

To: Representative Tawna Sanchez and Senator Elizabeth Steiner
Co-Chairs, Joint Committee on Ways & Means

Re: Youth Voice Youth Vote Participatory Budgeting \$1.2 million funding request.

May 3, 2023

Dear Co-Chairs and Ways & Means Committee members,

We, the undersigned individuals and organizations, are writing to request \$1.2 million in funding for a 2nd Cycle of Youth Voice Youth Vote Participatory Budgeting (www.youthpb.org). What is participatory budgeting (PB) and why fund YV² PB?

PB is a deliberative democratic process wherein ordinary people allocate a portion of a public budget- within parameters set by public officials- through a binding vote. PB operationalizes the principle of “nothing about us without us” and has become the fastest spreading form of participatory democracy in the world. Since starting in Brazil in 1989, it has been implemented in over 11,000 municipalities. PB has been adopted across the United States but as of 2021 PB had not come to Oregon.

Youth Voice Youth Vote Participatory Budgeting (YV² PB), is Oregon’s first participatory budgeting process. The first cycle was funded in 2021 by Senators Kayse Jama and Chris Gorsek, and Representative Ricki Ruiz with American Rescue Plan Act (ARPA) funds. Youth have been uniquely impacted by the COVID and are vastly underrepresented in government decisions made on their behalf. Through YV² PB, youth leaders are designing and implementing a transparent and equitable PB process to determine how to spend \$500,000 in American Rescue Plan Act (ARPA) funds on COVID Relief and recovery. In the process, over 1000 participating young people are expanding their leadership and organizing skills; enhancing and rebuilding community, relationships, and mental health in the wake of the pandemic; and becoming the experts and advocates in public budgeting and PB.

The \$1.2 million in funding for the 2023-2025 budget would provide \$200,000 in funding to implement the process and \$1,000,000 million to allocate through the PB process to fund projects proposed and selected by youth. These projects will address public health, economic justice, housing, and youth services and will be implemented by local non-profits or governments (e.g. schools, cities, special districts).

As elected officials you have the power to allocate public funds to address Oregonians needs and aspirations for healthier, more just communities. But you also have the power to share some of that budgeting power itself. That is the power we are asking you to exercise by funding a 2nd Cycle of Youth Voice Youth Vote PB. We urge you to share real power over real public money and fund a 2nd Cycle of Youth Voice Youth Vote PB with \$1.2 million in the 2023-2025 Oregon State Budget.

Sincerely,

Amy Stork
NE Portland Resident

Andre Middleton for **Friends of Noise**

Ben Stevens for **Sunrise PDX**

Dana Buhl
Director of Social Justice of First Unitarian Portland

Danielle Maillaird for **Oregon Walks**

Frankline Muthomi
Assistant Professor of Public Administrative, Portland State University

Eddy Morales, Gresham City Councilor

Isabela Villarreal for **Next UP Action Fund**

Jim Labbe for **Participatory Budgeting Oregon**

Le Khanh, for **Unite Oregon**

Lenny Dee for **Onward Oregon**

Lillyanne Pham and Ruby Joy White
Department of Culture and Community at Portland 5 Centers for the Arts

Linn Davis, Alex Renirie, Kacy Bull & Grace Taylor for **Healthy Democracy**

Vince Jones-Dixon, Gresham City Councilor