

# Participatory Budgeting in Chicago

**2014-2015  
Rulebook**



## **About This Rulebook**

This booklet was developed by the Participatory Budgeting in Chicago (PBC) Steering Committee in 2012 and revised in 2013 and 2014. While participatory budgeting 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. Maybe you will even help!

## **Table of Contents**

- Introduction by the Aldermen
- What is Participatory Budgeting?
- Goals: Why Participatory Budgeting in Chicago?
- Timeline: What Happens When?
- Rules: How Does It Work?
- Roles and Responsibilities: Who Does What?
- About PB Chicago

## **Introduction by the Aldermen**

Across the United States, city leaders are increasingly asking residents for suggestions about public spending. Here in Chicago, we're going one step further. Through a novel experiment in democracy, we're not just asking for your opinion, we're asking you to make real decisions about how to spend your tax dollars.

Each alderman in Chicago gets over \$1 million each year to allocate for various infrastructure improvements in his or her ward. This "menu money" goes to resurface streets and alleys, repair sidewalks, curbs and gutters, put in new streetlights, and the like. This menu money is spent at the total discretion of each alderman.

Beginning with the 2012-13 budget cycle, we ceded our decision-making authority to the residents of our wards through a process known as "participatory budgeting." Now, for a third year, residents of our wards will be eligible to vote directly on the infrastructure projects that are funded in our communities.

Participatory budgeting is grassroots democracy at its best. The process will make the aldermanic menu program more transparent and accessible, it will open up participation to people who have never before been involved and it will make government spending more effective. Who knows better what is needed in our communities than the people who live there?

At the heart of participatory budgeting are collaboration and consensus building. This Participatory Budgeting Chicago Rulebook was developed through a similar democratic process. We worked with a Steering Committee representing a wide spectrum of Chicagoans and we believe the final product will work well in our diverse communities.

We thank everyone who developed this rulebook. We are especially grateful to The Great Cities Institute at the University of Illinois at Chicago and the Participatory Budgeting Project for providing the structure for our thoughtful decision-making process. We are proud to present this rulebook to you and excited to dive into this new democratic practice in Chicago.

Welcome to PB Chicago!

Chicago City Council Members

John Arena  
Alderman, 45th Ward

Joe Moore  
Alderman, 49th Ward

Ricardo Muñoz  
Alderman, 22nd Ward

## **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.

## **Participatory Budgeting in Chicago (PBC)**

In 2009, Chicago Alderman Joe Moore launched the first PB process in the US, based on the model developed in Brazil. Since 2012, six Aldermen have participated in PB Chicago: Aldermen Arena (45<sup>th</sup> ward), Capplemann (46<sup>th</sup> ward), Hairston (5<sup>th</sup> ward), Moore (49<sup>th</sup> ward) and Muñoz (22<sup>nd</sup> ward). This year, Aldermen Arena, Moore and Muñoz are inviting residents to directly decide how to spend \$3 million dollars – at least \$1 million per ward.

Residents will decide how to spend part of their ward's "menu money," the \$1.3 million that each Alderman receives annually to spend as they desire. Menu money can only be used for capital repairs – physical infrastructure projects that benefit the public. Leadership Committees in each ward and a Steering Committee of ward representatives and city-wide organizations are working with the Aldermen to carry out the PB process.

# Goals: Why Participatory Budgeting in Chicago?

We hope to accomplish three main goals in participating PBC wards:

## **1. Equity**

We aim for our process to be fair and just and to lead to a more equitable distribution of public dollars in the city of Chicago.

## **2. Inclusion**

We aim 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 prevent the 'usual suspects' or reduce the influence of groups with more resources from dominating the decision-making process, and to generate spending decisions that are fairer and better reflect the entire community's needs.

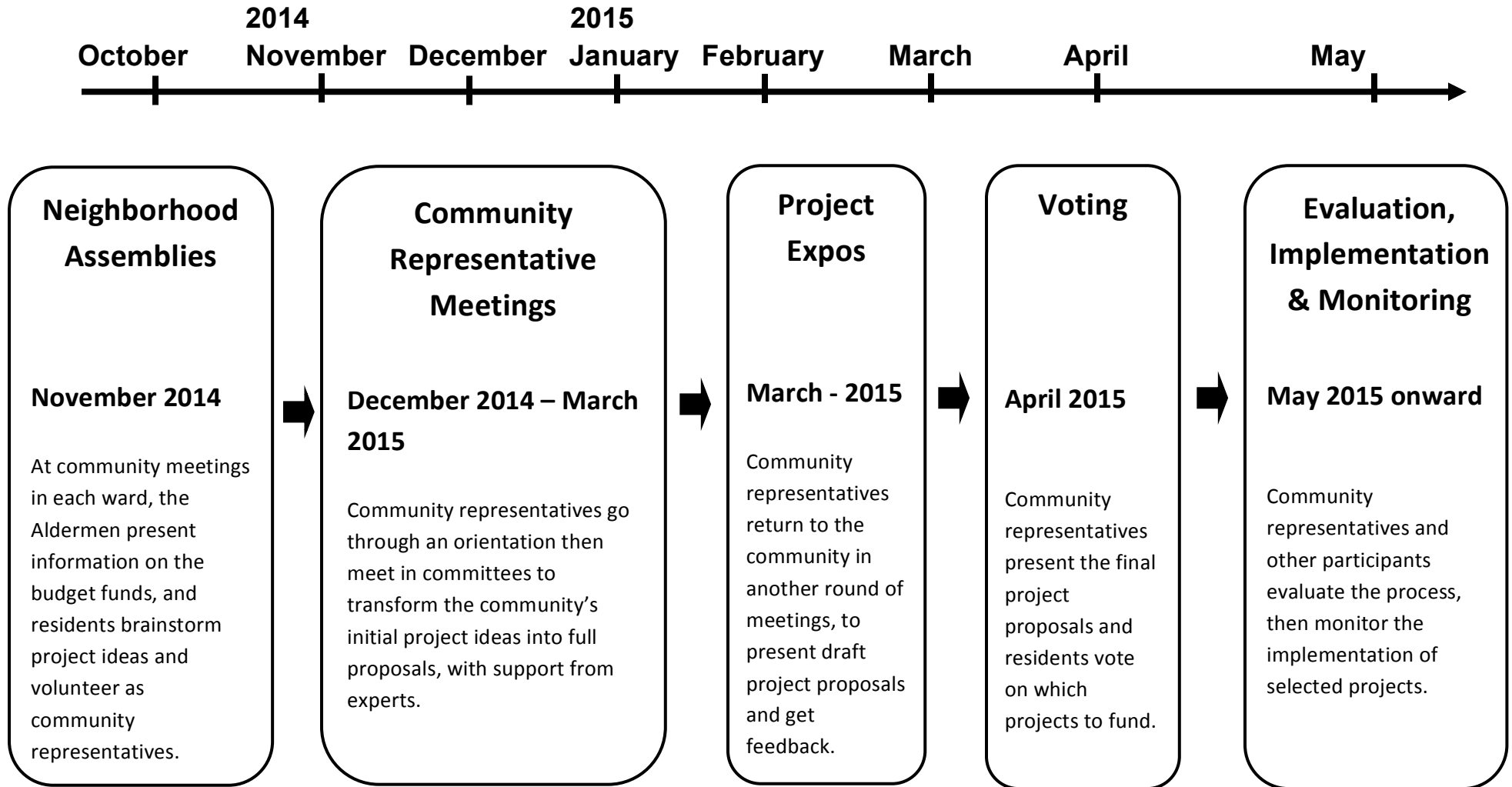
## **3. Community Building**

We aim to strengthen our communities and the individuals within them through outreach and education. By building community 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 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. The 2014-2015 cycle has five main steps, starting in November 2014 and continuing into 2015.



## **Rules: How does it work?**

### **Neighborhood Assemblies**

- Each ward will hold at least 5 Neighborhood Assemblies, including at least two special assemblies focused on engaging underrepresented populations, such as youth and non-English speakers.
- It is recommended that there be at least one assembly in each of the following timeframes: morning; weekend; and evening. This will allow for the broadest possible attendance.
- In order to attract more community reps that are representative of community demographics, wards are encouraged to hold more targeted, smaller-scale mini-assemblies at non-PB meetings of community organizations, churches, civic associations led by ward staff with 1-2 volunteers.
- Anyone is welcome to attend the Neighborhood Assemblies and propose project ideas.

### **Community Representative Meetings**

- 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 Leadership 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, Housing, Environment, Health and Social Service Facilities.
- Each community rep committee should strive to have 2 facilitators per committee and facilitators should go through training to prepare them for their role.
- 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. 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, Seniors, and Non-English Speaking Communities.
- Each committee will send its final project proposals to the ward's Alderman at least three weeks before the public vote.

### **Project Expos**

- 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). Each ward will also post project proposals online and solicit feedback.



## **Voting for Projects**

- Residents who live in the ward and are at least 16 years of age can vote for projects. Individual wards may use a lower voting age, if agreed on by the Alderman and the Ward Leadership 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 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 engaged more people of color, more low-income individuals and more immigrants than voting in the ward office or at the voting assembly.
- Each voter may cast one vote per project proposal.
- The Steering Committee and Ward Leadership Committees will decide together the number of total votes each person can cast, once the approximate number of projects on the ballots is known.

## **Amendments**

- The Steering Committee will review and modify the rulebook as needed at the end of each PBC 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 Leadership Committee.

## **Acceptable IDs for Voter Eligibility**

Voters must prove that they live in the ward 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, 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;
- Residency Letter or Identification issued by a homeless shelter, halfway house, etc;
- 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;
- 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 their Alderman's office to learn how they can participate.

## **Roles & 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**

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

- Attend a Neighborhood Assembly 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 PBC

### **Community Representatives**

Community Representatives do the work necessary to turn community ideas into project proposals.

- 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
- Participate in the evaluation of the PB process

### **Ward Leadership Committees**

In each participating ward, a PB Leadership Committee composed of local individuals, organizations, and institutions manage the PB process locally. Interested community representatives will also be able to join their Leadership Committee after participating for a cycle. Responsibilities may vary by ward.

- Help arrange food and childcare for assemblies and meetings
- Help identify locations for Neighborhood Assemblies and Project Expos
- Distribute promotional materials
- Conduct outreach to mobilize community members to participate

- Facilitate Neighborhood Assemblies, Project Expos and Community Representative meetings
- Monitor project implementation
- Participate in evaluating the PB process
- Make decisions on PBC governance at the ward level

### **PBC Steering Committee**

A 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. A full list of Steering Committee members is included at the end of the rulebook.

- 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

### **Aldermanic Offices**

- Provide staff support to Community Representatives and Leadership 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 childcare 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

### **Project Leads (The Great Cities Institute at UIC & The Participatory Budgeting Project)**

- 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 PBC online presence and resources

## **About the PB Chicago Steering Committee**

The following organizations and individuals serve on the Steering Committee for 2014-2015:

### **Aldermen**

Alderman John Arena, 45<sup>th</sup> ward

Alderman Joe Moore, 49<sup>th</sup> ward

Alderman Rick Muñoz Alderman, 22<sup>nd</sup> ward

### **Resource Organizations**

UIC Great Cities Institute (Co-Chair)

The Participatory Budgeting Project (Co-Chair)

Active Transportation Alliance

Blocks Together

Center for Tax and Budget Accountability

Chicago Lawyers' Committee for Civil Rights Under Law

Chicago Public Art Group

Enlace Chicago

Friends of the Parks

Grassroots Collaborative

Illinois Collaboration on Youth

Illinois PIRG

Lawndale Alliance

Metropolitan Planning Council

Mikva Challenge

The Right Source

Smart Chicago Collaborative

Survey Research Lab

UIC Institute for Policy and Civic Engagement

United Congress of Community and Religious Organizations

Urban Transportation Center