

2021-22 Investment and Innovation Grants

Investment and Innovation grants are intended to build lasting private-sector and nonprofit-sector capacity to reduce waste through prevention, reuse, repair, recycling and composting. At the same time, the grants support efforts to advance racial equity in the garbage and recycling system, including expanding services and employment opportunities for underserved communities and reducing harms from garbage and recycling operations. The Investment and Innovation program advances progress toward multiple goals of the 2030 Regional Waste Plan and Metro's strategic plan to advance racial equity, diversity and inclusion.

Capital grants are awarded to private businesses, universities and nonprofit organizations for infrastructure upgrades and equipment. Businesses and universities are required to provide a cash match of at least 100 percent of the grant amount. Program grants support personnel costs, operations and equipment associated with programming at businesses, universities and nonprofit organizations. Program grants require business and university applicants to provide a match of at least 20 percent of the grant amount in cash, in-kind support or both.

Below is a summary of the 2021-22 Investment and Innovation (I&I) grants. The **22 grants represent a total Metro investment of \$2 million** to local businesses and nonprofits in greater Portland. Metro's funding will leverage an additional \$598,400 in matching funds provided by six business grant recipients.

I&I CAPITAL GRANTS

Birch Community Services

Refrigerated truck to rescue and redistribute 6.5 million pounds of edible food annually

Grant amount: \$102,221

Match amount: \$0 (not required for nonprofit organizations)

Total investment: \$102,221

Birch Community Services will purchase a refrigerated truck to rescue and redistribute 6.5 million pounds of high-quality edible food annually. Birch sources food from over 270 manufacturers, wholesalers, retailers, farms, dairies, bakeries and food growers to recover food that would otherwise be disposed, to distribute to families in need. Currently, Birch passes up significant opportunities to rescue and distribute food due to aging and insufficient transportation options. Having a new refrigerated truck will enable Birch to quickly pick up large quantities of edible food from donors, which in turn bolsters those donors' willingness to donate rather than dispose.

Community Development Corporation of Oregon

A network of portable coolers for BIPOC farmers

Grant amount: \$50,000

Match amount: \$0 (not required for nonprofit organizations)

Total investment: \$50,000

Community Development Corporation of Oregon will buy three portable coolers to place at strategic locations around East County where food is being grown by Black, Indigenous and People of Color (BIPOC) farmers. Having these coolers shared by a network of producers will bring food closer to consumers. The coolers will extend the life of their crops, allowing food to remain edible from harvest to sale or donation. This will ensure that the food reaches its highest value, providing economic benefit for BIPOC farmers to feed their communities with culturally appropriate foods. The grant fortifies the micro food hub model developing in Rockwood and East Multnomah County, including the Rockwood Food Systems Collaborative, which includes more than 50 emerging food businesses in an underserved area of the Metro region.

Dirt Hugger, LLC

Generating more compost with fewer emissions

Grant amount: \$500,000

Match amount: \$500,000

Total investment: \$1,000,000

Dirt Hugger, located in Dallesport, Wash., is a commercial composting facility that processes a significant amount of greater Portland's residential and commercial food waste and yard debris through a designated facility agreement (68 percent of their feedstock comes from the Metro region). Over half of the facility's end products — high quality compost — is sold in the Metro region. This project will increase throughput from 62,700 to 90,000 tons annually while reducing air emissions by adding aeration to the final phase of the composting process. The grant will also support conversion of diesel-powered equipment to electric. These improvements will ensure Metro area waste does not contribute to negative air quality impacts on local communities. Dirt Hugger will work with The Next Door, a social services agency based in the Columbia Gorge, to advance equity in the business by completing a diversity, equity and inclusion (DEI) assessment of the company's policies, procedures, work culture and physical environment, and a series of DEI workshops for staff. The project will include development of DEI goals for at least the two years after the grant period to ensure the company's commitment to advancing equity continues beyond the grant.

Lovett Deconstruction

Lumber resale project

Grant amount: \$54,500

Match amount: \$54,500

Total investment: \$109,000

Lovett Deconstruction will add an electric kiln and warehouse improvements to its new facility in northwest Portland. A wood kiln will significantly reduce the amount of mold and moisture on stored materials. Typical Pacific Northwest weather can compromise the quality and reusability of collected lumber by as much as 20 percent. Lovett Deconstruction is the only company in Portland that will offer Forest Stewardship Council-certified kiln dried lumber in large quantities. Lovett Deconstruction has a strong track record with regard to inclusivity, diversity and inclusion, and employs over 50 people of diverse backgrounds. The company partners with Oregon Tradeswomen to support hiring and training of BIPOC and women employees.

ReBuilding Center

A mobile classroom to bring home-repair classes to vulnerable communities

Grant amount: \$90,000

Match amount: \$0 (not required for nonprofit organizations)

Total investment: \$90,000

ReBuilding Center helps people stay in their homes and avoid waste by promoting and teaching repair skills, particularly for homeowners living with low incomes. Often homeowners with low incomes have many small repair needs, like a minor leak or failing siding, that worsen over time and result in houses with extensive, expensive repairs and safety concerns. The nonprofit's philosophy is that empowering homeowners with repair skills and knowledge of how to use salvaged items will promote housing retention and stability. ReBuilding Center has a rich roster of classes in electrical repair, plumbing and carpentry at little to no cost, and focuses these opportunities to BIPOC and low income residents of Portland. However, limited access to transportation makes traveling to inner North Portland to attend classes difficult. This grant will remove this barrier by developing a mobile shop to take ReBuilding Center classes out into the community. Funds will support a new all-electric van, tools, shelves, storage, and a level-2 charging station, to enable the organization to get out into more underserved parts of the Metro region, in collaboration with community partner organizations.

SnowCap Community Charities

SnowCap's Covenant Campus to increase clothing reuse for underserved communities

Grant amount: \$100,000

Match amount: \$0 (not required for nonprofit organizations)

Total investment: \$100,000

SnowCap operates in East Multnomah County, providing the community with free reused clothing five days a week. In 2021 SnowCap served people who spoke 75 different languages, 46 percent of which were people of color, refugees or ethnic minorities. Pre-pandemic, over 4,000 people a month had access to free clothing. This grant will support SnowCap's ambitious campaign for a new campus to greatly expand its capacity to receive, sort and distribute reused clothing. SnowCap believes individuals accessing assistance should be able to do so in a manner that focuses on choice. Being able to select one's own clothing helps bring dignity to the process and encourages people to continue to access needed services. In addition to growing SnowCap's clothing program, the new campus will enable them to offer space to partner agencies, like the Energy Trust of Oregon and the Oregon Food Bank. Partners will be able to conduct trainings and classes for clients, focusing on topics that help prevent waste such as cloth diapering, and low waste cooking and food preparation techniques.

West Tuality Habitat for Humanity

Construct a covered outside area to promote year-round shopping for reused items

Grant amount: \$50,000

Match amount: \$0 (not required for nonprofit organizations)

Total investment: \$50,000

West Tuality Habitat for Humanity in Forest Grove is one of the few reuse organizations serving the western part of the greater Portland region. This grant will enable the organization to create a

covered area outside where people can shop for high quality reused items year-round. The current area is not accessible in rainy or hot weather. Providing a cover will promote year-round activity, building sales and keep more goods from the landfill. The cover will also help prolong the usable lifespan of products stored and sold from the outside area. The anticipated waste stream impact of the covered area is an annual increase of 50,000 to 100,000 pounds of additional goods being repurposed, reused or recycled via Habitat for Humanity's Restore retail shop. The project will demonstrate the merits of reuse by utilizing a large portion of materials salvaged from other construction projects, including an entire garage and large quantities of timber and shiplap.

I&I PROGRAM GRANTS

Clackamas Service Center

Enhance capacity to rescue and redistribute edible food for families in need

Grant amount: \$100,000

Match amount: \$0 (not required for nonprofit organizations)

Total investment: \$100,000

Clackamas Service Center will expand its capacity at its new 8,000 sq. ft. "food hub" warehouse that opened in 2021. This grant will provide staff time and equipment, including a new walk-in fridge and freezer and backup generator to avoid food loss in a power outage. This will increase the center's ability to accept and distribute food donations, and the organization estimates it will be able to divert an additional 20,000 pounds of food annually that would otherwise go to waste. Clackamas Service Center will focus recovery and distribution efforts on culturally relevant items for Central American, Caribbean, Halal, Slavic, East African and Asian cuisines, to be distributed in partnership with organizations that serve diverse populations. This nonprofit fills a critical role as one of the few food rescue and distribution organizations in Clackamas County.

Community Warehouse

Creating a reuse hub

Grant amount: \$100,000

Match amount: \$0 (not required for nonprofit organizations)

Total investment: \$100,000

Community Warehouse will establish a third warehouse location and hire staff to accept and redistribute additional household goods, including mattresses, tables, chairs, dressers, bedding and kitchenware. Additional space will enable the organization to store donations that come in during the peak donation seasons of spring and summer, so that they will be fully stocked at distribution centers year-round and be able to move more material back into the community. Community Warehouse estimates the project will enable the recovery and redistribution of an additional 200 tons per year. The project will also pilot a Reuse Hub that will provide a shared space with other reuse organizations. This will be a major step forward in addressing a high priority need for reuse organizations to have shared physical space, resources and opportunities, as identified in a 2021 reuse, repair and share needs assessment report commissioned by the Portland Bureau of Planning and Sustainability.

Cracked Pots

Repair and reuse technician

Grant amount: \$80,000

Match amount: \$0 (not required for nonprofit organizations)

Total investment: \$80,000

Cracked Pots will establish a new repair and reuse technician position for its retail store, ReClaim It, to increase the amount of reusable furniture and other bulky items it recovers from Metro Central transfer station. The organization will grow its partnership with Community Warehouse, and may co-locate in its new Reuse Hub. With a dedicated technician, Cracked Pots can accept gleaned items that have minor, fixable flaws and devote the time and skill to repairing them for a new life. Cracked Pots will also continue to implement diversity, equity and inclusion into its organization and practices, building on consultation and training funded by a 2020 Investment and Innovation grant. This includes promoting the repair technician opportunity funded by the new grant to BIPOC candidates, along with implementing measures to support diverse employees and board members.

East Portland Tool Library

Establishing a new East Portland Tool Library

Grant amount: \$47,071

Match amount: \$0 (not required for nonprofit organizations)

Total investment: \$47,071

The East Portland Tool Library will expand access to a wide variety of shared tools for residents on the east side of Portland. The hand and electric tools will help alleviate air pollution from gas powered tools. The tool library will reduce waste by allowing people to rent tools and avoid the unnecessary purchase of new tools. Nearly a quarter of the people living in this area speak English as a second language, 35 percent are BIPOC individuals and 45 percent have low incomes. This will fill a gap by serving all people east of 82nd Avenue to the Gresham and north of Halsey to the Columbia River, which is the East Portland area not currently served by a tool library. The East Portland Tool Library will work with partners such as Habitat for Humanity East Portland and East Portland Resilience Coalition to develop culturally appropriate outreach strategies to encourage tool library use, including translation of information into the languages most often used in the area. Grant funds will support the building costs for the new library and a new volunteer and operations coordinator position.

Feed'em Freedom Foundation

Food recovery program

Grant amount: \$75,000

Match amount: \$0 (not required for nonprofit organizations)

Total investment: \$75,000

Feed'em Freedom Foundation is a Black-led organization which centers Black and BIPOC people to become owners and leaders within agriculture, land stewardship and regional food security response. The organization will develop a localized food recovery program that links unsold farmer's market produce from BIPOC and small Portland-area producers to the food systems of local area hospitals and social service organizations. This project is modeled after a successful effort with Sutter Health in California, which is providing project mentorship. Funding will also support

the Propagating Produce for the People program, which trains BIPOC youth affected by the justice system in agriculture, including waste reduction practices. As a newer nonprofit, Feed'em Freedom Foundation is working with the Oregon Food Bank to develop data collection methods, but anticipates that their programs will impact 200 BIPOC consumers weekly, more than 10 BIPOC farmers annually, and 40 BIPOC youth each seasonal cycle.

Free Geek

Recycling and reuse capacity expansion

Grant amount: \$96,808

Match amount: \$0 (not required for nonprofit organizations)

Total investment: \$96,808

Free Geek will expand its bulk sales program to be able to handle large quantities of printers, monitors, A/V systems, and vintage technology that the organization has not been able to receive and process. The grant will fund a new bulk sales coordinator to receive and sort these specialty items and pair them with unique customers and markets, to extend their useful lives. The grant will also provide flexible storage space bulk sales items and for lesser-used items, which will also serve as a drop-off location for the west side of Portland. The grant will also fund equipment to automate some of Free Geek's operations, including an automated drive crusher and battery-powered pallet jack, to improve efficiency and safety for employees.

GO Box

Reusable food retail packaging pilot

Grant amount: \$87,500

Match amount: \$17,500

Total investment: \$105,000

GO Box will partner with New Seasons Market and Waste Free Advocates to develop, implement and track the impacts of a reusable packaging pilot for retail food products produced by local companies in the greater Portland region. The pilot will launch at New Seasons Market locations where the products in reusable packaging will be available for sale. Packaging from these products will be returned by customers and accepted back by the store. GO Box will collect returned packaging, wash and sanitize them, then resell the packaging back to the local producer where it originated. In the project period, an estimated 10,000-15,000 glass jars will be prevented from becoming waste. The project will result in lessons learned from the pilot to develop a replicable reusable packaging model for retail products.

Green Lents

Community tool library waste reduction, repair and reuse empowerment

Grant amount: \$45,500

Match amount: \$0 (not required for nonprofit organizations)

Total investment: \$45,500

The Lents neighborhood is historically disinvested and undeserved, with many communities of color, immigrants and families living with low incomes. The goal of this project is to expand accessibility and remove barriers to the Lents Tool Library which is a community space that provides a way to share and reuse tools instead of having to purchase new. In particular, the project

focuses on welcoming the 40 percent of Lents residents that speak a language other than English at home. Green Lents will develop educational and outreach materials and conduct nine workshops on tool sharing and reuse. Educational topics will include safe tool usage, composting and seed starting, among other skill-building topics. The education and outreach content will be translated into multiple languages commonly spoken in the area to reach additional communities.

JD's Shoe Repair

Repairers onward: advance training in repair skills

Grant amount: \$22,000
Match amount: \$4,400
Total investment: \$26,400

JD's Shoe Repair is a LGBTQ and woman-owned small business dedicated to one of the oldest forms of repair. The shoe repair industry in the greater Portland region is struggling, with nine shops closing since the pandemic started. This grant will enable JD's Shoe Repair to expand its ability to handle a wider range of textiles through professional development and by training a new cobbler. Funds will be used for advanced training in dye work, sneaker repair, and purchasing highly specialized machinery. JD's Shoe Repair will also hire a new multilingual staff member to expand access to non-English speaking customers; and a short-term outreach coordinator to educate and empower the public to repair what is otherwise perfectly good, rather than dispose and buy new. The business will also develop shoe repair curriculum for Portland Community College classes to educate the next generation of cobblers.

Okapi Reusables

Reusable food ware service expansion

Grant amount: \$75,000
Match amount: \$15,000
Total investment: \$90,000

Okapi Reusables, a COBID-certified business, will expand its new circular cup borrowing service to more Portland cafes and restaurants. Okapi is modeled off a similar approach on reuse networks in Australia that has proven highly successful. It works like this: customers download an Okapi app, and can ask any participating cafe (currently 11 in Portland) for their drinks in a reusable cup. When finished, customers can return the reusable cup at any participating drop-off site. Okapi cleans and sanitizes used cups, and puts them back into circulation. This grant would fund a concentrated outreach effort to enroll 20 additional coffee shops to participate, additional materials and supplies, and outreach to cafe customers to encourage behavior change by choosing the reusable cup option. Okapi estimates the waste stream impact of this project will be an additional 46,000 single-use cups and 41,000 lids avoided during the project period, with more as cafes fully ramp up the service.

Park Trading Corp

Building a network of recycling opportunities for cannabis packaging

Grant amount: \$35,000
Match amount: \$7,000
Total investment: \$42,000

Park Trading Corp will hire a program coordinator to conduct outreach and coordinate collection events to increase business and customer participation in ReDram, a return-to-retailer recycling program for plastic packaging from cannabis products. This material is not accepted in curbside recycling programs and would otherwise be discarded as trash. The project includes expanding a three-day community collection event called “420 for Earth Day” to increase the number of participating retailers and incentivize customers to return plastic packaging. The project is estimated to result in a monthly increase of at least 4,000 pounds of plastic packaging returned for recycling with partner company P3 Recycling. Park Trading Corp is a BIPOC-owned small business and is currently seeking COBID certification with the State of Oregon.

Portland Fruit Tree Project

Increasing capacity to harvest and share excess urban fruit

Grant amount: \$84,400

Match amount: \$0 (not required for nonprofit organizations)

Total investment: \$84,400

Portland Fruit Tree Project will develop a fruit tree index to plan for long-term growth and viability of Portland’s fruit trees, resulting in less wasted fruit. The grant will provide jobs and training opportunities in tree scoring and tree care for BIPOC community members who will collect fruit tree data. This tree health and location data will tell the organization which trees are healthy and the best time to harvest, which ensures that staff and volunteer time is focused on harvesting from healthy trees and creating tree care plans to increase the viability of less healthy trees for future seasons. The project will result in more rescued fruit for people without access to fresh food, healthier fruit trees with less wasted fruit, workforce development opportunities, and improved neighborhoods with fewer pest-ridden, unhealthy trees.

ReDeploy

Increasing salvage of usable items during junk pickup to redeploy into community

Grant amount: \$100,000

Match amount: \$0 (not required for nonprofit organizations)

Total investment: \$100,000

ReDeploy is the nonprofit arm of veteran-owned G.I. Junk Removal service. ReDeploy was recently created to salvage serviceable items such as mattresses, furniture and other household items bound for disposal, and match them with the needs of vulnerable people. This grant will fund a program coordinator position and help outfit ReDeploy’s warehouse in Oregon City with storage and tools for assessing, sorting, storing and refurbishing salvaged items. The program coordinator will organize veterans and volunteers to identify and meet material needs of community members, with an emphasis on organizations serving veterans and people of color. G.I. Junk Removal is one of many junk removal companies in the Metro region, and this project can serve as a model for how junk removal companies can intercept salvageable materials before they end up in the transfer station as garbage, and get them back into the community to those most in need.

Repair PDX***Small appliance repair shop and education space***

Grant amount: \$84,000

Match amount: \$0 (not required for nonprofit organizations)

Total investment: \$84,000

Repair PDX will develop and pilot a space where small appliances can be fixed, community members can learn to repair their own items, and repair volunteers can increase their repair skills and knowledge. Additionally, they plan to explore donation and revenue streams for fixing small appliances and putting them back into circulation, in ways that will be sustainable after the seed money from the grant ends. Repair PDX has been hosting repair events successfully for years, and notes the large number of small appliances that come in that need just minor repairs to be fully functional. This grant will build the infrastructure and repair skills base to get more appliances out of the waste stream and back into use, in partnership with organizations like Goodwill Columbia Willamette and Gresham Habitat for Humanity ReStore. Repair PDX has developed an extensive network of local government and community-based organization partners, with a large bank of volunteers as key to its growing success.

SCRAP PDX***Community investment program***

Grant amount: \$21,000

Match amount: \$0 (not required for nonprofit organizations)

Total investment: \$21,000

SCRAP PDX will provide a variety of free monthly outreach events to invest in low-income communities, to increase access for reuse opportunities through teaching creative reuse skills to underserved members of our community. The youth outreach program will involve public mural projects that invite youth community members to develop, plan, and create public murals at their schools and within their communities. The family-oriented community events will focus on SCRAP's Fill Minds Not Landfills program, which collects waste materials from companies around Portland for reuse. Adult skill-building workshops will enable BIPOC community members, adults living with low incomes, and artists to build marketable or otherwise useful skills for free. These programs will leverage and expand existing partnerships with Portland Public Schools, New Avenues for Youth, the Latino Network, Hoi Phu Huynh, Rosewood Initiative, Trash 4 Peace, and the Albina Public Library, among others.