

ALBUQUERQUE DEMOCRACY DOLLARS

What if ABQ could take our elections out of the hands of big special interests and put them in the hands of the people?

Everyday Albuquerqueans would be heard and have a real say in the government decisions affecting our lives.

And people like us might even have a chance to run for office, and win!

How would it work?



Candidates who want to participate agree to certain limitations.



Residents get Democracy Dollars in the mail.



They give them to the candidate(s) of their choice.



Candidates can redeem them for public funds.

- ▶ Building on our current public elections program, every ABQ resident would receive \$25.00 worth of “Democracy Dollars” in the mail and could donate that money to local candidates of their choice who qualify for a publicly financed campaign and who agree not to accept private contributions.
- ▶ The system would require no additional city funding and would enable working- and middle-class candidates to compete against wealthy or well-connected candidates.
- ▶ A wide range of Albuquerqueans without big pocketbooks would be given a new way of participating in campaigns and having our voices heard.
- ▶ Candidates could focus on the issues important to the communities they serve instead of dialing for dollars from big donors and special interests.



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THE CHALLENGE

- ▶ Very few Albuquerque residents vote in city elections. Even in the recent mayoral election, voter turnout was very low—30% of registered voters. Who are they? 68% are white, and 67% are over 50. The vast majority Albuquerqueans are left out because they see big donors calling the shots anyway.
- ▶ Cynicism is at the heart of low voter turnout, and the vast majority of voters in ABQ believe the influence of money in our elections is a problem.
- ▶ The need for big donations in campaigns causes our representatives to spend far too much time listening to and addressing the concerns of special interest groups and the most well-connected residents, and far too little time working on behalf of everyday people.

THE BENEFITS

Albuquerque would not be the first to implement a Democracy Dollars system.

Seattle has utilized this system to engage under-represented and under-served populations in local elections—with great and well-researched results.

- ▶ When Seattle implemented the system in 2015, grassroots participation in publicly financed campaigns increased 230% and was dramatically more racially and economically diverse.
- ▶ Research demonstrates that the more representative an electorate is of its communities and families, the more equitable the policy outcomes.

**For more information, please contact
the ABQ Democracy Dollars campaign at
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