



Rulebook 2014-15

About this Rulebook

This booklet was developed by the Steering Committee for participatory budgeting in Boston in November 2014. While participatory budgeting is inspired by experiences elsewhere, the Steering Committee created these guidelines and rules to reflect the unique needs, issues, and interests of Boston and its youth.

This rulebook is only a starting point, and it remains a work in progress. We will continue to develop and improve the process as it unfolds in future years.

Introduction

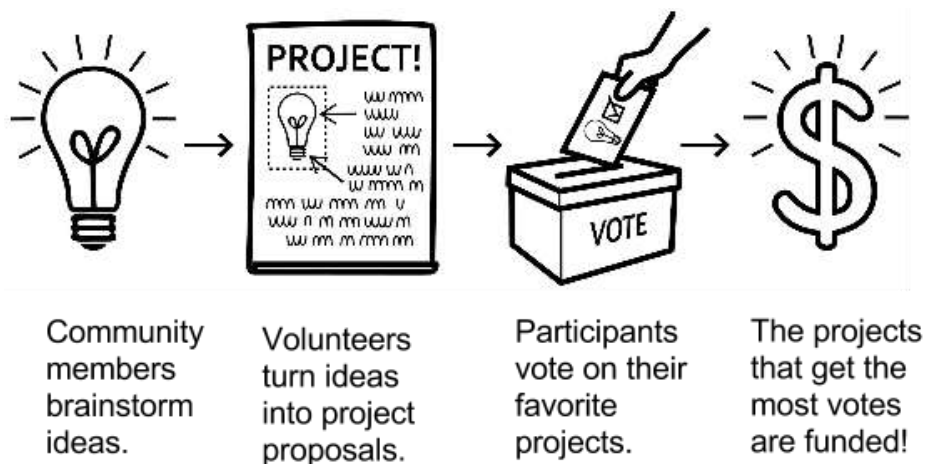
To be prepared by Mayor Walsh

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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. It's a tool to empower everyone to make decisions about how our city's money should be spent. The process was first developed in Brazil in 1989, and there are now over 1,500 participatory budgets around the world, most at the city level.



Youth Lead the Change: Participatory Budgeting Boston

2014-15 marks the second year of Youth Lead the Change: Participatory Budgeting Boston - a process designed for youth and by youth - to democratically allocate* \$1 million in capital projects to make our city a better place to live. Participatory Budgeting (PB) has been used in major cities such as Chicago and NYC since 2009, but Boston is the first city in the United States to try PB just for youth!

Young people from across the city will be asked to come up with ideas for capital projects* that will bring long-term physical improvements to our parks, streets, schools, and neighborhoods. Then youth volunteers, called Change Agents*, will be responsible for reviewing the ideas and turning them into actual proposals. Once the proposals are developed, young people from Boston will vote on their top priorities for funding.

Participatory Budgeting was first announced in 2013 by former Mayor Thomas Menino, and is now being championed by Boston Mayor Marty Walsh. Youth Lead the Change represents an important project for the City, increasing youth civic engagement and making Boston a stronger city for all. Youth Lead the Change gives youth real power, over real money to fund real projects for their communities.

Goals: Why are we doing this?

Increase Youth Power

Engage youth in meaningful decision-making and prove that young people are the solution, not the problem.

Allow All Voices to Be Heard

Include all community stakeholders in the democratic process.

Build Stronger, Safer, and Healthier Communities

Bring neighborhoods together, solve community problems, and develop projects that will improve the well-being of all members of the community.

Strengthen City-wide Sense of Pride, Solidarity, and Equality

Create a unified Boston across neighborhoods where everyone feels part of a growing community.

Make a Pathway into Civic Life

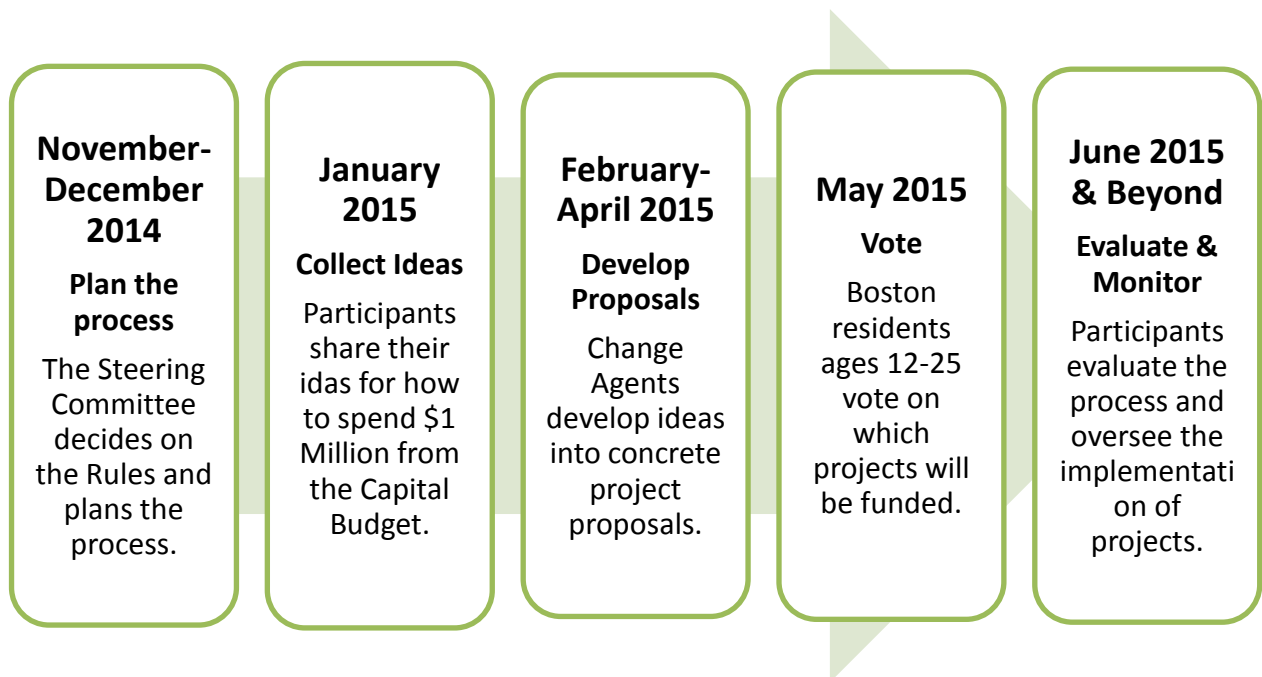
Create an entry point for young people to become civically engaged* and learn about the city and government.

Principles: How do we work?

Inclusion
YouthPower
Courage
Transparency
Solidarity
Respect
Equality
Innovation
Boldness

Timeline: What happens when?

Youth Lead the Change involves a series of meetings and events that feed into the city's budget cycle. The 2014-15 process has five main steps, starting in November 2014 and concluding in June 2015.



Rules: How does it work?

What types of projects can be funded?

Capital funds* in the City of Boston can be used for improvements to City-owned property like community centers, schools, parks, libraries, and other public spaces. Capital funds can only be used for physical infrastructure* projects that benefit the public, cost at least \$25,000, and have a lifespan of at least 5 years (though the minimum lifespan may be longer for certain types of projects). Projects such as creating after-school programs or hiring more city staff (like firefighters, police, and teachers) are *not* capital projects, so they will not be eligible.

Through Youth Lead the Change, you can make improvements to your community, such as:

- Buying new **computer hardware and software** for your school or library.
- Renovating and repairing the **public buildings, parks, basketball courts, and swimming pools** that you use every day.
- Installing **street lights, bike lanes, traffic signals**, and other equipment that keeps your streets safe.
- **Planting trees** on City sidewalks to bring more nature and shade to your neighborhood.
- Reconstructing or resurfacing **sidewalks and public roads**, so you don't have to worry about twisting your ankle or popping a tire!

Collecting Ideas

- Anyone is welcome to propose project ideas, no matter how old they are or where they live.
- There will be public events to collect ideas throughout the city, plus smaller "Pop-up" discussions in classes, after-school programs, clubs and public spaces like T stops, malls and supermarkets. People will also be able to submit ideas online, through social media and via text message.
- Translation and interpretation will be provided as often as possible to ensure that everyone can participate. There will also be meetings and outreach for youth who face other barriers to participating.

Developing Proposals

- Volunteers called Change Agents* are responsible for turning ideas into projects for the public vote. You can volunteer to be a Change Agent if you:
 - are between the ages of 12 and 25;
 - *and* live, attend school, work, or volunteer in Boston or are part of a program or organization in Boston.
- Change Agents will be trained at orientation sessions, where they will each join a thematic committee to develop project proposals for issues such as: Education, Parks & Recreation, Environment, and Public Safety. Committees will be guided by trained facilitators*.
- Change Agents committees will meet weekly after school during February through May and should expect to dedicate 10-15 hours each month.
- Before the proposal development phase, the Steering Committee will develop and announce the criteria that Change Agents will use to evaluate project ideas. Some considerations will include feasibility, community need, and community impact.



These are some sample capital project ideas from New York. They aim to improve community gardens and make playgrounds more accessible.

Voting

- You are eligible to vote if you are:
 - between the ages of 12 and 25;
 - *and* a resident of the City of Boston.
- Each voter can only vote once.
- Voting will be held primarily at schools and public assemblies over several days. Voting will also be held at voting stations in public places, and through digital ballots.
- To educate the broader youth population about the project proposals on the ballot, events such as science-fair style project expos will be held before or during the voting period. The project proposals will also be posted online.
- After the vote, the winning projects will be submitted to the Office of the Mayor for final approval and inclusion in the City budget. The results will be widely publicized and celebrated as soon as possible.

Evaluation, Implementation, and Monitoring

- After the vote, Change Agents, Steering Committee members and other participants will meet to evaluate the process and identify ways to improve it.
- Steering Committee members will monitor the implementation of projects and address any problems that arise.
- The City of Boston, Steering Committee and Change Agents will publicize and celebrate the completion of any winning projects



Roles & Responsibilities: Who does what?

Boston Youth	Brainstorm project ideas at public meetings and online, volunteer to become Change Agents to develop ideas into proposals, and vote on projects on the final ballot.
Change Agents	Take the ideas brainstormed and meet in committees to develop project proposals.
Steering Committee	Design the PB process, make key decisions about PB operations, help spread the word about PB, and monitor the implementation of funded projects.
Steering Committee Co-Chairs	Help with facilitation of Steering Committee meetings, review materials, and promote the PB process.
The Participatory Budgeting Project (PBP)	Provides expertise to the Steering Committee, the City of Boston and PB participants based on knowledge of other PB processes around the world.
PB Oversight Committee	Appoints the Steering Committee, helps with outreach and event planning, provides background information for participants and connections to relevant City agency staff, and oversees the work of the Participatory Budgeting Project.
City Departments, Staff and Experts	Give feedback on project eligibility and cost, and support Change Agents in developing strong, feasible proposals.

About the Steering Committee

The Steering Committee is the governing body for the Youth Lead the Change participatory budgeting process. It includes organizations and schools committed to youth empowerment, and resource organizations that bring in expertise.

Steering Committee Governance

- Co-Chairs are selected at the beginning of the PB cycle. Co-Chairs help set meeting agendas and facilitate meetings.
- Whenever possible, Steering Committee decisions are made by consensus at in-person meetings, according to this process:
 - introduce an issue and possible answers, after it is discussed by a workgroup
 - take a straw poll
 - discuss for a limited amount of time
 - reach a decision
- Where there is no consensus, decisions are made by simple majority vote (51%). At least half of the Steering Committee members must be in attendance (50% quorum*) for a vote to be valid. Voting can take place at Steering Committee meetings or online.
- Each member organization has one vote.
- The Steering Committee has 4 work-groups:
 - **Event Planning:** Focus on setting meeting locations and determining logistics.
 - **Outreach & Communications:** focus on face-to-face outreach, social media, on-line media and other engagement strategies
 - **Nuts & Bolts:** monitor implementation of projects. Focus on answering questions about how PB works during the key stages: idea collection, proposal development, and voting
 - **Fun:** make sure the PB process is fun and engaging

Steering Committee Members

To be populated once members submit member agreements

Youth Organizations

Resource Organizations

About the City of Boston Oversight Committee

This Oversight Committee is made up of City staff overseeing the project. Duties of the oversight committee include appointing the Steering Committee, helping with outreach and event planning, providing background information for participants, connecting participants to relevant City agency staff, and overseeing the work of the Participatory Budgeting Project.

The oversight committee is made up of:

Shari Davis

Executive Director, Boston Youth Fund

Director, Mayor's Youthline & Mayor's Youth Council

Francesco Tena

Manager, Mayor's Youth Council

Nelli Ruotsalainen

Communications Specialist, Youth Lead the Change

Chris Byner

Director, Boston Centers for Youth & Families

Abi Vladeck

Special Assistant, Capital Planning

Chris Osgood, Patricia Boyle-McKenna & Nigel Jacob

Mayor's Office of New Urban Mechanics

*Glossary of Terms

*Allocate

to distribute funds for a specific reason.

*Boldness

showing confidence and lack of fear.

*Capital budget

funds used in the City of Boston to build or improve city-owned schools, streets, parks, libraries, community centers and other public spaces. Capital funds can only be used for physical infrastructure projects that will last a long time and benefit the public. For example, repairing a basketball court in a public park would be a capital project. However, repairing a basketball court in your backyard would not be a capital project because it would not benefit the public. Similarly, paying for staff and referees to run a basketball league would not be a capital project because it would not be an improvement to physical infrastructure.

*Change Agents

volunteers who turn ideas into project proposals for the vote.

*Civic engagement

working together to make a difference our communities

*Courage

having the strength to do something difficult.

*Equality

being equal in rights, status, and opportunity.

*Facilitator

someone who helps a group of people understand their common objectives and achieve them, without taking a particular position in the discussion.

***Inclusion**

the act of including something, someone, or a group of people; making sure that everyone's voice is heard.

***Innovation**

the act of introducing new ideas, tools, or methods.

***Infrastructure**

the basic equipment and structures (such as roads, school buildings, parks) that are needed for a city to function.

***Participatory budgeting (PB)**

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

***Quorum**

the number of members required to be present in order to make official decisions.

***Respect**

a feeling or understanding that someone or something is important, and should be treated in an appropriate way.

***Solidarity**

unity among individuals with a common interest.

***Transparency**

openness and honesty about the way decisions are made.

***Youth Power**

young people having control over important decisions that affect their lives.

