

Democracy Voucher Program Overview & Levy Renewal Proposal

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Democracy Vouchers

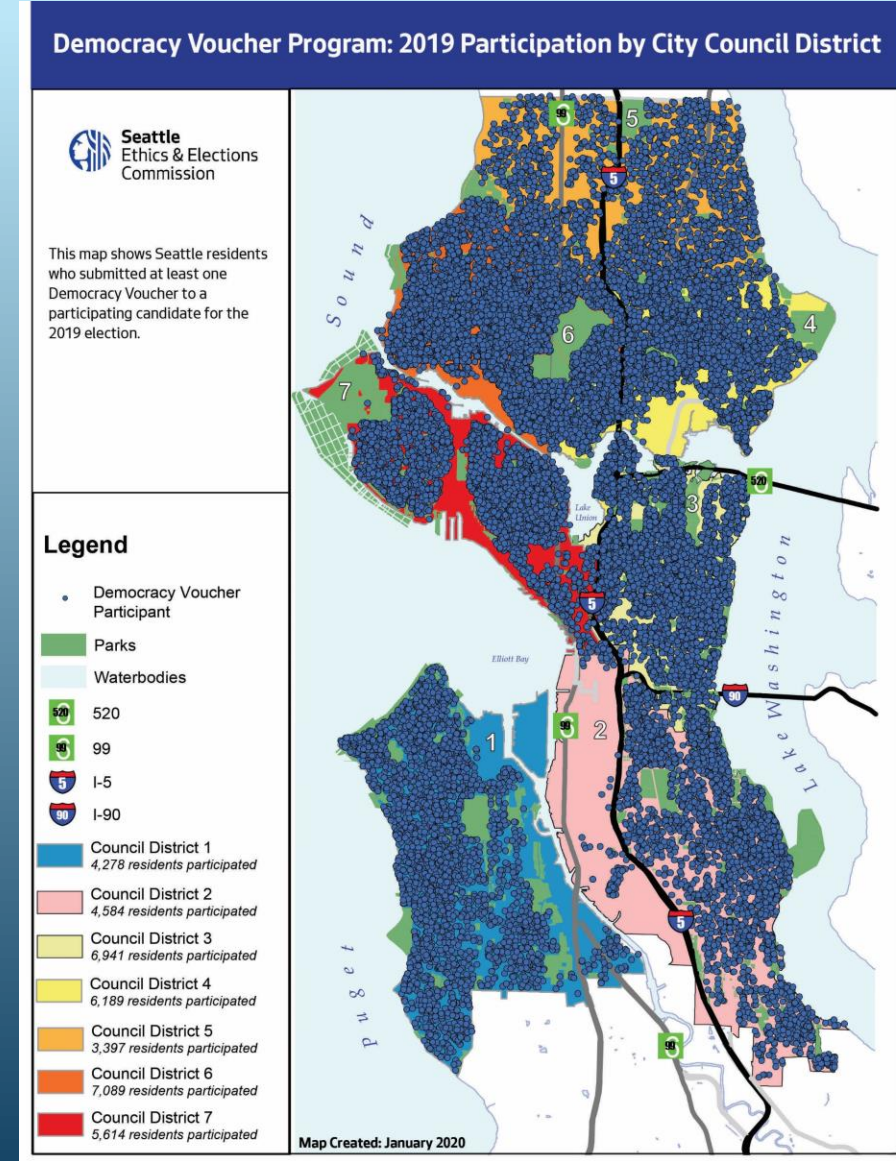
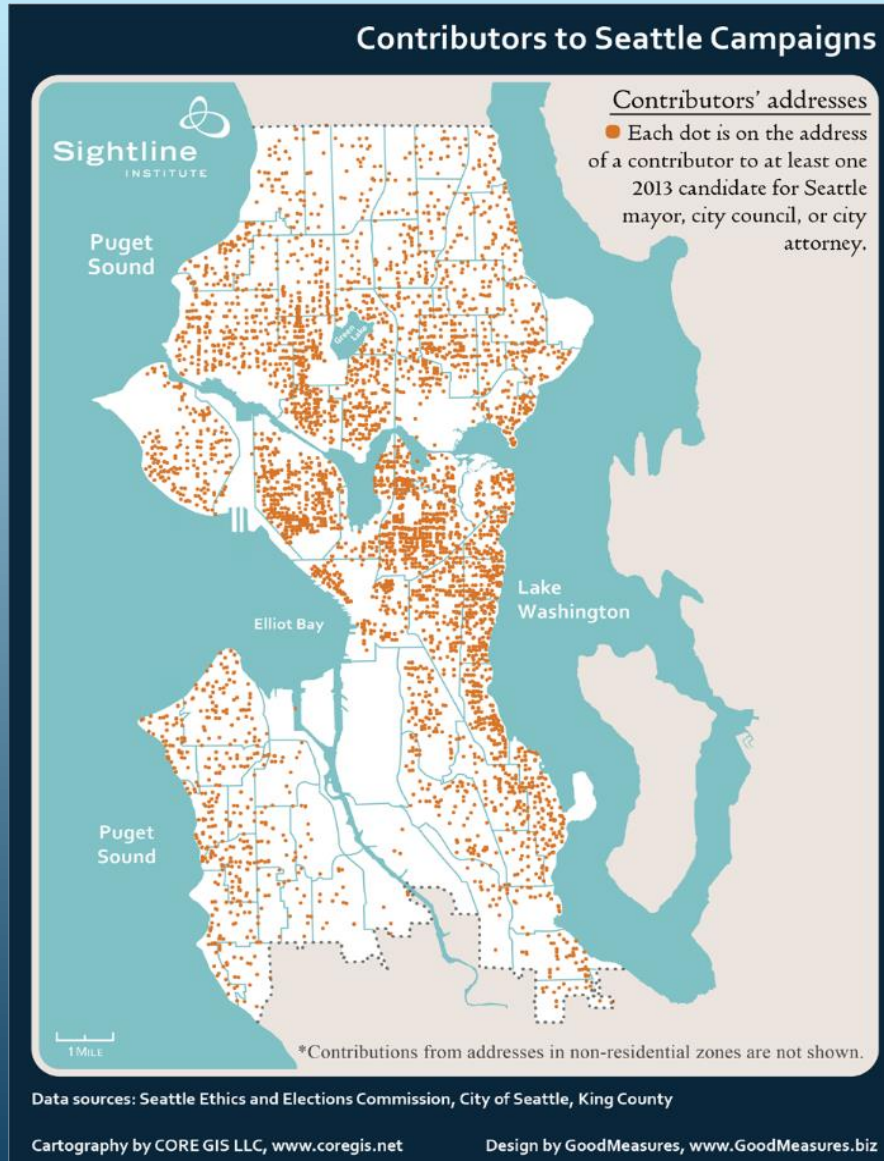
Created by voters in 2015 and implemented in the 2017 election cycle, the Democracy Voucher Program is a first-of-its-kind public campaign financing system which aims to increase participation, reduce the influence of big money in politics, and make the city's elections more accessible and transparent.

The program is administered by the independent Seattle Ethics & Elections Commission (SEEC) which sends four \$25 democracy vouchers to eligible residents during municipal election cycles. Residents then donate their vouchers to qualifying campaigns, which are redeemed for the assigned value.

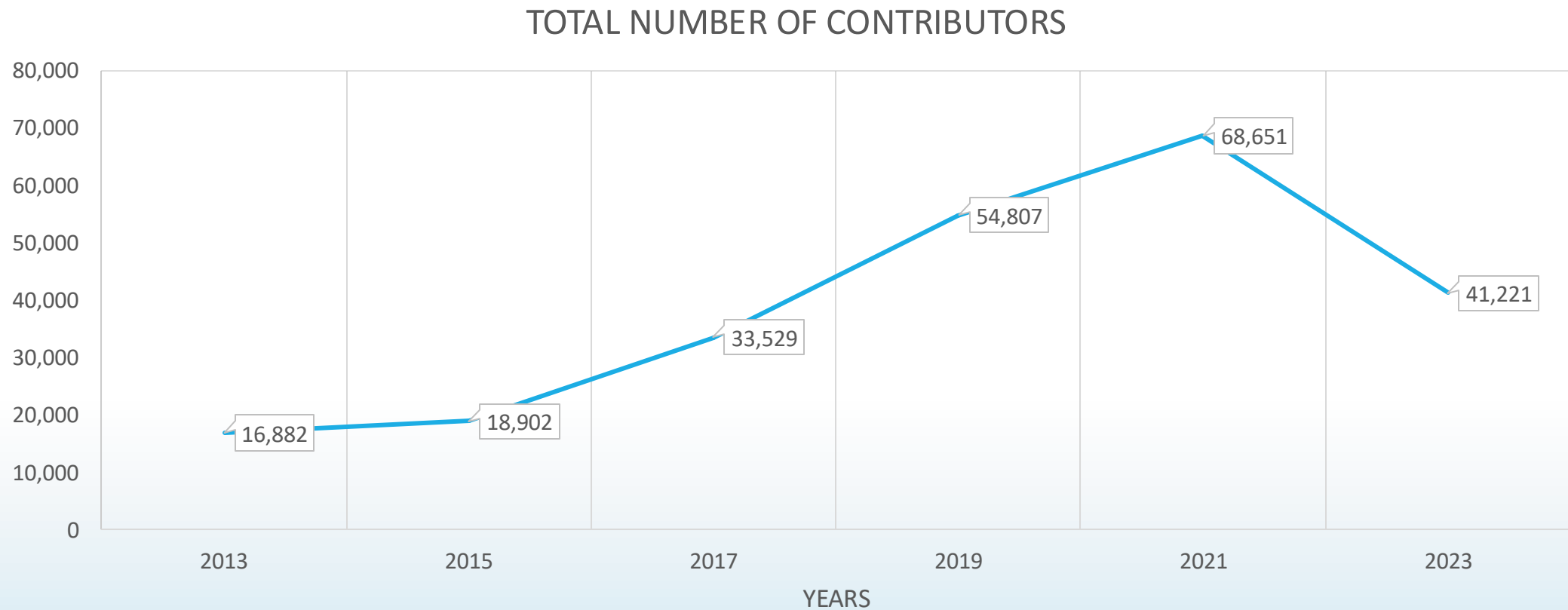
A 10-year property tax levy finances the Democracy Voucher program, which expires at the end of 2025. Mayor Harrell has proposed a levy renewal to fund the program for an additional 10 years.

Map of 2013 Campaign Contributors

Map of 2019 Campaign Contributors

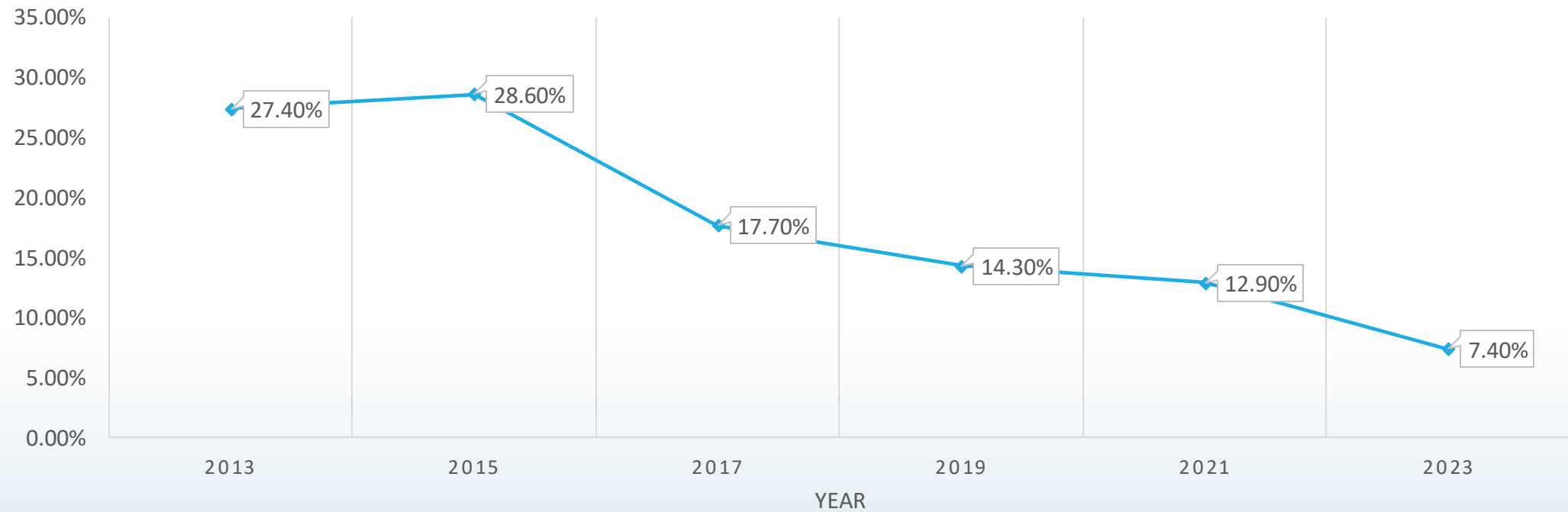


Outcomes – Number of Contributors



Outcomes – Locally Funded Campaigns

PERCENTAGE OF CONTRIBUTIONS FROM OUTSIDE SEATTLE



Outcomes – Competitive Races

2011–2013

Last four-year cycle before vouchers

- 2.67 candidates per council race
- Five of nine races have no primary, one candidate runs unopposed
- Every incumbent on the ballot, eight of nine win reelection
- Seven win by more than 20 points, three get more than 80 percent of the vote

2017–2019

First four-year cycle with vouchers

- 6.1 candidates per council race, 228% increase
- Every race has a competitive primary
- Three of nine races are decided by more than 20 points

Democracy Voucher Levy Renewal Proposal

10-Year Property Tax Levy

Collects \$4.5 million/year over 10 years (currently \$3m/year)

\$0.0142 tax rate, \$13.07 annual impact to the owner of a median value home (\$920,000 in 2026)

Voters to consider on the August 5th Primary Election Ballot

Advisory Workgroup to convene to consider programmatic recommendations in 2026, provided the measure is adopted by voters

Considerations When Proposing a \$4.5m Annual Budget

Democracy Voucher Program Budget Forecast - Fund Summary - \$4.5 million renewal											
Budget Year	2025	2026	2027	2028	2029	2030	2031	2032	2033	2034	2035
Annual Revenue	\$3,000,000	\$4,500,000	\$4,500,000	\$4,500,000	\$4,500,000	\$4,500,000	\$4,500,000	\$4,500,000	\$4,500,000	\$4,500,000	\$4,500,000
Campaign Funds - 65% Utilized	\$5,850,000	\$0	\$4,265,625	\$0	\$7,008,300	\$0	\$5,332,025	\$0	\$8,419,650	\$0	\$6,665,025
Administration	\$1,790,533	\$756,531	\$1,919,012	\$824,325	\$2,098,565	\$899,030	\$2,256,561	\$981,451	\$2,470,876	\$1,072,493	\$2,665,591
Remaining Program Budget	\$3,186,082	\$6,929,552	\$5,244,915	\$8,920,590	\$4,313,726	\$7,914,695	\$4,826,109	\$8,344,658	\$1,954,132	\$5,381,639	\$551,022

Democracy Voucher Program Budget Forecast - Fund Summary - \$4 million renewal											
Budget Year	2025	2026	2027	2028	2029	2030	2031	2032	2033	2034	2035
Annual Revenue	\$3,000,000	\$4,000,000	\$4,000,000	\$4,000,000	\$4,000,000	\$4,000,000	\$4,000,000	\$4,000,000	\$4,000,000	\$4,000,000	\$4,000,000
Campaign Funds - 65% Utilized	\$5,850,000	\$0	\$4,265,625	\$0	\$7,008,300	\$0	\$5,332,025	\$0	\$8,419,650	\$0	\$6,665,025
Administration	\$1,790,533	\$756,531	\$1,919,012	\$824,325	\$2,098,565	\$899,030	\$2,256,561	\$981,451	\$2,470,876	\$1,072,493	\$2,665,591
Remaining Program Budget	\$2,497,684	\$5,741,153	\$3,556,516	\$6,732,192	\$1,625,327	\$4,726,296	\$1,137,710	\$4,156,259	-\$2,734,267	\$193,240	-\$5,137,376

Democracy Voucher Program Budget Forecast - Fund Summary - \$3 million renewal											
Budget Year	2025	2026	2027	2028	2029	2030	2031	2032	2033	2034	2035
Annual Revenue	\$3,000,000	\$3,000,000	\$3,000,000	\$3,000,000	\$3,000,000	\$3,000,000	\$3,000,000	\$3,000,000	\$3,000,000	\$3,000,000	\$3,000,000
Campaign Funds - 65% Utilized	\$5,850,000	\$0	\$4,265,625	\$0	\$7,008,300	\$0	\$5,332,025	\$0	\$8,419,650	\$0	\$6,665,025
Administration	\$1,790,533	\$756,531	\$1,919,012	\$824,325	\$2,098,565	\$899,030	\$2,256,561	\$981,451	\$2,470,876	\$1,072,493	\$2,665,591
Remaining Program Budget	\$2,497,684	\$4,741,153	\$1,556,516	\$3,732,192	-\$2,374,673	-\$273,704	-\$4,862,290	-\$2,843,741	-\$10,734,267	-\$8,806,760	-\$15,137,376

Next Steps



Committee Vote: April 11, 2025



Full Council Vote: April 22, 2025



King County Submission Deadline: May 2, 2025



Election Day: August 5, 2025



Property Tax Collection Start: January 1, 2026



Working Group Convenes: Early 2026

Thank You

Questions?