Vote Your Voice

FIELD STRENGTHENING GRANTS
PROPOSAL GUIDELINES | 2023

VOTE YOUR VOICE IS AN INITIATIVE OF

SPPLC

Community Foundation
for Greater Atlanta
About Vote Your Voice

In 2020, the Southern Poverty Law Center (SPLC), in partnership with the Community Foundation for Greater Atlanta (Community Foundation), launched the Vote Your Voice initiative with the goal of ensuring full voter participation and fair representation for communities of color in the Deep South. In creating the initiative, the SPLC and the Community Foundation recognized that the United States is in a moment of unprecedented challenges to our democracy. At the national, state and local levels, there have been an onslaught of efforts designed to hamper citizens’ ability to vote, with a disproportionate impact in communities of color. New measures include criminal penalties for certain voter registration and assistance activities, barriers to register and vote (such as imposing new voter ID requirements), limited opportunities to participate in elections (by curbing vote-by-mail, early voting, and other practices designed for voting accessibility), and the periodic purging of voter rolls.

Vote Your Voice is supporting groups based in communities of color to galvanize people to exercise their right to vote, advocate for voting access, and encourage full civic participation, so people, particularly communities of color, can make their voices heard and shape their own future. Vote Your Voice supports organizations working in the states of Alabama, Florida, Georgia, Louisiana and Mississippi.

About Field Strengthening Grants

The Field Strengthening grants offered this year build upon feedback we received from the field through a program evaluation, and provide funding to organizations that are effectively engaging communities of color year-round to encourage their participation in voting and other civic actions, such as learning about voting rights and other policy issues that affect their lives, organizing other community members, engaging in dialogues with their elected representatives, and preparing for leadership roles in civic and public life. Vote Your Voice recognizes that the process of shifting power so that communities of color have an equal voice in shaping policies that affect their lives requires year-round community-building, civic education and civic action.

Field Strengthening grant amounts are dependent upon organizational capacity, demonstrated outcomes and proposed scope of work. Typical grant amounts will range between $50,000 to $500,000 and should not exceed 20% of an organization's total budget. The average grant period is two years.
**Priority Organizations**

*Vote Your Voice* will provide grants to organizations in five Southern states – Alabama, Florida, Georgia, Louisiana and Mississippi – to boost voting rates and increase civic participation among communities of color. *Vote Your Voice* is particularly interested in work with voters of color often not well covered by large voter outreach campaigns, including young voters of color (ages 18 – 35) and voters of color in non-metro areas.

**Voter registration and mobilization activities** among voters of color, particularly those facing significant barriers to participation, such as young people, voters in non-metro areas, returning citizens, those who have been purged from voter rolls and infrequent voters generally not contacted by the major campaigns. Specifically, these activities could include:

- Voter registration efforts, which may include educating priority populations about the importance of voting and how to register and vote as well as providing voter registration materials
- Voter education efforts, which may include educating priority populations about the issues and offices on which they can vote and the various ways people can cast their ballots in their state
- Get-Out-the-Vote efforts, which may include outreach to secure commitments to vote, reminders to vote and other encouragement to participate in the election
- Use of a variety of methods to reach targeted voters, such as door-to-door outreach, phone calling, texting, social media, and events

*Grant funds may not be used to advocate for any political party, candidate or ballot initiative, though funds may be used to provide information about ballot initiatives.*

**Civic engagement** activities, such as educating community members about voting rights policies and other policy issues that affect their lives, organizing community members to weigh in on policy issues, facilitating dialogues with community members and their elected representatives, and preparing community members for leadership roles in civic and public life.

**Efforts to protect voting rights** and ensure full access to voting as well as voting rights restoration for formerly incarcerated individuals. Specifically, these activities could include:

- Education of the public and/or policymakers about voting rights policies and measures and their impact on voter access
- Leadership development, advocacy and other trainings and workshops for community members focused on voting rights
- Advocacy for measures that promote full access to voter participation
- Engagement of new stakeholders in advocacy efforts
Research to deepen understanding of effective voter and civic engagement outreach methods and messages. Research could include:

- Testing new voter outreach and civic engagement strategies in partnership with BlueLabs or another analytical partner to design experiments and assess results
- Focus groups and/or polling to learn more about target populations’ priorities and effective messages to encourage voter participation

**Selection Criteria**

- A track record of impact in encouraging voter and civic participation among communities of color;
- A clear plan and timeline for the organization’s proposed activities and measurable goals;
- Organizational capacity to implement the proposed plan of action;
- A plan to track outreach activities and impact, including if possible, voter registrations achieved and voter participation among those targeted;
- A commitment to learning from other initiative participants as well as best practices in the field to improve on the organization’s approaches for greatest impact;
- A commitment to conducting wholly nonpartisan voter registration and voter mobilization activities, and an understanding of what is legally permissible.
Please complete the Organizational Profile and fill out the Vote Your Voice application. **Incomplete applications will not be eligible for funding.** For questions about the Organizational Profile, please contact VoteYourVoice@cfgreateratlanta.org.

We encourage you to include in your application both the strengths and accomplishments of your work as well as the challenges, needs or gaps that the Vote Your Voice funding can help you to address.

**Vote Your Voice application at a glance:**

1. **Organizational Background & Objectives**
   Describe in detail the population the organization aims to engage, e.g. the characteristics, geographic region and approximate number of those the organization is aiming to reach through the project, as well as, the organization’s track record of working with this population and how the organization’s experience and/or research informs your planned activities to mobilize this community.

2. **Project Objectives, Specific Goals and Timeline**
   Identify your organization’s project objectives, quantifiable goals, and a timeline of the project’s major activities during the grant period. If applicable, discuss how year-round activities intersect with and reinforce election-related activities.
   
   - **Goals.** Provide a brief description of the organization’s voter and civic engagement goals.
   
   - **Target population.** Describe in detail the population the organization aims to engage, e.g. the characteristics, geographic region and approximate number of those the organization is aiming to reach through the project, as well as, the organization’s track record of working with this population and how the organization’s experience and/or research informs your planned activities to mobilize this community.
   
   - **Project approach.** Discuss how your voter outreach, civic engagement, and/or voting rights advocacy strategies reflect the current challenges of the moment as well as effective field practices.
   
   - **Specific objectives.** Discuss the organization’s specific objectives, per year, using quantifiable targets to the extent possible.
   
   - **Timeline.** Provide a timeline of the project’s major activities during the grant period. If applicable, discuss how year-round activities intersect with and reinforce election-related activities.
   
   - **Measuring progress.** Discuss how you will measure the progress of your voter and civic engagement activities. If applicable, please share an example of how you have used data in the past to inform how you adjust a program or strategy.
   
   - **Capacity-building interest.** If your organization is interested in capacity-building support, please describe the aspect of organizational strengthening on which you
intend to focus. Please also discuss your staff leadership’s commitment to engaging with an organizational development consultant to complete an assessment and finalize a capacity strengthening plan.

3. **Voter Registration and Mobilization Tracking/Reporting**

Identify how you will measure the progress of your voter and civic engagement activities. Please note that this is an important consideration in the grant determination process, as tracking results not only helps individual organizations learn about and track their progress, measurement also helps the field overall build understanding of effective voter outreach and civic engagement approaches.

4. **Budget**

Field Strengthening grant amounts are dependent upon organizational capacity, demonstrated outcomes and proposed scope of work. Typical grant amounts will range between $50,000 to $500,000 and should not exceed 20% of an organization's total budget. Please provide the organization’s projected fiscal budget, current operating budget, and the last fiscal year budget with actuals.

### IMPORTANT DATES

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<tr>
<th>Date</th>
<th>Description</th>
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<tr>
<td>July 27, 2023</td>
<td>Organizations are invited to submit proposals</td>
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<tr>
<td>August 16, 2023, 12 - 1 p.m. ET</td>
<td>*Online orientation webinar for interested applicants – register <a href="#">here</a></td>
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<tr>
<td>September 8, 2023, by 5 p.m. ET</td>
<td>Proposals are due</td>
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<td>Sept. 11 - Oct. 15, 2023</td>
<td>Proposal review period (organizations may be contacted for additional information)</td>
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<tr>
<td>October 16, 2023</td>
<td>Grant decisions announced</td>
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**Orientation Webinar**

Community Foundation and SPLC staff will provide information and answer your questions during a strongly encouraged [online orientation session](#) on Wednesday, August 16, 2023, from 12 – 1 p.m. A recording of the webinar will also be made available on the Community Foundation Grant Opportunities webpage after the webinar. Questions can be submitted via email prior to the webinar at [VoteYourVoice@cfgreateratlanta.org](mailto:VoteYourVoice@cfgreateratlanta.org).

**Questions?**

For questions regarding the application process, please contact one of the following:

**VoteYourVoice@cfgreateratlanta.org**  
**Jovan Paige**  
Power & Leadership Program Officer  
Community Foundation for Greater Atlanta  
[jovan.paige@cfgreateratlanta.org](mailto:jovan.paige@cfgreateratlanta.org)