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Democracy Reinvented: Participatory Budgeting and Civic Innovation in America (Innovative Governance in the 21st Century)

Hollie Russon Gilman

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Participatory Budgeting—the experiment in democracy that could redefine how public budgets are decided in the United States.

Democracy Reinvented is the first comprehensive academic treatment of participatory budgeting in the United States, situating it within a broader trend of civic technology and innovation. This global phenomenon, which has been called “revolutionary civics in action” by the New York Times, started in Brazil in 1989 but came to America only in 2009. Participatory budgeting empowers citizens to identify community needs, work with elected officials to craft budget proposals, and vote on how to spend public funds.

Democracy Reinvented places participatory budgeting within the larger discussion of the health of U.S. democracy and focuses on the enabling political and institutional conditions. Author and former White House policy adviser Hollie Russon Gilman presents theoretical insights, indepth case studies, and interviews to offer a compelling alternative to the current citizen disaffection and mistrust of government. She offers policy recommendations on how to tap online tools and other technological and civic innovations to promote more inclusive governance.

While most literature tends to focus on institutional changes without solutions, this book suggests practical ways to empower citizens to become change agents. *Democracy Reinvented* also includes a discussion on the challenges and opportunities that come with using digital tools to re-engage citizens in governance.

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