

**BEFORE THE PUBLIC UTILITY COMMISSION
OF OREGON**

UG 490

In the Matter of

NORTHWEST NATURAL GAS
COMPANY, dba NW NATURAL,

Request for a General Rate Revision.

ORDER

DISPOSITION: CASE FUND GRANT REQUEST PAYMENT ORDERED

On November 7, 2024, Community Energy Project (CEP), Coalition of Communities of Color (CCC) and Verde filed a request for payment of their case fund grant in this docket. On November 8, 2024, CEP and CCC filed an amended proposed budget. The procedures for payment of Case Fund Grants are governed by Section 7.2 of the Environmental Justice Communities Funding Agreement (Agreement) adopted by the Commission in Order No. 23-033. The proposed budget was approved in Order No. 24-072. That order approved a grant of up to \$18,523 for CEP, a grant of up to \$13,478 for CCC, and a grant of up to \$8,333 for Verde and directed a 50 percent up-front payment of each. In the amended proposed budget CEP requests an additional \$233.50 in eligible expenses and CCC requests an additional \$583 in eligible expenses, bringing the total requested issue fund grant to \$18,756.50 for CEP and to \$14,061 for CCC. CEP, CCC, and Verde request final payment in the amount of \$9,495 for CEP, \$7,322 for CCC, and \$4,166.50 for Verde.¹

Section 6.7 of the Agreement approved by the Commission in Order No. 23-033, provides that a Case Fund Grant recipient may file to amend its budget and request additional funding due to unforeseen changes in the scope or complexity of issues, positions taken by other parties, changes in the schedule of the case, or other good cause.

Once an amended proposed budget is received, the Commission decides whether additional Case Fund Grants are available for use based on factors identified in the

¹ In the November 7 filing, Verde requested payment of its full grant of \$8,333, explaining that Verde had not received the 50 percent upfront payment directed in Order No. 24-245. On November 15, 2024 Verde updated its request to \$4,166.50 stating that the 50 percent payment had subsequently been received.

Agreement. The Commission has the authority to accept, deny, or partially deny the request, and may place reasonable conditions on the grant.

CEP and CCC's amended proposed budget includes the requisite information. In light of the issues being addressed, the complexity of the issues and the significant policy decisions raised, the Commission believes that the amended proposed budget is reasonable and should be approved.

Under the Agreement, the request for payment must:

- (1) Itemize the expenses, payees and hourly rates for amounts to be reimbursed, including billing details, and including separately identified amounts for consultant or expert witness fees and travel expenses;
- (2) Demonstrate that the expenses are reasonable and are directly attributable to issues and positions pursued on behalf of low-income residential customers or Environmental Justice Communities and consistent with the grantee's Proposed Budget;
- (3) Provide information sufficient to show that the grantee has complied with any condition or requirement of the Case Fund Grant; and
- (4) Specify whether the request for payment is for a progress payment or final payment in full and indicate whether any approved budget amount may be released back to the applicable Case Fund because the grantee does not intend to request payment for the full approved budget amount.

The Commission finds that CEP, CCC, and Verde's request meets the requirements of the Agreement, and their request should be approved. Section 7.1 of the Agreement provides that the utility must pay the Case Fund Grant to the requesting intervenor within 30 days after receipt of Commission directive.

ORDER

IT IS ORDERED that:

1. The Community Energy Project and Coalition of Communities of Color's amended proposed budget for a Case Fund Grant is approved.
2. A Case Fund Grant is approved up to \$18,756.50 for Community Energy Project.
3. A Case Fund Grant is approved up to \$14,061 for Coalition of Communities of Color.

4. The Community Energy Project's request meets the requirements of the Environmental Justice Communities Funding Agreement, and its request for payment of its Case Fund grant is approved.
5. Northwest Natural Gas Company pay \$9,495 from the 2024 Northwest Natural Company Case Fund to the Community Energy Project within 30 days after receipt of this order, and the grant be assessed to Northwest Natural Company's residential customers.
6. The Coalition of Communities of Color's request meets the requirements of the Environmental Justice Communities Funding Agreement, and its request for payment of its Case Fund grant is approved.
7. Northwest Natural Gas Company pay \$7,322 from the 2024 Northwest Natural Company Case Fund to the Coalition of Communities of Color within 30 days after receipt of this order, and the grant be assessed to Northwest Natural Company's residential customers.
8. Verde's request meets the requirements of the Environmental Justice Communities Funding Agreement, and its request for payment of its Case Fund grant is approved.
9. Northwest Natural Gas Company pay \$4,166.50 from the 2024 Northwest Natural Company Case Fund to Verde within 30 days after receipt of this order, and the grant be assessed to Northwest Natural Company's residential customers.

Made, entered, and effective Nov 22, 2024.



A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read "Alison Lackey".

Alison Lackey
Chief Administrative Law Judge