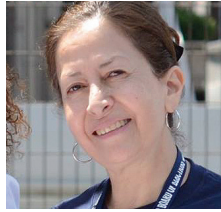


# Voter Engagement Toolkit for Community Foundations



- Strategies and Case Studies -

APRIL 2018



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[Visit \*nonprofitvote.org/foundationtoolkit\* to download report and view related sources.](https://nonprofitvote.org/foundationtoolkit)

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## INTRODUCTION

**Active civic engagement, including voting, is at the core of the health and economic vitality of local communities. Research associates civic and voter participation with a host of benefits. People who vote are more likely to engage with neighbors, talk to elected officials, and engage civically in other ways. Communities that vote get more attention from candidates and greater clout before and after Election Day.**

Foundations and nonprofits are well positioned to increase voter and civic participation within the communities they serve. They're trusted messengers, deeply rooted in local communities and invested for the long term. Increasing participation fits well into the social missions and goals of philanthropic organizations.

There is strong data backing up the effectiveness of nonprofits doing nonpartisan voter engagement with the communities they serve. Studies like Nonprofit VOTE's *Engaging New Voters*<sup>1</sup> report show that nonprofits reach populations most likely to be overlooked by partisan campaigns and have a markedly positive impact on voter turnout with those they engage. Further, because nonprofits and community foundations are part of their communities' fabric, their impact builds over time.

### RESOURCES FOR COMMUNITY FOUNDATIONS

This guide lifts up concrete ideas and examples for community and public foundations to encourage voter engagement among their grantees and networks. Strategies range from communications, resource sharing, and nonprofit trainings to integration into programs and grantmaking or donor and grantee education. Voter engagement is not another program but rather a valuable tool in a broader set of strategies to build healthy communities, give voice across all neighborhoods, and increase the impact and effectiveness of grantees to achieve their goals.

Elections provide a unique educational and engagement opportunity. They're a chance to connect differently with the people you serve, focusing on their role as citizens and voters. An election season is a window of opportunity to talk about issues with candidates and future elected officials at a point when they're often more accessible and more apt to listen. For example:

- In 2016, the Community Foundation for Greater Atlanta responded when the state legislature added two constitutional amendments to the statewide ballot related to children and relevant to communities it served. The foundation hosted a training to help nonprofits understand their ability to take a position or provide neutral public education. One grantee, Meals on Wheels Atlanta, used it as a chance to engage its clients as active citizens in a civic conversation about the measure and voting.

<sup>1</sup> Engaging New Voters: The Impact of Nonprofit Voter Outreach on Client and Community Turnout, Nonprofit VOTE, [nonprofitvote.org/engaging\\_new\\_voters/](https://nonprofitvote.org/engaging_new_voters/)





## INTRODUCTION

**“ We realized that all we can do, and all foundations combined can do, is small compared to what the Texas Legislature can do. That’s when we determined we needed to be more politically active within the boundaries of the law.”**

*Mary Jalonick, former president, Dallas Foundation*

- Seven community foundations in Texas are members of the Texas Education Grantmakers Advocacy Consortium. The consortium was established in 2012 to address problems of systemic under-funding of public education. More broadly, it trains and engages the trustees and staff of its 43 member foundations on what they can do to educate their state legislators and more effectively support public education’s policy and advocacy. In 2018 they will provide members information on guidelines and resources for nonpartisan election activities. As former Dallas Foundation president Mary Jalonick said, “We realized that all we can do, and all foundations combined can do, is small compared to what the Texas Legislature can do. That’s when we determined we needed to be more politically active within the boundaries of the law.”
- In its recent strategic plan, the Seattle Foundation identified low civic participation as a challenge for many grantees and communities. It partnered with the King County Election board to provide funds and support to grantees on how to conduct nonpartisan voter education as a component of the foundation’s “Vibrant Democracy Initiative.” In the 2017 mayoral and council elections, voter outreach and candidate forums gave new voice to lower-income and younger communities often overlooked by traditional campaigns.

The philanthropic and voluntary sector has long been part of the bedrock of democratic participation and civic innovation. Our hope is that you will find something in the ideas and examples offered in this toolkit that will be appropriate for your foundation and that will contribute to a conversation among your board, donors and grantees to promote active citizenship, strengthen communities, and help make democracy work.

.....

*This community foundation guide is a first edition for 2018. There is a similar guide for private foundations. We plan to learn from you and your peers about what’s helpful and what’s missing for an updated edition for 2020. Please send your feedback and examples to [foundationtoolkit@nonprofitvote.org](mailto:foundationtoolkit@nonprofitvote.org)*





## GUIDELINES FOR STAYING NONPARTISAN

Prepared by Greg Colvin and Eric Gorovitz, Adler & Colvin

*Greg Colvin is Senior Counsel and Eric Gorovitz is a Principal Attorney at Adler & Colvin, a group of seasoned attorneys in San Francisco deeply committed to serving the legal needs of the nonprofit sector nationwide.*

**Supporting voter participation in elections, much like other forms of advocacy or leadership development, is an effective way for community foundations to strengthen democracy and give voice to the communities they serve. Community foundations can participate in elections in two basic ways:**

- 1. Candidate Elections.** Community foundations can support or promote a wide range of voter engagement, voter education, and candidate engagement activities as long as they don't take sides (i.e., remain "nonpartisan").
- 2. Ballot Measure Elections.** Community foundations can conduct nonpartisan voter engagement and education on ballot measures, including initiatives, referenda, and bonds. Community foundations can also take sides on ballot measures, within their lobbying limits<sup>2</sup>.

Although a detailed discussion of the rules is beyond the scope of this toolkit, this section briefly summarizes these two key concepts. They are derived from Section 501(c)(3) of the Internal Revenue Code (the "Code"), which sets the qualifications for tax exemption of charities, including community foundations.

### CANDIDATE ELECTIONS

Section 501(c)(3) prohibits all charities, including community foundations, from engaging in activities that **support or oppose** any candidate, or group of candidates such as a political party, for election to public office. However, the Code places **no limit** on the amount of **nonpartisan** activities a community foundation may conduct in pursuit of its charitable or educational purposes.

Being nonpartisan means a community foundation cannot endorse or contribute to any candidate campaign nor engage in any communication, conduct, or use of resources that favors or disfavors a candidate or party. This includes activities such as rating candidates or labeling them with partisan identifiers such as "pro-choice" or "anti-tax." The safest strategy is to make no reference to any candidate or party except in the context of nonpartisan educational activities where multiple opposing candidates are presented, or in a context completely separate from any election, such as attempting to influence an incumbent's action as an officeholder.

<sup>2</sup> For nonprofit advocacy limits see – Independent Sector's Lobbying Guidelines for Public Charities and the resources of the National Council of Nonprofits and Bolder Advocacy.





## GUIDELINES FOR STAYING NONPARTISAN

If it avoids partisan content and acts independently from any candidate or political group, a community foundation can support or conduct nonpartisan voter registration, promote voting early or by mail, or encourage greater voter participation by any community or demographic of people chosen without regard to political affiliation or preference.

Further, community foundations can educate voters about the candidates using unbiased, even-handed methods such as nonpartisan debates, forums, questionnaires, voter guides, news reporting, social media, and web links. They should use guidance from the IRS or other respected experts in the field like Nonprofit VOTE and Bolder Advocacy.<sup>3</sup>

### BALLOT MEASURE ELECTIONS

About half the states and many localities have ballot measures by which voters may enact new laws through public elections. There is no limit on the nonpartisan charitable or educational work community foundations may do around ballot measures.

Section 501(c)(3) expressly authorizes public charities (but not private foundations<sup>4</sup>) to engage in activities designed to influence the outcome of legislation, including ballot measures, provided that such activities do not constitute a “substantial part” of the charity’s overall activities.<sup>5</sup> This federal tax restriction affects only laws passed by legislatures or voters in a ballot measure, not other forms of government action like regulatory, administrative, or judicial decisions. Expenditures to support or oppose a ballot measure may also require reporting under state or local campaign finance laws.<sup>6</sup>

.....

A community foundation can engage in any kind of activity related to an election, without limit, so long as the activity is *charitable or educational and does not take sides*. Being a public charity, rather than a private foundation, also means that a community foundation can, if it chooses and within its lobbying limits, *take a side* in a *ballot measure campaign* as a lobbying activity.

To determine how best to accomplish its goals and remain nonpartisan, a community foundation seeking to fund voter engagement activities should consult knowledgeable counsel as well as learning from the content of this toolkit and suggested resources in the “Resources” section (p. 20) before embarking on specific activities.

<sup>3</sup> Guidance from the IRS on how to conduct these activities on a nonpartisan basis is in Revenue Rulings 2007-41, 80-282, 78-248, and 76-456.

<sup>4</sup> Technically, Section 501(c)(3) doesn’t distinguish public charities from private foundations, which are also exempt under Section 501(c)(3). However, other Code sections prohibit private foundations from conducting or directly funding lobbying, including lobbying on ballot measures.

<sup>5</sup> Some community foundations may prefer to use the definitions and percentage limits of Section 501(h) to govern their ballot measure and other lobbying expenditures. Those rules treat a public charity’s communications, conduct, or expenditures supporting or opposing a ballot measure as direct (not grassroots) lobbying of voters in their capacity as legislators that provide higher and more defined spending limits.

<sup>6</sup> Further discussion of campaign finance requirements related to ballot measures is beyond the scope of this Toolkit. Community foundations should consult with campaign finance counsel and each relevant state or local campaign finance office before starting any activity that could be subject to these rules.





## VOTER ENGAGEMENT OPTIONS IN FOUR AREAS

The following sections review options for community foundations to encourage nonpartisan voter participation and candidate engagement. Broken down into four areas, each of the four sections includes examples from the case studies that are part of this report. We invite you to send us your ideas and feedback to [foundationtoolkit@nonprofitvote.org](mailto:foundationtoolkit@nonprofitvote.org) to include in future editions.

### Communications

Using regular communications channels with your community, donors, and staff to encourage voting and share nonpartisan resources.

### Nonprofit Trainings and Funder Collaborations

Sponsoring or promoting nonprofit trainings on nonpartisan election activities. Convening with others to discuss civic engagement and democracy. Partnering with philanthropy supporting organizations (national affinity groups and/or regional associations of grantmakers) to create programming on these topics and learn from their best practices.

### Language in Grant Agreements and RFPs

Using appropriate language that is not unnecessarily restrictive and distinguishes between partisan and nonpartisan activities.

### Voter Engagement Grantmaking

Making grants to do voter registration, education and outreach as part of the foundation's broader commitment to active citizenship and healthy communities.





# PROGRAM AND DONOR COMMUNICATIONS

## Communication with your grantees, donors, or staff can provide helpful information and a reminder about voter participation.

It sends a message about the importance of voting as part of healthy communities, active citizenship, and having a voice in the future. Election reminders are well-suited to fit into a communication schedule. They revolve around a series of dates – from a voter registration deadline to Election Day – so there is time to plan ahead.

### Options and Sample Content for Communications

#### 1. Time Communications to Key Dates

*Use key dates to provide reminders and information about voting.*

- **Election Day or Dates for Early Voting:** .....  
Communications work best in the two weeks or days before the election.
- **A Voter Registration Deadline:** .....  
With a link to register in your state.
- **National Voter Registration Day:** .....  
Occurs annually on the fourth Tuesday of September.

#### Resources

- [nonprofitvote.org/voting-in-your-state/](http://nonprofitvote.org/voting-in-your-state/)
- [nonprofitvote.org/voting-in-your-state/](http://nonprofitvote.org/voting-in-your-state/)
- [NationalVoterRegistrationDay.org](http://NationalVoterRegistrationDay.org)
- [#NationalVoterRegistrationDay](https://twitter.com/NationalVoterRegistrationDay)

#### 2. Promote Voter Education Events

*Highlight a candidate forum or forum on ballot measures.*

- **A Candidate Forum or Ballot Measure Forum:** .....  
Sponsored by a community partner.

- [nonprofitvote.org/resource-library/candidate-engagement-2/](http://nonprofitvote.org/resource-library/candidate-engagement-2/)
- [nonprofitvote.org/resource-library/ballot-measures-2/](http://nonprofitvote.org/resource-library/ballot-measures-2/)

#### 3. Advertise Nonpartisan Resources for Nonprofits

*Share links to resources and guidance for your grantees and partners.*

- **A Guide or Fact Sheet on Staying Nonpartisan:** .....  
Summarizing nonpartisan guidelines for 501(c)(3) organizations.
- **Voter Engagement Activities for Nonprofits:** .....  
Best practices and tips on doing voter registration, voter education, or candidate forums.

- [nonprofitvote.org/resource-library/staying-nonpartisan-2/](http://nonprofitvote.org/resource-library/staying-nonpartisan-2/)
- [nonprofitvote.org/all-resources/](http://nonprofitvote.org/all-resources/)

#### 4. Send Communications to Your Staff

*Send election reminders or voting information to your staff.*

- **An Election Reminder from the CEO or Senior Staff:** .....  
Reminding staff of an upcoming election or policy in regards to time off to vote.

- [nonprofitvote.org/documents/2015/07/sample-email-ceoexecutive-director.docx](http://nonprofitvote.org/documents/2015/07/sample-email-ceoexecutive-director.docx)





## PROGRAM AND DONOR COMMUNICATIONS

**“The School Board election is an important election for the future of the school district and the future of the children of Reading.”**

*From the Campaign Summary posted by the foundation.*

### Communication Examples

#### **HARTFORD FOUNDATION FOR PUBLIC GIVING** (Hartford, Connecticut)

##### *“My Vote” Social Media Campaign*

A conversation on civic engagement with trustees and stakeholders led to ideas to promote civic participation among their communities. One outcome was a social media campaign called “My Hope. My Voice. My Vote” done in collaboration with three other local community foundations and two grantmaker networks.<sup>7</sup>

The initiative encouraged residents to engage in the election and provided easy access to the information needed to register and vote. Launched in September on National Voter Registration Day, it rolled out weekly content linked to videos and messages to inspire and encourage people to vote. It used social media to provide important dates, deadlines and links to critical information about how to register to vote, how to get an absentee ballot, or find your poll.



#### **THE COMMUNITY FOUNDATION OF MUNCIE AND DELAWARE COUNTY** (Muncie, Indiana)

##### *Highlighting a Grantee’s Mock Election*

In 2017, the Community Engagement Officer who publicizes the foundation’s activities highlight a high school’s mock election on its website. The teacher used funds from the foundation’s Bell Education Grant program that gave small grants to teachers for curriculum innovation. Together they created and managed a polling station as part of a mock election held on the county Election Day. Students learned election laws and procedures. They were trained as poll workers, and the polls were open all day on Election Day. Along with what appeared on the county ballot, a school-related ballot measure was included for students to discuss and vote on.

#### **BERKS COUNTY COMMUNITY FOUNDATION** (Reading, Pennsylvania)

##### *Voter Education on a School Board Election*

In 2015, the Reading School Board was dysfunctional and in crisis. The foundation wanted to make sure Reading voters were aware of the upcoming election and its importance. The foundation hired a communications firm to spearhead a voter education campaign. Its goals were to increase voter participation, educate voters about what school boards do, and who was running.

The firm interviewed residents about the problems of the schools and school board. It chose Berks Community Television (BCTV), a 501(c)(3) nonprofit as the home and face of the campaign. The campaign produced and widely distributed a nonpartisan candidate guide in English and in Spanish. It ran a social media campaign and online ads to further its goals of education and visibility for the elections. In the final two weeks, the campaign hired canvassers to conduct door-to-door outreach. As a result of these efforts, turnout was higher. The School Board became more functional and able to make decisions for the benefit of the schools and children of Reading.

<sup>7</sup> The Community Foundation of Eastern Connecticut, Connecticut Community Foundation and Fairfield County’s Community Foundation, as well as Metro Hartford Alliance and the Connecticut Council for Philanthropy.





## NONPROFIT TRAININGS AND FUNDER COLLABORATIONS

### Nonprofit Trainings

If a community foundation sponsors trainings or alerts grantees about training opportunities, it can include election activities. Public facing nonprofits can benefit from knowing the nonpartisan guidelines and best practices for doing voter engagement and the benefits of doing so. Here are three options for your foundation to provide training opportunities related to electoral and voter participation<sup>8</sup>.

#### 1. Sponsor a Voter Engagement Training

Sponsor or advertise a training opportunity conducted by a nonprofit training partner or a local civic organization or community partner.

##### Example:

#### COMMUNITY FOUNDATION FOR GREATER ATLANTA

##### *A Nonprofit Training on Ballot Measures*

In 2016, Georgia had two statewide ballot measures on issues related to public schools and children's health that were of strong interest to the foundation and local communities. One addressed the role of the state takeover of "chronically failing" public schools. The other concerned generating revenue for the Safe Harbor for Sexually Exploited Children program.

The foundation hosted a forum for 45 nonprofits to learn about the proposed measures and discuss what nonprofits could do to support or oppose the measures and/or boost public voter education. Nonprofits wanting to take a position were provided with guidance on rules for lobbying and disclosure. Nonprofit VOTE and the local board of elections were both involved as trainers.

Following the forum, the foundation awarded five grants to nonprofits interested in implementing internal awareness activities with their staff and clients.

<sup>8</sup> Find training resources at Nonprofit VOTE's voter engagement resource library organized by topic.





## NONPROFIT TRAININGS AND FUNDER COLLABORATIONS

### 2. Incorporate Voter Engagement into a Training Series Sponsored by the Foundation

If your foundation offers capacity building trainings, consider including voting and elections in the curriculum of an advocacy or leadership training.

#### THE COMMUNITY FOUNDATION FOR GREATER NEW HAVEN

##### *A Voter Engagement Training for Nonprofits*

The foundation provides the nonprofit community a year-round schedule of workshops and events designed to help board and staff members meet the challenges of running effective organizations. As part of this capacity building program, the foundation is planning a Voter Engagement Training for Nonprofits in April 2018. Attendees will learn guidelines and best practices for voter and candidate engagement in the 2018 election. Breakout sessions will allow nonprofit staff to consider election activities appropriate for their nonprofit and community in 2018.

### 3. Promote Voter Engagement Webinars

Nonprofit VOTE works with national experts to provide free monthly webinars for 501(c)(3) organizations on a range of subjects. Topics include Staying Nonpartisan, Doing Voter Registration, Hosting a Candidate Forum, Nonprofits and Ballot Measures, and What Nonprofit Staff Can (and Can't) Do in Elections. Identify one or two webinars to promote in an election year.

*View the list of training webinars at – [nonprofitvote.org/webinar-series](https://nonprofitvote.org/webinar-series)*





## NONPROFIT TRAININGS AND FUNDER COLLABORATIONS

### Funder Collaborations and Peer Exchanges

**Funder collaborations and peer exchanges offer foundation staff, board members, and donors an opportunity to explore civic engagement or advocacy and discuss democracy issues and initiatives. Along with the national networks listed as resources on page 20, here are three examples of regionally based convenings.**

Members of the regional grantmakers association *Philanthropy Northwest* started an affinity group called Democracy Northwest. The group's members discuss their foundation's potential to support policy advocacy and voter participation and the benefits and challenges of doing so. They've been exploring the role of foundations, donors and their grantees in the US Census count and public input into fair and transparent redistricting. The group is also considering opportunities for collaborative grant making.

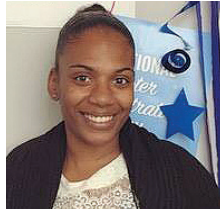
The *Texas Education Grantmakers Advocacy Consortium* is a group of Texas foundations created to allow foundation boards and staff to learn advocacy and policy skills to engage Texas policymakers. The consortium will provide similar training and guidance on nonpartisan election activities such as candidate or voter education.

The *Kansas Association of Community Foundations* and its 94 foundation members promote community philanthropy and inspire action to improve the quality of life in the State of Kansas. This association educates members on effective philanthropic operations and fosters collaboration and the exchange of information regarding philanthropic programs and issues. When the Council on Foundations stopped holding its community foundation conference in 2014, the association held its own the next year. In 2017, 400 participants from 32 states attended. Their 2018 conference will feature a plenary on advocacy and election engagement.

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Contact [info@nonprofitvote.org](mailto:info@nonprofitvote.org) to discuss a training opportunity designed for your foundation and nonprofit partners.





## GRANT AGREEMENTS AND RFP LANGUAGE

### Review Your Grant Agreement

A grant agreement can appear to bar all “political activities” if it does not include the term “partisan” in the definition. This creates confusion among nonprofits on whether or not they can carry out even fully allowable nonpartisan voter activities such as voter registration or candidate forums commonly undertaken as part of the sector’s long-standing commitment to active citizenship.

The IRS code only prohibits *partisan* political activities to support or oppose candidates. It does not prohibit election activities conducted on a *nonpartisan basis*. Further, the IRS does not require grantmakers to include a statement related to partisan political activities. It’s sufficient to state funds should be used solely for charitable and educational purposes as outlined in the Internal Revenue Code.

#### 1. Grant Agreement Templates

Foundations can ensure they are not unnecessarily restricting their grantees with inaccurate or unnecessary limiting language. To move in that direction, two grant agreement templates were developed by the Council on Foundations and Center for Lobbying in the Public Interest<sup>9</sup>, a program of the National Council of Nonprofits, with the assistance of Marcus Owens, director of the IRS Exempt Organizations Division (1990–2000)

*Grant Template with language prohibiting partisan political activity available at [nonprofitvote.org/foundationtoolkit](https://nonprofitvote.org/foundationtoolkit)*

Key language in template: “No funds may be used for partisan political activities, which are prohibited under Section 501(c)(3).”

*Grant Template without a specific partisan political prohibition available at [nonprofitvote.org/foundationtoolkit](https://nonprofitvote.org/foundationtoolkit)*

Key language in template: “Grant funds will be used solely for charitable, religious, scientific or educational purposes as described in Section 170(c)(2)(B) of the Internal Revenue Code.”

### Add Language to an RFP

A foundation can proactively include a question into an RFP about an applicant’s civic and voter engagement activities in the same way it might include other questions that promote the values and goals of the foundation and its expectations for community leadership development, sustainability, or outreach to diverse communities.

<sup>9</sup> Now a program of the National Council of Nonprofits.





## VOTER ENGAGEMENT GRANTMAKING

### VOTER ENGAGEMENT AND VOTER ENGAGEMENT GRANTMAKING

Community Foundations in Seattle, Atlanta, Denver, Los Angeles and other regions have created voter engagement grant initiatives as part of existing programs or special projects.

The grants are part of a broader focus on capacity building, advocacy, leadership development, or doing more to ensure the voices of all communities are heard in the political process and they gain the benefit of voting or other civic participation.

### Common Features of Voter Engagement Grant Programs

- 1. Embedded in Existing Programs:** The program is overseen by a program officer or team involved in the foundation's community engagement activities.
- 2. Collaboration with a Civic Partner:** The foundation partners with a nonprofit or civic organization experienced in voter registration and engagement to support and help manage the program. For example, the Community Foundation for Greater Atlanta partners with the Center for Civic Innovation; The Denver Foundation partners with the Participation Project of the Colorado Resource Center; the Seattle Foundation partners with the King County Elections Department.
- 3. RFP and Grants or Mini-Grants:** The foundation has an RFP process for prospective grantees that fits the activity. Usually most grants go to recent or current grantees, but other nonprofits can apply. Its civic partner participates in identifying qualified applicants and the grant review process. The size of grants varies among programs featured in this toolkit. From \$5,000 - \$30,000 (or more) to \$500 - \$2,500, enough to support and incentivize a more limited set of activities.
- 4. Training and Ongoing Assistance:** At the start of the grant period, grantees receive an initial training to review nonpartisan guidelines, state election procedures, best practices from the field, and a discussion of any reporting and evaluation. Learning opportunities continue with calls or peer exchanges.
- 5. Evaluation:** Measure impact in ways that are commensurate with the purpose and scale of the grant. The civic partner managing the program assists grantees in completing an evaluation. (See evaluation components in Appendix B.)

### INVESTING IN MORE THAN ONE CYCLE

The community foundations mentioned here most often started voter engagement grantmaking with a one-year pilot. They followed with a multi-year initiative over at least two to three years or cycles. Like other programs, voter engagement works best through a multi-year, sustained investment. Besides honing the model, research shows voting is habit-forming and has a multiplier effect. A person who votes in more than one election is likely to become a lifetime voter and encourage others to vote as well.





## VOTER ENGAGEMENT GRANTMAKING

### Examples of Grantmaking Programs

#### VOTER ENGAGEMENT AND EDUCATION INITIATIVES

In 2016, the *Seattle Foundation* partnered with the King County Elections office on a Voter Education Fund program. Each entity contributed an equal amount and continues to do so each year. Grants are made annually to qualifying nonprofits. Its first year goal was to promote voter education among new citizen populations for which language issues and inexperience with elections meant lower participation in county affairs. In 2017, the foundation and election board each contributed just over \$200,000 to the fund. The program expanded to other communities with low participation. The foundation created and managed the RFP working with the county to select grantees. The county election board provided training, on-going assistance and resources. The nonprofits represent a cross section of the county in and outside Seattle and conduct a range of engagement activities from candidate forums, voter education, voter registration and the like.

*The Denver Foundation* integrates civic engagement across all its programs with a resident engagement-centered approach. Voter engagement is one strategy to create stronger neighborhoods along with advocacy and other types of community engagement. The foundation partners with the Participation Project of the Colorado Resource Center (CRC) to provide advocacy and voter engagement grants and training and coaching to local nonprofits. Organizations have included community health centers, employment and education service centers, neighborhood advocacy groups, and more. Other voter engagement funding has come through the foundation's Strengthening Neighborhoods mini-grant program for leadership activities by individuals, and donor-advised funds.

Civic engagement is one of three areas *The Minneapolis Foundation* supports through its competitive grantmaking program. Its civic engagement investments are meant to strengthen leadership and organizing capacity in diverse communities, including promoting voter participation, fostering new civic leadership, and removing barriers to voting. 2017 featured elections for Minneapolis mayor, city council and park board. In this cycle the foundation awarded \$256,000 in voter engagement grants to 14 nonprofits. Each grantee received training and ongoing assistance from the managing partner, Minnesota Voice. They undertook a range of nonpartisan activities such as candidate forums, and voter registration and voter pledge drives. Voters were educated on ranked choice voting, the popular new voting method Minneapolis and St. Paul now use. Voter turnout increased from 18-46% in areas that have had low voter turnout. Voters elected the most diverse city council and park board in the city's history.

**“Communities thrive as more people participate in our democracy;”** said Catherine Gray, the foundation's director of Impact Strategy for Civic Engagement. **“Voting is a critical launch point for empowering people to speak up on the issues that affect their lives.”**





## VOTER ENGAGEMENT GRANTMAKING

### Examples of Grantmaking Programs

The *New Hampshire Charitable Foundation* has civic engagement as one of six funding priorities. It has funded or sponsored an array of efforts to promote voter education and engage candidates on issues. Some recent examples:

- Hosting a *2016 Gubernatorial Forum on Young Children*. All six leading Democratic and Republican candidates attended. It was co-sponsored with Endowment for Health and Spark NH – the state’s early childhood advisory council – to promote a comprehensive system of early childhood programs and services in New Hampshire.
- Sponsoring and participating in a *Presidential Primary Forum on Addiction issues*. Its forum on “Addiction and the Heroin Epidemic” at Southern New Hampshire received wide participation and media attention. A foundation program officer was a panelist. That year the issue rose to become the number one issue for New Hampshire voters.
- Granting funds for technology and website upgrades to *Citizens Count NH*. Citizens Count uses its website and communications to provide nonpartisan election information, candidate guides, and tools for citizens to vote and learn about the issues and candidates.

*The California Community Foundation* focuses on economic opportunity, youth, health, smart growth and the arts in greater Los Angeles. Across these programs, the foundation sees the effects of helping grantees develop skills in policy advocacy, community engagement, and leadership development. Part of this is making grants for voter registration, outreach and education as part of its civic engagement portfolio. It has identified nonprofits with a history of work within this field to provide training and technical assistance to its community partners. In 2016 and 2017, the foundation prioritized two housing and homelessness ballot measures of critical importance to the foundation and its community partners.

“Participating nonprofits have reported the benefits of voter engagement in improved organizational health, service delivery and community outreach. The funding helped nonprofits learn important skills about doing a community-based constituency outreach campaign, skills they view as transferrable to other programs such as the upcoming 2020 US Census.”

*Joe Duvall, Program Officer*







## VOTER ENGAGEMENT GRANTMAKING

**“ Each vote is a voice that shows a drive to make our community a better place for all to live and thrive.”**

*Celebrating Civic Engagement, CFGA post, Nov. 14, 2017*

*The Kansas Health Foundation* (KHF), today a public foundation,<sup>10</sup> works to improve the health of all Kansans with the goal of increasing health equity through the reduction of health disparities – broadly defined to include social and economic factors. Civic and Community Engagement is one of four impact areas. It saw how health disparities mirror civic participation disparities in its 2015 *Kansas Civic Health Index* report, co-produced by the National Conference on Citizenship. Prior to the release of the report, it held a Civic Health Summit inviting 40-50 community leaders to assess the current state of civic health. From the Summit, KHF partnered with two private health foundations to form the “Integrated Voter Engagement: Health Depends on a Vibrant Democracy” initiative. In 2017, this consortium made multi-year grants to 10 nonprofits to incorporate nonpartisan election participation activities into existing health equity work – seeking to close participation gaps in all types of elections and continue community advocacy and democracy work year-round.

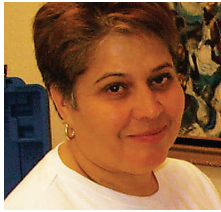
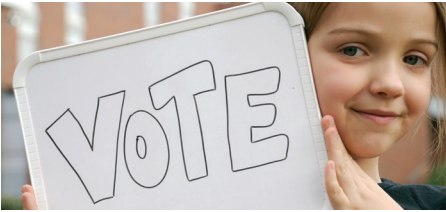
### BALLOT MEASURE ADVOCACY AND SPECIAL PROJECTS

The *Community Foundation for Greater Atlanta* encourages civic engagement through diverse funding streams, including the Civic Engagement Fund, established in 2013 to fund civic and voter engagement strategies that draw people into public decision-making processes. Among its priorities are inspiring and educating residents to become active, knowledgeable voters.

- In 2016, two statewide ballot measures related to children drew the attention of nonprofits; one on a state takeover of “chronically failing” public schools and another revenue measure for programs for sexually exploited children. The foundation sponsored a forum for nonprofits to learn about the measures and provide factual, nonpolitical education on their purposes. For those taking a position, the foundation provided relevant lobbying rules. Following the forum, the foundation awarded five grants to nonprofits interested in implementing awareness activities with staff and clients, including a Meals on Wheels program to reach senior voters and New American Pathways, a refugee-serving nonprofit, to translate educational materials.
- In 2017, the foundation awarded six organizations a total of \$115,000 in grants aimed at boosting civic engagement around local elections – to strengthen civic leadership among nonprofits and individuals and have candidates and the public pay greater attention to issues within the nonprofit sector and communities.

<sup>10</sup> Founded more than three decades ago, KHF changed status from a private to a public foundation in 2014.





## VOTER ENGAGEMENT GRANTMAKING

**“The foundation can’t match public resources from the county or state. When we have an opportunity to leverage added public support it makes sense to do so.”**

*Kathy Hallissey, Program Director, Cleveland Foundation*

The *Cleveland Foundation* has supported bond measures and tax levies related to the foundation’s goals and the work of its community partners and grantees.

### **1. Cuyahoga Fund for Arts and Culture – Levy**

The idea for a public fund for the arts came from a foundation grantee, the Community Partnership for Arts and Culture (CPAC), which was instrumental in the passage of the county levy on cigarette sales in 2006, creating the fund. In 2015, a 10-year continuance was overwhelmingly approved by voters. The fund is one of the largest public funders for arts and culture in the nation.

### **2. Keep Our Port Strong – Cleveland-Cuyahoga County Port Authority – Operating Levy**

The Port of Cleveland drives more than \$3.5 billion in economic activity every year. The foundation supported the successful voter-approved renewals of its operating levy in 2013 and 2017 through grants designed to educate and mobilize voters.

### **3. Cuyahoga Community College (Tri-C) – Bond Measure Levy**

The Cuyahoga Community College (Tri-C) placed a 25-year bond issue on the ballot to raise the \$227 million for capital work. The college helps businesses access and train local talent across a range of professions and give them a low-cost leg up on four-year colleges. Voters approved it by 57%.

<sup>11</sup> Related to a similar bed tax for arts and culture in neighboring Lake County, one of the three counties the foundation is active in.





## GETTING STARTED

### *Steps Towards Considering and Implementing Nonpartisan Voter Engagement Activities*

#### 1. Connecting to Mission and Goals

The implementation of civic and voter engagement activities generally starts with the CEO or board or it might be prompted by one of your grantees or donors. It usually includes a discussion on how the activities both align to the foundation's mission and advance program goals such as strengthening the impact of local nonprofits and communities. Support by the CEO is essential to making civic engagement activities a priority of the foundation. The board should understand the nonpartisan nature of the work, especially when grantmaking is involved.

#### 2. Choosing an Approach

This toolkit provides a range of options. The choice depends on the foundation's program interests and stakeholders. It also depends on how the activities fit into current programming with appropriate staffing and partners. As the elections are ongoing, consider options to pilot programs and continue them for at least two cycles (and potentially longer term). Plan grantmaking to allow nonprofits to get training and conduct activities that, in a general election, are carried out from July through Election Day.

#### 3. Considering Staff and Partners

**Staffing:** A staff lead can be a program officer whose portfolio already includes community or civic engagement or a communications associate able to promote the activity or highlight key dates in the election cycle as suggested on page six.

**Partners:** A community partner experienced in nonpartisan voter engagement and state election procedures can assist with training and ongoing technical assistance as well as evaluation. Based on the experience of other community foundations, it can be an organization that the foundation already supports, such as a voter engagement or advocacy coalition. Policy-oriented nonprofit associations or local election boards can make good partners as well.

#### 4. Defining Goals

*Sample goals could include:*

- Promoting voting as part of the foundation's role as a civic leader and demonstrate and use your institutional voice.
- Encouraging active citizenship. Seeing voting as a gateway to broader civic engagement.
- Empowering communities to exercise their political voice and be heard on policy and public affairs.
- Narrowing voter participation gaps and increasing registration and turnout among communities with a history of low participation.
- Providing election guidance and training as part of building capacity for grantees to achieve program and advocacy goals.
- Building a new generation of voters and leaders in politics and government.
- Responding to board and community interest for a local ballot measure in a partnership with your grantees and or community leaders.
- Creating stronger neighborhoods and more effective nonprofits.





## RESOURCES

### Voter Engagement Resources

#### For Foundations and Nonprofits

#### GENERAL RESOURCES AND GUIDANCE

- **Nonprofit VOTE's Voter Engagement Online Resource Library:** [nonprofitvote.org/all-resources](https://nonprofitvote.org/all-resources)  
Factsheets, checklists, and guides by topic on conducting nonpartisan voter and candidate engagement.
- **Foundations Support for Election-Related Activities:** [nonprofitvote.org/documents/2018/03/foundation-support-election-related-activities.pdf/](https://nonprofitvote.org/documents/2018/03/foundation-support-election-related-activities.pdf/)  
A factsheet from Bolder Advocacy on how and why foundations can support election activities.

#### BENEFITS OF VOTING

- **Benefits of Voting Fact Sheets:** [nonprofitvote.org/benefits-voting](https://nonprofitvote.org/benefits-voting)  
Read what research says about the benefits of voting for the individuals, communities and nonprofits.
- **Engaging New Voters: The Impact of Nonprofit Voter Outreach:** [nonprofitvote.org/engaging\\_new\\_voters](https://nonprofitvote.org/engaging_new_voters)

#### GUIDE TO VOTING PROCEDURES IN YOUR STATE

- **A 50-state guide by Nonprofit VOTE with the National Association of Secretaries of State:** [nonprofitvote.org/voting-in-your-state](https://nonprofitvote.org/voting-in-your-state)  
Link to official information from your state's election website on voting procedures: Election dates and deadlines, register to vote, voting early or by mail, finding polling locations, contact information for all local or state election offices.

#### FOUNDATIONS AND BALLOT MEASURES

- **Ballot Measure Resources from Nonprofit VOTE:** [nonprofitvote.org/resource-library/ballot-measures-2/](https://nonprofitvote.org/resource-library/ballot-measures-2/)  
Factsheets, guides, presentations on how nonprofits and foundations can support ballot measures.
- **Foundations and Ballot Measures from Bolder Advocacy:** [bolderadvocacy.org/tools-for-effective-advocacy/toolkits/ballot-measures/foundations-and-ballot-measures](https://bolderadvocacy.org/tools-for-effective-advocacy/toolkits/ballot-measures/foundations-and-ballot-measures)  
Practical and legal guidance for private and public foundations on supporting ballot measures.

Council on Foundations	<a href="https://cof.org/public-policy/nonprofit-political-activity">cof.org/public-policy/nonprofit-political-activity</a>
Independent Sector	<a href="https://independentsector.org/policy/policy-issues">independentsector.org/policy/policy-issues</a>
CF Leads	<a href="https://cfeads.org">cfeads.org</a>
Exponent Philanthropy	<a href="https://exponentphilanthropy.org">exponentphilanthropy.org</a>
Funder's Committee for Civic Participation	<a href="https://funderscommittee.org">funderscommittee.org</a>
PACE: Philanthropy for Active Civic Engagement	<a href="https://pacefunders.org">pacefunders.org</a>
Philanthropy Roundtable	<a href="https://philanthropyroundtable.org">philanthropyroundtable.org</a>
United Philanthropy Forum	<a href="https://unitedphilforum.org">unitedphilforum.org</a>





## APPENDIX A

### Common Nonpartisan Voter Engagement Activities

#### 1. Voter Outreach and Education

##### *Conduct or Promote Voter Registration*

- ★ Conduct a voter registration drive at your nonprofit or in your community.
- ★ Encourage people to register to vote in your communications, on your website or at events.
- ★ Participate in National Voter Registration Day.

##### *Educate Voters on the Voting Process*

- ★ Provide information on when and where to vote - links to poll finders, an election website.
- ★ Remind people of registration or election deadlines and dates.

##### *Share a Nonpartisan Voter Guide*

- ★ Provide nonpartisan information about what's on the ballot.
- ★ Share a nonpartisan voter guide or official sample ballot from your locality or state.

##### *Encourage People to Participate and Vote*

- ★ Send reminders to your staff, clients and constituents about voting in the next election.
- ★ Conduct a get-out-the-vote activity.

##### *Provide Election Assistance*

- ★ Assist voters with disabilities, language barriers, or in need of special assistance to participate.
- ★ Publicize a voter information line or website to help answer questions about early voting or polling locations.

#### 2. Candidate Engagement

##### *Host a Candidate Forum*

- ★ Sponsor a candidate forum with other community partners for all the candidates.
- ★ Promote a candidate forum sponsored by a trusted partner.

##### *Create a Candidate Questionnaire*

- ★ Submit questions to the candidates in a race of interest to your nonprofits.
- ★ Use Nonprofit VOTE's fact sheet or Bolder Advocacy's fact sheet on creating a candidate questionnaire for specific guidelines to follow to remain nonpartisan.

#### 3. Ballot Measures and Issue Advocacy

##### *Continue Issue Advocacy During an Election*

- ★ Continue your regular advocacy or lobbying activities during the election period, as long it is related to pending legislation on issues you have a history of working on and not timed or otherwise structured to influence how people vote.

##### *Support or Oppose a Ballot Measure (or provide neutral voter education on the issue)*

- ★ Have your board take a position for or against a question on the ballot.
- ★ Educate the public on your position within your normal lobbying limits.





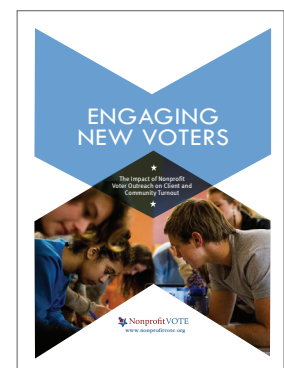
## APPENDIX B

### Sample Evaluation Components for Voter Engagement Grantmaking

*A post-election assessment of the impact of voter engagement activities can include evidence of:*

- ★ How the voter engagement contributed to other kinds of community engagement and leadership development across populations served? Did it create new partners?
- ★ Numbers of people engaged relative to initial goals. Who was registered, signed a pledge to vote, or engaged in get-out-the-vote or other activities?
- ★ Change in voter turnout in precincts where the nonprofit targeted most of their outreach compared to the last similar election (two or four years earlier).
- ★ Comparing the demographics and voter turnout of the people your organization contacted to register or vote compared to all voters in the same jurisdiction of similar demographics. This requires access to the state voter file after it's been updated post-election. To do this kind of analysis you need:
  - Grantees to accurately track contact information of voters that register, fill out a pledge to vote or other card, or were personally contacted about voting.
  - A partner with access to the state or county voter file and the ability to provide relevant data on who voted, past voting history, demographics, and other kinds of election data.
- ★ Its impact on the nonprofit's issue advocacy. For example, are candidates more responsive to a nonprofit during the election, or once elected? Does it lead to more access to policy makers, elected officials, or other community leaders?
- ★ The specific success or challenges of activities funded, including the organization's capacity to carry out its planned activities.
- ★ Its sustainability and likelihood to continue in future state or local elections.

Nonprofit VOTE and its research partner, Grassroots Solutions, analyze the impact of 122 nonprofits across nine states in the 2016 election cycle. The analysis shows that hard-to-reach young voters who were engaged by nonprofits turnout out at a rate 5.7 points higher than their counterparts. Young women showed the biggest gain with a 6.5 point advantage. The report also documents the demographics reached and best practices for doing so. The report is online at [nonprofitvote.org/engaging\\_new\\_voters](http://nonprofitvote.org/engaging_new_voters)





## APPENDIX C

### Voter Engagement Terms

**Voter Registration:** Voter registration is helping people register to vote or update their voter registration. Voters may register by mail, in-person, or online. Many states also allow voters to register on Election Day and during early voting. Others require registration up to 30 days in advance of the election.

**Get-out-the-vote (GOTV):** Get-out-the-vote activities before the election come in many forms. The more personal, the more effective they are. They can involve:

- ★ Contacting voters about the election through social media, texts, at public events, or any nonprofit service or activity.
- ★ Campaign style GOTV using voter lists to canvass, mail, or make calls in the final weeks of election.
- ★ Voter assistance that answers questions can also increase citizens' likelihood to vote.

**Voter Education:** Voter education has two categories. One is learning about the process of voting. The other is what's on the ballot. Process information includes where, when, and how to vote or to register or update your registration. For example, when's early voting or what do voters need to be able to vote. What's on the ballot is learning about the candidates, ballot measures, and issues at stake.

**Candidate Engagement:** Common activities are candidate forums, candidate questionnaires, inviting candidates to events, sharing policy research, or asking questions at their events. It's about raising the profile of your organization, developing relationships with future office holders, and educating candidates about issues important to your community.

**Issue Advocacy:** Speaking out in support or opposition to policies is issue advocacy. For the purposes of this election-related toolkit, it includes taking a position for or against ballot measures (considered a lobbying activity) and continuing issue advocacy during an election cycle.

**Voter Engagement:** The broad term that's used to include any type of election activity, from voter registration and voter education to getting-out-the-vote and offering voter assistance.

**Civic Engagement:** Any type of civic action or engagement from voting, advocacy, and community organizing to volunteering or civic education, or any way of being be active participants in building and strengthening their communities.





## CASE STUDIES

FOUNDATION	TYPE OF ACTIVITY
Berks County Community Foundation	<i>Communications</i>
Community Foundation of Muncie and Delaware County	<i>Communications</i>
Hartford Foundation for Public Giving	<i>Communications</i>
Kansas Association of Community Foundations	<i>Convening</i>
Denver Foundation	<i>Grantmaking</i>
Kansas Health Foundation	<i>Grantmaking</i>
Seattle Foundation	<i>Grantmaking</i>
The Minneapolis Foundation	<i>Grantmaking</i>
California Community Foundation	<i>Grantmaking; Ballot Measures</i>
Community Foundation for Greater Atlanta	<i>Grantmaking; Ballot Measures</i>
New Hampshire Charitable Foundation	<i>Grantmaking; Voter Education</i>
Cleveland Foundation	<i>Ballot Measures</i>
The Community Foundation for Greater New Haven	<i>Nonprofit Training</i>







BERKS COUNTY  
COMMUNITY FOUNDATION

## BERKS COUNTY COMMUNITY FOUNDATION – READING, PA

“The School Board election is an important election for the future of the school district and the future of the children of Reading.”

*from the campaign summary*

### Voter Education in a School Board Election

*Contact: Heidi Williamson, Vice President for Programs and Initiatives*

In 2015, the *Berks County Community Foundation* engaged in an important school board election related to its concern for youth and education. The Reading School Board was dysfunctional and in crisis. The majority of its board members had resigned or left. Six of nine seats were open. The foundation wanted to make sure Reading voters were aware of the upcoming election and its importance.

Past elections showed low turnout and a lack of awareness of the issues at stake. The School Board made a decision that impacted every aspect of a child’s education, managed a budget of \$226.8 million in taxpayer dollars – and its ability to deliberate was broken.

#### **FIT WITH MISSION AND GOALS**

The foundation’s mission is to promote philanthropy and improve the quality of life for the residents of Berks County. Founded in 1994, it now has hundreds of funds. Each year, those funds distribute scholarships and grants to support local students and assist a variety of nonprofit organizations and causes. Donors may give directly to charities or to a category of interest such as education, the arts, veterans, and diversity.

#### **VOTER EDUCATION IN A SCHOOL BOARD ELECTION**

The foundation hired the communications firm, Steege Thomson Communications, to spearhead a voter education campaign. Its goals were to:

- Increase voter participation in the school board.
- Educate voters about the importance of school board elections and what school boards do.
- Create nonpartisan materials to enable voters to make informed decisions about candidates.

Steege Thomson first interviewed residents and stakeholders about the problems of the schools and school board and public expectations of what their role should be. The goals were to hear what had been past barriers to voter participation, learning about who was running, and what the school committee does.





BERKS COUNTY  
COMMUNITY FOUNDATION

## BERKS COUNTY COMMUNITY FOUNDATION – READING, PA

### Voter Education in a School Board Election

The foundation and communications firm chose Berks Community Television (BCTV), a 501(c)(3) nonprofit and popular public access station as the home and face of the campaign. It established itself as the go-to online destination for credible, nonpartisan information about the election and candidates. Together with the foundation and firm, it enlisted other media and nonprofit partners in the effort.

With the assistance of the communications firm, BCTV, and its partners, the initiative pursued a range of strategies:

**Nonpartisan Voter Guide:** It put together a nonpartisan guide with photos of the candidates and their answers to three questions. The guide was in English and in Spanish to engage the city's large Latino population. The guide was widely distributed at public gathering places and allowed voters to compare the candidate's positions. It appeared in the city's newspapers and was promoted on radio and other media.

**Media:** The communications firm and partners ran a social media campaign and took out print and online ads to further its goals of education and visibility for the elections.

**Community Outreach:** Along with online and media communications, the campaign hired canvassers to conduct 400 hours of door-to-door canvassing. With limited resources and because many registered voters don't participate, they targeted households with some history of voting in local elections. New voters and others were more targeted in the broader communications and other community and media outreach.

Most of the canvassing and communications took place over the last two weeks of the campaign, taking advantage of the higher impact of outreach and education to increase voting when done closer to an election.

Turnout was higher, but comparable to recent city elections. The candidates had positioned themselves in two slates, and the community voted for a particular slate of candidates rather than a mix of the two. Importantly, the School Board did become more functional and more able to fulfill their obligations to deliberate and make decisions for the benefit of the schools and children of Reading. This result could be associated with the higher visibility of the election, more people personally contacted, and influx of new board members filling open seats.





**THE COMMUNITY FOUNDATION**  
of Muncie & Delaware County, Inc.

## THE COMMUNITY FOUNDATION OF MUNCIE & DELAWARE COUNTY— MUNCIE, IN

### Posting on Learning Election Laws Through a Mock Election

*Contact: Kallie Sulanke, Community Engagement Officer*

The *Community Foundation of Muncie and Delaware County* in Indiana started in 1985. At the beginning of 2017, it had an asset pool of endowed funds of \$55 million dollars. In 2016, it added community engagement staff to strengthen its relationship with the local nonprofits and build awareness of the activities and impact of the nonprofits supported by the foundation and its donors.

#### FIT WITH MISSION AND GOALS

The community foundation encourages philanthropy and exercises leadership in directing resources to enhance the quality of life for residents of Muncie and Delaware County. It values the ability of all its citizens to give and serve for the common good of the community and to serve as a community convener around issues and needs of Delaware County. The foundation seeks to impact and empower Muncie and Delaware County by enabling philanthropy as a trusted community leader and promoting positive change now and for generations to come.

#### HIGHLIGHTING A GRANTEE'S MOCK ELECTION

In 2017, the Community Engagement Officer, who publicizes the foundation's activities, highlighted a mock election at a local high school on foundation's website. A teacher used funds from the foundation's Bell Education Grant program that gave small grants to teachers for curriculum innovation. The teacher used funds to purchase election equipment for the students. Together they created and managed a polling station as part of a mock election held on the county Election Day. Students learned election laws and procedures. They were trained as poll workers, and the polls were open all day on Election Day. Along with what appeared on the county ballot, a school-related ballot measure was included for students to discuss and vote on.





## HARTFORD FOUNDATION FOR PUBLIC GIVING – HARTFORD, CT

**“The Hartford Foundation believes in the value of resident engagement and participation in the electoral process,”** said Linda J. Kelly, HFPG’s past president who helped develop the strategic plan. **“As more of us participate in elections, the more powerful our collective voices become at the local, state, and national levels. This campaign encourages residents to vote and provides easy access to the information needed to register and vote.”**

### A Voter Engagement Social Media Campaign

*Contact: Stephanie MacGillivray, Senior Associate, Digital*

In 2016, the *Hartford Foundation for Public Giving* conducted a voter outreach and education campaign via social media called My Hope. My Voice. My Vote. The campaign was inspired by board discussions in the lead-up to its 2016-2018 strategic plan. From this and other discussions, building “Vibrant Communities” became one of three focus areas that included a greater focus on policy change and community engagement.



The campaign was supported by and included the Community Foundation of Eastern Connecticut, Connecticut Community Foundation and Fairfield County’s Community Foundation, and Connecticut Council for Philanthropy.

### FIT WITH MISSION AND GOALS

The foundation envisions a future where all residents have equitable opportunity to thrive and contribute to the well-being of the region. The region’s progress requires broader awareness of critical issues and meaningful civic engagement by diverse residents.

### 2016 VOTER ENGAGEMENT SOCIAL MEDIA CAMPAIGN

The social media campaign used videos and messaging to inspire and encourage people to vote. Each of three videos showed a voter talking about their voting experience. They illustrated how participating in the democratic



process can hold very different, but positive feelings for each person. Featured citizens shared a personal perspective on voting, and connecting family and community history to our present day political process.





## HARTFORD FOUNDATION FOR PUBLIC GIVING – HARTFORD, CT

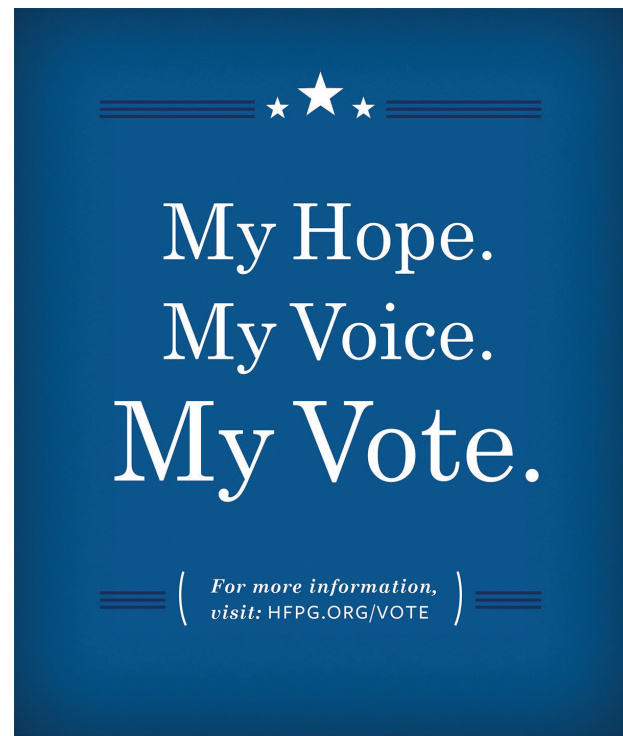
### A Voter Engagement Social Media Campaign

The social media campaign promoted the videos and separate messages to provide important dates, deadlines, and other useful statewide-voting information in a positive, approachable, consumer-friendly way. Individual social media posts and graphics had valuable links to information about how to register to vote, how to receive an absentee ballot, or how to find a poll. One message reminded those who have completed prison sentences and probation of their right to vote.

The campaign launched on National Voter Registration Day in September. It rolled out content weekly and did some paid ads on Facebook. A campaign kit and posters were distributed to 85 public-facing nonprofits from family centers to libraries. The videos were its most viewed element, raising the civic engagement profile of the foundation.

### RESULTS

Staff looked at voter turnout compared to 2012. Voting went up in 24 of 27 communities and towns served by the foundations. Its chief recommendation would be to start planning and content preparation earlier.



National, Statewide and Local Elections: **NOVEMBER 8, 2016**

BROUGHT TO YOU BY:  and philanthropy throughout Connecticut





## KANSAS ASSOCIATION OF COMMUNITY FOUNDATIONS – HUTCHINSON, KS

### Convening Community Foundations in Kansas and Nationally

*Contact: Svetlana Hutfiles, Executive Director*

The *Kansas Association of Community Foundations (KACF)* is a membership organization founded in 2005 by volunteers representing community foundations across the state of Kansas. Its mission is to leverage the resources of its 94 member community foundations to strengthen and promote community philanthropy and to inspire action that will improve the quality of life in Kansas communities.

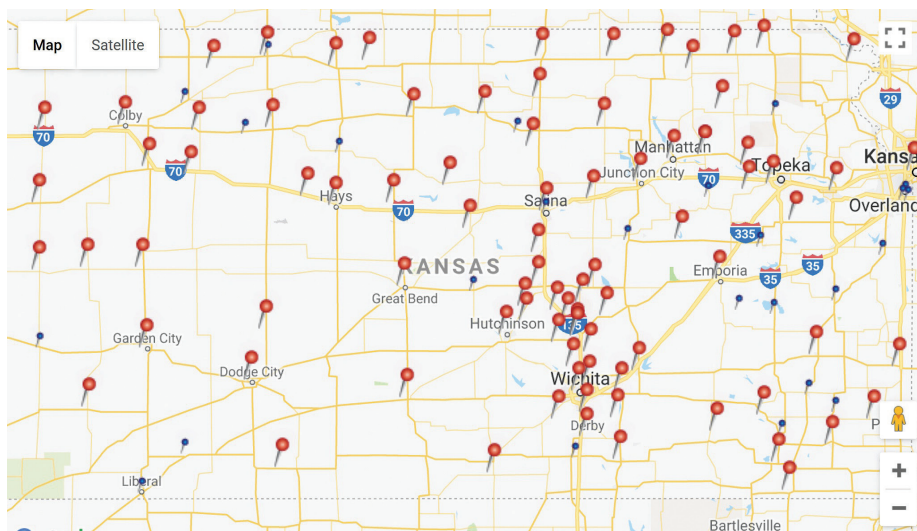
The association educates members on effective philanthropic operations and foster collaboration and the exchange of information regarding philanthropic programs and issues. Along with an active board, it has three committees: Advocacy, Conference, and Marketing. It has regional liaison groups working with community foundations throughout the state.

### 2018 NATIONAL CONFERENCE FOR GROWING COMMUNITY FOUNDATIONS

*Featuring advocacy, voter engagement, and 2020 Census*

The national conference grew out of those convened by the Kansas Association of Community Foundations over the last 11 years which has gained national recognition and attendance. It is tailored to small-staffed and volunteer-led community foundations in rural, small urban, and suburban America. The conference is designed to meet the needs of both new and seasoned board members and staff in practical training to enhance skills.

The 2018 Conference, *Inspiring Thriving Communities*, will frame three days of learning and training with 10 pre-conference retreats, 43 concurrent sessions and three plenaries, one of which is a three-part presentation on Advocacy, Voter Engagement, and preparing for the 2020 Census.



< *Community Foundations of Kansas*





THE DENVER FOUNDATION

## THE DENVER FOUNDATION – DENVER, CO

### Voter Engagement Grantmaking

*Contact: LaDawn Sullivan, Director of Leadership & Equity*

*The Denver Foundation* awards grants in the seven counties in metro Denver. Its programs integrate civic engagement with a community-based and resident engagement-centered approach. Voter engagement is one strategy in creating stronger neighborhoods along with advocacy, education, and other types of community engagement.

#### FIT WITH MISSION AND GOALS

The foundation's vision statement highlights leadership, equity, and inclusiveness across its grantmaking activities. It seeks to address the root causes of community issues and mobilize resources for the common good, while honoring the diverse strengths, needs, voices, and backgrounds of all area communities. Its work reflects the foundation's commitment to reducing disparities and promoting equity broadly, such as supporting civic engagement efforts that include educating the community on electoral issues and navigating access to the pathways of the political process.

#### VOTER ENGAGEMENT ACTIVITIES

The foundation supports voter engagement through its regular grantmaking, Strengthening Neighborhoods Program, and donor-advised funds.

##### 1. Nonprofit Voter Engagement

In 2016, the foundation partnered with the Participation Project of the Colorado Resource Center (CRC) to provide advocacy and voter engagement grants as well as training and coaching to 20 nonprofits. The organizations included food pantries, community health centers, employment and education service centers, and neighborhood advocacy groups. Highlights of the program included:

- Engaged 5,364 clients and constituents to register, or if registered, sign a pledge to vote, and another 1,949 contacted in prior work and other CRC programs;
- Trained 90 staff and volunteers on the benefits of voting, voter engagement tactics, nonpartisanship, and how to outreach to diverse populations;
- Close to the election, made personal contact with 7,400 people about voting;
- Educated voters on how and where to return vote, including voter service center locations, ballot drop off information, and how to get help or address voter access issues.





THE DENVER FOUNDATION

## THE DENVER FOUNDATION – DENVER, CO

### Voter Engagement Grantmaking

In 2017, the foundation supported a similar program, the Participation Project, with nine nonprofits focused on local elections. The Participation Project piloted best practices to help voters register online to make best use of this growing and popular registration method moving forward. Nonprofits help voters understand other new Colorado voting policies like Same Day Voter Registration, Automatic Registration at motor vehicle departments, and returning mail ballots conveniently at drop boxes or voter centers. All Participation Project partners participated in National Voter Registration Day on September 26.



#### 2. Strengthening Neighborhoods Program:

In its Strengthening Neighborhoods Program, the foundation operates a small grant initiative supporting local leadership activities of individual applicants. Any group of three or more unrelated individuals can apply. This program supports projects that are “resident-led and reduce racial, ethnic, and economic disparities in the areas of basic human needs, economic opportunity, and education. This program supports projects that engage residents and constituents in taking action.” A number of projects have involved voter education and outreach activities.

#### 3. Donor-Advised Funds:

Through the foundation’s donor-advised funds, voter education activities of nonprofits such as the National Hispanic Voter Educational Foundation, Colorado Civic Engagement Roundtable, League of Conservation Voters Education Fund, and League of Women Voters Education Fund have been supported.

### TRAINING AND TECHNICAL ASSISTANCE (TA) SUPPORT PARTNERS

Nonprofit Vote and the Colorado Civic Engagement Roundtable are critical partners to Community Resource Center, providing data and systems support, resources, tools, and infrastructure. The Colorado Criminal Justice Reform Coalition provides assistance regarding voting for ex-offenders. JustVote Colorado provides information to answer questions and assist voters with issues casting their ballots.

### RESULTS AND TAKEAWAYS

The Participation Project participated in experimental research with Nonprofit VOTE to assess its impact on reaching new voters missed by other campaigns. It found more than half (51%) of the voter registrations collected resulted in registrations from new registrants and those who were prevented from being de-registered. By comparison, similar site-based experiments at transit stops, grocery stores, etc. resulted in only 27% and 29% registration rates of new voters.

The increased voter education and engagement activities of the nonprofit and civic sector in the state, similar to high civic engagement states like Minnesota or Maine, has helped vault Colorado into the top five states in the nation for voter turnout.







## KANSAS HEALTH FOUNDATION – WICHITA, KS

“Difficult problems – in business or in civic life – are best solved when diverse viewpoints are brought to the table and common solutions are developed that benefit all. Yet, in Kansas, a significant portion of the state’s population does not participate in the democratic process.”

### Voter Engagement Grantmaking

Contact: *Elina Alterman, Program Officer*

Founded in 1985 as a private foundation, *Kansas Health Foundation (KHF)* seeks to improve the health of all Kansans with the goal of increasing health equity through the reduction of health disparities. In 2015 KHF became a public charity. KHF’s four impact areas include: Access to Care; Healthy Behaviors; Educational Attainment; and Civic and Community Engagement. For each impact area, KHF prioritizes funding based on race, ethnicity, income, and education.

As part of its civic mission, KHF has invested nearly 60 million dollars, most of it matching funds, to challenge about 40 community foundations in Kansas to raise endowment funds. KHF also provided operating and technical assistance funds to the Kansas Association of Community Foundations. It has invested in other civic infrastructure like the Kansas Leadership Center that is tasked to equip people in community, business, faith, government and nonprofit sectors with skills to make positive change for the common good, as well as the Kansas Health Institute that conducts research and develops credible information for policy leaders to make informed decisions as champions for a healthier Kansas.

### FIT WITH MISSION

KHF’s mission is to improve the health of all Kansans and create a culture in which every Kansan can make healthy choices where they live, work and play. To address health and civic inequities, it funds place- or community-based organizations, from service and education to advocacy and policy. Impact is understood to require action around local nutrition standards, access to transportation and other policies that promote healthy living and social and economic opportunity, all determinants of public health.

### VOTER ENGAGEMENT

KHF recently added voter engagement as a strategy to increase impact and advance goals. This had its roots in a year-long strategic planning process in 2014-15. The board and staff discussed how health disparities mirror civic participation disparities. The lack of participation was seen as a deterrent to policy development and change that ultimately would improve the health of all Kansans.



*Grantee Training*

“Increased health equity and improvement in health outcomes for all populations depend on a robust and vibrant democracy as health and civic disparities are intrinsically linked. Therefore it is critical that an engaged electorate be part of the decision-making process, have their voice heard and their vote counted, especially those populations with the lower health outcomes and greatest barriers to accessing care.”



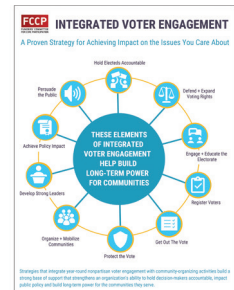


KANSAS HEALTH  
FOUNDATION

## KANSAS HEALTH FOUNDATION – WICHITA, KS

### Voter Engagement Grantmaking

Seeking added data, the foundation partnered with National Conference on Citizenship, known for its state Civic Health Index reports. Prior to the release of the Kansas report, KHF held a Civic Health Summit. To further assess the state of civic health in Kansas and learn from a variety of leaders from different sectors, KHF invited 40-50 community leaders to discuss what Kansas needed to move the needle on civic engagement. The finished 2016 Kansas Civic Health Index report told a story of civic participation trends and gaps and included a description of the Civic Health Summit and recommendations from its participants. The voter engagement initiative, a complement to its ongoing advocacy and civic work, was one outcome.



### 2016 PILOT

A voter outreach initiative was piloted with five organizations in 2016. Each received \$10,000 to do voter registration and mobilization activities connecting with health over a six month period. Grantees focused on census tracts with lowest voter participation and worst health outcomes, and included organizations experienced in advocacy like the YWCA.

### 2017 KANSAS INTEGRATED VOTER ENGAGEMENT

In designing the next voter engagement grant initiative, KHF looked at models recommended by the Funder's Committee for Civic Participation and others. KHF partnered with the Health Care Foundation of Greater Kansas City and the REACH Healthcare Foundation, both of whom fund in Missouri and Kansas, to create the Kansas Integrated Voter Engagement: Health Depends on a Vibrant Democracy.

In Summer 2017, the three foundations announced an RFP. The consortium committed 2.5 million dollars over three years. Through this initiative, they funded ten organizations to incorporate year-round, integrated voter engagement (IVE) into existing health equity work with the goals of increasing voter registration and turnout in state and local elections and supporting communities and individuals participating in the processes of democracy in between elections. Applicants had to identify and describe three factors: 1. The populations to be engaged through their efforts; 2. Health and other disparities experienced by these populations; and 3. Disparities in voter registration and turnout. Efforts would fit into ongoing efforts and engage historically underrepresented populations in policy, systems change and the democratic process within and beyond election cycles.

### TRAINING AND TA SUPPORT

Funds have been set aside for technical assistance service providers to support access to voter participation tools and trainings to build skills and organizational capacity. Examples of IVE technical assistance include:

- Coaching to help grantees develop and implement an IVE work plan;
- Meetings focused on skills-building with a diverse set of IVE practitioners and via peer learning;
- Infrastructure upgrades with access to database systems that support IVE efforts.
- All 10 grantees are coming together from across the state for a two-day retreat in Wichita to meet one another; learn about each other's work, target populations, and target geographies; and plan out technical assistance and meetings.





## SEATTLE FOUNDATION – SEATTLE, WA

### Voter Engagement Grantmaking – A Partnership with King County Elections

*Contact: Aaron Robertson, Director of Community Programs*

In late 2015, the *Seattle Foundation* established a Voter Education Fund as one of three funding areas in a new Vibrant Democracy Initiative. The three programs of the Initiative are designed to strengthen the voice and participation of underrepresented communities as a path to more equitable systems change. The initiatives emerged from strategic discussions with board members and community stakeholders. Grantees and community leaders co-designed ways to bring all voices into policy discussions and to strengthen community infrastructure for policy change.

The Voter Education Fund is a partnership with King County Elections to remove barriers to voting in diverse communities and increase their civic engagement and participation.

#### FIT WITH MISSION AND GOALS

Seattle Foundation's community impact statement talks about addressing racial and economic disparities to create an inclusive community where all have equitable access to opportunity and the benefits of a healthy community. That healthy community framework includes vibrant communities fueled by civic and democratic participation. Seattle Foundation seeks to increase the voice and strengthen the influence of underrepresented communities as they drive toward systemic and community change that will result in more equity and opportunity. This approach creates important benefits for nonprofit participants to support developing leaders, increase advocacy and engagement capacity, and learn and teach civic skills.

#### VOTER ENGAGEMENT ACTIVITIES

In 2016, the Voter Engagement Fund distributed \$220,000 to 22 groups through grants of up to \$25,000. The initial RFP focused on communities with limited English fluency (LEF) to help new voters understand ballot language, and voting instructions. Their efforts and outreach brought results. It took 15 years to get the first 3,000 people to sign up for King County's multi-lingual ballot. With the added translation assistance and community education this grant provided, that number nearly doubled in one year.

In 2017, the Voter Education Fund focused on engaging underrepresented communities in local elections for mayor, city council, and school committee, as well as a special election for state senate. Encouraged by the first-year results, the foundation and county increased funding to \$436,000 in grants, with each partner providing half. The Voter Engagement Fund broadened its focus to include community organizations working with citizens of all types – including veterans, people of color, youth, ex-offenders regaining the vote, and people experiencing homelessness. Before the proposal deadline, the partners held two public information sessions. Proposals were submitted by 59 organizations, and 30 nonprofits received grants of up to \$22,000 for larger projects or \$10,000 limit for smaller ones. Grantees receive training and essential collateral materials from the county and other partners.





## SEATTLE FOUNDATION – SEATTLE, WA

### Voter Engagement Grantmaking – A Partnership with King County Elections

Voter Education Fund grantees partnered to sponsor mayoral and city council candidate forums in both the primary and general election. Translation was provided as needed. The mayoral contest was upended midway through the race when the incumbent unexpectedly resigned, making community education even more vital and impactful.

#### TRAINING AND TA SUPPORT PARTNERS

As a co-contributor to the Voter Education Fund, King County Elections provides initial training to the grantees and materials. Staff provides ongoing technical assistance and answers questions. The foundation sees the county's involvement as strengthening the nonpartisan approach of the program and its community grantees.

#### RESULTS AND TAKEAWAYS

The Voter Education Fund's investments targeted communities with the highest barriers to voting and outcomes varied based upon the obstacles each community faces.

Highlights include: Thousands of new voters registered, ranging from more than 1,200 young voters registered by the Washington Bus, to 300 people experiencing homelessness registered to vote by the Seattle/King County Coalition on Homelessness. The grants also led to more than 50 ballot parties and 25 candidate forums, and the first Trans Justice voter guide. The Voter Education Fund helped contribute to 42.7% voter turnout in King County in 2017, an increase from other recent off-year elections (39.2% in 2015 and 28.6% in 2013).



*Why I Vote video, URBVOTE*

As part of its evaluation the foundation debriefs with grantees on their engagement work and studies the relative change in voter participation rates in lower-turnout precincts. Grantees report on the use of the funds, populations reached, volunteers and voters engaged, and benefits of the work to the community and organization. The next grant cycle is planned for the spring of 2018.



*Kick Off Training*





MINNEAPOLIS  
FOUNDATION

## THE MINNEAPOLIS FOUNDATION – MINNEAPOLIS, MN

**“Communities thrive as more people participate in our democracy,”** said Catherine Gray, the Foundation’s Director of Impact Strategy for Civic Engagement. **“Voting is a critical launch point for empowering people to speak up on the issues that affect their lives.”**

### Voter Engagement Grantmaking

*Catherine Gray, Director of Impact Strategy, Civic Engagement*

Civic engagement is one of three issues that *The Minneapolis Foundation* supports through its competitive grantmaking program. Its civic engagement investments seek to strengthen leadership and organizing capacity in diverse communities, including promoting voter participation, fostering new civic leadership, and removing barriers to voting. In 2013, the foundation made its first round of now annual voter engagement grants to 8-15 community nonprofits, each known for deep community connections, networks and relationships.

#### FIT WITH THE MISSION AND GOALS

Civic engagement drives the foundation’s overall vision of a thriving community where economic, social, and racial equity is a reality for all residents. It seeks to transform systems and policies and to empower more residents to be self-sufficient and speak up on issues that directly affect their lives. By promoting voting and other forms of civic engagement the foundations is “fostering a community where everyone is encouraged and motivated to participate in the democratic process and public decision-making.”



#### VOTER ENGAGEMENT GRANTS – 2017 LOCAL ELECTIONS

While Minneapolis prides itself on high voter turnout, participation in local elections remains far lower than national elections, with disparities of as much as 10 to 20 percentage points between neighborhoods.

2017 featured elections for Minneapolis mayor, city council and park board. In this cycle the foundation awarded \$256,000 in voter engagement grants to 14 nonprofits serving communities with historically low turnout. Grantees must demonstrate a capacity to include voter outreach in their services.

All grantees:

- Attended a kick-off training that included representatives from the City Clerk’s office.
- Participated in ongoing cohort meetings.
- Received ongoing assistance from the managing partner, Minnesota Voice.
- Joined in a get-out-the-vote weekend and helped with volunteer recruitment.
- Shared non-personal data of who they registered or signed a pledge to vote for the purposes of follow up and evaluation.





## THE MINNEAPOLIS FOUNDATION – MINNEAPOLIS, MN

### Voter Engagement Grantmaking

During the summer and fall, the 14 organizations undertook a range of nonpartisan activities such as candidate forums, candidate questionnaires, voter registration and voter pledge drives, get-out-the-vote efforts and other kinds of voter assistance. In addition, voters received education on ranked choice voting, the voting method Minneapolis and St. Paul now use that allows voters to rank their preferences with a first, second and third choice. (see box below).

### TRAINING AND TA SUPPORT PARTNER

Minnesota Voice, a 501(c)(3) civic engagement collaborative, assisted as it has in prior years with on-going training and assistance that includes access to the state voter file and post-election evaluation. They bring expertise in integrating voter engagement strategies into an organization's outreach and services.



### RESULTS

The foundation reported in its 2016 cycle that their grantees personally engaged 6,400 voters. Turnout increased as much as 20-30 points in the lower turnout areas that were targeted. They also did well with new voters. 75% of first time voters that were engaged by cohort grantees in 2014, returned to vote in 2016. In 2017, voter turnout was 18-46% higher in targeted areas that have had low voter turnout. Voters elected the most diverse city council and park board in the city's history. Since 2013, when the cohort strategy was first implemented, outcomes reported by grant recipients reflect increases in the effectiveness of their voter engagement work, as well as an increased ability to continue engagement of constituents past election cycles. For example, one grantee reported five times as many pledges and registrations in 2017 as it did in 2013.

### GRANTEE SPOTLIGHT: FAIR VOTE MINNESOTA

Along with voter engagement, the foundation supported an educational campaign by Fair Vote of Minnesota about the city's use of ranked choice voting. First adopted in 2009, the electoral method lets voters rank first, second and third choices. Fair Vote had a booth at the Minnesota State Fair and went to community gatherings and forums where they had voters rank choices on mock ballots. As a result, a post-election survey showed over 90% of the voters readily understood how the voting worked and their choices. The change has brought more competition, increased civility and diverse candidate pools. Candidates take a more positive tone when as they compete to be a second choice on their opponents' ballot. In a field of more than two candidates, there's no longer fear of votes being split between like-minded candidates. Instead the result is a consensus, majority winner.<sup>1</sup>

<sup>1</sup> Minneapolis Star Tribune 11/9/2017 - [startribune.com/minneapolis-candidates-applaud-positive-campaigns-high-voter-turnout/456482923/](http://startribune.com/minneapolis-candidates-applaud-positive-campaigns-high-voter-turnout/456482923/)





## CALIFORNIA COMMUNITY FOUNDATION – LOS ANGELES, CA

**“ We envision a future in which all of Los Angeles County’s diverse communities have the capacity and opportunity to participate fully in our democracy, where even the most vulnerable and underserved communities have a voice, a seat at the table and an opportunity to directly impact and decide the changes that will affect their lives and communities. We strive to ensure a democracy for all.”**

*from the foundation's Civic Engagement Overview*

### Ballot Measures and Voter Engagement

*Contact: Efrain Escobedo, Vice President, Civic Engagement and Public Policy*

The *California Community Foundation (CCF)* serves all of Los Angeles city and county. It has a long history of supporting voter and civic engagement as part of strengthening neighborhoods and engaging populations newer to the political process. Civic engagement is central to the strategies employed across four systems change priority areas which include Education, Immigration, Housing and Health.

#### FIT WITH MISSION AND GOALS

The community foundation focuses on systemic change to transform, strengthen and build full and effective participation among communities across Los Angeles. It sees helping grantees develop skills in voter engagement, policy advocacy, and community engagement as essential to these overall goals. From education and youth empowerment to economic opportunity, the foundation’s work is based upon the belief that everyone benefits when our most vulnerable communities are better equipped and more able to create and shape their own destinies.

#### VOTER ENGAGEMENT: TWO BALLOT MEASURES ON HOUSING AND HOMELESSNESS

In partnership with local funders, nonprofits, businesses and Los Angeles city and county officials, the foundation helped shape and support two sequential ballot propositions to increase resources for reducing homelessness and creating affordable housing. The first proposition was a city \$1.2 billion bond to build housing for chronically homeless populations. The second proposition was for the county. It called for a quarter percent increase in the county sales tax to fund services essential for longer-term solutions to address homelessness.

In the November 2016 bond measure, the foundation awarded funds to a large nonprofit experienced in voter education and engagement activities. The organization served as the anchor to help other local nonprofits educate and engage their community on the housing initiative, known as LA Proposition HHH. It also partnered with the United Way, businesses, and city government. The bond measure needed 2/3 voter support, and passed with 76% voting yes.



*Nonprofit volunteers get-out-the-vote in Los Angeles*





## CALIFORNIA COMMUNITY FOUNDATION – LOS ANGELES, CA

### Ballot Measures and Voter Engagement

The follow-up ballot proposition to fund additional services for those moving into affordable housing was more challenging. The quarter percent increase in the county sales tax also required a two-thirds vote to pass. In this round, the foundation gave \$200,000 to six nonprofits to lead community-based voter education efforts. All six served as “anchor” organizations, using their experience in elections and volunteer engagement to train and assist other community organizations. The ballot proposition, at first predicted to lose, ended up winning by 68%. An evaluation found those voters contacted by the nonprofits voted at above average rates.

Success at the ballot box opened up a great opportunity, but other strategies were needed. For one, affordable housing developers still face a complex permitting process and financial hurdles. In response, the foundation launched the Home L.A. Loan Fund, an innovative charitable investment option for donors that provides guaranteed seed-capital loans to organizations building permanent supportive housing. Through the loans, recipients can speed up production and maximize the number of units built. At the conclusion of each loan’s term, 100 percent of the initial investment is returned to the donor’s fund.

**“Every home built transforms someone’s future, helping them to rise above their struggles and take control of their own life.” – CCF 2017 Annual Report**

### RESULTS

Participating nonprofits reported the benefits of voter engagement in improved organizational health, service delivery and community outreach. The funding helped nonprofits learn important skills about doing a community-based voter education and outreach campaign, skills they expect to transfer to future electoral efforts and outreach for the 2020 Census.

Moving forward, the foundation seeks to support civic engagement capacity-building of nonprofits across all its program areas to learn advocacy and voter engagement skills, whether this includes funding or benefiting from training and resources provided by others. It is also starting work towards supporting a complete count in the upcoming 2020 Census through a community-based effort.



Partners celebrate voter approval of Prop H







## COMMUNITY FOUNDATION FOR GREATER ATLANTA – ATLANTA, GA

### Community Foundation for Greater Atlanta

*Contact: Katrina DeBerry, Program Officer*

The Community Foundation for Greater Atlanta (the foundation) serves the 23 county region surrounding the city of Atlanta. Its impact areas are the Arts, Community Development, Education, Nonprofit Effectiveness and Well-Being. The Foundation encourages civic engagement through diverse funding streams, including the Civic Engagement Fund, established in 2013 to fund civic and voter engagement strategies that draw people into public decision-making processes. Among its priorities are:

- Nonpartisan candidate forums or engagement opportunities.
- Inspiring and educating residents to become active, knowledgeable voters.
- Eliminating voting barriers and furthering access for all.

Each vote is a voice that shows a drive to make our community a better place for all to live and thrive.

### FIT WITH MISSION AND GOALS

The foundation believes the more informed and engaged individuals are, the greater their ability is to advocate for a better quality of life and effective solutions to critical problems in their communities. By understanding the issues that most affect community life, we encourage open discourse and discussion that nurtures leadership, empowers individuals and strengthens communities. The foundation believes that each vote is a voice that shows a drive to make our community a better place for all to live and thrive.

### VOTER ENGAGEMENT ACTIVITIES – 2016

The foundation sponsored activity to educate voters on 2016 state ballot measures, and improve voter outreach and voter engagement in the 2017 local elections.

#### 1. Community Forum on Ballot Measures and Mini-grants

In 2016, two constitutional amendments put forth by the Georgia legislature had particular interest and impact on the state's nonprofits:

- Amendment 1 allowed the state takeover of public schools found to be “chronically failing.” It was defeated.
- Amendment 2 addressed generating revenue for the Safe Harbor for Sexually Exploited Children Fund. It was approved.

The foundation sponsored a forum for 45 nonprofits to learn about the measures and provide factual, nonpolitical education on their purposes. For those nonprofits who decided to weigh in, the Foundation also provided guidance on rules for lobbying and financial disclosure.



## Community Foundation for Greater Atlanta

Following the forum, the foundation awarded five grants to nonprofits interested in implementing internal awareness activities with staff and clients. Examples of grant activities included:

- Meals on Wheels Atlanta reached senior voters with education on the ballot measures and voter registration assistance.
- New American Pathways, a refugee-serving nonprofit, translated educational materials into three languages.

## VOTER ENGAGEMENT ACTIVITIES – 2017

### 1. Voter Education in Local Elections

In 2017, the foundation made several significant investments aimed at boosting civic engagement around local elections. Its goals were to strengthen civic leadership among nonprofits and individuals and to have both candidates and the general public pay greater attention to issues within the nonprofit sector and communities.

- **City of Atlanta Mayoral Forum on the Arts:** Produced by a collaborative working partnership of Atlanta arts leaders, this forum offered citizens a chance to hear nine mayoral candidates discuss their arts platforms. Presented by Choose ATL and the Foundation, more than 400 people attended and 4,000 people watched a live stream of the event at ArtsVoteATL on Facebook.



- **Our Future Atlanta:** Funded by three local foundations, this coalition of non-governmental organizations and community leaders joined forces to engage Atlantans around the 2017 elections. Individual grantees included:
  - **Center for Civic Innovation:** provided Atlanta residents opportunities to engage with mayoral candidates through forums, facilitated conversations and special events.
  - **Partnership for Southern Equity:** organized community leaders around issue based partnerships to share data and assess gaps, hosted policy engagement workshops to identify and prioritize policy solutions.
  - **Pro Georgia:** canvassed in under-engaged communities and coordinated grassroots networks to register people to vote and discuss the mayoral race.



## Community Foundation for Greater Atlanta

### 2. Ideas Challenge: Creative Solutions for Boosting Local Civic Engagement.

The foundation launched the Ideas Challenge in 2014 to support innovation to address community challenges. In 2017, the foundation partnered with the Center for Civic Innovation to solicit and vet creative resident ideas to inform, engage and empower people around the 2017 local elections in the City of Atlanta and surrounding communities. Semi-finalists were selected by foundation and CCI staff. Finalists were selected by a panel of judges based on live pitches. Awards were determined by a committee of various community leaders. The 2017 Ideas Challenge winners were:

- Kavi Vu & Phi Nguyen with Asian Americans Advancing Justice-Atlanta: \$10,000 for “Wake Up Atlanta”, a web-based voter video series targeting Atlanta’s Asian American community. Videos in the series received up to 47,000 views on Facebook.
- Monica Campana with Living Walls and The City Speaks: \$5,000 for “Signs of Solidarity ATL – Voter Edition,” a project to create and hang 100 banners around Atlanta, each created by a local artist and containing a message that encourages people to vote.
- Jenn Graham with ProGeorgia: \$1,000 for “Civic Voter”, a text-based app to inform and remind Atlanta citizens of things they need to know in order to vote in the local elections.



Voter participation in the November general election saw more than 97,000 ballots cast, almost double that of 2013. DeKalb County and Fulton County, both containing parts of Atlanta, also reported large increases in voter turnout more than twice that of 2013.

The foundation is pleased with its burgeoning role in lifting up civic engagement and public will in the region. The foundation understands the value and importance of nonpartisanship and is becoming more sophisticated in the range of strategies it and their philanthropic and nonprofit partners can employ to encourage communities to engage in the full range of civic activities.

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*Thanks to blog entries by Erin Dreiling, marketing and communications manager The Ideas Challenge Winners, and Mindy Kao, program associate, Celebrating Civic Engagement.*



NEW HAMPSHIRE  
CHARITABLE FOUNDATION

## NEW HAMPSHIRE CHARITABLE FOUNDATION – CONCORD, NH

“ Everywhere I go, people with very different views tell me in very similar terms that they are troubled by the tone of our public dialogue and worried about the future of civic engagement. We need to do something about that because we’re not going to solve the serious challenges we face if we don’t: Closing the opportunity gap, confronting climate change, addressing the addiction and mental health crisis, creating welcoming and inclusive communities – all of those things depend on the health of our civic life and our democracy.”

*Richard Ober, President and CEO, New Hampshire Charitable Foundation*

### Voter Education and Candidate Engagement

*Contact: Deborah Schachter, Senior Program Officer*

*The New Hampshire Charitable Foundation* is New Hampshire’s statewide community foundation, founded in 1962 by and for the people of New Hampshire. The foundation manages a growing collection of nearly 1,900 funds created by generous individuals, families and businesses, and awards more than \$40 million in grants and scholarships every year. The Foundation works with generous and visionary citizens to maximize the power of their giving, support great work happening in our communities and lead and collaborate on high-impact initiatives.

#### FIT WITH MISSION AND GOALS

Civic engagement, a long-time focus of the Foundation’s work, *has been formalized as one of six funding priority areas*. The foundation envisions strong, just and inclusive communities where residents are informed, engaged and connected, and participate meaningfully in civic and community life. It sees civic engagement as essential to community health, and supports many nonprofit partners to ensure that vulnerable groups have a voice in public policy and systems change.

The foundation has fostered civic infrastructure by supporting efforts like New Hampshire Listens, an initiative which facilitates civic dialogue and assists residents to talk across differences to create communities that work for all, and Leadership New Hampshire, which educates a diverse pool of engaged or emerging leaders about key issues facing the state. It has also actively supported an array of research, data, and education efforts on many public policy issues, from state budget impacts to early childhood education and development, to the rise of opioid addiction and other substance use disorders.

#### VOTER AND CANDIDATE ENGAGEMENT

Like other community foundations, the foundation uses its leadership voice and grant dollars to encourage and support voter and candidate engagement. Recent examples include:

Quote excerpted in part from - [nhcf.org/what-were-up-to/operating-support-flow-nh-nonprofits-2018/](https://nhcf.org/what-were-up-to/operating-support-flow-nh-nonprofits-2018/)



## Voter Education and Candidate Engagement

### 1. 2016 Gubernatorial Candidate Forum on Young Children

The Forum on Young Children was co-sponsored with the Endowment for Health, and led by Spark NH, the state's early childhood advisory council, to promote early childhood policies and increase visibility of related issues for the candidates. Six of seven Democratic and Republican candidates for governor attended. Among topics addressed were the need for affordable childcare, the importance of early brain development, and the effects of the state's opioid crisis on young children. It was well-covered in the media.

### 2. 2016 Presidential Primary Forum on Addiction Issues

In early January, the Addiction Policy Forum hosted the "New Hampshire Forum on Addiction and the Heroin Epidemic" at Southern New Hampshire University. Among a crowded Republican presidential field, five candidates attended. Multiple foundation grantees were involved in bringing the event to New Hampshire, and some, along with the foundation's director of substance use disorder grantmaking, were featured on the day's panels. The forum received wide media attention. In addition to the forum, many sponsors later facilitated visits to treatment centers for both Democratic and Republican candidates. Opiate addiction was just starting to emerge as a key issue. That year it rose to become the number one issue for New Hampshire voters and provoked bi-partisan discussion nationally.



*Addiction Policy Forum, 2016 Presidential Primary*

### 3. Citizens Count NH – Voter Education

Citizens Count NH, formerly the Live Free or Die Alliance, uses its website and communications to provide nonpartisan election information, candidate guides and tools for citizens to learn and vote about the issues and candidates. It does not take positions on issues, endorse candidates, or stand for or against any elected official. It promotes the civil exchange of opinions in a variety of forums, online and in person. The foundation made recent grants for technology, website upgrades and expanded content.

### 4. Civics 101 – the Podcast

The foundation provided early underwriting support to New Hampshire Public Radio's innovative podcast, Civics 101. The podcast features simple, fact-based stories about how our democracy works, from the Electoral College and redistricting to the free press and the foundational role of the U.S. Postal Service. It soon went national. On its debut it was sixth on the iTunes chart. On its debut on Inauguration Day 2017, it reached the sixth spot on the iTunes chart and has since been downloaded more than 6 million times.

## TRAINING, EDUCATIONAL AND TECHNICAL ASSISTANCE SUPPORT PARTNERS

The foundation supports many grantees, such as New Futures and the New Hampshire Center for Nonprofits, as sources of training and support for individuals and nonprofit organizations who wish to become engaged and better understand their role in public policy and advocacy.





## CLEVELAND FOUNDATION – CLEVELAND, OHIO

### Support for Bond Measures and Tax Levies

Contact: Kathleen Hallissey, Program Director, Leadership Development

*The Cleveland Foundation* has supported bond measures and tax levies related to the foundation's goals and work of its community partners and grantees. The county measures expand or preserve resources for program priorities. As program director Kathy Hallissey noted, "The foundation can't match public resources from the county or state. When we have an opportunity to leverage added public support it makes sense to do so."

#### FIT WITH MISSION AND GOALS

The support for revenue measures fits with the foundation's goals, in particular, in three of its main program areas:

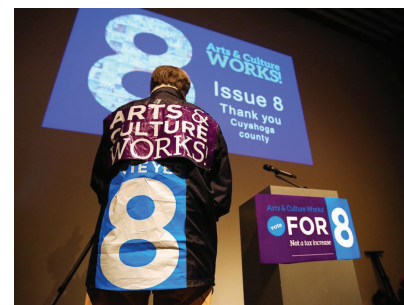
- Arts and Culture: sustaining a vibrant and healthy cultural community, from small, neighborhood-based programs to world-renowned organizations.
- Economic Development: building an economy that can thrive and be sustainable and globally connected.
- Education and Youth Development: re-inventing K-12 education and understanding that economic vitality depends on youths being prepared to excel in school and participate and compete in today's job market.

#### SUPPORTING BOND MEASURES AND TAX LEVIES

The foundation makes grants directly to established ballot committees advocating for new or continued revenue. It encourages the committees to use its support for grassroots community education.

#### 1. Cuyahoga Fund for Arts and Culture Levy

The idea of a county fund to support the arts started first with the establishment of the Community Partnership for Arts and Culture. In 1997, The Cleveland Foundation and George Gund Foundation commissioned a regional, community-wide, strategic cultural plan. The group charged with developing this plan became the Community Partnership for Arts and Culture (CPAC). CPAC was instrumental in the passage of the original small levy on cigarette sales for Cuyahoga County in 2006<sup>2</sup> creating the *public entity* (it is a government entity in the county) similarly called Cuyahoga Arts & Culture. In 2015, a 10-year continuance of the levy was overwhelmingly approved. The Cleveland Foundation was one of many individual and business donors such as the Cleveland Indians contributing to the success of the original and renewal measures.



Arts and Culture Issue 8

<sup>2</sup> Related to a similar bed tax for arts and culture in neighboring Lake County, one of the three counties the foundation is active in.





## CLEVELAND FOUNDATION – CLEVELAND, OHIO

### Support for Bond Measures and Tax Levies

Today the Cuyahoga Arts and Culture is “one of the largest public funders for arts and culture in the nation, helping hundreds of organizations in Cuyahoga County connect millions of people to cultural experiences each year.” ([report.cacgrants.org/](http://report.cacgrants.org/)) Since 2007, the fund has invested more than \$170 million in more than 375 organizations both large and small, from the Rock and Roll Hall of Fame to numerous community arts initiatives. This work has contributed to Cleveland’s renewal as a more vibrant place to live, work and play.

#### 2. Keep Our Port Strong-Cleveland-Cuyahoga County Port Authority Operating Levy

The Port of Cleveland drives more than \$3.5 billion in economic activity every year, with just a small amount of public money first authorized in 1968. The foundation supported the successful voter-approved renewal of the measure in 2013 and 2017 through grants designed to educate and mobilize voters.

#### 3. Cuyahoga Community College (Tri-C) Bond Measure Levy

The foundation is a strong supporter of the Cuyahoga Community College, also known as Tri-C. For the first time since 1963 the public college has asked voters for help to support its infrastructure. It placed a 25-year bond issue on the November 7 ballot to raise the \$227 million for capital work on its 50 buildings around the city. The community college helps local businesses fill their voracious need for skilled employees with training programs in health care, automotive repair and manufacturing. It gives students a low-cost leg up on four-year colleges. The bond measure for the Community College passed with 57% of the votes in favor.



Vote for Tri-C Issue 61



## COMMUNITY FOUNDATION OF GREATER NEW HAVEN – NEW HAVEN, CT

“Community foundations like ourselves are increasingly interested in more effective strategies to get results and move the needle on issues and public policy. To build impact, we want nonprofits to know what they and their community can do to engage voters and educate candidates in all types of elections.”

*Will Ginsberg, President*

### Voter Engagement Training for Nonprofits

*Contact: Caprice Taylor Mendez, Strategic Program Manager*

Established in 1928, the *Community Foundation of Greater New Haven* is the largest grantmaker in a 20-town region in the heart of central Connecticut. It integrates civic vitality and engagement throughout its programs and work with donors and partners.

#### FIT WITH MISSION AND GOALS

The foundation’s mission is to create positive and sustainable change in the Connecticut’s Greater New Haven area. It seeks to inspire people to get involved in local issues and provide leadership by mobilizing the community to address key issues and support others in their leadership roles. It believes a community thrives when its people are engaged in its institutions and in each other, have good sources of information, and trust that they and their neighbors can effect change at a local level.

#### VOTER ENGAGEMENT TRAINING FOR NONPROFITS – 2018

The foundation offers a variety of training forums, workshops, and other learning opportunities for organizations through its Nonprofit Management Resource Center. Sessions are designed to strengthen the leadership, management, and capacities of nonprofits large and small, from those who are just starting out to longstanding organizations. Workshops are paired with on-going technical assistance, including one-on-one consultations with experts in the field.

In April 2018, The Community Foundation added a Voter Engagement Training for nonprofits with Nonprofit VOTE and the state election office. Attendees will learn guidelines and best practices for voter and candidate engagement in the 2018 election. Breakout sessions will allow nonprofit staff to consider election activities appropriate for their nonprofit and community in 2018. Nonprofits attending will be offered sources for ongoing technical assistance.





## Voter Engagement Training for Nonprofits

### VOTER ENGAGEMENT MINI-GRANTS

In addition to the training, the foundation will issue an RFP to nonprofits serving historically lower voter turnout neighborhoods or voters to apply for a \$1,000 mini-grant to carry out voter engagement activities in the 2018 election. Ten nonprofits will get funding to do voter registration, voter education and get-out-the-vote activities with local residents as active participants. The program has a set of goals for each nonprofit, resources and assistance from partners, peer learning and post-election evaluation including components listed in this report's Appendix B.

### Upcoming Capacity Building Workshops

#### **Voter Engagement for Nonprofits**

**Wednesday, April 11, 2018**

**9:00 a.m. - 11:00 a.m.**

**The Community Foundation for Greater New Haven  
70 Audubon St. New Haven**

Help your community and staff register and vote. Learn tips and best practices for nonpartisan voter registration, voter education, candidate engagement and getting out the vote.



