



## BCTF January 2025 Commission Meeting

**Date:** January 9, 2025

**Time:** 10:00am-12:00pm

**Location:** Element Hotel Bend

**Participants:** Laurel MacMillan, Jeff Knapp, Eli Ashley, Sandy Anderson, Leah Rutz, Michael Gesme, Miguel Edwards, Amy Reynalds, Zavi Borja. Joined Via Zoom: Rachel Alms and Adam Foster. Absent: Jeff Manning.

### Action Items

- [ ] Laurel McMillan - **Create events calendar** Create a shared calendar/spreadsheet of all BCTF funded events for commissioners to reference
- [ ] Laurel McMillan - **Send calendar invites** Send calendar invitations for February 13 (10am-1pm) and May 8 (9am-4pm) meetings
- [ ] Laurel McMillan - **Develop recruitment strategy** Work with Zavi to develop a strategy for recruiting one new commissioner\* *up to two Commissioners due to information obtained after the meeting.*
- [ ] Laurel McMillan - **Deliver thank you books** Get the Ineffable books to Rachel and Adam who were not present at the meeting
- [ ] Laurel McMillan - **Update grant guidelines with discussed changes** Update the 2025 grant guidelines with changes discussed in meeting and distribute to commissioners for email approval by late January
- Next Meeting:
  - Focus on TBP Report
  - Brainstorm various venues to get the word out about BCTF (i.e. city club, pub talks, etc.)
  - ZoomGrants Review Training
  - Review past grants

### Overview

- Visit Bend welcomed new Destination Stewardship Director Zavi Borja to oversee both grant programs

- BCTF set **2025** grant program timeline with application opening **February 7th** and deadline of **April 11th**
- Commission established new maximum grant amounts: **\$10,000** for small marketing grants and **\$40,000** for large marketing grants
- Grant review meeting scheduled for **May 8th, 9:00 AM - 4:00 PM**
- Commission agreed to recruit one additional commissioner to reach full capacity of 11 members\* *up to two commissioners due to information obtained after the meeting*
- Budget projected at approximately **\$375,000** for 2025 grant cycle

### **Visit Bend Organizational Updates**

- Jeff highlighted focus on trust-based philanthropy and breaking down barriers to grant access
- Zavi joined as new Destination Stewardship Director to oversee grant programs and community engagement
- Visit Bend expanding stewardship efforts through increased community presence and convening solutions around arts, culture, and sustainability
- Organization working to integrate grant efforts with broader stewardship work

### **2025 Grant Program Timeline**

- Application Guideline Updates January 9- **February 7**
- Application goes live **February 7th**
- Next Commission Meeting scheduled for **February 13th, 10:00 AM - 1:00 PM**
- Conversation with funders event planned before application deadline, likely early **March**
- Grant deadline set for **April 11th**
- Grant review period: **April 12th - May 7th**
- Grant review meeting: **May 8th**
- Funding to begin **July 1st**

### **Trust Based Philanthropy Report Status**

- Report completed in May with 41% response rate (considered really good for industry standards)
- Further work paused during Visit Bend leadership and staffing transitions
- Visit Bend committed to supporting grantees with DEI implementation
- Commission agreed to:
  - Provide better resources and examples for DEI integration

- Encourage authentic community partnerships
- Revise application language to encourage genuine DEI efforts
- Add external resources to assist in better response to question
- Add examples of projects that include DEI efforts authentically

**Grant Guidelines updates from Parking Lot issues from April, 2024 Meeting**

1. **Grant Request Max**—Do we want to provide limits on asks to prevent people from asking for a really high request?

**Approved** *We max the Small Marketing/Research at \$10,000 (average is \$9,000) and Large Marketing at \$40,000 (average award is \$27,000 and largest grant we awarded was \$48,000)*

Moved by Miguel, second by Sandy, to make Small Marketing-Research Grants to \$10K maximum and Large Marketing Grants \$40K maximum. Motion passed.

2. **Out-of-Area Applicants**

Commissioners expressed concern funding international applicants, and also, possibly, applicants domiciled outside Central Oregon.

**Approved:** *State “applicant must be located in the United States” & let the “Collaborations” section of the application prove they are welcome/connected to the Bend area.*

Moved by Amy, seconded by Leah, that applicants must be located within the U.S., the same with collaborations. Motion passed.

3. **Contract Noncompliance-Breach**

BCTF policy on grant application eligibility mandates applicant’s compliance with the prior BCTF grants and that there be no outstanding grant agreements. If applicant does not comply with, and breaches, the award agreement, BCTF policy bars an applicant from submitting another application. The policy, however, does not define how long the bar to eligibility is in effect.

**Approved:** *ban for one year. All other circumstances would be case by case basis that Grant Administrator and Visit Bend staff discuss.*

Motion by Amy, second by Miguel, that a breach of contract will eliminate the applicant from future grants. Motion passed.

4. **Need for Funding**

The question arose, particularly with respect to OMD/HHA/Live Nation, but also other applications: What is the need for funds? With respect to OMD/HHA/Live Nation: these are highly successful and profitable organizations: they will continue to make a large profit, whether or not they receive BCTF funding.

**Approved:** *Keep funding available for profits and if we need to address this, continue to explore this subject.*

Need for funding criteria, members agreed to leave as is.

#### 5. **Culture Appreciation - Appropriation**

A concern was raised regarding Cultural Appropriation and the applicant's own knowledge/cultural background (or the retention of a qualified advisor) when applicant defines and promotes a culturally-based program.

**Approved:** *Keep as is and let the reviewers determine if it is fundable based off of merit and all of the application questions.*

Cultural appropriation while not welcomed, the members seemed to wish to review on a case by case, i.e. Taco Fest. It may be too difficult to define and existing review criteria would suffice.

#### 6. **DEI Question**

Does BCTF need to reframe/rephrase the question to elicit better responses?

Here is the question as currently stated:

*The proposal's/organization's strategies will actively enhance diversity, equity and inclusion within our community.*

**7-10 points** = Project has clear strategies identified for enhancing diversity, equity and inclusion within the applicant's organization and how the strategies are represented in the proposed project.

**3-6 points** = Organization has strategies for DEI, but they do not pertain to the proposed project or activity.

**0-3 points** = No DEI strategies listed or organization only lists it's DEI statement or policy.

- Suggestions included providing prompts to help the application think about how to have a better DEI strategy. Like for instance who is involved.
- Another suggestion was including links to external resources that would help the applicant. It was suggested to look at Travel Oregon's grant program for resources, questions.
- Someone else suggested helping make connections to organizations that might help the applicant out. More resources to provide beyond the check.
- Mentioned it should be something we value. Currently in grant guidelines that we value DEI.

Action: Laurel to take suggestions and rewrite question with the help of the executive committee and approve via email.

DEI, continue to encourage among applicants but review carefully to make sure that applicant has clearly articulated this and able to deliver on promises.

## **7. New Ideas v Static Programming / Several Applicants**

Commissioners voiced some discomfort about continuing to fund former grantees who are reapplying for successful but static programs.

- Remember this is a partnership between BCTF and the applicant.
- If we don't continue to fund our regular partners, not sure if there would be enough quality applicants to grant out the entire fund every year.
- Agreed to leave as is.

## **8. Arts/Culture Component**

Rather than create an actual arts/culture/humanities event, to get BCTF funds some applicants apply for an event in which they've cosmetically included, or manipulated the description to include, the arts/culture/humanities requirement.

- This is a constant struggle with this program that we are getting better and better at explaining of what qualifies. The changes made last year to the guidelines that specifically state what we don't fund have helped improve application quality. There will always be a few that are trying to fit a square peg into a round hole and bend their projects so they address the "cultural" component.
- We spend a lot of time asking what culture is, but we're saying arts and culture. That directs the definition for us. And looking at our definition, arts, heritage, humanities are the three big categories that fits into culture. Perhaps we need to remove "arts" where it appears as a definer for the program.
- No action was taken, continue as is for now.

## **9. Resources to Applicants/Grantees**

The topic of providing grant writing services to applicants resurfaced.

Commissioners voiced their appreciation for Visit Bend's services to aid grantees and connecting them with resources to improve success, such as: taking photos/videos/posting grantee events; and, offering five hours of free PR services. They also addressed their appreciation for all the work and time MacMillan provides applicants.

- Providing a pro bono grant writer opens up some liabilities if they don't get funded. They are the subject matter experts and we want them to take ownership their projects. Other programs (Mt. Hood-Gorge Region) offers a person to help but not write grants.
- Laurel essentially offer this service by helping grantees if they reach out to me by reading and providing suggestions on how the application might be stronger.
- It was mentioned that there are a lot of online resources available. We could help provide links.
- Would be hesitant in suggesting names of grant writers because they are not vetted.
- Looking through the Trust Based Philanthropy lens, maybe we should make the application easier so someone doesn't need external assistance. Lots of work was done in the past few years to remove jargon and reduce redundant questions from the application.

- A question was asked if we offer translation services for the grant guidelines. Laurel said we haven't in the past, but that is something we could explore. It was mentioned there is a lot of technology that translates for you. Maybe not needed.
- When we read the applications, English as a second language is considered, as is the fact that they might not be professional grant writer. Try to reduce any barriers.
- Grammarly was suggested as a resource to offer applicants.
- It was agreed to keep as is with adding resources.
- Providing resources "beyond the grant" was frequently brought up in the TBP report. We need to do a deeper dive of what resources we want to offer/can offer at a later date.

Resources for Applicants. Agreed that we should not refer to specific consultants but merely provide general guidance only.

### **Summary of changes to make to 2025 Application:**

- Commission established new maximum grant amounts:
  - Small marketing/research grants capped at **\$10,000** (average award **\$9,000**)
  - Large marketing grants capped at **\$40,000** (average award **\$27,000**)
- Added requirement that applicants must be located in United States
- Implemented one-year ban for non-compliant grantees, with other violations handled case-by-case
- Maintained eligibility for both nonprofit and for-profit organizations
- Commission retained Oregon Cultural Trust definition of culture
- Clarified focus on arts, heritage, and humanities activities
- Discussed need to better define cultural components in applications
- Agreed to judge applications on merit rather than policing cultural appropriation
- Enhanced DEI question with increased word count
- Added resources and examples for applicants
- Maintained trust-based philanthropy approach while ensuring accountability
- Commission to review and approve final language changes via email

### **Commissioner Recruitment**

- Opening for one additional commissioner to reach 11-member maximum\*
- *Note: after the meeting, Commissioner Jeff Manning resigned due to health issues. Recruitment can be for two Commissioners*

- Current recruitment methods include networks, press releases, and advertising
- Commission to develop new recruitment strategy with Visit Bend (Laurel & Zavi)
- Focus on expanding diversity of commission membership

#### **Budget and Administrative Updates**

- Projected budget approximately **\$375,000** for 2025 cycle
- Tourism dynamics may impact available funding
- Staff completed follow-up on outstanding grant reports in December.

#### **Meeting Minutes Approved**

Motion by Eli, second by Sandy to approve the last meeting April 3, 2024 minutes as emailed with no changes.

#### **Thank you**

- Visit Bend's latest Ineffable books were offered to all the Commissioners as a thank you for their service

Meeting was adjourned at 11:58am.