

## Funding Application

# Voter Education Fund

*Increasing voter participation in historically excluded communities*

Seattle Foundation and King County Elections are partnering to strengthen civic engagement through the Voter Education Fund.

The partners have committed \$950,000 in grants over the next two-years to organizations working to increase voter participation in historically excluded communities. Selected organizations will be funded for two years to do voter outreach and activities for the 2021 and 2022 election cycles.

### PRIORITIES

The Voter Education Fund will prioritize grants to organizations that work to reduce inequities in voting access in historically excluded communities who have faced systemic racism, being targets of voter suppression, and increased barriers to participation. Our focus communities for this funding opportunity includes, but is not limited to Black, indigenous, people of color, people experiencing homelessness, people convicted of a felony, limited-English speaking (LES) communities, people with disabilities and youth of color.

Applicants can apply for up to \$40,000 to develop and implement a strategic ongoing campaign to engage voters or potential voters, or up to \$15,000 to provide a series of targeted events.

### We are prioritizing applications that are:

- Led and staffed by individuals reflecting the lived-experience, racial, and ethnic communities being served; and
- Showcase a history or demonstrated ability to reach and engage members from the communities, especially as it relates to voting access; and
- Have a plan for engaging first time voters, people with disabilities, youth of color, individuals experiencing homelessness or people convicted of a felony.

## SUMMARY INFORMATION

**ANNOUNCEMENT DATE:** March 1, 2021

**DEADLINE:** April 2, 2021

**TOTAL AMOUNT AVAILABLE:** \$950,000 will be available for grants over the two-year period (grant amounts will vary and will be administered by Seattle Foundation).

**DESCRIPTION:** Two-year grants to support voter education activities (i.e., voter registration, education and outreach, one-on-one technical assistance, and nonpartisan virtual gatherings or ballot parties) in historically excluded communities that are in compliance with COVID-19 guidelines.

**TWO GRANT TYPES:** Organizations are invited to apply for support in one of two categories:

1. Catalyst Level Funding (up to \$40,000 total, \$20,000 a year for two years)
2. Capacity Level Funding (up to \$15,000 total, \$7,500 a year for two years)

**DURATION:** The first installment will be distributed in May 2021 and the second in early 2022.

**ELIGIBILITY:** 501c3 organizations (or organizations with a 501c3 fiscal sponsor) working in King County, Washington.

**INFORMATION SESSIONS:** Virtual info sessions via Zoom on March 9<sup>th</sup> from noon-1:30m and March 22<sup>nd</sup> from 4:30-6:00pm.

**CONTACT INFO:** Please contact Bao-Tram at [b.do@seattlefoundation.org](mailto:b.do@seattlefoundation.org) with any questions about this grant opportunity.

## FUNDABLE ACTIVITIES

King County Elections and Seattle Foundation will award grants to community-based organizations that provide either an ongoing campaign or events focused on one or more of the following that are appropriate given COVID-19 pandemic and recovery:

- Voter education or outreach informing historically excluded communities about how voting works in King County, such as who is eligible to vote, what is vote-by-mail, and democracy 101.
- Voter registration activities where historically excluded communities work, play or connect in compliance with COVID-19 government guidelines.
- Nonpartisan opportunities for communities to come together and learn about what’s on the ballot.
- Culturally appropriate technical assistance in navigating the voting process, such as helping voters change their address or language preference.

## GRANT TYPES

Applicants are invited to respond to this RFP and apply for funding in one of two areas related to the Voter Education Fund:

1. **Catalyst Funding** – grants will range up to \$40,000 (\$20,000 a year for two years).

Catalyst Funding will support organizations that provide ongoing voter registration and education activities throughout 2021 and 2022. Grantees are expected to offer a variety of approaches to educating and engaging voters or potential voters in their community throughout for the next two years. Organizations should consider applying for this level of funding if they have prior experience doing successful non-partisan voter engagement work within historically excluded communities.

2. **Capacity Level Funding** – grants will range up to \$15,000 (\$7,500 a year for two years).

Capacity Level Funding will support organizations that are newer to this who aim to provide a smaller series of targeted events to potential voters in 2021 and 2022. This is intended to grow the capacity of organizations representing focus communities who desire to increase their capability of doing effective, non-partisan voter education work.

Final grant amounts will be determined based on the proposed scope of work in relationship to both the number of voter engagement events hosted and the size of those events. All grantees will be required to attend specific cohort meetings throughout the year and prepare for monthly check-in calls with King County Elections. All grantees will have the opportunity to participate in technical assistance training and have access to capacity building workshops.

## EXAMPLES OF PREVIOUSLY FUNDED ACTIVITIES

Examples of previously funded activities include (groups can use various strategies):

| Catalyst Level examples   | Capacity Level examples   |
|---|---|
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Leading ongoing voter education work in historically excluded communities, including regular programming and a series of engagement events across multiple election cycles.</li> </ul> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Hosting a culturally specific non-partisan ballot party to encourage voter participation within limited English-speaking communities.</li> <li>• Implementing virtual community events to encourage voter registration and participation.</li> </ul> |

|   |   |
|---|---|
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Integrating voter education and registration activities into the daily programming operations of direct service organizations.</li> <li>Hosting a series of virtual and/or COVID-19 safe phone banks, candidate forums, or Get out the Vote activities throughout King County to increase voter participation.</li> <li>Creating targeted media efforts to reach historically excluded communities.</li> <li>Engaging focus communities in various stages of voter education, voter registration, and get-out-the-vote.</li> </ul> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Leading (5-10) smaller events to educate first-time voters or potential voters throughout 2021 &amp; 2022 while collectively building a strategy to have increased impact in future election cycles.</li> <li>Developing culturally relevant communication channels (i.e., texting, messaging platforms).</li> </ul> |
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## CRITERIA AND NARRATIVE QUESTIONS

Proposals will be selected and funding will be awarded based upon the degree to which the narrative meets the following criteria. The tables of Questions and Criteria are separated by Catalyst Level and Capacity Level.

### CATALYST LEVEL

Write a narrative response to sections A-C and complete the field plan. Make sure that the responses are relevant and complete.

| Section                               | Questions   | Criteria   |
|---------------------------------------|---|--|
| <b>A. Target population/community</b> | <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Describe your target population(s). (max 150 words)</li> <li>What significant role or gap within the community do you seek to fill? How would the community benefit from increased voter education, outreach and engagement? (max 250 words)</li> <li>What specific strategies will your organization use to engage this population/community in voter education activities in 2021 and 2022? Please share how you will tailor your approach given the COVID-19 pandemic and recovery. (max 400 words)</li> </ol>  | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Organization reflects strong understanding of then needs within their target community.</li> <li>Applicant is focused in communities experiencing significant social, racial and/or economic inequities as prioritized by this RFP.</li> <li>Identifies specific strategies and plans that address the unique cultural needs of the target community and is appropriate given the COVID-19 pandemic.</li> </ul> |
| <b>B. Capacity and experience</b>     | <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Does your organization have experience doing voter engagement with the target communities? Please describe. (max 250 words)</li> <li>How does your organization's leadership reflect the race, ethnicity, and languages spoken with the community you are targeting? (max 250 words)</li> <li>Please describe why you think your organization is well-positioned to receive a Voter Education Fund grant right now? For organizations with no to minimal experience, please be realistic about what your organization can offer and what you hope to learn. (max 250 words)</li> </ol> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Has expertise in voter education and engagement.</li> <li>Will have the necessary capacity and positioning to carry out the proposed strategy or effort.</li> <li>Staff/board are representative of the communities they are working with.</li> </ul>   |
| <b>C. Tracking progress</b>           | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>How will your organization track information and evaluate progress and/or success? (max 150 words)</li> </ul>  | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Is tracking or will track the results or effectiveness of strategies.</li> <li>Has the ability to modify practices based on lessons learned?</li> </ul>   |

|                                   |  |  |
|-----------------------------------|--|--|
| <b>D. Field plan &amp; Budget</b> | 1. Complete the field plan and budget using the Field Plan template. For project events, list as many anticipated events as your organization expects to deliver throughout 2021 and 2022. | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Demonstrates ongoing voter education and engagement activities that support potential voters through a variety of elections (primary, general, local).</li> <li>• Field plan takes into account strategies for COVID-19 pandemic and recovery.</li> <li>• Has a realistic budget which matches the proposed scope of work.</li> </ul> |
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### ***CAPACITY LEVEL***

Write a narrative response to sections A-C and complete the field plan. Make sure that the responses are relevant and complete.

| <b>Section</b>                         | <b>Questions</b>   | <b>Criteria</b>   |
|--|--|---|
| <b>A. Target population/ community</b> | B. Describe your target population(s). (max 150 words)<br>C. What significant role or gap within your target population do you seek to fill with this funding? How would the community benefit from increased voter education, outreach and engagement? (max 250 words)<br>D. What specific strategies will your organization use to engage this population with voter education activities in 2021 and 2022? Please share how you will tailor your approach given the COVID-19 pandemic and recovery. (max 450 words) | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Applicant is focused in communities experiencing significant social, racial and/or economic inequities as prioritized by this RFP.</li> <li>• Identifies specific strategies and plans that address the unique cultural needs of the target community and is appropriate given the COVID-19 pandemic.</li> </ul> |
| <b>E. Capacity and experience</b>      | 1. Does your organization have experience doing voter engagement with the target communities? Please describe. For organizations with no to minimal experience, please be realistic about what your organization can offer and what you hope to learn. (max 250 words)<br>2. How does your organization’s leadership reflect the race, ethnicity, and languages spoken with the community you are targeting? (max 250 words)   | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Applicant showcases prior experience leading voter education work or a strong desire to learn based on community needs.</li> <li>• Staff/board are representative of the communities they are working with.</li> </ul>   |
| <b>F. Field plan &amp; Budget</b>      | 1. Complete the field plan and budget using the Field Plan template. For project events, list as many anticipated events as your organization expects to deliver. (max 150 words)  | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Applicant identifies a reasonable number of events they’re proposing to successfully engage voters or potential voters. Field plan takes into account strategies for COVID-19 pandemic and recovery.</li> <li>• Applicant a realistic budget which matches the proposed scope of work</li> </ul>                 |

## HOW TO SUBMIT A PROPOSAL AND CONTACT INFORMATION

Proposals must be completed online by 5:00 p.m. on April 2, 2021 through the Foundant website:

<https://www.grantinterface.com/Home/Logon?urlkey=seattle>

For additional questions, please e-mail Bao-Tram Do at [b.do@seattlefoundation.org](mailto:b.do@seattlefoundation.org).

## INFORMATION SESSIONS

For those interested in learning more, please consider attending one of the optional virtual information sessions.

- **Date:** Tuesday, March 9<sup>th</sup>, 2021  
**Time:** noon-1:30pm
- **Date:** Monday, March 22<sup>nd</sup>, 2021  
**Time:** 4:30-6pm