

Agenda

- Welcome
- Warm up
- Info Share
 - PB and Education
 - PB and Health
- Discussion
- Reception!



**DEMOCRATIC
INNOVATION TO ADDRESS
BIG CHALLENGES**

Wednesday, November 8, 2023
6 - 7:30 pm
True North Classroom, Stephen Robert '62 Hall
280 Brook Street

CO-MODERATORS:
Allegra Scharff
Chief of Healthcare Equity, RHOH (Brown, MPH '17)
Breanna Lemieux
Accountable Entry Program Lead, EORHS

PANELISTS:
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LESC, Brown '16
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Opportunities Health Equity Zone, OME | NEI, Brown '18
Joana Yeboah
Pawtucket resident and PB Steering Committee member

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Participatory Budgeting Technical Assistance Provider
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Research Assistant, Brown '25

 **WATSON INSTITUTE**
INTERNATIONAL & PUBLIC AFFAIRS
 **BROWN UNIVERSITY**



Participatory Budgeting is a democratic process where community members decide how to spend part of a public budget.

Communities have the power to make real decisions about real money.

The Impacts of Participatory Budgeting:



Build more **inclusive political participation**– center the voices of people who are historically excluded from civic processes



Strengthen **connections** among residents, city leaders, agencies, and community organizations



Drive more **equitable distribution** of public resources

WARM UP: POP QUIZ!

#1: What is the total amount of the annual state budget for Rhode Island for FY24*?

- A. \$950 Million
- B. \$27 Billion
- C. \$6 Billion
- D. \$50 Billion
- E. \$14 Billion

*From the Office of Management of the Budget for RI: <https://omb.ri.gov/data-visualizations/FY-2024-budget>

WARM UP: POP QUIZ!

#2: Of the \$14 Billion total, how much of the state budget is spent on Education* and Health and Human Services (HHS) respectively?

- A. Education = \$7 Billion; HHS = \$5 Billion
- B. Education = \$3.5 Billion; HHS = \$6 Billion
- C. Education = \$9 Billion; HHS = \$1.5 Billion
- D. Education = \$1 Billion; HHS = \$9 Billion

* Includes K-12 and post-secondary



Participatory Budgeting in Schools

Watson Institute for International and Public Affairs
November 8, 2023





“Education for democracy cannot be separated from the practice of democracy and that democracy can be learned more effectively through direct and active participation in one’s communities.”
—Paulo Freire

City PB vs. School PB

At the root of the democratic process is a substantive discourse among the polis, one which identifies the needs of the population and works in tandem with the local government to execute the approved projects.

1. Replicable decision-making process whereby.....
 2. Citizens deliberate publically over the distribution of.....
 3. Public resources that are allocated by a city, state, or federal government.
- (Russon-Gilman, 2019)

At the school level, Community Decides follows this fundamental skeleton, with minor changes

- \$10,000 grant awarded by the Brown University
- The deliberation is held in a PB class that all students can opt into but is not open to all
- Deliberation is guided and structured around the PB class, but with limited parameters instituted by the teachers
- Local government is the school administration as well as staff that can decide the feasibility of the project

Goals for Community Decides Project

- Address the civic learning opportunity gap, where low-income students and students of color have an institutionally lower level of access
- Increase civic knowledge, attitudes, skills, and practices for all students
- Provide opportunities for students (particularly underserved youth) to acquire relevant civic competencies through project-based learning
- Contribute to positive school climates by deepening relationships and increasing trust, feelings of belonging, and community cohesion
- Help build a civic conscience

Community Decides Year 1: SPRING 2021

Original research design invited students, parents, and staff to meetings

- Five online meetings, narrowing spending priorities to one
- Collected data from students directly during their classroom days
- COVID-19 pandemic
- PAVED team collected data from all groups and detailed spending priorities



The screenshot shows a Microsoft Excel spreadsheet titled "Community Decides Budgeting Form". The spreadsheet has the following data:

Number of Items	Estimated Cost	Intended Use	Justification
5?	\$5,000.00	Eating lunch and breakfast. Better communication.	Having round tables will makes it a little more quiet and peaceful than it usually is.
	\$60-\$150	taste testing/sampling the cafeteria food.	It would give the chefs feedback on if the food should be made or not/how much the students like the food.

The spreadsheet is displayed in a window titled "Community Decides Budgeting Form". The right side of the image shows a video call interface with three participants.

Community Decides Year 2: FALL 2021 / SPRING 2022

New model, more opening up of schools

- Focused completely on students, as we noted positive feedback from last year's experience
- Lessons from “Voces Con Poder”: How do we create an environment that was supportive of *all* students?
- Implement an “outreach” + “townhall” activity, allowing students to gather and make decisions together
- Students interact and discuss, learning more about budgeting and about their schools
- Certain students would be chosen to join a class, and further develop a Spending Priorities Agreement that detailed specific investments/purchases



Community Decides Year 2: FALL 2021 / SPRING 2022

Bathroom upgrades

New mirrors and
bathroom supplies

Food-related projects

Seasoning station:
working closely with
the school's food
vendor (SODEXO)

Reusable water bottles

1 for each student

Community Decides Year 3: FALL 2022 / SPRING 2023

Formalizing many of the “kinks”

Outreach activities focused on knowledge gain and exposure

Restructuring outreach and town hall activities, so that they built and reinforced knowledge

Noted retained knowledge over the three years by students who had their first CD exposure 3 yrs. ago

Creation of a packageable curriculum by PAVED Research team for the delegate class

Created opportunities for greater student interaction and input

Y3 Community Decides Timeline

01 October

Three outreach activities, one for each grade level—initial exposure to PB

02 Nov-Dec

Town Halls—students rank their needs and simulate PB decision-making

03 Spring Semester

Students are chosen, both random and self-selection, to take part in the PB class

04 April-May

Announcement of projects, final surveying, and execution of projects

Curriculum for Community Decides Class

1. Learned about what budgets are
2. Made practice budgets
3. Discussed preferences for spending the money
4. Chosen preferred groups for how to spend the money
5. Done field research in the cafeteria to learn our peers' ideas
6. Learned from experts to help our decision
7. Made arguments for our projects
8. Chosen **one** project to focus on
9. Making a budget to discuss our exact plans (item-by-item)

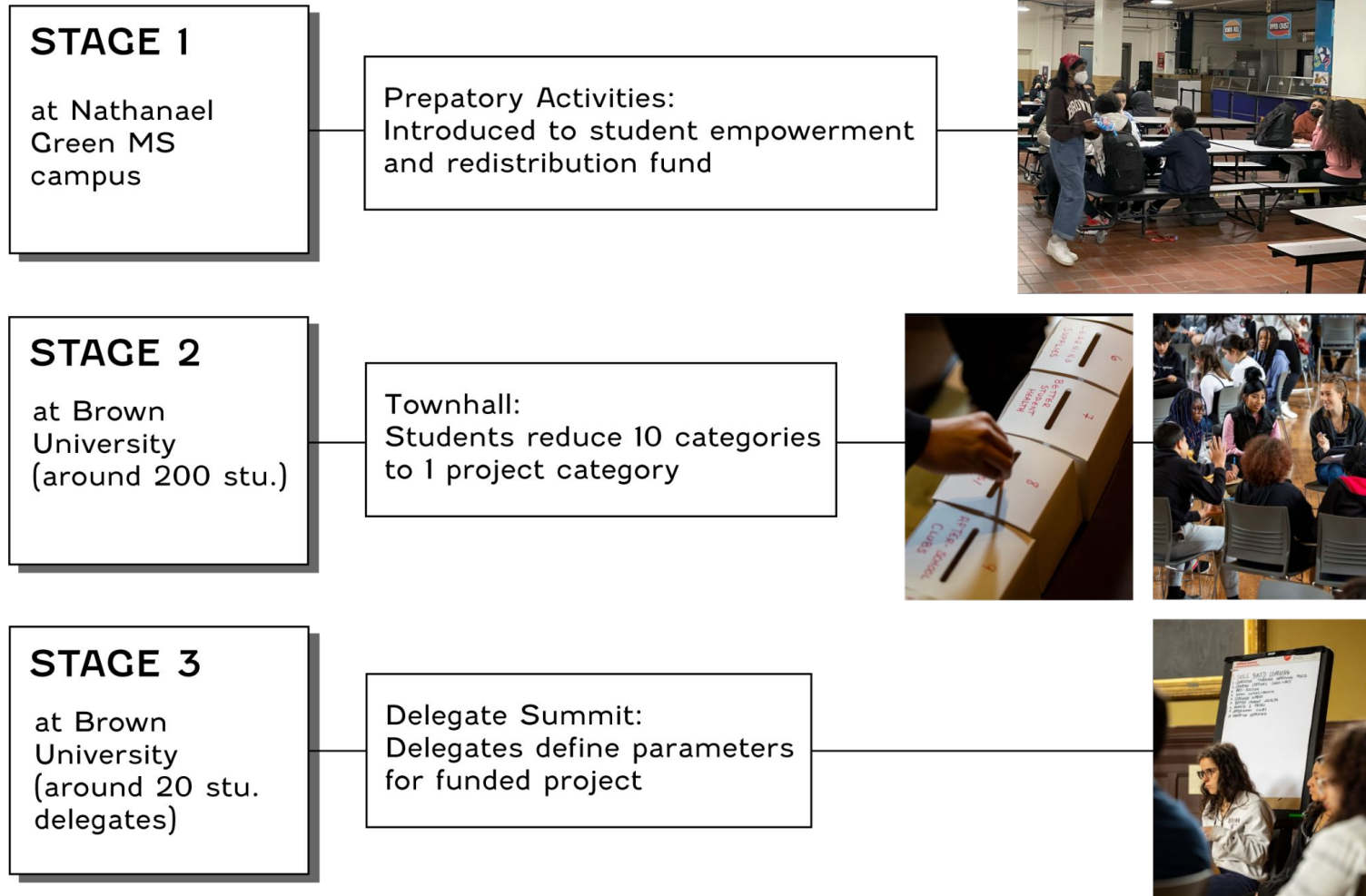
Power to the Pupil: SPRING-SUMMER 2023

How do we make decisions about redistribution?



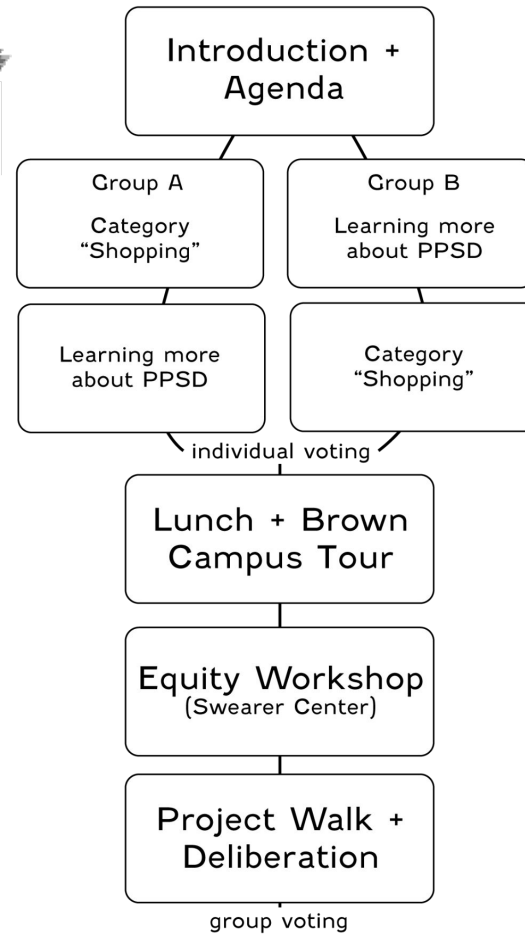
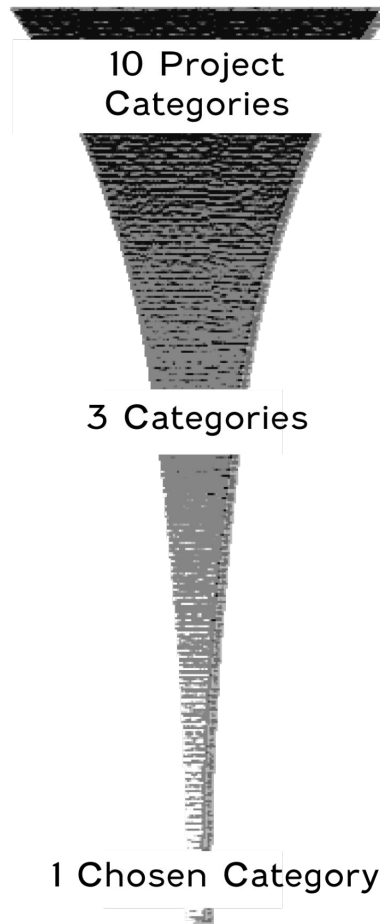
\$100,000 from the Fund for the Education of the Children of Providence

Power to the Pupil: SPRING-SUMMER 2023



Power to the Pupil: SPRING-SUMMER 2023

STAGE 2: TOWNHALL





School Participatory Budgeting is a promising civic learning tool designed to prepare young people to be active, engaged participants in civic life for the long-term by developing students' civic capacities like sense of agency, collective problem-solving, and communication and research skills, deepening relationships, trust, and cohesion in the school community, and making meaningful improvements to the school campus through democratic decision-making. (Bartlett, 2020)

Student Quotes



“I like asking students opinions because they are the target. The students should make their own choice with the help of adults.”



“It is my school and I should decide how to make it better.”



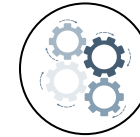
“We know what we actually need.”



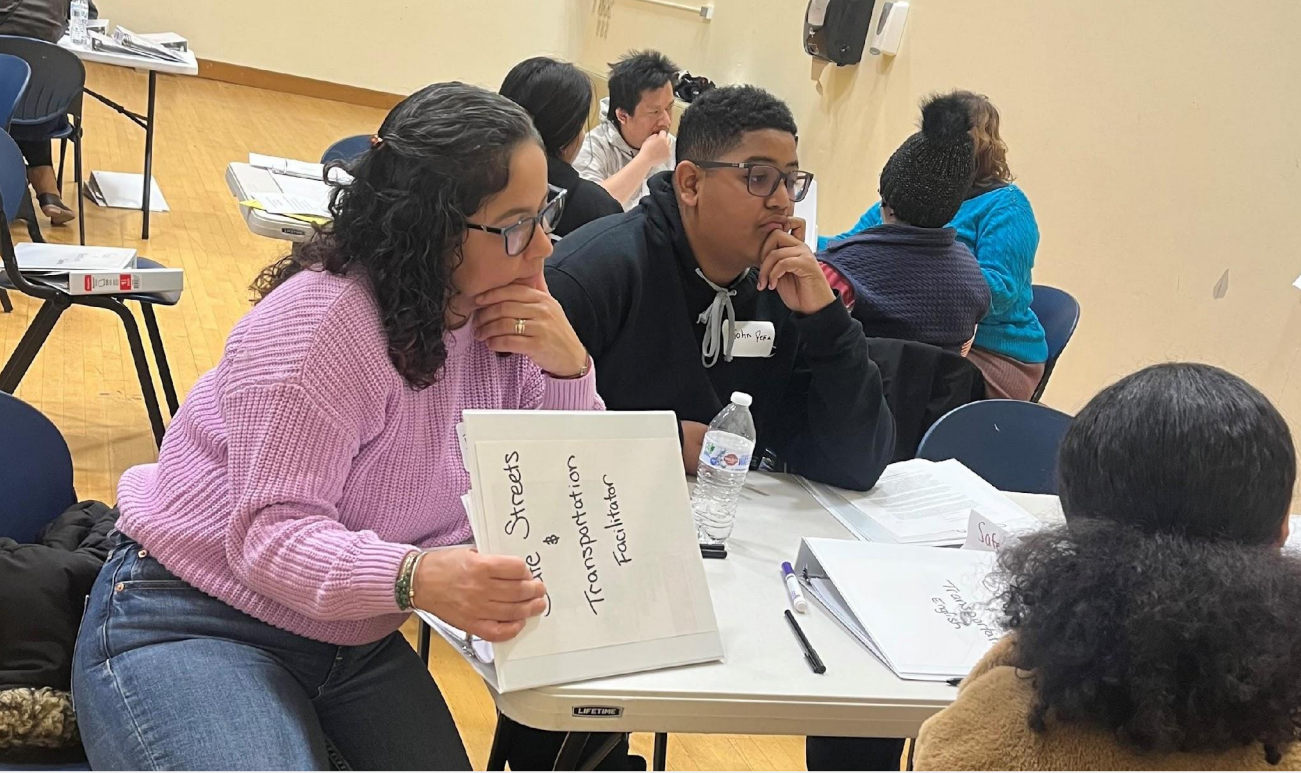
“Because we can see the students ideas to make the school better and to gather information to see what they think about the school.”



“Students know what helps them learn and feel better in school.”

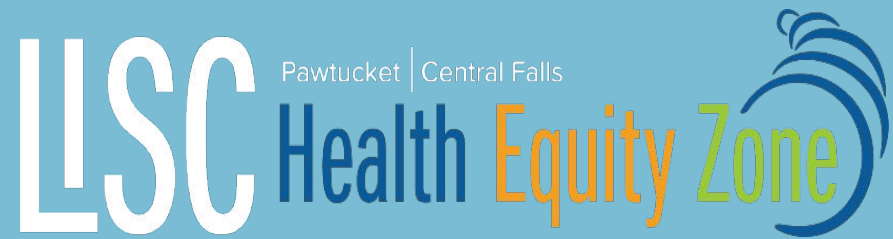


“I feel like students really experience the school while adults don't. Getting our perspective is better if your goal is to improve our opinions of the school..”



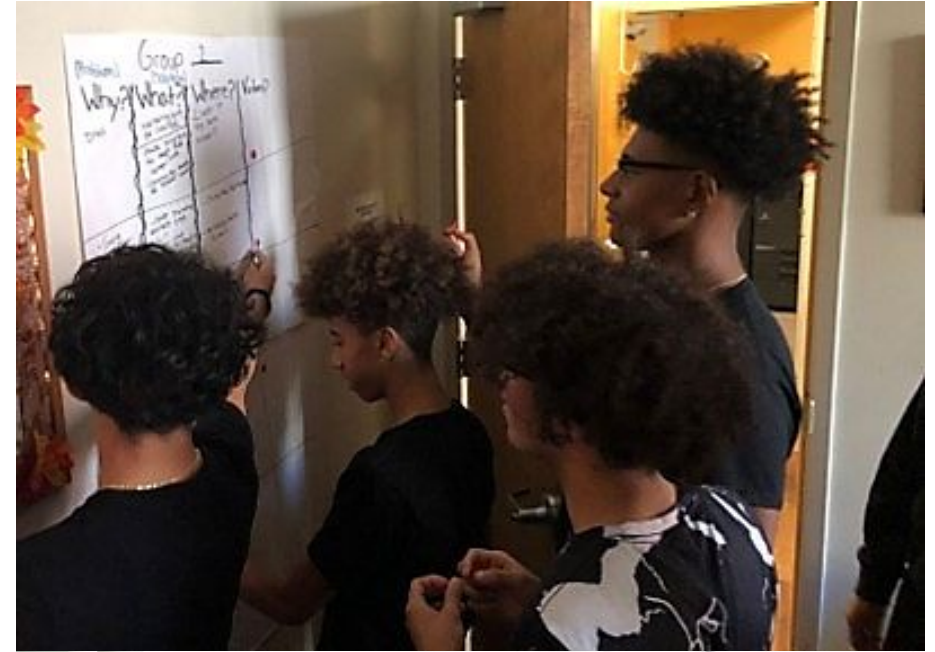
Participatory Budgeting in Health Equity Zones

Local Initiative Support Corporation
and ONE Neighborhood Builders



In 2022, the RI Executive Office of Health and Human Services invested \$900,000 of the Health System Transformation Project funds to implement the **Participatory Budgeting Pilot Program.**

EOHHS partnered with RIDOH to utilize and run the PB process through their Health Equity Zones, as the HEZ model has established community infrastructure and community relationships.



Pillars of a Health Equity Zone



Equity-Centered



Place-Based



**Address
Social Determinants of Health**



Community-Led

How did Participatory Budgeting Work in the HEZ?



DESIGN THE PROCESS

A steering committee that represents the community creates the rules and engagement plan.



BRAINSTORM IDEAS

Through meetings and online tools, residents share and discuss ideas for projects.



DEVELOP PROPOSALS

Volunteer "budget delegates" develop the ideas into feasible proposals.



FUND WINNING PROJECTS

The government or institution funds and implements the winning ideas.



VOTE

Residents vote on the proposals that most serve the community's needs.

Steering Committee

Creates Rulebook for process (and provides oversight throughout).



- **Who can submit ideas?**
- **Who can vote?**
- **What is the max \$ amount per project?**
- **How do we ensure equitable access to all projects?**
- **Can both infrastructure and programs be funded?**



Idea Collection

Ask residents: how would YOU invest funds to improve health in our community?

- **Pop-ups at food pantries, Shower to Empower, social service orgs, public housing, and more**
- **Community Town Halls**
- **Acting Workshops**
- **Youth-led Town Hall & Basketball Tournament**
- **Community Events**
- **Dropboxes**
- **Online through decideRI.org**



Proposal Development

Multilingual, multigenerational committees of residents work together to develop project proposals.

Committees meet with “project collaborators” from organizations and city agencies to help design feasible projects, tailored to the context of the city.



Vote

Residents decide which projects will receive funding.

Pawtucket/Central Falls:
more than **800** people voted

Central Providence:
more than **1200** people voted

Official Ballots created by Department of State

Voting Locations:

- Vote parties
- City Hall
- Schools
- Libraries
- Food Pantry
- Grocery Stores
- Social Service Organizations
- Online at decideRI.org
- And MORE!



Projects Voted for Implementation

Pawtucket & Central Falls



Sprinkler Water Park & Outdoor Gym Equipment



Mental Health: End the Stigma Campaign

Central Providence



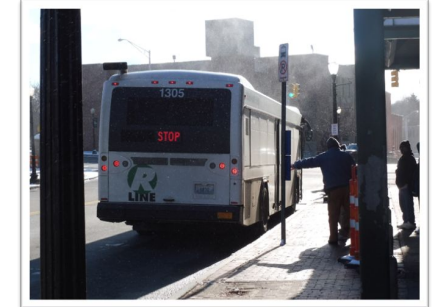
Expanding our Bathrooms



Lead-Free Water Project



Peer Mental Health Training



Improving our Bus Stops



Life Skills for Youth



Food-Bearing Tree Planting



Central Providence soccer for youth



Bike distribution and repair

All Unfunded Shovel-Ready Projects are on DecideRI.org!

Pawtucket Central Falls

Financials for Families

Food with Friends: Live Better, Eat Better

Bike Our City

Youth Soccer & Academic Support

Outdoor Learning & Arts at River Island Park

Interpreter Services For All

Suds for Hope: Mobile Laundry Truck

Pass the Plate: Life Starts with Healthy Eating

High Schoolers Tutor 1st & 2nd Graders

Central Providence

Catching up on Landscaping Services

Air Filter Project

Laundry for Schools

Neighborhood History Sharing

Multi-lingual Cafe

One-stop-shop for Basic Needs

Pool Access, Lessons & Lifeguards

Mi Cocina, Tu Cocina

Water Fountains and Reading Gardens for Our Parks

Clean up our Neighborhoods

Ground Murals

Central Providence Murals

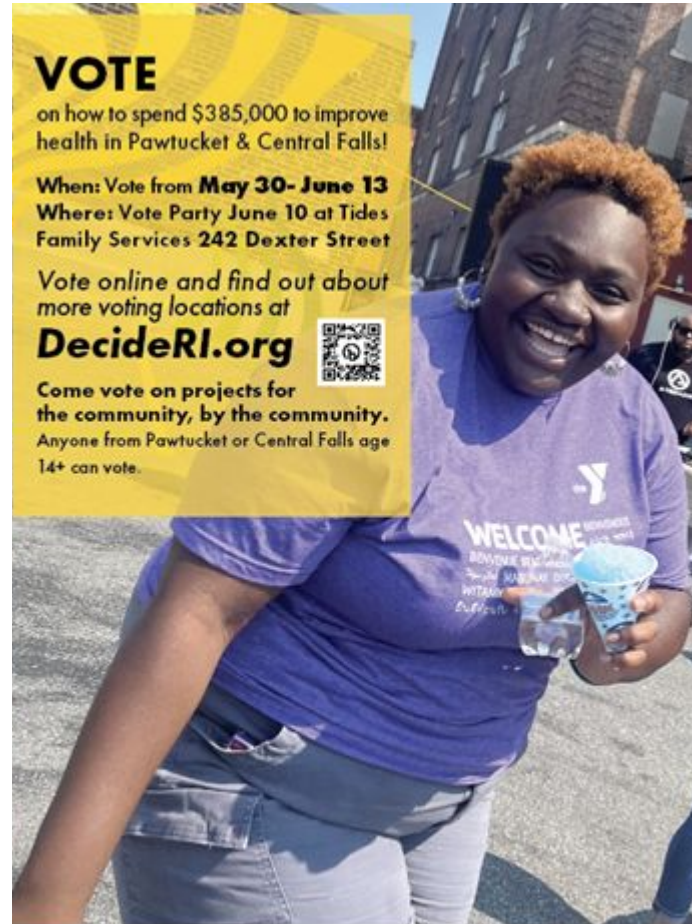
What did we learn?

Medicaid Members and Accountable Entities

The voices and choices of Medicaid patients were actively part of the PB process.

Accountable Entity and HEZ partnership:

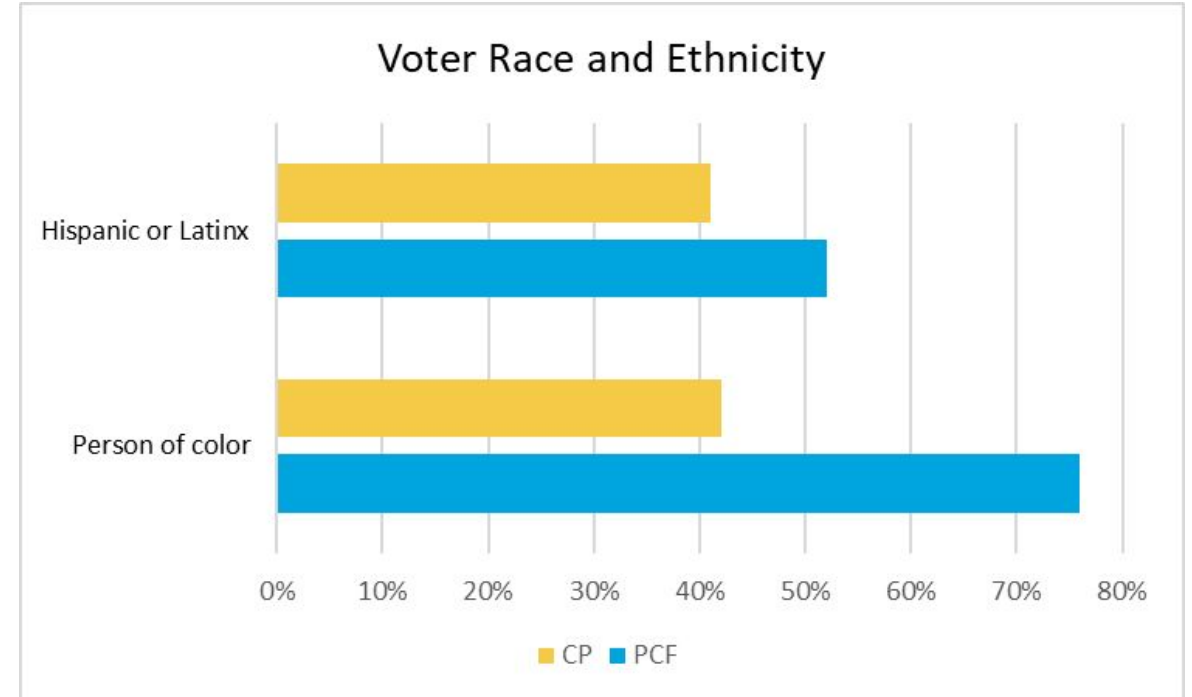
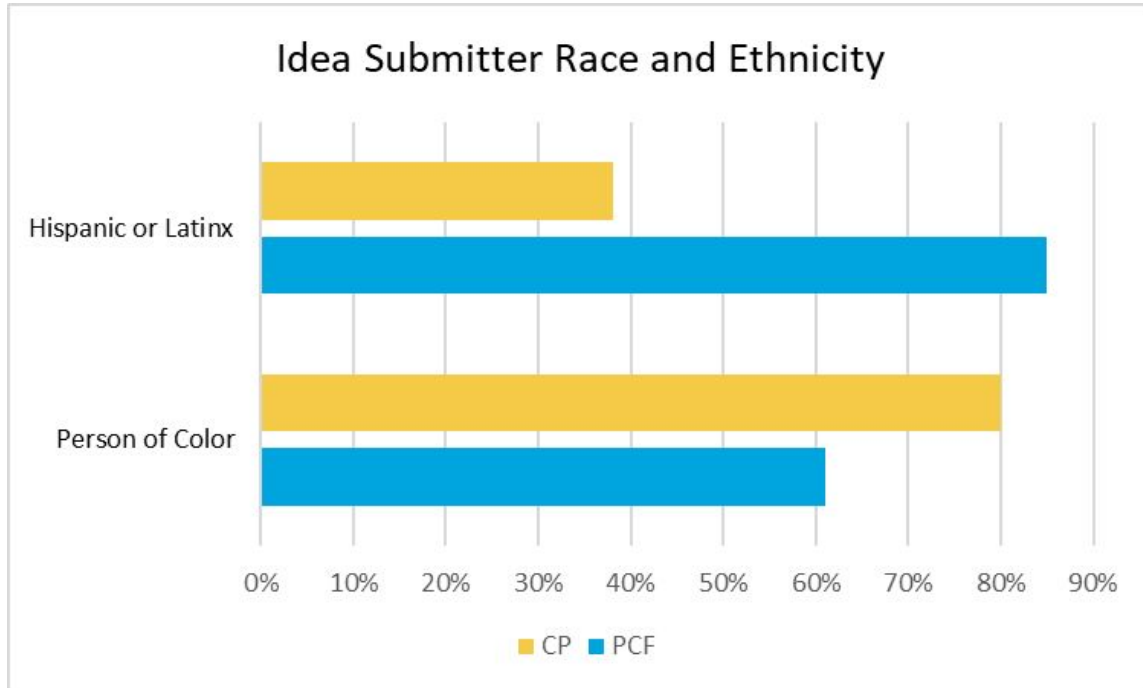
- Presenting PB process at statewide and individual AE meetings
- AE outreach and support of PB process: bus shelter advertising, newsletters write ups, social media posts and targeted emails
- AE staff participation at idea collection events, project fairs and voting parties,
- AE voter site support, hosting voter drop boxes at clinical sites
- AE staff participating as PB Steering Committee members



At least **258 Medicaid members** participated in this PB initiative, including:

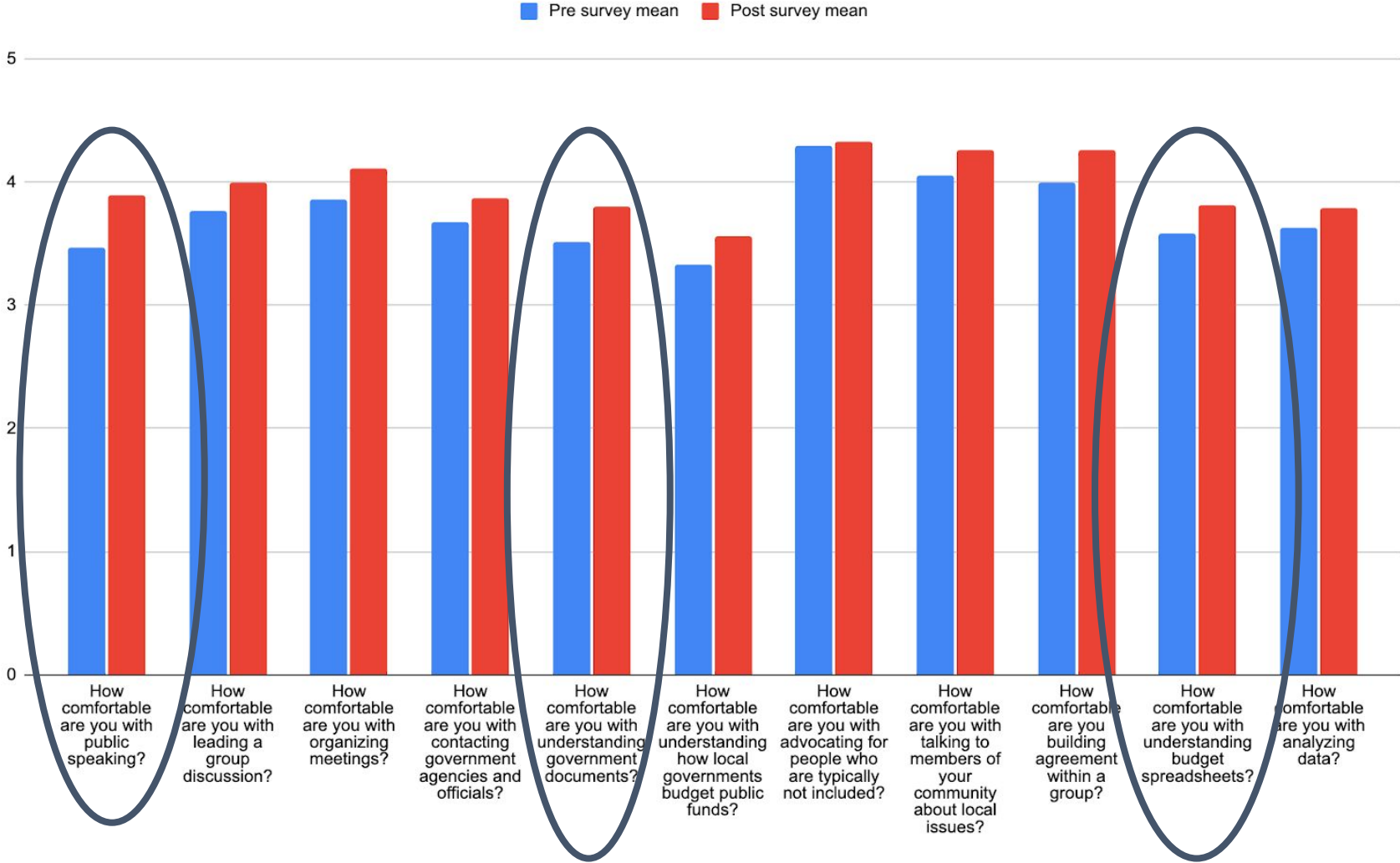
- **41.9%** of Steering Committee Members
- **40.6%** of the Budget Delegates,
- **35.8%** of the voters.

Voter and Idea Submitter Race and Ethnicity



	PAWTUCKET	CENTRAL FALLS	CENTRAL PROVIDENCE
Percentage of residents who identify as Black, Indigenous, or People of Color	51.8%	80.2%	40.7%

Participating as a Budget Delegate enhanced residents' comfort with civic skills across both HEZs:

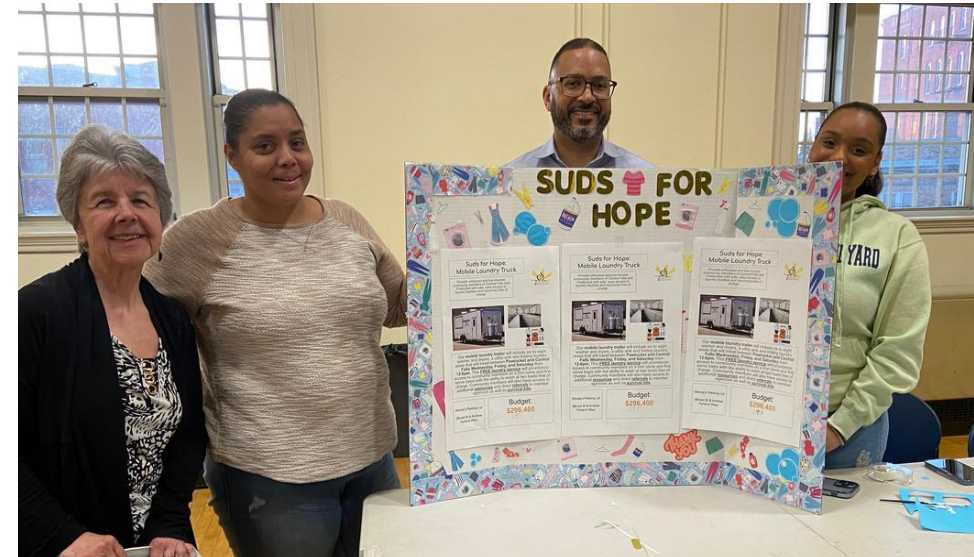


“I was a facilitator for the first time, and I was brave to do it. I felt that I did well, and I think I had the support of the committee.” PCF Facilitator

Participatory Budgeting influenced how steering committee members and budget delegates understood health and their own roles in their communities.

Analysis of responses to: *How if at all, has this process changed the way you think about your health and the health of your community?*

- Understanding the Importance of Community Involvement in Decision-Making
- Empowerment to Take Action and Make a Positive Impact
- Expanded Perspectives on Health and Community Well-Being
- A Sense of Accountability and Responsibility for the Community
- Gratitude for the Opportunity to Be Part of Positive Change
- A Shift Towards Collaboration and Away from Competition



Reflections

[The best part of the process was that] all of the perspectives were brilliant and valid regardless education level, economic status, income level, social aspects or gender.”

-PCF Steering Committee Member

“[El mejor parte del proceso fue que] todas las perspectivas eran brillantes y validas sin importa de nivel de educación, nivel de ingresos, ni de aspectos sociales, ni de sexo”

-PCF Steering Committee Member

“Most of the projects that were able to make it on the ballot were legitimately driven by grassroots and community folks.”

-Central Providence Steering Committee Member

“I personally have learned a lot. And I think that that message to me is we need to do it again. We need you to do it again.

Absolutely.” -Central Providence Steering Committee Member

Big Picture Takeaways

Increased comfort with civic engagement skills encourages residents to engage in their community more in the future.

More community engagement is health promoting. Direct community engagement identifies core issues with health problems, minimize the severity of problems, and improve residents' feeling of connectedness. Research indicates that people who are socially connected live longer and have an increase in resistance to diseases such as cancer and heart disease in addition to lower rates of hypertension.

VIDEO: A Snapshot of Participatory Budgeting in Rhode Island



Learn More

pavedresearch.com

decideRI.org

www.participatorybudgeting.org



Reading/Listening List

Watson Institute Podcast: How participatory budgeting can strengthen our democracy

<https://player.captivate.fm/episode/4e350cb8-4911-4602-a0e2-69ac58023d28>

Brown University News: <https://www.brown.edu/news/2023-06-08/power-to-the-pupil>

Boston Globe:

<https://www.bostonglobe.com/2023/06/27/metro/ri-asked-ordinary-people-how-spend-over-1m-their-neighborhoods-heres-how-that-process-could-be-future/>

PVD Eye:

<https://pvdeye.org/power-to-the-people-new-process-gives-providence-residents-a-real-voice/>

Let's Stay Connected!

Lucy Berman:

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Pam Jennings

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Discussion

**What do you think
should be the future of
PB in Rhode Island?**