

PARTICIPATORY BUDGETING in NYC: KEY DATAⁱ



In the first year in NYC, participatory budgeting (PB)...

- 1. Engaged 8,850 people, including: 2,138 neighborhood assembly participants; 251 Budget Delegates; and almost 6,000 voters.**
- 2. Mobilized long-term residents, many of whom had NOT previously worked for community change.**
 - 75% of neighborhood assembly participants and 78% of PB voters lived in their neighborhood for more than 8 years; 55% of assembly participants and 60% of voters lived in their neighborhood for more than 15 years.
 - 1 out of 3 neighborhood assembly participants and budget delegates and 44% of PB voters had never worked with others in their community to solve a problem before PB.
- 3. Brought people that are disengaged from and disillusioned with government into the political process.**
 - 78% of PB voters felt that they understood the needs of their council district better after voting.
 - Almost half of the neighborhood assembly participants had not contacted an elected official in the year before PB.
 - Almost 2 out of 3 (61%) neighborhood assembly participants think our system of democracy needs a lot of changes or that it needs to be completely changed compared to 1 out of 3 (33%) in the general populationⁱⁱ.
 - Budget delegates were more likely to be “very comfortable” contacting government agencies and officials after PB. 34% were “very comfortable” before and 44% after.
- 4. Mobilized a racially and ethnically diverse cross-section of New Yorkers.**
 - 20% of voters identified as African American; 14% as Hispanic or Latino; and 9% as Other.
 - A higher percentage of African Americans participated in neighborhood assemblies (38%), compared to the full population in the four districts.^{iv}
 - 21% of budget delegates and voters were born outside of the United States.
 - 11% of voters were most comfortable using a language other than English.
- 5. People of color actively participated in PB meetings and discussions.**
 - 87% of participants that identified as Black or African American, 81% of Asians and 79% of Latinos made specific budget proposals at neighborhood assemblies.
 - Participants that identified as Black or African American were the most likely to volunteer to be budget delegates.

6. People of color and low-income people participated in PB at higher rates than traditional electoral politics.

District 8:

- Latinos were 39% of voters in the 2009 City Council elections^v. However, 46% of the district's neighborhood assembly participants and 48% of PB voters identified as Latino.
- 22% of PB voters had household income less than \$10,000 compared to 4% of the district's voters in the 2009 City Council election.

District 45:

- Black or African Americans were 79% of voters in 2009 City Council elections. However, 83% of the district's neighborhood assembly participants and 84% of the district's PB voters identified as Black or African American.
- 20% PB voters had household income less than \$25,000 compared to 7% of the district's voters in the 2009 election.

District 32:

- 9% PB voters had household income less than \$25,000 compared to 1% of the district's voters in the 2009 election^{vi}.

7. PB built non-traditional leadership in communities.

Although women reported starting the PB process with less comfort in their leadership skills, they were the most likely to actively participate in all phases of PB.

- Only 24% of female budget delegates reported that they felt "very comfortable" with public speaking prior to starting PB, compared to 40% of male delegates.
- Only 18% of female budget delegates reported that they felt "very comfortable" with negotiating and building agreement prior to starting PB, compared to 30% of male delegates.
- However, women were 64% of neighborhood assembly participants; 65% of budget delegates and 62% of voters in the PB process.

While low-income people were less likely to be involved with community or politics before PB, they were actively engaged in PB meetings and discussions.

- 65% of participants with household income less than \$10,000 had NOT contacted an elected official in the year before PB, compared to 40% of those with income higher than \$150,000.
- Half of participants with household income less than \$10,000 had NOT worked in their community to solve some community problems before PB, compared to 25% of people that make more than \$150,000.
- 90% of participants with household income less than \$10,000 spoke during the small group discussion, compared to 94% of participants that make more than \$150,000.

The vast majority of Spanish speakers spoke during the Neighborhood assemblies and almost half volunteered to be budget delegates.

- 89% of Spanish-speaking participants spoke during the small group discussion.
- 42% of Spanish-speaking participants volunteered as budget delegates; compared to 49% of English-speaking participants.

8. PB provided a voice to those who are most in need; those who want to make changes in their community, but don't have an outlet through traditional politics.

Low income participants are concerned about neighborhood and city-wide problems and want to make decisions about their neighborhoods.

- 45% of neighborhood assembly participants and 37% of PB voters had a household income below \$50,000, the approximate median income of the four districts.^{vii} About 1 out of 5 PB voters had income less than \$25,000.
- 76% of budget delegates with household income less than \$15,000 reported that they were very interested in city-wide problems compared to 45% of those with incomes above \$100,000.
- 79% of budget delegates with an income less than \$15,000 are “very interested” in being able to make decisions about their neighborhood compared to only 63% of those with income greater than \$100,000.

9. PB expanded social and political networks.

- 82% of budget delegates are more likely to participate in a community organization after PB.
- 34% of budget delegates attended more than 5 meetings at a community organization in the six months prior to PB, compared to 53% during PB.
- 14% of budget delegates attended 2 to 5 meetings of a political party in the six months prior to PB, compared to double that amount (27%) during PB.

Visit www.PBNYC.org for more info.

ⁱ Data based on 963 neighborhood assembly surveys; 344 budget delegate surveys; 3,721 voter surveys.

ⁱⁱ General Social Surveys 2004: NORC ed. Data for Middle Atlantic cities with populations over 250,000.

^{iv} Based on weighted average of City Council districts 8, 32, 39 and 45 from 2010 Census.

^v Voter Activation Network, 2009 City Council Election.

^{vi} Voter data includes full population of District 32.

^{vii} \$53,778 is the combined median income for council districts 8, 32, 39 and 45.