



**Seattle**  
Office for Civil Rights

**For Immediate Release**

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**Participatory Budgeting Moves Forward in City of Seattle**

*Seattle Office for Civil Rights announces Participatory Budgeting Project as awardee for PB contract*

**Seattle, WA** – The Seattle Office for Civil Rights (SOCR) has selected the third-party administrator who will run the Participatory Budgeting process in the City of Seattle. The awardee of the request for proposal is the [Participatory Budgeting Project \(PBP\)](#).

SOCR received one proposal for the Participatory Budgeting RFP which came from the Participatory Budgeting Project (PBP). Although we had hoped for more applicants, we were pleased to see a proposal from PBP, who were engaged in the application process and showed a deep understanding and experience with a community led PB process.

Since 2009, PBP has worked with dozens of governments, public institutions, and organizations to provide technical help with planning, implementation, and evaluation of PB. Their scope of work builds on their years of ability and adapts it to the Seattle local context by aligning closely to the Black Brilliance Research Project vision, deeply engaging with local communities, and hiring Seattle personnel. PBP is committed to supporting communities who make decision on how to distribute public money and their aim is to create and support PB processes that deepen democracy, build strong communities, and make public budgets more equitable and effective.

The Rating Panel to decide the awardee for the PB contract was made up of community organizers, City and County staff, and were all individuals connected to Black community with diverse ages, sexuality, and gender expressions. As PBP was the only request for proposal sent for consideration, the panel was instructed to read, rate, and submit a recommendation on how to move forward with PBP's proposal. The Rating Panel sent more questions to PBP which centered people with especially targeted identities, addressing the complexity of the Seattle landscape while meeting a strict timeline, building systems that address conflict and harm, and budget elaborations and adjustments to address pay equity. The rating panel reviewed PBP's responses and decided to move forward with PBP given that:

1. SOCR's Community Investments division bring up remaining points in the contracting phase.
2. PBP ensures that an intersectional and historical analysis is woven into all PB processes moving forward.



**Seattle**  
Office for Civil Rights

3. Make the panel's deliberation notes publicly available to future community groups.

PBP clearly met the expectations and qualifications set out in the RFP. They are a leader in the field of PB and share many of the same values necessary to have an effective and trusted community led PB process. Some added strengths include:

- Have an interest in building a process that is replicable.
- Outlined ways they can build local ability to help future PB process.
- Clearly described a desire to center especially targeted BIPOC communities.

The contract period will be from May 2022 to April 2023, with contract negotiation and development work beginning at once after the public award announcement on April 7, 2022.

One of the largest participatory budgeting undertakings in the nation, the \$30 million funding for this Participatory Budgeting program came from a \$100 million fund earmarked by then Mayor Jenny Durkan after community groups demanded investments into Black, Indigenous, and People of Color (BIPOC) communities during the protests for Black lives in the summer of 2020.

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**Derrick Wheeler-Smith, Interim Director, SOCR:**

"We are excited to award this contract to Participatory Budgeting Project and begin to invest this funding into community. We've seen through other municipalities that participatory budgeting can be a transformative process for marginalized communities to hold power and thrive in the decision-making process for self-investment. We look forward to working with PBP as we navigate this bold new terrain."

**Tammy Morales, Councilmember, City of Seattle:**

"Participatory budgeting is a critical component of democratizing wealth, power, and resources by empowering the community to have input on how government resources are distributed. This approval has been long-awaited and I am excited for the beginning of this Participatory Budgeting process. My office is hopeful to see new, impactful investments in Black and Brown communities."

**Participatory Budgeting Project:**

"The Participatory Budgeting Project team is eager to collaborate with the City of Seattle and the Seattle Office for Civil Rights to implement the City's 2022 participatory budgeting process. Community leaders in Seattle have worked tirelessly to build power, dismantle anti-Black racism, and repair harm from systemic underinvestment in the City's historically underserved



**Seattle**  
Office for Civil Rights

communities. We look forward to supporting a transformative process that brings to life the vision for participatory budgeting articulated by community members through the city-commissioned Black Brilliance Research Project report as well as the longstanding efforts of local communities to reimagine public safety.”

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**About the Seattle Office for Civil Rights**

The Seattle Office for Civil Rights (SOCR) works to advance civil rights and end barriers to equity. SOCR enforces laws against illegal discrimination in employment, housing, public accommodations, and contracting within Seattle city limits. SOCR leads the Race & Social Justice Initiative, a citywide effort to end institutional racism in City government and to achieve racial equity across our community.