Washington State Department of Commerce

Planning and Predesign Grant Capital Equity Program Report

Pursuant to Chapter 474, Laws of 2023 (SB 5200, Sec. 6067)

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Report to the Legislature

Director Joe Nguyễn

RESEARCH AND DEVELOPMENT SERVICES

v3.5

Acknowledgments

Washington State Department of Commerce
Marissa Landeis, Ph.D., Senior Project Manager,
Research and Development Services Unit

Sean Ardussi, Research Services Section Manager,
Research and Development Services Unit

Alice Zillah, Managing Director, Research and
Development Services Unit

1011 Plum St. SE
P.O. Box 42525
Olympia, WA 98504-2525

www.commerce.wa.gov

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Executive summary

Overview

In 2021, the Department of Commerce received $5 million to provide grants for the planning, pre-design and technical assistance of communities' capital projects. The Planning and Predesign Capital Equity Program (PPCEP) is the pilot designed for this purpose and in support of Commerce's goals to reduce barriers that organizations serving marginalized[1] and/or rural[2] populations face when contracting with the state.

Through three phases, PPCEP supported communities' capital project goals:

1) Enlisting community partners

2) Contracting for technical assistance

3) Awarding grants for organizations in the beginning stages of capital construction projects

Authorizing legislation

Chapter 474, Laws of 2023 (SB 5200 (2023), Sec. 6067) tasked Commerce to:

Provide a report to the appropriate committees of the legislature and the governor by October 1, 2024, on progress and recommendations for improving outreach to underrepresented and remote communities and eliminating barriers to participating in state capital funding programs.

Key highlights

- **Commerce contracted with six community partners representing diverse populations across the state. Community partners conducted 870 interviews to understand the need for community facilities and affordable housing.**

- **Commerce contracted with eight technical assistance providers to provide workshops on grant writing, effective capital development planning, strategic partnership, architectural programming, assessing feasibility and risk, and funding sources. These workshops supported 233 participants and their community organizations.**

Commerce awarded grants to 18 community-based organizations to support planning and predesign projects that intend to provide select services, such as food banks, health and wellness centers, cultural centers, safety response centers, and childcare centers (Table 1).

Table 1. PPCEP awarded projects, by county

Organization	Population served	County
Pomeroy Childcare	Families with infant, toddler, pre-school, or school-age children in need of care during the workday/week	Garfield
Tubman Center for Health and Freedom	Low-income, BIPOC, LGBTQIA+	King

[1] Marginalized is defined as "communities that have been historically underserved by capital grant policies and programs."
[2] Rural is per OFM's definition, where "rural county" is described as "… a county with a population density less than 100 persons per square mile."

Organization	Population served	County
Mother Nation	American Indian/Alaska Native Women	King
Wing Luke Museum	Asian American, Native Hawaiian, or Pacific Islander (AANHPI)	King
Fathers and Sons Together	BIPOC youth and their families	King
Suquamish Tribe	Suquamish Tribe and the greater community	Kitsap
Kittitas Environmental Education Network	Yakima/Ellensburg community	Kittitas
Boys and Girls Clubs of the Columbia Basin	Underserved youth in Kittitas County	Kittitas
Colville Tribes First Foods	Colville tribal community	Okanogan
Okanogan County Community Action Council	Okanogan County's most vulnerable residents	Okanogan
Black Agricultural Leadership Council	Black farmers and community members	Pierce
Lopez Children's Center	Lopez Island families	San Juan
Orcas Community Resource Center	Orcas Island residents	San Juan
Farmer Frog	Serving the Snohomish community	Snohomish
American Indian Community Center	Low-income households in Spokane County and the surrounding area	Spokane
University District Development Association	Area employees, residents and students	Spokane
Spokane Tribal Network	Indigenous women and families	Stevens
Prescott School District	Residents of Prescott School District	Walla Walla

Recommendations

Upon evaluation of PPCEP program development and implementation, Commerce developed six recommendations to improve outreach and support greater access to capital programs.

1) Develop lasting networks with community partner organizations
2) Invest in community-based organization operations
3) Continue planning and pre-design grants for community-based organizations
4) Simplify the grant application process
5) Provide grant writing assistance
6) Continue to incorporate community representation in evaluations

Introduction

Background

Chapter 332, Laws of 2021 (HB 1080, Sec. 1093) directed Commerce to develop a grant program to promote equity in the distribution of capital grants, prioritizing organizations serving communities historically marginalized.

This initial appropriation provided $5 million for Commerce to take early action on lessons learned from a parallel Commerce report that reviewed equity in Commerce capital grant programs. That report was required by Chapter 334, Laws of 2021 (the 2021 State Operating Budget) and outlined various barriers community organizations experience in accessing state capital funds, from outreach and engagement, technical knowledge and organizational capacity (see Appendix A).

Moreover, Chapter 474, Laws of 2023(the 2023 State Capital Budget) provided the requirements for this report along with an additional $5 million to continue the Planning and Predesign Capital Equity Program (PPCEP). However, Chapter 375, Laws of 2024 (the 2024 Supplemental State Capital Budget) transferred the second PPCEP appropriation to a single project in Everett in support of the Latino Educational Training Institute. The effect of this change was to return PPCEP to the initial $5 million, which reduced the planning, technical assistance, and predesign grants for organizations that serve marginalized and/or rural communities.

The shift in expected fund availability prompted Commerce to seek internal partnership with the Housing Trust Fund[3], which contributed $2 million in additional resources to support community organizations in completing planning or predesign projects that could lead to a future Commerce affordable housing application under RCW 43.185A.

Building PPCEP

PPCEP prioritized improving community outreach and reducing the systemic barriers to contracting with Commerce that largely affect smaller organizations serving marginalized and/or rural communities. This work reflected on lessons learned from a parallel report from Commerce: Equity Review of Capital Grant Programs.

The result was three complementary layers to building an equitable, collaborative and intentional program.

1) **Enlisting community partners**: PPCEP was developed through collaboration within communities and across Commerce divisions and programs, including the Housing Division, the Community Capital Facilities Unit in the Local Government Division, and the Community Engagement and Outreach Team. Community partners represented marginalized and/or rural communities that historically have been underrepresented in Commerce capital grant programs. They served as liaisons to underserved communities and provided equity consultation for Commerce in developing PPCEP.

2) **Contracting for technical assistance:** Technical assistance consultants provided expertise on planning and predesign activities to community-based organizations interested in applying for a Commerce capital grant. When preparing for a capital project, organizations need to complete various pre-construction activities. This type of work typically requires funds to hire contractors to serve as consultants. The PPCEP technical assistance consultants offered their services on behalf of Commerce and were designed to be accessible to organizations across the state.

[3] Request for Proposals: Planning and predesign grants for Community-Based Organizations, June 2024 announcement

3) **Awarding grants for organizations in the beginning stages of capital construction projects**. Planning, predesign and preconstruction activities are expensive. In addition to providing access to technical assistance consultants, PPCEP designated funds for planning and predesign grants to be awarded directly to community-based organizations. The grants were intended to be low-barrier and to prioritize organizations representing communities that have historically been underrepresented in state funding.

PPCEP project highlight

The Orcas Community Resource Center received funding to design its building, which will provide housing and recovery services on Orcas Island.

Progress for improving outreach and access to state capital programs

Community partners

According to the previous report, Equity Review of Capital Grant Programs, one notable barrier blocking underserved communities from accessing capital funding opportunities involves awareness, or timely notification. This particularly affects organizations primarily serving Native Americans, Black, Indigenous, and People of Color (BIPOC), those with limited English proficiency, and those focused on rural communities and disability rights.

Commerce posts funding opportunities on its website, social media platforms and on a statewide procurement site called Washington Electronic Business Solution (WEBS). Commerce also emails information about funding opportunities to broad distribution lists of people and organizations that have signed up for these notifications. However, significant awareness gaps remain as funding for programs, old and new, shifts alongside staff turnover at both Commerce and community organizations.

PPCEP prioritized contracting with community partners with strong connections to historically marginalized and/or rural communities. Using their existing networks and outreach skills, the community partners streamlined the connections between Commerce and communities.

In spring 2023, Commerce sought applications from a diverse pool of applicants to act as community partners, including Black and African American, Hispanic and Latino, Asian and Pacific Islander, federally recognized tribes, tribal communities, urban Indian, Native American, and Alaska Native. The evaluation process prioritized applicants who had the following experiences[4], or worked closely with networks who experienced:

- Surviving hate crimes, homelessness, racism, sex trafficking, sexual assault, and sexism.
- Navigating immigration, refugee, housing, or community service processes, the foster care system.
- Identifying as lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender, person with a disability, youth or young adult, senior, veteran, or a woman.

The community partners acted as equity consultants for Commerce on behalf of the communities identified. This required considerable time for workgroup meetings, facilitating outreach, conducting interviews, developing RFPs and evaluating proposals.

The Washington Environmental Health Disparities Map and the Office of Financial Management (OFM) population density map assisted in identifying areas in Washington experiencing the highest amounts of social and environmental hardships, and which would benefit from services provided through capital projects.

Many of the areas with the highest population density overlapped with those the health disparities map identified as most disadvantaged. The populations in these overlapping areas became the focus for community partners to conduct outreach. Each of the six community partners were assigned areas identified from the two maps where they had established networks.

In October 2023, the community partners began conducting outreach, further establishing networks with these communities. This outreach resulted in acknowledging the types of services beneficial to those areas, which

[4] Lived experience was defined in the community partners RFP as including but not limited to: Surviving from incarceration, hate crimes, homelessness, racism, sex trafficking, sexual assault, and sexism; Navigating through, immigration, refugee, housing or community service processes, and the foster care system; or Identifying as, a lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgendered person, a person with a disability, a youth or young adult, a senior, a veteran, or a woman.

informed the implementation of PPCEP. More than a year of outreach included community events, 870 interviews,[5] and two surveys sent to hundreds of organizations.

Events and interviews hosted by community partners served as listening sessions to identify the needs of the represented communities and their residents.

- **Asia Pacific Cultural Center** supported the Cambodian, Vietnamese, Samoan/Pacific Islander, Filipino, Korean, and Thai communities in Pierce, Thurston and south King County. Community needs included affordable housing, cultural centers and libraries.
- **Centro Cultural Mexicano** supported the Latino communities in King, Pierce, Snohomish, Whatcom and Yakima counties, and the Tri-Cities area. Community needs included affordable housing, recreational facilities, and cultural or community centers.
- **Prolific Success** provided support to the African American community statewide. Community needs included community centers and tiny homes.
- **Greater Seattle Business Association** supported the LGBTQ+ and BIPOC communities in King, Pierce, Spokane, and Walla Walla counties. Community needs included affordable housing and LGBTQIA community centers.
- **Vexing Media** supported Native American and Latino communities in Spokane County. Community needs included affordable housing and community centers.
- **G3 and Associates** supported African American and Asian Pacific Islander communities in King, Pierce and Snohomish counties. Community needs included community centers and financial assistance offices.

These community partners also helped with implementing technical assistance consultation services. Two surveys were distributed among the community partners' established networks. The first survey inquired about technical assistance needs and capital projects of interest. The second survey was used to match organizations to one of the eight technical assistance consultants.

Hundreds of organizations received the surveys, with 128 organizations responding to the community needs survey and 113 responding to match with a technical assistance consultant. Both surveys showed the highest technical assistance needs were budgeting, fundraising and project analysis. The second survey was used to match all eligible organizations to one of the eight technical assistance consultants contracted through PPCEP, where they could access workshops and one-on-one technical assistance. After the surveys, the community partners shifted to providing input on the creation of the PPCEP program.

"When I think about really successful community resource spaces, I think about the navigators. People who believe you, people you can trust, who understand your long histories with medical trauma."
– Interviewee

Next, community partners moved to offering one-on-one technical assistance and workshops to organizations serving marginalized communities in their networks. This included help with grant writing and accessing funding opportunities.

[5] Community members participating were compensated for their time at $45 per hour, with a maximum of $200 per day per person. Childcare and adult care were also available for those participating, with a maximum of $50 per child/adult per day. Translation was offered for the lived experience interviews.

Technical assistance consultants

According to the Equity Review of Capital Grant Programs, "organizations that have previously been successful or that have the ability to hire consultants and grant writers" are more likely to be successful when applying for Commerce funding. Based on this finding, along with feedback from the community partners, PPCEP identified a lack of access to technical assistance as another barrier preventing organizations representing marginalized and/or rural communities from accessing state capital funds.

In December 2023, Commerce released a request for proposals for consultants interested in providing preconstruction planning and predesign technical assistance to community-based organizations and federally recognized tribes. The assistance would focus on activities for projects that might be eligible for funding from specific Commerce housing or community facilities programs, such as the Building Communities Fund or Housing Trust Fund.

Commerce staff and community partners evaluated 88 proposals. In all, eight technical assistance consultants were selected, each receiving $100,000 to support planning and predesign. The contracts were designed so the eight technical assistance consultants collectively covered all the eligible planning and predesign activities (Appendix B) necessary to build capital projects.

Appendix C contains a list of technical assistance consultants, as organized by the Commerce programs for which they provided support and expertise. Appendix D contains a list of the expertise offered by the technical assistance consultants.

Commerce's previous capital equity report found a significant barrier to accessing Commerce funding is the structure of grant applications, which are often long and complex. Larger organizations have the funds to hire grant writing experts, which gives them an advantage. In response, five of the eight technical assistance providers conducted grant writing workshops specific to the RFP.

"GS Consulting has been diligently preparing us to build the capacity we need to pursue our vision of a recovery residence. We could not have gotten this far without them."

- Technical assistance survey respondent

The technical assistance consultants offered multiple grant writing sessions, each focused on a different type of capital project. There were grant writing sessions for each of the community capital facilities and housing programs, totaling 12 workshops. The sessions were recorded and posted online.

These workshops were designed to aid organizations in submitting the CBO RFP applications and provide them with the necessary tools and skills to submit grant proposals. In total, 190 participants attended.

Afterward, the technical assistance consultants shifted focus to offering planning and predesign workshops. These workshops were designed to be low-barrier and prioritized organizations serving marginalized and/or rural communities. Specifically, organizations would not need to pay or apply for technical assistance, and a survey distributed by the community partners was used as a sign-up tool.

The eight technical assistance consultants conducting workshops began creating the content in fall 2024. They used survey results, as well as their own outreach to matched organizations, to develop the content. In total, 233 participants attended these workshops, many of which were recorded.

One technical assistance consultant did not offer workshops and instead focused on one-on-one technical assistance to tribes. They are assisting three tribes with planning and predesign work for developing capital projects.

In January 2025, the technical assistance consultants distributed a survey to organizations that received PPCEP technical assistance to assess how effective they found Commerce's implementation of the services. Organizations expressed having survey fatigue, so the response rate was low. As of March 27, 2025, only 13 organizations completed the survey. According to these results, 92% felt they received the technical assistance they needed, and 92% felt this type of technical assistance successfully supported organizations serving marginalized and underserved communities. Furthermore, 82% of the organizations reported being very satisfied or satisfied with the technical assistance they received, and 18% reported feeling neutral.

The survey also asked these organizations to describe how Commerce can improve its support of organizations serving marginalized communities. The responses indicated that more funding should be made available to allow organizations to access these workshops or pay for their own consultants. Additionally, reducing barriers to all funding opportunities at Commerce would be beneficial. These results are based on a small number of organizations that received technical assistance from the consultants contracted. Commerce continues to encourage more organizations to provide feedback.

The types of assistance offered depended on the organizations' needs and interest in specific capital projects and were free to hundreds of organizations across Washington. As of spring 2025, the technical assistance consultants were still offering workshops and one-on-one assistance, with plans to continue through June 2025.

Community-based organizations development

Organizations serving marginalized communities face barriers in accessing funds designated for planning and predesign technical assistance. Many Commerce programs require organizations to have already conducted a significant amount of preconstruction work to be competitive for capital grants. This requires access to other sources of funds and, for some, the capacity to hire technical assistance providers to assist with this work.

This barrier prompted intentional development of the community partners model and prioritization of community organizations serving marginalized communities. To complement PPCEP after its budget authority was reduced, the Commerce Housing Division allocated $2 million for planning and predesign services for organizations interested in developing a housing capital project. To simplify the process, Commerce released one joint funding opportunity. The funds allocated for the Housing program are separate from the PPCEP funds, so this report solely focuses on the organizations funded through PPCEP.

Awarded housing projects

Lake Chelan Valley Habitat for Humanity: serving low-income residents in Chelan County

Hoh Indian Tribe: serving Hoh tribal citizens in Jefferson County

Jefferson Land Trust: Preserving open space, working lands, and habitat in Jefferson County

ECS: serving Low-income East African immigrants in King County

Seattle Indian Services Commission: serving American Indian, Alaska Native, and Native Hawaiians in King County

Port Gamble S'Klallam Tribe: serving Port Gamble S'Klallam tribal citizens in Kitsap County

Community Lifeline: serving adults experiencing homelessness without children in Mason County

Puyallup Tribe: serving Native American elders, young adults, and families in Pierce County

Progress House Association: serving BIPOC with incarceration or homelessness experience in Pierce County

Community Action of Skagit County: serving Community members needing affordable housing Skagit County

Spokane Indian Housing Authority: serving the Spokane Tribe of Indians in Stevens County

Lake Whatcom Residential and Treatment Center: serving low-income people and people experiencing homelessness in Whatcom County

Fathers and Sons Together (FAST) hired a project manager and a grant writer to develop their FAST Resource Outreach Center that will support Black fathers and youth in south King County.

In June 2024, Commerce released an RFP seeking applications from community-based organizations interested in developing a Housing or Community Capital Facility capital project. Five of the technical assistance providers offered grant writing sessions to make this funding more equitable and accessible. These sessions were recorded and uploaded to the PPCEP webpage for organizations to view regardless of attendance. The technical assistance providers were also able to provide one-on-one grant writing assistance to eligible organizations.

To ensure an equitable evaluation process, the eligibility requirements prioritized organizations that serve marginalized communities and might be new to contracting with Commerce. Organizations that had contracted with the state on a capital grant between 2022 and 2024 were not eligible to apply. Another five prioritization points were awarded to organizations that hadn't contracted with Commerce for a capital project between 2017 and 2024. Additionally, the applicant organization must fit one of three criteria:

- Is operating in a rural county
- Is a federally recognized tribe
- Is serving marginalized or underserved communities

Commerce wanted to ensure the organizations awarded funding were serving marginalized populations in a way that promoted equity and reinvested in communities. The community partners assisted Commerce in developing

the eligibility requirements. Applicants were required to describe how the project would benefit marginalized communities and detail the ways the organization plans to adapt to changing needs. They were also asked to describe how their organization incorporates the experiences of their community into the development and implementation of services, including current and former participants, staff and volunteers.

Commerce awarded 18 organizations grants of up to $200,000 for the planning and predesign activities necessary to complete before applying for a Commerce capital grant. With these funds, community-based organizations have been able to conduct the planning and predesign activities necessary to be eligible for capital projects (see Table 1).

Washington state has 39 counties, 30 of which are rural, and the Capital Grant Equity Report found that rural communities are less likely to receive information and outreach regarding funding opportunities. Therefore, PPCEP prioritized organizations serving marginalized populations in rural areas. Half of the 18 organizations awarded PPCEP funds proposed projects to provide services to marginalized populations in six rural counties.

The Suquamish Tribe is conducting a feasibility study, funding source analysis, and a comprehensive project budget for its Joint Public Safety and Critical Infrastructure Hub.

Four of Washington's 29 federally recognized tribes applied for a planning and predesign grant, and two were awarded funding.

Commerce distributed a survey to the 18 organizations conducting planning and predesign activities on projects funded by PPCEP. Of the respondents, 62% are very satisfied with their experience with Commerce, and 38% are satisfied. These organizations were also asked to provide insight on how Commerce can improve funding opportunities. Many of them reported the need for more funding, like PPCEP, simplifying the application process, and providing more assistance on grant applications.

Recommendations

Improving outreach to marginalized and/or rural communities

Through community partners, PPCEP informed organizations serving marginalized and/or rural communities about funding and technical assistance opportunities. These organizations were also prioritized for those services. In reviewing the accomplishments of PPCEP, the program could be improved for future iterations.

Recommendation #1: Develop lasting networks with community partner organizations

Commerce should consider how to enhance its connection to community-based organizations and the diverse populations they represent. Expanding on PPCEP's community partners model could develop lasting networks between Commerce and organizations serving marginalized communities.

In some cases, Commerce may lack current contact information, or the organization might not have the capacity to respond to a funding opportunity, such as response fatigue from pursuing so many funding opportunities. By doing more outreach with or through community partners, Commerce can develop a stronger network with marginalized communities that can enhance their access to state capital programs.

Recommendations for eliminating barriers to participating in state capital funding programs

PPCEP has prioritized organizations investing in marginalized communities through outreach, funding and technical assistance opportunities. Throughout the pilot program, those funded through PPCEP were asked to give input on how Commerce can further reduce the barriers organizations face when accessing funding opportunities.

Recommendation #2: Expand investments in community-based organizations

Commerce should consider opportunities to expand the allowable investments in community-based organizations. Through PPCEP, community members presented projects that Commerce capital programs cannot widely support as standalone investments. This includes new parking, community gardens, and accessible restrooms. For example, the Commerce Early Learning Facilities program has resources for minor renovations of existing childcare facilities, such as accessible restrooms, but Commerce does not have many other types of funding for community service facilities, such as a food bank. These funding constraints limit organizational flexibility and responsiveness to sudden needs. They also enhance competition for the scarce resources that can support such projects.

By expanding the allowable investments in small capital projects that have minimal funding alternatives available, the state can ensure these projects would not become barriers to ongoing facility operations. For example, a community capital campaign is a primary means for an organization operating a community space, such as community center or a nonprofit that rents out commercial kitchen space needs to upgrade or replace failed equipment, such as an HVAC or a new sprinkler installation.

Recommendation #3: Continue planning and pre-design grants for community-based organizations

Commerce should consider opportunities to continue planning and pre-design grants for community-based organizations. The PPCEP is effectively a one-time authority and will not have additional funds available beyond the currently supported projects. By continuing to offer funding for the preliminary stages of a construction project, the

state can enhance community development and grow the service delivery pipeline for marginalized communities statewide. This includes offering smaller grants amounts, such as $100,000 or less.

Recommendation #4: Simplify the grant application process

Commerce should consider opportunities to simplify grant application process. For example, by creating an application-based web portal where organizations upload necessary files and answer a limited number of questions, technology could diminish reliance on institutional memory and automate part of the application process. However, this would not provide immediate returns to a new Commerce applicant and would also require start-up and maintenance funding.

In addition, PPCEP organizations found Commerce's grant writing workshops educational, but they reported not feeling confident submitting a proposal, because they viewed it as a risk with no guarantee of funding. As illustration, 17 of the proposals submitted for PPCEP pre-development grants were disqualified, because required documentation was not provided. This means these proposals did not meet thresholds and could not be evaluated, leaving organizations with limited opportunity for feedback.

Recommendation #5: Provide grant writing assistance

Commerce programs that open funding cycles are required to host funding workshops for eligible organizations, including workshops dedicated for tribes, but that does not provide adequate time to address how to complete a Commerce application. Simplifying the application process may also not be feasible for all funding opportunities. Therefore, Commerce should consider how to provide grant writing assistance to support smaller organizations in the early stages of the proposal development process.

The PPCEP technical assistance consultants who offered grant writing assistance reported that organizations still found the application process difficult and time consuming.

> **" State applications can be overwhelming to individuals and organizations that lack experience, so creating an environment for newer organizations that allows for capacity building and a chance for them to learn the necessary steps, documents, and threshold requirements to apply for funding may prove beneficial. "**
>
> **- Technical assistance consultant**

While hiring third parties in support of community funding applications may be feasible, that option comes with cost and equity concerns. Opportunities to provide grant writing assistance within Commerce's existing resources include expanding its funding workshop requirements or convening many Commerce programs before they open funding cycles to allow communities to ask technical or administrative questions about the program and their applications.

Recommendation #6: Continue to incorporate community representation in evaluations

Commerce should continue to request trusted representatives in marginalized communities to evaluate proposals for funding opportunities.

Commerce and community partners assisted in the PPCEP evaluation process, and this proved helpful as the community partners provided important context to help understand the community's true needs. Having

community representation in Commerce funding evaluation processes would offer valuable input on the project prioritization process and focus investment decisions on the projects that would provide the most benefit to marginalized communities.

Appendix A: The Capital Equity Grant Report

Background

To delve into these types of barriers, the Legislature directed the Department of Commerce, via Chapter 334, Laws of 2021 (ESSB 5092, Sec. 129 (89)) to "conduct a comprehensive equity review of state capital grant programs administered by the department" for three purposes:

- Reduce barriers to historically underserved populations' participation in capital grant programs
- Redress inequities in existing capital grant policies and programs
- Improve the equitable delivery of resources and benefits in these programs

The report, published Jan. 28, 2022, identified these specific barriers and developed recommendations.

Identified barriers

In the initial report, community partners were involved and helped Commerce identify several recurring barriers to accessing capital funding and opportunities with the goal of creating equitable funding processes. One of the frequently experienced barriers was the lack of readily accessible technical information necessary to submit a successful application, which was reported as the biggest impediment to securing grant funding. The work involved listening sessions and Communities of Concern Commission conversations and outreach to inform the following list of barriers.

Outreach and engagement barriers

Though funding opportunities are available and open to many organizations (for example, by subscribing to agency and partner mailing lists), a recurring theme is that the same organizations that have been funded in the past are the ones most likely to receive funds in the future. This was attributed to:

- Lack of sufficient awareness or timely notification of funding opportunities, which limits the ability of new entrants to submit applications successfully. In particular, organizations primarily serving Black, indigenous, and people of color (BIPOC), those with limited English proficiency, and those focused on rural communities and disability rights were less likely to receive information and outreach.
- Scoring criteria perceived to reward larger organizations that received previous funding, equating size and experience with capacity.
- Turnover at Commerce leads to inconsistency in key contacts for organizations and creates confusion about the point of contact for questions and pre-contract requirements.

Technical barriers

Technical barriers involved capital funding and processes, which are connected to systemic barriers around rules and regulations.

- Lack of capital funding knowledge. For example, the capital budget passes in April, and the award letters for legislatively directed projects are not sent to recipients until June, which means some are surprised when they cannot immediately access funding.
- Application and other processes are overly complex and lack plain language, examples, and transparency. Technical assistance or toolkits were not readily available.
- Organizations that have previously been successful or that can hire consultants and grant writers are more likely to be successful.
- Applications and other program materials are not widely available in alternative languages and formats.

Organizational and capacity barriers

Nonprofits working with government agencies experience challenges relating to government requirements and regulations.

- Reimbursement contracts and match requirements are challenging for small organizations and can require bridge loans or other up-front financing to launch the projects until reimbursement is available.
- Some organizations, particularly those relating to BIPOC communities, do not have access to traditional bank financing.
- Operating funds are also needed, which are not available through capital programs.
- Some organizations lack the capacity, subject matter expertise, and technical knowledge to move projects from pre-planning through design, fundraising, application and implementation.
- Capital projects must demonstrate that the grantee has site control through ownership or lease. Some organizations have difficulty obtaining a long-term lease.
- Contractors working with small organizations can experience payment delays, which can temporarily affect their business.

Appendix B: Planning and predesign activities

- Consultation on-site planning, including:
  - Architectural planning and siting
  - Geotechnical reviews
  - Environmental site assessment assistance
  - Planning construction and materials management
  - Project predesign (drawings and diagrams)
- Consultation on budgeting for capital projects, including:
  - Capital project feasibility analysis
  - Lifecycle cost analysis
  - Project budget analysis
  - Program analysis
- Consultation on capital fundraising and financing
  - Securing matching resources for project development
  - Maximizing local government contributions to project development in the form of land donations, infrastructure improvements, waivers of development fees, local- and state-managed funds, zoning variances, or creative planning
  - Longevity planning for ongoing funding for technical assistance after the PPCEP grant expires
  - Sharia-compliant financing for capital projects
- Plan and policy coordination, including consultation on compliance with planning requirements in at least one of these areas:
  - Assistance with compliance with an organization's strategic plan, business plan, or master plan
  - Coordination with local planning, economic development, environmental, social services, and recreational activities
  - Project maintenance and management

Appendix C: Capital programs expertise offered by consultants

Apple Health and Home Initiative
- Atromitos
- GS Consulting
- SidexSide architects
- MIG
- Advocates for Human Potential

Building for the Arts
- SidexSide architects
- Cultural Dot Space
- MIG

Early Learning Facilities
- SidexSide architects
- Cultural Dot Space
- MIG
- Thrive Community Building
- Takeall

HOME Rental Development Program
- GS Consulting
- SidexSide architects
- Advocates for Human Potential

Building Communities Fund
- GS Consulting
- Advocates for Human Potential

Housing Trust Fund
- GS Consulting
- Cultural Dot Space
- SidexSide architects
- Takeall
- Advocates for Human Potential

Housing Preservation Program
- GS Consulting
- SidexSide architects
- Takeall
- Advocates for Human Potential

National Housing Preservation Program
- GS Consulting
- SidexSide architects
- Advocates for Human Potential

Youth Recreational Facilities
- GS Consulting
- SidexSide architects
- MIG
- Takeall

Appendix D: Services and technical assistance offered by consultants

Architectural planning and siting
- GS Consulting
- Cultural Dot Space
- SidexSide architects
- MIG
- Thrive Community Building
- Advocates for Human Potential

Geotechnical reviews
- SidexSide architects
- MIG
- Advocates for Human Potential

Environmental site assessment assistance
- SidexSide architects
- MIG
- Advocates for Human Potential

Planning, construction and materials management
- GS Consulting
- Cultural Dot Space
- SidexSide architects
- MIG
- Advocates for Human Potential

Project predesign (drawings and diagrams)
- GS Consulting
- Cultural Dot Space
- SidexSide architects
- MIG
- Thrive Community Building
- Advocates for Human Potential

Capital project feasibility analysis
- Atromitos
- GS Consulting
- Cultural Dot Space
- SidexSide architects
- MIG
- Thrive Community Building
- Advocates for Human Potential

Lifecycle cost analysis
- GS Consulting
- SidexSide architects
- Thrive Community Building
- Advocates for Human Potential

Project budget analysis
- Atromitos
- GS Consulting
- SidexSide architects
- MIG
- Thrive Community Building
- Advocates for Human Potential

Program analysis
- SidexSide architects
- Advocates for Human Potential
- Atromitos
- GS Consulting
- Cultural Dot Space
- SidexSide architects

Maximizing local government contributions
- Atromitos
- GS Consulting
- Cultural Dot Space
- SidexSide architects
- Thrive Community Building
- Advocates for Human Potential

Longevity planning
- GS Consulting
- SidexSide architects
- Thrive Community Building
- Advocates for Human Potential

Sharia-compliant financing
- Atromitos
- GS Consulting

Assistance with compliance with an organization's strategic plan, business plan, or master plan.
- Atromitos
- MIG
- Thrive Community Building
- Advocates for Human Potential

Coordination with local planning, economic development, environmental, social services, and recreational activities

- Atromitos
- SidexSide architects
- MIG
- Advocates for Human Potential

Project maintenance and management

- Atromitos
- SidexSide architects
- Thrive Community Building
- Advocates for Human Potential

Grant writing assistance

- Atromitos
- GS Consulting
- Cultural Dot Space
- Thrive Community Building
- Advocates for Human Potential