



## Port of Vancouver USA

# 2026 Community Fund Program Overview

### **PROGRAM OVERVIEW**

The Port of Vancouver USA (“port” or “POV”) has established a Community Fund to be invested in community projects within the boundaries of the [port district](#). Funding for the Community Fund program is \$10,000 for fiscal year 2026.

Projects submitting applications for funding from the Community Fund must meet the port’s mission, “to provide economic benefit to our community through leadership, stewardship and partnership in marine, industrial and waterfront development.” Additionally, projects must meet Washington State Auditor, Revised Code of Washington and Washington Administrative Code requirements (see “references” section). These codes direct that qualifying projects must provide direct linkage to trade promotion, tourism promotion, public education and awareness and/or economic and workforce development in the port district.

### **PROGRAM GOALS**

The goal of the Community Fund Program is to direct program funds to projects that contribute to the port district in one or more of the following areas:

- **Economic Development**— Projects that promote the creation and/or retention of jobs, trade promotion, entrepreneurship, workforce development and skills development. Education projects that provide exposure to STEM fields and the skilled trades are also encouraged.
- **Tourism**—Projects that attract visitors from outside the port district to take part in a tourist event, program or activity and generate tourism spending in the port district. Can also include beautification projects that create an attractive community to enhance the marketability of the port district to new businesses.

### **APPLICATION PROCESS**

Applications for the Community Fund must be received by **Friday, January 16, 2026** at 5:00 p.m. Applications can be submitted electronically to Gigi Harker-Olguin, Economic Development Specialist, [gigi.harkerolguin@portvanusa.com](mailto:gigi.harkerolguin@portvanusa.com); or hard copies can be mailed or delivered to the port’s administration office at 3103 NW Lower River Rd., Vancouver, 98660.

Applications will be reviewed by the port's Community Fund Committee (including one port commissioner) to ensure applications/projects meet one or more of the program goals. An informational interview may be included in the selection process. The port will announce funding awards on or before February 13, 2026.

Organizations that receive funding will have one year to use funds after the award is made. The port reserves the right to use the entire fund for one project, to fund multiple projects, or to fund a portion of a request, at its sole discretion.

### **RATING CRITERIA:**

The Community Fund selection committee will use the following criteria in a point system to award funding. The selection committee may decide to fund any or all portions of a request.

- Thoroughness in completing the application
- Clear description of how the project/program meets one or more program goals
- How the project furthers the port's mission and goals outlined in the port's [Strategic Plan](#)

Additional points will be awarded to:

- Applications providing a match toward the overall cost of the project. This can include cash, in-kind match (wages, donated time) or materials purchased, and funds from other sponsors or partners. Projects with a match will be awarded additional points as the port seeks to maximize the leverage of its funds. Matching funds shall be documented as part of the application.

Preference will also be given to projects with the following components:

- Projects which further the port's [Strategic Plan](#) goals
- Projects deemed most "ready to go"
- Projects where the Community Fund fills a needed gap

### **REIMBURSEMENT REQUIREMENTS:**

- Applications must include a completed W-9, proof of current nonprofit status (if applicable), and list of board/organizational configuration.
- For programs and/or projects selected for funding, the port will send a letter or email to the applicant confirming approval and a checklist for documenting all requirements have been met.
- Successful applicants will be required to submit all documentation and an invoice for reimbursement up to the maximum allocated by the program.
- If a successful applicant needs funds in advance, supporting documentation must be submitted to the port to substantiate and justify the pre-payment.

- Fund recipients will provide regular updates to the port's Economic Development Specialist (Gigi Harker-Olguin) on how the project is progressing.
- Once the project is completed, a verbal report and/or presentation must be made at a port commission meeting.
- The applicant agrees to recognize the Port of Vancouver USA, including use of the port's logo, sponsorship notation and/or statement of the port's financial support for the project/program. This must be consistent with port branding guidelines.
- Funds cannot be used for organizational or operational expenses such as rent, salaries, payments to consultants, utilities and/or other regular expenses.
- Funds shall be used only for the applicant and cannot be transferred, donated or reprocessed to other organizations, projects or programs that are not within the application. Any such violation will require repayment of the full funding amount to the port.
- To be eligible, an applicant must be a community group, non-profit organization or publicly-supported education group.
- An investment by the port in one year to an organization or project does not constitute an obligation for future investments.

## **RESTRICTIONS**

Funds will not be awarded to:

- Churches, schools, or religious organizations where port funds may be used for religious purposes
- For-profit entities
- Groups that discriminate on the basis of age, race, sex, sexual orientation or national origin
- Groups with which the port has been or is currently in litigation
- Political organizations, campaigns or parties
- Unions doing work with the port or representing port employees
- Current port employees, board members or their families
- Groups outside the port district; or projects taking place outside port district boundaries
- A project that has already received funding twice in a five-year period
- City, county or other government entities

## **ADDITIONAL CONSIDERATIONS:**

1. Applications should not seek financial support for on-going operations.

2. Accepting funds from the port will subject applicants to state audits regarding use of funds. The port will require information on the use of the funds for inclusion in the port's annual audit reports.
3. The port retains the right to suspend, terminate, or request the return of unspent funds after providing written notice.

### **REFERENCES:**

1. Port of Vancouver USA [Strategic Plan and Mission Statement](#) and [port district map](#).
2. Revised Code of Washington Chapter 53.08 and sections [53.08.245](#) and [53.08.255](#)
3. [Article VIII; Section 7](#) of the Washington State Constitution prohibits Washington state ports from loaning or gifting state funds, property or credit.

### **QUESTIONS:**

Contact Gigi Harker-Olguin, [gigi.harkerolguin@portvanusa.com](mailto:gigi.harkerolguin@portvanusa.com); 360-518-2550.