



Puget Sound Regional Council

Outreach Compensation Policy and Procedures

(For community-based organizations, focus groups, working groups, committee members, participation in surveys, and interviews)

August 2022

Purpose

To establish a policy and procedures for compensating focus group or committee members who are not compensated by their employers for participating in PSRC-funded meetings compensating for participation in surveys and interviews by members of the public; and compensating Community-Based Organizations (CBO) directly to encourage participation in PSRC outreach.

Definitions

Focus Group and Community Meeting

A small group of people that meet for a limited period of time to participate in a guided discussion, providing insights on a policy, product, strategy, etc., either in-person or virtually. This type of group is used to understand different perspectives and priorities that may affect a project scope or get feedback on draft proposals or direction at any time throughout a project. These groups typically meet for 1-2 hours per session, one or more times as needed.

Committee and Working Group

Both are long-standing groups of people representing the perspectives of jurisdictions or interest groups, appointed by the agency to discuss key issues, make recommendations, and/or complete tasks concerning a particular subject. Working groups tend to meet for 1-2 hours per session over a 6-to-18-month period of time and generally require prep and post-meeting follow up time. Committee groups meet for 1-2 hours per session, but over a longer 1-3-year period of time and usually require participation by subject matter experts and jurisdictions, also requiring prep and post-meeting follow up time. A Committee can also be a permanent standing group that works with and advises PSRC.

Community Based Organization

A Community-Based Organization (CBO) refers to an organization aimed at making desired improvements to a community's social health, well-being, and overall functioning. Community organization occurs in geographically, psychosocially, culturally,

spiritually, and digitally bounded communities. CBOs work closely with the community and are better able to identify the needs of the residents.

At PSRC's discretion, the intention of this policy is to enable small or overburdened organizations to provide expertise and insight to PSRC when they otherwise couldn't due to limited financial resources.

An eligible CBO will be a private non-profit 501(c)3 organization or locally established entity which is representative of a community or significant segments of a community in the Puget Sound area and which provides educational or other related basic human services to individuals in the community. (Examples of CBOs include Africatown Seattle, Compass Housing Alliance, and HomeSight)

Survey

A questionnaire used to inform a project, generally multiple choice and/or short answer and distributed by email, phone, in-person or mail with participants typically selected at random based on their address or demographics.

Interview

A one-on-one telephone, virtual, or in-person meeting, sometimes as follow-up to a survey, to solicit detailed information, clarify data or community perspectives, or obtain feedback on a process.

Policy

Focus Groups, Working Groups and Committees

Members of focus groups/committees who are not already being compensated by their employers or other organizations for participating in PSRC-funded meetings may be compensated for attending group meetings. If an alternate is attending a meeting in place of a committee member, the alternate is also eligible for compensation.

Surveys and Interviews

Members of the public may also be compensated or entered into a lottery for taking a survey or participating in an interview.

Community Based Organizations

CBOs may be compensated directly to consult, provide expertise and insights to aid PSRC's planning work or to encourage responses to PSRC outreach efforts.

Compensation Rate Structure

The compensation rate structure is set and adjusted by PSRC based on market rates (what other agencies are paying for a similarly sized survey/interview) for time and level of effort. The compensation rate structure will be subjected to periodic evaluation, at the discretion of PSRC. These rates will be reviewed by Finance to determine reasonability. PSRC may adjust the compensation rate per meeting based on amount of time required and/or level of effort.

New public outreach efforts must include the Outreach Compensation Cost Estimate Form. This form is used for planning purposes and funding determination.

Procedures

Committees and Community Meetings, Focus and Work Groups that may exceed \$600 per participant per calendar year

1. Member's Questionnaire

Each member of the focus group/working group/committee must fill out the Member Questionnaire, on an annual basis. The Member Questionnaire is required to be updated when personal information changes. The Member Questionnaire form is available on Grapevine.

Members of focus group/working groups/committees must disclose in the Member Questionnaire if they are being compensated by their employer for preparing for and attending the meeting(s).

The Member Questionnaire will be distributed by PSRC staff to the participant, as needed, and must be submitted to PSRC's Finance department for processing, email to finance@psrc.org.

2. Attendance

Regular attendance in focus groups/working groups/committee meetings is required for the member's compensation. Attendance must be recorded by the focus group/working group/committee facilitator and provided to PSRC's Finance Department within 30 days after each meeting. Participants must stay for at least 75% of the meeting to be compensated. The record of attendance will serve as support for processing compensation to members. Consultants must provide a matching record (IE: proof of attendance and/or participation in addition to payment receipt) to be reimbursed. A sample attendance sheet is available on Grapevine. PSRC staff will distribute the attendance form to participants, and/or consultants, as needed, and must be submitted to PSRC's Finance department for processing, email to finance@psrc.org.

3. Compensation

PSRC's Finance Department is responsible for calculating the total compensation per member based on the current compensation rate structure. This task can be delegated to a consultant. The Compensation Schedule will be the current standard compensation per meeting and any adjustment based on anticipated unusual time commitment for a particular meeting. The Compensation Schedule shall be communicated to each focus group/working group/committee facilitator two weeks prior to the schedule of meeting, as the schedule allows.

PSRC's Finance department, or the consultant, is responsible for the processing of checks, or online payments (for example, PayPal, Venmo) for the member's

compensation in accordance with its accounts payable policy and procedures. If reimbursed by check, it will be mailed to the participant's address provided on the member's questionnaire.

Surveys, Interviews, and Focus Groups that do not exceed \$600 per participant, per calendar year

Participants in surveys, focus groups, and/or interviews may be eligible to receive compensation using check, online payment (for example, PayPal, Venmo), or gift card based on the current compensation rate structure and adjusted for time and effort as applicable.

PSRC will only issue checks or electronic payments for compensation. If gift cards are used as compensation, the consultant will furnish and safeguard the cards and issue them as appropriate. Proof of purchase and delivery to recipient is required for reimbursement to consultant.

Federal funds may not be used to purchase gift cards regardless of the purpose, even if distributed by a consultant.

Community Based Organizations

Payment will be made via check to the organization upon receipt of an invoice for the services provided. Services provided can be time spent working with PSRC staff, either in person, via phone, virtually, or any combination.

PSRC will use the Compensation Rate Structure to determine a fair and reasonable hourly rate or total compensation amount to grant the CBO for their work with PSRC. CBO staff members or volunteers will not receive compensation from PSRC.

Revisions to Policy

Minor revisions to this policy may be performed administratively. Minor revisions include but are not limited to: Compensation Rate Structure, delivery method of payment as new services become available.

This policy will be brought to the Operations Committee every 3 years for review. Next review will be in 2025.

References

Advisory councils [§ 200.422](#)

Costs incurred by advisory councils or committees are unallowable unless authorized by statute, the Federal awarding agency or as an indirect cost where allocable to Federal awards. See [§ 200.444](#), for applicability to States, local governments, and Indian tribes.

Administratively Amended by PSRC August 2022
Approved revision by the Executive Board June 23, 2022
Approved revision by the Executive Board June 24, 2021
Adopted by the Executive Board October 22, 2020