

# PARTICIPATORY BUDGETING PROJECT



2016-17  
Annual Report

# Our Mission

Participatory Budgeting Project (PBP) is a nonprofit organization that empowers people to decide together how to spend public money. We create and support participatory budgeting (PB) processes that build stronger communities, make public budgets more equitable and effective, and deepen democracy.



This is a tough time be working on budgets and democracy. Governments are considering massive cuts for programs that are critical for communities. People are tired of politics as usual, tired of their voices not being heard. We have a big problem: Our democracy is not working.

At PBP, we have a big solution: Share real power over real money. We the people can do more than elect our leaders - we should also have the power to directly decide what government does. Thousands of people across North America are already turning this vision into reality, taking budgets into their own hands and building civic power with participatory budgeting.

PB gives communities new opportunities to learn together, work together, and grow together. It lifts up the voices of young people, women, people of color, low-income residents, and others who are often not prioritized by government. When we give people control over their public money we learn what they need, and we invest in our democracy.

PBP is the first and only nonprofit dedicated to growing PB across North America. Since I founded the organization in 2009, we have supported 174 PB processes in dozens of cities, empowering 300,000 people to decide how to spend \$240 million.

This past year was busy, as we worked to build a responsive, equitable, and people-powered democracy:

**We expanded PB across North America.** We supported PB processes in 24 cities, and launched the first PB processes for a school district (in Phoenix, AZ) and for federal funds (Community Development Block Grants in Oakland, CA).

**We built new tools for democracy.** The quality of PB processes is just as important as quantity. We developed a library of tools and resources to make PB better, including an outreach guide, curriculum for PB in schools, an implementation manual, and the white paper *Next Generation Democracy*.

**We supported movements for social change.** We partnered with national and international organizations working for racial justice, healthy communities, and youth voice, helping them use PB to build power and democracy.

After a year of growth, now is the time to take this work to the next level. PB is no longer an experiment. We know that it works. It should be a core part of every government - in schools, universities, public housing, cities, states, and federal agencies.

With your support, this future is possible. Together, we can build a more participatory and inclusive democracy.

Thank you for joining us!

A handwritten signature in black ink, reading "Josh Lerner". The signature is written in a cursive style and is positioned above the printed name and title.

Josh Lerner  
Executive Director & Co-Founder

# What is Participatory Budgeting?

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

The city of Porto Alegre, Brazil started the first full PB process in 1989. Since then, PB has spread to over 3,000 cities around the world, and has been used by counties, states, housing authorities, schools, universities, and other institutions. PBP launched the first PB process in the US in 2009.

PB involves an annual cycle of public meetings and voting, integrated into the broader budget decision-making process. Each community adapts PB to its needs, but it generally follows these steps:

## Design *the process*

A steering committee, representative of the community, creates the rules in partnership with government officials to ensure the process is inclusive and meets local needs.

## Brainstorm *ideas*

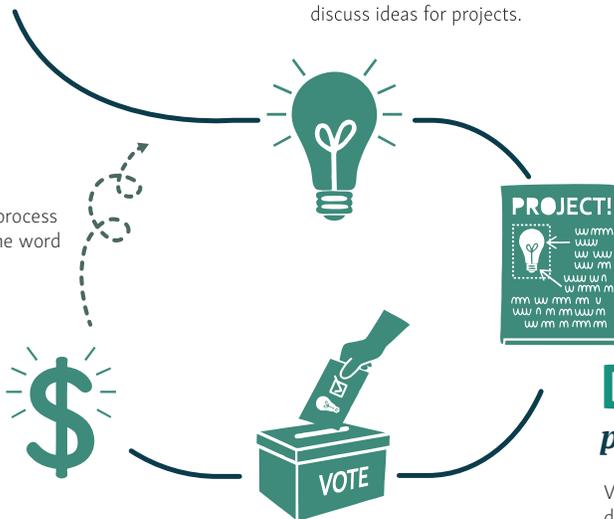
Through meetings and online tools, residents share and discuss ideas for projects.



**PB is the world's longest running, most widespread innovation in participatory democracy**



Improve the process and spread the word for next year!



## Fund *winning projects*

The government implements the winning projects, such as laptops in schools, Wi-Fi in public parks, or traffic safety improvements. The government and residents track and monitor implementation.

## Vote

Residents vote to divide the available budget between the proposals. It's a direct, democratic voice in their community's future.

## Develop *proposals*

Volunteers, usually called budget delegates, develop the ideas into feasible proposals, which are then vetted by experts.

# Our Work

## NETWORK BUILDING



We bring together diverse practitioners and organizers to help PB grow.

### 4th International Conference on PB in North America

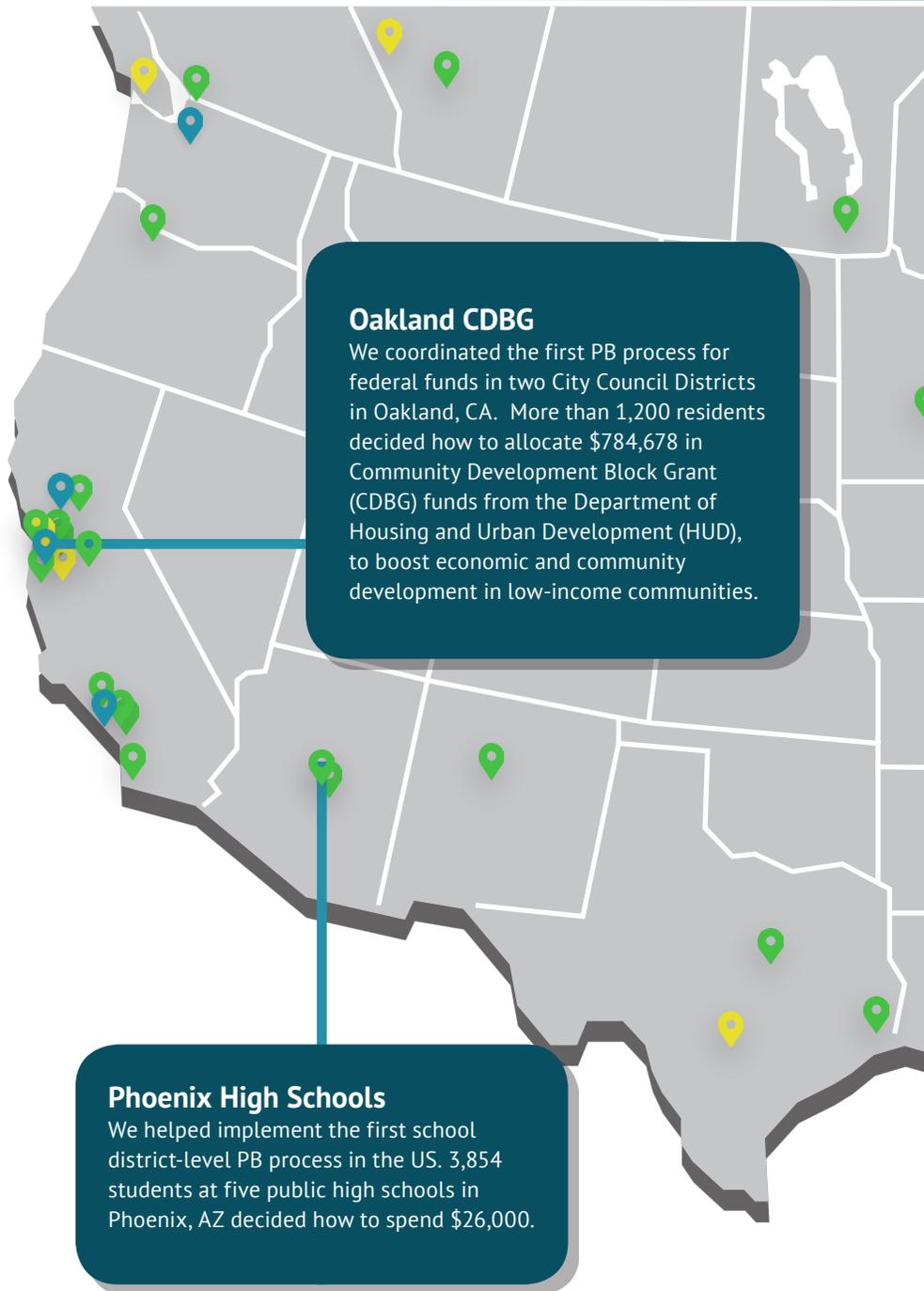
In May 2016 at the Harvard Kennedy School and community sites around Boston, we brought together more than 235 PB practitioners, organizers, researchers, technologists, and officials from around the world to discuss best practices and build new relationships.

### North American PB Network

We launched a peer-to-peer learning and collaboration network of North American cities and institutions implementing PB.

### Partnering for Social Change

We helped over a dozen national and international organizations to use PB to support their work.



### Oakland CDBG

We coordinated the first PB process for federal funds in two City Council Districts in Oakland, CA. More than 1,200 residents decided how to allocate \$784,678 in Community Development Block Grant (CDBG) funds from the Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD), to boost economic and community development in low-income communities.

### Phoenix High Schools

We helped implement the first school district-level PB process in the US. 3,854 students at five public high schools in Phoenix, AZ decided how to spend \$26,000.

### PBP's WORK:



Inspiring PB



Supporting PB Organizing



Supporting PB Implementaion

## TECHNICAL ASSISTANCE & TRAINING



We help governments, institutions, and organizations implement PB processes and campaigns.

## PARTICIPATION LAB



We research and develop new tools and practices to make PB and democracy work better.

### PB in Schools Guide

Features 18 lessons and six worksheets to help jump-start PB processes, and has been accessed by over 650 people.

### Outreach Toolkit

A guide for organizers and city staff on how to make PB more equitable and reflective of community needs.

### White Paper: Next Generation Democracy

An introduction for elected officials on how to use PB for innovative, effective, and fair leadership. Has been distributed to over 1,250 advocates and leaders.

### PB Implementation Manual

A how-to guide that includes more than 50 tools, templates, and best practices.

For additional tools visit [participatorybudgeting.org/resources](http://participatorybudgeting.org/resources)

### PB NYC

Since 2011, we have provided technical assistance for PB NYC, the largest PB process in the US. In the 2016-17 cycle, more than 102,000 residents in 31 City Council districts decided how to spend over \$40 million.

### Advocacy for PB in the South

Thanks to funding from the Fund for Democratic Communities, PBP is supporting PB advocacy efforts in over a dozen cities in the Southern US. We are training local leaders to organize for PB, and assisting policy-makers interested in using PB as a tool for community power.

# Impacts

This year we expanded PB to a record number of cities, people, and dollars. We also deepened PB's impacts on individuals, communities, and governments.

101,000

People engaged in democracy

↑ 38%  
from 2015  
to 2016

\$51.86

Million invested in communities

↑ 27%  
from 2015  
to 2016

↑ 33%  
from 2015  
to 2016

60

PB Processes

## Broader Participation

"According to a new report from Public Agenda, it's working: In most communities' PB voter demographic surveys, residents from lower-income communities were over-represented or represented on par with census data. In nearly all communities, black voters were over-represented or on par with census data. On gender, 62 percent of surveyed PB voters overall were women. Also... all jurisdictions allowed residents and resident business owners to vote in PB regardless of citizenship status."

- Oscar Abello, "Participatory Budgeting Reaches Historically Disenfranchised Neighbors," Next City





**Growing Support**  
Major national and international organizations promoted PB as a model for equity, health, resilience, and good government:



Robert Wood Johnson Foundation



**Civic Education**

**“If there are any schools or districts across the country that are thinking about doing school PB, in our opinion it’s a no-brainer. If our job is to create great citizens, how better than to have them act as citizens?”**

- Dr. Chad Gestson, Superintendent, Phoenix Union High School District



**Policy Reforms**  
Years of ad-hoc PB proposals to renovate bathrooms and install air conditioning in New York City schools sparked city-wide campaigns to increase funding for these neglected needs. The bottom-up campaigns led to city-wide policy changes, directing \$180 million in additional city funding to school bathrooms and air conditioning!



**184**  
Projects Funded

**Innovative Projects**  
**Mobile homeless showers:** This year, PBNYC participants voted to allocate \$60,000 to funding the city’s first mobile shower stations. The cleaning service will be located outside of a Brooklyn soup kitchen, allowing 150-200 daily guests to wash before receiving their meals.

# Team

In 2016, PBP expanded to meet the growing demand for PB across North America. We welcomed **nine new staff**, launched a **new website**, and expanded into a new **Brooklyn office**. Our team includes talented and passionate people in New York (our main office), Oakland, Chicago, Greensboro, and Madison, who are proud to be transforming democracy every day.



## Staff

### NEW YORK

Josh Lerner, Executive Director  
Jennifer Godzeno, Deputy Director  
David Beasley, Communications Director  
Melissa Appleton, East Coast Project Manager  
Lize Mogel, Development Manager  
Hadassah Damien, Manager of Engagement Technology  
Naiyma Holmes, Operations Manager  
Harvir Kaur, Individual Giving Coordinator  
Rossanna Mercedes, Volunteer Coordinator  
Lila Barrett, Development & Communications Associate  
Giselle Blanco-Santana, Executive Assistant

### OAKLAND

Shari Davis, Director of Strategic Initiatives  
Ginny Browne, West Coast Project Manager  
Roselyn Berry, Community Engagement Coordinator  
Solaire Spellen, Program Associate  
Ashley Brennan, Program Associate

### FIELD STAFF

Maria Hadden, Midwest and South Project Manager - Chicago, IL  
Valerie Warren, Community Engagement Coordinator - Greensboro, NC  
Jake Carlson, Research Fellow - Madison, WI

## Board of Directors

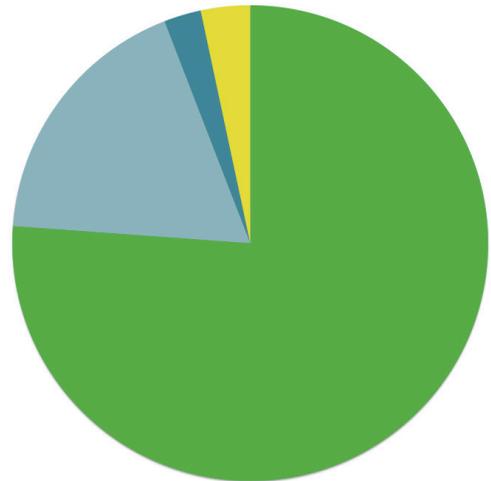
Michael Menser (Chair), Brooklyn College, City University of New York - New York City, NY  
Vishal Gujadhur (Treasurer), Bill & Melinda Gates Foundation - Washington, DC  
Alina Chatterjee (Secretary), Scadding Court Community Centre - Toronto, CA  
Silaka Cox, Rockaway Youth Task Force - New York City, NY  
Biola Jeje, American Postal Workers - Washington, DC  
Joey Lake, ZEISS - Vallejo, CA  
Joe Moore, Chicago City Council - Chicago, IL  
Christopher Wilson, The Bement School - Deerfield, MA



# Finances\*

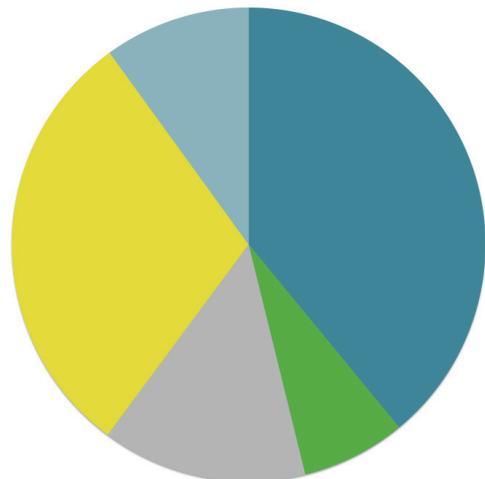
## 2016 Revenues | \$1,345,000

● Foundation Grants	\$1,025,000	77%
● Contracts	\$242,000	18%
● Events, Trainings, & Other	\$45,000	3%
● Individual Giving	\$34,000	2%



## 2016 Expenses | \$1,211,000

● Technical Assistance	\$477,000	39%
● Participation Lab	\$87,000	7%
● Network Building	\$171,000	14%
● Management & General	\$365,000	30%
● Development	\$122,000	10%



\*unaudited

# Our Supporters

## FOUNDATIONS

Democracy Fund  
The California Endowment  
The James Irvine Foundation  
Rita Allen Foundation  
State Infrastructure Fund  
New York Women's Foundation  
New York Foundation  
The JPB Foundation  
Fund for Democratic Communities  
Robert Wood Johnson Foundation  
Akonadi Foundation  
McCormick Foundation\*  
Z. Smith Reynolds Foundation\*  
Annie E. Casey Foundation  
Lily Auchincloss Foundation  
Crown Family Philanthropies\*

*\*=support received through partner organization*

## GOVERNMENT

City of Boston  
City of Cambridge  
City of Dieppe  
City of Greensboro  
City of Seattle  
City of Vallejo  
City of Victoria  
City University of New York  
New York City Council  
New York City Council Member Ben Kallos  
New York City Council Member Brad Lander  
New York City Council Member Mark Levine  
New York City Council Member Carlos Menchaca  
New York City Council Member Deborah Rose  
New York City Council Member Ritchie Torres  
Phoenix Union High School District

## INSTITUTIONS

Harvard University - Ash Center for Democratic Governance  
Davenport Institute for Public Engagement and Civic Leadership  
Swedish Association of Local Authorities  
CARTO



## DONORS DECIDE: PB<sup>2</sup>

PBP practices what we preach. Each year, in a PB process we call “PB squared”, we invite all of our donors to decide how a portion of their donations is spent.

We start by asking for ideas on how to improve and expand PB. Our PB Amplifiers supporter board develops the ideas into projects, in consultation with PBP staff. Our donors then vote for their top projects, and we implement the projects with the most votes.

### 2016 Winning Projects

**PB in Schools Video** | \$10,000 | 3-5 minute video on how schools can use PB to engage students and the school community in deciding how to spend part of the school budget.

**Data for Delegates** | \$8,000 | An online civic data and research resource, to be used by PB budget delegates, who play a key role in determining what projects best meet community needs.

### 2015 Winning Projects

Outreach Toolkit for Community Organizing in PB

Guide to PB in Schools

Online Tools for Asking Local Officials to Launch PB



At our 2016 NYC benefit we honored the New York Women's Foundation, the Fortune Society, and Joan Bakiriddin





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Boston City staff and youth leaders coordinate their city-wide youth PB process.