Parks and Recreation (PP&R) also facilitates student education during the program; topics covered by PP&R include urban forestry and site restoration practices. CCA and CSNA, both program project sites, are owned by PP&R and serve as ideal locations for maximizing educational and community benefit. PP&R provides access to these locations, assistance in organizing volunteer events, and support in ongoing project site evaluation and maintenance.

Other partners and their levels of involvement include:

POIC+RAHS and FOT are honored to welcome natural resource professionals to volunteer as mentors, connecting students to job opportunities and providing advice and support. Volunteer mentors work at organizations such as Port of Portland, Columbia Slough Watershed Council, and the Bureau of Environmental Services.

To encourage its staff members to support SCLTP, the Xerces Society offers a stipend to present to SCLTP students on various conservation topics. The Xerces Society and other professionals meet with Student Crew Leaders to educate them about pollinators and the importance of insects, tree care, careers in native restoration, and how all three areas intersect professionally.

Ecology in Classrooms and Outdoors provides one staff member to supervise SCLTP's elementary student mentoring component, which involves 15 SCLTP students' mentorship of 30 elementary students. Participating elementary school educators are encouraged to integrate information learned during the event into following classroom lessons. For many mentored students, this is one of their only opportunities to meaningfully engage with the natural environment.

The Columbia Slough Watershed Council trains Crew Leaders on how to educate youth and other community members about watersheds and assists with site plantings. They also educate assistant Crew Leaders about the Slough's history, native animal and plant life, and how native plantings positively impact the Slough.

In 2018, Metro Ecologists will also partner with POIC+RAHS, incorporating components of their Volunteer Naturalists program into the educational aspects of the SCLTP and support youth in developing skills that are necessary to follow a naturalist career-track.

Through partnerships with environmental organizations and city and state governmental agencies, SCLTP empowers youth to take ownership in the care of their natural surroundings. Participants also educate friends, neighbors, and citizens across East Multnomah County on the existence and importance of urban forest and watersheds. Program participants and community members work collaboratively to improve their neighborhood environment.

Many of SCLTP partnerships have been in place since the program's inception and all are well-established. Funding from Metro's Nature in Neighborhoods initiative would strengthen and build-upon these valued and effective community partnerships.

9. Organizational preparedness (up to one page, 4000 characters)

Explain why your organization and your partners have the experience and capacity to conduct the program, including identification of key personnel, their roles in the program and their qualifications.

POIC+RAHS has provided culturally-specific, trauma-informed services from classroom to career for minority and low-income youth and families for almost 50 years. Programs offered include: Work Opportunities Training (participants earn a credential or diploma); Mentoring (youth work with a culturally-representative role model); RAHS (achieves a 90% graduation rate); Gang Outreach (a street-level resource for gang-impacted youth); and, POIC's Community Healing Initiative (prevents recidivism and offers pro-social events); among many others.

SCLTP combines POIC+RAHS' deep experience working with underserved, minority and low-income, communities with FOT and other program partners' experience in natural resource management.

FOT was founded in 1989 by a community member who loved trees and started planting them in Portland neighborhoods. Today, FOT is a nationally-recognized leader in improving the urban tree canopy and restoring sensitive natural areas. Since its founding, FOT has planted over 700,000 trees and native plants with thousands of volunteers.

Key Staff

Though SCLTP is a collaboration of multiple organizations, POIC+RAHS and FOT provide the main program staff, including: Leigh Rappaport, RAHS Program Manager and Youth Advocate: Leigh conducts program administration and supervision. She has over 30 years of experience working with diverse populations, both in conservation education and community outreach. She has spent most of her career developing strategic partnerships with countless community-based organizations, state and federal agencies, and local nonprofits to expose, educate, and connect community members to nature. Leigh will be working closely with members of FOT, specifically Logan Lauvray, as well as various staff members of PP&R and the Columbia Slough Watershed Council, among other partners.

Logan Lauvray (FOT): Logan has served as FOT's Green Space Program Manager since May 2009. During his time at FOT, he has assisted in the planning, organization, and implementation of planting and restoration projects with dozens of partners at over 50 planting locations throughout Portland. Prior to his role at FOT, Logan volunteered for thousands of hours on environmental restoration projects, worked for over four years at the Xerces Society for Invertebrate Conservation, and was a part-time contractor with a native plant restoration business. Lauvray is currently the Vice President of the Xerces Society and regularly volunteers for Cascadia Wild.

Max Showers, FOT Green Space Specialist: Max joined FOT as a temporary Summer Maintenance Technician in May 2015 and was soon after promoted to a full-time Green Space Specialist. Now, Max plans and executes volunteer restoration projects throughout Portland. Prior to working with FOT, Max was a seasonal worker for the Forest Park Conservancy, helped develop community-based sustainability initiatives at the Idaho Conservation League, and created the Idaho Multi-Hazard Risk Portfolio for the State of Idaho.

Anne Marie Santos, Green Space Specialist: Anne has been working with the FOT Green Space Program since March 2016. In her role, she has supported and implemented restoration projects and environmental education opportunities for Portland Metro youth. Anne Marie has over eight years of experience in providing nature- and farm-based education to youth in partnership with organizations such as Shelburne Farms and the Vermont Community Garden Network.

Program Accomplishments

To date, SCLTP has provided in-depth training for over 100 students, planted and maintained thousands of public trees, restored hundreds of acres of public green spaces, and engaged over one thousand community volunteers as environmental stewards. SCLTP has also inspired multiple participants to pursue their interests in environmental protection; several program graduates have explored career-track environmental education programs at universities.

10. Diversity, Equity and Inclusion (up to one page, 4000 characters)

Describe how your program involves communities of color and the demographics of the community served in identifying the need for, designing, and delivering this programming. How does your organization's vision or mission address diversity and equity?

Culturally-Specific Organizational Background (POIC+RAHS)

POIC+RAHS has been creating opportunities for marginalized communities for nearly 50 years. POIC has been a beacon for communities of color, particularly the African American community, working against discriminatory practices that keep people of color unemployed, underemployed, and unable to access economic opportunities. POIC provided culturally relevant workforce training and career placement throughout the 1970s. Then, viewing education as a critical component of a community's success, POIC founded Rosemary Anderson High School, an accredited alternative high school, in 1983. RAHS now has four Portland area locations delivering high school and general education diploma (GED)-track programming. Together, POIC+RAHS provides a continuum of services from classroom to career for our community's most vulnerable youth and families.

POIC+RAHS continues to work against the root causes of generations-long economic, judicial, academic, and social inequities. These stem from a lack of access to relevant and sufficiently individualized education, skill-building, and employment opportunities. POIC+RAHS delivers programs and services through a trauma-informed, racial equity lens. This is the first step in addressing deeply-rooted barriers faced by Portland's low-income youth of color.

Today, POIC partners with government agencies, local businesses, and other community-based organizations to provide educational, workforce development, and family services. POIC+RAHS's approach, defined by positivity and a commitment to not giving up on these Opportunity Youth (youth not employed or enrolled in school), is working. POIC+RAHS achieves 90% graduation rates and 78% post-secondary enrollment, almost unheard of for this population. This is a remarkable feat considering many of our students come to POIC+RAHS two to four years behind in academic skills and credits.

Diversity, Equity, & Inclusion (FOT)

Like POIC+RAHS, FOT is dedicated to serving Portland's diverse populations. In the past, FOT has participated in workshops led by the Center for Diversity and the Environment and regularly partners with culturally-specific organizations such as APANO, Adelante Mujeres, and Chemawa Indian School to provide environmental education and engage students in conservation and community tree planting projects.

Involvement of Communities of Color

For almost five decades, POIC has celebrated and valued the cultural identities of its participants, over 80% of whom self-identify as minority. POIC also respects their many backgrounds and lived experiences. Over 90% of POIC+RAHS youth are impacted by gangs, 84% live below the federal poverty line; and nearly 20% have children of their own. POIC+RAHS engages youth most organizations have given up on, yet they represent our community's greatest opportunity to break cyclical adversities and build generational resiliency. Overall, POIC+RAHS reintroduces homeless teens to the classroom, pairs gang-affected students with meaningful work opportunities, and helps youth affected by domestic violence find stability and hope through mentorship.

SCLTP directly benefits at-risk, low-income, and minority youth by engaging them in environmentally educational, community-based experiences. SCLTP pays youth to work alongside us as we learn about and protect the natural environment. Low-income and minority communities also benefit from SCLTP through the conservation projects completed, increasing the environmental health of their communities.

Further, low-income and minority youth participants are involved in the following ways: serving as Crew Leaders during community events; recruiting and coordinating volunteers of all cultures; managing projects from beginning to end, and program graduates act as community ambassadors and educators for POIC+RAHS, FOT, and CCA.

11. Location and program reach (up to two pages)

On next page, please upload a location/vicinity map that shows where the program and/or participating communities are located within the region, such as on Google Maps, MetroMap, Regional Equity Atlas, or the Regional Conservation Strategy viewer

✓ I uploaded it!

12. Demographic form (two pages)

On next page, please upload the requested the 2018 Nature in Neighborhoods demographic form, which will not be used for the review of your grant application.

✓ I uploaded it!

Document Uploads

Documents Requested *

Provide a location/vicinity map that shows where the program and/or participating communities are located within the region, such as on Google Maps, MetroMap, Regional Equity Atlas, or the Regional Conservation Strategy viewer.

Required? Attached Documents *



[Project Maps, POIC+RAHS](#)

** ZoomGrants™ is not responsible for the content of uploaded documents.*

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Columbia Children's Arboretum



Phase Five

Phases
1 - 4

Phase Five

Phase Six

Key



Program/Arboretum
Boundary Line



Completed Phase



Ongoing Phase



Upcoming Phase



NE Simpson St

NE 112th Ave

Columbia Slough Natural Area

PHASE 3

Trail Extension
(PHASE 1)

PHASE 2

Columbia
Slough

PHASE 1 & 2

Forty Mile Loop Trail