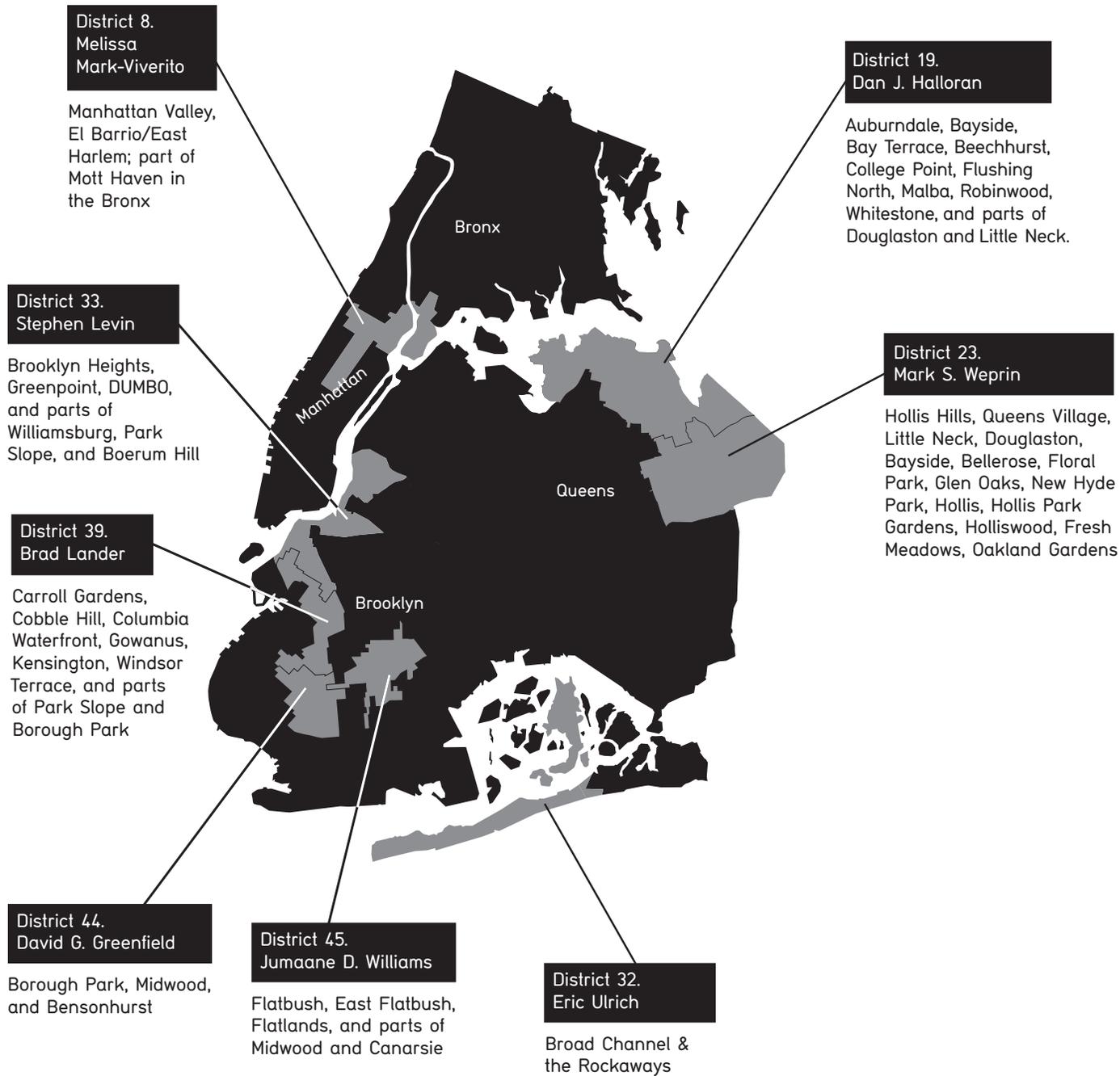


# Participatory Budgeting in New York City



2012-2013  
Rulebook



## About this Rulebook

This booklet was developed by the Steering Committee for Participatory Budgeting in New York City (PBNYC) in July 2011 and revised in May and June 2012. While participatory budgeting is inspired by experiences elsewhere, we want the New York City 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 expect to continue developing and improving the process as it unfolds and in future years, together with other community members. Maybe you will even help!



## Introduction by the Council Members

As members of the New York City Council who represent diverse districts, we are pleased to embark on the second year of a new form of democracy: Participatory Budgeting in New York City. Through this exciting initiative, we will put budgeting decisions directly in the hands of people whose decisions impact the most: the residents of our districts.

Year 1 of PBNYC proved that this program really is a grassroots democracy at its best. Across four districts, 6,000 people came out to vote on how more than \$5 million in capital dollars should be used, resulting in the funding of 29 projects. When the Fiscal Year 2013 City budget passed on June 28th, it included funding for projects directly chosen by taxpayers, for the first time ever in NYC.

In Year 2 of PBNYC, four additional districts will join the process and it will all happen again; residents will come together, exchange and debate ideas, team up to turn ideas into proposals, and then decide at the ballot box which projects get funded. This process makes budgeting more transparent and accessible, and it opens up participation to people who have never been involved before. It will make budgeting more effective, because no one knows the needs of each community better than those who live in it. Participatory budgeting requires elected officials to collaborate with our constituents, and the Participatory Budgeting in New York City 2012-2013 Rulebook was developed through a similar democratic process. The work of a Steering Committee,

representing a wide spectrum of New Yorkers with different backgrounds and ideologies, this rulebook was put together through compromise and consensus. We want to thank everyone who participated, especially Community Voices Heard and The Participatory Budgeting Project, for their thoughtful work bringing us all together and structuring the decision-making process.

We are proud to present this rulebook to you and are excited to launch Year 2 of this new democratic practice for NYC.

Let the participating begin!

New York City Councilmembers:

David G. Greenfield, (District 44, Brooklyn)

Dan J. Halloran (District 19, Queens)

Brad Lander (District 39, Brooklyn)

Stephen Levin (District 33, Brooklyn)

Melissa Mark-Viverito (District 8, Manhattan/Bronx)

Eric Ulrich (District 32, Queens)

Mark S. Weprin (District 23, Queens)

Jumaane D. Williams (District 45, Brooklyn)

## 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 1,000 participatory budgets around the world, most at the municipal level.

## Participatory Budgeting in New York City

In 2011, four New York City Council Members—Brad Lander, Melissa Mark-Viverito, Eric Ulrich, and Jumaane D. Williams—launched a PB process to let residents allocate part of their capital discretionary funds. In 2012, Council Members David G. Greenfield, Dan J. Halloran, Stephen Levin, and Mark S. Weprin are joining PBNYC, giving the community real decision-making power over at least \$10 million in taxpayer money.

Discretionary funds are resources that the Council Members can allocate as they desire. Capital funds can only be used for physical infrastructure projects that benefit the public, cost at least \$35,000 and have a lifespan of at least 5 years. Through PB, residents in each participating district will decide how to spend at least \$1 million capital dollars.

In PBNYC's pilot year more than 8,000 New York City residents proposed and voted on local infrastructure projects, such as improvements to schools, parks, libraries, and housing. The Council Members submitted the projects receiving the most votes—totaling more than \$5 million citywide—to the City for implementation.

## Goals: What is this for?

We hope to accomplish three main goals through PBNYC:

### 1. Inclusion

We aim to include everyone in the community — especially those who are often excluded from the political process, who face obstacles to participating, or who feel disillusioned with politics. By making every effort to actively engage these communities and reduce obstacles to participation, we hope to prevent the 'usual suspects' or groups with more resources from dominating, and to generate spending decisions that are fairer and better reflect the entire community's needs.

### 2. Equality

We aim for every person to have equal power over public spending—one person, one vote. Giving each community member the same power to propose and vote on spending ideas makes governance more democratic.

### 3. Empowerment

We aim to empower and strengthen our communities and the individuals within them through education and skill building, and by giving people real decision-making power. By building community power to make budget decisions and to shape the budget process, we hope to develop new leaders and inspire people to work together to improve the community.

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

## Timeline: What happens when?

The PB process involves a series of meetings that feed into the city's annual budget cycle. The 2012-2013 cycle has five main steps, starting in September 2012 and continuing into 2013.

..... 2012 ..... 2013 .....>

..... Proposing projects .....



September–October 2012

### Neighborhood Assemblies

At community meetings in each district, the Council Members present information on the budget funds, and residents brainstorm project ideas and select budget delegates.

 Residents also submit project ideas online.



November–February 2013

### Delegate Meetings

Delegates go through an orientation, then meet in committees to transform the community's initial project ideas into full proposals, with support from experts.

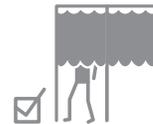
..... Choosing projects .....



February–March 2013

### Project Expos

Delegates return to the community in another round of meetings, to present draft project proposals and get feedback.



March–April 2013

### Voting

Delegates present the final project proposals and residents vote on which projects to fund.

..... Implementing projects .....



April 2013 onward

### Evaluation, Implementation & Monitoring

Delegates and other participants evaluate the process, then oversee the implementation of projects.

## Rules: How does it work?

### Neighborhood Assemblies

- Each district will have at least 5 assemblies, including any special assemblies for youth, seniors, and large non-English speaking communities in the district. Each district will also collect project ideas online, with assistance from the City-Wide Steering Committee.
- Anyone is welcome to attend the assemblies and propose project ideas.
- Participants can volunteer to serve as budget delegates if they:
  - 1 · live in the district,
    - work in the district,
    - own a business in the district, **or**
    - attend school in the district **or** are parents of children who attend school in the district **and**
  - 2 · are at least 14 years old

### Delegate Meetings

All delegates must attend a delegate orientation session in their district.

- At the delegate orientation sessions, each budget delegate will join a committee, to discuss and develop project proposals for a certain issue area or demographic group.
- Potential issue committees may include but are not limited to:
  1. Transportation
  2. Public Health
  3. Public Safety
  4. Education
  5. Parks, Recreation & Environment
  6. Art & Culture
  7. Housing
- If there are enough delegates 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. These committees will develop projects that specifically address the needs of their demographic group. Potential demographic committees may include but are not limited to:

- Youth
- Committees for non-English speaking communities in the district
- There must be a minimum of five people to form a delegate committee.
- Delegates may not form geographic committees (committees for only part of their district).
- Districts may establish a limit for how many project proposals each committee will submit for public vote.
- When prioritizing projects, delegates will consider feasibility, need, and equity.
- Each committee will send its project proposals to the district's Council Member at least three weeks before the public vote.

### Project Expos

- At the Project Expos, budget delegates will present their project proposals to the community and get feedback through a science fair format.
- Each district will hold at least one Project Expo and post project proposals online.

### Voting for Projects

- People can vote for projects if they live in the district and are at least 16 years old.

- At the time of voting, voters must present proof that they satisfy the eligibility requirements. Acceptable IDs are listed on the next page.
- Each voter may cast five votes, one vote per project.
- Voting opportunities will take place on multiple days and in multiple locations in each district, including at least four voting events, weekday voting in the Council Member office, and absentee ballots. Each voter can vote on one occasion.
- If there is a tie for the last bit of funding, the Council Member will decide how to resolve the tie. Options may include attempting to draw on additional funds to implement both proposals or funding the cheaper of the tied projects.
- If the last bit of available funds does not cover the cost of the next highest vote-getting project, Council Member staff will try to find additional funds to implement the project. If this is not possible, the funds will be allocated to the unfunded project with the next most votes.

### Evaluation, Implementation & Monitoring

- After the vote, each district will hold at least one evaluation meeting.
- In each district, the District Committee or a monitoring committee, composed of budget delegates and District Committee members, will monitor the implementation of projects and address any problems that arise.
- If an approved project cannot be implemented for some reason, the funds allocated to it are awarded to the unfunded project with the next most votes. If the funds are not enough to cover this project, the Council Member will try to find additional funds to cover the remaining costs. If this project still cannot be funded, the money goes to the next highest vote getter that can be covered by the available funds.

### Acceptable IDs for Voter Eligibility

Voters must prove that they live in the district and are 16 years or older. 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:

- 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;
- Residency Letter or Identification issued by a homeless shelter, halfway house, etc.;
- Passport or other ID issued by a foreign government;
- Social Security Card or Social Security benefit statements or check;
- Employment Authorization Document;
- Medicare or other insurance document with address;
- Tax forms;
- 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;
- Union Membership Card.

People who cannot present the above documents should contact the Council Member office to learn how they can participate.

## Roles and Responsibilities: Who does what?

There is a role for everyone in the participatory budgeting process, 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 Stakeholders

Anyone can participate in the process, even if they only come to one meeting or only vote.

- Identify local problems and needs
- Propose project ideas
- Provide input and feedback on project proposals
- Monitor and provide input on the implementation of projects
- Provide feedback for the PB evaluation
- Encourage people to participate!
- Volunteer to be budget delegates, if they are at least 14 years old and live in the district, work in the district, own a business in the district, attend school in the district, or are parents of children who attend school in the district
- Vote on project proposals, if they are at least 16 years old and live in the district

### Budget Delegates

Budget delegates do the extra work necessary to turn resident ideas into real projects.

- Research local problems, needs, and projects
- Learn about the budget funds and the budget process

- Discuss and prioritize initial project ideas
- Develop full project proposals, with technical assistance from experts
- Update residents on project proposals and solicit feedback
- Prepare project posters and presentations
- Serve as spokespeople for city-wide and local media, when called upon
- Encourage people to participate!
- Monitor and provide input on the implementation of projects
- Evaluate the PB process
- Communicate delegate concerns and ideas to the District Committee and City-Wide Steering Committee

### Delegate Committee Facilitators

- Facilitate delegate meetings and ensure that all delegates are able to participate, serving as neutral force on the committee
- Serve as the main point of contact between Council Member staff and delegates, helping to coordinate communication and resolve conflicts
- Connect delegates with info and resources
- Ensure that notes are taken at meetings and distributed to the committee
- Support delegates in researching, assessing and developing proposals.

### District Committees

In each participating Council district, a District Committee composed of local organizations, institutions, Community Boards, and community leaders manages the PB process locally.

Interested delegates and facilitators will also be able to join their District Committee after participating for a year.

- Determine the number of neighborhood assemblies, and help plan and carry out the assemblies
- Arrange food, childcare, and interpretation for assemblies and meetings
- Recruit volunteers for outreach, assemblies, and the vote
- Distribute educational and promotional materials about the PB process
- Develop and execute outreach plans to mobilize broad, inclusive, and proportional community participation
- Facilitate budget assemblies and meetings
- Provide guidance and background information to delegates
- Serve as spokespeople for city-wide and local media, when called upon
- With the Council Member staff, coordinate voting events
- Monitor project implementation
- Evaluate and revise the rules of the PB process
- Provide orientation to new District Committee members

### Monitoring Committees

Some budget delegates and District Committee members participate in monitoring committees, to ensure that approved projects are implemented properly. These responsibilities may also be fulfilled by the District Committee.

- Monitor progress on approved projects
- Oversee any necessary changes to approved projects, with the Council Member offices

- Communicate with delegates and residents about progress on projects

### City-Wide Steering Committee

A Steering Committee coordinates the PB process across the participating districts. The committee includes the participating Council Members, the project leads, approximately two community representatives from each participating Council district (that also serve on the District Committee), and city-wide organizations focused on good government, research, policy, organizing, and community education. A full list of Steering Committee members is included at the end of the rulebook.

- Design and guide PB process
- Attend PB events and meetings in participating districts during each stage of the PB process
- Provide specialized support for the PB process, including research, organizing, media, online engagement, social media, policy & budgeting, data visualization, and design
- Promote the PB process through the press, social media, and other networks, using protocol agreed-upon by the Steering Committee,
- Help raise support funding
- Create and distribute educational and promotional materials about the PB process
- Mobilize broad, inclusive, and proportional community participation
- Provide assistance at budget assemblies, delegate meetings, and/or budget delegate orientations
- Evaluate and revise the rules of the PB process
- Encourage PB for other districts and budgets

- Identify and recruit groups to support PB at the city and district level
- Ensure that the district-level PB process is inclusive and consistent with the core goals of PBNYC
- District Committee representatives on the City-Wide Steering Committee will also serve as liaisons between the two bodies, communicating decisions, ideas and perspectives

### Council Member Offices

- Allow district residents to decide how to spend at least \$1 million of FY2014 discretionary funds, and deliver final budget priorities to the City
- Designate a staff person to coordinate PB in the district, in collaboration with the District Committee
- Participate in the Steering Committee and the local District Committee, and assist with their responsibilities
- Work with the District Committee to coordinate and facilitate outreach to organizations, individuals, and special constituencies
- Provide information on the budget funds and past spending
- Secure spaces – in collaboration with the District Committee and Delegate Committee Facilitators - for assemblies, meetings and voting events, in accessible and ADA-compliant locations whenever possible
- Provide cost estimates for project proposals
- Offer feedback and technical assistance on project proposals
- Serve as a liaison between budget delegates and city agencies

- Determine eligibility of projects in collaboration with the city agencies
- Facilitate and oversee online participation by residents
- Coordinate outreach to city-wide and local media
- Serve as spokespeople for city-wide and local media
- Coordinate the public vote, in collaboration with the District Committee
- Oversee any necessary changes to approved projects, with the Monitoring Committees
- Deliver regular updates to budget delegates and the public during all stages of the PB process

### Project Leads (Community Voices Heard & The Participatory Budgeting Project)

- Participate in the Steering Committee and assist with their responsibilities
- Support the District Committees in the implementation of the PB process locally
- Offer technical assistance on the PB process
- Coordinate evaluation of the PB process
- Help develop and support outreach plans for each district.
- Help with press outreach
- Facilitate communication and information exchange between the groups involved in the PB process
- Develop proposals and recommendations for scaling up PB in NYC
- Lead expansion advocacy efforts
- Provide orientation to new Steering Committee members

- The Community Engagement lead will serve as co-chair of the City-Wide Steering Committee

### Research & Evaluation Team

External researchers and Steering Committee members are collaborating to study, document, and evaluate the PB process.

- Coordinate and monitor research and evaluation of the PB process
- Observe Assemblies, Expos, Voting Sites, and other meetings to collect data and conduct interviews
- Compile reports and background information on each district, including secondary data on civic engagement and neighborhood demographics
- Develop reports and materials to summarize the evaluation of PB

### Community Boards

Community Boards that overlap with the participating Council districts are encouraged to provide support and connect PB with the Community Board planning and prioritizing processes.

- Participate in the Steering Committee and the local District Committee, and assist with their responsibilities
- Provide background information on neighborhood needs & project ideas
- Offer feedback and technical assistance on project proposals
- Identify community needs and potential projects to be prioritized

### City Agencies

The Steering Committee does not have the power to assign responsibilities to City agencies or staff, but we hope agencies will play the following roles:

- Meet with budget delegates to discuss eligibility rules for capital discretionary projects and clarify what projects are already in the pipeline
- Vet project ideas and provide cost estimates for projects for the ballot
- Implement projects that receive the winning votes in the district

## About the City-Wide Steering Committee

At the start of this initiative, the participating Council Members asked The Participatory Budgeting Project and Community Voices Heard to help facilitate the process – PBP as the technical assistance lead and CVH as the community engagement lead. Together with the project leads, they formed a Steering Committee to guide PBNYC. The Steering Committee includes the Council Members, organizations and professors committed to improving city spaces and governance, and district representatives that ground the process in the participating communities. The following organizations and individuals serve on the Steering Committee for 2012-2013:

### City Council Members

Council Member David G. Greenfield, District 44  
Council Member Dan J. Halloran, District 19  
Council Member Brad Lander, District 39  
Council Member Stephen Levin, District 33  
Council Member Melissa Mark-Viverito, District 8  
Council Member Eric Ulrich, District 32  
Council Member Mark S. Weprin, District 23  
Council Member Jumaane D. Williams, District 45

### Resources Organizations and Professors

Community Voices Heard  
The Participatory Budgeting Project  
Arts & Democracy Project  
Center for Urban Pedagogy  
Community Development Project of the Urban Justice Center  
Dēmos  
Fifth Avenue Committee  
Flatbush Development Corporation  
Getting Out & Staying Out  
New York Civic

New York Immigration Coalition  
New Yorkers for Parks  
Organizing Brooklyn Communities  
People's Production House  
Pratt Center for Community Development  
Pratt Institute Programs for Sustainable Planning  
& Development  
Project for Public Spaces  
Right to the City Alliance  
Mimi Abramovitz, CUNY, Hunter College  
Andreas Hernandez, Marymount Manhattan College  
Celina Su, CUNY, Brooklyn College

### District Representatives

Mel Wymore, District 8  
David L Giordano, Children's Aid Society, District 8  
Henry Euler, District 19  
Rhea O'Gorman, District 19  
Mary Boyd-Foy, District 23  
Eric Contreras, District 23  
John Cori, District 32  
Beverly Corbin, Families United for Racial and  
Economic Equality (FUREE), District 33  
Berit Hoff, District 33  
Mamnun Haq, District 39  
Joni Kletter, District 39  
Joan Bakiriddin, District 45  
Hazel Martinez, District 45



To find out more:

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