



City of Cleveland

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Department of Finance Legislative Summary

Ord. No. 96-2023

Civic Participation Fund: Participatory Budgeting / “People’s Budget”

Through this investment in Cleveland's civic infrastructure, Cleveland will pilot its first-ever citywide participatory budgeting process, or “People’s Budget.”

In a People’s Budget (PB), Cleveland residents propose ideas, turn ideas into proposals, and then vote for proposals that will come before City Council for funding. Cleveland VOTES will implement the PB pilot over 12 months in partnership with Neighborhood Connections and the City. The goal of implementation is to ensure historically marginalized residents—particularly youth 14+—have a new “onramp to democracy” by participating in a new piece of civic infrastructure.

This proposed ordinance directs \$510,000 to implement a PB process, focusing on deep community engagement. Costs include:

- Dedicated implementation staff at the City and at Cleveland VOTES
- Stipends for a resident Steering Committee
- Outreach and engagement micro-grants for community-based organizations
- Voting software and evaluation services

The 21-member Steering Committee will support outreach and implementation of the PB process. Its members will be chosen by an open call and targeted outreach to ensure diverse representation by ward, race, gender, and age. It will finalize standards and requirements for PB projects. Cleveland VOTES and Neighborhood Connections will then host idea sessions where residents propose ideas for projects. The funded City and Cleveland VOTES staff will work with residents to build full proposals out of those ideas. Residents then vote on proposals online or in-person during a week(s)-long process full of community events with arts, food, and music.

Legislative Funding Request: \$510,000 (with additional \$5 million planned for resulting project proposals)