



The People's Budget

Denver's Participatory Budgeting Program

Community Planning and Housing Committee | September 16, 2025

Kiki Turner | People's Budget Program Administrator



Agenda

What is the People's Budget?

Direct democracy, where community allocates taxpayer dollars

Projects Funded by the People

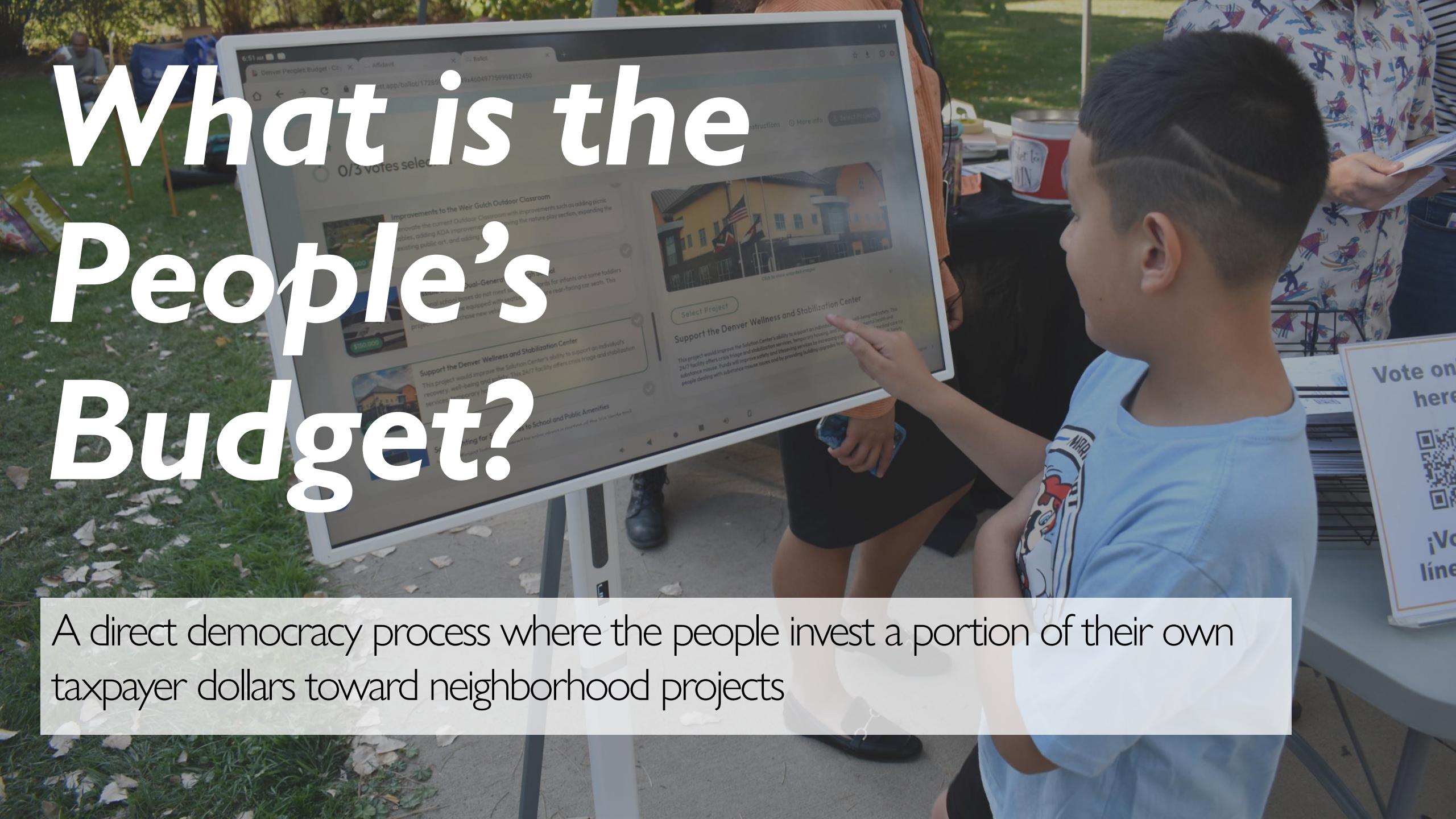
6,000+ community members invested in 13 infrastructure projects to date

Meet the People of the People's Budget

Community experiences and upcoming opportunities for council engagement

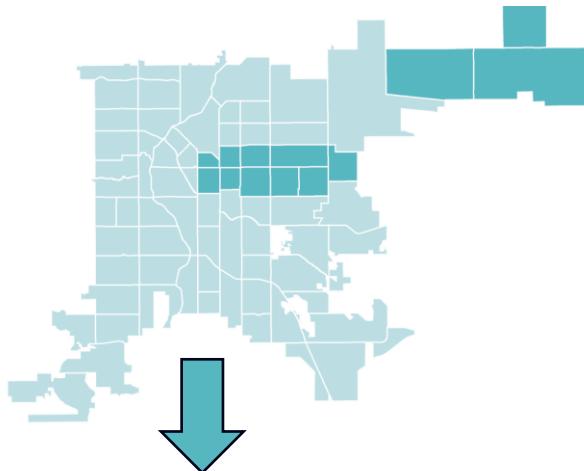
What is the People's Budget?

A direct democracy process where the people invest a portion of their own taxpayer dollars toward neighborhood projects



Funding to Date: \$5 Million over Five Years

Cycle One: 2021-2022

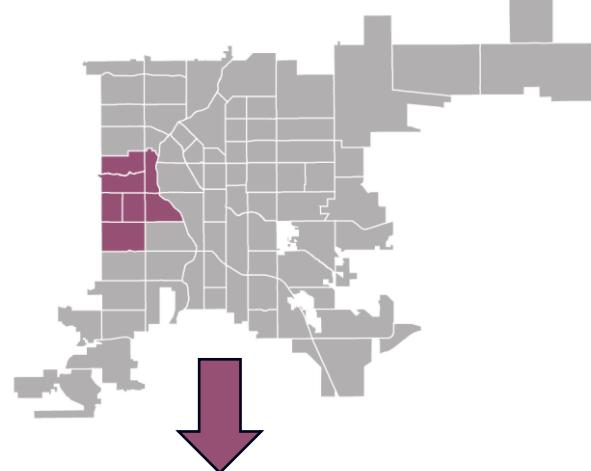


Budget toward constructed projects: **\$2 Million**

Budget to operate the Program:
\$250,000

Budget toward constructed project contingency: **\$0.00**

Cycle Two: 2023-2024

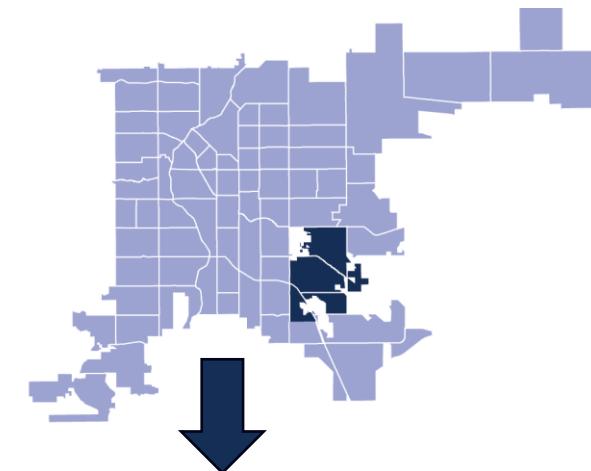


Budget toward constructed projects: **\$1 Million**

Budget to operate the Program:
\$150,000*

Budget toward constructed project contingency: **\$0.00**

Cycle Three: 2025-2026



Budget toward constructed projects: **\$2 Million**

Budget to operate the Program:
\$200,000*

Budget toward constructed project contingency: **\$200,000***

Cycle 3 of the People's Budget: 2025 through 2026

\$2 MILLION

\$1 MILLION dedicated to the **Near Southeast** to build on the Neighborhood Planning Initiative

\$1 MILLION dedicated **citywide** to build on prior engagement and involve all neighborhoods



April-Sept. 2025

Oct.-Dec. 2025

Dec. '25.-April 2026

May-Sept. 2026

Oct.-Dec. 2026

Launch Cycle 3!
Recruit and train
Resident Leaders

PHASE 1:
Steering
Committee

PHASE 2:
Idea
Collection

PHASE 3:
Project
Development

PHASE 4:
Community
Voting





People's Budget Lifecycle

Phase I *Community Design*



Oct.-Dec. 2025	Dec. '25-April '26	May-Sept. 2026	Oct.-Dec. 2026	Q1 2027-2028
PHASE 1: Steering Committee	PHASE 2: Idea Collection	PHASE 3: Project Development	PHASE 4: Community Voting	PHASE 5: Project Implementation

Steering Committee sets the foundation for Cycle 3

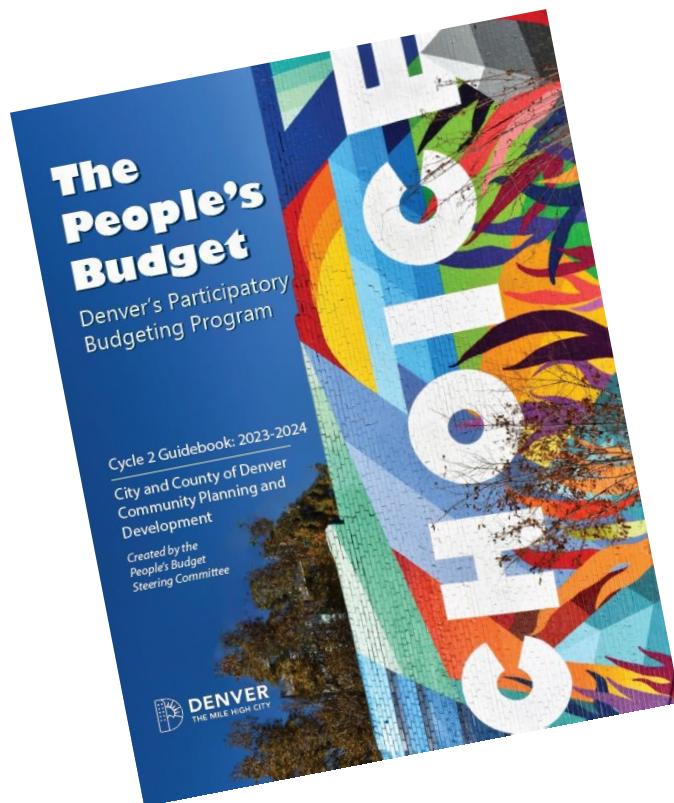
The committee creates a guidebook with key decisions for the program, including:

Who can submit ideas?

What will be included in the project scoring rubric?

Who can vote?

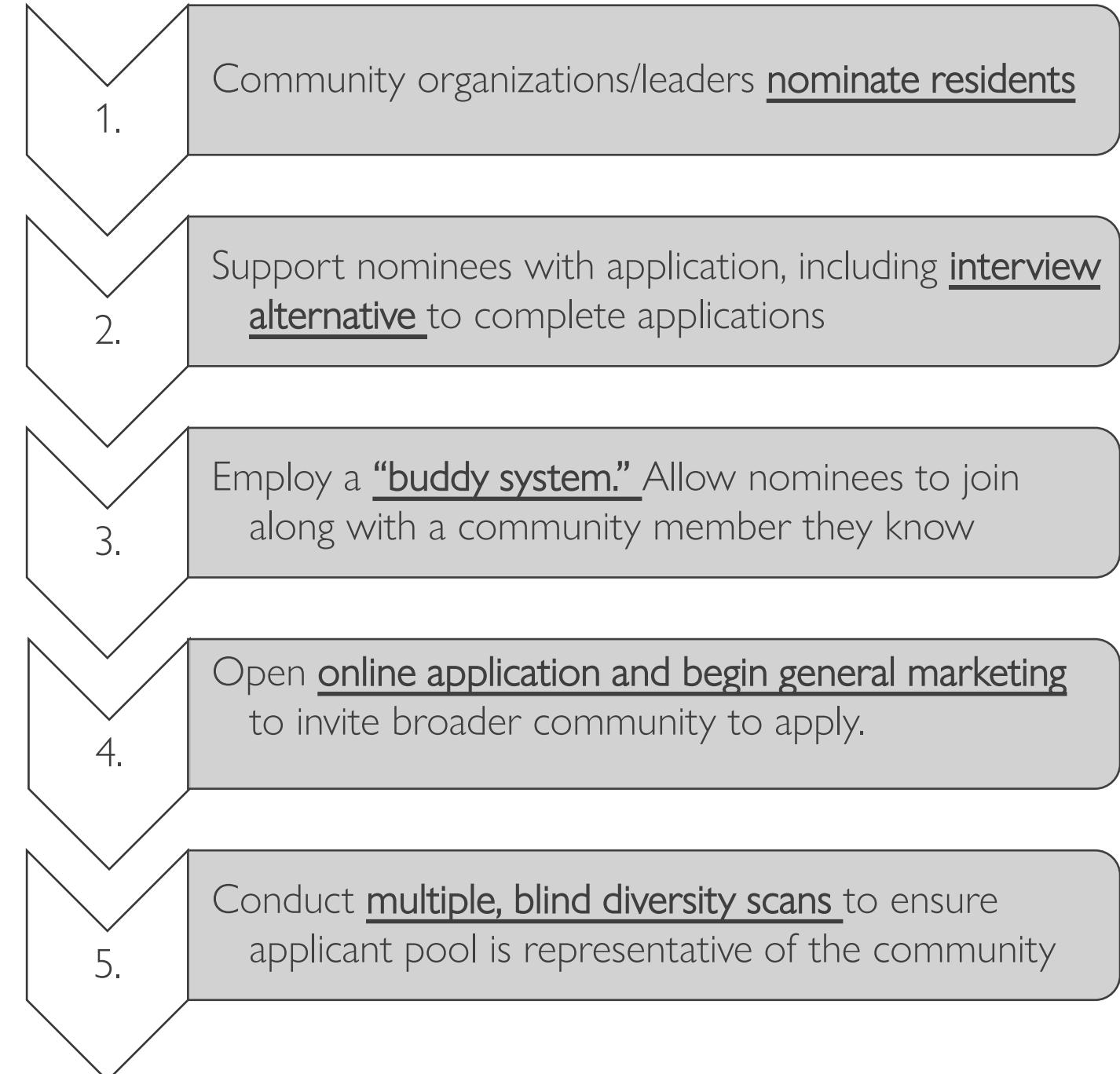
What type of voting mechanism will be used



Identify new community leaders through strategic recruitment

Outreach from April through September:

- City Council recommendations
- Community database outreach
- In-person recruitment
 - 30 events or meetings
 - Engaged over 500 people





Steering Committee: Logistics

- One committee, with significant representation from the Near Southeast Plan Area as well as representation from north, east, central, and west Denver
- Meetings in southeast Denver, likely the Cook Park Recreation Center or George Washington High School

★ **Several members from prior cycles, building long-term relationship with the city**

People's Budget Lifecycle: Phase 2 *Idea Collection*



Oct.-Dec. 2025
PHASE 1: Steering Committee

Dec. '25-April '26
PHASE 2: Idea Collection

May-Sept. 2026
PHASE 3: Project Development

Oct.-Dec. 2026
PHASE 4: Community Voting

Q1 2027-2028
PHASE 5: Project Implementation

A woman with curly hair and blue sunglasses is smiling while sitting in a black power wheelchair. She is wearing a blue and white plaid shirt over a grey t-shirt and light-colored pants. The background shows a multi-story building with a red roofline and some trees.

Phyllis Mack Community Outreach Mini-Grants

Funds and resources to community members
to help generate participation during idea
collection and community voting

Cycle 3 Idea Collection:

- **Phyllis Mack Community Outreach**
Mini-grantees trained in December
and January.
- **Community-led events January**
through April.

★ **New partnership**
with Denver
Public Schools
for increased
youth
participation.



People's Budget Lifecycle:

Phase 3 Proposal Development



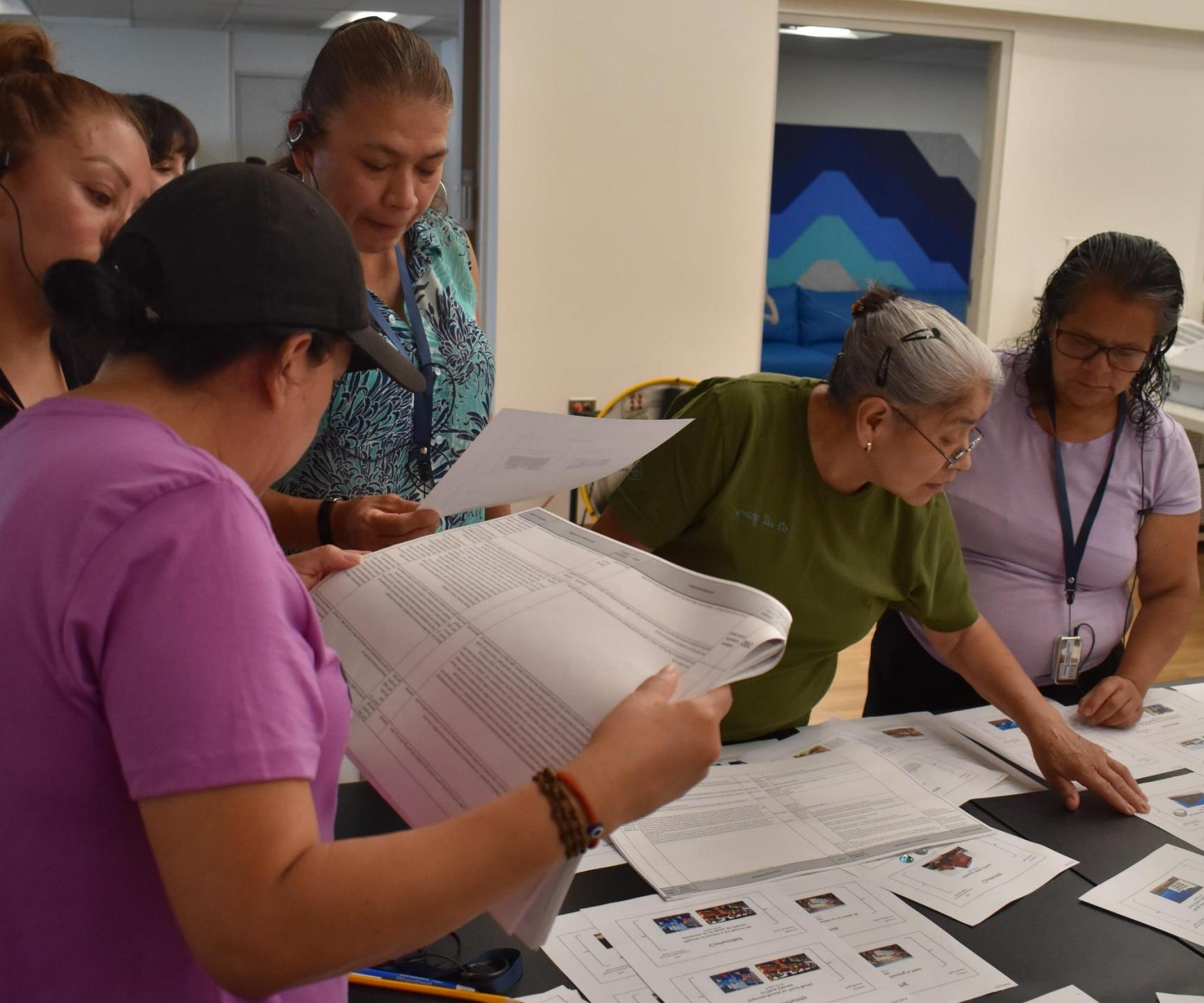
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Dec. '25-April '26
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Oct.-Dec. 2026
PHASE 4: Community Voting

Q1 2027-2028
PHASE 5: Project Implementation



Proposal Development Logistics:

- Develop two lists of projects: a Near Southeast list and a Citywide list
- Community collaborates with staff from a dozen agencies to develop top ideas for the ballot



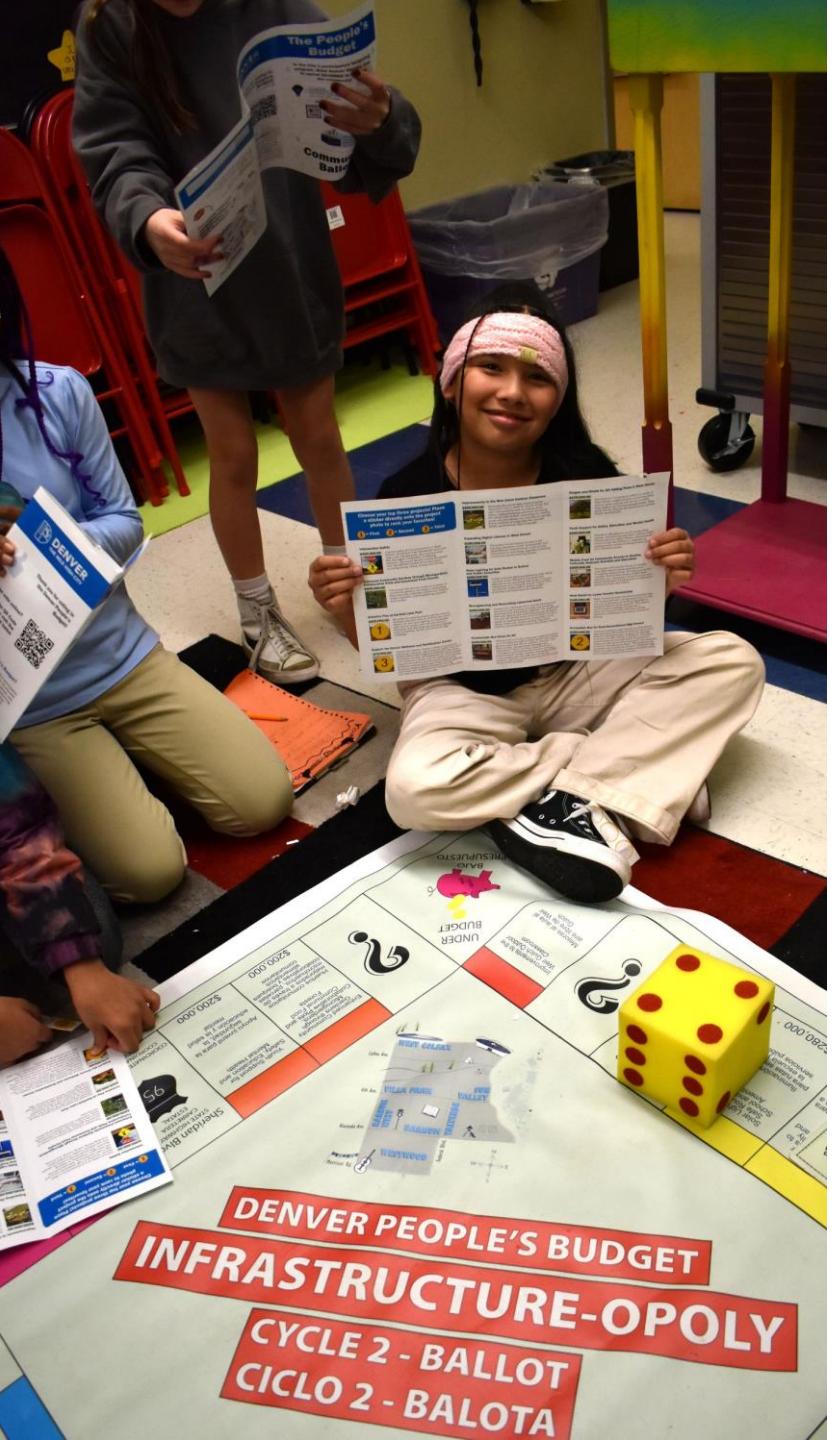
Continued collaboration with non-profits to develop externally-led projects

People's Budget Lifecycle:

Phase 4 Community Voting



Oct.-Dec. 2025	Dec. '25-April '26	May-Sept. 2026	Oct.-Dec. 2026	Q1 2027-2028
PHASE 1: Steering Committee	PHASE 2: Idea Collection	PHASE 3: Project Development	PHASE 4: Community Voting	PHASE 5: Project Implementation



Cycle 3 Community Voting:

- Fund \$1M of projects the Near Southeast and \$1M of projects citywide.
- Support Phyllis Mack Mini-Grantees with community led voting events.



New telephone townhall for strategic dial-out voting event

People's Budget Lifecycle: *Project Implementation*



Oct.-Dec. 2025
PHASE 1: Steering Committee

Dec. '25-April '26
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Q1 2027-2028
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Cycles I-2 Project Implementation

Cycle 1 Results

\$300,000: New Freedom Park Improvements

\$225,000: Shower trailers for unhoused residents

\$200,000: Tiny homes for unhoused residents

\$37,500: New trashcans in FNE Parks/Trails

\$175,000: Community Gardens at subsidized housing

\$362,500: New lights in FNE Parks/Trails

\$187,500: Safer intersections in Capitol Hill

\$400,000: Accessible sidewalks in Ruby Hill

\$112,500: Accessible transit in City Park

COMPLETE

Cycle 2 Results

\$356,250: Intersection Safety

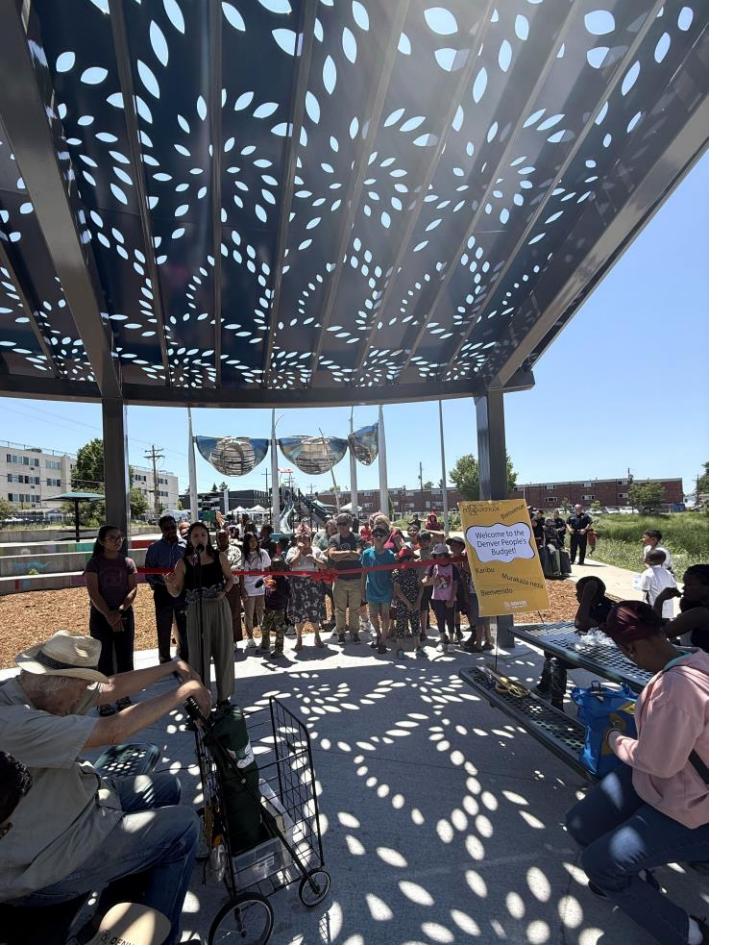
\$306,250: Mobile Food to Enhance Community Access to Healthy, Culturally Relevant Nutrition and Education (Community Partner-led)

\$181,250: Oxygen and Shade for All! Adding trees in West Denver

\$156,250: Heat Relief for Lower Income Households (Community Partner-led)

\$1 MILLION

\$2 MILLION



Completed Work: Projects for the people, by the people



Meet the
People of the Denver
People's Budget

“A good government takes work, and it takes government meeting community members where we are. The People’s Budget puts the people first. I want everyone to have this kind of access to their government.”

- Craig Allen, Cycle 2 Steering Committee member



Mariafer Fernandez served as a project delegate in Cycle 2, where she helped build the ballot. In Fall 2024, she voted for the first time in the People’s Budget. A few months later, she gained citizenship and now looks forward to voting in traditional elections this fall.

Democracy is hard. Without you, it's impossible.

You matter in the Denver People's Budget. Make a difference for your community today and vote online. Get involved at denvergov.org/denverpb



La democracia es difícil. Sin ti, es imposible.

Usted importa en el Denver People's Budget.
Haga una diferencia para su comunidad hoy
y vote en línea en denvergov.org/denverpb



Over 6,000 people have participated

The majority of which are historically under-represented residents including communities of color, immigrants and refugees, youth, people with disabilities, unhoused people, people in jail, etc.

81%

of resident leaders identify as **Black, Indigenous people of color.**

53%

of resident leaders earn **less than \$25K a year.**

34%

of resident leaders identify as a **person with a disability**

The People's Budget reaches those who **cannot access traditional government** or who face barriers to civics and traditional participation.

55%

Reported they could not or did not vote in the previous federal election.

- ★ Won the 2025 **Metro Vision Award** through DRCOG.
- ★ Featured in a global report on democracy as an **inclusive process and a model** for other cities.
- ★ Won the **Voice of the People Award** by the International City/County Management Association.

Next Steps and Council Engagement:

Phase I Milestone Event:

Nov. 24 from 2:30 to 5pm

- Tour of City Hall
- Cycle 3 guidebook reveal
- Steering committee submits first ideas of Cycle 3



Phase II Launch: Idea Collection

Idea cards and digital platform share kits distributed on Dec. 1

Questions?

