

 **Metro** | *Meeting minutes*

Meeting: Conservation Education Grant Committee Meeting #1
Date/time: Wednesday, Feb. 11, 2015
Place: Room 270
Purpose: Review pre-applications and identify proposals that most strongly meet grant criteria and Metro's Natural Areas levy framework

In attendance

Megan Hanson, City of Portland Bureau of Environmental Services
Tony DeFalco, Verde
Neil Schulman, Confluence Environmental Center
Marci Krass, Willamette Riverkeepers and Mt. Hood Community College
John Sheehan, Metro, Conservation Education Program
Lara Bjork, Xerces Society
Gaylen Beatty, Columbia Land Trust
Jen Nelson, Tualatin Soil & Water Conservation District

Absent

Lara Christensen, Gray Family Foundation
Kristen Harrison, Portland Metro STEM Partnership

Staff

Crista Gardner, Grants Coordinator
Heather Nelson Kent, Grants Program Manager
Oriana Quackenbush, Grants Program Assistant
Marybeth Haliski, Administrative Services Coordinator

Meeting Summary

Crista Gardner and Heather Nelson Kent welcomed the committee and thanked them for volunteering their time. Heather reviewed the purpose of the 2013 local option levy that provides funds for these grants. She noted the equity emphasis in the levy to reach low income communities and people of color and noted that the conservation education grants have, so far, been one of the best ways to meet that goal.

Crista discussed the grants awarded in 2014. She shared some key discussions that committee had such as funding a balance between policy and programming or catalytic and proven programs to reach the final recommendation. She also shared some updates on those projects.

Conflict of Interest Policy

Crista provided a handout outlining Metro's conflict of interest policy and outlining the conflicts that had been noted for this committee. When a conflict occurs, that committee member refrains from scoring or discussing the application in question. She reminded the committee that conflicts relate to financial interest for the reviewer or a member of their immediate family and asked if anyone had additions or corrections to the list provided. Neil Schulman noted a conflict for the Green Lents proposal and will not discuss that project. Crista noted that more conflicts may develop between the pre-application and full application as partnerships and budgets are finalized and the committee will revisit this conversation at the next meeting.

Compelling Proposals

Crista Gardner led the review committee in a discussion about what made the best proposals compelling. Committee members noted that they appreciated applications where it was clear that funding would go directly to an organization within a diverse community. If the applicant was not a culturally specific organization they found the proposals more compelling when the organization demonstrated a deep commitment to working on diversity, equity and inclusion in their programming or mission. For those serving a diverse community or partnering with a culturally specific organization, applications were more compelling when it was clear the program was responding to a need identified by the community and that the community would be involved in the creation or development of the work rather than offering the same program to a new population. Similarly they found school-based projects most compelling when the schools were the applicants or demonstrably strong partners. Furthermore, school-based program applications that included clear educator support and commitment, not just administrative support, were more compelling. This was often demonstrated in the organizational preparedness section.

The committee appreciated applications that clearly outlined how the program met the program goals and how they planned to sustain the program beyond the grant. For the established programs, they found it more compelling when they demonstrated why the program has been successful so far because it demonstrated the organization is paying attention to the effectiveness of their program. In general, it was noted that authenticity about what could use improvement or what was not successful so far was appreciated. At the programmatic level the committee found deeper engagement of multiple contacts with the same group more compelling than one-time outreach to a larger number of people. It was also noted that applications that addressed how they would work to overcome barriers for diverse communities such as how participants would get to sites, what resources people would need to continue to access a site or do an activity after the program (e.g. cost, equipment, time, transportation access) were more compelling.

The comments about what made applications compelling opened up a conversation about comparing the community based organizations' capacity, experience or grant writing skills generally to larger or more environmentally focused organizations. Committee members cautioned against putting too much weight on capacity or demonstrated experience if aiming to include community based organizations and new entrants to environmental education generally. They noted that funding those without the experience is part of building capacity for these organizations and traditional environmental organizations also experience growing pains when they start their programs. It was noted that lack of capacity can be used as a reason to fund less of these organizations, but they need continual support to build that capacity. Additionally, considerations

of scalability were noted to favor larger, more traditional organizations. The committee could also consider how institutionalized racism affects the selection process and that the 'traditional' approach to conservation education does not value land-based or other types of approaches which these organizations may use or want to use. These comments were noted not just for consideration in the committee review process but for the grant program to consider when requesting that programs align with particular goals and a two way conversation about goals and approaches was encouraged.

Application review discussion

Committee members were assigned one half of the proposals to read before the meeting. The group divided into two groups for discussion with Heather Nelson Kent and Crista Gardner each facilitating a discussion. The groups came back together with their recommendations of proposals to invite back for a full application with a goal of requesting full applications totaling between 150 to 200% of available funding.

Both groups reviewed applications with a community garden or agriculture component and the reunited committee discussed concerns about determining whether these proposals met the criteria. The grant criteria does not rule out these projects, but indicates there needs to be a clear focus on natural systems, native plants and/or environmental education. Some looked for the capacity to expand or adapt current programming and others noted the importance of environmental education partnerships. It was noted that there are farms that are known for doing a great job of delivering environmental education but they too probably went through growing pains to find the balance between food-based curriculum and natural systems curriculum. The projects that serve a community-identified need, such as food production, were discussed as being a potentially great entryway for underserved communities to environmental education. The committee was cautious to note that applicants may need some guidance to ensure they meet the criteria standards if funded. The committee concluded that it was important that all agriculture and garden related projects invited to submit full proposals be given the same feedback about how these programs can work within the criteria to ensure fairness and transparency. The committee was able to reach consensus on which proposals to invite and those proposals are listed in Attachment A.

Process Reflection and Feedback

Crista and Heather invited the committee to share any feedback about the review process or suggestions about what to include in the full application forms. In the full applications the committee asked staff to relay some requests for additional information to the applicants generally as it applies to their program. If their program is working with a new community, diverse communities or low income communities the committee would like information on how they plan to address barriers generally and any site access barriers such as lack of public transportation. If an applicant was funded by this program last year, the committee would like them to reference any lessons learned in the process so far. A committee member also suggested that to improve the pre-application next year, the general categories could include more sub-questions to help guide the responses as they seemed to be interpreted in different ways. Another committee member cautioned against becoming too formulaic with the questions so as to allow creativity.

The committee discussed how to help the applicants clarify their program and organizational connections to the program goals and one suggested asking the following questions: How do your organizational goals fit in with the goals of this grant program? And how does this program meet the grant program goals?

Next steps

Staff will create a synopsis of the 2014 projects' progress to date for the committee.

Full applications will be due March 17, 2015 and the committee can expect to receive copies on March 20, 2015.

The next meeting will be held on April 14, 2015 from 8:30 a.m. to 12:30 p.m. in Room 270.

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Attachment A: Conservation Education Grant Review Committee Meeting Summary Feb.

Conservation education applications invited to submit a full proposal

Program title	Organization	Program Partners	Amount requested	Program summary
Teaching the importance of STREAM (Science, Technology, Restoration, Engineering, Arts and Math) via Youth Engagement and Career Mentorship	Adelante Mujeres	Tualatin Riverkeepers, Friends of Fernhill Wetlands, Clean Water Services, Jackson Bottom Wetlands	\$90,114	Long time partners Adelante Mujeres and Tualatin Riverkeepers will develop future conservation leaders by providing opportunities to explore the field of conservation and to share their learning with their peers. This project will engage Latino youth, their families and the broader community.
Asian Pacific Islander Youth Leaders in Nature	Asian Pacific American Network of Oregon (APANO)	Jade District, Audobon Society, OPAL Environmental Justice, Pacific Islander Student Association (PISA), Harrison Park School, CDE	\$25,000	Strengthens partnerships between Asian Pacific Islander youth groups with conservation and environmental literacy organizations to jointly plan retreats and action projects that build relationships, political skills and stewardship.
The TALON Program	Audubon Society of Portland (ASoP)	ROSE, Hacienda and Bienestar Community Development Corporations; Friends of Nadaka; City of Portland's Parks and Recreation	\$100,000	TALON is a training and paid apprenticeship program that engages youth of color living in East Multnomah and North Clackamas Counties in professions in environmental education, stewardship, conservation advocacy and wildlife care. The goal of TALON is to build diversity in the environmental community.
Native Plant and Reforestation Education Signs	City of Tualatin	Clean Water Services, Friends of Trees, Wetlands Conservancy, Cascade Education Corps	\$8,000	Funding from Metro will enable the City of Tualatin to design, purchase and install educational signs at Brown's Ferry Park Native Plant Demonstration Garden. This signage will connect citizens to native plants and provide education on the advantages of using natives for water conservation, wildlife habitat and diversity.
Home is Where the Watershed is: Conservation Education for Low Income and Housing Insecure Families	Community Partners for Affordable Housing, Inc. (CPAH)	Tualatin Riverkeepers, Beaverton School District ELL/Somali Program, Good Neighbor Center	\$25,000	Home Is Where the Watershed Is provides conservation education to ethnically diverse, low-income youth and their families in Washington County. Through enduring and innovative partnerships we will offer culturally responsive opportunities to strengthen community stewardship of local natural areas.

Program title	Organization	Program Partners	Amount requested	Program summary
“Ecology Education in North Clackamas”	Ecology in Classrooms & Outdoors (ECO) (North Clackamas)	North Clackamas School District, Milwaukie Elementary, Oak Grove Elementary, Riverside Elementary, Ardenwald Elementary, Clackamas Water Environment Services, North Clackamas Parks and Recreation	\$24,800	<i>Ecology Education in North Clackamas</i> provides a series of hands-on ecology lessons and outdoor field experiences for twenty classrooms in four low-income schools in the North Clackamas School District.
STEAM--Earth Conservation Team (ECT), Centro Cultural summer camp	EdenAcres (STEAM)	Centro Cultural, FG School District, Clean Water Services EdenAcres Partners: FG Community School, Roots and Shoots club, FG Sustainability Commission, Fernhill Wetlands Council, Hyla Woods, Nana Cardoon, Dairy Creek Food Web, FG Community Gardens, Demeter Biodynamic, Cascadia Permaculture Institute	\$28,108	EdenAcres is a learning community that explores sustainability education (SE) best practices through the iterative development of a model SE learning environment. Its mission is to engage learners and teachers in active outdoor learning for transition to a sustainable future, with a goal of environmental literacy (as described by the ODE Environmental Literacy Plan) for all learners in the FG region. This proposal requests funds to replace lost funding from Pacific University for instructors so that we can continue to offer Centro Cultural’s STEAM--ECT outdoor summer camp while we work to identify a stable source of funding. The goals of the STEAM--ECT project are to educate students through forest and conservation design, to connect the Latino community through experiences that foster environmental literacy, and to develop confidence, a sense of accomplishment, and a life--long connection to the environment. Program serves 70 students for 7 weeks each summer.
Forest Park Community Partnership Project	Forest Park Conservancy	Community Cycling Center, Center for Diversity and the Environment	\$20,000	FPC, CCC and CDE will create a partnership to create a pathway for young residents in North/Northeast Portland to increase their use of and connection to Forest Park. This partnership will result in more young people of color and low income people having access to and knowledge of Forest Park and identifying Forest Park as “theirs”.
Friends and Neighbors for Environmental Diversity	Friends of Tryon Creek	Neighborhood House, Center for Diversity and the Environment , Oregon Parks and Recreation Department	\$91,869	Friends of Tryon Creek has forged a dynamic partnership with Neighborhood House, Center for Diversity and the Environment, and the Oregon Parks and Recreation Department to increase access by low income individuals and people of color to outdoor nature programs and to achieve organizational change.
Farm School	Friends of Zenger Farm		\$79,804	To expand Zenger Farm’s successful Farm School Program into new school districts over three school years, beginning with 2014-2015. Approximately 9,000 students will connect with Zenger programming during the project to build understanding of their local ecosystem and how their actions affect the environment.

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St. Johns Community Conservation Program	George Middle School	Portland Public Schools, David Wynde, Portland State University Graduate School of Education PSU Leadership and Sustainability Education Slough School Sauvie Island Center	\$96,600	The St. Johns Community Conservation program will facilitate the development of culturally responsive K-12 conservation education programming through community involvement and teacher professional development. Teacher capacity will expand through on-site and technology-based collaboration. Students' connection with nature will align with themes of equity and diversity.
Community Leadership for Earth Stewardship	Growing Gardens	Home Forward, Village Gardens	\$76,000	The Stephens Creek Crossing Community Garden will pilot multi-cultural, multi-generational opportunities for residents at Stephens Creek Crossing to learn and become leaders in sustainable and organic gardening practices, local watershed health, and environmental stewardship.
Food Works Sustainable Agriculture Leadership Program	Janus Youth Programs, Inc.	Home Forward, METRO Parks, Sisters of the Road, Laughing Planet Café, New Seasons Market, Portland Farmers Market, St. Johns Farmers Market, Growing Gardens.	\$25,000	Food Works is a sustainable agriculture tiered youth leadership and employment program. Each year, 30 culturally diverse youth, most from lower-income communities, learn about environmentally conscious agriculture practices through peer-led workshops and hands-on learning on their 2.5 acre Sauvie Island organic farm site.
Centennial Youth and Restoration in Action	Johnson Creek Watershed Council	Centennial School District, Pleasant Valley Elementary, City of Gresham	\$10,000	Working with Centennial School District, Johnson Creek Watershed Council will engage Centennial students and families in hands-on, meaningful conservation education projects through a major culvert and pond replacement and riparian restoration project being constructed on Centennial property.
Kairos Learning Exploration Garden	Kairos PDX	Ask Mr. Science LLC, Independence Gardens, Kairos Parent Network	\$25,000	KairosPDX is creating a learning garden to capture the desired qualities of cultivated and wild spaces. This is our opportunity to curate a space in our rapidly developing neighborhood and create access to nature and experiential education, utilizing our student-driven learning strategies.
Gladstone Parks Conservation Education and Job Training Project (Gladstone Parks Project)	Lower Columbia Estuary Partnership and Wilderness International	Lower Columbia Estuary Partnership (co-applicant), Wilderness International (co-applicant), City of Gladstone, Clackamas County Juvenile Department, Holcomb Elementary, Kraxberger Middle School, W.L. Henry Elementary	\$97,353	The Gladstone Parks Project provides opportunities for underserved youth, at-risk teens, and parent volunteers to learn about, experience, and contribute to healthy habitats in Gladstone parks through environmental education, hands-on habitat restoration work, and a job training program.

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Mercy and Wisdom Community Health Clinic Garden	Mercy and Wisdom Community Health Clinic	Serene Care Clinic, Portland State University, Depave, Hands on Greater Portland, Starbucks, Townshend's Tea, Mt. Scott Fuel Co.	\$10,000	MWCHC has transformed a portion of its property into an accessible garden to promote mental & physical health for patients & community. The project aims to create green space, increase access to fresh & local products, promote sustainability education, and contribute to watershed health.
No Child Left Inside Curriculum Design via Couch Park Naturescape Design	Metropolitan Learning Center (MLC) & MLC Parent Teacher Student Association (MLCPTSA)	MLC PTSA, Portland Public Schools, City of Portland Parks and Recreation, Kids Community Learning Center, VerdeNW, Northwest District Association	\$20,000	We will utilize our teachers' human capital to create a curriculum that meets or exceeds in a measurable way the goals outlined in "The No Child Left Inside Act" of 2009. We will use then use this curriculum as a process for the design of a Naturescape in Couch Park.
Opportunity Corps	Momentum Alliance	Northwest Youth Corps, U.S. Fish & Wildlife Foundation, Bureau of Land Management, Open Meadow, Outside In	\$15,000	Momentum Alliance and Northwest Youth Corps are collaborating to improve the design of NYC's programming to make it accessible to local underrepresented youth through training, coaching, and an intensive summer internship for ten underrepresented youth to increase connection with nature, improve environmental literacy, and diversify conservation leadership.
Exploring Language, Exploring Nature; Curriculum for Immigrants & Refugees	People-Places-Things, LLC	City of Gresham Natural Resources Program, Portland Bureau of Environmental Services Sustainable Stormwater Division, Multnomah County Libraries, Confluence Environmental Center	\$8,425	This partnership between conservation professionals and an established English learning program for adults will bring conservation education to an underserved, highly diverse population and create a model for using the natural world as curriculum.
Garden-Based Ecological & Environmental Education	Portland Earth Art & Agriculture Project (Earth Art Ag)	Outgrowing Hunger, Portland Public Schools: Harrison Park K-8, Atkinson Elementary, Bridger Elementary, Beverly Cleary Elementary, Creative Science School, Laurelhurst Elementary; APANO; Impact NW; Met. Family Services (Alder SUN)	\$25,000	Program provides ecological and environmental education to 2000 students/ month at 5 PPS schools. Professional educators lead in-class and after-school programs focusing on ecological & environmental literacy through hands-on activities in site specific green spaces reflect the needs of the community and the environment.

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Community Orchard-Based Ecological Education and Stewardship	Portland Fruit Tree Project (PFTP)	Village Gardens, Sabin Community Association, HomeForward, Portland Parks & Recreation: Community Gardens, Parkrose Community United Church of Christ	\$24,000	Working with partners and diverse members of five Portland communities, we will engage 300 participants (54% will be low-income) in ecological restoration and educational at five community orchards. These year-round activities will improve the health of the local environment while building community knowledge and empowerment.
Columbia Children's Arboretum Native Restoration by Rosemary Anderson High School	Portland OIC/Rosemary Anderson High School	Friends of Trees, Portland Parks and Recreation, East Columbia Neighborhood Association, Woodlawn School	\$25,000	The POIC will partner with Friends of Trees and Portland Parks and Recreation to engage a group of eight POIC/RAHS students in two unique applied learning experiences: 1. Invasive species removal and native restoration planting 2. Community outreach and education
Lead and Learn: Restoring community through connection with nature	Project YESS at Mt. Hood Community College	Mt. Hood Community College, World Salmon Council, Sweetbriar Elementary School, Walt Morey Middle School, Portland Parks & Recreation, Lents Elementary School, Sandy River Basin Watershed Council, BLM, Zenger Farm, The Nature Conservancy	\$23,500	This project will provide urban, low-income, and minority youth (ages 16-21) a unique opportunity to develop leadership skills by mentoring/teaching younger youth; be employed on a conservation crew; learn about and explore careers in conservation and natural resources; and develop a lifelong connectedness to nature.
The Young Women's Leadership and Outdoor Skills Program (YWP)	Rewild Portland	Native American Youth And Family Center – Portland (NAYA) Hoyt Arboretum Friends (HAF)	\$25,000	YWP connects girls ages 10-15 from diverse backgrounds to their local natural spaces and cultivates an ethic of stewardship for these places. Through mentorship and engagement in the outdoors, girls learn science, art, and leadership skills to empower them as future conservation leaders.
Outdoor classroom for Sacramento Elementary	Sacramento Elementary School	Parkrose School District, Nevue Ngan Associates and Parkrose Heights Association of Neighbors, (PHAN).	\$17,000	We propose to create an outdoor classroom space at Sacramento Elementary School. This classroom will create a nature based environment that supports student learning in all areas. This space will also be used for a variety of community based activities and events. Sacramento Elementary School is one of six schools in the Parkrose School District. Located in NE Portland, Parkrose School District has served the community for well over a century.
Acorns to Oaks: Instilling Wonder and Place on the Sandy River Delta	Sandy River Basin Watershed Council	Confluence Project, Oregon Zoo, Friends of Trees, Troutdale (Reynolds) School District, Friends of the Sandy River Delta, Columbia Gorge Ecology Institute	\$45,000	The program will introduce Troutdale students to their neighborhood natural area, the Sandy River Delta. Students will conduct and share ecological research, experience art with Native American mentors, and plant oaks. Classroom teachers will receive training and receive a new Delta EE Guide.

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Stem on the farm with elementary school students	Sauvie Island Center	Metro, owner of the natural area Sauvie Island Organics – owner of the farm, Portland State Capstone program, Beaverton schools – Beaver Acres and Barnes	\$20,250	Sauvie Island Center will expand our Farm to School and Back program to Washington County. This expansion will provide a combination of hands-on outdoor education with a classroom science lesson to approximately 750 additional children from high-poverty schools in Washington County.
Schoolyard Stewards: Conservation Education for Oregon City School District and beyond	Schoolyard Farms	Oregon City School District, Candy Lane Elementary, Clackamas County Juvenile Department, Clackamas River Basin Council, Clackamas County Soil and Water Conservation District, Clackamas County Office of Sustainability, Oak Lodge Sanitary District, North Clackamas Urban Watersheds Council	\$25,000	<i>Schoolyard Stewards</i> connects elementary students at Candy Lane Elementary in Milwaukie to nature through hands-on conservation programming; at-risk youth in the juvenile justice system to training in conservation education; and the surrounding community to their local natural areas through conservation-based volunteer opportunities.
Living Learning Lab	Springwater Environmental Sciences School	Matt Brown – Food Waves, Caldwell Family Farm, LLC, SW Charter School	\$12,000	To Sustain and further develop Springwater's science based community garden by rehiring our Garden Coordinator. The school garden is an ideal tool used to provide hands-on learning experiences in all academic subjects. Teachers use the garden space to introduce scientific methods and permaculture tenets so kids better understand the interdependency of natural systems and how this interdependency leads to sustainability.
OakQuest Phase 2: Expanding education, empowering citizens & Native youth	Urban Greenspaces Institute (UGI)	Native American Youth and Family Center (NAYA); Kingfisher Ecological Services LLC (KES); Mark G. Wilson, consultant; PSU Indigenous Nations Studies; Metro; The Intertwine Alliance; Tualatin Hills and North Clackamas Park and Recreation Districts; City of Portland Parks and BES; West Multnomah, East Multnomah, Clackamas, and Tualatin Soil and Water Conservation Districts; Conservation Biology Institute; ODFW; USFWS; Portland Audubon Society; Oregon Wildlife Heritage Foundation	\$40,000	We will mentor three Native American youths in career-building conservation education and hands-on experience, engage 50+ citizen scientists to field-verify our final regional oak map, and train 45+ private landowners in naturoscaping to enhance oak understory and create new oak habitat in strategic neighborhoods.

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Verde Landscape	Verde	Hacienda CDC, Metro (Science & Stewardship Division), Portland Parks & Recreation, BestHQ, Innovative Changes	\$25,000	Verde seeks Metro funding to support education, environmental and economic outcomes for Verde Landscape Crew Members. Verde Landscape, a nonprofit social enterprise, connects people with nature, builds environmental literacy and develops conservation leaders by recruiting and training low-income adults to restore the region's natural areas.
Watershed Engagement and Research	Wetlands Conservancy (The) (TWC)	City of Tualatin, Athey Creek Middle School, Clean Water Services, Xerces Society, New Seasons Market	\$22,000	TWC will work with Tualatin 3 rd - 12 th grade students on conservation of Hedges Creek and Nyberg wetlands. The program will include scientific inquiry, landscape design, communication and community outreach. Students will be exposed to future career possibilities while developing personal connections to their local landscape.
Cultivating Connections with the Willamette in Clackamas and Washington Counties through River Discovery	Willamette Riverkeeper	Cascade Education Corps, Portland Parks & Recreation, Clackamas Basin Council, Clackamas County, Groundwork Portland, Metro, North Clackamas Urban Watersheds Council, Oregon Tradeswomen, Project YESS, River Network, and Wilderness International.	\$24,500	Willamette Riverkeeper will strengthen our River Discovery Program in Clackamas and Washington counties and engage more under represented youth and community members in learning about the Willamette River. Land and water based programs will emphasize citizen science, hands on stewardship, leadership, sensory awareness, and canoeing.
Wisdom Workforce Program	Wisdom of the Elders, Inc.	NAYA, Beaverton Schools Indian Education, Metro, Portland Parks and Rec (City Nature East), Portland Bureau of Environmental Services, Portland Bureau of Planning & Sustainability, Johnson Creek Watershed Council, Oregon Health Authority, PSU Graduate School of Education, PCC Career Pathway Program, Mt. Hood Com'y College Workforce Development, Highland Park STEM Middle School, and Ecotrust.	\$75,000	Wisdom's Native American environmental education and workforce development initiative will provide Native adults with culturally-tailored workforce training, environmental assessment and restoration service learning, and a career pathways/job pipeline plan; and strengthen classroom learning and hands-on service learning in local natural areas for Native youth, youth of color, and STEM middle school students.