

# News Release

For Immediate Release: May 5, 2021

## Durham Seeks Resident Votes to Select Participatory Budgeting Projects for COVID-19 Response

*Online Voting Open May 5 – June 6*

DURHAM, N.C. – Which 31 nonprofits and community organizations should receive up to \$50,000 for COVID-19 response? Beginning today, City of Durham residents can vote to help select the winning projects.

Earlier this year, more than 60 Durham-connected nonprofits and community organizations submitted grant applications to Participatory Budgeting Durham (PB Durham) to request funding to support community needs stemming from COVID-19. Now, those have been narrowed down to 31 grant proposals, and residents are invited to vote to select the winning organizations to implement their projects over the next two fiscal years. The nonprofits and community organizations with the most votes will be eligible to receive up to \$50,000 in grant funding through this program.

In order to help select the organizations to receive funding, all city residents and students 13 years and older were invited to cast their votes through an online ballot. The ballot, now available in [English](#) and [Spanish](#), is open from May 5 through June 6, and provides an opportunity to vote for projects in three categories - Community Building and Economic Opportunities, Health and Human Services, and Children, Youth and Family Wellness. Residents who participate by casting their vote will also be eligible to win a \$100 VISA gift card or gift cards to support local, minority-owned restaurants in Durham.

According to Interim Assistant Budget Director Andrew Holland, the voting part of this process gives residents a chance to help choose how grant funds are spent to support their community's needs. "It's important that we seek input from our community, especially those most vulnerable and our underserved community members, as they have been the most impacted by COVID-19," Holland said. "Moreover, having residents vote for these grant proposals gives them a real voice in their local government decision making and how funds are put back into their community."

During the voting period, PB Durham staff and volunteers will also table and canvass at various sites throughout Durham to ensure as many residents as possible have the opportunity to vote. "Our outreach and engagement strategy is to meet people where they are," Holland said. "In addition to the online voting, we plan to have pop-up voting sites at Durham Station, Durham County Health Services Building, African-American barbershops, religious institutions, and more."

Announced late last year, the [second cycle](#) of PB Durham formed a grant funding program to support local efforts to strengthen the community's social and economic fabric by offering COVID-19 relief assistance. City Council approved \$1 million in funding for Durham-connected nonprofit and community organizations directly serving residents impacted by the COVID-19 pandemic, and addressing any underlying issues impacting underserved communities. To help rank priority areas to receive funding, residents were invited to participate in a short, online survey. After the survey closed, over 60 nonprofit and community organizations submitted applications to address the biggest needs identified through the survey, which included food access, eviction prevention, and employment opportunities. Approximately 40 budget delegates and City staff then vetted and scored the projects based upon equity, impact, and feasibility to arrive at the 31 proposals now up for vote.

For more information about PB Durham Cycle 2 grant funding, visit the [PB Durham website](#), send an [email](#) to PB Durham staff, or call (984) 227-9095. Residents may also follow PB Durham on [Facebook](#), [Twitter](#), and [Instagram](#).

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