



PB Chicago

Participatory
Budgeting
Chicago

Rulebook 2021



**Great Cities
Institute**

PB Chicago
pbchicago.org

Participatory Budgeting

Engages community members with government to improve their cities by deciding how to spend public budgets.

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About this Rulebook

This booklet was developed by the Participatory Budgeting Chicago (PB Chicago) Steering Committee with assistance from the Great Cities Institute at the University of Illinois at Chicago. While participatory budgeting (PB) is inspired by experiences elsewhere, we want the Chicago process to reflect the special characteristics of the local community. The Steering Committee thus generated these guidelines and rules based on our understanding of community needs, issues, and interests. This rulebook is only a starting point, and we intend for it to remain a work in progress. We will produce additional guidelines and materials as necessary, and continue developing and improving the process as it unfolds in the current and future years, together with other community members.

What is Participatory Budgeting?

Participatory Budgeting (PB) is a democratic process in which community members directly decide how to spend part of a public budget. PB gives ordinary people real decision making power over real money. The process was first developed in Brazil in 1989, and there are now over 1,500 participatory budgets around the world, most at the municipal level.

About PB Chicago

In 2009, Joe Moore, who was Alderman of the 49th Ward, launched the first PB process in the US, based on the model developed in Brazil in 1989. In 2012, PB Chicago expanded PB to additional wards across the City of Chicago. Since then over **38,000 residents** have directly decided how to spend over **\$40 million** in public dollars and have co-created and voted to fund over 190 community projects.

2019 Participating Wards

- 1 – Alderman Daniel La Spata
- 29 – Alderman Chris Taliaferro
- 33 – Alderwoman Rossana Rodriguez Sanchez
- 35 – Alderman Carlos Rosa
- 36 – Alderman Gilbert Villegas
- 39 – Alderwoman Samantha Nugent
- 40 – Alderman Andre Vasquez
- 47 - Alderman Matt Martin
- 49 – Alderwoman Maria Hadden

PB Chicago Steering Committee

Formed in 2012 to support the multi-ward expansion of participatory budgeting in the city, the Steering Committee is comprised of staff, Aldermen and community members from participating wards, representatives from citywide resource organizations as well as coordinating staff from the Great Cities Institute (GCI) at the University of Illinois at Chicago.

UIC Great Cities Institute

Access Living

Active Transportation Alliance

Bikes and Roses

Blocks Together

Chicago Public Art Group

Chicago West Side Branch NAACP

Consortium to Lower Obesity in Chicago Children, Ann & Robert H. Lurie Children's Hospital Friends of the Parks

Friends of the Parks

Mikva Challenge

Smart Chicago Collaborative

UIC Institute for Policy and Civic Engagement

Goals: What do we want to accomplish with PB?

We believe that we can improve our city through PB by giving community members a voice with decision making opportunities. While there are many benefits to doing PB, our main goals we strive to achieve are accomplished by following certain guiding **principles**.

It aims to make decisions on how to **allocate** Aldermanic Menu funding, to **educate** residents about governmental processes, and to **build** communities and coalitions. It aims to do so in an **equitable, inclusive, sustainable, and transparent** way.

Equity

We aim for our process to be fair and just, both in the distribution of funds to the areas of most need as well as in the participation of community members. A focus on equitable participation, working harder to engage the most marginalized populations, will lead to a more diverse and representative process.

Inclusion

We strive to include the entire community - especially those who are often excluded from the political process, who face obstacles to participating, or who may feel disillusioned with politics. By making every effort to actively engage these communities and reduce obstacles to participation, we hope to reduce the influence of groups with more resources from dominating the decision-making process, and to generate spending decisions that better reflect the entire community's needs. We recognize that the ideal PB process has to have focused consideration of people disconnected, whether by the digital divide, or from the PB process itself, and take specific actions to identify and include them.

Community and Coalition Building

We work to strengthen our communities and the individuals within them through outreach, education, dialogue, and civic engagement. This process is designed to bring us together to make better budget decisions. Working together to identify needs, learn about our resources and sharing solutions not only connects individuals to one another, but also creates collaboration across blocks, neighborhoods and organizations inspiring people to work together to improve the community.

Sustainability

We aim to maintain sustainability. Healthy democratic processes require renewal and support for the individuals participating. Through training and workshops as well as expert support, we provide tools and space to that allow communities to develop sustainable projects and leaders. Our processes provide space for new and existing community leaders to learn and practice skills, build relationships and work together to find sustainable solutions to address community needs.

Transparency

We aim to share information clearly, make decisions and communicate openly, to help people access information, understand decisions, and create a way of accountability. (source <https://www.participatorybudgeting.org/mission/>)

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

Timeline: What Happens When?

The PB process involves a series of meetings and decisions that feed into the city's annual budget cycle and fit into four main phases: Idea Collection; Proposal Development; Expos and Public Voting; and Implementation. The cycle will take place over eight months from April to November. The timeline includes one (1) month latitude or leeway to ensure flexibility.

Idea Collection

Residents from across the ward are invited to gather to learn about community needs, the budget and share ideas at neighborhood assemblies, meetings and digitally in a variety of ways including through the PB Platform. In addition to sharing ideas people are asked to volunteer as community representatives.

Proposal Development

Volunteer community representatives will work together with city staff and subject matter experts to take all the submitted ideas from the Idea Collection phase and turn them into concrete, project proposals that can be put on a ballot.

Expos and Public Voting

Final proposals are presented to the community at project expos and put on the ballot for the vote. Voting happens over a period of weeks at ward service offices, various community locations, and digitally through the PB Platform. Projects with the most votes are funded until the funds expire.

Implementation

The projects with the most votes are implemented through the city's usual process of procurement. Ward staff keep the community informed on the progress of winning projects and may call upon community representatives to help with any additional community input or outreach.

Rules: How does PB Happen in Chicago?

Engagement In 2021

- We enter into Cycle 10 (2021) with hope and new digital strategies for engaging residents whose voices are not normally heard. We do this while acknowledging an uncertain reality in terms of when face-to-face engagement will be safe to return to. Given the uncertainty, face-to-face engagement minimums will remain in the rulebook with the full recognition that meeting the minimums may not be possible. We encourage all to innovate and experiment in this new reality with both digital and face-to-face engagement (when safe) to learn new strategies, best practices, and what works best in each unique community context to meet our goals.

Idea Collection

- Anyone is welcome to attend the neighborhood assemblies or idea collection events and propose project ideas.
- Anyone is welcome to submit a project idea digitally through the PB Platform or through a variety of different ways that each ward may also choose to implement.
- Each ward will hold at least 5 Idea Collection events, including at least two special events focused on engaging underrepresented populations, such as youth and non-English speakers.
- It is recommended that there be at least one event in each of the following timeframes: morning; weekend; and evening. This will allow for the broadest possible attendance.
- In order to attract community representatives that are reflective of community demographics, and include people who are disconnected wards are encouraged to hold more targeted, shared events at non-PB meetings of community organizations, churches, and civic associations and to focus digital outreach and engagement efforts on marginalized populations.

Proposal Development

- Anyone who lives in the ward, works in the ward, has a business in the ward, is a student in the ward or has children who are students in the ward is welcome to serve as a community representative.
- At orientation sessions, each community representative will join a committee, to discuss and develop project proposals for a certain issue area or demographic group.
- Ward staff and the PB Committee of each ward will decide which issue committees are created, based on the ideas proposed by the community at large. Potential issue committees may include but are not limited to: Transportation, Streets, Public Safety, Parks, Arts, Schools & Libraries, Sustainability and Housing.
- If there are enough community representatives who feel that they face major obstacles to participating fully in issue committees, they may form a demographic committee. Demographic committees are meant to ensure maximum participation from community members who might not otherwise participate, not to divide or separate sectors of the community. Potential demographic committees may include but are not limited to: Youth, Seniors, and Non-English Speaking Communities.
- Each community rep committee should strive to have 2 facilitators per committee and facilitators should go through training to prepare them for their role.

Expos and Voting

- Each ward will hold at least 2 project expos, where community representatives will present their project proposals to the community and get feedback. These events include an opening presentation and a science fair style exposition where committees display their projects in process with visual aids (e.g., poster displays or videos).
- Residents who live in the ward and are at least 14 years of age can vote for projects. Individual wards may use a lower voting age, if agreed on by the Alderman and the PB Committee.
- At the time of voting, voters must present proof that they satisfy the eligibility requirements. Acceptable IDs are listed on the next page.
- To facilitate broad participation, each ward will hold digital voting throughout the duration of their vote, at least 5 days of voting at the Aldermanic Office, at least 1 voting assembly, and at least 2 mobile voting tables in places with a high concentration of historically underrepresented populations.
- Additional mobile voting sites are highly recommended as data shows that mobile voting engages more people of color, more low-income individuals, and more immigrants than voting in the ward office or at the voting assembly.
- Additional prioritized digital outreach to marginalized communities is also encouraged.
- Each voter may cast one vote per project proposal.
- The Steering Committee and PB Committees will decide together the number of total votes each person can cast, once the approximate number of projects on the ballots is known.

Implementation

- After the vote, winning projects will be submitted by the Aldermen and staff to the Office of Budget and Management for implementation. Ward staff will keep residents updated on implementation progress.

Amendments

- The Steering Committee will review and modify the rulebook as needed at the end of each PB Chicago cycle, during planning for the next cycle. In the case of urgent issues that cannot wait until the end of the current cycle, the SC may make changes via a two-thirds majority vote. Reasonable prior notice of proposed change will be furnished to each ward office and Ward Leadership Committee.

Acceptable Voter IDs

Voters must prove that they live in the ward and are of age to vote (depends on ward). In order to facilitate broad participation, voters may present a wide array of proofs of ID, including but not limited to one or more of those below, to establish residency and age:

- A document with name and current address from a local, state, or US government agency such as a state driver's license or non-driver ID, consular ID, passport, EBT card, military ID card;
- Voter registration card;
- Utility, medical, credit card bill with name and current address;
- Current lease;
- Paycheck or paycheck stub from an employer or a W-2 statement;
- Bank statement or bank-issued credit card statement;
- Student ID;
- Employee ID;
- Permanent Resident Card (Green Card) or other Immigration Documentation;
- Chicago CityKey;
- Residency Letter or Identification issued by a homeless shelter, halfway house, etc;
- Tax forms;
- Passport or other ID issued by a foreign government;
- Social Security benefit statements or check;
- Employment Authorization Document;
- Medicare or other insurance document with address;
- School records (or naming the parents of children attending school and the parents' address);
- Title to any property (automobiles, house, etc.) with address;
- Birth or marriage certificate; and/or
- Union Membership Card.

Roles and Responsibilities: Who Does What?

There is a role for everyone in participatory budgeting, but different people have different roles and responsibilities, based partly on their stake in the community and their time commitment to the process. We encourage every community stakeholder to both participate and encourage others in the community to participate.

Community Members

- Attend an Idea Collection event and/or project expo
- Identify local problems and needs
- Propose project ideas
- Volunteer to be community representatives
- Vote on project proposals
- Encourage friends and neighbors to participate in PB Chicago

Community Representatives

- Identify local problems and needs
- Discuss and prioritize initial project ideas
- Consult with community members on project proposals
- Develop full project proposals
- Prepare project posters and presentations
- Conduct outreach to mobilize community members to participate
- Monitor project implementation through meetings with ward staff.
- Participate in the evaluation of the PB process

PB Committee Member

- Help arrange food and logistics for assemblies and meetings
- Help identify locations for idea collection, project expos, and voting
- Distribute promotional materials
- Conduct outreach to mobilize community members to participate
- Facilitate idea collection events, project expos, and community representative meetings
- Monitor project implementation
- Participate in evaluating the PB process
- Make decisions on PB Chicago governance at the ward level

Aldermen and City Staff

- Provide staff support to community representatives and PB committees
- Prepare and distribute educational and promotional materials
- Present information on the prior year “menu” funds and past spending
- Reserve spaces for assemblies and meetings
- Help arrange food and logistics for assemblies and meetings
- Act as liaison with city departments and agencies providing estimates for project proposals and leveraging funds with sister agencies

- Provide feedback and technical assistance on project proposals
- Deliver final PB decisions to the City
- Monitor project implementation

Steering Committee

- Design and oversee the PB process
- Make decisions about the PB Process
- Help raise support funding
- Distribute promotional materials
- Conduct outreach to mobilize community members to participate
- Support neighborhood assemblies and community representative meetings
- Facilitate community representative orientations
- Approve and help evaluate the PB process
- Review and revise rules to the PB process
- Encourage PB for other wards and budgets
- Help create a shared catalog of project costs
- Help provide interpretation and translation of materials

Project Lead: GCI

- Prepare educational and promotional materials
- Offer technical assistance on the PB process
- Coordinate evaluation of the PB process
- Prepare written reports and data summaries of the process
- Help provide interpretation and translation of materials
- Help establish PBChicago online presence and resources

Top 5 Recommendations & Best Practices

The following list of recommendations and best practices are suggestions based on what has worked in multiple wards across the city. They are shared here with the intention of assisting other and newer PB wards with on the ground knowledge from past experiences and so they do not need to reinvent the PB wheel, just realign it for their ward.

- 1. Creating a more equitable and inclusive ballot by bundling or combining projects.** Most wards have geographic areas that have seen less investment than other areas of the ward and/or have demographic populations that have been marginalized for years in contrast with more active and engaged populations of the ward. Many wards have found that if they bundle projects together on the ballot they have been better able to reach the goals of equity and inclusion because investment is steered toward areas that have the most need.
 - For example: Wards will sometimes bundle by issue area such as combining park projects from different areas of the ward together so voters are selecting ballot options based on issue area rather than geography. Wards will also combine projects located in areas where more active residents live together with projects where less engaged but more marginalized populations live.
- 2. Allowing any student that lives in the ward to vote during an in-school high school voting event.** Many wards conduct voting events during the lunch hours at their local high schools. Allowing all students that live in the ward to vote, regardless of their age, is in alignment with the goal of inclusion, encourages youth to vote in local elections when they are 18 and to participate in other civic activities, and streamlines the logistics and voter registration of an in-school voting event.
- 3. Increase the number of voting days and events to increase voter turn-out.** Since 2011 and across multiple wards, there has consistently been a correlation between the number of PB voters and the number of days and locations available to residents to vote in the ward.
- 4. Increase the number of mobile or pop-up voting locations in high traffic areas or in locations that target specific populations to increase access for people of color and lower-income individuals.** Data from the 49th ward demonstrated higher rates of participation by people of color, low-income individuals, and immigrants at mobile voting sites than at the ward office or at the voting assembly. For example, 62% of mobile voters were people of color while 29% of voters at the ward office and voting assembly were people of color.
- 5. Use a percentage vote on the ballot to determine the amount of the \$1 million that should be allocated to street resurfacing.** The percentage vote gives residents the ability to determine how much of the \$1 million should be allocated to street resurfacing by selecting which percentage from 0%-100%. The percentage vote gives community reps and ward staff flexibility to work with the Chicago Department of Transportation to prioritize streets in greatest need of resurfacing while also coordinating additional infrastructure work underway that places moratoriums on specific streets

Research on PB Chicago

The UIC Great Cities Institute (GCI) is conducting research on participatory budgeting (PB) processes taking place in Chicago. The purpose of the research is to understand the nature of participation in the PB process by examining who does and does not participate in PB, why people participate, how outreach and the design of the process impacts participation, and what skills, beliefs and attitudes participants and elected officials learn from the process. The research project is guided by the following goals:

Research Goals

- To document and assess the PB process to provide support data for organizations and officials seeking to democratize budget processes;
- To better understand the composition and motivations of PB participants in order to maximize participation of diverse stakeholders in future processes;
- To refine the PB process so that it may be possible to expand PB in Chicago and to scale up the US model in the near future.

What is Involved in the Research

The research involves surveys, observations of the process and interviews with participants. Participants will be asked to complete a survey at each phase of the PB process (idea collection, proposal development, and the PB vote) and randomly selected participants are also interviewed. Questions on both the surveys and the interviews include:

- How participants heard about PB;
- Their experience of the PB process;
- How they participated;
- What they learned as a result of participating;
- How they do or do not participate in other types of community events; and
- Personal demographic information including race or ethnicity, household income, age, and how long the participant has lived in the neighborhood.

Confidentiality

All data collected is completely anonymous and kept strictly confidential. No identifying information such as a participant's name or address is collected as a part of the research and therefore will not be used when data from the study is published.

GCI prepares and disseminates an evaluation report at the end of each PB cycle. All reports are publicly available on GCI's website <https://greatcities.uic.edu/>.

The mission of the UIC Great Cities Institute is to link its academic resources with a range of partners to address urban issues by providing research, policy analysis and program development. Tied to the University of Illinois at Chicago Great Cities Commitment, GCI seeks to improve quality of life in Chicago, its metropolitan region, and cities throughout the world.

Glossary of PB Chicago Terms

Included below are some common terms and definitions that we use during the process.

Community Representative: Community representatives are volunteers from the community that do the work necessary to turn community ideas into project proposals.

Menu Money: \$1.32 million in city bond money that each Alderman receives to spend on capital improvements in their ward.

Mobile Voting: Voting that happens on location in high traffic areas that are accessible to the community; typically held over short periods of time 2-3 hours.

Neighborhood Assemblies and Idea Collection events: Town hall style meetings that involve presentations and small group brainstorming and take place in various locations throughout the ward.

Project Expo: Community gathering where community representatives showcase their project proposals for their communities. Often resemble science fair type events with volunteer made visual presentations.

Steering Committee: Coordinates the PB process across the participating wards. The committee includes the participating Aldermen, the project leads, at least two community representatives from each participating ward (that also serve on the local leadership committee), and city-wide organizations focused on good government, research, policy, organizing, and community education.

PB Committee: In each participating ward, a PB Ward Leadership Committee composed of local individuals, organizations, and institutions manage the PB process locally. Each ward uses different terminology for this committee. Interested community representatives will also be able to join their Leadership Committee, some wards require participation in PB for one cycle prior to joining the leadership committee. Responsibilities may vary by ward.

PB Platform: A digital platform where residents can get information on PB and participate including submitting project ideas, working on project proposals, and voting.

