



\$50,000 for Projects Benefiting Newcomers

Date: Tuesday, June 16, 2020

For Immediate Release

VICTORIA, BC –The Participatory Budgeting Steering Committee is seeking proposals for the 2020 Participatory Budgeting initiative, which will see \$50,000 invested for projects benefiting new immigrants and refugees in Victoria.

Anyone with an idea for a project or activity that will enhance or enrich the lives of newcomers in our community is invited to apply online at engage.victoria.ca/participatory-budgeting by 4 p.m. on July 31, 2020.

Close to 20 per cent of Victoria's population are newcomers, or people who are new immigrants or refugees to Canada who have settled in Victoria, according to the 2016 Census. They face significant social and economic barriers to integration into the community and Canadian society. To help alleviate these challenges, the 2020 Participatory Budgeting initiative will focus on projects that foster diversity, inclusion and make a real difference in the lives of newcomers in Victoria.

"This year we are turning our attention, energy and resources to newcomers, while also increasing participation in an exciting form of democracy," said Victoria Mayor Lisa Helps. "We're encouraging residents from all walks of life to get involved and bring forward creative project ideas that foster a welcoming city for those getting a new start in our community."

Participatory Budgeting is an innovative, democratic process that gives the entire community the opportunity to participate and decide how to invest a portion of the City budget. Community voting will determine the top projects for funding.

This year's citizen-led volunteer Participatory Budgeting Steering Committee is being coordinated by the Inter-Cultural Association of Greater Victoria and includes 20 community volunteers and one City staff liaison.

"This is a great opportunity for the community to get involved and create solutions that positively impact the lives of new immigrants and refugees in Victoria," says Deepa Pillay, member of the Participatory Budgeting Steering Committee. "The application process is simple and easy to navigate, making it accessible to anyone who is interested in participating."

Projects can be put forward by an individual, groups, or non-profit organizations. All projects must take place within the City of Victoria and must benefit newcomers.

Proposals could include art installations, projects that address issues of racism and discrimination, events to build a culturally-inclusive community or anything else designed to benefit newcomers in Victoria.

“Newcomers enrich our communities and a welcoming city is not just welcoming of newcomers, but of all: as an inclusive, diverse, resilient and connected city. Projects like Participatory Budgeting help us create a city in which everyone is welcome, and everyone is able to participate – economically, socially, culturally and politically – in the ongoing evolution and direction of Victoria,” said Victoria City Councillor Sharmarke Dubow.

After a successful pilot project in 2017, the City committed to three more years of Participatory Budgeting. So far, 11 community-led projects have received \$110,000 in City of Victoria Participatory Budgeting funding.

Participatory Budgeting Learning Events

The Steering Committee and City staff will co-host a series of web-based learning events for residents and organizations interested in submitting a proposal. The goal of these sessions is to help individuals and organizations learn about the City’s Participatory Budgeting initiative, generate ideas and help build effective proposals.

Date: Tuesday, July 7

Time: 5 p.m. – 7 p.m.

Details: Part 1: Participatory Budgeting 101, Part 2: Build Your Own Proposal

Date: Saturday, July 11

Time: 10 a.m. – noon

Details: Part 1: Participatory Budgeting 101, Part 2: Build Your Own Proposal

Learn more, RSVP for a learning event and apply for Participatory Budgeting funding at engage.victoria.ca/participatory-budgeting

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