



# Alaska Heat Smart

Stevie Leeann Gawryluk, Budget Analyst I  
Ms. Angie Flick, Director  
CBJ Finance Department

September 7, 2023

RE: AHS comments on community grant process

Dear Stevie and Angie,

Thank you for the opportunity to provide feedback to the Assembly Finance Committee on possible changes to the CBJ community grant review and award process. The Alaska Heat Smart (AHS) finance subcommittee reviewed the three options offered and has the following comments.

## **Option 1: Pre-Budget Process**

AHS joins the city staff in supporting option 1, although we would like to offer some caveats to our support. Option 1, a process modeled after the Marine Passenger Fee project, differs from the status quo in that not only is the timing of the process different, but the nature of the review is substantially different.

Moving the grant solicitation to December runs into the busy and vacation-laden holiday period. Perhaps the solicitation could be started earlier, November 15th, to give applicants at least 45 days to develop a grant request.

Option 1 appears to shift some of the burden of grant request review to the public and city staff and away from a direct review by the Assembly. This public review and comment process for grant requests found in option 1 should include the opportunity for additional input from the organizations submitting grant requests. In the past, AHS has used the grant presentation process as an educational opportunity, during which AHS staff and board have learned of both Assembly interests and concerns. Our presentations have allowed AHS to explain in more detail the specifics of our organizational needs that may not be addressed elsewhere and which may not be readily available to the public.

Community “needs” are articulated in plans and resolutions adopted by the Assembly. The Assembly also establishes specific annual goals. The grant request process should seek information from applicants on how their project and/or program addresses community needs. Some type of documentation of a community need is recommended, whether from a survey or articulated in an Assembly-approved plan or report. Also, the applicant should address how their request serves one or more of the Assembly’s goals or other CBJ priorities articulated in resolutions, ordinances, or funding.

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The grant process should request information that identifies how the applicant's project/program provides:

- economic or social benefits to Juneau as a whole or to particular members of our community
- job creation/workforce development
- will leverage other sources of funding

Lastly, the process should incorporate the opportunity for organizations to request matching funding. It should recognize that the timing of federal grant proposals and CBJ grant funding may not coincide – for example some recent federal grants have only provided a few months' notice from funding opportunity announcement to application deadline. There should be an opportunity to amend requests, or to ask for out-of-cycle funding to address major opportunities for federal funding.

### **Grantee Organizational Categories**

Determination of organizational categorization should be further clarified. The CBJ definition of one-time funding is clear and stands apart from other categories. AHS has no issues with the definition of one-time funding defined as 'funds that are utilized for a unique project or purchase that do not recur and have an end date'.

Each category of grantee may seek operational funding as a portion of their annual budgets and may fall into this general category if their funding needs are ongoing and do not fall under the definitions of one-time, partner, or non-competitive.

The difference between partner agencies and non-competitive grantees is not immediately clear. Some partner agencies may act as granting conduits, while others may not. Partner agencies appear to perform beneficial functions to the city where non-competitive grantees may as well, although non-competitive grantees appear to focus on recurring events.

### **Alaska Heat Smart as Partner Agency**

After careful consideration of grantee organization categories, the AHS board of directors believes that Alaska Heat Smart most closely fits as a 'partner agency'.

AHS was explicitly created to help the CBJ meet its climate and renewable energy goals and implement its plans, including the Juneau Renewable Energy Strategy (JRES), adopted by the Assembly in 2018. The Juneau Commission on Sustainability (JCOS), which is advisory to the Assembly, played a key role in convening the parties which came together to form AHS, with the explicit purpose of assisting the CBJ in implementing the JRES.

CBJ has supported the AHS mission and funded its operations since AHS's founding in late 2019. Discussions with CBJ staff and with the Assembly have explicitly

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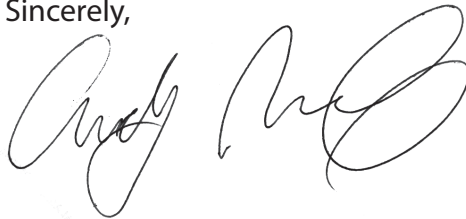
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recognized that AHS support for energy efficiency and heat pump is the single most cost effective way for the CBJ to meet its carbon reduction goals, while also reducing its dependence on fossil fuels, lowering the cost of housing by improving home heating conditions for hundreds of families, reducing energy burdens for Juneau's lower income population, and growing local contractor workforces through economic stimulation. Additionally, CBJ investments in AHS leverages substantial private and federal capital, nearly \$2.5M to date.

AHS works closely with several partners i.e., the US Department of Energy, the National Renewable Energy Laboratory, AEL&P, and Tlingit Haida Regional Housing Authority. Data from nearly 800 home energy assessments helps to inform both the city regarding carbon output of home heating and cooling and helps AELP better understand grid impacts of both oil to heat pump conversions and electric resistance to heat pump conversions.

Again, thank you for the opportunity to provide input on this important community process.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Andy Romanoff', is written over a faint, light blue circular stamp.

**Andy Romanoff**  
Alaska Heat Smart  
Executive Director

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