

Democracy Fund Docket II Blurbs

Democracy Fund Blurbs for Grant Recommendations Under Consideration Docket II (distributed May 17, 2012)

Note: 16 grant recommendations are under consideration, totaling \$3.1 million. Recommendations are spotlighted within their relevant Democracy Fund funding strategy and include several organizations that work on fiscal policy advocacy, including Faith in Public Life and the National Priorities Project, a co-funding recommendation with the Transparency Fund, and State Fiscal Analysis Initiative groups in Maryland and North Carolina. We include a recommendation for a new progressive faith online organizing network and several idea generation and engagement recommendations that inspire the participation of Asian American, Black, Latino, working class white, and youth constituencies in criminal justice reform, economic equity, educational access, and immigrants' rights advocacy. As per Democracy Fund custom, a demographic summary of all recommended grantees is included at the end of this document.

Idea Generation

Democracy North Carolina

\$100,000/ 1 year; renewal, general support

To support Durham-based Democracy NC, a nonpartisan statewide organization that uses research, organizing, and advocacy to expand democratic participation, reduce the influence of money in politics, and achieve representational government. Democracy NC has six local coalitions across North Carolina and conducts nationally renowned, path-breaking advocacy for publicly financed local, statewide, and judicial elections and voting rights and reforms, including ex-felon re-enfranchisement and voter pre-registration for teenagers. The organization is led by Bob Hall, a MacArthur "genius" honoree. This recommendation is part of the Democracy Fund's North Carolina "building state-based open society" portfolio. As such, this could be a final grant, depending on USP's city/state selection process.

Faith in Public Life

Up to \$250,000/ 1 year; renewal, project support

To support expanded federal budget advocacy work by Faith in Public Life, a Washington, DC-based strategy center advancing faith in the public square as a positive and unifying force for justice, compassion, and the common good. In order to maximize the faith community's unique ability to shape public debates, Faith in Public Life identifies and creates moments of opportunity, builds and supports broad coalitions, and designs and implements innovative campaigns, bold initiatives and capacity-building tools. Since its launch in 2006, Faith in Public Life has worked to build the faith community's media presence and capacity, provide strategic assistance to faith-based coalitions, broker new partnerships, develop online communities, sponsor opinion research, and amplify the voices of emerging religious leaders.

Leadership Conference Education Fund (fka Leadership Conference on Civil Rights Education Fund)

\$750,000/ 1 year; renewal, general support; U.S. Programs Anchor Grant

To support the Leadership Conference Education Fund, a Washington, DC based organization that was established in 1969 to provide public education and research for the national civil rights community. An USP anchor grantee, the Leadership Conference Education Fund promotes policies that strengthen civil rights advocacy by serving as the 501(c)(3) partner of the Leadership Conference on Civil and Human Rights, a coalition of more than 200 civil and human rights organizations that was founded by A. Philip Randolph in 1950. Through its initiatives on voting rights enforcement, fair and impartial federal courts, and affirmative action protection, the Education Fund builds an informed public to support the nation's growing diversity and pressing civil and human rights issues.

Mexican American Legal Defense and Education Fund

\$100,000/ 1 year; new, project grant

To support the Mexican American Legal Defense and Educational Fund (MALDEF), a leading Latino legal civil rights organization for more than forty years. MALDEF's mission is to advance fair treatment of – and opportunities for – Latinos through advocacy, communications, education, and litigation. Democracy Fund support is for MALDEF's Texas specific work and complements general support from the Equality and Opportunity Fund. Via its San Antonio office, led by Nina Perales, a nationally regarded civil rights litigator and advocate, MALDEF's conducts effective non-partisan redistricting work in Texas, where there remain a number of places where the Latino community can expand representation in city governance, the state legislature, and the state Board of Education. This also includes support for changing outdated at-large elections for city council in Austin, in order to move to a single-member district system that would bring a wider range of perspectives to local government. This recommendation is part of the Democracy Fund's Texas "building state-based open society" portfolio. As such, this could be a final grant, depending on USP's city/state selection process.

National Priorities Project

\$150,000/ 1 year; renewal, general support, co-fund with the Transparency Fund

To support the National Priorities Project, a Northampton, Massachusetts based think tank that monitors and translates the federal budget to help better inform the public around the federal budgeting process; how and where tax dollars are being spent; and how and when they can influence budget creation. The National Priorities Project serves as a primary intermediary for hundreds of state and locally based organizations nationwide who seek to better understand the federal budget, identify ways to become active in advocacy to shape the budget, and amplify calls for more just budgeting priorities.

Southern Coalition for Social Justice

\$100,000/ 1 year; renewal, general support

To support the Southern Coalition for Social Justice, a Durham, North Carolina based organization that was founded in 2007 to provide legal, social science, organizing, and communications support to efforts to dismantle structural racism throughout the south. The Southern Coalition for Social Justice works closely with grassroots social justice groups in North Carolina and across the south to support immigrant justice and confront 287g policing policies,

protect minority voting rights, examine “heirs property” rights of long-time landowners facing developers, and advance criminal justice reform, including “ban the box” efforts. This recommendation is part of the Democracy Fund’s North Carolina “building state-based open society” portfolio. As such, this could be a final grant, depending on USP’s city/state selection process.

State Fiscal Analysis Initiative

Project support for two state-based organizations, total recommendation of \$300,000/ 2 years

To support the State Fiscal Analysis Initiative, based at the Center on Budget and Policy Priorities, a national network of state-based organizations that provide high level state-based research and policy support on budget, tax, and fiscal issues to advance the interests of low- and moderate-income people. The work of the SFAI groups is particularly significant at a time when so many local, state, and federal budgets are confronting dramatic shortfalls and essential services have been (or may soon be) cut. SFAI organizations receive independent support from a collaborative of foundations, including Annie E. Casey, Ford, Kellogg, Mott, and Stoneman foundations.

Maryland Budget and Tax Policy Institute	\$150,000/ 2 years; new
North Carolina Justice Center	\$150,000/ 2 years; new

United for a Fair Economy, Tax Fairness Organizing Collaborative

\$150,000/ 1 year; renewal, project support

To support Boston-based United for a Fair Economy’s Tax Fairness Organizing Collaborative, a national network, convened in 2004, to educate and organize for fair and adequate taxation and socially-just budget priorities at the state and federal levels. The collaborative’s 28 member groups in 24 states provide a nationwide tax fairness organizing infrastructure to complement the State Fiscal Analysis Initiative and the Economic Policy Institute-based Economic Analysis and Research Network.

Engaging Key Constituencies in Open Society Advocacy

Beloved Community Center

\$75,000/ 1 year; renewal, general support)

To support the Greensboro, North Carolina based Beloved Community Center, an organization that models a spirit of community that is based upon Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr.’s vision of a “beloved community.” The Beloved Community Center’s base, within Greensboro’s African-American, Latina/o, and youth communities, is actively engaged in police accountability, immigrant justice, and educational equity campaigns. The Center provides important support to workplace organizing, in the state with the lowest percentage of unionized workers, and has led an internationally noted truth and reconciliation process follow murders in Greensboro that were committed by white supremacists. This recommendation is part of the Democracy Fund’s North Carolina “building state-based open society” portfolio. As such, this could be a final grant, depending on USP’s city/state selection process.

Citizen Engagement Lab

\$300,000/ 2 years; renewal, project grant

To support the Citizen Engagement Laboratory (CEL), an Oakland-based innovative online advocacy hub for projects such as Color of Change, Presente, and Get Equal. Established in 2006, the Citizen Engagement Laboratory developing innovative online vehicles, using digital media and technology to enhance civic engagement, at scale, and amplify the voices of underserved groups in order to make government more responsive and to bring about positive social change.

Faithful America

\$150,000/ 2 years; new, project grant

To support Faithful America, a new initiative borne out of Faith in Public Life. Faithful America is an online community of progressive people of faith that seeks to hold public figures accountable for exploiting Christianity and scapegoating marginalized communities. With over 110,000 online members just in its first few months of existence, Faithful America has already built one of the largest grassroots advocacy lists in the progressive faith community. Faithful America seeks to mobilize progressive Christians using cutting-edge online organizing techniques and seeks to support broader progressive advocacy efforts by amplifying a moral narrative for social and political change.

Funders Collaborative for Youth Organizing (fiscal sponsor: Bend the Arc, fka Jewish Funds for Justice)

\$100,000/ 1 year; renewal, tie-off

To support the Funders' Collaborative on Youth Organizing, a Brooklyn-based national intermediary that seeks to increase funding for grassroots youth organizing organizations across the U.S. The Funders Collaborative for Youth Organizing, a partnership of donors and youth advocates, develops strategies to promote investment in the leadership of low-income youth of color in social justice organizing and has funding initiatives on educational opportunity, immigrant youth leadership, and food justice. OSF has long supported the collaborative, including prior board representation from Erlin Ibreck and now from Bill Vandenberg. Due to shifting USP priorities, this is a tie-off recommendation.

Highlander Research and Education Center / Zilphia Horton Community Project

\$200,000/ 1 year; renewal, project grant

To support the Highlander Research and Education Center's Zilphia Horton Community Project, based in New Market, Tennessee, to place cultural organizers – individuals with both artistic and community organizing skills – into criminal justice reform and immigrants' rights advocacy campaigns throughout the south. The Zilphia Horton Community Project started as a pilot project in 2010, with cultural organizers placed at Kentuckians for the Commonwealth, for a felon re-enfranchisement campaign, and Tennessee Immigrant and Refugee Rights Coalition, for a youth-led campaign for immigrant youth higher education access. The Highlander Center, located in the Appalachian hills of New Market, Tennessee, has served as a leading center for the civil and human rights movement for more than 75 years.

North Carolina Latino Coalition

\$75,000/ 1 year; renewal, general support

To support the Durham-based North Carolina Latino Coalition, a statewide organization dedicated to building power among grassroots Latina/o community-based organizations. For the

past two decades, North Carolina has had one of the nation’s fastest rates of Latino community growth and the coalition builds the capacity of grassroots organizations, increases their access to issue information, and builds educational and economic opportunity advocacy campaigns. This recommendation is part of the Democracy Fund’s North Carolina “building state-based open society” portfolio. As such, this could be a final grant, depending on USP’s city/state selection process.

USAction Education Fund

\$300,000/ 1 year; renewal, general support

To support the USAction Education Fund, a Washington D.C. based national network of 25 independent, state-based, grassroots, and multi-issue organizations that educate, engage, and empower people to participate in the democratic process. USAction devotes its primary attention to empowering low- and moderate-income communities through issue advocacy campaigns for tax and budget fairness, health access, preservation of Social Security, expansion of Medicaid and Medicare, and creating jobs.

Democracy Fund Docket II Recommended Grants and Grantees Grant Recommendation Analysis, Demography, and Equity

Total number of grants recommended:	16
Total funding recommended:	\$3.1 million
Total general support:	7
Number of multi-year grants recommended:	5
Number of co-funded grant recommendations:	2, including 1 anchor grantee
Number of tie-off recommendations:	5 potentially, state-based
Number of newly recommended grantees:	1
Number of recommended grantees with people of color as Exec. Director*:	7 (44%)
Number of grant dollars recommended for people of color led organizations:	\$1,625,000 (52% of total)
Number of recommended grantees with women as Exec. Director*:	7 (44% of total)
Number of grant dollars recommended for women led organizations:	\$1,100,000 (35% of total)
Number of recommended grantees with openly LGBTQ person as Exec. Director*:	1 (6% of total)
Number of grant dollars recommended for LGBTQ led organizations:	\$200,000 (6% of total)
Number of recommended grantees with immigrant or first generation American as Exec. Director*:	3 (19%)
Number of grant dollars recommended for immigrant led organizations:	\$475,000 (15%)

Geographic Diversity

The following is where the 16 recommended grantees have their base of operations. Many of the recommended organizations have local and state affiliates, partners, or chapters that enable them to reach far beyond the cities where their offices are located.

North Carolina:	5 (3 in Durham, Greensboro, Raleigh)
Washington, DC:	4
California:	2 (Los Angeles, albeit for Texas-specific legal advocacy, Oakland)
Massachusetts:	2 (Boston, Northampton)
New York:	1 (New York City)
Maryland:	1 (Baltimore)
Tennessee:	1

* The background or identity of an executive director is only one measure, among many, for identifying an organization's authentic commitment to diversity. Via due diligence in our grant recommendation process, the Democracy Fund uses this and other measures of assessment to monitor our performance from docket to docket. Through this, we seek to improve our track record of funding high impact organizations that are rooted in, led by, and sensitive to the interests of communities that have faced and often continue to face the greatest challenges to achieving a more open society.

Circulated by the Democracy Fund on May 17, 2012. For further information on the recommended grantees, please contact program director, Bill Vandenberg; program officers, Patricia Jerido or Nora Ranney; or program associates, Nashay Jones and Hedly Nam.