

# BLACK BRILLIANCE RESEARCH

Presentation

FRIDAY, FEBRUARY 26, 2021



2020

**Divest to  
Reinvest**  
FOR BLACK & BROWN  
COMMUNITIES

1

2







Black Brilliance Research Project

# EXECUTIVE SUMMARY





## Invest in lived experience

Culturally responsive care is essential. Fund community workers and support the solutions suggested by persons who understand each other.



## Address root causes of harm

Create healing, connection, nourishment, safety, and support to prevent harm. Invest more in proactive and preventative solutions.



## Stop punishing individuals for systems' failures

Transform failing systems, for example: housing, education, mental health, and employment.



## Fully embrace a new normal

Listen, follow, and normalize leadership from those closest to the issues. Foster solidarity across the oppressions that typically divide communities (including: anti-Black racism, transphobia, ableism, ageism, and sexism).

# Community is eager to build a better world

Most people are not interested in continuing to invest in policing. They are interested in learning how to keep each other safe without police, coercion, or the threat of systemic violence and oppression.



# Overall Recommendations

Black Brilliance Research Project

STOP CAUSING HARM	CREATE INCLUSIVE POLICIES	FOLLOW BLACK LEADERSHIP	PAY FOR COMMUNITY EXPERTISE	INVEST IN THRIVING SOLUTIONS	These takeaways come up repeatedly in the research across communities.
<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Divert criminal, legal &amp; foster care investments</li><li>• Eliminate workers and work that causes harm</li><li>• Cut police, court, corrections, &amp; probation funding; reinvest into community</li></ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Prioritize workers with empathy &amp; lived experience</li><li>• Include cultural and artistic expression in healing</li><li>• Fund community work up-front</li><li>• Simplify contracting</li></ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Partner with Black-led community organizations specializing in the work</li><li>• Support Black workers creating new opportunities</li><li>• Stop pitting Black leaders against one another and communities</li><li>• Normalize Black-led PB</li></ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Fund Black community priorities</li><li>• Pay for Black healers and cultural workers through innovative models</li><li>• Fund exploratory research, pilots, and workforce solutions</li></ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Treat root causes</li><li>• Make it easier to find existing effective resources and programming</li><li>• Fund spaces and land to anchor programming</li><li>• Invest in anti-gentrification and permanent affordability</li></ul>	<div><p>“</p><p>"Black women share with everybody. When Black women get (resources) everyone gets fed."</p><p>- Black, Woman, Age 35 - 45, Seattle Council District 2</p><p>”</p></div>



# Our Focus: Community Health, Safety, and Thriving

## Black Brilliance Research Project

01

### HOUSING & PHYSICAL SPACES

Housing diversity and the need for more Black-led residential and Black-led commercial spaces were frequently requested. This was a concern shared by non-Black people as well. Physical space is essential.

02

### MENTAL HEALTH

Researchers and community members were adamant about the need for new culturally responsive and caring mental health networks led by people with lived experience. A new and equitable payment structure is required to ensure people receive proper care by appropriate healers.

03

### YOUTH & CHILDREN

Childcare and inter-generational out-of-school time supports were big priorities for several teams, particularly for children facing systemic violence, trauma, and multi-generational disadvantages

04

### ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT

The urgent need for economic relief to address the triple crises of COVID-19, economic recession, and systemic racism via hyperlocal, cooperative solutions that build new capacity and opportunity in community.

05

### CRISES & WELLNESS

Alternatives to the currently harmful 911 and crisis response system are needed. These should be staffed by trained and skilled community members.

**These five focus areas have been identified as the priorities that will guide the 2021 participatory budgeting process.**

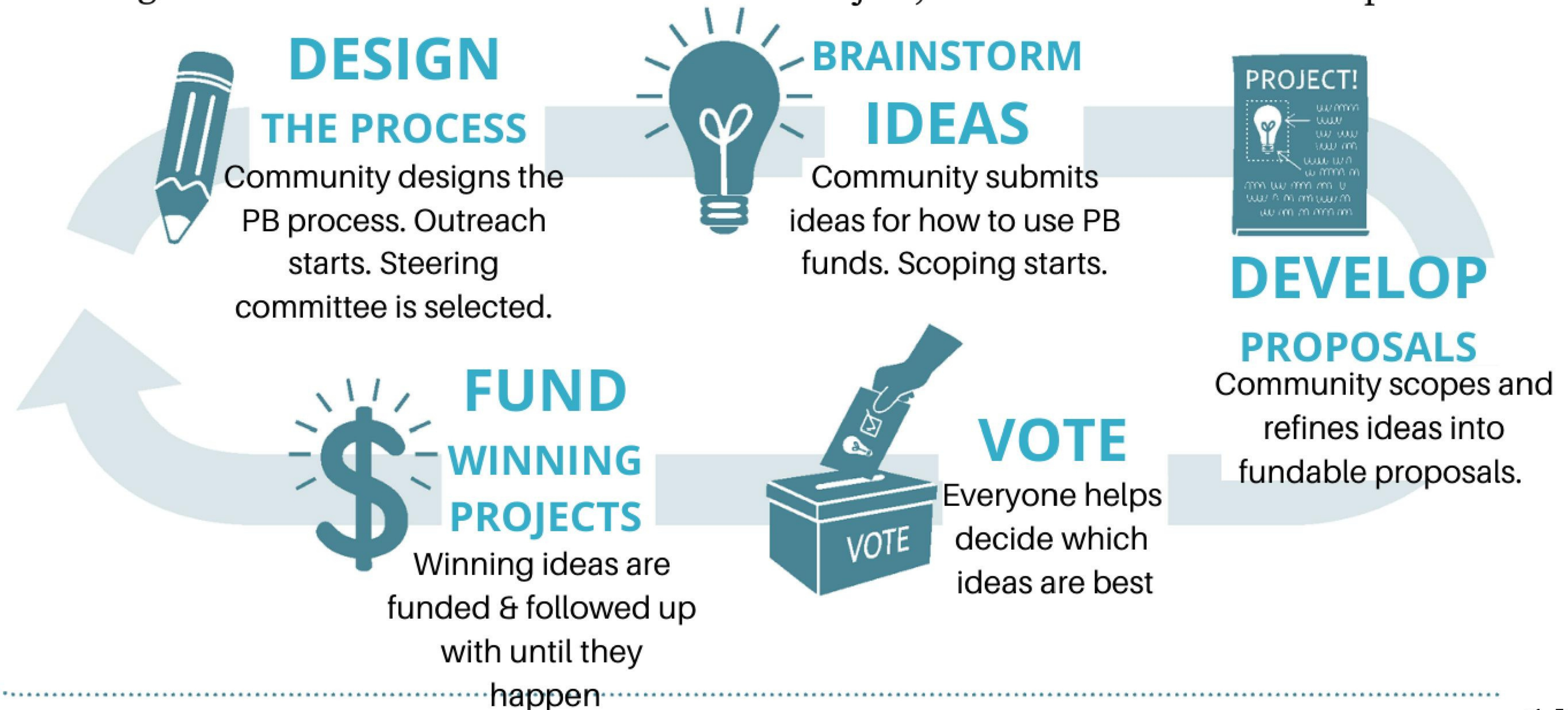


# Participatory Budgeting = People-powered Budgets

Continuing to give people real power over real money (since 2015 in Seattle)

## How PB Works

PB is an annual cycle of engagement where the public decides how public money is spent. According to the 2020 Black Brilliance Research Project, this is the overall roadmap.



BLACK BRILLIANCE  
RESEARCH

# Picking the steering committee





## Steering Committee Criteria

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Must include people with the following lived experiences:

1. People who have been incarcerated
2. People who are well-connected to multiple community organizations
3. People with lived experience of homelessness
4. People with disabilities
5. People who are trans, non-binary, or gender non-conforming
6. Black women
7. Older Adults
8. Youth (at least 2 people)
9. People from the African Diaspora
10. A person appointed by Duwamish Tribal Services (at least 1 person)
11. People from communities over-represented in negative health outcomes

**"We are more than one thing. Blackness is multi-faceted. We are intersectional. We're everywhere."**

***- Black, Non-binary human,  
Age 35 - 45, Seattle Council  
District 2***



“ In PB, everyone can be part of the solution. ”

## Steering Committee

Create rules in partnership with the findings from the Black Brilliance Research Project, government workers, and Participatory Budgeting Project.

## Outreach Workgroup

Educate communities about Participatory Budgeting. Invite communities to participate in each stage of PB.

## Accountability Workgroup

Monitor and receive feedback about the decision-making process. Bring appropriate parties together to resolve issues.

## Budget Delegates and Process Facilitators

Consolidate information and make sure Participatory Budgeting is on track.

## Lived Experience Workgroup

Ensure PB process is aligned with the lived experiences of community members, while centering Black-lived experiences.

## Restorative and Proactive Safety Workgroup

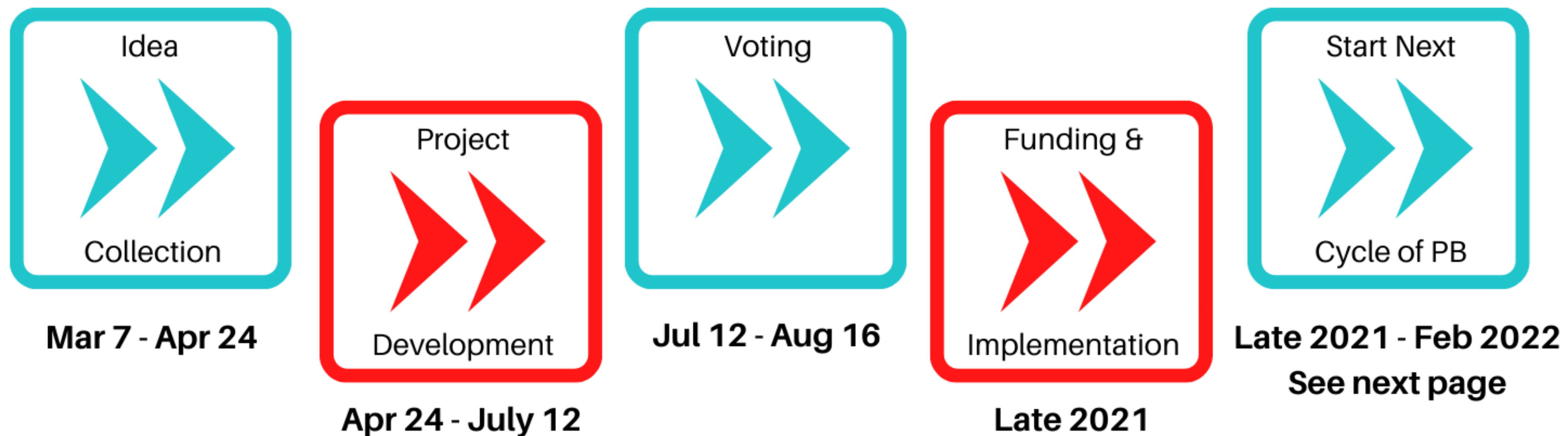
Ensure PB is connected to on-the-ground work and advocacy about community safety and healing.

## BIPOC-led Workgroups and Committees Supporting PB



In every PB group, those who are most likely to be harmed or killed by systemic racism and violence are centered. This helps ensure the City honors commitments to divest from systemic racism and violence. People most harmed include: Black women who are trans, indigenous women, and people with disabilities, among other groups.





Black Brilliance Research Project





# NEXT STEPS

Q & A Only slides

# SEATTLE PB FACTS 101

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01

Ages 10+ who live, work, play, access services, study, worship in Seattle or King County residents displaced from Seattle

02

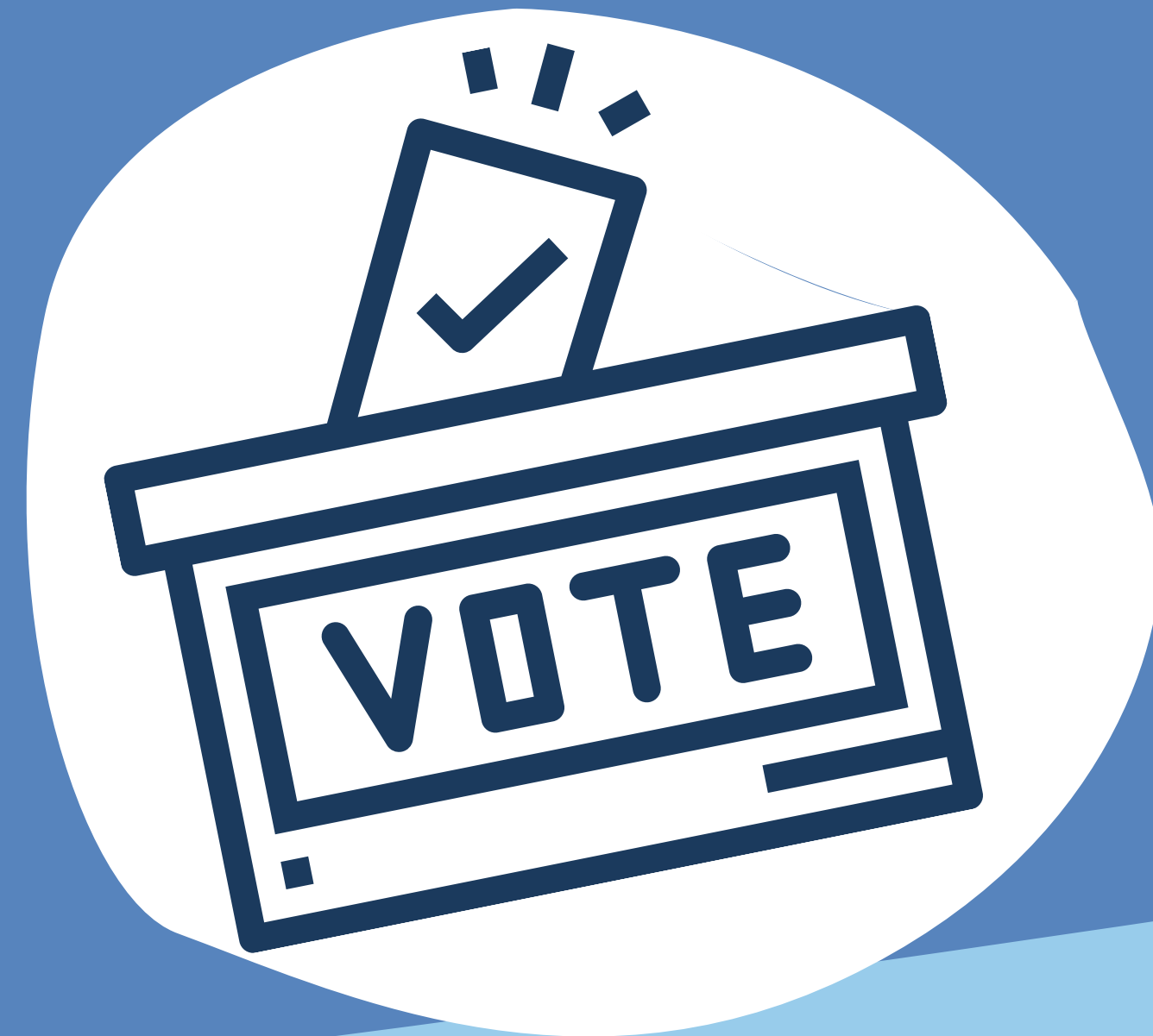
Most community members will volunteer to support PB, ~ 30 people will serve 1-year paid terms to direct PB

03

Community members suggest ideas, combine best ideas into vote-able proposals, and then vote

04

Keep growing PB pot, fund the winning projects, and do it over again & again



Source: Black Brilliance Research Project



## **TALK ABOUT PB**

Share information  
with your  
community, social  
media, writing, art,  
music, everything.

## **FIND OUT BARRIERS**

Let's make PB work  
for everyone. Help  
us find the gaps so  
we can work  
together to fill  
them.

## **TRAIN UP**

Attend train-the-  
trainers and start  
practicing your  
outreach with other  
community  
members.

## **SUPPORT**

Share research  
from Black  
Brilliance  
Research.

## **LEARN TO LEAD**

Check out the  
workgroups and the  
experiences that  
are centered in  
leading PB.

# PRIORITIES

Q & A Only slides

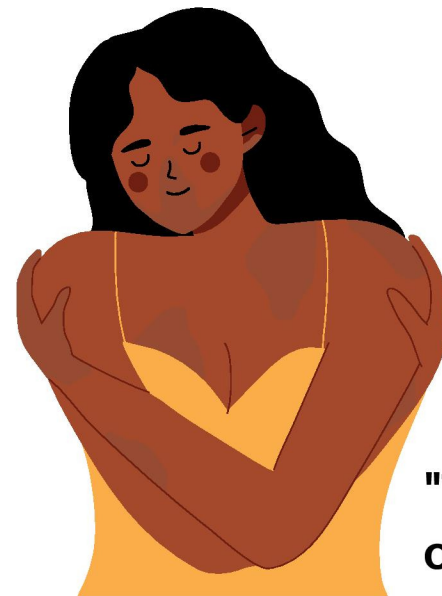




"My biggest issue is trusting someone I can talk to without judging me."

*Freedom Project,  
All City Center*

# We Need Culturally Responsive & Accessible Healing



**Black workers in white supremacist systems is NOT cultural responsiveness.**

"The emotional, mental trauma [of] our people is one of generational turmoil. Self Love is at the center of this."

-Black Elder

**We Need New Equitable Payment Structures. The status quo starves everybody.**

**Our communities are eager to create and provide more decentralized culturally relevant and trauma-informed services, with ample Black healers, therapists, peer supports, and holistic BIPOC-led drug user care.**

**"We must defer leadership to people that are actually experts on the devastation that is happening on the ground."**

*- Black Trans Prayer Book*





## Mental Health and Youth

### Black Youth Mental Health

- From East African Community Services's surveys with youth we've learned that 39% to 50% of youth are experiencing mental health challenges during this pandemic.
- Black youth find it easier to speak to their peers about issues related to mental health than to talk to other community members.
- Community members recommend investments in accessible, quality mental healthcare resources for youth with a particular emphasis on: (a) creating space for youth to have conversations about mental health, (b) increasing accessible mental health services (including those offered in schools), and (c) sharing healthy coping methods for those youth experiencing mental health challenges.



"The emotional, mental trauma [of] our people is one of generational turmoil. Self Love is at the center of this."

-Black Elder

"From a young age, people should be learning why it's important to take care of yourself."

- *East African Community Services*

# **WORKGROUPS**

Q & A Only slides





## BIPOC-led Lived Experience Workgroup

In every committee, it is important that those who are most likely to be harmed or killed by systemic racism and violence are represented. Among other groups, this should esp. include Black women who are trans, indigenous women, and persons with disabilities.

“

"[Collectivism is the approach i]f anyone wants to think about how we're going to be innovative in dismantling this budget and reinvesting over here and building these new innovative practices, strategies, approaches that are built in cultural responsiveness and relationships"

- *TraeAnna Holiday (KCEN)*

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### Lived Experience Workgroup Criteria

1. People with lived experience facing multiple systems of oppression
2. People with experience serving on intergenerational teams
3. Community representatives from each racial advisory council to the police
4. Representatives from communities over-represented in negative health outcomes
5. People with additional experiences, as identified in the Black Brilliance Research Project

**"I would reinvest in our youth generation, formally incarcerated and those with lived experience that look for a way to contribute their lived experience with those who are in position to make change... [people currently in these positions] do not relate with the actual issues that they advocate for."**

**- *Black, Man, Age 35 - 44, Pierce County resident***





## Black-led Accountability Workgroup

In every committee, it is important that those who are most likely to be harmed or killed by systemic racism and violence are represented. Amongst other groups, this should include: Black women who are trans, indigenous women, persons with disabilities.

### Accountability Workgroup Criteria

1. People who have been incarcerated
2. Black or BIPOC community facilitators and mediators, such as restorative justice practitioners and conflict resolution specialists
3. People with lived experience successfully helping community members address gaslighting, internalized racism, sexism, homophobia, and transphobia
4. People committed to honoring the movement's demands to divest from systemic violence (e.g., policing) and reinvest those funds into Black and Brown community

"We showed up. We were factual. We knew who we were talking to. Some of the flip flop politicians who promise [but don't deliver], we knew that we'd come through."

- *Briding Cultural Gaps*

"[I'd reinvest in] permanent housing, good food, and mental health support for Black queer folks and folks with disabilities, Elder support and caregiving, effective accountability processes for Black people who have been harmed, intergenerational wisdom circles and skills building, traditional ecological knowledge"

- *Black, Trans, Age 45 - 54, Pierce County*



# Black-led Budget Delegates and Process Facilitators

In every committee, it is important that those who are most likely to be harmed or killed by systemic racism and violence are represented. Among other groups, this should esp. include Black women who are trans, indigenous women, and persons with disabilities.

“[We should be] institutionalizing equity. We would shift from [the status quo] to welcome risk in new ideas. Invest in those who have brilliance but because of history [they've had] no opportunity to manifest. Take HUGE risks. Refocus on those who nurture self-determination IN community.”

- *Black, Woman, Age 35 - 44, South King County*

## Budget Delegates and Process Facilitators Criteria

1. People who have been Incarcerated
2. Current or former Black Brilliance Researchers
3. People who enjoy making information accessible and easy-to-understand
4. People who serve as a liaison with people who have data on public and private investments
5. People with experience working to end institutional racism in local governments
6. People passionate about expanding voting rights





# Black-led Restorative and Proactive Safety Workgroup

In every committee, it is important that those who are most likely to be harmed or killed by systemic racism and violence are represented. Among other groups, this should esp. include: Black women who are trans, indigenous women, and persons with disabilities.

"Art and cultural practice is essential to the mental, social, and spiritual health of communities...[We are] grassroots in the ethos of mutual aid and self-determination"

- *Forever Safe Spaces*

## Restorative and Proactive Safety Workgroup Criteria

1. Restorative Community Pathways (RCP) participants or RCP representatives
2. Peace and Safety Initiative participants
3. Black and/or BIPOC community members who work to prevent and respond to domestic and gender-based violence
4. BIPOC health practitioners or BIPOC community advocates who specialize in culturally responsive programming and lived experience

Citation: <https://kcprosecutor.medium.com/q-a-community-diversion-program-restorative-community-pathways-40c1d3fcbfc9>







## Black-led Outreach Workgroup

In every committee, it is important that those who are most likely to be harmed or killed by systemic racism and violence are represented. Among other groups, this should include: Black women who are trans, indigenous women, and persons with disabilities.

“Art and cultural practice is essential to the mental, social, and spiritual health of communities...[We are] grassroots in the ethos of mutual aid and self-determination”

- *Forever Safe Spaces*

Anyone can help with PB by using and remixing community-circulated PB kits or resources. The more we share resources, the more people we can reach. Community doesn't need to wait for the outreach workgroup to start PB.

### Outreach Workgroup Criteria

1. People with lived experience with every stage of the criminal legal system, i.e. people who have been incarcerated
2. People with lived experience of homelessness
3. People with disabilities
4. People who are trans, non-binary, or gender non-conforming
5. People who are well-connected to multiple community organizations
6. Social media influencers
7. Black or BIPOC people who work at local news outlets and journalists
8. Black or BIPOC artists and cultural workers
9. People who have experience coordination mutual aid







## Black-led Steering Committee

In every committee, it is important that those who are most likely to be harmed or killed by systemic racism and violence are represented. Among other groups, this might include: Black women who are trans, indigenous women, and persons with disabilities.

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- *Black, Non-binary human, Age 35 - 45, Seattle Council District 2*

The Steering committee and accountability workgroup will be the first groups started in March. Together, they will develop and refine processes that will hold all PB groups accountable to the community, adjusting as needed. Other workgroups can start later in the PB process (e.g., budget delegates can start closer to when it's time to start developing ideas into voting proposals).