PARTICIPATORY BUDGETING PROJECT

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www.participatorybudgeting.org
“Just 19% [of Americans] say the government is run for the benefit of all.”

–PEW RESEARCH CENTER NOVEMBER, 2015
Who We Are

MISSION
To empower people to decide together how to spend public money.

HISTORY
Founded in 2009, we have led, supported, or inspired almost every PB process in North America.

WHERE WE WORK
Across the US and Canada, with staff in New York City, Oakland.
WHAT ARE WE UP AGAINST?

Gentrification. How can we promote development without displacement?

Austerity. How can existing resources be used to reinvest in people and places?

Gig economy. How can we share wealth, provide dignity and security?
THE PROBLEMS WITH PARTICIPATION

POWERLESS

I participate
You participate
He participates
We participate
You all participate
They decide

(French student poster)
A LADDER OF BUDGET PARTICIPATION

Participatory Budgeting

Citizen Boards Or Councils Focus Groups & Town Halls

Online Games

Hearings & Deputations

Listening

Informing

Consultation

Limited Participation

Full Participation

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Another world is possible
Participatory Budgeting and Planning

- PB is democratic process in which community members directly decide how to spend part of a budget (could be for a town, city, nation, business, or organization)
- Participatory Planning = transparent, involving all stakeholders

**Empower Kentucky Plan**
Post-coal KY plan, developed through a 2-year process with more 1200 participants
*Kentucky (statewide)*

**Participatory Budgeting in NYC**
31 council districts, +$40 million in capital funds. 100,000 voters.
*New York City, NY (citywide)*

**PB at a national scale**
Portugal recently became the first country to do PB with its national budget
*Portugal (nationwide)*
...and so much more

- Community Land Trusts
- Free, Open-Source, Libre Software
- Restorative Justice
- Mutual Aid Networks
- Solidarity Health Clinics
- Timebanking
- Land banks
- Limited Equity Housing Cooperatives
- Permaculture
- Intentional Communities
- Tool Libraries
- Complementary Currencies

- Credit Unions
- Creative Commons
- Media Democracy
- Community Networks
- Blockchains
- Zero Waste
- Community Solar
- Debt Relief
- Revolving Loan Funds
- Public Banks
- Collectives and Unions

...and the list goes on
WHAT IS PARTICIPATORY BUDGETING?

A democratic process in which community members directly decide how to spend part of a public budget.
How PB Works

1. Design the Process
2. Brainstorm Ideas
3. Develop Proposals
4. Cast a Vote
5. Fund Winning Projects
DEMOCRATIZE CONVENTIONAL ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT

Special Districts and Assessments - Tax Increment Financing, Business Improvement Districts, Economic Development Corporations

Public Benefit Funds - Community Benefits Agreements, PILOT payments, Anchor Institution (e.g., Hospitals Universities)

Business & Workforce Development Programs - Small business loans, Incubators, Education & Training

Low Income and Workforce Housing - Subsidies, Credits, Fee en lieu (of construction) funds

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WHERE HAS PARTICIPATORY BUDGETING WORKED?

3000+ PB processes around the world

✓ Cities
✓ States
✓ Counties
✓ Public Housing
✓ Schools
✓ Community Organizations

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164,000 TENANTS

As many as 6,000 tenants per year have allocated up to $9 million in capital funds per year.
First Citywide PB Process in the U.S.

- 117,000 residents
- First citywide process in U.S.
- $3.2 million (sales tax revenue)
- 4,000 residents voted to fund 12 winning projects
$37 million reaching over 4.5 million residents in 28 districts
$1 million decided entirely by YOUTH residents ages 12-25
As a result of participating, I am more likely to...

Agreement on a scale of 1 to 5

- Know more about government.
- Feel more confident in my abilities.
- Have gotten to know people in the community better.
- Have a better understanding of community needs.
- Have learned new skills.

2018 YOUTH LEAD THE CHANGE WINNING PROJECTS

FANS IN SCHOOLS
PROJECT A - 858 VOTES

YOUTH WI-FI LOUNGE
PROJECT D - 812 VOTES

ADD SOLAR PANELS TO BUILDINGS
PROJECT B - 718 VOTES

PAST WINNERS

- Informative homeless resources. A digital billboard displaying resources and job opportunities available to the homeless youth.

- Performing and visual arts studio. A space where people of all ages can come together and create all types of art.

- Future media center. A space that would contain recent technology that would otherwise be unavailable to most students.
HOW TO ENSURE EQUITY AND INCLUSION?

✓ Money that matters
✓ Grassroots leadership
✓ Inclusive design
✓ Targeted outreach
✓ Equity criteria
In NYC, funds are more likely to go to projects in low-income areas in PB than through other discretionary funds.
VALLEJO
20% of PB voters were ineligible to vote in regular elections

NYC
Higher percentage of low-income residents voted in PB (40%) compared to full population (34%) & local elections (29%).