



**DATE:** September 10, 2025  
**TO:** Board of Commissioners  
**FROM:** Cornell Wesley, Executive Director  
**SUBJECT:** Report Number 25-29  
Adopting Revised Community Livability Grant Program Guidelines

**BOARD ACTION REQUESTED AND BRIEF DESCRIPTION**

Approve Resolution No. 7622

This action by the Prosper Portland Board of Commissioners (Board) will approve revised Community Livability Grant (CLG) program guidelines (Guidelines). If approved, the Guidelines will direct Prosper Portland's investment of grant dollars to community-based organizations and other eligible entities within the City of Portland's Tax Increment Finance (TIF) districts. The proposed updates to the CLG Guidelines clarify eligibility conditions, establish limits on cost areas, institute a match from the grantee after a grant threshold has been reached, and streamline the evaluation criteria and process language.

**STRATEGIC ALIGNMENT AND OUTCOMES**

The CLG program aligns with Advance Portland's Outcome 3.5, Support the Growth and Health of Businesses within Commercial Districts, and contributes to the success of City of Portland-adopted TIF district plans.

**BACKGROUND AND CONTEXT**

The CLG program was created by Prosper Portland in 2007 and updated multiple times pursuant to agency-adopted strategic plans and specific needs identified in TIF district action plans. The CLG program is currently available in Gateway Regional Center, Interstate Corridor, and North Macadam TIF Districts, but may extend to additional TIF districts through action planning and pursuant to funding availability. Since its inception, CLG requests have regularly exceeded available funds, and Prosper Portland continues to seek program improvements to maximize impact through limited resources.

The CLG provides funding to community-based organizations and other entities for projects that promote healthy, complete, and resilient neighborhoods and that support community well-being and widely shared prosperity. Eligible applicants include nonprofit organizations, neighborhood and business associations, and neighborhood groups. Property owners may also be eligible.

The CLG is awarded on an annual basis and is served by a selection committee composed of community members representing a range of expertise and lived experience and who understand the goals within relevant TIF district action plans.

Key changes to the Guidelines include:

- **Availability of Funds:** Eligible entities may receive up to \$300,000 within a 5-year period, rather than a 10-year period. A 50% match will now be required for any amount awarded beyond \$200,000 of CLG funding. Soft costs, such as consultant fees, are now an eligible use of funds, up to \$25,000.
- **Eligible Entities:** The updated Guidelines clarify eligible applicants. New language has been added for eligible properties to align with the criteria used in the Prosperity Investment Program.
- **Selection Process:** The proposed language simplifies the minimum project requirements to include demonstration of community support, financial feasibility, and project completion within one year from time of the award.

These changes were informed by feedback from Prosper Portland staff and past grant recipients.

### **EQUITY IMPACT**

The CLG is an existing program whereby TIF resources are granted in alignment with Advance Portland and respective TIF district action plans. The Guidelines clarify both eligible entities and language for a streamlined selection process, while providing more frequent access to the funds once organizations have reached the maximum grant amount. The Guidelines also allow for contractors or consultants to be paid directly if reimbursement is deemed a financial hardship for grant recipients.

### **COMMUNITY PARTICIPATION AND FEEDBACK**

Prosper Portland staff surveyed past CLG recipients who received a grant within the past five years. The questionnaire sought feedback from a diverse range of respondents on key areas including clarity of the guidelines, types of improvements funded, adequacy of funding amounts to complete the project, and experience with the reimbursement process.

The survey included a diverse cross-section of respondents: 45% business owners, 38% property owners, and 18% nonprofit administrators spanning five TIF districts (Central Eastside, Lents Town Center, Interstate Corridor, Old Town<sup>1</sup>, and Gateway Regional Center). Respondents represented organizations with annual incomes ranging from \$50,000 to more than \$1 million, providing a wide-ranging perspective on the program's reach and impact.

Survey respondents generally agreed that the application guidelines are clear and most of the improvement projects they hoped to pursue were eligible under the program. However, several participants noted that the reimbursement-based model imposed a financial strain on some applicants. Despite this challenge, grant recipients rated their overall experience highly, giving the program an average score of 4.4 out of 5 stars.

Survey feedback revealed three key priorities for enhancing the program, all of which are addressed in the Guideline adjustments and overall program implementation. Respondents felt that grant amounts should be increased; many would benefit from assistance in identifying and coordinating with reliable contractors; and simplifying or aiding the permitting process would greatly improve accessibility and ease of implementation of the grant.

### **BUDGET AND FINANCIAL INFORMATION**

There are no financial impacts from this proposed action.

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<sup>1</sup> The Old Town Action Plan spans both the former River and Downtown Waterfront TIF Districts

Prosper Portland will initiate an annual competitive process by announcing available funds in each TIF district where funds are budgeted and available.

**RISK ASSESSMENT**

The Guidelines, as proposed, reduce potential risks to Prosper Portland by both clarifying and streamlining criteria for applicants and grantees, ensuring transparency and garnering qualified projects.

**ATTACHMENTS**

None.