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Publicly Funded Campaigns Presentation

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General Policy Committee Meeting

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Gainesville Context

- The State of Florida regulates Campaign Financing for **statewide** office
 - Governor, Attorney General, Chief Financial Officer, Corporation Commissioner
- State statutes are silent on public funds for candidates in local elections
- Alachua County Code & City of Gainesville Code regulate Campaign Financing
 - Contribution limits
 - Financial report filing requirements

Why Public Campaign Financing?

- Greater diversity among donors
- Increase in the overall number of donors
- More women & qualified persons are encouraged to run
- Candidates experience more quality time with constituents
- Greater voter participation
- Reduced influence of large contributions from large organizations
- Protected effective competition

Running a Campaign in Gainesville

- Total Expenditures of *Elected* Candidates

- District wide: \$34,000 (2017)

- At-Large: \$35,000 (2018)

- Mayoral: \$55,000 (2016)

Publicly Funded Campaign Structures

1. Grants

- City of Austin, TX

2. Vouchers

- City of Seattle, WA

3. Matching Funds

- City of Tucson, AZ
- Montgomery County, MD
- State of **Florida**

Grant Structure

- Provides full funding for candidates to run their campaigns.
- Participating candidates receive a lump-sum grant
 - no further fundraising required (or allowed)
- To Participate, Jurisdictions may choose to
 - Require candidates to raise a threshold number of contributions
 - Require candidates to sign an agreement

Austin, Texas

- Funds are only available in a **runoff election**
- Candidates receive an **equal** distribution of available funds
- To qualify, candidates must sign a campaign contract
 - Candidate forums
 - Debates arranged by City Ethics Review Commission

Austin, Texas

- Grant program is funded by
 - The registration fee paid by compensated lobbyists
 - Donations from individuals and business entities
 - Fines collected for violations of campaign contracts
 - A \$1 voluntary donation via a check-box on City utility bills
 - All filing fees paid to the City by candidates running

Vouchers

- A voucher program provides four vouchers to each registered voter who has applied to the program.
- Each voter can choose to donate to a specific candidate. The candidate can then redeem the voucher.

Seattle, Washington

- Registered voters who are residents of Seattle can apply to receive four \$25 vouchers
- The voters assign vouchers to a candidate who can use the voucher to fund their campaign activities, up to the established campaign valuation for their seat
- Candidates must receive a qualifying number of signatures and contributions
- The program is funded by a property tax that costs households about \$8 per year

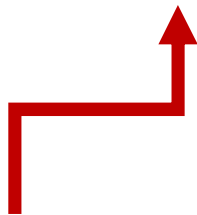
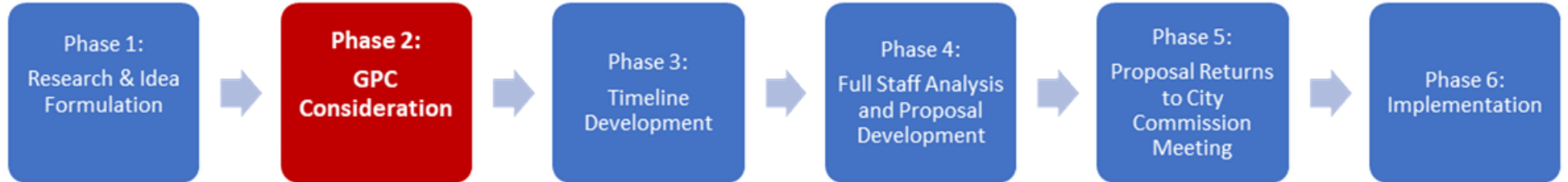
Matching Funds

- This model **matches** small contributions from voters to qualifying candidates with the use of public funds.
- The structure of how the program receives funding varies by jurisdiction
 - EX: Denver assesses \$2.88 per resident/year
 - In times of declared fiscal emergency that fee is suspended/reduced
 - Other funding from unspent funds distributed to a candidate, interest generated, etc.

Montgomery County, Maryland

- To qualify, candidates must
 - Collect a qualifying number of contributions
 - Meet qualifying dollar thresholds
 - Only accept contributions from an individual between \$50 and \$150
 - Refuse to accept a contribution from organizations/groups such as political action committees, corporations, labor organization, etc.
- The program
 - Matches funds for candidates. The amounts vary based on the candidate's office (county executive, county council. Etc.)
 - Establishes maximum limits of public funds per candidate

Recommended Next Steps



We are here!

If the General Policy Committee wants to proceed, move this project to Phase 3 of the Policy Process.

Questions?