

## Democracy Fund Docket III Blurbs

### **U.S. Programs Democracy Fund Blurbs for Grant Recommendations Under Consideration Docket III (distributed July 31, 2012)**

Note: Twenty-four (24) grant recommendations are under consideration, totaling \$4.175 million. Recommendations are spotlighted within their relevant Democracy Fund funding strategy – idea generation, voter participation, or community engagement – and 15 are for tie-off grants, since this is the Democracy Fund’s final full docket. Five of the recommendations are for grants of \$50,000 or less. Recommendations under consideration include several organizations that advance economic equity, including leadership on fiscal policy, bank accountability, and housing justice issues; three groups that amplify progressive faith or small business voices in open society advocacy; six groups that catalyze youth engagement in open society priorities; and an “anchor grantee,” the Center on Budget and Policy Priorities. The Center on Budget’s recommendation includes co-funding from the Equality and Opportunity Fund, for project specific work on immigration and fiscal policy, and a site visit will occur on September 7<sup>th</sup>.

As per Democracy Fund custom, a demographic summary of all recommendations under consideration is included at the end of this document. We welcome your comments, questions, and co-funding inquiries and thank you for your partnership over the Democracy Fund’s (fka the Democracy and Power Fund) four year existence.

#### **Anchor Grantee – 1 grant under consideration for \$750,000**

##### **Center for Budget and Policy Priorities**

*\$750,000/1 year; renewal, general support*

To support the Center for Budget and Policy Priorities, a Washington, DC-based think-tank and one of the nation’s preeminent policy organizations. Founded in 1981 and led by OSF thought partner Bob Greenstein, the Center on Budget analyzes federal and state budget priorities, with a particular emphasis on the impact of various budget choices and tax policies on low-income Americans. At the state level, the Center runs the State Fiscal Analysis Initiative, a well-regarded network of 41 state-based fiscal policy think tanks that protect the social safety net and advance policies to confront poverty. Globally, the Center’s International Budget Partnership helps civil society organizations in newer democracies, such as the former Soviet republics. The Center is frequently rated among Washington’s most effective policy research and advocacy organizations and Greenstein recently served on the Economic Equity Working Group.

#### **Idea Generation – seven grants under consideration for \$1,025,000**

##### **Grassroots Policy Project**

*\$50,000/1 year renewal; general support, tie-off*

To support the Grassroots Policy Project, based in Cambridge, MA, an educational and research organization working in partnership with grassroots community groups, activist networks, statewide coalitions, and other training organizations to encourage strategic approaches to issues

of social and economic justice. GPP provides grassroots organizations with the tools, training, and technical assistance to further their long-term social change goals.

**Main Street Alliance (fiscal sponsor: Northwest Federation of Community Organizations)**

*\$500,000 /2 years, renewal; project support*

To support the Seattle-based Main Street Alliance, a national network of small business coalitions that leverages small business voices to advance policies that promote racial, economic, and social equity. With the Democracy Fund's early support and continued donor outreach, the Alliance has grown quickly to represent more than 10,000 businesses in 15 states and has proven to be a strong counterweight to the national business lobbies that claim to represent small businesses but that take consistently regressive positions on the role of government, fair taxation, and social justice. Following a successful role in the health care debate, MSA is turning its attention to workplace quality, fiscal policy, money in politics, and lending reform campaigns.

*Note: MSA is also currently receiving a project grant from the Transparency Fund and may be considered for project funding by the Equality and Opportunity Fund.*

**School for Creative Activism**

*\$75,000/1 year; renewal, general support, tie-off*

To support the School for Creative Activism, a New York City-based organization, for its work to design and implement a cultural organizing curriculum to enhance the advocacy impact of interested USP grantees. Coming off of three highly successful and well-reviewed sessions with racial and economic justice advocates in North Carolina, San Antonio, TX and New York City, SCA will continue its work to build creative models of organizing which challenge organizers to engage constituencies differently and develop campaigns that reach a broader audience. This grant advances the Democracy Fund's support of innovative ideas with an emphasis on expanding the field's application of broad-based engagement strategies.

**Southern Organizing Working Group**

*\$50,000/1 year; renewal, project support, tie-off*

To support the Southern Organizing Working Group, a network of funders who seek to strengthen the infrastructure for social justice work in the U.S. South. The group's goals include fostering joint learning about social justice work in the South among local, regional and national funders; leveraging new resources for work in the South; and promoting strategic coordination of existing efforts in the region. OSF support will help advance the promotion, discussion, and dissemination of a sizable research effort, "As the South Goes," which has mapped the social justice philanthropic landscape in the region, uncovering potential new sources of support.

**State Fiscal Analysis Initiative**

*Project support for two state-based organizations, total recommendation of \$250,000/ 2 years*

To support the State Fiscal Analysis Initiative (SFAI), based at the Center on Budget and Policy Priorities. SFAI is a national network of 41 state-based organizations that advance the interests of low- and moderate-income people through the provision of high quality and highly credible state-based research and policy support on budget, tax, and fiscal issues. The work of the SFAI network is particularly significant at a time when many states are confronting prolonged budget and revenue shortfalls and essential services have been – or may soon be – cut. SFAI organizations receive independent support from a well-coordinated funders' collaborative that

includes Annie E. Casey, Ford, Kellogg, Mott, Northwest Areas, and Stoneman foundations. OSF supports SFAI groups in Louisiana, Maryland, Mississippi, North Carolina, and Texas.

Louisiana Budget Project	\$150,000/2 years; renewal
Mississippi Economic Policy Center	\$100,000/2 years; renewal

### **United States Student Association Foundation**

*\$100,000/1 year; project support*

To support the United States Student Association Foundation, a current general support grantee, in launching a campaign to address the student debt crisis, which surpassed \$1 trillion in 2012 and grows at the rate of \$2,853 per second. The campaign will press for better federal regulation of loans as well as corporate lender accountability in order to bring relief to students and families caught in cycles of poverty due to student debt and unemployment. The campaign will mobilize student activists from USSAF's national network of public and private universities, community colleges, historically Black colleges and universities, and other minority-serving institutions.

### **Voter Participation – four grants under consideration for \$400,000**

#### **Ballot Initiative Strategy Center Foundation**

*\$100,000/1 year; project support*

To support the Ballot Initiative Strategy Center Foundation (BISC), a Washington, DC-based research and strategy center dedicated to supporting the work of progressive advocates in fighting negative ballot initiatives and referenda or advancing proactive ballot efforts. Founded in 1999, BISC has grown from a small, niche research operation studying the use of ballot measures by the right wing to a nationally recognized and relied upon clearinghouse on ballot measures. This project grant will allow BISC to conduct collaborative research in states on how the initiative and referendum process is used and to identify issues that have the potential to stem the tide of 40 years of conservative dominance on the ballot.

#### **Blueprint North Carolina**

Democracy Fund State-Based Strategy Grantee

*\$75,000 /1 year renewal; general support, tie-off*

To support Blueprint North Carolina, a Raleigh, NC based state civic engagement convening “table” with over 50 nonprofits dedicated to improving non-partisan voter participation and advocacy in the state. Founded in 2005 as the North Carolina partner of State Voices, a Democracy Fund grantee, Blueprint provides communications, research, coordination, high quality voter and demographic data, technical assistance, and outreach support to elevate efforts to expand access to health care, raise wages, secure affordable housing, advance a cleaner environment, and achieve freedom from discrimination. Blueprint builds the capacity of social justice non-profits so that they can engage in voter participation at a scale that is significant and more effectively communicate progressive ideas and values.

#### **League of Young Voters Education Fund - Texas**

Democracy Fund State-Based Strategy Grantee

*\$75,000/1 year; renewal, project support, tie-off*

To support the Houston-based Texas state affiliate of the League of Young Voters Education Fund for its work to empower young people to participate in the democratic process and create progressive change on the local, state, and national levels through outreach, trainings, leadership development, arts-based organizing, alliance building, and non-partisan voter engagement. The League has a unique niche in focusing its outreach and leadership development on young people of color who are not based on college campuses. The Texas League serves young people 18-35 years of age, particularly African-Americans and Latinos from Houston and surrounding areas.

### **Texas Civic Engagement Table**

Democracy Fund State-Based Strategy Grantee

*\$150,000/1 year renewal; general support, tie-off*

To support the Austin-based Texas Civic Engagement Table, a state civic engagement convening “table” with over 40 nonprofits dedicated to improving non-partisan voter participation and advocacy in the state. Founded in 2010 with OSF funding, TCET serves as the Texas partner of State Voices, a Democracy Fund grantee. TCET provides communications, research, coordination, high quality voter and demographic data, technical assistance, and outreach support in order to enhance open society advocacy and impact.

### **Engaging Key Constituencies in Open Society Advocacy – 12 grants under consideration for \$2 million**

#### **Center for Participatory Change**

Democracy Fund State-Based Strategy Grantee

*\$75,000/1 year; renewal, general support, tie-off*

To support the Center for Participatory Change, an Asheville, NC based non-profit focused on supporting community-led, grassroots social justice work in western North Carolina. CPC integrates research, leadership development, and regional networking to build the capacity of small grassroots organizations, serving roughly 40 local groups annually with hands on and high quality technical support. CPC conducts deeply rooted multi-cultural work in a region with a complex racial history – fostering collaboration among African American, Latina/o, Native American (primarily Cherokee), and rural Appalachian white people. These alliances lead to more effective advocacy on local and state level issues, including environmental justice, affordable housing, immigrant’s rights, and public investment.

#### **Funders Collaborative for Youth Organizing (fiscal sponsor: Bend The Arc)**

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

To support the Funders’ Collaborative on Youth Organizing, a Brooklyn-based national intermediary that seeks to increase funding for youth organizing organizations across the U.S. and develop strategies to promote to other funders the importance of investment in the leadership of low-income youth of color in social justice organizing. OSF has long supported FCYO, including board representation from Erlin Ibreck (Bill Vandenberg now serves as our representative), and this recommendation would continue OSI’s support for FCYO’s youth leadership pipeline project and a series of regional funder convenings to recruit new donors.

#### **Grassroots Institute for Fundraising Training**

*\$125,000/1 year; renewal, general support, tie-off*

To support the Oakland-based Grassroots Institute for Fundraising Training, a national training and capacity building organization that promotes the connection between fundraising, social justice, and social justice movement building, particularly for people of color communities and groups. GIFT assists organizations in building community-rooted grassroots fundraising capacity, administers a one of a kind people of color development internship, and conducts research on people of color fundraising trends. Since 2010, GIFT has played a key supporting role in a Democracy Fund initiated funder collaborative to invest in experiments to grow the pool of resources – and reduce reliance on foundation funding – for community-based organizations.

### **Institute for Civic Engagement and Social Change**

Democracy Fund State-Based Strategy Grantee

*\$75,000/1 year; renewal, project support, tie-off*

To support the Institute for Civic Engagement and Social Change, a Durham, North Carolina-based organization housed within North Carolina Central University, an Historically Black College or University (HBCU). This renewal support will further advance the collaboration among North Carolina's eleven HBCUs through the newly formed Student Empowerment Network, an effort to increase the civic capacity of undergraduate students at North Carolina's HBCUs and increase collaboration across campuses. In order to build a greater force for social change, the project seeks to become a repository of civic engagement best practices, a clearinghouse for data and information, a producer of student-centered engagement materials, and a real and virtual "commons" where people can gather.

### **Interfaith Youth Core**

*\$50,000/1 year, new, general support*

To support the Chicago-based Interfaith Youth Core, a national organization focused on equipping student leaders to engage their campuses and communities to advance interfaith cooperation through training and leadership development. Interfaith Youth Core facilitates interfaith dialogue to create young leaders who are able to work with and across a range of religious communities. Its campus chapters are networked nationally and work locally to combat religious bigotry, anti-Muslim bigotry in particular, and to highlight the promise of interfaith cooperation. The organization works through a wide range of media platforms to elevate social and political commentary that promotes interfaith cooperation and shift national discourse on religion from one of exclusion to inclusion.

### **Latin American Coalition**

Democracy Fund State-Based Strategy Grantee

*\$75,000/1 year; renewal, general support, tie-off*

To support the Charlotte-based Latin American Coalition, North Carolina's largest Latino community-based organization and an important anchor of the state's immigrant rights movement. The Latin American Coalition is a key civic engagement organization, working on a continuum of naturalization to voter participation, and works for the promotion and equal participation of all people in the civic, economic and cultural life in North Carolina. The organization includes direct services, statewide civic engagement initiatives, and cultural programs to build a broad base of support for advocacy.

### **La Union del Pueblo Entero**

#### Democracy Fund State-Based Strategy Grantee

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

To support La Union del Pueblo Entero (LUPE), a San Juan-based non-profit membership organization that was established by César Chávez. LUPE's mission is to engage farmworkers, immigrants, and their families in transforming the communities in which they live and it anchors the Rio Grande Valley Equal Voice Network, a Marguerite Casey Foundation-supported alliance that represents over 10,000 families in the region. By virtue of its long and trusted history in the Valley, home to three of the U.S.'s five poorest counties, LUPE is well-positioned to lead civic engagement efforts in the Valley by convening a regional collaborative table that will offer trainings, mini-grants, access to voter files and software, and voter outreach support.

#### **National People's Action**

*\$600,000/18 months; renewal, general support*

To support National People's Action, a 37 year old, Chicago-based national resource center that supports, strengthens, and coordinates grassroots community organizations working for social and economic justice. Through NPA, 29 affiliate organizations in 15 states and the District of Columbia link local and regional organizing efforts into powerful national campaigns that win accountability from decision-makers. OSF support will build the network's capacity and support its work to push forward a national economic and racial justice agenda on housing, job creation, and banking issues.

#### **Pacific Institute for Community Organizations dba PICO National Network**

*\$600,000/18 months; renewal, general support*

To support the PICO National Network, a 40 year old, Oakland, CA-based network of faith-based community organizations that brings the voices of local families and faith leaders to the public debate on national, state, and local policies. With more than 50 faith traditions represented in over 1,000 member institutions, PICO represents one million families in 18 states and 150 cities. Following the collapse of ACORN, PICO is now the nation's largest community-based organizing network and OSF support has helped to strengthen its leadership on campaigns for housing justice, bank accountability, and immigrant justice, along with building a new, non-partisan voter engagement effort.

#### **Ruckus Society**

*\$50,000/1 year; renewal, general support, tie-off*

To support the Ruckus Society, an Oakland-based capacity building organization that provides direct action trainings and ongoing campaign and leadership development support to grassroots organizations working on a range of issues, including immigrants' rights, economic equity, climate and environmental justice, and the rights of indigenous peoples. Founded in 1996, Ruckus works in collaboration with its long-term partners to deliver trainings on nonviolent direct action. Through its national network of trainers, Ruckus also provides ongoing assistance to support the development and execution of effective campaigns by communities on the frontlines of combating economic, racial and environmental injustices.

#### **Southern Coalition for Social Justice**

Democracy Fund State-Based Strategy Grantee

*100,000/1 year; renewal, general support, tie-off*

To support the Southern Coalition for Social Justice, a Durham, NC based organization that was founded in 2007 to provide legal, social science, organizing, and communications support to efforts throughout the South to dismantle structural racism. SCSJ works closely with grassroots social justice groups in North Carolina and across the South to support fair redistricting efforts, immigrant justice, protecting minority voting rights, examining “heirs property” rights of long-time landowners facing developers, and advancing criminal justice reform.

**Texas Low Income Housing Information Service**

Democracy Fund State-Based Strategy Grantee

*\$50,000/1 year renewal; project support, tie-off*

To support the Austin-based Texas Low Income Housing Information Service’s work to build the advocacy capacity of low-income leaders and community-based organizations in the Rio Grande Valley area. In addition to leveraging legal support and policy analysis to serve very low-income individuals and families with regard to housing and public safety concerns, the organization is also working with residents to direct the use of hurricane recovery funds made available through a groundbreaking \$3.2 billion U.S. Housing and Urban Development conciliation agreement in Texas. Under the agreement, millions of dollars will be available for infrastructure programs to repair, replace, or relocate homes; this agreement could set a precedent for other impoverished, weather-ravaged areas.

**Democracy Fund Docket III Recommended Grants and Grantees**

**Grant Recommendation Analysis, Demography, and Equity**

Total number of grants recommended:	24
Total funding recommended:	\$4.175 million
Total general support:	15
Number of multi-year grants recommended:	5
Number of co-funded grant recommendations:	1, for anchor grantee
Number of tie-off recommendations:	15
Number of newly recommended grantees:	1
Number of recommended grantees with people of color as Exec. Director*:	11 (46%)
Number of grant dollars recommended for people of color led organizations:	\$900,000 (22% of total)

Number of recommended grantees with women as Exec. Director*:	14 (58% of total)
Number of grant dollars recommended for women led organizations:	\$1,750,000 (42% of total)
Number of recommended grantees with openly LGBTQ person as Exec. Director*:	5 (21% of total)
Number of grant dollars recommended for LGBTQ led organizations:	\$800,000 (19% of total)
Number of recommended grantees with immigrant or first generation American as Exec. Director*:	3 (13%)
Number of grant dollars recommended for immigrant led organizations:	\$300,000 (7%)

### **Geographic Diversity**

The following is where the 24 grantees under consideration 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:	6 (Durham – 3; Asheville, Charlotte, Raleigh)
Texas:	4 (Austin – 2; Houston, San Juan)
California:	3 (Oakland)
Washington, DC:	3
Illinois:	2 (Chicago)
New York:	2 (New York City)
Louisiana:	1 (Baton Rouge)
Massachusetts:	1 (Cambridge)
Mississippi:	1 (Jackson)

Washington: 1 (Seattle)

\* 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 July 31, 2012. For further information on the recommended grantees, please contact program director, Bill Vandenberg; program officers, Patricia Jerido or Nora Ranney; or program associates, Maggie Corser and Hedy Nam.