



Invitation to Apply

Release: February 16, 2022

Deadline: March 7, 2022, 6 p.m. ET

GoVoteNYC is a collaboration among New York City-based donors united in the conviction that a strong democracy is crucial to a just recovery and resilient future. We support nonpartisan strategies to shift the decades-long downward trajectory of voter participation in New York City.

Theory of Impact

New York City will flourish when all New Yorkers are informed, engaged, and participating in civic life and elections. Local government will be more representative, effective, responsive, and accountable when all voices are heard in our central democratic process – voting.

The Issue

Roughly 75% of New York City registered voters regularly sit local and state elections out. The 25% that do typically vote tend to be older, better educated, and more affluent – and thus they do not equitably represent the electorate. Higher income neighborhoods with high levels of education have consistently greater turnout than the citywide rate. Young voters under 30 participated in the 2017 mayoral election at a rate of 13.5%. Neighborhoods with large immigrant populations frequently have lower rates of voter participation.

New Yorkers who do not vote report feeling uninformed about candidates, the offices on the ballot, and how those offices impact their lives. They feel their votes do not count. When they experience barriers at the polls – i.e., voter roll discrepancies or lack of interpreters – they are disincentivized to return. Faith in the city’s electoral system is dismally low, and the Board of Elections ability to effectively administer elections is a persistent problem. Unaddressed, these deterrents have far-reaching consequences for New York City. Candidates and elected officials spend more time engaging with communities with high propensity voters, giving them more sway and more say in government. Patterns of persistent low voter turnout and participation gaps across socioeconomic divides impact policy decisions, distribution of services, and allocations of public dollars - \$102 billion in the current city budget.

GoVoteNYC Goals

- Increase voter participation in New York City elections and narrow participation gaps.
- Increase the capacity of New York City organizations to educate, engage, and mobilize voters.

- Strengthen coordination among New York City organizations who are building a more inclusive, representative, and engaged citizenry.
- Foster a fair and barrier-free voting experience.

What We Support

GoVoteNYC operates in a strictly nonpartisan manner and will provide funding only to organizations that are both exempt from tax under section 501(c)(3) of the Internal Revenue Code (“the Code”) and are a public charity described in sections 509(a)(1), (2), or (3) of the Code, for one or more of the following purposes:

- Increasing voter participation in NYC’s elections and narrowing participation gaps.
- Increasing the capacity of NYC’s nonprofits to educate, engage, and mobilize voters.
- Strengthening coordination among NYC organizations who are building a more inclusive, representative, and engaged citizenry.
- Fostering a “voter-friendly” ecosystem in NYC where barriers to voting are minimized and election administration is competent and fair.

The Collaborative will *not* spend funds to:

- Carry on propaganda, or otherwise to attempt, to influence legislation (within the meaning of section 4945(d)(1) or the Code),
- Influence the outcome of any specific public election, or to carry on, directly or indirectly, any voter registration drive (within the meaning of section 4945(d)(2) of the Code),
- Conduct voter registration drives (within the meaning of section 4945(f) of the Code),
- Make any grant to an individual for travel, study, or other similar purposes (within the meaning of section 4945(d)(3) of the Code), or
- Undertake any activity for any purpose other than one specified in section 170(c)(2)(B) of the Code.

The 2022 GoVoteNYC Voter Engagement Framework: Networked, Creative, Proven.

GoVoteNYC funding should:

- Catalyze a “culture of voting” that is deeply rooted in community relationships and issues; that is joyful; and that fosters informed, engaged life-long voters.
- Target low propensity voters (particularly young voters and people of color), voters who face barriers to participation (e.g., language access, disabilities, former incarceration, etc.), and specific communities and/or geographic areas with historically low turnout numbers.

- Lean into research showing that nonpartisan, relational organizing leads to new voters and expand the field of voter engagement through new research and analysis.
- Increase innovation and creativity in voter engagement, i.e., new thinking, new technology, new tactics, and/or new partners.

GoVoteNYC grantees will be expected to partake of the following coordinated activities. Funding proposals should consider the staff time to meet this expectation.

- Facilitated Networking. The New York Civic Engagement Table (NYCET) will act as an independent facilitator, convener, and coach to the 2022 GoVoteNYC grantee cohort. Four to five convenings are planned for the grant period. NYCET will lead the cohort in developing complementary and innovative strategies, goals, metrics, and ongoing evaluation of the work. NYCET data, technology, and field skills training will be available to all participants. With NYCET guidance, grantees will participate in tracking and analyzing voter data.
- Voter engagement tactics testing. Coordinated by NYCET and guided by social science/evaluation experts, each of the grantees will participate in one or more jointly designed experiments to test the efficacy of specific voter engagement tactics. Areas of interest include issue-based messaging, voter festivals, street canvassing/place-based outreach, and social media/influencers. Target populations for study could include young people and voters of color, as well as locations of low turnout, high-density immigrant areas, etc.

Submission Guidelines

Grants will be for one year and will range from \$50,000 to \$90,000. These grants will prioritize the work of coalitions, umbrella organizations, and partnerships. Funds can be used to cover staff time, materials, technology, and other costs associated with voter education, mobilizing, and GOTV activities; subgrants to partners; and staff time associated with participation in technical assistance offerings.

All applicants will follow the same process, regardless of previous support from GoVoteNYC.

The deadline is 6:00 p.m. ET, March 7, 2022. Final notifications will be made in mid-March.

Submission Directions

Applicants are invited to apply via written proposal or a conversation, but all materials must be submitted through The New York Community Trust's Grants Portal.

To apply via written proposal:

1. Assemble and merge application questions 1 – 7 (listed below) into a single PDF file no more than 25MB in size, name it in the following format: “Applicant Organization Name.pdf”.
2. Complete a GoVoteNYC Fund RFP [Proposal Cover Sheet](#).
 - a. For purposes of the staff and board ethnicity breakdown, please provide information for the entire institution, not just the department where the work may occur. These fields cannot be left blank. Applications without this information will not be considered.
3. Because you will need to submit the proposal and the Proposal Cover Sheet together, we recommend making sure your proposal (questions 1 to 7) is in a single PDF prior to starting the Proposal Cover Sheet. You will know you have been successful in submitting both when after uploading the document you see “You have successfully uploaded your PDF” on your screen.
4. Once uploaded, check the certification box at the end and click submit. You will get an email confirming the proposal has been received. This email will include – as a PDF attachment – the Proposal Cover Sheet you just completed. The email will be sent to the email address entered in the “Information about Person Completing this Form” field on the Proposal Cover Sheet.
5. Please note The Trust’s communications about the result of your submission will be by email, whether notification of a decline or grant. Please add noreply@nycommunitytrust.org to your address book so important communications do not get caught in spam filters.

As part of our standard due diligence process, members of the Fund, Trust staff, and the Fund’s consultant will gather publicly available information, including your organization’s 990 filing. If further information is required, it will be requested.

To apply via conversation:

1. Schedule an appointment for your conversation with GoVoteNYC Director Laura Hansen at info@govoteny.org. **Appointments will be available on February 18, 21 or 28 during business hours.** Conversations will be held on Zoom with one or more GoVoteNYC funders.
2. Prepare for the conversation based on Application Questions 1 to 7, below.
3. Laura will take notes during your conversation and share them with you, for you to review and make any final edits. Your organization will be responsible for

uploading the notes and [proposal cover sheet](#) by the application deadline. Refer to the Written Proposal section above for more details on how to submit through The New York Community Trust's grants portal.

Application Questions

1. How has your organization approached voter education, engagement, and get-out-the-vote (GOTV) activities in the past? What have you accomplished and learned in recent election cycles?
2. How would you like to innovate your existing approaches?

Note: Applicants should define innovation in the context of their mission and constituencies, and the grantee cohort will have opportunities to think through innovation together. Some areas of interest to GoVoteNYC are voter festivals, novel modes of communication, social media experiments, and socially engaged art.

Let us know if you are especially interested in working directly with an arts organization to co-create materials, strategies, events, and/or messaging.

3. If you are new to GOTV, why is your organization addressing this issue? How will you integrate this work into existing activities?
[Note: only answer this question if you are new to voter engagement.]
4. How would you use a grant from the GoVoteNYC Fund?
 1. What will you do?
 2. Who will it serve?
 3. Who will staff it?
 4. Will you be working with partners?
5. What are voter engagement challenges and opportunities in working with communities you serve?
6. What outcomes do you hope to achieve? How will you track and measure them? For example:
How many people will you reach or serve?
What communities or neighborhoods will you focus on?
7. Include a project budget and current organizational budget.

Selection Process & Reporting

Grant decisions will be made in mid-March.

The GoVoteNYC Fund is administered by The New York Community Trust. Award letters will come from The Trust and will include reporting requirements, based on a set of deliverables mutually agreed upon by GoVoteNYC and grantees. Grant reporting may include a conversational format for mutual feedback between grantees and GoVoteNYC on this process and the work.

GoVoteNYC Member Organizations

Altman Foundation
Robert Sterling Clark Foundation
The Ford Foundation
J. M. Kaplan Fund
Moelis Family Foundation
The New York Community Trust
New York Foundation
Charles H. Revson Foundation
Jamie Rubin
Scherman Foundation
Trinity Church Wall Street Philanthropies

This is not an open request for proposal. GoVoteNYC will only accept applications via this invitation. For questions contact Laura Hansen, Director, GoVoteNYC Fund at info@govoteny.org.