

REGIONAL WASTE ADVISORY COMMITTEE

Meeting Worksheet

PRESENTATION DATE: August 10, 2022 **LENGTH:** 15 minutes

PRESENTATION TITLE: 2022 Investment and Innovation grants and program update

DECISION TYPE: Informational

RELATED REGIONAL WASTE PLAN GOALS: Goals 2, 8, 9 and 15

PRESENTER(S): Suzanne Piluso, Investment and Innovation Program Manager

PURPOSE OF PRESENTATION

- Staff will provide a summary of the 2022 Investment and Innovation grants recently awarded to reduce waste and advance equity in the garbage and recycling system, and share what's next for the grant program.

ACTION REQUESTED

- None (informational)

BACKGROUND

Metro's Investment and Innovation (I&I) program recently awarded 22 new grants, totaling \$2 million, to private businesses and nonprofit organizations for creative projects to reduce waste in ways that advance racial equity. Capital grants up to \$500,000 will support upgrades to infrastructure and equipment, and program grants up to \$100,000 will build capacity by funding personnel, operations and smaller equipment. *See Attachment 1 for descriptions of the new grants.*

The Metro Council initiated the I&I program in 2018 to support a wide range of private sector efforts to reduce waste and foster economic opportunities and other benefits for communities of color and other historically marginalized communities. The I&I program has awarded approximately \$10.5 million over four funding cycles to date, and is an important tool to help achieve the overarching objectives of the 2030 Regional Waste Plan. Specifically, the grants are advancing the following Plan actions:

2.3 -- Utilize grant programs to invest in businesses and nonprofit organizations to strengthen regional efforts around reducing waste, making better use of the waste that is produced and helping foster economic opportunities for communities of color and others who have historically been left out of the garbage and recycling system.

8.1 -- Support efforts to ensure that surplus edible food desired by agencies serving communities experiencing hunger is made available to them.

8.2 -- Implement strategies to increase the salvage of building materials for reuse, without increasing exposure to toxics.

8.5 -- Invest in neighborhood-scale reuse and repair services and infrastructure.

9.1-- Provide culturally responsive education and assistance for responsive education and assistance for garbage, recycling and reuse services to residents and businesses.

15.3 -- Develop public-private partnerships to expand local markets for priority recyclable materials, with an emphasis on minority-owned and other business owners from historically marginalized groups.

15.4 -- Fund investments to improve the performance of material recovery facilities through collection rates and/or other mechanisms.

This year, the I&I program:

- Prioritized funding three types of projects: Recycling infrastructure, reuse and repair, and food waste prevention and rescue.
- Added a second external review committee for program grants as an equity best practice, to have more community input into funding decisions.
- Implemented an “equity threshold” requirement, requiring every application to demonstrate meaningful efforts to advance racial equity to be eligible for funding. Staff offered applicants opportunities to brainstorm ways they could incorporate equity into their unique projects and programs, and staff are continuing to provide this assistance in the current contracting phase of the new grants.

These program enhancements and others were implemented in response to findings in a 2021 program evaluation of the program’s three-year pilot phase. Staff presented the evaluation findings, including the program’s environmental and equity outcomes to date, to RWAC, the Committee on Racial Equity, and the Metro Council last year. *The evaluation report is available at <https://www.oregonmetro.gov/tools-partners/grants-and-resources/investment-and-innovation-grants>.*

NEXT STEPS

- Funding priorities for the I&I program are developed each year, taking into account current needs in the garbage and recycling system and other policy, legislative and funding strategies underway and planned. Staff will return to RWAC in late 2022 to for input on proposed funding priorities for the FY22-23 grant cycle. The next grant cycle will launch in early 2023 with a request for proposals for up to \$2 million in available funding.

QUESTIONS FOR CONSIDERATION

- None

ATTACHMENTS

- Attachment 1: Summary of 2022 Investment and Innovation grants