Webinar
Engaging communities in budget decisions to build power
February 20, 2024

countyhealthrankings.org

We value
Collaboration
Innovation
Integrity
Courage
Inclusion
Excellence
Join the conversation

Welcome to Q&A
Questions you ask will show up here. Only host and panelists will be able to see all questions.

Where can I find strategies to address children in poverty?

1. Share successes and lessons learned
2. Offer resources
3. Build knowledge
4. Listen for multiple perspectives
Everyone has a role to play

- Setting priorities
- Making decisions
- Sharing resources

Structural determinants of health

Society's written and unwritten rules
Public budgets

Budgets shape community conditions and health outcomes

Building collective power

Changing conditions
Participatory budgeting

A strategy to build community power

Welcome

Anita Dos Santos
Advocacy manager
Participatory Budgeting Project

Benjii Bittle
Business development manager
Tacoma-Pierce County Health Department
Discussion group

When: Following the webinar
What: Share ideas, ask questions
How: Zoom
Why: Deepen learning

What is participatory budgeting?

*Participatory budgeting* is a democratic process in which community members directly decide how to spend part of a public budget.
The Participatory Budgeting Cycle

**Design the Process**
A steering committee that represents the community creates the rules and engagement plan.

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

**Develop Proposals**
Volunteer “budget delegates” develop the ideas into feasible proposals.

**Fund Winning Projects**
The government or institution funds and implements the winning ideas.

**Vote**
Residents vote on the proposals that most serve the community’s needs.

Successful Participatory Budgeting

**Accessible**
We meet people where they are and make processes simple.

**Inclusive & Equitable**
We center community members who have been systematically excluded.

**Centers Lived Experience and Community Decision Making**
We recognize that lived experience uncovers intimate information about an area that data can’t always explain.

**Field Research**
We know that exploring neighborhood dynamics is key when developing proposals that will be implemented impactfully.

**Learn by Doing**
We take an experiential approach to everything in PB because we know that people learn democracy by doing it!
What kinds of budgets?

- City, county, state, and federal budgets
- Non-governmental sources like foundation or nonprofit budgets
- Discretionary funds of elected officials
- School, school district, and university budgets
- Public agency budgets
- Police and carceral budgets

Coming Soon: Denver, CO

- "The Engaging Communities with Lived Experiences project uses participatory budgeting to empower the community. The project aims to support individuals in recovery, address health disparities, and promote equity in substance use disorder treatment."
- Funded by a tax that sets funding aside for addressing mental health and substance misuse needs in Denver.
Central Falls, RI

- **Voces con Poder**: Students and parents at all schools in the Central Falls school district voted to dedicate **$100,000** from the American Rescue Plan Act (ARPA) to improve their schools.

- The Rhode Island Dept of Health ran a process through the Health Equity Zones Initiative. Residents of Central Falls and Pawtucket decided on how to spend **$385,000** to "improve the conditions that help us stay or become healthy."

- Winning projects were a Sprinkler Water Park & Outdoor Fitness Park, and the "Mental Health: End the Stigma" Campaign.

L.A. Repair in Los Angeles, CA

- Organizers in L.A. advocated for a **new approach to public safety** and **substantial investments in Black and Brown communities**. Office of Racial Equity is formed.

- **REPAIR Zones** were selected based on a number of factors including:
  - employment and poverty data
  - home access to Internet
  - COVID-19 case rates
  - CDC Social Vulnerability Index
  - CalEnviroScreen Environmental Index
  - historically "redlined" neighborhoods

- Effective PB **requires a commitment to racial equity and shared decision making** from those in government and accountability systems rooted in a strong base of community members.
Challenges of Participatory Budgeting

- Getting buy in from elected officials or those in power
- Time and resources
- Managing the community's expectations

TECHNICAL ASSISTANCE
We design, strengthen, and facilitate equitable and innovative Participatory Budgeting and Participatory Democracy processes.

PARTICIPATION LAB
Engage in shared learning, research, and design, and test improvements to participatory democracy practice.

CAMPAIGNS & ADVOCACY
Advocate in collaboration with community partners to win and expand equitable, accessible and significant PD practices.
Health Benefits of Participatory Budgeting

**Community**
- Support community power.
- Share resources equitably.
- Address root causes.
- Make decisions more inclusive, transparent, accountable and efficient.
- Reduce scale and duration of problems.

**Individual**
- Improve self efficacy.
- Increase trust.
- Improve social cohesion.
- Resilience.
  - Improved sleep, wound healing.
- Resistance to disease:
  - Heart disease, cancer.
Audre Lorde

“In our world, divide and conquer must become define and empower.”

Sister Outsider and Other Essays

Participatory Budgeting in Pierce County

We led

- Pilot project in a park.
- Three urban school-based projects.
- Subject specific and rural projects.

Tacoma Creates.
National evangelism.
Build the evidence base.

We partnered

We supported

City of Tacoma:
- $1 million projects in five Council Districts.
Outcomes

Prioritize communities for long term engagement
Identify champions and funding
Have hard conversations
Train
ACTION

Preparing for PB

Photo credit: Metro Parks Tacoma
Questions?
Benjii Bittle
Director
bbittle@tpchd.org

Summary: Participatory budgeting

Is a process that shares power
When implemented successfully, PB engages community and builds power.

Can influence health
PB activities can create healthier communities and better individual health outcomes.

Has been used in many settings
Seek support in implementing PB into your work.
Keyword: participatory budgeting

Questions?
Click on survey in the chat

Upcoming webinar:
March 12, 2024
Previewing the 2024 Annual Data Release

Bethany Rogerson
Co-director, CHR&R

Molly Burdine
Data analyst, CHR&R

Gillian Giglierano
Evidence analyst, CHR&R
Discussion group

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