



Invitation to Apply
Release: May 8, 2023
Deadline: May 31, 2023, Noon

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 out local and state elections. The 25% that 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.

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 discouraged to return. Patterns of persistent low voter turnout and participation gaps across socioeconomic divides affect policy decisions, distribution of services, and allocations of public dollars - \$104 billion in the current city budget.

In 2021 and 2022, GoVoteNYC provided over \$2 million in grants to nonprofit partners across New York City. These grantees, trusted messengers in their communities, engaged, informed, and mobilized their neighbors and communities to get out the vote. These activities, conducted in multiple languages, reached millions of New Yorkers across all boroughs. Focused engagement led to turnout rates doubling amongst targeted populations.

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.

GoVoteNYC Grants for 2023 through 2025.

GoVoteNYC’s two-year plan through the 2025 elections will prioritize “trusted messengers,” the approach consistently proven most effective in changing voter behavior. It will augment trusted messenger grants with electoral reform advocacy, strategic research, and a continued pursuit of innovative engagement tactics. This plan aims to give grantees the time needed to ensure organizational readiness for the 2025 election cycle.

GoVoteNYC grantees will work together over two grant periods:

- a year-long capacity building period from mid-2023 to mid-2024 with grants of \$50,000.
- an 18-month implementation period from mid-2024 through 2025 with grants of \$80,000.

GoVoteNYC funding should:

- Catalyze a “culture of voting” that is deeply rooted in community relationships and issues; is joyful; and 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.
- Increase innovation and creativity in voter engagement, i.e., new thinking, new technology, new tactics, and/or new partners.

The New York Civic Engagement Table (NYCET) will act as an independent facilitator, convener, and coach to the 2023-2025 GoVoteNYC grantee cohort. GoVoteNYC grantees will be expected to partake of the following coordinated activities:

- Up to four convenings are planned for the 2023 - 2024 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.
- NYCET will provide tailored 1:1 support to grantees in the planning, implementation, and evaluation of their individual programs.

Funding proposals should consider the staff time to meet this expectation.

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 Fund 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.

Submission Guidelines

The first round of \$50,000 grants in this round will be for one year. 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.

Upon satisfactory completion of one-year capacity-building grants, in 2024 organizations will be invited to apply through a streamlined process for an 18-month implementation grant, assuming adequate available funding. Therefore, please frame your response to the questions below to include organizational goals for 2023 through 2025.

Application Questions

1. How would you use a grant from the GoVoteNYC Fund?
 - What will you do?
 - Who will it serve?
 - Who will staff it?
 - Will you be working with partners?
 - What do you expect your deliverables to be?
2. How would you propose to innovate your existing approaches, building on prior funding?
3. What specific challenges do you hope to address with the 2023-2024 capacity-building grant? And how would you use the 2024-2025 implementation grant?

Include a project budget and current organizational budget.

Submission Directions

Applicants are invited to apply via written proposal and all materials must be submitted through [The New York Community Trust's Grants Portal](#).

The deadline for completed response is noon on Wednesday May 31, 2023. Final notifications will be made in June.

To apply:

1. Assemble and merge application questions 1 – 3 (listed above) 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 3) 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.

Selection Process & Reporting

Grant decisions will be made in June.

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
Brooklyn Community Foundation
Robert Sterling Clark Foundation
The Ford Foundation
Moelis Family Foundation
The New York Community Trust
New York Foundation
New York Womens’ Foundation
Charles H. Revson Foundation
Scherman Foundation
Trinity Church Wall Street Philanthropies
Unitarian Universalist Veatch Program at Shelter Rock

This is not an open request for proposals. GoVoteNYC will only accept applications via this invitation. For questions contact Neill Coleman, Director, GoVoteNYC Fund at info@govotencyc.org.