Partnerships and Social Innovation program: Building thriving communities

The Partnerships and Social Innovation program will bring people together across sectors to identify, invest in and collaborate on projects that will make a positive impact and advance racial equity and climate action in greater Portland.

Overview
Today's societal challenges are increasingly complex and multifaceted. No single entity, organization, policy or program can solve these deeply entrenched problems. They require creative alliances and innovative solutions.

When government agencies, businesses, foundations and nonprofits come together, they can leverage their skills, knowledge and resources to make a bigger and longer lasting impact.

Vision: People live, work and play in vibrant communities where their everyday needs are easily accessible

Mission: To facilitate collective investment for community impact

Collaborative problem solving
Metro will bring together diverse stakeholders and communities to:
- identify community challenges,
- design effective solutions, and
- co-invest in these solutions for community impact.

Collaboration allows for a more comprehensive and integrated approach to problem-solving, as each partner brings their unique expertise and perspectives to the issue.

Engaging communities in the process is essential for ensuring that solutions are tailored to the specific needs and priorities of the people who are directly impacted by the problem. This not only helps to ensure that solutions are more effective and sustainable, but it also builds a sense of ownership and empowerment among community members.

Advisory council
This program is guided by an advisory council made up of people from the public, private, philanthropic and civic sectors. The council advises on investment and impact areas that are in line with Metro and partner priorities, and driven by community vision.

Contact
Yohannes Wolday, Partnerships and Social Innovation Director
yohannes.wolday@oregonmetro.gov

Approach

The Partnerships and Social Innovation program will use the following approach:

Community outreach and engagement: Community engagement is a key pillar of this program. To meaningfully engage communities, the program will center ongoing communication, trust-building and collaboration. Community members and community-based organizations will help identify priorities, co-design and co-implement solutions, and jointly assess the impact of projects.

Opportunities identification and solution design: The program will work with community members and stakeholders to identify key issues and areas where financial investment can have the greatest impact.

Priorities will be identified in a variety of ways, including:
- collaborating with Metro departments to identify and design solutions from existing or new programs,
- partnering with community organizations to identify priorities and co-design solutions, and
- collaborating with diverse partners to identify community needs from existing or new programs.
-

Partnership development and management: Public-private partnerships have the most transformative impact when each entity brings their own strengths. The program will build partnerships by identifying ways to collaborate on the development of shared goals and collective investment. This includes working with diverse cross-sector organizations to identify and explore mutual interests and opportunities for partnership.

Community investment and solution implementation: Project funding is designed to be a collaborative co-investment from public and private sources. As such projects will be those that are aligned with the different stakeholders, primarily the impacted communities, Metro, and the private and philanthropic partners. The program will support projects that can make meaningful progress toward building a vibrant community where everyone's needs are easily accessible.

Shared accountability: Communities and partners will help monitor and evaluate projects to ensure they are achieving the desired impact for the intended communities.