

15 Key Metrics for Evaluating Participatory Budgeting: A Toolkit for Evaluators and Implementers

Developed by Public Agenda and the Participatory Budgeting Project together with the North American Participatory Budgeting Research Board, and with generous funding from Democracy Fund.

How to Read the Key PB Metrics

The 15 Key PB Metrics, outlined in the rest of this document, describe PB's potential impacts in three areas:

Civic and Political Life:

- a) To what extent does PB engage a significant and growing number of residents, including those who cannot or do not participate in mainstream political life? (*Metrics 1, 2, 3, 4, 5*)
- b) To what extent does PB foster collaboration between civil society organizations and government? (*Metric 6*)
- c) Is PB associated with elected officials' political careers? (*Metric 7*)

Inclusion and Equity:

- a) Is PB engaging traditionally marginalized communities? (*Metric 8*)
- b) Through what means does PB facilitate participation? (*Metric 9*)
- c) Is PB fostering equitable distribution of resources? (*Metric 10*)

Government:

- a) How are the number of PB processes and dollar amounts allocated to PB changing from year to year? (*Metrics 11, 12*)
- b) What is the implementation rate of winning PB projects? (*Metric 13*)
- c) Are additional resources being allocated to projects or needs identified through PB? (*Metric 14*)
- d) What is the cost to government of implementing PB? (*Metric 15*)

Each metric is described with:

- A title and a description of how it contributes to a better understanding of PB.
- An indication of whether data collection depends on *primary* or *secondary data sources* or both.

Primary data sources means data collection needs to be conducted by local evaluators at key points during the PB process.

Secondary data sources means data collection can be conducted after the PB processes using publicly available sources, by either local evaluators, Public Agenda or PBP.

- Specific variables that inform the metrics and (where applicable) recommended survey items or questions. Recommended survey items and questions correspond to those in *key PB metrics research instruments*.

Additionally, some metrics include further notes on measurement and analysis issues.

Summary Table of the Key PB Metrics

<i>Metric</i>	<i>Description</i>	<i>Primary Source (Local Evaluators)</i>	<i>Secondary Source (PA, PBP)</i>
Impact on Civic and Political Life			
1. # of PB participants and % of eligible residents who participate.	Indicates PB's reach and ability to engage the targeted population.	Questionnaire for Evaluators and Implementers: # of participants at idea collection events, # of people submitting ideas online, # of active budget delegates, # of voters	Comparisons with # of PB-eligible residents in PB voting area
2. # and % of PB voters who are eligible to vote but did not vote in the most recent local election.	Indicates PB's potential to engage residents who don't participate in the mainstream political process.	Voter Surveys: <i>Did you vote in the [specify year and type of last local election]? A: I am not eligible/ No, but I am eligible/ Yes, I voted/ I am not sure</i>	Comparisons with citizen voting age population (CVAP) data
3. # and % of PB voters who are ineligible to vote in local elections.	Indicates PB's potential to engage people who are excluded from standard forms of political participation owing to age, immigration status or other reasons.	Voter Surveys: <i>Did you vote in the [specify year and type of last local election]? A: I am not eligible/ No, but I am eligible/ Yes, I voted/ I am not sure</i>	
4. # and % of participants who report prior civic engagement or participation.	Indicates PB's potential to attract otherwise less civically engaged residents.	Idea Collection Participant and Voter Surveys: <i>In the past 12 months, have you worked with other people in your neighborhood to fix a problem or improve a condition in your community, not including work you may have done related to participatory budgeting? A: Y/ N/ I am not sure</i>	
5. # and % of participants who report being new or returning to PB.	Indicates both growth and retention of PB participants and various patterns of participation over time.	Idea Collection Participant Surveys: Participated or not in any way in previous PB year Voter Surveys: Voted or not in previous PB year	
6. # of nongovernmental and community-based organizations involved in PB.	Indicates the extent to which PB engages civil society. Also an indicator of variation in how processes are implemented.	Questionnaire for Evaluators and Implementers: # and names of organizations that helped with outreach, were on steering committees, received funding to help implement projects	
7. # and % of elected officials reelected.	Helps to assess over time PB's association with officials' political careers.		Media
Impact on Inclusion and Equity			
8. # and % of participants who are of low SES and/or people of color; and relative to demographics in jurisdiction and most recent local election.	Indicates PB's potential to engage communities that are marginalized in the traditional political process.	Idea Collection Participant and Voter Surveys: Race/ethnicity, Income, Education, Gender, Age	Comparisons with local population and voter demographics in local elections

<i>Metric</i>	<i>Description</i>	<i>Primary Source (Local Evaluators)</i>	<i>Secondary Source (PA, PBP)</i>
Impact on Inclusion and Equity cont.			
9. Accessibility indicators for idea collection phase, project development phase and voting.	Captures aspects of the process implementation that increase access during the idea collection phase, the project development phase and the voting phase.	Questionnaire for Evaluators and Implementers: # of assemblies and other idea collection events, online idea collection, outreach methods; # and type of budget delegate committees; # of reg. voting sites, # of mobile voting locations, online voting, outreach methods Idea Collection Participant and Voter Surveys: <i>How did you first hear about today's [event/vote]? (Check all that apply) [...]</i>	
10. Allocation of PB funds by project type (to be compared with the allocation of comparable funds prior to PB).	Describes how PB funds get allocated across types of projects. Informs study of differences in allocation and of equity in the distribution of PB funds.		#, % and \$ of winning projects by project category; #, % and \$ of PB ballot items by project category; #, % and \$ of projects by project cat. prior to PB
Impact on Government			
11. # of new, continued and discontinued PB processes from year to year.	Tracks growth and sustainability in PB processes over time.		Count of active PB processes: count first-time, continued and discontinued processes
12. Amount and % of funds allocated to PB projects.	Tracks the money allocated to PB projects in any one year.	Questionnaire for Evaluators and Implementers: \$ amount allocated to PB projects; source budget and total amount in source budget for same year	
13. Project completion rates and final project costs.	Highlights the # and % of <i>winning ballot projects</i> that are completed and how much money was spent on them (compared with how much was allocated).		Public records: projects' implementation status, total costs of implementation (and as % of \$ amount allocated at outset)
14. Amount of additional money allocated to projects and needs identified through PB.	Indicates PB's potential to bring additional funds to communities and/or to allocate funds differently by raising the importance of an issue.	Questionnaire for Evaluators and Implementers: <i>Can you think of a project that was or projects that were identified or developed through the PB process that subsequently received funding allocations from sources other than the money allocated directly through PB? How much money and from where has it come?</i>	
15. Dollar amount spent on PB implementation.	Makes transparent how much money is spent on implementation and how that compares with the funds allocated to projects, with quality indicators of the process and with outcomes.	Questionnaire for Evaluators and Implementers: <i>Can you provide an estimate of the \$ amount spent by the [district/city/county] on each of the following during the implementation of PB? [...]</i>	

IMPLEMENTATION PHASE

Planning:

Implementers define process goals, write or revise the process Rulebook and establish roles and responsibilities.

Idea collection:

In large community meetings and online, residents learn about the available budget funds, brainstorm initial spending ideas and volunteer as budget delegates.

Proposal development:

Delegates meet in committees to review project ideas, consult with technical experts, develop full project proposals and prepare project posters and presentations.

EVALUATION COMPONENTS

• Questionnaire for Evaluators and Implementers:

- Steering Committee, or not
- List of community-based organizations (CBOs) on Steering Committee (if applicable)
- Dollar amount allocated for PB projects
- Name and size of the source budget for PB
- How the money can be spent / project eligibility criteria

• Questionnaire for Evaluators and Implementers:

- Number and types of idea collection events that took place, including mobile and online
- Number of participants/attendees, in person and online
- Outreach methods
- List of CBOs officially helping with outreach

• Idea Collection Participant Surveys:

- Q: How did you hear about today's assembly?
- Prior civic engagement
- Prior involvement with PB
- Voted or not in most recent local election

• Questionnaire for Evaluators and Implementers:

- Opportunity to volunteer as a budget delegate, or not
- Number of active budget delegates (if applicable)
- List of budget delegates committees formed (if applicable)

IMPLEMENTATION PHASE

Vote:

The public votes for which projects to fund, and the winning projects get added to the budget.

Project implementation:

The government funds the winning projects.

EVALUATION COMPONENTS

- **Questionnaire for Evaluators and Implementers:**
 - Voting eligibility criteria for the process
 - Number of regular and mobile voting sites
 - Online voting, or not
 - Number of days the voting period lasted
 - Number of ballots cast (in person and online)
 - Outreach methods
 - List of CBOs that officially helped with outreach
- **Voter Surveys:**
 - Q: How did you hear about today's vote?
 - Prior civic engagement
 - Prior voting in PB
 - Voted or not in most recent local election
 - Race/Ethnicity, Age, Gender, Income, Education

- **Questionnaire for Evaluators and Implementers:**
 - Number of days or months the whole process lasted
 - List any project or projects identified or developed through the PB process that received funding from other sources than the money allocated to PB
 - List of CBOs responsible for implementing projects
 - Estimate of the total dollar amount spent by government on: technical assistance; organizing help; IT services; space, food, materials, transportation to events; etc.
 - Estimate of number of government staffers who worked on PB and the total number of hours worked

See also: Library of Additional PB Research Instruments

For evaluators who are interested in further data collection, such as conducting qualitative interviews with participants and observing meetings, we have compiled a selection of additional research instrument templates. These instruments have been used previously in PB evaluations in the U.S. They do not directly inform the key PB metrics, but local evaluators may find them useful as they develop additional research questions. This ***Library of Additional PB Research Instruments*** currently includes *additional demographic questions for participant surveys*, *sample budget delegate surveys*, *qualitative interview guides* and *sample meeting observation sheets*.