



## Invitation to Apply

Release: April 1, 2024

Deadline: April 26, 2024, Noon

**GoVoteNYC** is a collaboration among New York City-based donors committed to strengthening democracy through civic engagement. 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 participate 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 percent of New York City registered voters regularly sit out local and state elections. The 25 percent that typically vote tend to be older, better educated, and more affluent – failing to equitably represent the electorate.

New Yorkers who do not vote report feeling uninformed about candidates, the offices on the ballot, and how those offices affect their lives. They feel their votes do not count. And when they do go to vote and experience barriers at the polls – e.g., voter roll discrepancies or a lack of interpreters – they are less likely to return. Patterns of persistent low voter turnout disadvantage low-income communities, affecting policy decisions, distribution of services, and allocations of public dollars.

Since 2021, GoVoteNYC has provided nearly \$3 million in grants to nonprofits across New York City. These grantees – trusted messengers in their communities – engaged, informed, and mobilized their neighbors and communities to get out the vote. Their efforts, conducted in multiple languages, reached millions of New Yorkers across all boroughs. Nonprofits' focused, nonpartisan voter engagement helped double turnout rates among targeted communities.

### 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 prioritizes “trusted messengers,” the approach consistently proven most effective in changing voter behavior. It augments trusted messenger grants with electoral reform advocacy, strategic research, and a continued pursuit of innovative engagement tactics.

GoVoteNYC grantees have worked together to build capacity since mid-2023. Now, GoVoteNYC will award 18-month grants of \$100,000 to allow nonprofits to follow their plans to encourage more voters to participate in 2025 local and state elections.

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, previous incarceration, etc.), and specific communities and/or geographic areas with historically low turnout.
- Incorporate research showing that nonpartisan, relational organizing leads to new voters.
- Increase innovation and creativity in voter engagement, i.e., new technology, new tactics, and/or new partners.

The New York Civic Engagement Table (NYCET) is an independent facilitator, convener, and coach to the 2023-2025 GoVoteNYC grantee cohort. GoVoteNYC grantees participate in the following activities coordinated by NYCET:

- development of complementary and innovative strategies, goals, metrics, and ongoing evaluation.
- NYCET data, technology, and field skills training.
- tracking and analyzing voter data.
- tailored 1:1 support in the planning, implementation, and evaluation of grantees’ individual programs.

Funding proposals should account for the staff time needed to work with NYCET and colleague nonprofits.

### **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” election system 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 second round of \$100,000 grants will be for 18 months. Only non-profits that received a grant in 2023 are eligible to apply. 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.

## Submission Directions

Since grantees submitted full proposals in 2023, no proposal is required. Applicants are invited to apply by completing the cover sheet and uploading a budget through [The New York Community Trust's Grants Portal](#). To be considered for a renewal, grantees must also complete an oral or written report and provide an expenditure report for their initial grant.

**The deadline for completed response is noon on Friday, April 26, 2024. Grant notifications will be made in June.**

To apply:

1. 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.
2. You will know you have been successful in submitting the budget when after uploading the document you see “You have successfully uploaded your PDF” on your screen.
3. 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.
4. 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](mailto: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. We may request additional information.

## 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 Org

Charles H. Revson Foundation

The Ford Foundation

The New York Community Trust

New York Foundation

New York Women's Foundation

The Rockefeller 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](mailto:info@govotencyc.org).