

# PARTICIPATORY BUDGETING

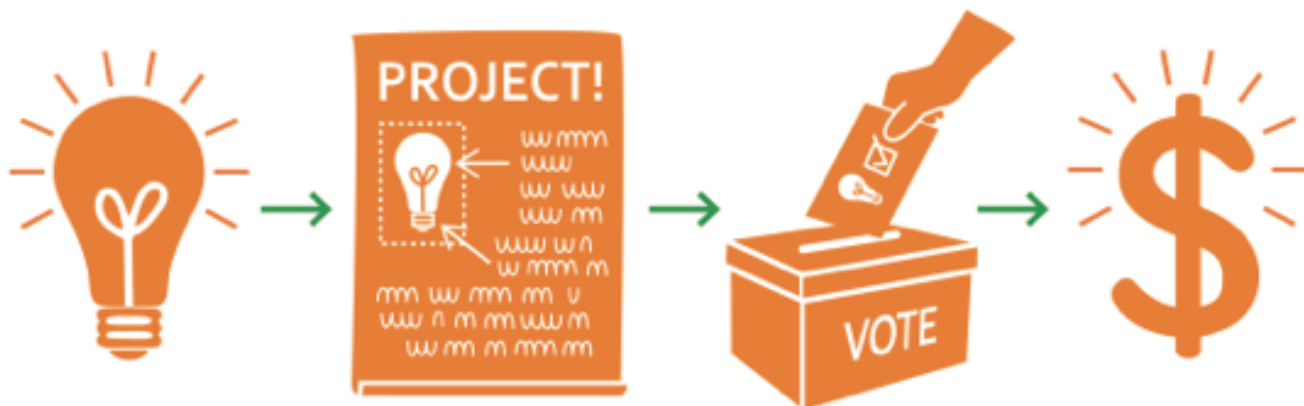


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## REAL MONEY, REAL POWER

Participatory budgeting (PB) is a different way to manage public money. It is a democratic process in which community members decide how to spend part of a public budget. PB gives ordinary people real decision-making power over real money.

## HOW IT WORKS

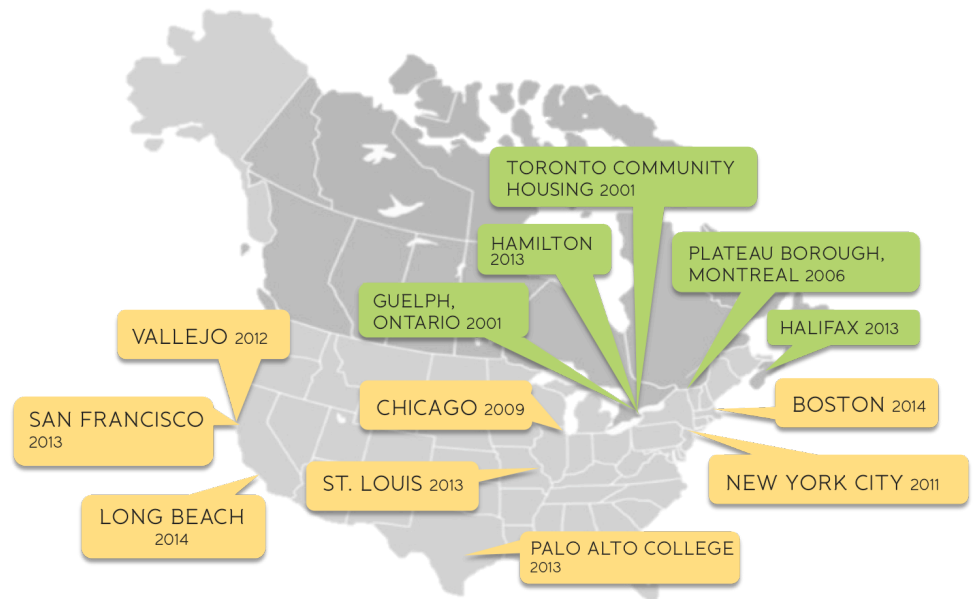


Local communities make budget decisions through an annual cycle of meetings and voting. Most experiences follow a similar basic process: residents **brainstorm spending ideas**, volunteer budget delegates **develop proposals** based on these ideas, **residents vote** on proposals, and the **government funds the top projects**. After funding, the process starts again, and PB becomes part of the way government works.

## WHERE IT'S HAPPENING

The Brazilian city of Porto Alegre started the first full PB process in 1989, for its municipal budget. As many as 50,000 people have participated each year, to decide as much as 20% of the city budget.

Since then, PB has spread to over 1,500 city budgets in Latin America, Asia, Africa, Europe, and North America. States, counties, housing authorities, schools, universities, and community organizations have also used PB for their budgets.



### Toronto Community Housing

In 2001, Toronto's public housing authority began to engage tenants in allocating \$9 million of capital funding per year. Tenants identify local infrastructure priorities in building meetings, then budget delegates from each building meet to decide which priorities receive funding.

### New York City

In 2011, four New York City Council Members piloted a PB process to let residents allocate part of their capital discretionary funds. 24 Council Members have since joined PBNYC, giving the community decision-making power over more than \$28 million in taxpayer money.

### Vallejo, California

The City of Vallejo launched the first city-wide PB process in the US. Residents are allocating \$2.4 million in sales tax revenues.

## OUTCOMES

- More Civic Engagement
- Broader Political Participation
- New Community Leaders and More Active Citizens
- Stronger Relationships Between Government, Organizations, and Residents
- Fairer and More Effective Spending

## PARTICIPATE!

To learn more and get involved, contact the Participatory Budgeting Project (PBP).

PBP is a non-profit organization that empowers people to decide together how to spend public money, primarily in the US and Canada. We create and support participatory budgeting processes that deepen democracy, build stronger communities, and make public budgets more equitable and effective.

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