

Communications Funds FAQ

1. What are Communications Funds?

Each Coalition District is granted a designated amount of funds for district-wide communications. Each Coalition uses funds differently based on their own priorities. SE Uplift has historically divided and redistributed these funds to its closet partners, Neighborhood Associations (NAs), based on the number of households in their area. These funds have been granted to NAs for communication-related activities and products October through September the following year with minimal requirements or restrictions attached. In 2018-19 NAs spend the majority of funds on: web hosting, newsletters, event supplies, and snacks for the neighborhood association meetings.

2. What is the Program Goal/Purpose?

SE Uplift's mission is *"to collaborate with the SE Portland community to build informed, inclusive, and participatory neighborhoods that support our social and ecological well-being"*. And we know that communications are an important part of achieving our mission. Our priority for communication funding in 2019-2020 is to make funds available to our diverse SE Portland community, and to ensure funds support strategies that use best practices for effective and accessible outreach and communications.

This includes, but is not limited to, communications and projects such as: flyer printing, website hosting, banners, newsletters, and translation services. We want recipients of these funds to use them as part of a larger strategy for communicating to their neighbors that they exist, what they do, their mission, and opportunities to engage. For more information visit the communications page for [additional resources](#) and to learn more about the funds.

3. How are Communications Funds being Allocated in 2019-2020?

As of the fiscal year 2019-2020, communications funds continue to be available for Neighborhood Associations, and now small communication grants will be available to community groups, neighborhood associations, and others with missions and goals that align with SE Uplift and who serve the Southeast Portland community.

Neighborhood Associations that have used all of their allotted funding from the previous fiscal year will receive their full communications funds amount. Others with missions/goals that align with SE Uplift and serve the coalition area can submit a grant application to access between \$700-\$1,000 of communications funds.

4. How do we Access Communications Funds?

Communication grants will be open for application as early as December 1st, the application and other resources can be found on the Communications Fund webpage. You may submit your application electronically on our website.

5. Why are changes happening to this Program?

Changes are in response to a number of things. First and foremost, every year a portion of funds go unused by Neighborhood Associations, and at the same time, we hear from our partners (primarily NAs) that they could use more money for communications. We need a program that is more flexible and accountable. Additionally, because SE Uplift serves all community groups, individuals, and organizations in its 20 neighborhoods, we will continue to adjust our programs and resources to achieve our mission and values.

6. Is SE Uplift Allowed to make this Change?

Yes, SE Uplift is allowed to change its programming and resource distribution to align with its current mission, goals, contract requirements, etc. In this change, Neighborhood Associations still have dominate access to this funding, as the majority of the funds are allocated to neighborhood associations prior to being open to any other groups.

Furthermore, the grant and amendments from our funder, The Office of Community and Civic Life, have many recitations regarding supporting community capacity including but not limited to: Neighborhood Associations, community groups, groups that are historically under-represented in and underserved by Civic Life funded programs, etc. Our grant contract with our funder encourages equitable practices to our programming and we have identified this change as a small step toward furthering equity throughout our services. Additional changes would be needed to truly make this program equitable moving forward.

7. Who can apply for a communications grant?

All community groups, neighborhood associations, and small organizations may apply for a communications funds. Because these funds are part of our larger capacity building efforts, these funds are prioritized for small, growing, and expanding groups and organizations that have little to no access to other resources for communications. Also, because the priority is to build community capacity, funds are not available to single individuals for their single issue that does not attribute to the social and ecological well-being of our coalition area.

- Applicants must demonstrate you are part of an established group, organization, or committee.
- Applicants must indicate how their work aligns with SE Uplift's Mission and Values.
- Applicants must share how they will meet minimum communication best practices (outlined in the resources below).

8. How do we receive the funds?

The method by which funding, and reimbursements are allocated is dependent on your status as a group/organizations.

Organizations with a designated 501© (3) status or fiscal sponsor will receive a check to allocate towards your project. Other groups must authorize all financial requests with a signed Payment/Reimbursement Request Form, which describes the expense.

All requests must be accompanied by an invoice or receipt and, if applicable, a digital or hard copy of outreach materials produced.

If submitting a request for payment to a vendor, please provide an invoice along with the Payment/Reimbursement Request Form.

If submitting a request for reimbursement please provide a receipt, or invoice showing the expense paid, along with your Payment/Reimbursement Request Form.

Copies of checks will not be accepted as proof of payment!

9. How long will it take to access funds from SE Uplift?

Communications grants open on December 1st. Neighborhood Associations receiving the same funding as the previous fiscal year will be notified by e-mail from the SE Uplift Liaison. Other groups may apply as soon as December 1st.

Proposals are due on January 15th and notification of grants will be going out as soon as February 1st. Groups will have to complete their projects and submit reports by September 30th.

SE Uplift will pay all authorized requests as quickly as possible and in no more than 30 days of receipt.

- Check requests are submitted to the CPA once a week. Checks are delivered to SE Uplift the following Monday morning.
- Requests submitted after noon on Thursday will be processed the following week.
- All checks exceeding \$500.00 require two signatures, one from the SE Uplift Executive Director and one from a SE Uplift board officer and may take more than a week to acquire.
- Checks will be mailed immediately, to the address on file, once they have been processed and signed, unless other arrangements have been made.

10. Can we use communications funds to partner on another organization's or group's project?

Yes, but only if your neighborhood association has met a baseline level of communication as outlined [here](#). Additionally, your group must receive a substantial amount of recognition or visibility for said partnership. Cost of partnership must be equivalent to amount of recognition. If you are uncertain about whether or not a partnership qualifies as an outreach expense please contact the Communications Grant Program Manager, christina@seuplift.org, to discuss the matter before taking action.

For example: a \$500 contribution must result in \$500 worth of publicity, whether you are co-organizing a project or not.

Some of the ways you might receive recognition or visibility include, but are not limited to: having your logo on all outreach materials and online communications associated with the project, having a physical presence during culmination of the project (ex: tabling at an event), or by receiving public acknowledgement at the project site (ex: formal, verbal or visual, attribution at an event, permanent plaque)¹.

11. Can we use communications funds to sponsor or make a donation to another organization's or group's project?

Communication funds are intended to be used for outreach related expenses only and may not be used to make donations.

Sponsorship may be considered an appropriate use of funding depending on level of visibility offered in exchange for the sponsorship. The same considerations for partnerships described above apply. Please contact christina@seuplift.org if your neighborhood wishes to use communications funds to sponsor a project/event.

12. Can we change our mind about how we want to use funds after we have submitted our communications funds proposal?

Absolutely! Your communications funds proposal can be changed/updated throughout the year with board approval. Any major changes will need to be submitted to and approved by SE Uplift prior to requesting reimbursement for the new expenses.

13. Can funds be spent on items the neighborhood plans to sell?

Sorry, no. Communications funds cannot be used to purchase items that the neighborhood association plans to sell.

14. Can funds be spent on food for neighborhood association events?

Sorry, no. As much as we all love food and food can be a way of getting people to your meetings, because we have such limited funds to distribute, these funds are intended for baseline outreach related communications such as print and electronic communications. Learn more about baseline communications [here](#).

¹ You must provide documentation to SE Uplift to support rationale behind using communications funds to partner (IE flyers, screen shots of website postings, sponsorship benefits, etc.).

15. What if we need help determining how to best use my Communication Funds?

Your SE Uplift Liaison is a good resource! We have staff with expertise in social media and developing a basic communication strategy. We also have published resources on web platforms and achieving a baseline for communications, marketing strategies, branding, and more

**SEND ALL DOCUMENTS, INCLUDING PROPOSAL, SIGNED AGREEMENT
& PAYMENT/REIMBURSEMENT REQUESTS TO:**

By Email: christina@seuplift.org*
Subject Line: Communications Funds

By Post: SE Uplift
Attn: Christina
Estimé
3534 SE Main Street

Drop Off: SE Uplift
3534 SE Main Street
Portland, OR 97214
M-TH, 10-5PM

***Electronic Submission preferred**

