Budgeting for Justice

PARTICIPATORY BUDGETING AS A MEANS OF ADVANCING RACIAL EQUITY IN LOS ANGELES
Welcome!

Purpose:
- Shed light on how participatory budgeting (PB) can be used to advance racial equity in Los Angeles County

Outcomes: Shared understanding of the following:
- how public budgeting drives racial inequities;
- PB through a racial equity lens, including recommendations;
- opportunities to address racial inequities through PB.
Agenda

• **Racial Inequities in Los Angeles**
  - Indicators
  - Key Drivers

• **Participatory Budgeting through a Racial Equity Lens:**
  - Definition
  - Main Steps
  - Key Components
  - Three Models
  - Recommendations

• **Potential Opportunities for PB in Los Angeles**
Racial Inequities in Los Angeles

*RaceCounts.org shows that Angelenos of color are less likely to:*
  - have access to early childhood education
  - have health insurance
  - own a home
  - feel safe in their neighborhoods

*Recently we’ve seen significant racial disparities in:*
  - COVID-19 death rates
  - unemployment rates
  - the impact of police violence
Racial Inequities in Los Angeles

Key Drivers (RaceCounts.org):

- Inequitable systems that turn racial biases into disparities
- Exclusionary patterns of economic development
- Imbalance in political power
- Use of need- and color-blind policies that perpetuate disparities
Racial Inequities in Public Budgeting

**Question:** How do the drivers of racial inequity play out within the context of public budgets—both in terms of process and outcomes?

*Share answers in chat room.*
Participatory Budgeting

**Definition:** In general, PB is a process that allows residents to directly participate in budget decisionmaking.
Participatory Budgeting

Main Steps in PB:

1. Approval
2. Design
3. Community Outreach
4. Brainstorming
5. Proposal Development and Review
6. Decision-making
7. Project Implementation and Process Evaluation
Participatory Budgeting through a Racial Equity Lens

Key Design Components:

1. **Transparency** > process open and accessible to the public
2. **Civic Engagement** > robust community outreach and participation
3. **Community Decisionmaking** > over what projects are funded
4. **Equity** > empower marginalized people and shift resources to them
Participatory Budgeting through a Racial Equity Lens

**PB Models:**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Key Components</th>
<th>Consultative</th>
<th>Democracy Reform</th>
<th>Social Justice</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Transparency</strong></td>
<td>✓</td>
<td>✓</td>
<td>✓</td>
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<tr>
<td>• Process readily made open and accessible to the public.</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Civic Engagement</strong></td>
<td>✓</td>
<td>✓</td>
<td>✓</td>
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<tr>
<td>• Robust community outreach and participation.</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Community Decision-making</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td>✓</td>
<td>✓</td>
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<tr>
<td>• Community members decide which projects are funded, not elected officials.</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Equity</strong></td>
<td></td>
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<td>✓</td>
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<tr>
<td>• Civic engagement targeted to marginalized community members.</td>
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<td>• Needs-based allocation of resources to marginalized communities.</td>
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<td>• Marginalized community members co-design program and determine rules.</td>
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Participatory Budgeting through a Racial Equity Lens

**Consultative PB:** primarily aims to enhance public trust. Does not include community decisionmaking power. In terms of the four drivers, generally:

- fails to account for systemic biases that result in racially disparate outcomes
- does not address exclusionary economic patterns
- fails to address racial disparities in political power
- does not meaningfully account for the interests of high-need communities
Participatory Budgeting through a Racial Equity Lens

*Democracy Reform PB:* prioritizes shifting power to community members in addition to improving public trust, but does not focus on marginalized communities. In terms of the four drivers, generally:

- fails to account for systemic biases that result in racially disparate outcomes
- does not address exclusionary economic patterns
- fails to address racial disparities in political power
- does not meaningfully account for the interests of high-need communities
Participatory Budgeting through a Racial Equity Lens

*Social Justice PB:* prioritizes increasing equity, in addition to improving trust in government and shifting power to community members. In terms of the four drivers, generally:

- minimizes systemic biases that result in racially disparate outcomes
- reduces exclusionary economic decisionmaking
- reduces political power imbalances
- provides for need- and color-conscious policymaking
Participatory Budgeting through a Racial Equity Lens

Recommendations:

• Adopt the Social Justice model (if politically feasible)
• Use the Social Justice model to transform budgeting systems overall
• Advocate for racial equity to be centered throughout the process
• Advocate for co-design from the outset
• Use PB to facilitate movement building and community empowerment
Opportunities to Organize and Advocate for PB

*Utilize PB approaches to incorporating community voice and involvement*

- Measure J implementation
- Alternatives to Incarceration
- AB109
- A second federal Coronavirus and economic relief package
Questions?

- Racial Inequities and Key Drivers?
- PB through a Racial Equity Lens?
- Opportunities to Organize and Advocate for PB?
Next Steps

- Workgroup on PB and racial equity in L.A.

Thank You!