

To: Office of Community & Civic Life  
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## 2022-2023 NECN Final Small Community Grant Report

The Northeast Coalition of Neighborhoods reports that the total grant funds awarded and distributed during fiscal year 2022-2023 was \$30,973. Split amongst 9 community projects, the average amount approved and disbursed was \$3,441. For extended reports on each project funded, see pages 4-8. Additionally, for further guidance on the scoring and funding metrics that the independent grant committee utilized, see page 3.

PROJECT	ORGANIZATION	AMOUNT REQUESTED	AMOUNT APPROVED
Indigenous Marketplace Returns to NE PDX	Portland Indigenous Marketplace	\$4,500	\$4,500
Visibly Invisible: Honoring Our Unsung Sheroes, Queens Brunch	Sistas Empowerment Corp	\$4,500	\$4,500
Connecting to Your Purpose Within	Sunflower Z's Healing Garden	\$4,500	\$4,050
You Have Options - Definite Chief Aim	York Academy of Oregon	\$4,500	\$4,050
Rhythms of Kwanzaa	Sabin CDC	\$3,850	\$3,850
Lloyd Ecodistrict Community Lending Library	Lloyd Ecodistrict	\$4,500	\$3,150
Connecting for Capacity and Community-Building in NE PDX	Milk Crate Kitchen	\$4,500	\$3,150
Uplifting, Regrouping, Engaging the Community Voices	Bethel AME Economic Development Corp	\$1,883	\$1,883
Leisure Hour Jr. Golf Program Adopt-A-Family	Leisure Hour Jr. Golf	\$1,840	\$1,840
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>9 Grants Awarded</b>	<b>\$34,573</b>	<b><u>\$30,973</u></b>

## PROGRAM SUMMARY

The Northeast Coalition of Neighborhoods (NECN), empowered by Civic Life, funded nine initiatives, ranging from holistic wellness events to community lending libraries and cultural celebrations. NECN's commitment to fostering community engagement, promoting cultural awareness, and addressing the diverse needs of residents within Northeast Portland remains intact. However, as NECN looks towards the future, there is a strong desire to broaden the reach and engagement to include marginalized communities such as seniors, neurodivergent individuals, disabled persons, Native American populations, and immigrants. We believe that, along with creative marketing, some of this can be achieved by spreading funds to sponsorship, so that we can offer CBOs and projects that don't normally apply for whatever reason beyond the grant cycle.

As we believe enhancing inclusivity and accessibility is always a project in motion, NECN is taking proactive steps to streamline document processes and reevaluate certain parameters of its funding initiatives. By doing so, we aim to remove barriers and create opportunities for participation from a wider range of community members to further support the mission of Civic Life. Additionally, there is consideration for adjusting guidelines to enable support for mutual aid drives, such as food box distributions, recognizing the critical role these initiatives play in addressing immediate needs within the community.

In addition to streamlining processes, NECN also strengthened our scoring system to assess project proposals more effectively. This scoring system considers various factors such as alignment with NECN's mission, impact on underserved communities, feasibility, and sustainability. By implementing this system, we aim to identify, thus diversify, when funded projects meet the immediate needs of the community and /or contribute to long-term positive change.

Unfortunately, the review committee noted instances where projects appeared to seek funding under the guise of community support while lacking genuine representation or understanding of the communities they claim to serve. In response, NECN is actively exploring ways to foster genuine inclusion, expansion, and representation within funded projects, emphasizing the importance of authenticity and relevance in community engagement efforts. Through these strategic changes and ongoing efforts to expand outreach, NECN is dedicated to ensuring that all residents of District 2 feel supported, empowered, and included in the collective efforts to build a stronger, more vibrant community.

## SCORING

Each committee member gave a score for each criteria using the following metric. Scores were combined and weighted. The funding proportion is in direct relation to this overall score. To spread funding around, any grant request under \$2000 was funded fully as long as it scored over 5/50%. We also funded with the goal of successful project execution in mind. **No grants with less than a score of 5 (50%) were funded as this means the criteria was vaguely met.**

<b>7.5 (75%) or higher</b>	Very Good - Exceptional	Fully funded at 100%
<b>6.5 (65%) or higher</b>	Good to Very Good	Funded at 90%
<b>5 (50%) or higher</b>	Adequate to Good	Funded at 70%

### Scoring Metrics

#### **Fit and Impact (35%):**

- Does the narrative make a clear case for achieving project goals and timeline?
- Are NECN goals central to the project?
- Will the project have meaningful impacts for the community?

#### **Diversity and Equity (35%):**

- Is the project led directly by the communities benefiting from it?
- Does the project advance the leadership or voice of historically under-represented communities?
- Does the project responsibly serve underserved communities?

#### **Engagement (15%):**

- Does the project directly involve and engage community members?
- Do project activities connect to the goals?
- Is there a clear plan for promoting the project?

#### **Project Feasibility (15%):**

- Does the narrative include a detailed plan for successful project implementation?
- Does the applicant have sufficient capacity to manage grant funds as well as provide the required report?

- 1-2: Weak (fails to meet criteria)**
- 3-4: Marginal (vaguely meets criteria)**
- 5-6: Adequate/Good (meets criteria)**
- 7-8: Very Good (strongly meets criteria)**
- 9-10: Exceptional (exceeds criteria)**

## PROJECT SUMMARIES

### **York Academy - Definite Chief Aim:** Awarded \$4,050

Over the course of nine weeks, York Academy embarked on a journey through Napoleon Hill's 13 principles of success philosophy, focusing on the "DCA Edition" to guide 15 youths along with three mentors. Inviting community members from diverse professional backgrounds like banking, real estate, law, psychology, and even a former gang member, they aimed to inspire and mentor youth from their own neighborhoods. The sessions emphasized emotional intelligence and instilled the belief that what one can envision, one can achieve. Witnessing remarkable transformations, participants eagerly embraced each lesson, particularly valuing discussions on scholarships, self-esteem, financial literacy, conflict resolution, leadership, cultural awareness, and community engagement.

Notably, the project not only provided hope to those affected by gang violence but also enhanced literacy skills and financial literacy, with each student opening a savings account. Despite challenges such as scheduling conflicts and budget constraints, the project's success was sustained by community support, facilitating the purchase of necessary materials and resources.

Looking ahead, areas for improvement include organizing enriching field trips, diversifying meeting content, and delving deeper into investment education. By addressing these aspects, the project can further empower youth to navigate life's challenges and make informed decisions, thus continuing to foster growth and positive change within the community.

### **Visibly Invisible - Honoring Unsung Heroines:** Awarded \$4,500

The Visibly Invisible: Honoring Our Unsung Heroines Queen's Breakfast, organized by SISTAS Empowerment Corp, resonated deeply with over 120 attendees, celebrating remarkable Black/African descent women from the community. Attendees described the event as "amazing" and "life-giving," emphasizing its spiritual and empowering atmosphere reminiscent of a deeply spiritual gathering. Through panels and recognition of 2024's Unsung Heroines, the event not only honored outstanding contributions but also raised awareness about SISTAS Empowerment Corp's mission to empower Black women and girls. Looking forward, organizers anticipate the upcoming Gala, aiming to continue fostering community engagement and celebration.

Despite its success, the event highlighted key learning opportunities, particularly the need for more time for meaningful dialogue and the challenge of predicting attendance for free events. Although initially planned for 120 attendees, increased demand required adjustments to accommodate up to 150,

presenting budgetary challenges. Nonetheless, the event's triumph, supported by NECN, RACC, and the Collins Foundation, underscores the significance of creating inclusive spaces for healing, empowerment, and celebration within communities, reaffirming the vital role of recognizing the often-overlooked work of Black women.

**Sunny Z Healing Garden/Black Rose Wellness: Awarded \$4,050**

Black Rose Wellness, a collective led by three Black women mental health professionals with expertise in somatic and energy healing, organized a successful multigenerational holistic wellness event for Black women centered around the principle of Nia (purpose) during Kwanzaa's fifth day. Utilizing social media platforms like Instagram and Facebook, the event quickly booked up within hours, drawing 15 women aged 23 to 55. Attendees were warmly welcomed with roses and wellness kits comprising self-care items like spiritual bath supplies and affirmation cards. Despite a sold-out DIY paint kit, the event pivoted smoothly to a DIY vibe board activity, fostering community building and laughter as participants connected over their intentions for 2024.

Throughout the event, a focus on Black joy and sisterhood permeated activities such as crafting purposeful vibe boards and engaging in healing circles where grounding techniques, deep breathing exercises, and sensory integration practices were taught. The women were guided through a transformative journey of self-discovery, culminating in a sound bath, reiki session, and reflective journaling. Each participant left equipped with a take-home wellness guide to continue aligning with their purpose and practicing self-love, emphasizing the empowering and nurturing environment fostered by Black Rose Wellness.

**SabinCDC Kwanzaa w/ Nikki Brown Clown: Awarded \$3,850**

The Rhythms of Kwanzaa event, hosted by Sabin CDC, proved to be a vibrant and joyous celebration, embodying the spirit of community unity and cultural richness. With over 40 children and 20 adults participating, the event featured dynamic displays of dance, song, and drumming led by talented performers like Cuk Barber, Nikki Brown Clown, and Ladybug PDX, infusing the gathering with enthusiasm and joy. Children engaged in activities such as drumming, singing, and listening to Kwanzaa stories, fostering both learning and celebration of the seven principles of the holiday.

The event also facilitated intergenerational exchange, as elders joined in the festivities, creating a heartwarming atmosphere of cultural transmission and unity. Collaborative activities like creating a unity chain and playing Kwanzaa-themed games further reinforced the values of Umoja (unity) and collective effort. Closing the celebration with Zawadi, the tradition of giving and receiving culturally specific gifts,

underscored the event's significance in promoting cultural awareness and fostering a sense of belonging within the community. Overall, the Rhythms of Kwanzaa event exemplified Sabin CDC's dedication to community engagement and creating inclusive spaces for celebrating shared values and traditions.

**Milk Crate Kitchen - Connecting for Capacity:** Awarded \$3,150

Under the leadership of Co-Director Sherielyn Gardner, the MCK project enlisted the help of three NE Portland residents and community members, alongside founder Michael Casper and five existing volunteers, to conduct extensive research on twelve neighborhoods in the area. Through two weeks of dedicated research using internet-based resources and Sherielyn's expertise, the team identified 103 nonprofits serving the community, compiling vital information for a master tracker. With the assistance of a new volunteer, they created a user-friendly directory accessible to the public, aiming to streamline access to resources.

MCK organized two successful lunch-and-learn events to disseminate their findings, showcasing Milk Crate Kitchen's culinary skills and attracting a diverse audience including business owners, association leaders, and city council candidates. The open-source directory, featuring keyword search and filter options, promises broader accessibility and utility. Reflecting on their experience, the team emphasizes the importance of a comprehensive communication strategy for wider outreach and envisions future phases to enhance partnerships and address community needs.

**Lloyd EcoDistrict - Lending Library:** Awarded \$3,150

The Lloyd EcoDistrict Lending Library, initiated in response to community demand for low-cost event resources, has seen significant success thanks to the support of the NECN grant. With allocated funds of \$3,150, essential items like a rechargeable solar generator and reusable trays were procured, facilitating sustainable and inclusive neighborhood gatherings. The library's impact is evident through its contribution to community cleanups and partnerships with organizations like SOLVE and Climate Curious, fostering environmental awareness and community engagement.

Notably, the library's resources have been enthusiastically embraced by local nonprofits and housing complexes, enabling them to host successful and eco-conscious events. While winter presented challenges, efforts to expand outreach and engagement, particularly with BIPOC-led organizations, are underway. Looking ahead, the library aims to promote zero-waste events and educate the community on environmental stewardship, fostering a more sustainable and connected neighborhood. With ongoing support and collaboration, the Lloyd EcoDistrict Lending Library is poised to continue making a positive impact on the Lloyd and surrounding neighborhoods.

**Leisure Hour Golf:** Awarded \$1,840

The Leisure Hour Jr. Golf Program (LHJGP) Adopt a Family initiative, funded by the Northeast Coalition of Neighborhoods, achieved remarkable success, serving 52 families during the holiday season. With a carefully allocated budget of \$1840.99, the event provided essential support to families in need, encompassing toys, educational materials, wrapping supplies, and food. Despite a slight budget overrun, the program's commitment to community impact remained steadfast, reflecting the dedication of volunteers and partners who ensured the event's success.

Held at First AME Zion, the event fostered a profound sense of camaraderie and compassion among families and volunteers, highlighting the importance of community support during challenging times. Volunteer coordinators played a pivotal role in orchestrating the initiative, contributing to its emotional resonance and long-term impact. Moving forward, the LHJGP Adopt a Family program aims to become an annual tradition, perpetuating its legacy of hope and support within the community while strengthening bonds of fellowship and collective action.

**Indigenous Marketplace:** Awarded \$4,500

The Indigenous Marketplace Celebrates Black History event, formerly known as PIM, marked a significant success highlighted by a safe environment and positive feedback from attendees and vendors alike. Christopher Spivery's contributions, from creating event graphics to showcasing his art, added a unique and appreciated touch to the event. Despite space limitations, organizers creatively curated an art exhibit and playlist to ensure ample room for vendors and a vibrant atmosphere. Key learnings include the event's positive reception, successful execution of planned activities, and the crucial role of grant funding in elevating the event's ambiance through signage, decorations, and amenities like free snacks and coffee provided by sponsors.

While the event largely stayed within budget, adjustments such as redirecting performer stipends to the art exhibit and playlist, and organizers volunteering instead of hiring additional staff, allowed for necessary expenses like transportation and event materials. The venue's accessibility, provided parking, and standout decorations further enhanced the event's appeal and functionality. Looking ahead, organizers aim to secure more space for live entertainment in future iterations while remaining adaptable to potential changes in venue ownership. Overall, the event's success underscores the importance of collaboration, creativity, and strategic budgeting in delivering a memorable and impactful community experience.

**Bethel AME:** Awarded \$1,883

The event commenced with a screening of an Oregon Experience episode on Beatrice Morrow Cannady, followed by tours of the EDC land and mingling with board members. A PowerPoint presentation showcased the organization's vision, mission, and new board members. The NECN Small Grant facilitated the purchase of a Meeting Owl and a laptop, enhancing communication at the Clair People's Food Bank. Successes included increased community engagement, exceeding fundraising goals, and expanding the board. Key learning opportunities included addressing accessibility issues for individuals with hearing and vision impairments. Challenges included promoting the event amidst a snowstorm and providing adequate resources for virtual attendees without computer access. Improvement areas identified include childcare availability, technology training for elders, and addressing the digital divide.

The Meeting Owl and laptop facilitated seamless communication and community engagement at the food bank, contributing to the organization's success. Despite challenges, the event garnered significant community support and donations, underscoring its impact. Moving forward, addressing accessibility and technology barriers will be crucial for inclusivity and effective communication. Promoting events and providing resources for virtual attendees without computer access are areas for improvement. Overall, the event exemplified the organization's commitment to serving the community and highlighted opportunities for growth and enhancement in future endeavors.