



Hartford Foundation

FOR PUBLIC GIVING

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Civic Engagement and Get Out the Vote

Request for Proposals

February 1, 2023

The Hartford Foundation for Public Giving is pleased to announce a competitive grant opportunity designed to support civic engagement and voter participation as the 2023 Hartford mayoral election approaches. The Hartford Foundation welcomes requests of up to \$25,000 for activities implemented during the summer and fall of 2023 and expects to award up to \$200,000 in total across all grantees.

Under IRS guidance, public charities (all 501c3 nonprofits) can engage in voter education and mobilization activities, provided these activities are conducted in a nonpartisan manner that is not biased in favor or against any particular candidate or political party. Foundation funds cannot be used to support activities that (a) would favor one candidate over another; (b) oppose a candidate in some manner; or (c) have the effect of favoring or providing a benefit to a candidate, group of candidates, or political party.

Examples of nonpartisan activities eligible under this grant opportunity include, but are not limited to, the following:

- Nonpartisan debates, forums, and voter guides
- Voter registration
- Strategies that educate voters on the voting process
- Participating in “Get Out the Vote” activities on Election Day
- Providing supports to remove barriers to voting on Election Day (e.g., transportation to polling locations)
- Assisting voters with disabilities, language barriers, or in need of special assistance to participate
- Publicizing a voter information line or website to help answer questions about early voting or polling
- Sponsoring a candidate forum for all the candidates on the ballot
- Other related civic education efforts that promote civic engagement

Organizations can find additional guidance about IRS permissible activities [here](#).

The Foundation is also hosting an optional information session via Zoom on Tuesday, February 21, 2023, from 1:00 p.m. – 2:00 p.m. Registration for the info session can be found [here](#). After registering, you will receive a confirmation email containing information about how to join the meeting, including the Zoom meeting link.

Applicants are requested to complete the [online grant application](#) by Monday, March 20, 2023, at 11:59pm. Grants will be announced in early May 2023.

This request for proposals seeks to support civic engagement and voter participation in Hartford's mayoral election in November 2023 only. A subsequent Request for Proposals to support civic engagement and voter participation in the 2024 presidential election will be released in early 2024.

I. Background:

The Hartford Foundation's 2023 Civic Engagement and Get Out the Vote Request for Proposals is a nonpartisan effort to engage underrepresented voters, particularly among historically disenfranchised community members. This proposal is in alignment with the Hartford Foundation's Civic and Resident Engagement outcome team's mid-term outcome to help improve residents' ability to influence government and other institutional decision-making bodies.

In Greater Hartford, the lowest rates of voter participation are documented among people of color, especially Black and Latino/a/x voters; young voters between the ages of 18-29; and residents of the City of Hartford. In the 2019 Hartford mayoral election, an estimated 9,983 votes were cast, representing less than one fifth of active, registered voters on election day. Further, CTData's analysis of the 2018 Census Bureau voting age data found that over 14,000 eligible, not-yet-registered voters reside in Hartford.

The Hartford Foundation recognizes civic participation, including voting, as one of the most impactful ways to create sustained, positive change in one's everyday life. Research indicates that higher levels of civic trust, participation, and engagement are correlated with more equitable economic outcomes as well as positive health outcomes and lower crime rates.¹

II. Proposal Requirements:

Grants will be considered for projects that can help increase voter registration and participation on Hartford's mayoral election day, as outlined above.

Preference will be given to the following:

- Organizations and groups that are Black or Latino/a/x led
- Organizations and groups with proposed activities that are focused in [neighborhoods](#) demonstrating low voter registration

Applications will be reviewed using the rubric available [here](#).

- **Population of Focus:** Program activities must engage Hartford residents, with an emphasis on documented underrepresented voters including people of color, particularly Black and Latino/a/x communities, and people ages 18 – 29.
- **Eligible Applicants:** Applicants must meet Hartford Foundation grantee criteria, found [here](#). Non-501c3 community-based groups may apply using a fiscal sponsor that have 501c3 status.

¹ Abraham, M., Seaberry, C., Ankrah, J., Bourdillon, A., Davila, K., Finn, E., McGann, S., Nathan, A. (2019) Greater Hartford Community Wellbeing Index 2019. New Haven, CT: DataHaven.

Organizations will be asked about previous experience in best practices with engaging underrepresented voters such as communities of color and young voters in Hartford and will be expected to comply with IRS guidelines for nonprofits engaging in voter education and mobilization. Applicants should be able to conduct civic engagement activities from the grant award date (expected May 2023) through the November 2023 Hartford mayoral election.

In most cases, organizations currently receiving core support or multi-year funding from the Hartford Foundation during the Civic Engagement GOTV RFP grant period will be ineligible to apply. In addition, if your organization has received a grant through a 2022 RFP, please contact Kate Piotrowski at kpiotrowski@hfpg.org before applying.

Expected Measurement of Outcomes:

Funded proposals will be asked to track and report on the following measurements: 1) the total number of Hartford residents engaged through program activities, 2) the number of Hartford residents who have registered to vote, 3) population(s) reached, and 4) outreach and engagement strategies, such as event tabling, speaker series, social media campaigns, etc.

Additional Information:

Eligibility and other program related questions can be directed to Kate Piotrowski at kpiotrowski@hfpg.org. Any technical questions regarding completing the online application should be directed to Grants Administration at grantsadministration@hfpg.org.

Applicants should complete all required questions of the online application by the deadline in order to be deemed eligible for funding consideration. Each organization is invited to submit one proposal.

III. Key Dates:

- Civic Engagement and Get Out the Vote RFP release: Wednesday, February 1, 2023
- Optional virtual info session: Tuesday, February 21, 2023, at 1:00pm. Register [here](#).
- Application deadline: Monday, March 20, 2023, at 11:59pm
- Award announcement: early May 2023