



**Hartford Foundation for Public Giving**  
**Civic Engagement Project**  
**Request for Proposals**  
**March 2020**

The Hartford Foundation is pleased to announce a competitive grant opportunity to [eligible](#) nonprofits proposing projects to promote civic engagement, including through immediate and longer-term engagement of residents, particularly underrepresented voters and other disengaged residents in Greater Hartford. Nonprofits who currently have a civic engagement grant (GOTV or GOTC) from the Hartford Foundation are eligible to apply but must demonstrate how its request would differ from or supplement currently funded activities. Applicants are requested to complete the [online grant application](#) by **May 4**. The proposal requirements are listed below. Grants will be announced by **June 16**.

**Background**

The Hartford Foundation is the community foundation for the 29-town Greater Hartford, Connecticut region, dedicated to improving the quality of life for area residents. One of the oldest and largest community foundations in the country, since 1925 the Hartford Foundation has awarded grants of more than \$720 million and provided a host of other support and training services to a broad range of area nonprofit organizations.

Community participation and leadership is a priority for the Hartford Foundation and is one that contributes to the Foundation's goal to increase opportunities for all. Civic engagement, one part of community participation, may take many forms including voter engagement, participating in local government, volunteering and sharing ideas.

Responses to the recent 2018 DataHaven Community Wellbeing survey demonstrate that on measures of civic engagement and neighborhood connectedness, disparities exist across our region. For example, while 86% of outer suburb and 76% of inner suburb residents said that felt their neighbors were invested in improving their neighborhoods, a considerably lower proportion of City of Hartford residents (62%) indicated that their neighbors were invested. A similar pattern held true when people were asked if they believed their neighbors would organize to prevent the closing of a neighborhood fire station; while 98% of outer suburb residents indicated that their people in their neighborhood would mobilize in this way, 67% of Hartford residents said the same – a divergence of 31 percentage points.

Research also shows consistently low rates of voter engagement among particular populations in our region, referred to as “underrepresented voters.” Groups in Greater Hartford with the lowest rates of voter participation in our region are: 1) people of color, particularly Hispanics of

any race and Black voters, 2) young people, especially those between the ages of 18-24, and 3) residents of Hartford. We believe that national elections in 2020 may create a timely moment to promote voter engagement around the elections as well as broader civic engagement.

### **Funding Opportunity**

The Hartford Foundation is pleased to announce a third year of funding support under its Civic Engagement Project. This project seeks to enhance local efforts to connect and mobilize residents through a variety of civic engagement activities, including Get Out the Vote (GOTV) activities, in 2020. Requests ranging from \$2,500-\$50,000 will be considered.

The **Hartford Foundation's Civic Engagement Project** is a nonpartisan effort to increase engagement of underrepresented or disconnected community members, drawing upon the strength of nonprofits and individuals from our community. Our grants seek to support organizations in reaching people whose participation is underrepresented, activating and educating them around community concerns, and connecting them to the upcoming elections via nonpartisan voter engagement activities.

**What are nonpartisan civic engagement activities?** These might include (but not be limited to):

- Civic education
- Connecting residents to opportunities to become active around community concerns
- Voter registration
- Having new and existing voters sign "pledge to vote" cards and other commitment tools
- Hosting electoral debate viewing and discussion events
- Participating in "Get Out the Vote" (GOTV) activities on Election Day, such as voter mobilization efforts (e.g., free transportation, etc.)

Voter registration activities supported by the Hartford Foundation must be available without regard to the voter's political preference. Information or other assistance regarding registration or voting shall not be withheld or refused based on support for or opposition to particular candidates, parties or policy position.

We welcome applications that propose any of these civic engagement activities, **either** directly with underrepresented community members **or** by providing technical assistance to support other organizations or community groups to engage residents.

### **Criteria for Consideration for Civic Engagement Grants:**

- Can conduct the work for this grant starting from June 14, 2020, for up to a period of one year.

For direct work with community residents:

- Have an ability to engage underrepresented voters and/or undercounted residents. Communities reached should include people from one or more of the following target

groups: 1) people of color, particularly Hispanics of any race and Black voters, 2) young people, especially those between the ages of 18-24, and/or 3) residents of Hartford and/or undercounted census tracts in East Hartford, and Manchester.

- Have some knowledge or experience organizing members of the community.

For work supporting other nonprofits/groups:

- Have a track record in civic engagement efforts
- Have experience providing technical support to diverse community groups.

**Note: Nonprofits who currently have a civic engagement grant from the Hartford Foundation are eligible to apply but must demonstrate how its request would differ from or supplement currently funded activities.**

### **Impact and Reporting:**

Given the variety of potential projects that can be supported by a civic engagement grant, successful applicants will work with Foundation staff to develop appropriate ways and measures to capture the effect of the funded civic engagement activities. Possible ways of capturing these outputs will likely be a mix of quantitative (e.g. number of participants, number of events) and qualitative measures (e.g. participant feedback, themes from community meetings, pictures of events).

### **To Apply:**

[Click here](#) to apply. Grant applications should be **submitted no later than Monday, May 4, 2020.**

**Information session:** An optional information conference call will be held at 2pm on March 18. If you have questions about this RFP and are interested in joining the call, please RSVP by March 16 to Susan Hills (shills@hfpg.org). Questions at any other time can be directed to Yvette Bello (ybello@hfpg.org), 860-548-1888.

Any technical questions regarding completing the online application should be directed to Grants Administration (grantsadministration@hfpg.org or 860-548-1888). Please include "Civic Engagement Project" and your agency's name in the email subject line.

### **Key Dates:**

- Optional Informational Conference Call 2pm, March 18, 2020
- Application deadline May 4, 2020
- Grantee notification and start of grant period June 16, 2020
- Projects may have a duration of up to one year, with a completion date on or before June 15, 2021.