

# Youth Voice, Youth Choice

## 2015-2016 Rulebook



Brought to you by the Seattle Department of Neighborhoods in partnership with the Participatory Budgeting Project



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*Steering Committee during the "Writing the Rules" workshop*



## Letter from the Mayor

At the City of Seattle, we all work to improve the lives of residents through innovative, creative, and equitable programs. These guiding principles are why we have committed \$700,000 of the 2016 budget to Youth Voice, Youth Choice, the first Participatory Budgeting Initiative in Seattle's history. This program gives our youth a voice on how the City should spend a portion of the City's budget, creating more equitable and lasting outcomes within their communities.

We want as many young people as possible to participate in City government. Participatory budgeting is a growing national idea, broadening the conversation by engaging youth, many for the first time, in government and the democratic process. Participatory Budgeting brings more people to the table on how City dollars are spent. The more young people involved, the more inclusive and powerful the results will be. Please join us in Youth Voice, Youth Choice for this historic initiative in the City of Seattle.

Sincerely,

Mayor Ed Murray



*Seattle Youth participating in a public Idea Assembly to gather project ideas*



## About this Rulebook

This booklet was developed in December 2015 by the Steering Committee for Participatory Budgeting (PB) in Seattle. While participatory budgeting is inspired by experiences elsewhere, the Steering Committee created these guidelines to reflect the unique needs, issues, and interests of young people in our city.

This rulebook is only a starting point, and it is intended to remain a work in progress. We expect to continue developing and improving the PB process as it unfolds, together with PB participants.

## What is Participatory Budgeting (PB)?

PB is a democratic process that was first developed in Brazil in 1989 and is now practiced in over 3,000 cities around the world. In these cities, PB lets community members directly decide how to spend part of a public budget.

## PB in Seattle

In January through March of 2015, public meetings were held to explore interest in bringing PB to Seattle. In July, Seattle Mayor Ed Murray and Councilmember Nick Licata announced the launch of a citywide youth PB process to take place with \$700,000 of city funds. The PB process is being run by the Seattle Department of Neighborhoods (DON) and involves four steps: first, young people will come up with ideas for public projects they would like to see in their communities; second, volunteers will turn those ideas into concrete proposals with support from the Department of Neighborhoods and appropriate City staff; third, Seattle youth will be invited to vote on the final list of projects; fourth, the winning projects will be funded and implemented by the City of Seattle and other local agencies as appropriate.

## Goals: What is this for?

We hope to accomplish these main goals through PB in Seattle:

- *Build youth skills and knowledge to create new leaders*

We aim to empower young people with the tools they need to reach their potential and shape the future of our city.

- *Give youth a meaningful and lasting voice in city government*

We aim to increase civic engagement by young people, while creating a new platform for them to collaborate with government and develop solutions to the challenges facing our city.

- *Fund projects that create equity in our city*

Through PB, we aim to address the deepest needs in our communities and ensure City resources go where they will have the greatest impact.

- *Forge a more inclusive democracy*

We aim to engage those who are typically excluded from decision-making, building bridges among diverse communities and creating a new model for how to govern in our city.

We ask everyone involved to work with us to achieve these goals.

## Project Eligibility

Projects are eligible for funding if they meet the following criteria:

- Benefit the public. Projects that only benefit private individuals or groups are not eligible.
- Are one-time expenditures that can be completed with funds from this year's PB process.
- Cost more than \$25,000 and less than \$300,000.

Projects funded through PB may be implemented by Seattle city departments, other public agencies that operate in the city, or by non-profits organizations.

## Timeline: What happens when?

The PB process involves a series of meetings that feed into the City's annual budget cycle. The 2015-2016 cycle has four main steps (plus evaluation), starting in November 2015 and continuing into mid-2016.



## Rules: How does it work?

### Idea Collection

- Young people learn about PB, discuss community needs, and brainstorm ideas for projects to fund at large public assemblies that will take place around the city, as well as at smaller events targeted for traditionally underrepresented youth. At these events, young people will also sign up to serve as budget delegates for the next stage of the process.
- People will also be able to submit project ideas online, via social media, and at outreach events in schools, community gatherings, and other public places.
- Anyone is welcome to attend the assemblies and propose project ideas, regardless of age.

### Proposal Development

Participants can volunteer to serve as budget delegates if they:

1. Are between the ages of 11 and 25 years old, and
  2. Live, work, go to school, receive services, volunteer, or are part of a program in the City of Seattle.
- All budget delegates must attend a delegate orientation session.
  - At the delegate orientation sessions, each delegate will join a committee to discuss and develop project proposals for a certain issue area or constituency.
  - Issue-based committees may include but are not limited to: Arts & Culture, Education, Health & Safety, Parks & Recreation, Environment, and Community Services.
  - Constituency-based committees may also be created to ensure maximum participation from youth who might not otherwise participate, such as homeless youth and youth in foster care.

### Voting for Projects

People are eligible to vote for projects if they:

1. Are between the ages of 11 and 25 years old, and
  2. Live, work, go to school, receive services, volunteer, or are part of a program in the City of Seattle.
- Voting will take place on multiple days, locations, and formats, which may include schools, community centers, and digital/online voting.
  - Each voter may only vote once.

### Evaluation and Monitoring of Funded Projects

After the vote, the Steering Committee and PB participants will meet to evaluate the first cycle of PB and decide on ways to improve it for next year. Over the following months, Steering Committee members and PB participants will have the opportunity to monitor the implementation of funded projects.

## Roles & Responsibilities: Who does what?

There is a role for everyone in PB, but different people have different responsibilities, based on their stake in the community and their time commitment to the process.

### Seattle Youth

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

- Identify local problems and needs
- Propose project ideas
- Volunteer to be budget delegates, if they are between the ages of 11 and 25 and live, work, go to school, receive services, volunteer, or are part of a program in Seattle
- Vote on which projects to fund, if they are between the ages of 11 and 25 and live, work, go to school, receive services, volunteer, or are part of a program in Seattle

### Budget Delegates

Budget delegates do the work necessary to turn ideas into real projects. Delegates must be between the ages of 11 and 25 and live, work, go to school, receive services, volunteer, or be part of a program in Seattle.

- Research local problems, needs, and project ideas
- Learn about the City budget and the budget process
- Discuss and prioritize initial project ideas
- Develop full project proposals, with assistance from City staff
- Evaluate the PB process

### Facilitators

Facilitators help youth and adults participate effectively in PB 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 DON 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

### Steering Committee

The PB Steering Committee is composed of youth and adults from youth-serving organizations and other community groups. This committee oversees PB in Seattle.

- Design and guide PB process
- Help plan and carry out idea collection efforts

- Recruit volunteers for outreach, assemblies, and the vote
- Distribute educational and promotional materials about PB
- Develop and execute outreach plans to mobilize broad, inclusive, and representative community participation
- Serve as facilitators for assemblies and budget delegate committees
- Serve as spokespeople for city-wide and local media
- Monitor project implementation
- Evaluate and revise the rules of the PB process

### **Seattle Department of Neighborhoods**

- Administer the PB process for the City of Seattle
- Facilitate communication and information exchange between the groups involved in PB
- Collaborate with the Steering Committee to plan and implement outreach, PB events, and the PB vote.
- Plan and facilitate Steering Committee meetings, along with Steering Committee co-chairs
- Work with the Steering Committee to coordinate outreach to organizations, individuals, and special constituencies
- Provide information on budget funds and past spending
- Provide cost estimates for project proposals
- Offer feedback and technical assistance on project proposals, expo displays, and ballot text
- Serve as a liaison between budget delegates and city departments
- Determine eligibility of projects in collaboration with City agencies
- Facilitate and oversee digital participation platforms
- 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 Steering Committee
- Oversee any changes to approved projects, with the Steering Committee
- Deliver regular updates to the public during all stages of the PB process

### **City Departments & 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



## Participatory Budgeting Project

- Facilitate participatory workshop for the PB Steering Committee to write the rules of the process
- Develop materials for key stages of the PB process
- Provide ongoing technical assistance to Department of Neighborhoods and lessons learned from PB around the US and internationally

## Research & Evaluation Team

Researchers document and evaluate the PB process.

- Collect and analyze participant data throughout the PB process
- Observe assemblies, delegate meetings, voting sites, and other PB events to collect data
- Develop evaluation report on the first year of PB in Seattle

## Seattle Adults

Adults in the general public can contribute to this process by:

- Brainstorming projects in the idea collection phase. People of any age can contribute an idea.
- Helping with outreach to youth during the PB process
- Volunteering for activities to help the PB process, such as logistics for Idea Assemblies, data entry of voting results, and others identified along the way by the Steering Committee and Department of Neighborhoods staff.

*Seattle youth and facilitators at a public Idea Assembly*



## About the PB Steering Committee

The PB Steering Committee includes individuals from the following organizations:

- 206 Forward - Youth Advocates of Seattle
- All Girl Everything Ultimate Program / Southend Ultimate
- City Neighborhood Council
- El Centro de la Raza
- FareStart
- InterIm Community Development Association - Wilderness Inner-City Leadership Development (WILD) Program
- Multimedia Resources and Training Institute (MMRTI)
- New Horizons
- OneAmerica
- Peace for the Streets by Kids from the Streets
- Red Eagle Soaring
- Sand Point Arts and Cultural Exchange (SPACE)
- SOAR: Building Effective Partnerships for Children, Youth, and Families
- The Breakfast Group
- The Washington Bus
- Year Up
- YTech/PugetSoundOff.org (part of Metrocenter YMCA)
- Seattle Youth Commission

## About Seattle Department of Neighborhoods

The Seattle Department of Neighborhoods provides resources and opportunities for community members to build strong communities and improve their quality of life. With more than 180 neighborhoods in the city, we meet people where they are and play a key role in helping neighbors develop a stronger sense of place, build closer ties, and engage with their communities and city government.

The department is divided into four divisions:

- Leadership Development
- Community Investments
- Community Assets
- Outreach & Engagement

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