



**DATE:** July 12, 2023  
**TO:** Board of Commissioners  
**FROM:** Kimberly Branam, Executive Director  
**SUBJECT:** Report Number 23-19  
 Authorizing Multiple Agreements to Implement Workforce Development and Business District Programs During Fiscal Year 2023-24

**BOARD ACTION REQUESTED AND BRIEF DESCRIPTION**

Adopt Resolution Nos. 7492 and 7493

These actions by the Prosper Portland Board of Commissioners (Board) will authorize the Executive Director to sign the agreements identified below to implement workforce development and business district support programs administered and funded by Prosper Portland in fiscal year (FY) 2023-24. These two annual agreements exceed the Executive Director’s signature authority and require Prosper Portland Board approval.

Grantee	Amount	Purpose
Worksystems, Inc.	\$3,310,494	Administer and implement youth and adult workforce development services
Venture Portland	\$570,000	Administer and implement business district support programs and the Catalytic Investment Initiative

**STRATEGIC ALIGNMENT AND OUTCOMES**

These programs exemplify Prosper Portland’s collaboration with partners to build an equitable economy. They meet Prosper Portland’s strategic objectives by:

- Improving connections between target industry employers and job seekers through workforce development initiatives that connect neighborhood residents to nearby quality job opportunities; and
- Supporting neighborhood capacity building through training, technical assistance, and financial assistance to neighborhood business district associations.

**BACKGROUND AND CONTEXT**

**Worksystems.** Prosper Portland and Worksystems, Inc. (Worksystems) have a long-standing partnership. Prosper Portland implements the youth program (known as NextGen) and adult workforce development program (known as Economic Opportunity Program) through grants to Worksystems, which delivers the two programs in coordination with its other workforce services. Worksystems, in turn, provides sub-grants to non-profit providers specializing in youth and adult workforce development.

Adult workforce development providers were selected through a request for proposals (RFP) issued by Worksystems in the spring of 2013, and youth workforce development providers were selected through an RFP in May of 2022. Worksystems will issue a new RFP to select providers for the adult program this fiscal year, and contracts will begin for those providers in FY 2024-25. Prosper Portland is involved in the issuance of the RFPs and in the selection of providers. A list of anticipated FY 2023-24 youth and adult workforce development service providers is included in Exhibit A to Resolution 7492.

The Community Workforce Navigator Program began in 2015 to improve access to appropriate workforce development services and to increase the incomes of low-income residents so they can afford to stay in the neighborhood as housing costs rise. The target populations are under- and unemployed residents, low-income residents, people of color, and English as a Second Language speakers. The navigator program currently serves the seven Neighborhood Prosperity Network (NPN) districts, which includes Our 42nd Avenue, Cully Boulevard Alliance, Jade District, Division Midway Alliance, Rosewood Initiative, Historic Parkrose, and St. Johns Center for Opportunity. The program also funds a navigator at Urban League to connect residents in priority neighborhoods to high-growth jobs in the manufacturing industry.

This program is typically implemented through sub-grants from Worksystems to community-based workforce providers. However, due to high staff turnover at workforce organizations and reduced service levels over the last two fiscal years, staff are piloting a direct hire approach for the Rosewood Initiative and Division Midway Alliance NPN districts. Worksystems will contract directly with the districts to hire one full-time navigator per district. The pilot program will be evaluated throughout the fiscal year to determine if the new approach is yielding the intended outcomes, which includes better alignment of workforce programming with district needs, increased district capacity, deeper community connections, and improved service delivery. Coordination between Prosper Portland, Worksystems, workforce staff and/or providers, NPN staff, and community leaders is critical for successful program implementation.

In FY 2021-22, Worksystems programs served 735 adults and 457 youths; 54 percent of adults and 70 percent of youths identified as people of color. Furthermore, 89 percent of adult participants retained employment at program exit and 58 percent of youth participants were placed in employment or post-secondary training. The Community Workforce Navigator Program provided services to 456 individuals; of those, 84 percent were people of color.

**Venture Portland.** Since 1986, Venture Portland, a 501(c)(4) Oregon non-profit corporation, has invested in the strategic growth of Portland's unique neighborhood business districts. Venture Portland provides unique and critical services to neighborhood business district associations that further their ability to create a positive economic development environment for local businesses and the surrounding community.

In FY 2023-24, Prosper Portland will contribute \$570,000 for Venture Portland organizational operations and programming. Venture Portland supports existing and emerging business districts through the delivery of trainings and workshops, sharing best practices, marketing and promoting business districts, and administration of Business District Capacity Building and Neighborhood Economic Development Grant programs.

Venture Portland will dedicate \$190,000 to fund the Catalytic Investment Initiative (CII) in FY 2023-24. Launched in 2015, the CII provides targeted support to designated neighborhood business district associations in East and North Portland. Districts served in FY 2023-24 will include Foster, Lents, Midway, St. Johns, and Williams. A sixth district will be identified in coordination with Venture Portland and Prosper Portland staff. The CII provides grants and staff support to increase business association membership, volunteers, and revenue. Potential projects could include a business seminar series,

seasonal event (summer/holiday), marketing/promotion activities, business mapping, and/or identity collateral. Eligible business associations must participate in a board strategy session, complete a 12-month work plan, and monitor outcomes to ensure the success of their grant activities.

The table below outlines Venture Portland’s annual reporting metrics and includes actuals for FY 2021-22 and target goals for FY 2023-24.

<b>Venture Portland General Fund Performance Metrics</b>	<b>Actual FY 2021-22</b>	<b>Target FY 2023-24</b>
Number of technical assistance and training hours	4,570	2,700
Number of volunteer hours	5,419	8,000
Amount of grants awarded to business districts	\$100,300	\$102,600
Private funds leveraged by Venture Portland	82,443	\$200,000

**EQUITY IMPACT**

**Worksystems.** The Economic Opportunity Initiative (EOI) promotes achievement of Prosper Portland’s strategic goals for wealth creation, access to high quality jobs, and 21<sup>st</sup> century networks and partnerships. The workforce development programs served over 1,600 individuals per year in FY 2021-22; approximately 69 percent of those served identified as people of color. Prosper Portland’s investments in youth and adult workforce leverage significant investment by Worksystems. For the youth system, Worksystems anticipates spending an additional \$2,000,000 in Multnomah and Washington counties. In addition to these investments in intensive one-on-one workforce development services, Worksystems contracts with a work experience intermediary to develop and match youth to appropriate work experience opportunities and provide coaching to the youth and the employer to achieve successful placements. Work experiences are essential in learning the demands and expectations of the work environment and exploring careers of interest in a safe and supportive context. The youth system also funds industry-specific career exposure trainings in the five targeted sectors of healthcare, construction, technology, clean technology, and manufacturing to give youth entry-level skills to start on a career path in one of these industries.

For adult participants, Worksystems anticipates providing an additional \$1,000,000 in workforce preparation, training, and employment services through WorkSource Portland Metro (WSPM), whose services are set aside for low-income individuals with barriers to employment in Multnomah County. WSPM services are available to address different skill levels, work histories, and career goals and can be accessed by EOI participants to support their career plans.

The Community Workforce Navigator Program provides neighborhood-based workforce support to residents and business owners who are able to more easily connect job seekers to employment opportunities right in their neighborhood. In FY 2021-222 the program served Our 42nd Avenue, Cully Boulevard Alliance, Jade District, Division Midway Alliance, Rosewood Initiative, Historic Parkrose, and St. Johns Center for Opportunity NPN district residents and Urban League Portland community members.

**Venture Portland.** Gentrification and displacement pressures create significant challenges for neighborhood business district associations. Venture Portland’s Catalytic Investment Initiative is designed to directly address the disparity among Portland’s business district associations by focusing resources in neighborhoods experiencing gentrification pressures or whose demographic and economic profiles, business district size, and lack of infrastructure pose unique and significant challenges.

**COMMUNITY PARTICIPATION AND FEEDBACK**

While there has been no specific public participation related to these actions, there has been considerable community engagement over many years. Most recently, Prosper Portland’s Community Budget Committee (CBC) reviewed and supported the FY 2023-24 draft budget requests for these economic development programs.

**Worksystems.** As noted above, Worksystems issued RFPs for the selection of service providers for the youth and adult workforce development programs. The process of selecting new providers is open and transparent and involved significant outreach and input from existing providers and other entities interested in providing workforce development services.

**Venture Portland.** Venture Portland’s board meets quarterly and is comprised of an all-volunteer board of directors and professional staff. The board is made up of delegates from member business districts that simultaneously serve on Venture Portland’s board and contribute to their business district while also working at their own businesses.

**BUDGET AND FINANCIAL INFORMATION**

City of Portland General Funds will be provided to Prosper Portland through an annual IGA with the City Budget Office (CBO) that was approved by the Prosper Portland Board through Resolution 7490 on June 21, 2023. The Community Development Block Grant (CDBG) funds will be provided through an annual IGA with the Portland Housing Bureau (PHB), was approved by the Prosper Portland Board through Resolution No. 7489 on June 21, 2023. The anticipated overall budget for the two programs under consideration, with all funding sources, is shown in the table below. Funds have been included in Prosper Portland’s FY 2023-24 Adopted Budget. Funds from both PHB and CBO will be provided on a reimbursement invoicing basis with the respective City bureau.

	General Fund	Community Development Block Grant (CDBG)	Enterprise Zone	TOTAL*
<b>Worksystems</b> (see Exhibit A to Resolution 7492 for further detail)	\$1,354,000	\$1,727,494	\$229,000	\$3,310,494
<b>Venture Portland</b>	\$570,000	\$0	\$0	\$570,000

\*Does not include Prosper Portland staff time and materials and services

It is possible that additional funds may be identified to support this work. Therefore Resolution No. 7492 authorizes the Executive Director to increase funding to Worksystems by up to an additional \$500,000, should additional resources become available.

**RISK ASSESSMENT**

The following processes and contractual obligations identified in the Worksystems and Venture Portland agreements limit risk and ensure that partners deliver optimal services and work toward the goals of the programs.

Worksystems specific:

- Regularly involve Prosper Portland staff in policy discussions about the youth and adult workforce development system.
- Provide training to providers to ensure CDBG funds are properly administered.

- Report accomplishments, challenges, and outcomes bi-annual basis (or more frequently).
- Monthly invoice for reimbursement of program costs

Venture Portland specific:

- Report accomplishments, challenges, and outcomes on a bi-annual basis
- Bi-annual grant disbursements are contingent on receipt of program reporting

**ATTACHMENTS**

None.