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How a Public Bank Could Help You.

A campaign is underway in New York to take money out of Wall Street and put it into the hands of the city.

New Yorkers are known for speaking their minds, but can they put their money where their mouth is? A new campaign is underway to make one of the richest cities in the world reclaim local wealth and make the banking system work for people who actually live here, by putting people over profits.

Community banks and neighborhood credit unions have been around for decades as a way for communities to build assets, launch mom-and-pop businesses, and help keep money in the hands of working people, rather than lining the pockets of international financial institutions. But what if a city as a whole decided to create its own bank? The Public Bank NYC campaign calls for a full-fledged bank, owned and operated by and for the city, which could serve as a public trust invested in social justice, accountable to the public.

Right now, billions of the City of New York's dollars are being held in commercial banks. That's a problem, because it's those same banks that make decisions about whom to lend to, and at what rates—not just on Wall Street but in everyday Main Street businesses and neighborhoods as well. Those banks are also the same big financial institutions that were deemed “too big to fail” during the last financial collapse, and were only kept afloat during the Great Recession with a huge bail-out, ultimately funded by public money.

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The Nation

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