



CITY OF BEND

Advisory Body Stipend Program Update and Recommendations

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Stipend Program Background

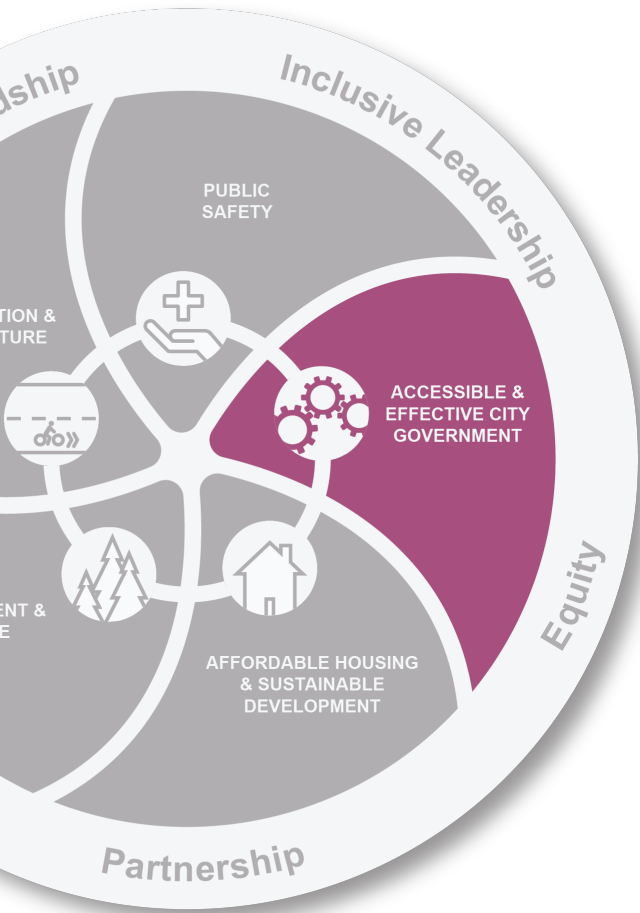
2021 – 2023 Council Goal

Meet the diverse and changing needs of the community and build connection between community members and City government by providing services in ways that work for everyone, build public trust, and promote civic engagement.

- Expand opportunities for community members to connect with the city
- Lower barriers to engagement and improve access

Actions

- Provide a stipend to offset incurred costs of participating on a City advisory committee, board, or commission.
- Implement a strategy to capture demographic information to tell the story of who is participating to ensure the stipend program is serving communities who we want to hear from.



Stipend Program Background

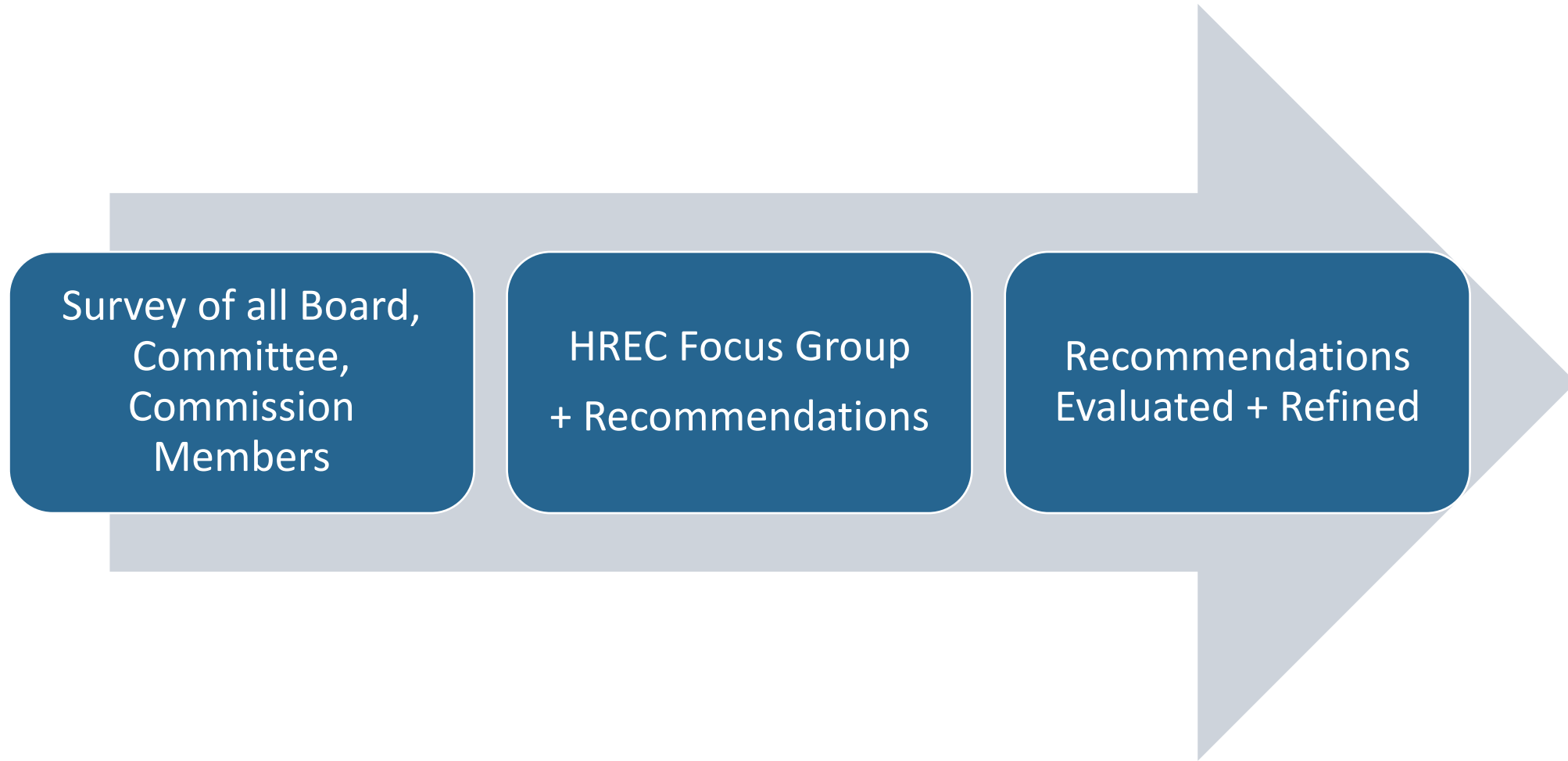
Current
participation

75%
(73 out of 92)
are receiving the
stipend

- Stipend Program adopted by Council in 2022, launched in July 2022
 - Evaluation and refinement after first year
- Intended to offset related expenses such as internet (for remote meeting participation), parking, and transportation
 - Not compensation for time
 - Members serve as volunteers, not employees of the City
- \$40 per meeting (regular and subcommittee meetings), not to exceed \$500 annually per person
- All advisory group members are eligible, but may opt out
- Applies to permanent committees
- Disbursement is by cash cards that are mailed
 - Option for a mailed check



Evaluation Process



Stipend Survey

(Issued in October 2023)

Everyone who took the survey has heard of the stipend program

Only 3 knew about it before applying to an advisory body

Signing up and receiving debit cards is seen as easy, while using the debit cards is seen as difficult by slightly more than half of respondents

Stipend is helping with the cost of transportation and internet

Those who opted out of stipends were still generally favorable/positive about the stipend program



HREC Recommendations

- **Continue the Stipend, it is generally meeting the objectives**
- **Expand to include ad-hoc committees**
- **Gather additional data to better understand the overall impact through optional, annual surveys**
 - Feedback on the stipend program
 - Insights into the diversity of advisory body members (geographic representation, renters, homeowners, primary transportation means, demographics, etc.)
- **Increase promotion of the program**
 - Highlight the program on website, in outreach materials, on application, and in interviews
 - Sign up should occur after selection, not as part of application process



HREC Recommendations

- **Improve the reimbursement process**
 - Avoid pre-paid cards, offer Venmo or direct deposit
 - Highlight check option
 - Offer monthly, quarterly and annual reimbursements
 - Reimburse actual costs
- **Other suggestions**
 - Provide equipment and supplies
 - Expand outreach, focusing on underrepresented communities
 - Provide language and accessibility support

Recommended Adjustments: Stipend Program

Current Stipend Program

- Offered to all standing advisory bodies
- \$40/meeting, max \$500/year
- Pre-paid debit cards
- Not collecting demographic data

- **Continue the Stipend Program**
- **Gather additional data to better understand the overall impact through optional, annual surveys**
 - Feedback on the stipend program
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- **Expand to include ad-hoc committees**
- **Continue promotion of the program**
 - Highlight the program on website, in outreach materials, on application, and in interviews
 - Sign up should occur after selection, not as part of application process
- **Improve the reimbursement process**
 - Provide direct deposit, check and pre-paid card options



Questions for Council

- Should the proposed recommendations be incorporated into the program?
- How frequently would you like staff to report back on the Stipend program?
 - After the survey?
 - Annually?
- Do you have any other feedback?



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