



NEWS from the Shelby County Mayor's Office

Lee Harris, Mayor

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11th Floor, 160 North Main, Memphis, Tennessee 38103

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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**SHELBY COUNTY MAYOR LEE HARRIS JOINS COUNTY COMMISSION AND
MORAL BUDGET COALITION TO LAUNCH NEW PARTICIPATORY BUDGETING
EFFORT**

***Shelby County Government is working with local partners to engage more county residents in
the budgeting process.***

Shelby County, TN – Shelby County Mayor Lee Harris will partner with the Shelby County Commission and the [Moral Budget Coalition](#) to host a [virtual town hall](#) meeting at 5:30 p.m. on Thursday, April 14, 2022. The town hall meeting will launch the Community-Centered Participatory Budgeting Process, a new initiative that encourages county residents to become part of the Shelby County budgeting process. County residents are encouraged to attend. Registrants are asked to complete ahead of the meeting an online survey that allows them to rank their budget priorities and suggest new services and programs. Research has found that more than half of American citizens want a local participatory budgeting process for their communities.

The Moral Budget Coalition is an affiliation of individuals and organizations, which last year offered recommendations for the 2022 county budget. Those recommendations included the creation of a community-centered process to encourage participation by Shelby County residents. The coalition members include Stand for Children, Restaurant Workers Unite, DeCarcerate Memphis, Memphis Tenants Union, MICAH, My Sistah's House, BLDG Memphis, HOPE,

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Memphis for All, Memphis & West Tennessee Labor Council, Memphis Music Initiative, The Collective Blueprint, and Whole Child Strategies.

Shelby County Mayor Lee Harris: “Few things are more important than how taxpayer dollars are spent. We are partnering with the County Commission and the Moral Budget Coalition to help everyone have a voice in one of the most critical processes in local government. I’m excited by this work because it means bringing more residents into the budget conversation.”

Shelby County Commissioner Michael Whaley: “As a Shelby County commissioner, I often hear from constituents in my district who have questions about how the decisions are made to fund projects and programs. And they want to know who gets to decide. I have long been an advocate of participatory budgeting and am eager to hear from our citizens.”

Natalie McKinney, Co-Founder and Executive Director of Whole Child Strategies, Inc.: “We are optimistic that, if done in full faith and with respect for community voice, the community-centered budgeting process can help propel us toward a future that truly represents the stated needs of all of our communities.”

Michael Thompson, Shelby County Budget Director: “We work very hard to keep a close eye on the dollars and cents Shelby County brings in and what is paid out. We work hard to make our county government budget easier to understand. And we are pleased to have worked on a process that allows more residents to participate.”

(End of Release)



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