

## **Civic Engagement and Get Out the Vote**

Request for Proposals

January 2024

The Hartford Foundation for Public Giving is pleased to announce a competitive grant opportunity designed to support civic engagement and voter participation in the 2024 presidential election in the City of Hartford and/or Hartford Foundation's [28 town region](#). The Hartford Foundation welcomes requests of up to \$25,000 for activities implemented in the spring through fall of 2024.

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
- Voter Education (e.g., sharing information about the voting process and elections)
- Raising awareness on voter issues (e.g., housing, education, etc.)
- 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](#). Applicants are requested to complete the online grant application by **Tuesday, February 20, 2024 at 11:59 p.m.** Grants will be announced in April 2024.

## **I. Background:**

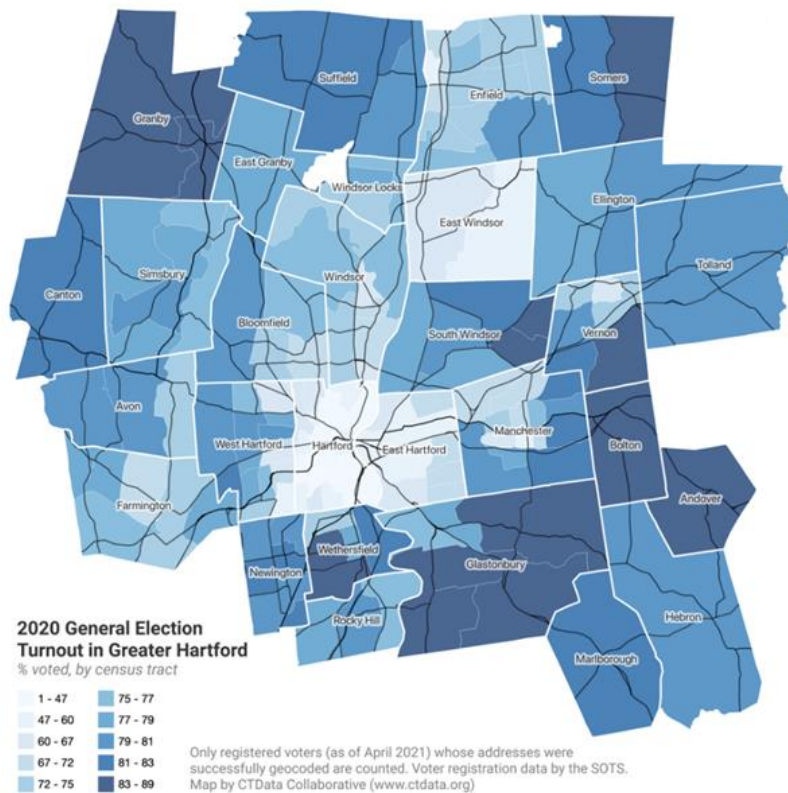
The Hartford Foundation's 2024 Civic Engagement and Get Out the Vote Request for Proposals is a nonpartisan effort to engage underrepresented voters, particularly among historically disenfranchised community members. Research shows consistently low rates of voter registration and turnout among particular populations in our region, referred to as "underrepresented voters." 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 Latine voters; young voters between the ages of 18-29; and residents of the City of Hartford. As of 2019, Enfield, Hartford, and Manchester had the most eligible residents that have not yet registered to vote<sup>1</sup>. CTData Collaborative's 2020 Presidential Findings highlight that Hartford and surrounding towns such as East Hartford, East Windsor, Enfield, and Manchester had the lowest voter turnout in the 2020 Presidential election as per the map shown below<sup>2</sup>.

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<sup>1</sup> CTData Collaborative. (2020). Voting Behavior in the 2019 Hartford Municipal Election. <https://www.ctdata.org/voting-story-2023>. (2023)

<sup>2</sup> CTData Collaborative. (2020). 2020 Presidential Election: Our Findings. <https://www.ctdata.org/blog/2020-presidential-election-data-connecticut-civic?rq=voter>. (2023)



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.<sup>3</sup>

## II. Proposal Requirements:

Grants will be considered for projects that can help increase voter registration and participation in Hartford or the Greater Hartford presidential election, as outlined above.

Preference will be given to the following:

- Organizations and groups that are Black or Latine led
- Organizations and groups with proposed activities that are focused in Hartford [neighborhoods](#) or Greater Hartford [towns](#) demonstrating low voter registration and/or engagement.

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

- **Population of Focus:** Program activities must engage residents of Hartford or Greater Hartford, with an emphasis on underrepresented voters including people of color, and Black

<sup>3</sup> 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.

and Latine 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.

Organizations will be asked about previous experience in best practices with engaging underrepresented voters such as communities of color and young voters 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 April 2024) through the November 2024 presidential election.

In most cases, organizations currently receiving core support or multi-year project grant funding from the Hartford Foundation during the Civic Engagement GOTV RFP grant period will be ineligible to apply. We will consider current grantees of the 2023 GOTV RFP for potential continuation funding but a previous award does not guarantee funding. In addition, if your organization has received a grant through a 2023 RFP, please contact Cynthia Wills at [cwills@hfpg.org](mailto:cwills@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 and/or Greater Hartford residents engaged through various project activities, 2) the number of Hartford and/or Greater Hartford residents who were registered to vote, and 3) anticipated impact of the 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 Cynthia Wills at [cwills@hfpg.org](mailto:cwills@hfpg.org). Any technical questions regarding completing the online application should be directed to Grants Administration at [grantsadministration@hfpg.org](mailto: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:**

- **Release Application: January 16, 2024**
- **Applications Due: February 20, 2024**
- **Award Notifications: April 2024**
- **Election Day: November 5, 2024**