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Dear Community,

Great pride and humility bubble up inside me as I write this note in my new role as Executive Director of the Participatory Budgeting Project (PBP). 2019 marked a monumental year for PBP. Organizationally, we turned 10 years old and successfully transitioned our leadership to a national Black-led organization committed to equity.

I am filled with deep gratitude for the support thus far for this shift and the work that I know is to come to grow our work while we dismantle oppressive systems. It will be hard, and it will require us to evaluate and re-evaluate how we show up in our work to advance equity across the country.

Participatory budgeting (PB) in North America is in a vastly different place than it was just one decade ago. In the last year alone, we launched a national campaign called Democracy Beyond Elections to expand participatory democracy, disseminated new digital PB tools to hundreds of policymakers and community leaders, and empowered young leaders across the country to shape their reality by launching PB in schools in over a dozen cities and towns.

As we plan for the next iteration of our work, building community control over public budgets has never felt more urgent. A global pandemic coupled with nationwide movement demanding justice for Black lives has shed a new light on a real reality: our most impacted communities are under-resourced and overpoliced. People across the country are leaning into conversations and demands in ways that will have lasting implications for decades to come.

This moment marks a turning point for our country and PBP to recommit to who and what we stand for. We commit to demanding real community power over the budgets, policies, and decisions that impact their lives.

We commit to being in service of our partners on the ground by creating explicit pathways to learn and co-craft our strategies alongside them.

We commit to PB as a tool to reach communities most impacted by the issues to decide where resources should go, identify solutions, and implement change.

Reimagining what’s possible is one important step to moving to real community control - and it won’t be easy. It will require all of us to play our role. We thank our hardworking staff, board members, donors, and supporters like you who have consistently shown up for us over the years.

We can’t wait to continue building with you all.

Elevate,

SHARI DAVIS
Executive Director
**OUR MISSION**

We empower people to decide together how to spend public money. We create and support participatory budgeting (PB) processes that deepen democracy, build stronger communities, and make public budgets more equitable and effective.

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**OUR WORK**

**TECHNICAL ASSISTANCE**

We provide direct support to PB processes in order to grow and improve PB. We train governments, schools, organizations, and residents, empowering them to implement high-impact processes.

**PARTICIPATION LAB**

We develop and test innovative strategies, design solutions, and civic engagement tools that make PB easier and more effective.

**NETWORK BUILDING**

We build relationships with government officials and staff, organizers, and researchers to increase demand and support for PB.

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Empowering communities with

**Real Money. Real Power.**
OUR TEAM

SHARI DAVIS
Executive Director

MELISSA APPLETON
Program Director

KRISTINA BANKS
Finance & Operations Director

ELIZABETH CREWS
Director, Democracy Beyond Elections

KRISTANIA DE LEON
Network Building Manager

INGRID HAFTEL
Manager, Democracy Beyond Elections

KIM IZAR
Development Manager

ANTONNET JOHNSON
(Mellon/ACLS Public Fellow), Participation Design Strategist

RAHEM MEKDEM TEKA
Communications Manager

LOREN PEABODY
Research Fellow

JULIA SILEN
Operations Coordinator

BOARD OF DIRECTORS

JOAN BAKIRIDDIN
(Barmer Co., New York City

EVAN GRANER
Communications Chair | San Francisco

MICHAEL MENGER
Chief, City University of New York | New York City

ROBERT SHERMAN
Center for Family Policy and the Environment | Oakland

CHELSEA TU
Center on Race, Poverty, and the Environment | Phoenix

CYNDI TERCERO SANDOVAL
Phoenix Union High School District | Phoenix
We supported hundreds of community leaders and legislators to re-imagine what democracy could look like in 2019.

We formally launched Democracy Beyond Elections, a national campaign to expand participatory democracy in the United States, with over 50 organizations. We identified 38 new partner sites ready to grow PB in their communities through a national expression of interest RFP. We supported groundbreaking PB pilots, including the largest per capita PB process in North America in Atlanta.

Most importantly, we focused heavily on listening and responding to what our partners on the ground need to serve their local stakeholders and historically underrepresented community members. We heard that more and more grassroots coalitions are pressuring their elected officials to implement PB in their city budgets, that PB can advance key issues such as affordable housing, streets & transportation and climate resilience, and that there is an urgent need to re-imagine community safety.

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173 PB processes launched or expanded in North America in 2019.

Over $55 million allocated in 2019 to community-driven solutions through PB.

150 policymakers, community leaders, and funders involved in developing our Democracy Beyond Elections policy platform that centers equity and real community power.

Community leaders gather at the Democracy Beyond Elections strategy convening on June 2019.
SPREADING PARTICIPATORY BUDGETING IN SCHOOLS

Impact & Outcomes

Schools, school districts, and colleges around the world are using PB to engage students, parents, educators, and staff in deciding how to spend a part of the school budget. PB develops student leadership, supports student and school success, lifts up student and family voice, and involves the full school community in meaningful civic experiences.

From students using PB and participatory policy-making to re-imagine safety in Brooklyn high schools to launching PB in rural schools in Merced, California, we saw PB as a tool to center the voices of youth leaders across the U.S. PB in schools is a tangible solution that shifts the narrative around youth as future leaders towards recognizing them as leaders now.

147 public schools across NYC launched PB through the Department of Education’s Civics for All initiative.

1,488 students decided on how to make Brooklyn schools safer through “Safe Schools”, our second year of a participatory budgeting and policy-making initiative through our partnership with Brooklyn Borough President, Eric Adams.

Schools launched or expanded PB in Schenectady NY, Merced CA, Central Falls RI, St. Louis MO, Chicago IL, Afton NY, Newburg NY, Phoenix AZ, Mesa AZ, Chandler AZ, Sunnyside AZ, and New York City NY, as well as the City University of New York, University of Manitoba, University of Connecticut Hartford, and Paolo Alto Community College.

Phoenix Union High School District students preparing to submit their PB ballots.
To acknowledge the movement around PB and key issues like climate resilience and equity, we built new tools to better address these challenges. This includes PBcan.org, an interactive website to help imagine how PB can address concerns including affordable housing, transportation, climate resilience, and equity.

We've also been hard at work creating the first online course for educators on how to plan and run a successful PB process in their schools, rooted in principles of participatory democracy and youth leadership. We anticipate offering the course, Community Leadership through Civics in Action: Bringing Participatory Budgeting to Your School, starting in summer 2020 and can’t wait to share it widely with educators, school administrators, and others.

Stay tuned for a number of other materials that have been in the works and are slated for 2020 release, including a new resource on PB and equity, an evaluation toolkit for PB in schools, and a guide for PB in membership organizations.

Counted over 181,800 PB voters from schools, districts, cities, and organizations across North America.

Developed a robust curriculum for our online PB course and began testing our content with a focus group of educators.

PB can:
ADDRESS ISSUES THAT MATTER MOST TO YOUR COMMUNITY

What is Participatory Budgeting (PB)?

What kind of budgets are we talking about?

EXPLORING HOW PB CAN HELP:

Support Affordable Homes

Improve Streets & Transportation

Strengthen Climate Resilience

Deepen Equity & Inclusion

Homepage of PBP’s new interactive tool, PBcan.org
We are committed to creating an equitable workplace, in which courageous conversations about power, privilege, risk, and identity have a meaningful impact on PBP practices, including decision-making. In 2019, we took measurable steps towards modelling our values internally.

This looked like establishing an internal equity committee, composed of staff from different cultural and social identities, investing in our professional development to attend new management courses, and preparing our staff and board for an executive leadership transition.

Impact & Outcomes

60% of our staff identify as women of color

Invested in our staff by raising all staff salaries to meet our current pay scale

PBP’s Executive Director, Shari Davis, was awarded an Obama Fellowship in 2019, due to the innovation and impact of PBP’s work.

PBP staff and board members gather in upstate New York for the annual fall planning retreat on December 2019.
Young people need safer and more supportive schools. This past spring, we partnered with the Mayor’s Office of Criminal Justice and Brooklyn Borough President Eric Adams to engage students at two Brooklyn high school campuses in deciding how to spend over $1 million and new policies to make their schools safer and more supportive. That’s 10x more funding than in any other school participatory budgeting (PB) process!

1,488 students crafted spending and policy proposals to be implemented by the school administration. They then voted on the proposals. Funded projects included launching a campus safety council, investing in de-stressor activities, and bathroom renovations.

Following the process, over 400 students signed up for the campus council to implement their school projects and 95% of voters said the winning projects would lead to safer and more supportive schools.

“You get to put that power of choice into the hands of the student, who gets to choose where the money goes. This is what WE want, not what other people are choosing for us.”

– Monica, Gotham Academy student
FINANCIAL REPORT

Jan 1, 2019 - Dec 31, 2019 *

Income: $1,410,449

- Foundation: 83.6%
- Non-Profit Contributions: 3.0%
- Program Service Income: 3.9%
- State and Local: 4.7%
- Individual Contributions: 1.9%

Expenses: $1,155,494

- Payroll Expense: 52.7%
- Contract Services: 15.0%
- Professional Services: 8.4%
- Insurance: 5.7%
- Occupancy: 0.5%
- Office Expenses: 4.7%

* unaudited financials
THANK YOU TO OUR PARTNERS!

Partners

Arts & Democracy
Brooklyn Borough President Eric Adams
Building Healthy Communities Merced
Building Stronger Families Providence
Center for Court Innovation
Center for Popular Democracy
Center for the Future of Arizona
City of Eau Claire WI
City of Vancouver BC
NYC Civic Engagement Commission PB Advisory Committee
Civic Hall
Coro NY Leadership Center
Creative New Jersey
Drug Policy Alliance
Generation Citizen
Ideas42 NYC Behavioral Design Center
Jefferson Center
Katal Center for Health, Equity, and Justice
Kounkuey Design Initiative
Long Beach Forward
New Jersey Policy Perspective
New York City Council
NYC Department of Education Civics for All
New York State Education Department Office of Accountability
NYC Civic Engagement Commission
NYC Mayor’s Office of Criminal Justice
NeighborhoodStat
PBNYC Citywide Committee
People’s Action
Sustainable Jersey
TakeRoot Justice
The Nonprofit Partnership
Theatre of the Oppressed NYC

Advisory Board Committee

Giovanni Allegretti | Centre of Social Studies, Portugal
Sal Asaro | Queens College
David Beasley | Auburn Seminar
Alina Chatterjee | Scadding Court Community Centre
Shymaine Davis | Baltimore, MD
Karen Dolan | Institute for Policy Studies
Joanna Duarte Laudon | City of Toronto
Michael Freedman-Schnapp | Forsyth Street
Alexandra Flynn | University of British Columbia
Jez Hall | PB Partners, UK
Sandy Heierbacher | National Coalition for Dialogue & Deliberation
Gabriel Hetland | University at Albany
Isaac Jabola-Carolus | City University of New York
Patricia Jerido | Leadership Matters Consulting
Sandee Kandhari | Legal Aid Society
Alexander Kolokotronis | Yale University
Rachel Laforest | Retail Action Project
Stephen Lafume | City of Boston
Steve Larosiliere | Stoked
Matt Leighninger | Public Agenda
Richard Marcantonio | Public Advocates
Joe Moore | City of Chicago
Aseem Mulji | University of California Berkeley
Tiago Peixoto | World Bank Institute
Whitney Quesenbery | Center for Civic Design
Richard Raya | San Francisco’s Mission Promise Neighborhood
Erin Sanborn
Daniel Schugurensky | Arizona State University
Donata Secondo | Democracy Fund
Al Solis | XQ Institute
Anne Stuhldreher | San Francisco Financial Justice Project
Celina Su | City University of New York
Rachel Swaner | Center for Court Innovation
Aaron Tanaka | Center for Economic Democracy
Tai Tsao | Meeteoor
David Vlahov | Yale University
Ny Whitaker | Events by Ny
Sondra Youdelman | People’s Action

Funders

American Council of Learned Societies
Brooklyn Community Foundation
Butler Family Fund
Democracy Fund
Ford Foundation
Mertz Gilmore Foundation
New York Community Trust
Robert Wood Johnson Foundation
Stanford Center on Philanthropy and Civil Society
TD Charitable Foundation
The California Endowment
The Geraldine R. Dodge Foundation
The James Irvine Foundation
JPB Foundation
LOOKING FORWARD

2020 is a monumental year for participatory budgeting. We are looking forward to building this next phase of our journey.

Build and launch new participatory pilots that shift policies and spending towards communities most at need.

Deepen partnerships with grassroots organizers and elected officials by disseminating tools to expand PB in cities and towns across the US.

Continue executing our two-year strategic plan that prioritizes building an organization centered in equity and sustainability.

Follow our work!

@PBProject  ParticipatoryBudgetingProject  pbproject