

Participatory Budgeting in New York City



2013-2014
Rulebook



Introduction by the Council Members

As members of the New York City Council who represent diverse districts, we are pleased to embark on the third cycle of a new form of democracy: Participatory Budgeting in New York City. Through this exciting initiative, **we will put budget decisions directly in the hands of people those decisions impact the most: the residents of our districts.**

Cycle 2 of PBNYC proved that this program really is an example of grassroots democracy at its best. Between September 2012 and April 2013, over 13,000 people across eight City Council districts decided how to spend around \$10 million in public money, funding 45 community projects.

In Cycle 3 of PBNYC, two additional districts will join the process. Residents will come together, exchange and debate ideas, team up to turn ideas into proposals, and then decide at the ballot box which projects get funded. **This process makes budgeting more transparent and accessible, and it opens up participation to people who have never been involved before.** It will make budgeting more effective, because no one knows the needs of a community better than those who live in it.

Participatory budgeting requires elected officials to collaborate with constituents, and the Participatory Budgeting in New York City 2013-2014 Rulebook was developed through a similar democratic process. The work of a Citywide Steering Committee, representing a wide spectrum of New Yorkers with different backgrounds and ideologies, **this rulebook was put together**

through compromise and consensus. We want to thank everyone who participated, especially Community Voices Heard and The Participatory Budgeting Project, for their thoughtful work bringing us all together and structuring the decision-making process.

We are proud to present this rulebook to you and are excited to launch Cycle 3 of this innovative new democratic practice for NYC.

Let the participating begin!

New York City Councilmembers:

Sara Gonzalez/Carlos Menchaca (District 38, Brooklyn)
David G. Greenfield (District 44, Brooklyn)
Brad Lander (District 39, Brooklyn)
Stephen Levin (District 33, Brooklyn)
Melissa Mark-Viverito (District 8, Manhattan/ The Bronx)
Donovan Richards (District 31, Queens)
Eric Ulrich (District 32, Queens)
Mark Weprin (District 23, Queens)
Jumaane D. Williams (District 45, Brooklyn)

Participating Council Districts

District 8.
Melissa
Mark-Viverito

El Barrio/East
Harlem; Mott
Haven in the
Bronx

District 33.
Stephen Levin

Brooklyn Heights,
Greenpoint, DUMBO,
and Boerum Hill; parts
of Williamsburg

District 39.
Brad Lander

Carroll Gardens,
Cobble Hill, Columbia
Waterfront, Gowanus,
Kensington, Windsor
Terrace, and parts
of Park Slope and
Borough Park

District 38.
Sara Gonzalez/
Carlos Menchaca

Red Hook, Sunset
Park, and Greenwood
Heights; parts of Bor-
ough Park, Gowanus,
South Slope, and
Windsor Terrace

District 44.
David G. Greenfield

Borough Park, Midwood,
and Bensonhurst

District 45.
Jumaane D. Williams

Flatbush, East Flatbush,
Flatlands, and parts of
Midwood and Canarsie

District 32.
Eric Ulrich

Belle Harbor,
Rockaway Beach,
Rockaway Park,
Neponsit, Breezy
Point

District 23.
Mark S. Weprin

Hollis Hills, Queens Village,
Little Neck, Douglaston,
Bayside, Bellerose, Floral
Park, Glen Oaks, New Hyde
Park, Hollis, Hollis Park
Gardens, Holliswood, Fresh
Meadows, Oakland Gardens

District 31
Donovan Richards

Far Rockaway,
Arverne, Bayswater,
Edgemere

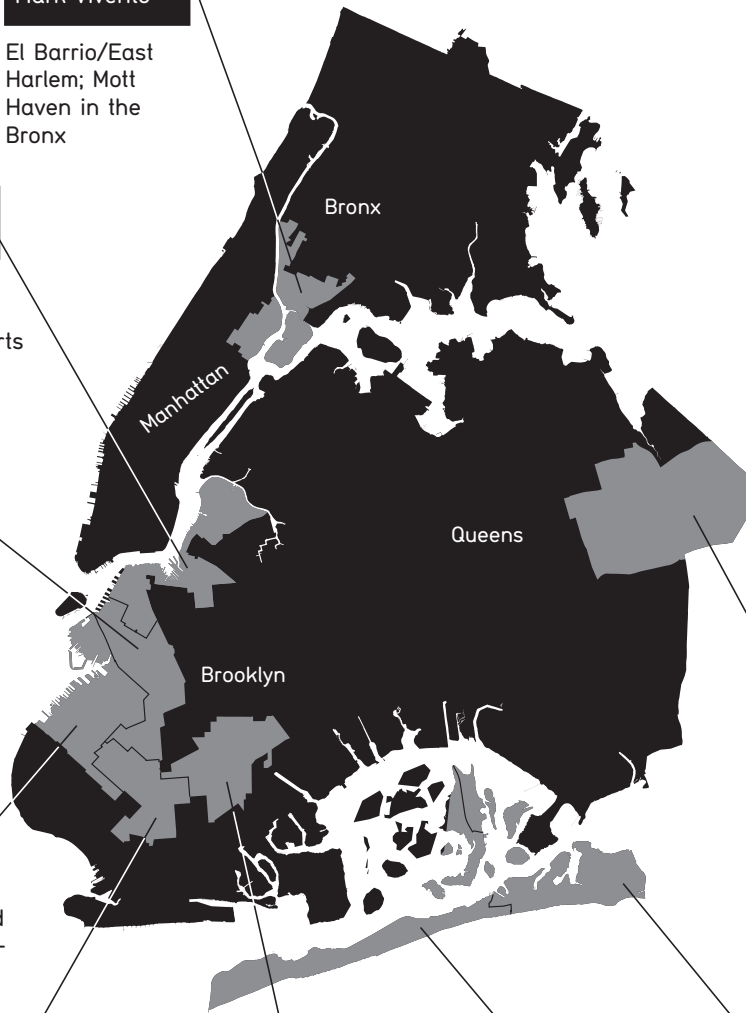


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About this Rulebook

This booklet was developed by the Citywide Steering Committee for Participatory Budgeting in New York City (PBNYC) in July 2011 and revised in 2012 and 2013. While participatory budgeting is inspired by experiences elsewhere, the PBNYC Steering Committee created these guidelines and rules to reflect the unique needs, issues, and interests of New York City's communities.

This rulebook is only a starting point, and it remains a work in progress. Together with other community members, we will continue to develop and improve the process as it unfolds in future years.

What is Participatory Budgeting?

Participatory Budgeting (PB) is a democratic process in which community members directly decide how to spend part of a public budget.

PB gives ordinary people real power to make real decisions over real money. The process was first developed in Brazil in 1989, and there are now over 1,500 participatory budgets around the world, most at the municipal level.

Participatory Budgeting in New York City

In 2011-12, four New York City Council Members - Brad Lander, Melissa Mark-Viverito, Eric Ulrich, and Jumaane Williams - launched a PB process to let residents allocate part of their capital discretionary funds. In 2012-13, Council Members David Greenfield, Dan Halloran, Stephen Levin, and Mark Weprin joined. This year, in Cycle 3, Donovan Richards and Sara Gonzalez have joined. In 2013-14, community members will decide how to spend approximately \$12 million in taxpayer money.

In PBNYC, New York City residents propose and vote on projects to fund with Council Member discretionary funds. Discretionary funds are resources that the Council Members typically allocate as they desire.

Residents in each participating district will decide how to spend at least \$1 million in capital dollars. These funds can be used for local improvements to schools, parks, libraries, housing, and other public spaces. Capital funds can only be used for physical infrastructure projects that benefit the public, cost at least \$35,000 and have a lifespan of at least 5 years. In some districts, residents may also decide how to allocate expense funds, for programs of non-profit organizations. The Council Members submit the projects receiving the most votes to the City for implementation.

Our Goals: Why PB?

We aim for PB to have the following impacts:

1. Open Up Government

Allow residents a greater role in spending decisions, and inspire increased transparency in New York City government.

2. Expand Civic Engagement

Engage more people in politics and the community, especially young people, people of color, immigrants, low-income people, the formerly incarcerated, and other marginalized groups.

3. Develop New Community Leaders

Build the skills, knowledge, and capacity of community members.

4. Build Community

Inspire people to more deeply engage in their communities, and to create new networks and organizations.

5. Make Public Spending More Equitable

Generate spending decisions that are fairer and reflect the entire community's needs, so resources go where they are needed most.

Our Principles: How We Work

We strive to implement PB according to the following principles:

1. Empowerment

Enable local people to decide how PB works in their communities and across the city.

2. Transparency

Share information and make decisions as openly as possible.

3. Inclusion

Make special efforts to engage people who face obstacles to participating, are often excluded, or are disillusioned with politics.

4. Equality

Ensure that every person can have equal power over public spending.

5. Community

Bring people together across traditional lines of division, to work together for the good of the whole community.

Timeline: What happens when?

The PB process involves a series of meetings that feed into the city's annual budget cycle. The 2013-2014 cycle has five main steps, starting in September 2013 and continuing into 2014.



..... Proposing projects



Late September – October 2013

Neighborhood Assemblies


Through community meetings and online methods, the Council Members present information on the budget, and residents brainstorm project ideas and select budget delegates.



Late October 2013 – Early March 2014

Delegate Meetings

Budget delegates meet in committees to transform the community's initial project ideas into full proposals, with support from experts.

 Residents also submit project ideas online.

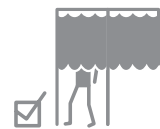
..... Choosing projects



March 2014

Project Expos

Delegates return to the community to present project proposals.



Late March – April 2014

Voting

Delegates present the final project proposals and residents vote on which projects to fund.

..... Implementing projects



April 2014 onward

Evaluation & Monitoring

Delegates and other participants evaluate the process, then oversee the implementation of projects.

Rules: How does it work?

Collect Ideas: Neighborhood Assemblies and Online

- Each district will have at least 7 assemblies, including at least 4 special meetings for underrepresented community members (e.g. youth, non-English speakers).
- Each district will also collect project ideas online, via mail or email forms, at informal meetings, and at public events or spaces.
- Anyone is welcome to propose project ideas.
- People can volunteer to serve as budget delegates if they:
 1. live in the district, work in the district, own a business in the district, attend school in the district, or are parents of children who attend school in the district, **and**
 2. are at least 14 years old.

Delegate Meetings

- All delegates must attend an orientation session and sign a delegate agreement.
- At the delegate orientation sessions, each budget delegate will join a committee, to discuss and develop project proposals for a certain issue area or demographic group.
- Potential issue committees may include but are not limited to:
 1. Transportation
 2. Public Health
 3. Public Safety
 4. Education
 5. Parks, Recreation & Environment
 6. Art & Culture
 7. Housing
- If some delegates feel that they face major obstacles to participating fully in issue committees, they may discuss with the Council Member's office whether to form a demographic committee. Demographic committees are meant to ensure maximum participation from people who might not otherwise participate, not to divide or separate sectors of the community. These committees will develop projects that specifically address the needs of their demographic group.

Potential demographic committees may include but are not limited to:

- Youth
- Committees for non-English speaking communities.
- Delegates may not form geographic committees (committees for only part of their district).
- Districts may establish a limit for how many project proposals each committee will submit for the public vote.
- When prioritizing projects, delegates will consider criteria that include feasibility, need, and benefit.
- Each committee will send its project proposals to the district's Council Member at least three weeks before the public vote.
- Delegates will agree to adhere to campaigning guidelines outlined by the Steering Committee.

Project Expos

- At the Project Expos, budget delegates will present their project proposals to the community through a science fair format.
- Each district will hold at least one Project Expo and post project proposals online.

Voting for Projects

- People can vote for projects if they live in the district and are at least 16 years old.
- At the time of voting, voters must present proof that they satisfy the eligibility requirements. Acceptable IDs are listed on the next page.
- Each voter may cast five votes, one vote per project.
- Each district will have at least six voting locations, including at least two mobile voting tables in places with a high concentration of underrepresented community members.

Each district will also offer weekday voting in the Council Member office and absentee ballots.

- Whenever possible, all voting materials will be made available in the top three languages other than English in each district.
- Each voter can only vote on one occasion.
- If there is a tie for the last bit of funding, the Council Member will decide how to resolve the tie. Options may include attempting to draw on additional funds to implement both proposals or funding the cheaper of the tied projects.
- If the last bit of available funds does not cover the cost of the next highest vote-getting project, Council Member staff will try to find additional funds to implement the project. If this is not possible, the funds will be allocated to the unfunded project with the next most votes.
- To ensure the integrity of the vote, all voting sites will be administered by poll workers that have completed a PBNYC vote training, and all Council Member offices will use a standardized system of voter and ballot tracking.

Evaluation, Implementation & Monitoring

- After the vote, each district will hold at least one evaluation meeting.
- In each district, the District Committee will monitor the implementation of projects and address any problems that arise.
- If an approved project cannot be implemented for some reason, the funds allocated to it are awarded to the unfunded project with the next most votes. If the funds are not enough to cover this project, the Council Member will try to find additional funds to cover the remaining costs. If this project still cannot be funded, the money goes to the next highest vote getter that can be covered by the available funds.

Acceptable IDs for Voter Eligibility

Voters must prove that they live in the district and are 16 years or older. In order to facilitate broad participation, voters may present a wide array of proofs of ID, including but not limited to one or more of those below:

- A document with name and current address from a local, state, or US government agency such as a state driver's license or non-driver ID, consular ID, passport, EBT card, military ID card
- Voter registration card
- Utility, medical, credit card bill with name and current address;
- Current lease
- Paycheck or paycheck stub from an employer or a W-2 statement
- Bank statement or bank-issued credit card statement
- Student ID
- Employee ID
- Permanent Resident Card (Green Card) or other Immigration Documentation
- Residency Letter or Identification issued by a homeless shelter, half-way house, etc
- Passport or other ID issued by a foreign government
- Social Security Card or Social Security benefit statements or check
- Employment Authorization Document
- Medicare or other insurance document with address
- Tax forms
- School records (or naming the parents of children attending school and the parents' address)
- Title to any property (automobiles, house, etc.) with address
- Birth or marriage certificate
- Union Membership Card

Eligible voters may sign an affidavit confirming their age and residency in the district if they are unable to present the required forms of ID.

Roles and Responsibilities: Who does what?

There is a role for everyone in participatory budgeting, but different people have different responsibilities, based on their stake in the community and their time commitment to the process. We encourage everyone to both participate and encourage others to participate.

Community Members

Anyone can participate, even if they only come to one meeting or only vote.

- Identify local problems and needs
- Propose project ideas
- Provide input and feedback on project proposals
- Monitor and provide input on the implementation of projects
- Provide feedback for the PB evaluation
- Volunteer to be budget delegates, if they are at least 14 years old and live in the district, work in the district, own a business in the district, attend school in the district, or are parents of children who attend school in the district
- Vote on project proposals, if they are at least 16 years old and live in the district

Budget Delegates

Budget delegates do the extra work necessary to turn resident ideas into real projects.

- Research local problems, needs, and projects
- Learn about the budget funds and the budget process
- Discuss and prioritize initial project ideas
- Develop full project proposals and posters, with assistance from experts

- Update residents on project proposals and solicit feedback
- Serve as spokespeople for city-wide and local media, when called upon
- Monitor and provide input on the implementation of projects
- Evaluate the PB process
- Communicate delegate concerns and ideas to the District Committee and City-Wide Steering Committee

Facilitators

Facilitators help residents participate effectively in neighborhood assemblies and budget delegate meetings. They are neutral parties that do not advocate for particular projects.

- Facilitate group discussions and meetings, and ensure that all participants are able to contribute
- Serve as the main point of contact between Council Member staff and delegates, helping to coordinate communication and resolve conflicts
- Connect delegates with information and resources
- Ensure that notes are taken at meetings and distributed afterward
- Support delegates in researching, assessing and developing proposals, based on criteria that include feasibility, need and benefit

District Committees

Each participating Council Member convenes a District Committee, composed of local organizations, institutions, community leaders, and former budget delegates, to manage PB locally.

- Determine the number of neighborhood assemblies, and help plan and carry out the assemblies
- Arrange food, childcare, and interpretation for assemblies

and meetings

- Recruit volunteers for outreach, assemblies, and the vote
- Distribute educational and promotional materials about the PB process
- Develop and execute outreach plans to mobilize broad, inclusive, and proportional community participation
- Facilitate budget assemblies and meetings
- Provide guidance and background information to delegates
- Serve as spokespeople for city-wide and local media, when called upon
- Coordinate voting events with Council Member staff
- Monitor project implementation
- Oversee any necessary changes to approved projects, with the Council Member offices
- Communicate with delegates and residents about progress on projects
- Evaluate and revise the rules of the PB process
- Provide orientation to new District Committee members

City-Wide Steering Committee

A Steering Committee coordinates the PB process across the participating districts. See the end of the rulebook for more information about the Steering Committee and a list of members.

- Design and guide PB process
- Attend PB events and meetings in participating districts during each stage of PB
- Provide specialized support for the PB process, including with research, organizing, media, online engagement, social media, policy & budgeting, data visualization, and design
- Promote the PB process through the press, social media,

and other networks, using protocol agreed upon by the Steering Committee

- Help raise support funding
- Create and distribute educational and promotional materials about PB
- Mobilize broad, inclusive, and proportional community participation
- Provide assistance at budget assemblies, delegate meetings, and/or budget delegate orientations
- Evaluate and revise the rules of the PB process
- Encourage PB for other districts and budgets
- Identify and recruit groups to support PB at the city & district level
- Ensure that the district-level PB processes are inclusive and consistent with the core goals of PBNYC
- District Committee representatives on the Steering Committee will also serve as liaisons between the two bodies, communicating decisions, ideas and perspectives

Council Member Offices

- Allow residents of each district to decide how to spend at least \$1 million of City FY2015 discretionary funds, and deliver final budget priorities to the City
- Designate a staff person to coordinate PB in the district, in collaboration with the District Committee
- Participate in the Steering Committee and the local District Committee, and assist with their responsibilities
- Work with the District Committee to coordinate and facilitate outreach to organizations, individuals, and special constituencies
- Provide information on the budget funds and past spending
- Secure spaces – in collaboration with the District Committee and Delegate Committee Facilitators – for assemblies, meetings

and voting events, in accessible and ADA-compliant locations whenever possible

- Provide cost estimates for project proposals
- Offer feedback and technical assistance on project proposals, presentations, and ballot text
- Serve as a liaison between budget delegates and city agencies
- Determine eligibility of projects in collaboration with the city agencies
- Facilitate and oversee online participation by residents
- Coordinate outreach to city-wide and local media
- Serve as spokespeople for city-wide and local media
- Coordinate the public vote, in collaboration with the District Committee
- Oversee any changes to approved projects, with the District Committee
- Deliver regular updates to budget delegates and the public during all stages of the PB process

Project Leads (Community Voices Heard & The Participatory Budgeting Project)

- Co-Chair and participate in the Steering Committee
- Support the District Committees in the implementation of PB locally
- Offer technical assistance and support for each stage of PB, and for community and press outreach
- Facilitate communication and information exchange between the groups involved in PB
- Lead efforts to expand and deepen PBNYC

Research & Evaluation Team

Researchers document and evaluate the PB process.

- Coordinate and monitor research and evaluation of PBNYC
- Observe Assemblies, Expos, Voting Sites, and other meetings to collect data and conduct interviews
- Compile reports and background information on each district, including secondary data on civic engagement and neighborhood demographics
- Develop reports and materials to summarize the evaluation of PB

City Agencies

- Provide budget delegates with relevant background information
- Assess feasibility of project proposals
- Provide cost estimates for project proposals
- Offer feedback on project proposals
- Work with budget delegates to make desired projects feasible within City guidelines
- Implement winning projects

About the City-Wide Steering Committee

The Steering Committee is the governing body for PBNYC. It includes the City Council Members, organizations committed to improving city spaces and governance, and district representatives that ground the process in the participating communities.

Steering Committee Governance

- Co-chairs are selected at the beginning of the PB cycle. Co-chairs set meeting agendas and facilitate meetings.
- Whenever possible, decisions are made by consensus at meetings.
- For changes to the Rulebook or the composition of the Steering Committee, or other issues where there is no consensus, decisions are made by vote. 50% quorum is necessary for a vote to be valid, and a 66% majority is necessary for a vote to pass. Voting may take place at Steering Committee meetings or online.
- Each member organization and Council Member office has one vote, and each district also has two district representative votes.
- At the end of the PB cycle, Steering Committee members nominate and vote on new members to invite.
- Council Members can appoint new District Representatives to the Steering Committee at any point during the PB cycle.

Steering Committee Members 2013-14

Council Members

Sara M. Gonzalez/Carlos Menchaca, District 38	Melissa Mark-Viverito, District 8 Donovan Richards, District 31
David G. Greenfield, District 44	Eric Ulrich, District 32
Brad Lander, District 39	Mark Weprin, District 23
Stephen Levin, District 33	Jumaane D. Williams, District 45

Co-Chairs

Community Voices Heard
www.cvhaction.org

The Participatory Budgeting Project
www.participatorybudgeting.org

Resource Persons and Organizations

Adhikaar	New Immigrant Community
Arts & Democracy Project	Empowerment
BRIC	New York Immigration Coalition
Brooklyn Food Coalition	New York Civic
Center for Urban Pedagogy	The New York World
Chhaya Community Development Corporation	New Yorkers for Parks
Common Cause New York	NYC Community Garden Coalition
Community Development Project at the Urban Justice Center	Permanent Citizens Advisory Committee to the MTA
Community Service Society	Pratt Institute
Desis Rising Up & Moving	Project for Public Spaces
Fifth Avenue Committee	Public Agenda
Flatbush Tenant Coalition	Public Policy Lab
Getting Out Staying Out	Right to the City Alliance
Human Impacts Institute	Transportation Alternatives
The Laundromat Project	596 Acres
Lower East Side Ecology Center	Celina Su, CUNY, Brooklyn College
	Ron Hayduk, CUNY Queens College

District Representatives

David Giordiano, Children's Aid Society, District 8	Leah Hebert, District 38
Frank Toner, District 23	Mamnunul Haq, District 39
Patricia Kehoe, District 23	Rachel Fine, District 39
John Cori, District 32	Matt Green, District 39
Reverend Eleni Marudis, District 32	Joan Bakiriddin, District 45
Benjamin Solotaire, District 33	Hazel Martinez, District 45



To find out more:

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