

Youth Voice, Youth Vote Participatory Budgeting (PB)

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Youth Voice, Youth Vote Participatory Budgeting:

Oregon's first participatory budgeting process happening now in the project area of Senate Districts 24 and 25 and House District 50 using Federal American Rescue Plan Act (ARPA) one-time funding to implementing **\$500,000** of projects for and by youth uniquely and disproportionately impacted by the COVID 19 pandemic. Winning projects begin implementation upon conclusion of this cycle, after July 2023.

Significance:

- Youth ages 13-25 designed and co-facilitated a process that will select COVID recovery projects addressing the many ways youth have been impacted by the pandemic and its negative economic impacts in their community.
- Resources directed to an area under-resourced to adequately serve low-income youth of color.
- PB demonstrates stronger community participation that exceeds typical quick, one-way informational interactions with the public by government.
- Practiced worldwide, participatory budgeting enables ordinary people to exercise their power over decisions that directly impact their lives and guide investments made on their behalf.

Problem Statement:

Young people 24 and under represent almost **20%** of residents in the demographically diverse East Metro region but they lack the access to power, resources, or space to address their needs through local, regional, and State budgetary decisions.

Tool/Solution:



**YOUTH VOICE
YOUTH VOTE**
PARTICIPATORY BUDGETING



Project area: Communities East of I-205 in East Portland, East Multnomah County, North Clackamas, Gresham, Troutdale, and Wood Village

Participatory Budgeting Phases



1. PROCESS DESIGN

Youth Steering Committee Members represent their communities. They design the process (with pay!) and write a rulebook that specifies eligibility criteria, goals and values to guide each step.

The process repeats!



2. IDEA COLLECTION

Youth come together to envision the future they want and share ideas for investments in their communities.

3. PROJECT DEVELOPMENT



Youth Budget Delegates and Project Implementers research and refine ideas, then generate a list of feasible projects.



CURRENT PHASE



4. VOTE

Youth vote on projects they want implemented. Projects with the most votes get funded.



5. IMPLEMENTATION

Project Implementers receive funding to carryout the winning projects.



“...There needs to be more youth and people of color taking part of budgeting in our communities. I want to be part of change and something beautiful.”

Samantha Leyva Gonzalez, 19
Portland Community College



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Progress and Outlook:

- Elevates the leadership of **20+** youth involved from the onset and in all phases of the PB process, beyond superficial and tokenizing ways.
- More than **1,000** youth (and predominantly youth of color) have participated in the process, submitted ideas, and have worked to develop project proposals for funding to date.
- Youth submitted **244** ideas during idea collection which inform the development of project proposals.
- More than **10** community-based organizations are informing this process and dedicating their time to develop high-quality, youth-led projects.
- High schools in the project area have been valuable sites for generating high-quality youth participation and future polling places for the voting phase to select the winning projects.



Event with youth Steering Committee members and Participatory Budgeting Oregon staff

Why PB?

For Elected Officials:

- Long-term collaboration, deep engagement, and relationships with constituents.
- Demonstrated transparency and accountability in the use of public funds.
- Structured model for involving community members in shared decision-making.

For Community Members:

- Shared power over public funds.
- Meaningful participation, especially for those unable to vote
- Opportunity to define vision, values, and goals for public budgets.
- Guaranteed delivery of community-identified projects.
- Expanded knowledge and capacity to implement PB.

For Youth:

- Friendships and relationships with peers and community allies, connections frayed by COVID.
- Compensation for taking on significant roles in the process.
- Ownership over public funds and outcomes.
- Fun and valuable opportunities to contribute to local and regional decision-making.
- Professional and social capital.

Contact and Follow Up

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