



Civic Engagement Initiative Fund: 2016 Technical Assistance & Mini- Grant Request for Proposals

Applications must be received electronically to minigrant@massvote.org or via mail (NOT postmarked) **by 5:00pm on Friday, July 1, 2016.

OUR MISSION:

MassVOTE works to promote a culture of active political participation by providing civic organizations the tools they need to organize, register, and educate voters, with an emphasis on historically disenfranchised communities. We build civic coalitions to advocate for democracy reforms that make the electoral process more accountable and accessible to all people. To learn more visit www.massvote.org

THE CIVIC ENGAGEMENT INITIATIVE:

The Civic Engagement Initiative (CEI) was established in 2002 as a non-partisan effort to increase voter participation in Boston's and Chelsea's most disadvantaged communities. Since then it has grown its funding to support a range of community based organizations across Massachusetts that are building or creating new civic engagement efforts to increase voter registration, education and participation among low income, youth, communities of color and immigrant voters.

CIVIC ENGAGEMENT INITIATIVE (CEI) GRANTS:

MassVOTE believes that civic engagement is an important vehicle for creating social change in our communities and for holding public institutions and officials accountable to our priorities. CEI Technical Assistance Grants offer support for organizations that are using the power of the ballot and voter participation as an organizing tool for social change. We offer them to community based organizations that believe that if they engage those who are directly impacted in the civic arena they will be able to advance their organization's issues, such as affordable housing, quality public education, job creation and public services. As part of the grant, MassVOTE provides technical assistance to support non-profit community based organizations that work to promote a culture of active political participation. The technical assistance we offer includes one-to-one coaching and support, skills training and voter database engagement tools to organize, register, and educate voters so that organizations can maximize their capacity and play a significant role in boosting voter participation in their communities.

MassVOTE understands that in order to successfully increase voter participation, efforts to engage voters must start early in the election cycle and be sustained over time, especially in communities that have been historically disengaged and excluded. Every year voters across Massachusetts come out to participate in local, statewide and national elections. Receiving a technical assistance grant offers an opportunity for organizations to use elections as vehicles to build their capacity to connect issue campaigns with the importance of voting, develop leaders and carry out non-partisan organizing efforts that strengthen our communities.

GRANT CATEGORIES:

For the purposes of this RFP, MassVOTE is offering grants in two categories for the time period of January-June 2016.

- 1) **Mini-grants** in amounts of \$500 -1,000 to support specific time-limited civic engagement projects, such as organizing a non-partisan community forum, producing and distributing voter education guides or conducting short-term voter engagement efforts or mobilization events.
- 2) **Technical Assistance Grants** in amounts of \$2,500-5,000 intended to help recipient organizations build power in their communities by organizing their members to participate in the democratic process.

Here are some examples of how other groups have used the grant:

- ✓ Carrying out short-term 3-6 months civic engagement projects.
- ✓ Conducting door-to-door voter education and mobilization.
- ✓ Conducting voter registration drives.
- ✓ Creating and distributing candidate guides.
- ✓ Holding non-partisan meet-the-candidates forums.
- ✓ Developing field plans for direct, one-on-one voter contact and follow-up.
- ✓ Carrying out campaigns to increase voter participation from the previous election cycle (by at least 5%.)
- ✓ Other creative activities that promote civic engagement and the ability to track voter participation.

Note: In addition to the categories above, MassVOTE provides larger amounts of funding to a number of organizations that have been building their capacity for five to ten years, many of whom started the process by organizing some of the efforts and events mentioned above. We hope to continue to grow our own capacity so that we can provide increased levels of funding to more organizations as they build and expand their civic engagement programs over time.

APPLICATION PROCESS:

Whether applying for the mini-grant or the technical assistance grant, projects should demonstrate how the organization is using civic engagement as a tool for change to promote and advance the movement for social, racial and economic justice.

Guidelines for Technical Assistance Grants 2016:

If your organization is committed to learning to build its civic engagement program and further developing its capacity to use voter engagement as a tool for community change, then please review the following guidelines below.

- Have a strong commitment to building, creating or sustaining its non-partisan civic engagement work.
- Combine non-partisan voter education and mobilization with education and discussion about important public policy solutions, for example, the need for quality jobs, good schools, safe streets, etc.
- Be committed to social, racial and economic justice, and to connecting those issues to increase voter participation and hold public institutions accountable to those who are directly affected.
- Be ready and willing to build the organization's capacity to use the Voter Activation Network (VAN) voter tracking system database, which is free of cost to participating organizations.
- Send at least one organizational staff or leader and one member/volunteer [minimum two people] to participate in the mandated VAN and Grantee Learning and Development Convening.
- Acknowledge the sponsorship of the MassVOTE Civic Engagement Fund on materials paid for by the mini-grant.

Mandatory Gathering & Trainings

- **Tuesday, July 12 at 10-2pm:** Grant Orientations: (Location TBD in Boston area)
- **Wednesday, July 27 at 6-8pm:** VAN Intro. Training: (Location TBD in Boston area)
- **Wednesday, August 31st:** Deadline to complete technical assessment meetings with MassVOTE Democracy for Non Profit Coordinator/Tech Assistant Consultant to assess, plan, and evaluate the project and provide direct training and support.
- **Leadership Development & Voter Engagement Trainings Fall Cycle:** Get Out the Vote Election Day planning (date and time to be determined Sept/Oct)
- **Wednesday, November 30th:** Participate in an evaluation and celebratory gathering at the end of the grant cycle.
- **Friday, December 16th:** Submit a final report at the end of the grant cycle.

****Note:** There is a high level of engagement required for the technical assistance grants so we ask that you view receiving one as a contribution of a small amount of funding with a large amount of potential learning and skills building, rather than as a typical general operational or program grant.

Guidelines for Mini-Grants Grants 2016:

- **Tuesday, July 12 at 10-2pm:** Grant Orientations: (Location TBD in Boston area)
- **Wednesday, November 30th:** Participate in an evaluation and celebratory gathering at the end of the grant cycle.
- Acknowledge the sponsorship of the MassVOTE Civic Engagement Fund on materials paid for by the mini-grant.

Each application must include:

- a cover page using the attached template
- a copy of evidence from the Internal Revenue Service of the 501c3 tax status of the applicant, or, if the applicant does not yet have 501c3 tax status, the appropriate documents from the applicant's fiscal sponsor
- a narrative section of no more than three pages, answering the following questions:

Narrative of *no more than 3 pages*:

1. Brief introduction including organizational mission statement and why your organization is qualified for the proposed grant.
2. Describe your project: What are your goals? How do they connect with the grant guidelines? How will your project build power that advances racial justice and the agency of those who are directly impacted to participate in the civic arena? What are the specific activities you will carry out? Please include a timeline.
3. Describe how this grant will support building your civic engagement program and issue campaigns. If possible, please describe how you will be using this project to build for the upcoming 2016 elections.
4. Please provide your organizational budget and a project budget. Indicate how this funding will be used, e.g. purchase equipment, staff volunteer stipend, etc.

Important RFP Dates for all Fall 2016 Funding Cycle

- **Request for Proposal Deadline:** Friday July 1, 2016 by 5pm via email or mail [must be received on July 1st, not postmark]
- **Tuesday, July 12 at 10-2pm:** Grant Orientations: (Location TBD in Boston area)
- **Grantee Notification & Acceptance Letter:** Friday, July 8th, 2016
- **Grant Cycle Evaluation & Celebratory Gathering:** Wednesday, November 30th
- **Final Report Deadline:** Friday, December 16th by 5pm. via email minigrants@massvote.org or mail to MassVOTE office.

Mandatory Trainings for Technical Assistance Grantees:

- **Voter Activation Network (VAN) Trainings:**
 - a) Legal Compliance [Webinar]
 - b) Intro. to VAN: **Wednesday, July 27 at 6-8pm:**

- **Leadership Development & Voter Engagement Trainings Fall Cycle:** Get Out the Vote Election Day planning (date and time to be determined Sept/Oct)

Optional Training & Support for all Grantees

- **Voter Activation Network (VAN):** Voter Registration & Data Entry webinars. An in person training will be determined by grantee cycle collective need and will be determined by mid-Feb. for a March training date.
- **Other:** Based on initial and ongoing assessments by the MassVOTE CEI Technical Assistance Coordinator and/or on request, additional support, training and coaching will be offered as needed.

MassVote 2016 CEI Grant Application Cover Page

Applications must be received (*NOT postmarked*) by 5:00pm on July 1, 2016.

Name of Organization:

Address:

Website:

President/Exec. Dir.:

Contact/Lead Organizer (if different):

Phone #:

Email:

501(c)(3)?
your IRS 501(c)(3) letter.)

If yes, Federal Tax ID # (FEIN):

(Please also attach

If not a 501(c)(3), name of fiscal sponsor (organization name and address):

Total Organizational Budget:

Number of Organizational Volunteers/Members:

Total # of staff working on project:

Total # of stipend volunteers working on project:

Population and Geographic Area Served:

Applying for: Mini Project Grant \$500 - \$1,000 Tech Assistance Grant \$2,500 - \$5,000

Requested Amount:

Board Authorization: I, the undersigned, confirm that our Board of Directors is fully apprised of the nonpartisan nature of the MassVOTE Civic Engagement Fund for which we are applying for funds. On behalf of the Board of Directors, I pledge to ensure that all activities conducted under the auspices of the MassVOTE Civic Engagement Fund will adhere to all laws and regulation pertaining to organizations qualified as tax exempt under section 501c3 of the Internal Revenue Code parameters for the duration of the project. Moreover, I further pledge that under no circumstances will parties engaged in implementing the proposed activities show a preference for or against any candidate or political party.

Signature of Authorized Board Official

Date:

Name of Authorizing Individual

Title: