

**Democracy and Power Fund State Funding Recommendations Memo**  
**Docket II (June 30, 2010)**

Eleven recommendations totaling \$1,075,000

As a result of the implementation of our three-year strategic plan, in the fall of 2009 the Democracy and Power Fund (D&P) began an effort to identify a set of key states where the opportunities to advance (or the threats to) an open society are significant and to provide support to state-based groups to build power to impact lasting change. In our last docket meeting on April 12, 2010, we presented D&P's selection of North Carolina and Texas as our priority states. Now, following extensive due diligence consisting of research, site visits, and more than 125 in-person and phone conversations, D&P is pleased to offer the first set of recommendations for building state-based power in North Carolina and Texas through increasing public participation, non-partisan voter engagement, policy research and analysis, strategic convening and collaboration, and social justice issue advocacy.

This memo is offered in place of the standard write-ups in order to present you with the context behind our selection of North Carolina and Texas, our state-specific grantmaking strategy, and our eleven recommendations for this docket.

**I. Selection of North Carolina**

In politics and activism, one's frame of reference depends on where you sit. From the outside, North Carolina can appear to be a state of considerable conservatism – it's the home of Jesse Helms and his legacy of civil rights obstruction and political race baiting, it has the lowest percentage of unionized workers in the nation, backlash to public school integration is rising, and its fast growing immigrant population faces one of the nation's most hostile climates. When talking with many North Carolinians themselves, while in the state, we get a different picture. There many share insights into a proud legacy of southern progressivism where many declare North Carolina to be the great southern progressive hope (no one seems to include Florida as a truly southern state as South Florida has been referred to as "New York City's sixth borough"), one where conditions are right for a different path forward, one that doesn't feature an economic race to the bottom, racial division, government that Grover Norquist would fondly say has been "drowned in the bathtub," and environmental degradation.

To North Carolinians, this relative progressivism is symbolized by a state business culture that prioritizes profit making over strife and division (and has indeed contributed to a tidier civil rights legacy than many other southern states), its strong support for its public schools and flagship public higher education institutions like UNC-Chapel Hill, its birthplace of the sit-in movement in Greensboro, the narrow victory of Barack Obama in the 2008 election, its rare support for publicly financed judicial elections, and recent steps forward to legislate safe school anti-bullying policies to protect LGBTQ identified students from harassment and pass landmark legislation to confront racial bias in death penalty sentencing.

Both of these narratives can, of course, coexist and that's why North Carolina is such a compelling place for OSI to explore deeper investments in building strong state-based organizations, advancing a robust social justice advocacy agenda, and developing vibrant grassroots organizing networks that lift up the voices, concerns, and hopes of people of color, immigrants, and young people.

For much of the past decade, North Carolina has been among the nation's fastest growing states for three primary reasons: 1) it has a pleasant quality of life, with decent weather and a lower cost of living than the Boston to Washington, DC urban corridor; 2) the employment situation is strong and diversified, with its higher education institutions creating a high tech mecca, principally in the Research-Triangle area of Raleigh-Durham-Chapel Hill, that draws many well educated northerners to the state, and the Charlotte area's rise to be the nation's second largest banking center after NYC; and 3) the free trade accelerated decline of its historic industries: textiles, furniture, and tobacco has led to new low-wage economies of service, construction, and agribusiness industries that have made the state a magnet for immigrants from Mexico and Central America.

Because of these factors, North Carolina now has roughly nine million residents, slightly larger than the population of New York City, making it the third most populous southern state (after Texas and Florida). The state is now the nation's tenth most populous and continues to grow. It is changing rapidly, with one third of the population now people of color and a tri-racial population dynamic – African-American, Latino, and white – replacing the Black/white dominance of old. North Carolina through the 1990s had the fastest growing immigrant population and in the 2000s had the fastest growing Latino population. This is no Mayberry (and taking TV fiction for what it is, the state likely never was Mayberry).

While the state is facing some nasty battles over school integration (characterized as a “neighborhood schools” fight) and anti-immigrant 287(g) agreements and “Secured Communities” policing programs popping up in several jurisdictions, a number of recent victories indicate the presence of a strong social justice advocacy network. Examples include the legislature's passage of the Racial Justice Act, a landmark bill that prohibits the seeking or imposing of the death penalty on the basis of race. The law, of interest to the Criminal Justice Fund, allows pre-trial defendants as well as death row inmates to challenge the decision to seek or impose the death penalty in their case if it was based on impermissible racial bias. The bill puts the responsibility on prosecutors to prove that race was not a factor in seeking the death penalty and establishes a process by which relevant evidence may be used to establish that race was a significant factor in seeking or imposing the death penalty with the county, prosecutorial district, judicial division or the state. Additionally, the state legislature recently passed comprehensive sex education legislation and expanded anti-bullying provisions to increase protection for LGBTQ identified students and the state is noted for its leading edge support for publicly financed elections for judicial candidates, of interest to the Transparency and Integrity Fund. Last, but not least, lawmakers recently passed a bipartisan bill to allow sixteen and seventeen-year-olds to pre-register to vote, facilitating youth registration at two highly convenient

locations: in school and at the motor vehicles department when applying for a driver's license.

Despite these victories, North Carolina has a history of accommodation and paternalism, with a culture that relies heavily on civility and not rocking the boat or, as a Charlotte community leader told us in a very Charlotte specific reference, “you don’t shout in the bank lobby.” Resistance to expanding democracy is strong and sophisticated. The business community is powerful within the state and faces pressure to seek moderation in order to maintain the state’s allure to out of staters, particularly from the more moneyed northeast. In his book, *Civilities and Civil Rights: Greensboro, North Carolina, and the Black Struggle for Freedom*, William Chafe identifies a classic example of how social progress in North Carolina has been met, addressed, and delayed:

“In 1954 Greensboro became the first city in the South to announce that it would comply with the Supreme Court’s ruling, in *Brown v. Board of Education*, that segregation in schools must end. Six years later the city was the birthplace of the sit-in movement – an act of protest that would help to transform the nation. By 1963 the number of people demonstrating in Greensboro’s streets exceeded that in any city except Birmingham, ... Six years after that, armed confrontation between National Guard troops and black college students accompanied Greensboro’s emergence as a center of the Black Power movement in the Southeast. Finally, in 1971 – seventeen years after the *Brown* decision – Greensboro integrated its public schools, becoming one of the last cities in the South to comply with federal desegregation orders.”<sup>1</sup>

Nonetheless, the arc toward social justice in North Carolina does not come without intentionality, commitment, and long-term planning and the state, like most, is very much one of contradictions. Despite its right-wing pedigree, from Billy Graham to Jesse Helms, within the state there is a vibrant and active social justice community that is well-positioned to provide leadership in advancing a new vision of social justice in the south. In this document we will share recommendations for our first five state grantees. We look forward to our June 30<sup>th</sup> conversation with you.

## **II. North Carolina Grantmaking Strategy**

To date, we’ve had more than 55 conversations and interviews with community, elected, and philanthropic leaders in Charlotte, Greensboro, and Raleigh-Durham. We’ve also taken steps to thoughtfully engage with the state’s large and robust philanthropic community – a legacy of its tobacco wealth – to identify the wisest approach for an OSI investment strategy for North Carolina that is both bold in meeting OSI’s vision and interests and complementary to what’s already occurring in the state. Key thought partners for us in-state include the Z. Smith Reynolds Foundation (ZSR), one of the nation’s leading state-based funders and the architect of strategies that have built North Carolina’s nationally recognized and very vibrant advocacy infrastructure. The Mary

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<sup>1</sup> Chafe, William H.: *Civilities and Civil Rights: Greensboro, North Carolina, and the Black Struggle for Freedom*, Oxford University Press 1980

Reynolds Babcock Foundation, like ZSR located in Winston-Salem, has provided essential insights into the grassroots capacity in state, and the Triangle Community Foundation, a community fund based in Durham, has given early wisdom to us on the state's lively and sizable network of community foundations, some of which could become funding partners in the future.

From these conversations, it's clear that the challenges we've identified in Texas – a great need for enhanced in-state social justice philanthropy and a need for nearly all forms of c3 capacity building – are not necessarily what North Carolina most needs, as the state has significant in-state funding and most of the key components of social justice capacity, even if these elements are new and just finding their footing. To wit, we've assessed the state's strong social justice advocacy environment – illustrated by a strong cadre of more “grasstops” style advocacy and single issue organizations that ZSR funds healthily – and will complement these efforts by prioritizing OSI support for organizations that seek to build capacity, leadership, and power to advance social justice from African American, Latina/o, and immigrant communities, along with that of young people. Grasstops groups and advocacy organizations cannot be as effective as they need to be if there is no base of people behind them – as Frederick Douglass reminds us “power concedes nothing without a demand” – so we'll emphasize funding that will build the grassroots organizing, issue advocacy, and civic engagement capacity from the above key constituencies that have yet to build true power relative to their numbers in the state.

Beyond supporting organizations that meet the priorities stated above, D&P will also fund key statewide organizations and collaborations that build issue advocacy capacity, expertise, and impact and those that enhance statewide civic engagement collaboration. Lastly, we'll also prioritize donor organizing to try to both bring new, national money into North Carolina and to leverage more for open society groups from in-state donors.

### **III. Selection of Texas**

Many funders, activists, and “progressives” generally cringe when the subject of Texas is brought up. Whether due to its conservative policies, politicians hinting at seceding, the re-writing of history books, or wanton indifference to the rest of the country and frequently its own people, Texas is to many a very inhospitable place to expend resources on positive change.

That feeling is understandable. Texas has the highest proportion of people lacking health insurance of all 50 states; the second highest imprisonment rate; the third highest poverty rate; the highest teenage birth rate; the lowest voter turnout; and the lowest proportion of high school graduates. Additionally, Texas executes as many prisoners per year as the rest of the country combined.

As *The New York Times* noted on March 13, 2010, the state is also noted for its heavy and unhealthy partisan politicization of public education through its elected state Board of Education, currently dominated by evangelical conservatives. Earlier this year the Texas Board of Education approved curricula and text books that, to quote *The Times*, “put a

conservative stamp on history,” questioning the Founding Fathers’ commitment to a secular government, presenting Republican political philosophy in a positive light, questioning Darwin’s theory of evolution, and cutting Thomas Jefferson from a list of figures whose writings inspired revolutions in the late 18<sup>th</sup> century (due to his coining of the term “separation of church and state”). The board also stripped references to key civil rights and labor leaders and lifted up the Confederacy in the U.S. Civil War.

Yet, Texas is at a tipping point. It is America’s fastest growing state, and that growth is made up mostly of Latinos, African Americans, young people and immigrants. In 2004 Texas became one of only four states where whites are no longer in the majority, and that growth is projected to bring up to four additional Congressional seats to Texas following this year’s census making Texas far and away the biggest winner in the census. These newcomers are creating opportunities for lasting, positive change on a range of OSI issues.

That change is evident in the recent elections and policy shifts. As the *Economist* noted in a special report<sup>2</sup> on Texas,

The sheriff of Dallas County is a lesbian Latina. The leading candidates to become mayor of Houston in November include a black man and a gay white woman.<sup>3</sup> The speaker of the House of Representatives is the first Jew to hold the job in 164 years of statehood and only the second speaker to be elected from an urban district in modern times. In this year’s legislative session, bills to compel women to undergo an ultrasound examination before having an abortion (to bring home to them what they are about to do) and to allow the carrying of guns on campus both fell by the wayside; a bill to increase compensation for people wrongly convicted sailed through.

This new wave of diverse elected leaders is more than just an interesting statistic. The politics of the state is changing. In our meeting with Mayor Annise Parker of Houston, she spoke of her desire to be a transformative leader and of the coalition that brought her to power. That coalition was made up of LGBTQ people, Latina/os, and fiscal conservatives who liked her comptroller experience-- not your typical urban coalition. It is a coalition that may soon help lead to the formation of a public defenders’ office, which Harris County commissioners passed unanimously and now awaits funding from the state legislature.

Because of its sheer size, Texas has the ability to change the direction of the country. One in every thirteen people in the U.S. lives in Texas (nearly 25 million people). As the *Economist* further noted, “Texas had become used to being at the centre of events, having supplied the president, the vice president or at least the treasury secretary for all but a handful of the past 50 years” and carries significant policy weight at the federal level and not just because of its 34 (soon to be as many as 38) electoral votes.

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<sup>2</sup> *The Economist*, Lone Star Rising, special edition, July 11, 2009.

<sup>3</sup> Annise Parker won the election, becoming the first openly gay mayor of a major American city.

Important policy battles in Texas may be harbingers for the rest of the nation. As Larry Faulkner, president of the Houston Endowment<sup>4</sup> noted, conservatives in Texas have more nuanced views on immigrant justice issues than elsewhere. For example, roughly 20 anti-immigrant bills are introduced each legislative session but none have recently succeeded despite the state's conservatism. The failed legislation includes voter ID, English-Only, birthright citizenship, and efforts to roll back in-state tuition for immigrant students.

Texas is in many ways ground zero for U.S. Programs priority areas. There are numerous opportunities to impact change on issues ranging from criminal justice reform to immigration reform and beyond. The state has one of the worst death penalty records and also one of the worst indigent defense systems in the nation. African American and Hispanic offenders make up 68% of the current death row population in Texas, although the African American and Hispanic/Latino population of Texas is only 46.5%. Consequently, the Criminal Justice Fund (CJF) has historically centered many of its reform efforts in Texas. CJF has long identified a need for grassroots mobilization and public education and D&P's work in Texas to build a more vibrant grassroots and advocacy infrastructure could help close this gap. D&P and CJF have already identified the need to support efforts across programs to create a public defender's office in Harris County (Houston), among other pressing needs.

Advancing a more open society in Texas is also a goal of the Transparency and Integrity Fund (TIF). Because of the intersection of several key U.S. Programs priorities in Texas, and the critical mass of Criminal Justice Fund and proposed D&P grantees doing work there, TIF has identified Texas as a state where gaps in civil society journalism should be addressed. TIF aims to support organizations such as the *Texas Observer* that report on criminal justice reform advocacy, immigration reform and other areas that – in part due to shrinkage in newsroom reporting capacity – are getting a short shrift.

Death penalty reform legislation also advanced at the Texas state legislature in 2009 with the passage of legislation creating a statewide public defender office to represent inmates in state capital habeas appeals. The office will begin in September of 2010 and will be a significant improvement to the quality of counsel in these cases. To date, Texas has relied on a haphazard and arbitrary system of appointing and under-compensating private lawyers with no institutional support or appointment criteria. The new office will allow those facing the death penalty to have a better ability to preserve their appellate claims and ensure that the appellate process is a meaningful review of their conviction and sentence, as opposed to a rubberstamp of the trial. This will contribute to a lower number of executions.

Texas also passed legislation creating an Innocence Commission to study causes of wrongful convictions and make recommendations for reform, increased levels of wrongful conviction compensation, and made advances on bills related to eyewitness identification reform and recording custodial interrogations. Looking ahead, death penalty advocates in Texas will continue aggressive advocacy, employing a strategy of

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<sup>4</sup> The Houston Endowment grants approximately \$70M in the Houston/Harris County region per year.

winning incremental reforms that will work in conjunction with a litigation strategy to decrease the use of, and the political attachment to, the death penalty.

There are significant challenges in expending resources in Texas, but the potential for change there, and the resulting impact at the federal level, is unparalleled. With a targeted grantmaking strategy, D&P can help state- and locally-based organizations turn the corner in a state with significant national weight.

#### **IV. Texas Strategy**

Recognizing the importance of developing relationships in Texas, and in order to avoid the pitfalls of a parachuting national funder that upsets the local organizational and funder ecosystems, the D&P team embarked on a deep-dive into Texas that took them to El Paso, Houston, Dallas, Ft. Worth, McAllen, Alamo, Harlingen, Las Milpas colonia, San Antonio, Austin and the border wall along the Rio Grande. During those visits we conducted over 70 meetings with nonprofit organizations, unions, elected leaders, demographers, and funders.

Because of strong cross-fund interest in the state (the Criminal Justice Fund has long funded in Texas and the Transparency and Integrity Fund is also expanding its work there), several of our Texas trips included representatives from the various U.S. Program funds as well as Ann Beeson. In so doing we've also reached out to existing grantees, such as the Texas Criminal Justice Coalition, to seek their guidance on broader state-based strategies.

From those meetings we learned that the organizational infrastructure in Texas is weak. Because there is no campaign contribution limit in state elections, local donors in Texas – trial lawyers, developers, and energy industry titans particularly dominate this landscape – invest heavily in partisan electoral work at the expense of grassroots organizing and issue advocacy groups. There is also a very limited number of foundations that work statewide or that employ a social justice framework for their investments. The result is that there are very few grassroots, advocacy or non-partisan voter engagement organizations with the capacity and scale to impact policy reform at the state or federal levels. The organizations that do exist lack the coordination, collaborative tables, and access to tools that organizations in many other states possess.

The sheer size of Texas also makes the limited existing c3 infrastructure disjointed. Texas contains 254 counties, 1000 independent school districts, 1200 incorporated municipalities and covers 268,820 square miles. The state contains three of the top ten most populated cities in the country, and runs 790 miles from end to end. The population of Texas is the same as three New York Cities or four Colorados and two New Mexicos combined. The Dallas- Fort Worth region alone is the nation's fifth most populous metro area and has more people than all but fifteen states. Because of its size, a state-wide approach with the amount of resources that we are currently able to bring to the state is simply not possible.

While US Programs is currently considering the development of a broader, statewide strategy for Texas, the Democracy and Power Fund will commence its state funding efforts with a more targeted strategy. Based on our due diligence, we've identified two regions with the highest potential for increasing public participation to impact OSI priorities: Harris County (including Houston) and the Rio Grande Valley.

The Census Bureau estimates that Harris County's Latino population grew by 40 percent between 2000 and 2008, while the white population grew less than one percent. Harris County is also the fastest growing African American county in the nation—mostly due to post-Katrina resettlement, the prior mayor's warm welcome of Katrina impacted families (Bill White is now the leading challenger to the incumbent governor, Rick Perry, who has embraced the Tea Party), and the low cost of living. Indeed, census projections show Houston soon replacing Chicago as America's third largest city. Nearly half of eighteen- to 29-year-olds in Harris County are Latino (largely Mexicano although there is a large and growing Central American population), according to Rice University's Institute for Urban Research, while 70 percent of people over 60 are white. There are also sizable and fast growing Asian (Southeast, East, and South) and African communities in the county.

The Lower Rio Grande Valley of Texas (the Valley) includes the four counties located in the southern most portion of the state of Texas: Hidalgo, Cameron, Starr and Willacy. The Valley is also one of the fastest growing regions in the nation. Census projections place the population of the Valley at 1,194,819, a 63.4% increase over 1990. Put another way, the Valley's population is larger than nine states, and McAllen, the largest city in the Valley, is the fastest growing city of its size in the country. Yet, it is also extremely poor; three of the five poorest counties in the nation are in the Valley.

Texas is not going to suddenly become a beacon for open society overnight. Looking at it with a long-view, we have settled on a strategy that will build the grassroots organizing, issue advocacy, and civic engagement capacity and impact of African-American, Latina/o, and immigrant communities, along with that of young people. While our work will be statewide in desired impact in this vast state of more than 24 million residents, we'll begin by focusing resources on the two fast growing and very diverse regions of Harris County and the Rio Grande Valley. It's important to note that we are not employing an Austin-dominant strategy as that would skew toward a liberal advocacy elite that is fairly disconnected from what's happening in the rest of the state.

Beyond supporting organizations that meet the priorities stated above, D&P will also fund – or help launch – key statewide organizations and collaboratives that build issue advocacy capacity, expertise, and impact and those that enhance statewide civic engagement collaboration. We will also prioritize donor organizing to try to both bring new, national money to Texas, and also leverage more for open society groups from in-state donors.

OSI is seen as a leader in philanthropy and, unlike many foundations in this time of economic challenge, we have both sizable resources and the ability to innovate and be responsive to needs as expressed by organizations and leaders in the field. Importantly,



this includes an ability to take well-conceived risks. For Democracy and Power Fund priorities, selecting Texas to make long-term change is not the easy route and we were steered by many to choose states that may be more obvious, like Florida or Ohio, states that are often under the nation’s political microscope and that also have social justice capacity challenges. Significant time and resources are necessary to build power in a state such as Texas but, from our due diligence and conversations with many thought leaders, the state teeters on a precipice. We have an opportunity today to make a difference in the nation’s second most populous state that can, over time, carry the rest of the nation with it in much more positive and constructive ways than it has in the past.

## **V. North Carolina Grant Recommendations**

### **A. Grassroots Organizing and Non-Partisan Voter Engagement Recommendations**

The four grants recommended below, totaling \$375,000 – to the North Carolina State Conference of the NAACP, Beloved Community Center, Democracy North Carolina, and the North Carolina Latino Coalition – would provide funding to a cohort of state-based groups that are leaders (or have considerable potential to become leaders) in expanding public participation and civic engagement in people of color communities, especially African-American, Latina/o and immigrant communities.

### **B. Capacity Building and Key Convener Recommendations**

The grant recommendation below, for \$50,000 to the North Carolina Justice Center, spotlights the important and complementary role that multi-issue policy research and advocacy groups that are deeply connected to grassroots constituencies play in advancing social justice at the state level.

## **VI. Texas Grant Recommendations**

### **A. Grassroots Organizing and Non-Partisan Voter Engagement Recommendations**

The three grants recommended below, totaling \$325,000 – to the Houston Branch of the NAACP, La Unión del Pueblo Entero, and Texas Organizing Project – will provide funding to a cohort of groups in Harris County and the Rio Grande Valley that are leaders (or that have considerable potential to become leaders) in expanding public participation and civic engagement in people of color communities – especially African-American, Latina/o, and immigrant communities.

### **B. Capacity Building and Key Convener Recommendations**

The three grant recommendations below, totaling \$325,000 – to the Center for Public Policy Priorities, Reform Immigration for Texas Alliance, and the Texas Civic Engagement Table – are designed to build the state’s c3 infrastructure so that organizations working to advance a more open society can better coordinate their work, connect to top quality policy research and analysis, and have access to the tools and expertise to allow them to impact change at the state level and beyond.

**Name of Organization:** National Association for the Advancement of Colored People (fiscal sponsor for the North Carolina State Conference of the NAACP)

**Tax Status:** 501(c)(3) public charity

**Purpose of Grant:** to support the North Carolina State Conference of the NAACP

**Previous OSI Support:** No prior support to the NC State Conference

**Organization Budget:** \$27,943,516

**Project Budget:** \$370,000

**Major Sources of Support:**

|                                  |          |
|----------------------------------|----------|
| Food Lion                        | \$30,000 |
| Wachovia                         | \$12,000 |
| AT&T of North Carolina           | \$12,000 |
| NC Mutual Life Insurance Company | \$12,000 |
| Genworth Financial Services      | \$12,000 |

**Amount Requested:** \$120,000 over one year

**Amount Recommended:** \$125,000 over one year (including \$75,000 from the Democracy and Power Fund, T1: 21091 and \$50,000 from the Equality and Opportunity Fund, T1: 24023)

**Term:** One year, beginning July 1, 2010

**Description of Organization**

Founded in 1909 by a multiracial group of progressive thinkers, the National Association for the Advancement of Colored People (NAACP) is a national non-profit civil rights organization whose mission is to ensure the political, educational, social, and economic equality of rights of all persons and to eliminate racial hatred and racial discrimination. Since 1938, the North Carolina State Conference has provided technical assistance to all volunteer run adult branches and youth units in their effort to translate the national NAACP programs to the local level in the areas of education, economic development, criminal justice, health, environment and international affairs.

**Description of Program for Which Funding Is Sought**

The North Carolina NAACP State Conference is a Durham, NC based organization and a flagship state conference within the national NAACP network. The NC State Conference serves to improve the political, educational, social, and economic status of African-Americans and other racial and ethnic minorities; to eliminate racial prejudice; to keep

the public aware of the adverse effects of discrimination; and to take lawful action to secure the elimination of racial discrimination.

In the fall of 2006, the executive committee of the NC NAACP State Conference, along with other coalition partners, developed and approved an ambitious movement building initiative called the Historic Thousands on Jones Street Coalition (HK on J): The Peoples General Assembly. “HK on J” takes its name from the phrase “Historic Thousands on Jones Street,” to commemorate the 2007 march of thousands to the NC State Legislative Building on Jones Street in Raleigh. The NC NAACP led in organizing over 70 social justice organizations around a fourteen point people’s legislative reform agenda. Over five thousand people convened in Raleigh in February 2007, marking the NAACP’s 98<sup>th</sup> Birthday, and held a mass teach-in. After a two-hour policy discussion, the group unanimously voted to endorse a fourteen-point anti-racism, anti-poverty, and anti-war agenda with 81 action steps. For the three years following, with no dedicated staffing, the HK on J Coalition has expanded, boasting over 90 partner organizations. In 2008, over 8,000 people crowded Jones Street for a report on the agenda and in 2009, 10,000 people from across the state attended. The HK on J campaign is the main vehicle for the NC NAACP’s dynamic and innovative work.

Through the HK on J People’s Agenda, the NC NAACP helped to build public will to win an increase in the minimum wage (the first state in the south), same day voter registration (the first state in the south), and hundreds of millions of dollars in new money for low wealth schools and disadvantaged students. It has also launched a fight against re-segregation in public schools, particularly in Wake County (Raleigh), a liberal leaning county with the state’s largest school district, where the school board has been taken over by forces advocating for an end to economic integration of local schools. In addition, the passage of the Racial Justice Act in 2009, led by the state’s strong death penalty abolition movement, will enable a defendant to show statistical evidence that race was a key factor in a trial or sentencing in a death penalty case that will allow the judge to commute the sentence to life in prison without parole. The NC NAACP, with HK on J partners, spearheaded the development of the first-ever state Jobs Summit in conjunction with the Governor to hear recommendations from those affected by joblessness and underemployment and from organizations that serve those affected.

Other successes of the HK on J Campaign include:

- Creating a Working Group to discuss with key staffers of the Governor’s cabinet the federal ARRA stimulus package to assure that title VI was adhered to in its administration and distribution of funds;
- Securing more than \$2 million new dollars to address health disparities;
- Secured more than \$19 million new dollars for affordable housing;
- Provided long-term support until victory was won for the Smithfield workers to collectively bargain at the largest hog processing plant in the world;
- Joined with ADELANTE, a coalition of progressive organizations and non-profits to advocate for educational opportunities for Latino and immigrant children and youth, demonstrating commitment to black and brown unity;

- Joined with the Southern Coalition for Social Justice in filing an amicus brief to the NC Supreme Court to intervene in a lawsuit that seeks to disenfranchise black voters by attacking nineteen minority legislative districts;
- Worked in partnership with the Proteus Fund to create the Voter Education Protection Registration Empowerment Program (VEPREP) that reached 140,000 households with robocalls to Get Out the Vote in African-American communities in which 45% or more had not voted in primary elections;
- Created over 30,000 voter cards to inform citizens of their voting rights and to encourage ex-felons to exercise their voting rights;
- Developed PSAs for urban and gospel stations to engage residents to take advantage of Same Day Registration and Early Voting;
- Provided leadership and joined with the black media to develop North Carolina's "Millions Voting March" during the 2008 presidential election. This included over 200,000 robocalls, door to door contact and public announcements drawing over one million African-Americans to the polls; and
- Led efforts to provide reparations for the victims of the 1898 white supremacist terrorists' attacks in Wilmington, NC.

### **Rationale for Recommendation**

The Democracy and Power Fund and the Equality and Opportunity Fund jointly recommend a grant of \$125,000, over one year, to the NAACP's North Carolina State Conference to advance this key Fund goal: Building state-based capacity through grassroots organizing and non-partisan voter engagement in order to build power for those who do not currently have it. The proposed grant advances the Equality and Opportunity Fund's interest in supporting efforts to ensure justice and equality, prohibit arbitrary and discriminatory government action, and to lift barriers that prevent people from participating fully in economic, social, and political life.

As part of the Democracy and Power's state strategy, the NC NAACP's Historic Thousands on Jones Street Campaign provides a great opportunity to galvanize people and communities throughout the state through grassroots organizing with bold but winnable policy demands. As North Carolina, like nearly every state, faces severe budget cuts and a retrenchment on civil liberties from a climate of rising anti-immigrant sentiment, unaddressed historical racism, and lack of support for the poor, the HK on J Campaign has proven to be a successful coalitional model for diverse and smaller organizations to aggregate their power to the state level on many issues that target structural inequality and are OSI priorities. The HK on J fourteen-point agenda includes calls for the following:

- High quality, well funded, and diverse schools
- Livable wages and support for low-income people
- Same day voter registration and public financing of elections
- Support for Historically Black Colleges and Universities
- Affordable housing and ending consumer abuse
- Abolishing racially biased death penalty and mandatory sentencing laws
- Collective bargaining for public employees and

- Immigrants' rights

With more than 100 community and campus branches, the North Carolina NAACP is a flagship state conference for the national NAACP and Ben Jealous, the Association's President, had encouraged OSI support of the state chapter even before the selection of North Carolina as a priority state for the Democracy and Power Fund. The NC NAACP is led by Rev. Dr. William J. Barber, II, a dynamic leader, catalytic speaker, and builder of powerful and diverse alliances who serves as the state president. Rev. Barber entered the position with a promise to increase the relevance of the 100-year old institution to contemporary life and criticized former NC NAACP leaders for having a behind-the-scenes approach to civil action, preferring to negotiate with legislators rather than taking the civil rights agenda to the streets. His commitment to organizing and policy advocacy is unique for the institution and he states that while the NC NAACP will continue to work with lawmakers "...the difference is that when we go into the legislature, we don't check with them to negotiate what's most politically acceptable. We go in and stand on our principles." And a broad, diverse, and growing community of organizations and activists stands with them.

Rev. Barber has shared that OSI funding would enable the hiring of two new staffmembers for the NAACP – it currently only has one staffperson, an executive director, and Rev. Barber's time is supported primarily by his congregations. One of the new positions will be an organizer who will focus on sustaining and expanding the base of support for the organization and the broader HK on J campaign. The second position will enable the hiring of a policy staffperson, perhaps with legal expertise, to assist in its advocacy work, including on school desegregation issues, an issue of interest to the Equality and Opportunity Fund.

The Democracy and Power Fund and the Equality and Opportunity Fund are excited to recommend this first funding recommendation to support the North Carolina NAACP's work and provide backing for a statewide advocacy, organizing, and public education that promotes base-building among African-Americans, builds alliances between the state's diverse populations, advances the broader issues of all North Carolinians who seek social justice, and advances several key OSI priorities.

**Name of Organization:** Democracy North Carolina

**Tax Status:** 501(c)(3) public charity

**Purpose of Grant:** to provide general support

**Previous OSI Support:** \$100,000  
\$100,000 from JEHT Foundation Emergency Fund (2009)

**Organization Budget:** \$914,000

**Project Budget:** N/A

**Major Sources of Support:**

|                                   |           |
|-----------------------------------|-----------|
| Z. Smith Reynolds                 | \$350,000 |
| Individual Donors                 | \$200,000 |
| Educational Foundation of America | \$50,000  |
| Carnegie Corporation of NY        | \$25,000  |
| Proteus/Piper Fund                | \$10,000  |
| Park Foundation                   | \$10,000  |

**Amount Requested:** \$100,000 over one year

**Amount Recommended:** \$100,000 over one year

**Term:** One year, beginning July 1, 2010

**Description of Organization**

Democracy North Carolina (Democracy NC) is a Durham, NC-based non-profit organization that combines research, organizing, training, and advocacy to increase civic participation and government accountability. Democracy NC promotes policy reforms that provide (a) “voter-owned” public campaign financing to free candidates from the endless fundraising chase that compromises their integrity; (b) protect the integrity of the election process and the principle of “one person, one vote”; (c) create robust disclosure of the flow of money in politics; and (d) make serving in public office accessible to ordinary citizens and accountable to voters and high standards of ethical conduct. They are also committed to expand voting rights and participation (a) by making voting more accessible through Election Day Registration, out-of-precinct voting, enforcement of the Voting Rights Act, etc.; and (b) by educating those not involved (youth, ex-felons, discouraged ex-voters, new citizens, etc.) about the value of participation.

Democracy NC traces its roots to 1970, when the Institute for Southern Studies was founded by veterans of the civil rights movement – primarily white activists from the Southern Student Organizing committee and Black activists from the Student Nonviolent Coordinating Committee. Democracy NC began as a project of the Institute and then

became the North Carolina Project of Democracy South. In 2003, Democracy South's NC Money in Politics Project became known as Democracy North Carolina. The organization remains committed to promoting and protecting equal voting rights, equal representation in government and an equal voice in shaping policies. To achieve its policy goals, it is dedicated to a series of "base building" strategies that include developing adult volunteers (Democracy Advocates), young organizers (through the Democracy Summer program), and through building local pro-democracy organizations. Their strategy involves focusing a combination of research, education, and organizing on winnable reforms and, through incremental victories, demonstrating the value of citizens being active owners of the political process.

In the past few years, Democracy NC has applied this approach in effective coalitions that have made North Carolina the largest state in the nation with same-day (election day) voter registration (adopted in 2007) and, especially significant in a post-*Citizens United* era, the state offering a public campaign financing option for the largest number of statewide offices. In 2008, its statewide field staff of five organizers coordinated nonpartisan coalitions in five metro areas, plus a statewide faith-based "Souls to the Polls" campaign that helped North Carolina become the state with the greatest gain in voter participation over 2004. In addition, Democracy NC distributed 600,000 voter education tabloids and flyers; provided data, phone or walk lists, and training to 350 volunteers; organized local advocates who pressured county boards of elections to open dozens of additional Early Voting sites (including 20 at college campuses); and received 225,000 visitors to its North Carolina Election Connection website.

In 2009, building on the success of their Same-Day Registration coalition, Democracy North Carolina lined up support from election officials, school boards, youth groups, advocacy organizations, and legislative leaders to prepare and pass a bipartisan bill that, effective January 1, 2010, made North Carolina one of the first states to permit sixteen and seventeen year olds to pre-register to vote. *[No OSI dollars will go toward Democracy NC lobbying efforts; we include this information as testament to its advocacy strength within the state]*. Also in 2009, Democracy NC organized popular support and provided technical assistance leading to the adoption and implementation of North Carolina's first municipal public financing elections program, which was used by the new Chapel Hill mayor and the top vote-getter for the town council.

In 2010, the organization was heavily involved in educating "hard to count" North Carolinians about the importance of filling out the Census form, including conducting four regional trainings for local groups and distributing 950,000 English and Spanish informational cards through more than 250 faith-based centers and through public schools, food banks, social service agencies, housing projects, community centers, and neighborhood groups in many of the counties with the lowest response rates in the 2000 census. Thanks in part to Democracy NC and to the Southern Coalition for Social Justice, a Durham, NC based recent USP grantee identified by the Democracy and Power Fund and funded via the Strategic Opportunities Fund for census outreach work, North Carolina has tied for first place as the state with the biggest gain in mail-back response over 2000 (74%, up from 64%).

Democracy NC programs include:

Democracy Summer – an intensive training program for college students that provides basics of community organizing and social change, a history of voting rights and electoral reforms in North Carolina and the nation, and a strategy mapping session in which participants identify goals to accomplish. Past projects include innovative reports, including one titled “The Color of Money in Charlotte” which correlated differences in neighborhood schools and other services with the disparity of political giving by race and zip code; voter education campaigns; and “democracy festivals.” Alumni from the program have gone on to work for MoveOn.org, the Institute for Southern Studies, and North Carolina Voters for Clean Elections. Democracy NC’s current associate director and two board members have been Democracy Summer interns, evidence of a strong internal leadership development pipeline.

Voter Education and Get-Out-the-Vote – Democracy NC is a major partner in Blueprint North Carolina, the State Voices affiliated c3 civic engagement table, with a focus primarily on African-American, Latino, and young voters in eight large population counties. Democracy NC’s 2010 goal is to move these constituencies’ percentage of the overall vote share to 27%, up from 24% in 2006.

Money & Politics - Democracy NC is seen as a national leader in successfully advocating for reducing the influence of money in politics. In 2005-07, Democracy NC’s research and complaint with the State Board of Elections led to the conviction of the speaker of the state house of representatives on federal corruption charges, and broad coalitional organizing led the legislature to adopt a comprehensive set of laws regulating ethics and lobbying. As the state’s top watchdog, Democracy NC’s focus on the area of money and politics is building broader popular support for expanding public campaign programs to cover more offices, as well as defending and implementing existing programs so they serve as positive models worth fighting for. Democracy NC advocated for these “voter-owned” elections to be included as one of the key priorities for the Historic Thousands on Jones Street Coalition led by the North Carolina NC NAACP and detailed elsewhere in this docket.

### **Description of Program for Which Funding Is Sought**

The recommendation is for general operating support.

### **Rationale for Recommendation**

The Democracy and Power Fund recommends a grant of \$100,000, over one year, to Democracy NC to advance these key Fund goals: Building state-based capacity through grassroots organizing and non-partisan voter engagement in order to build power for those who do not currently have it; and through multi-issue advocacy that is deeply linked to grassroots organizations and OSI priority issues and constituencies.

As part of our Democracy and Power recommended state strategy, Democracy NC plays



a critical role with its statewide reach and is a key player in that state to advance multi-racial organizing and advocacy on key OSI issues including structural racism, voting rights, government transparency, election systems reform, and youth leadership. A number of these priorities also fall within the interests of the Transparency and Integrity and Equality and Opportunity Funds. Democracy NC is a strong and committed coalition builder, too, working with many organizations to achieve its mission, including the NC NAACP, NC Voters for Clean Elections, Blueprint, NC Women United, Latin American Coalition, NC Lobbying & Government Reform Coalition, NC Justice Center, Alliance of NC Black Elected Officials, Southern Coalition for Social Justice, League of Women Voters, the Council of Churches, and any others.

Democracy NC is lead by Bob Hall, who has been working with grassroots groups across North Carolina since 1970. He formerly served as executive director and research director with the Institute for Southern Studies and was recognized for that work with a MacArthur Fellowship in 1992. He is very well regarded in the state and in each meeting that we had with Democracy NC, in both Charlotte and Durham, exhibited his deep commitment to coalition work by inviting in a wide range of allies and peer organizations.

We are excited to recommend a grant to Democracy NC, especially as the ramifications of the *Citizens United* decision are understood and implemented and the organization's leadership on money and publicly financed elections becomes even more critical. Democracy NC provides a unique and accomplished model of success on these issues nationwide, certainly Albany could learn a lot from its success, and this is all the more rare within southern states. Democracy North Carolina's work on public financing, election systems reform, voter participation, community engagement, and research makes it a critical partner as OSI begins to invest more deeply in building state-based power in North Carolina.

**Name of Organization:** Beloved Community Center of Greensboro, Inc.

**Tax Status:** 501(c)(3) public charity

**Purpose of Grant:** to provide general support

**Previous OSI Support:** \$30,000  
\$30,000 from USJ Sentencing and Alternative Incarceration Project (2002)

**Organization Budget:** \$1,139,292

**Project Budget:** N/A

**Major Sources of Support:**

|                              |           |
|------------------------------|-----------|
| Kellogg Foundation           | \$225,000 |
| Atlantic Philanthropies      | \$200,000 |
| Ford Foundation              | \$200,000 |
| Z. Smith Reynolds Foundation | \$125,000 |
| Andrus Family Fund           | \$50,000  |
| Individual Donors            | \$30,000  |

**Amount Requested:** \$75,000 over one year

**Amount Recommended:** \$75,000 over one year

**Term:** One year, beginning July 1, 2010

**Description of Organization**

The Beloved Community Center (BCC) is a Greensboro, NC-based organization committed to fostering and modeling a spirit of community based on Dr. Martin Luther King’s vision of a ‘Beloved Community.’ In that spirit, Beloved Community Center works toward social and economic relations that affirm and realize the equality, dignity, worth and potential of every person. Beloved Community Center is a multi-issue organization that concentrates its work in overlapping spheres with initiatives in economic and racial justice, immigrant justice, democracy and voter participation, education and youth leadership, media justice, environmental sustainability and spiritual and cultural programming.

Rooted in the African-American community but working in a multi-racial fashion, BCC seeks to resolve economic disparity and discrimination experienced in the workplace, schools, and neighborhoods with initiatives including community sustainability, creation of wealth programs through green job creation, urban gardening and building trades training, and creative community-unionism. The BCC organizes clergy in the city of Greensboro to play a pivotal role in guiding the community through labor disputes through modeling a spirit of standing with the “least of these” in their community. The

community approach has resulted in rare labor organizing victories for public employees and agricultural workers throughout North Carolina.

Based on the success of these campaigns, the BCC played a leading role in garnering community support throughout the country for the long-standing struggle for worker justice at the Smithfield Packing Plant in Tar Heel, NC. In the last few months, those workers – through a democratic vote – finally won the right to collectively bargain with the company. Though the workers and their representatives (the United Food and Commercial Workers – UFCW – union) were at the forefront of that struggle, their success was due in large part to the successful community support garnered by the BCC.

Similarly, the BCC is building community support for farm laborers, many of whom are immigrants. The BCC has played a leadership role in the Farm Labor Organizing Committee's campaign to organize tobacco, tomato, and sweet potato workers, a significant opportunity to advance economic justice and forge greater unity between African-American and Latino communities in North Carolina.

In January of 2009, the BCC launched a major undertaking to leverage the American Reinvestment and Recovery Act (the federal economic stimulus package) to grow jobs, build equity, and advance wealth creation in low income communities. Through a grant from the City of Greensboro and working closely with MIT's Community Innovators Lab, BCC is developing a training model for youth (16-24) called *Pathways to Green Careers*. The first class of this program graduated on May 14<sup>th</sup>.

A major undertaking in the sphere of economic justice for BCC has been forging the Black Brown Unity Alliance. Though multi-faceted in its reach – economic justice, education, and civic participation – much of the work focuses on economic justice issues that are fundamental to the well-being of both of these marginalized groups. A very successful conference was held in Greensboro in October, 2009 that drew together a broad coalition of Latino, African American, and other social justice organizations to address the pressing needs of the communities in the face of an increasingly strained economy and growing propensity to blame minorities and immigrants for the economic and social challenges faced by the entire community.

### **Description of Program for Which Funding Is Sought**

The recommendation is for general operating support.

### **Rationale for Recommendation**

The Democracy and Power Fund recommends a grant of \$100,000, over one year, to the Beloved Community Center to advance this key Fund goal: Building state-based capacity through grassroots organizing and non-partisan voter engagement in order to build power for those who do not currently have it.

Through our due diligence, the Democracy and Power Fund has been impressed by the work of the Beloved Community Center to take its deep roots in Greensboro and to scale its efforts to the state, southern region, and even internationally. Its work on economic and racial justice is highlighted here but we are pleased to learn that BCC is beginning to increase its work to expand democracy (particularly among people of color, immigrant communities, economically disenfranchised people, and young people) and has recently joined with the Blueprint NC state civic engagement table.

BCC is headed up by the Rev. Nelson Johnson, a long-time civil rights and labor activist who serves as a member of SEIU's Ethics Commission and has served on the board of the Greensboro Chamber of Commerce. Rev. Johnson has written articles involving his extensive experience in community organizing and socio-political analysis in the University of Pennsylvania *Journal of Labor and Employment Law*, *The Witness Magazine* and *Black Scholar* magazine.

As part of D&P's state strategy, the Beloved Community Center plays a critical role in statewide racial and economic justice advocacy and serves as a model for multi-racial community building. It has served as the anchor organization of the historic Greensboro Truth and Community Reconciliation Project (GTCRP) which followed the "Greensboro Massacre" of November 3, 1979, that resulted in the death of five community and labor organizers at the hands of Ku Klux Klan and Nazis. As one might expect, despite the passage of time these hate inspired murders continue to reverberate in the Greensboro community, especially along racial lines, and provide the impetus for the formation of the GTCRP.

Supported by prominent human rights advocates such as Archbishop Desmond Tutu, the Greensboro Community Truth and Reconciliation Project is an ongoing effort to seek greater truth, encourage greater clarity and understanding, and promote restorative justice, genuine reconciliation, and authentic community in the city. Although the truth and reconciliation process was focused in Greensboro, its influence has attracted national and international attention and in July, 2006, the BCC co-hosted an international gathering of truth seeking initiatives at which the lessons of the Greensboro truth and community reconciliation process were shared with representatives from five countries and seven domestic localities who discussed the applicability of the Greensboro process to other communities. In February, 2009, Senator Patrick Leahy, in advocating for a national truth commission related to the U.S.'s improper conduct in the "wars on terror," referenced the truth and reconciliation processes in South Africa and Greensboro, NC.

We are pleased to recommend this grant to support the building of grassroots organizing, issue advocacy and civic engagement capacity in North Carolina, rooted in its African-American community but making an impact much more broadly.

**Name of Organization:** North Carolina Latino Coalition

**Tax Status:** 501(c)(3) public charity

**Purpose of Grant:** to provide general support

**Previous OSI Support:** N/A

**Organization Budget:** \$329,900

**Project Budget:** N/A

**Major Sources of Support:**

|                              |           |
|------------------------------|-----------|
| Membership income            | \$101,200 |
| Z. Smith Reynolds Foundation | \$100,000 |
| Needmor Fund                 | \$30,000  |

**Amount Requested:** \$75,000 over one year

**Amount Recommended:** \$75,000 over one year

**Term:** One year, beginning July 1, 2010

**Description of Organization**

The North Carolina (NC Latino Coalition or NCLC) is a broad based, multi-issue coalition of grassroots Latino congregations, neighborhood associations, unions, community centers and sports associations dedicated to building relational power among immigrants in North Carolina. NCLC seeks to strengthen the leadership, voice and participation of immigrants in local, statewide and federal issues and its leaders use community organizing and direct action as their primary strategies. Organizers and leaders build relationships among immigrant leaders and allies, identify common concerns, research potential solutions, and act collectively for social change. Founded in 2002 and currently working in partnership with six local broad base organizations affiliated with the North Carolina Industrial Areas Foundation network, the coalition focuses its current work on three overarching areas:

1. Building multi-racial alliances by identifying, mentoring, and connecting immigrant leaders and their institutions with local and statewide multi-racial organizing efforts.
2. Providing organizing technical assistance to grassroots Latino organizations throughout the state so that they can bring about change in their local communities.
3. Organizing large and participatory actions in order to publicly negotiate solutions with decision makers from the public and private sectors.

**Current Organizing Focus**

The leaders of the NC Latino Coalition focuses its efforts on these organizing priorities:

- Improving access to college education for undocumented immigrants;
- Supporting the rights of farmworkers;
- Supporting communities affected by recent ICE raids;
- Building alliances with groups in support of comprehensive immigration reform
- Maintaining accountability on the implementation of Title VI law regarding the hiring of interpreters; and
- Increasing voter engagement in the immigrant community.

**Leadership Development Strategy:** During the last two years the NC Latino Coalition pioneered the NC Latino Leadership Academy as a forum for the community organizing training of Latino leaders in the state. Over 75 leaders from 30 institutions attended the community organizing trainings and are now active leaders in their own communities. The academy brings together leaders from across the state three times per year for community organizing training and development of strategy.

**Constituency and Community involved:** The NC Latino Coalition is currently formed by 70 grassroots Latino organizations operating in over 22 counties. Organizations include congregations, community centers, neighborhood associations, and unions. North Carolina Latinos are generally poorer than their non-Latino citizen neighbors given that they face a number of challenges including language barriers, lack of information and understanding of the US system, low levels of education, racism and discrimination. The NC Latino Coalition is actively organizing in five out of the eight counties in the state where there are more than 2,000 Latina/o voters. That includes Durham, Forsyth, Guilford, Mecklenburg and Wake Counties.

### **Description of Program for Which Funding Is Sought**

The recommendation is for general operating support.

### **Rationale for Recommendation**

The Democracy and Power Fund recommends a grant of \$75,000, over one year, to the North Carolina Latino Coalition to advance this key Fund goal: Building state-based capacity through grassroots organizing and non-partisan voter engagement in order to build power for those who do not currently have it.

As part of the Democracy and Power Fund's state strategy, the NC Latino Coalition provides critically needed organizing and leadership capacity building in the fast growing Latino community throughout the state. Since 2000, North Carolina has had the fastest growing Latino population in the country with population growth of 394% since 2000. Despite the state's Latina/o population now approaching 400,000 people and roughly 7% of the population, many North Carolina counties do not have Latino community-based organizations (CBOs) or other venues of Latino organizing or participation. Where this

capacity has existed, the majority of the energy has been devoted to either basic human needs direct service work. Strong CBOs are an important factor that often determines the level of civic engagement and recognition of a local community and with the weak grassroots infrastructure in North Carolina, the voice of Latinos at the local and state levels warrants greater investment. It is our assessment that the North Carolina Latino community needs a broad base infrastructure that is able and ready to respond quickly to the growing demands of the anti-immigrant movement and can involve grassroots leaders from different counties within the state. NC Latino Coalition has the beginnings of that reach and capacity.

The NC Latino Coalition provides the role of connecting organizations working with and for immigrants with critical resources and information, defending their rights and negotiating with local governments, business and the larger community over quality of life and basic rights issues. During the last two years the NC Latino Coalition pioneered the NC Latino Leadership Academy and through its connection to other organizing networks affiliated with the Industrial Areas Foundation in North Carolina, has built alliances to have an impact on health, public safety, housing, recreation, education, and human relations. For a large segment of Latinos in the state, the NCLC's grassroots network represents the only chance of getting vital and accurate information about community services, housing, legal aid, new regulations, emergency assistance, and education.

Ivan Parra, NCLC's lead organizer, is a native of Colombia with a strong background in community organizing, including previous work as the Executive Director of El Centro Hispano, an organization that quickly became the largest Latino membership based organization in North Carolina. He has been a founder and key organizer of the Latino Community Credit Union, the first financial institution owned and operated by Latinos in North Carolina, and is an experienced bilingual trainer and organizer. He has been a key partner in building broad base multiracial interfaith coalitions in different parts of the state and has been organizing with the NC Latino Coalition since its creation.

With some of the harshest anti-immigrant laws in the country – including an outright ban on undocumented student attendance at public community colleges even if they pay higher tuition and forego financial aid and a large number of jurisdictions with 287(g) law enforcement partnerships with ICE – North Carolina's Latino community is heavily immigrant based and fairly new. Consequently, it does not have a long-standing tradition that such states as Colorado or Texas have that provide greater community infrastructure and potential to advance positive policies or stop the most regressive ones. We look forward to the challenge of helping to build up Latino community power to advance social justice and to support groups like the North Carolina Latino Coalition that are building the necessary skills for activists at the community level.

**Name of Organization:** North Carolina Justice Center

**Tax Status:** 501(c)(3) public charity

**Purpose of Grant:** to provide general support

**Previous OSI Support:** N/A

**Organization Budget:** \$5,226,387

**Project Budget:** N/A

**Major Sources of Support:**

|                              |             |
|------------------------------|-------------|
| Z. Smith Reynolds Foundation | \$1,050,000 |
| AJ Fletcher Foundation       | \$250,000   |
| Public Welfare Foundation    | \$218,750   |
| Mary Reynolds Babcock        | \$125,000   |
| Mott Foundation              | \$50,000    |

**Amount Requested:** \$50,000 over one year

**Amount Recommended:** \$50,000 over one year

**Term:** One year, beginning July 1, 2010

**Description of Organization**

The North Carolina Justice Center (NC Justice Center) is a Raleigh, NC-based organization dedicated to promoting social justice for the state’s low- and moderate - income families, and for minority, immigrant communities. NC Justice Center’s mission is to eliminate poverty in North Carolina by ensuring that every household in the state has access to the resources, services and fair treatment it needs in order to enjoy economic security and to participate equally in the opportunities available to the state’s residents.

NC Justice Center employs five interconnected strategies to reach that goal:

1. Community Empowerment – developing partnerships with individuals and community groups in order to remove obstacles that block the path to economic security and to provide them with the information and training they need to be effective advocates.
2. Research – analysis of the challenges facing North Carolina families and how state policy and the public spending can open up new opportunities for those who are struggling most.
3. Public Policy Advocacy – working with non-profit partners to promote state policies and budget priorities that provide new opportunities for historically disadvantaged individuals and communities and protect North Carolina’s most vulnerable residents.



4. Litigation – pursuing high-impact cases that can protect or expand the rights of low-income and immigrant groups and individuals, and providing individual representation in cases involving immigration law and foreclosure prevention.
5. Communications – extensive use of new and traditional media to inject the social justice perspective into the public debate on policy issues and to increase public support for the role of government in creating new opportunities for disadvantaged groups.

The NC Justice center has a staff of 45 that works on many issues of concern to OSI including:

- Protecting the rights of immigrants by assisting them in obtaining asylum or other legal status, by litigating against employers, government officials and others who subject them to abuse or violate their rights, and by advocating against policies that would adversely affect immigrant communities.
- Decreasing recidivism by formerly incarcerated individuals by ensuring that programs that help them reintegrate into society are adequately funded, advocating for criminal justice policies that are fair and sensible, and working for the removal of barriers to productive citizenship.
- Expanding protections for homeowners by educating communities about predatory lending practices, representing victims of such practices in court, and advocating for public policies that help families facing financial difficulties keep their homes. Improving public education so North Carolina’s classrooms help each child reach his or her full potential, regardless of income, race or background.
- Securing adequate funding for public programs and services that expand and enhance opportunities for economic security.
- Expanding access to housing that is safe and affordable, and securing legal protections for homeowners and renters.
- Establishing consumer protections that shield the hard-earned assets of low-income families from abusive practices.
- Advocating for fair tax policies that raise adequate funds while ensuring that taxes are not an obstacle preventing low-income families from reaching financial stability.
- Ensuring that quality health care is accessible and affordable to all.
- Advocating for policies that encourage the creation of jobs that are safe, pay a living wage, and provide health coverage and other benefits.

The Center is a flagship state social justice policy center nationally and provides key research, policy development, analysis, and convening space to North Carolina’s social justice ecosystem.

### **Description of Program for Which Funding Is Sought**

The recommendation is for general operating support.

### **Rationale for Recommendation**

The Democracy and Power Fund recommends a grant of \$50,000, over one year, to the North Carolina Justice Center to advance this key Fund goal: Building state-based power through multi-issue advocacy that is deeply linked to grassroots organizations and OSI priority issues and constituencies.

As part of the Democracy and Power Fund's state strategy, the North Carolina Justice Center is a key statewide organization that builds issue advocacy capacity and expertise to serve the state's broad social justice community. NC Justice Center provides a critical role in research and policy advocacy on a number of OSI priority issues within the state, including serving as the lead convener for the Second Chance Coalition, which includes more than 60 advocacy organizations, service providers, faith-based organizations, community leaders, and, most importantly, formerly incarcerated people and their families. The Second Chance Coalition promotes policies that reduce recidivism, increase public safety, and advance understanding among policymakers of the barriers facing those with criminal records, the impact of those barriers in increasing recidivism, and the consequences of high recidivism rates on public safety and the state's limited resources. As a result of the advocacy of the Second Chance Coalition, the passage of the Justice Reinvestment Project was approved with bipartisan support to reduce North Carolina's prison spending over the next several years.

The Justice Center also works in state and national coalitions and partnerships with other organizations, playing a lead role in several important coalitions, including Together NC for state budget and tax reform; the Farmworker Advocacy Network for the rights of migrant farmworkers; Transportation Reform and Modernization for North Carolina for transportation funding and mass transit; Adelante for immigrant access to higher education; and the NC Paid Sick Days Campaign for sick and family leave. It works closely with statewide policy organizations and local grassroots groups and among its key allies include: Beloved Community Center, Center for Participatory Change, Center for Responsible Lending, Common Cause North Carolina, Covenant with North Carolina's Children, Democracy North Carolina, El Pueblo, North Carolina Fair Share, Latino Coalition, League of Women Voters of North Carolina, and the NAACP's North Carolina State Conference.

The Center is headed up by Melinda Lawrence who served as a partner with the firm of Patterson, Harkavy and Lawrence, LLP from 1979-2007 with a practice concentrated in the areas of civil rights, consumer and employment rights litigation. During her career, she litigated numerous high-profile cases in North Carolina, including *Willie M. v. Hunt* which established new rights and services for mentally handicapped children, and *Small v. Martin*, which resulted in a major reform of North Carolina's prisons.

The Democracy and Power Fund is pleased to recommend a grant to the NC Justice Center as the state's anchor social justice advocacy leader that promotes the issues and concerns of families below the poverty line in North Carolina. In our third docket later this year, we will return with a recommendation for the work of its State Fiscal Analysis

Initiative project, a key piece of the state's social justice ecosystem that works in partnership with the Center for Budget and Policy Priorities.

**Name of Organization:** Texas Legal Services Center, Inc.  
(fiscal sponsor for Texas Organizing Project Education Fund)

**Tax Status:** 501(c)(3) public charity

**Purpose of Grant:** to provide support to the Texas Organizing Project Education Fund

**Previous OSI Support:** N/A

**Organization Budget:** \$3,266,323

**Project Budget:** \$1,257,900

|   |                                 |           |
|---|---------------------------------|-----------|
| <b><u>Major Sources of Support:</u></b> | Individual Donors               | \$455,000 |
|   | American Federation of Teachers | \$160,000 |
|   | Marguerite Casey                | \$100,000 |
|   | Be One Texas                    | \$75,000  |
|   | Fikes Foundation                | \$50,000  |

**Amount Requested:** \$150,000 over one year

**Amount Recommended:** \$150,000 over one year

**Term:** One year, beginning July 1, 2010

**Description of Organization**

Texas Legal Services Center (TLSC) is an Austin-based legal aid program which provides assistance and training to poverty law advocates and their clients in the areas of litigation support, education and communication. TLSC manages Texas Law Help and Texas Lawyers Help which are statewide web initiatives to increase access to justice. Other primary areas of assistance through TLSC include: The Legal Hotline for Texans, The Health Law Project, The Facility Victims Program, The South Central Pension Rights Project and The Crime Victims Legal Hotline.

**Description of Program for Which Funding Is Sought**

The Texas Organizing Project Education Fund (TOP) is a new Houston-based statewide organization promoting social and economic equality for low- to moderate-income Texans. TOP brings together seasoned community organizers, a top notch advisory committee of community, labor, and policy leaders and donors who recognize the critical importance of effective community-based organizing in Texas. It provides training, leadership development, and public education, putting community organizers on the ground in low income and minority communities throughout the state.

In 2010, TOP will focus its organizing efforts and non-partisan voter engagement in three counties —Harris, Dallas, and Hidalgo — with large numbers of African American, Latina/o, and immigrant populations.

#### Community Organizing and Issue Campaigns

While still a very new organization in April 2010 alone TOP conducted events with more than 600 residents on a range of issues. In Dallas, TOP members have come together to take on the school-to-prison pipeline. Among other things, they identified problems like the increasing propensity of the Dallas Independent School District police department to ticket children as young as six years old for routine, minor disruptive behavior, and the uneven use of “zero tolerance” policies in such a way that they target African-American and Latino children disproportionately.

In the Rio Grande Valley, residents of various colonias have started to organize to address basic quality of life issues concerning drainage and sewage systems. In the colonia Lucero del Norte a real estate company developed 56 lots without adequate infrastructure resulting in flooding of open sewage and creating major health risks in the area. When TOP began organizing house meetings and petition drives, instead of getting help the residents received citations from the County Health Department. TOP organizers were able to get the fines waived after delivering the Chief Inspector of Hidalgo County Health Department to the neighborhood TOP meeting. The group is continuing to pressure the Health Department to bring the developer into compliance, including a potential legal strategy with allies at Texas Rio Grande Legal Aid.

TOP's Irving chapter recently sent a delegation to Austin to protect low-income and disabled Texans from unreasonable utility disconnection policies. While in Austin local Irving leaders met with the Public Utility Commissioner, conducted a press conference with allied organizations, and testified at the Public Utility Commission of Texas (PUCT) public hearing to make clear the needs of low-income and disabled electricity consumers.

#### Civic Engagement

TOP conducted a rigorously evaluated non-partisan civic engagement project during the state primaries in early 2010. The goal of the project was to show how an effective grassroots organization that engages volunteers from the community could increase voter turnout in areas with low propensity to vote. The results showed increases in voter turnout of more than 300% in Southwest Houston over the 2006 state primaries, wildly exceeding TOP's goals of increasing voter turnout by 20%.

Looking forward, TOP plans to increase voter turnout through non-partisan efforts and, in the process, build a base of indigenous, trained community leaders with the capacity to move electoral operations and issue advocacy efforts. Its work will be centered in three counties: Dallas County, Harris County and Hidalgo County. TOP has prioritized these areas given the large and steadily growing population centers in Dallas and Houston metro areas, which respectively had the first and fourth highest numerical population growth in the country from 2000 to 2008. Hidalgo County has been prioritized because it

contains some of the poorest communities in the country, a large underserved Latino population, and it had the ninth highest growth rate of any metropolitan area.

### **Rationale for Recommendation**

The Democracy and Power Fund recommends a \$150,000 grant, over one year, to the Texas Organizing Project for its work to advance this key Fund goal: Building state-based capacity through grassroots organizing and non-partisan voter engagement in order to build power for those who do not currently have it.

TOP fills a critical niche in D&P's Texas strategy as the only statewide organization with the staff, skills, sophistication, and strategic capacity to conduct effective base-building in the D&P target regions of Harris County and the Rio Grande Valley. Indeed, through our due diligence we have been unable to identify any organization in Texas that conducts community organizing and voter engagement at the level of professionalism and scale that TOP does.

We are likewise impressed with TOP's bottom-up approach to its advocacy work. On a range of issues, including school-to-prison pipeline, healthcare, jobs creation and most recently a campaign aimed at protecting low-income individuals from having their utilities disconnected, TOP has been at the forefront advocating for necessary changes based on the communities' needs and concerns.

In its short existence, TOP has already proved itself capable of building diverse coalitions to take bread and butter issues, especially in the Great Recession, to build a political powerbase. The recent utility disconnection campaign coalition included Public Citizen, the AARP, Texas Legal Services Center, the National MS Society, and others. Faced with a meeting room crowded with TOP members Public Utility Commission Chairman Barry Smitherman told the group that, "despite perhaps clumsy wording in a proposed new rule to govern extreme weather disconnections, the state agency has no plans to make it easier for providers to pull the plug on them."

TOP is led by Ginny Goldman. She brings over fifteen years of organizing experience and seven years experience coordinating Texas statewide ACORN operations in 40,000 low-income households. Goldman is supported by seasoned lead organizers based in Houston, Dallas and the Valley. We have met with several of the lead local organizers and are impressed with their skills and deep roots in the regions.

TOP was built following the collapse of ACORN. As part of our due diligence, D&P has communicated our interest in recommending TOP with the General Counsel's office in order to vet any concerns about the post-ACORN organizational landscape, and we received a green light to request this proposal. In our view, this group is well-constructed and central to Texas's open society future. TOP has overcome our strong skepticism based on its past-ACORN connections, but rose to become our top state recommendation in this docket. This is a new organization, built out of Texas ACORN's ashes, but financially and structurally "bulletproof" with top quality legal, financial management,

and independent auditing consultants. TOP also has a completely new board – with no overlapping members from Texas ACORN – and a large number of high profile and widely respected community leaders vouching for it. We asked this group the toughest questions of any meeting in all of our state travels and they answered us directly and satisfactorily. We are now strong believers in TOP’s potential to impact change across the state.

**Name of Organization:** National Association for the Advancement of Colored People (fiscal sponsor for the Houston National Association for the Advancement of Colored People)

**Tax Status:** 501(c)(3) public charity

**Purpose of Grant:** to support the Houston National Association for the Advancement of Colored People Civic Participation Project

**Previous OSI Support:** No prior OSI support to the NAACP Houston Branch

**Organization Budget:** \$27,943,516

**Project Budget:** \$1,245,800

**Major Sources of Support:**

|                                    |           |
|------------------------------------|-----------|
| Gulf Coast Community Services      | \$200,000 |
| City of Houston                    | \$150,000 |
| Texas Access to Justice Foundation | \$139,753 |
| Harris County                      | \$97,425  |

**Amount Requested:** \$75,000 over one year

**Amount Recommended:** \$75,000 over one year

**Term:** One year, beginning September 1, 2010

**Description of Organization:**

Founded in 1909, the Baltimore-based National Association for the Advancement of Colored People (NAACP) is the nation’s oldest and largest civil rights organization. The mission of the NAACP has always been to improve the political, educational, social and economic status of minority citizens, to eliminate racial prejudice, to keep the public aware of adverse effects of racial discrimination, and to take lawful action to secure the elimination of discrimination. Its half-million adult and youth members throughout the United States are frontline advocates committed to the Association’s mission of protecting civil and human rights. With approximately 2,200 adult branches, youth councils, and college chapters in 49 states, five countries, and the District of Columbia, the NAACP is actively engaged in increasing the participation of African Americans in the democratic process.

**Description of Program for Which Funding Is Sought**

The NAACP Houston Branch, a non-profit organizational unit of the National Association of the Advancement of Colored People, was established in 1918 to help the un-served and underserved communities of color within Houston/Harris County.



Governed by a dedicated group of volunteer members, the NAACP Houston Branch has 22 standing committees, which provide a myriad of civil rights and social justice initiatives, programs and services in accordance with the vision and mission of the Association. The programs and services are provided at no cost to the community and include, but are not limited to, Civic Engagement, Legal Redress, and Health and Educational Advocacy. In recognition of its successful work and high functioning operations, the Houston branch will host the NAACP's 2012 national conference.

OSI support of the Houston branch will allow it to expand its non-partisan voter engagement work in Harris County, which has the fastest growing African-American population of any county in the nation. In the summer of 2010, the Houston branch will launch its Civic Participation Project designed to “promote, educate, mobilize and protect the electoral process of communities of color within Houston/Harris County.”

The three main strategic goals of the Civic Participation Project are: 1) to improve pre-election voter education; 2) to successfully increase voter turnout through enhanced voter mobilization; and 3) to increase poll monitoring on Election dates. In the short-term, the primary objective of the Civic Participation Project is to strengthen African American participation in the upcoming 2010 mid-term election; and in the long-term to develop a model to be used for future electoral processes as well as to ensure that elected officials are responsible and held accountable once they take office by having a more informed and educated voting constituency.

In addition to its voter engagement work, this grant will support the branch's ongoing efforts for police accountability and the establishment of a public defender's office in Harris County, a Criminal Justice Fund priority. Several recent high-profile incidents of police misconduct in Houston have heightened racial tensions in a city that prides itself on diversity and tolerance. In one case, an African-American college student – son of a former professional baseball player – was gunned down by police in front of his home in the prestigious Bellaire neighborhood because they did not believe that it was the young man's home. In another recent incident captured on video, an African-American juvenile was beaten by several officers while in custody. As a result the branch has stepped up its efforts to monitor police misconduct and connect victims to its legal redress committee.

The branch is also focusing on building support for the creation of a public defender's office in Houston, which after years of advocacy seems to be on the brink of success as the launch of a pilot project (a hybrid defenders' office) awaits budgetary approval. If awarded the money by the state legislature, Harris County would open an office with lawyers dedicated to representing indigent defendants full time in October. It would start with misdemeanor mental health cases and felony appeals cases. Within two years, it would expand to a staff of 68 handling about 6,400 criminal cases of all types in the civil and district courts. The office's lawyers would be involved in about half of all felony appeals, about a quarter of juvenile cases and smaller percentages of adult misdemeanors and felonies.

### **Rationale for Recommendation**

The Democracy and Power Fund (D&P) recommends a \$75,000 grant, over one year, to the NAACP Houston Branch for its work to advance this key Fund goal: Building state-based capacity through grassroots organizing and non-partisan voter engagement in order to build power for those who do not currently have it.

The NAACP Houston Branch fills a key niche in our Texas strategy as the only African American-led and focused group in the D&P priority region of Harris County that is working at scale and with the capacity to have measurable advocacy impact. Based on our due diligence and meetings with its leadership and peer organizations in Harris County, we believe that its volunteer structure and capacity for advocacy creates the prime environment for the branch to effectively conduct targeted voter education, GOTV and election protection campaigns.

In addition to its nascent voter engagement work, the branch conducts high-functioning community organizing around police misconduct and civil rights issues. With its rootedness, long-history in the region, and access to media and decision-makers, the branch is seen as the go-to organization in Houston on the OSI priority issues of police misconduct and racial equality.

This is one of a small number of flagship NAACP branches in the nation and we want to reward that strength as well as its leadership on issues of U.S. Program interest. The branch boasts an impressive 5,000 members, twelve staff, and 22 standing committees--the largest number of committees of any branch in the nation. Moreover, the current OSI national NAACP grant likely does not trickle down to support local branch or state conference work, so this grant is a wise complement while supporting the development of African-American led organizational power in this fast growing and massive city/county.

The Houston branch is well-performing with strong leadership, growing membership and impact. The branch's new president, Carolyn Scantlebury, is a highly respected local leader, former psychiatric social worker, and a first responder for New Orleanians when they arrived en masse in Houston, post-Katrina. She has supported many initiatives including voter education, mental health initiatives and Katrina relief efforts and is ably supported by Yolanda Smith, who has served as its Executive Director since 1999. Before joining the NAACP, Mrs. Smith's professional career included extensive management and operational experience working in Fortune 500 corporations.

It is our pleasure to recommend this \$75,000 grant to the NAACP Houston Branch.

**Name of Organization:** La Unión del Pueblo Entero

**Tax Status:** 501(c)(3) public charity

**Purpose of Grant:** to support ¡Votamos y Venceremos!

**Previous OSI Support:** N/A

**Organization Budget:** \$708,000

**Project Budget:** \$100,000

**Major Sources of Support:**

|                                    |          |
|------------------------------------|----------|
| Marguerite Casey Foundation        | \$90,000 |
| Annie E. Casey Foundation          | \$60,000 |
| Catholic Legal Immigration Network | \$10,000 |

**Amount Requested:** \$100,000 over eight months

**Amount Recommended:** \$100,000 over eight months

**Term:** Eight months, beginning July 1, 2010

**Description of Organization**

La Unión del Pueblo Entero (LUPE) is a San Juan-based non-profit membership organization that was established by César Chávez and whose mission is to engage farmworkers, immigrants, and their families in transforming the communities in which they live. LUPE anchors the Rio Grande Valley Equal Voice Network (the “Network”), a ten-organization, Marguerite Casey Foundation-supported effort representing over 16,000 families in the region, home to three of the U.S.’s five poorest counties.

**Description of Program for Which Funding Is Sought**

Recognizing that an organized and intentional project to encourage civic participation in the Rio Grande Valley is needed, the Network, with OSI support, will launch a pilot project called ¡Votamos y Venceremos! to increase public participation and civic engagement among marginalized populations living in the Valley.<sup>5</sup> During the six-month pilot phase, ¡Votamos y Venceremos! (the “Project”) will target ten communities in Hidalgo and Cameron Counties with the primary goal of increasing voter turnout for the November 2010 elections. Data and anecdotal experience from the pilot phase will be utilized to create a model for long-term project implementation. The Project’s long-term goal is to advance social change by creating a culture of voter participation in the Rio Grande Valley, home to more than one million Latinos.

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<sup>5</sup> ¡Votamos y Venceremos! translates loosely to “We Vote and We Overcome!”

More specifically, the project aims to provide voters in targeted communities with the tools they need to engage in the political process at the local, state, and national levels. The initial phase will serve as a laboratory for a variety of strategies and tactics for enhancing voter participation. The short-term goal is to see a fifteen percent increase in voter turnout among the ten low and middle-income communities chosen for the project as compared to the 2006 general election. Upon completion of the pilot phase, the Project will determine the impact and effectiveness of the various strategies and tactics for increasing voter participation in the Valley.

The Network members aim to expand on the Project to make a continuing impact on social justice in the Valley. In January 2011 the Texas legislature will convene and the Network aims to pivot into issue-related campaigns to foster understanding of pending policy changes or other government action and encourage public participation. For example, the legislature will be under enormous pressure to cut health care and education funding to make up for a large projected deficit. It is also expected that the Texas legislature will take up several anti-immigrant proposals (including one based on Arizona's SB 1070), attacks on access to higher education, and funding for public defender offices. Importantly, the legislature will also take on redistricting.

### **Rationale for Recommendation**

The Democracy and Power Fund (D&P) recommends a \$100,000 grant, over eight months, to the ¡Votamos y Venceremos! project for its work to advance this key Fund goal: Building state-based capacity through grassroots organizing and non-partisan voter engagement in order to build power for those who do not currently have it.

The Valley presents both extreme challenges and opportunities to advance a more open society. Entrenched poverty<sup>6</sup>, lack of government accountability, and the realities of living on a militarized border present unique obstacles to building power in the communities that live along the Rio Grande. Yet, we believe that over time sustained and strategic grantmaking can help indigenous organizations enhance civic engagement in the community and in the process wake up the sleeping giant that is the Latino community in South Texas.

As you will read below, our hope is for the Valley Network to plug into the emerging state civic engagement table. Its presence at the table will ensure that Valley-specific issues and needs are lifted up at the state-level. It will also ensure that the voter tools, trainings and coordination are employed by the trusted community members involved in the Valley Network, thus elevating their work in a region that has long been ignored.

LUPE, the fiscal sponsor and anchor for this project is led by Juanita Valdez-Cox. Juanita has been with the organization since 2003, first serving as its state director before becoming the Executive Director in 2007. She previously served as National Vice President of the United Farm Workers, and as a community organizer for ACORN.

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<sup>6</sup> Many of the region's residents live in colonias which are unincorporated areas that frequently lack access to electricity, street lights, sewage systems and first responders.

As described above, the Valley is one of two fast-growing and diverse regions that D&P selected for civic engagement grantmaking. Based on our due diligence, we believe that the Rio Grande Valley Network, with its dedicated organizers, collaborative model, rootedness and strong leadership is well suited to engage voters through the ¡Votamos y Venceremos! Project. We are pleased to recommend this \$100,000 grant.

**Name of Organization:** The Center for Public Policy Priorities

**Tax Status:** 501(c)(3) public charity

**Purpose of Grant:** to provide general support

**Previous OSI Support:** \$25,000  
\$25,000 from Law & Society Criminal Justice (2009)

**Organization Budget:** \$1,557,760

**Project Budget:** N/A

**Major Sources of Support:**

|                                |           |
|--------------------------------|-----------|
| Ford Foundation                | \$325,000 |
| Annie E. Casey Foundation      | \$215,000 |
| Public Welfare Foundation      | \$100,000 |
| Robert Wood Johnson Foundation | \$100,000 |

**Amount Requested:** \$75,000 over one year

**Amount Recommended:** \$75,000 over one year

**Term:** One year, beginning November 1, 2010

**Description of Organization**

The Center for Public Policy Priorities (the Center) is an Austin-based nonprofit policy institute committed to improving public policies to better the economic and social conditions of low- and moderate-income Texans. The Center pursues this mission through independent research, policy analysis and development, public education, advocacy, coalition-building and technical assistance.

The Center is the state’s primary organization dedicated to changing public policy to improve life for low-income Texans. It provides careful analysis of key demographic and program data, diligent monitoring of state agency program implementation, and active connections with networks of service providers and other community-based individuals and organizations. Currently, the Center’s work focuses in five areas:

- Creating economic opportunity (education, workforce training, economic development, asset building, consumer finance, and child support);
- Helping families meet basic needs (health care, nutrition, cash assistance, immigrants’ access to programs and services);
- Enhancing child well-being and protection;

- Ensuring effective public administration, particularly 1) an effective public benefits enrollment process, 2) appropriate decision making oversight of state contracts, and 3) budget transparency and accountability; and
- Securing fair and adequate taxation to pay for critical public investments in Texas.

In 2009, the Center released more than 120 analyses and comments about public policy, including: Federal Economic Recovery Legislation and Texas; The State of Texas Children 2008–09; New Federal Foster Care Legislation: What It Means for Texas; Strengthening the Texas Unemployment Insurance System; Texas KIDS COUNT: Our Border, Our Future; The Texas Recovery Plan; and Creating More Tier One Universities in Texas, among others.

In each sector of its work, the Center has developed connections to a wide array of organizations at the local, state, and national levels. On the local level, it works with many grassroots groups that rely on the Center for information and analysis, particularly as an “ear to the ground” in Austin. At the national level, the Center is a key member of a number of ongoing nationwide coalitions, including the State Fiscal Analysis Initiative, sponsored by the Center on Budget and Policy Priorities, the Economic Analysis and Research Network, an initiative of the Economic Policy Institute, and the Tax Fairness Organizing Collaborative of United for a Fair Economy. Each of these three national efforts is led by a Democracy and Power Fund grantee.

Texas policymakers widely regard the Center as a source of credible, accessible, and timely research and policy analysis. Just as significant, the Center’s analysis is an important resource to local officials and community organizations. It has an extensive database of county-level information on a wide range of issues, making its work pertinent to examinations both of local issues and of the local impact of state and federal policies. The Center’s policies and analysis are widely disseminated. Its target audiences are the general public, the advocacy community, opinion leaders (in both mainstream media and social networks), and policymakers.

**Description of Program for Which Funding Is Sought**

The proposal seeks general operating support.

**Rationale for Recommendation**

The Democracy and Power Fund (D&P) recommends a grant of \$75,000, over one year, to the Center for Public Policy Priorities for its work to advance this key D&P goal: Building state-based power through multi-issue advocacy that is deeply linked to grassroots organizations and OSI priority issues and constituencies.

Based on our due diligence, the Center is the most influential and trusted source for accessible and credible research that informs policy makers, opinion leaders, the press, advocates and the general public in Texas. Over the course of our 70 meetings in Texas,

the Center was universally hailed as key to moving policy in a positive direction or for thwarting right wing efforts to roll back public services and opportunities for Texans. Indeed, the *Texas Monthly* named the Center as a Texas organization without equal in its effective and high impact advocacy for social justice causes.

The Center plays a key role in D&P's Texas strategy by offering critical support via its policy development and analysis and through its close ties with grassroots, advocacy and voter engagement groups. It also serves as a connector for social justice organizations working to promote civic engagement and grassroots organizing to improve public policy, and with the Texas Impact Education Fund, an interfaith network, is currently leading the OSI Seize the Day funded economic recovery coalition in Texas.

The Center is led by Scott McCown who retired as a state district judge in 2002 to become director of the Center. Called "the voice of the voiceless" and "the conscience" of Texas politics by *Texas Monthly*, McCown previously presided over all of Texas' public school finance cases from 1990- 2002 and thousands of child abuse cases.

It is our pleasure to recommend this \$75,000 grant to the Center for Public Policy Priorities.



**Name of Organization:** Border Network for Human Rights

**Tax Status:** 501(c)(3) public charity

**Purpose of Grant:** to support the Reform Immigration for Texas Alliance

**Previous OSI Support:** \$350,000  
\$50,000 from USJ – Immigrant’s Rights (2007-2009)  
\$300,000 from Equality and Opportunity Fund (2009-2011)

**Organization Budget:** \$686,848

**Project Budget:** \$170,000

**Major Sources of Support:**

|                      |           |
|----------------------|-----------|
| Ford Foundation      | \$287,500 |
| Four Freedoms Fund   | \$100,000 |
| US Human Rights Fund | \$75,000  |

**Amount Requested:** \$120,000 over one year

**Amount Recommended:** \$100,000 over one year

**Term:** One year, beginning July 1, 2010

**Description of Organization**

The Border Network for Human Rights (BNHR) is an El Paso-based grassroots membership organization that combines community organizing, leadership development, litigation, and policy advocacy to build the voice and power of those who are hardest hit by border and immigration policies, and to address the systemic injustices facing border communities. Its mission is to facilitate the education, the organizing and the participation of marginalized communities on the US/Mexico border to defend and promote human and civil rights.

BNHR's priority issues include permanent residency for immigrants, labor rights, access to education, civic participation, human mobility, and peace and justice. BNHR focuses its organizing work in the immigrant communities of El Paso, Texas and in southern New Mexico. BNHR has formed more than 20 community-based Committees for Human Rights within immigrant neighborhoods and Colonias, and has trained more than 500 human rights promoters to coordinate the organizing work. BNHR attempts to create systemic changes in border enforcement policies, immigration laws, and other issues affecting border and interior communities.

**Description of Program for Which Funding Is Sought**

The Reform Immigration for Texas Alliance (RITA), fiscally sponsored by the Border Network for Human Rights, is a new statewide network dedicated to building support for immigrant rights, including comprehensive immigration reform. RITA's goal is to present a common, pro-immigrant Texas voice and educate Texas policy makers about "the need to fix America's broken immigration system with fair, humane and sensible policies that foster America's strength, security and prosperity."

In less than a year RITA has developed organically from a conference call among advocates to now include more than 100 organizations from across the state in the business, religious and law enforcement sectors with the aim of building a voice to express the need for immigrant rights. The more than 100 supporting organizations reach every section of the state, including El Paso, Austin, Dallas, Fort Worth, Houston, and the Rio Grande Valley.

With OSI support RITA will consolidate, expand and build its statewide capacity. In particular, OSI funds will be utilized to build grassroots capacity and civic engagement among RITA's member organizations across the state. Through this project, RITA hopes to encourage the organizing of the immigrant community "in order to become agents of change in policies that impact their daily lives and contribute to the continued strengthening of democracy in America."

In the short term, RITA's goal is to present a common Texas voice and vision on immigration policy through partnership development, and the sharing of strategies and resources to educate the policymakers on the need for immigrant rights advancement. In the long-term, RITA's goal is to support immigrant integration by building grassroots capacity and encouraging civic engagement among its member organizations.

### **Rationale for Recommendation**

The Democracy and Power Fund (D&P) recommends a grant of \$100,000, over one year, to the Reform Immigration for Texas Alliance (RITA) for its work to advance these key D&P goals: Building state-based power through multi-issue advocacy that is deeply linked to grassroots organizations and OSI priority issues and constituencies. Additionally, RITA is building critical capacity among Texas's immigrant leaders, communities, and organizations.

RITA fills a critical D&P need: it is the only state-wide alliance in Texas advocating for immigrant rights. In the short time since its founding, RITA has shown promise. It has already organized participation in national days of action, house parties, a large and well-attended convention, and most recently the Texas Caravan for America which traveled to Washington, DC, to participate in the March for America to build public will for immigration reform. All of these events took place without a full-time staffperson.

RITA was founded as a venue through which different sectors, sharing a common vision for immigrants' rights, could come together and provide immigrant organizations in

Texas a resource for building capacity within the immigrant community. We've been impressed with that approach as RITA works to build unlikely alliances such as those with the business sector. RITA acknowledges that many of its members do not have an organizing component – many are service or faith community agencies – and aims to build their capacity through trainings and resource sharing.

In addition to meeting with the Border Network for Human Rights as part of our due diligence, we also met with two other RITA members, the Austin Immigrant Rights Coalition, and Proyecto Inmigrante in Ft. Worth. In both of these meetings the executive directors noted the important role RITA played in connecting diverse and disparate organizations under one immigrant rights effort, and how effective RITA was at integrating the various member organizations into the leadership structure of the alliance.

Because RITA is housed and staffed by the Border Network for Human Rights, it is well positioned to have both an immediate impact and also has immense long-term promise. In recognition of BNHR's critical role in the field, the Equality and Opportunity Fund awarded BNHR a \$300,000 grant over two years to expand the success of its US/Mexico Border Task Force to Southern California and other underrepresented areas to continue to bring the vision and recommendations of border communities to the national immigration debate. Because of its successful outreach model, connectedness to the national immigration debate and local rootedness, BNHR is in a unique position to guide RITA to impact policy in Texas and beyond.

BNHR is led by Fernando Garcia, who will provide oversight of RITA. He previously served as the National Coordinator of the National Movement for Legalization and Human Rights - an alliance of community based immigrant groups and organizations in the U.S. At present he is also a member of the Independent Task Force of Immigration and America's Future convened by the Migration Policy Institute.

We are pleased to recommend this \$100,000 grant to the Reform Immigration for Texas Alliance.

**Name of Organization:** Youth and Family Alliance

**Tax Status:** 501(c)(3) public charity

**Purpose of Grant:** to support the Texas Civic Engagement Table

**Previous OSI Support:** N/A

**Organization Budget:** \$9,700,000

**Project Budget:** \$379,545

**Major Sources of Support:**

|                                    |          |
|------------------------------------|----------|
| Be One Texas (donor collaborative) | \$60,000 |
| Other Grants                       | \$40,000 |
| Atlantic Philanthropies (in-kind)  | \$35,000 |
| Board Contributions                | \$15,000 |

**Amount Requested:** \$150,000 over one year

**Amount Recommended:** \$150,000 over one year

**Term:** One year, beginning June 1, 2010

**Description of Organization**

The Youth and Family Alliance is an Austin-based non-profit organization that provides a continuum of services to youth and families, addressing critical needs to achieve lasting, positive change. It offers social and counseling services through strategically located community-based centers that house and serve homeless and runaway youth. The Youth and Family Alliance aims to help homeless youth achieve self-sufficiency and avoid long-term dependency on social services; provide children and youth in at-risk situations with the support, knowledge and skills necessary to reduce the occurrence of behaviors that negatively impact opportunities for life success; and strengthen families dealing with crisis, emotional distress and violence.

**Description of Program for Which Funding Is Sought**

The Austin-based Texas Civic Engagement Table (TCET) is a new, statewide table whose mission is to increase civic engagement through strategic campaigns and projects. TCET is based on the successful State Voices model, a core Democracy and Power Fund grantee that provides support to over 600 social justice and progressive non-profits in sixteen states. This model enhances the civic engagement work of other organizations by providing voter list access, technical assistance, data analysis, independent evaluation, and a place for strategic collaboration for 501(c)(3) organizations advancing social justice through organizing, advocacy, and non-partisan voter engagement.

The Texas Civic Engagement Table aims to join State Voices within one-year after its launch – connecting it up to the above shared services at lower cost than it can access independently – and will enhance the civic engagement work of other organizations in Texas by providing them with shared voter file access and related services, fundraising support, including regrating funds, and support for multi-issue issue advocacy battles.

More specifically, TCET will purchase annual contracts at bulk rates for all of its member organizations.<sup>7</sup> Through these contracts TCET will provide shared voter file access, training and support to the social justice organizations that join the table. Those partner organizations in turn will use their shared files to run and rigorously evaluate collaborative issue advocacy and policy campaigns; engage communities in state elections; and clean, update and add critical data to files for issue and non-partisan electoral work. TCET will also provide a shared consultant to train and facilitate access to these tools and project planning support.

Through State Voices, several states have developed tables with enormous impact. For example, the Wisconsin State Voices table includes a diverse range of organizations that have integrated their voter engagement work with advocacy and are racking up victories such as a paid sick leave referendum. Because of their central role in state policy battles and capacity, the Wisconsin State Voices was a natural to be selected for OSI's Economic Recovery Alliance grant. Similarly, in Colorado, the state c3 table has more than 45 organizational partners who in 2008 united around shared messaging and a coordinated field campaign to build public will to defeat three right-wing ballot initiatives that would have attacked affirmative action, abortion access, and workers' rights.

### **Rationale for Recommendation**

The Democracy and Power Fund recommends a \$150,000 grant, over one year, to the Texas Civic Engagement Table for its work to advance these key D&P goals: Building state-based power through increased organization collaboration, provision of key capacity building services, and expansion of large-scale non-partisan voter engagement efforts.

Through our more than 70 meetings in Texas we identified many gaps in the organizational ecosystem, but none as glaring or important as that of a viable and operational c3 table where advocacy, community organizing and voter engagement organizations could come together for coordination, strategy and shared tools. With this grant we will begin to close that gap and help the member organizations with the high-end voter engagement tools and support that otherwise would be out of reach for them.<sup>8</sup> In the long run it is our hope that in such a big state regional tables will also develop, and provide similar services in key regions like Houston/Harris and the Rio Grande Valley, among others.

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<sup>7</sup> As of the time of this writing the table members had not been finalized. In order to maximize the strategic impact of OSI's new Texas grantee cohort, all D&P recommended grantees will be table members and we'll connect other relevant USP grantees that conduct civic engagement work to the table.

<sup>8</sup> It should be noted that Mr. Soros has separately authorized a grant of \$1 million per year, over three years, to purchase these shared services to offset the diminished access/increased costs of these services resulting from the economic downturn.

The resulting collaboration, sharing of data, and utilization of common tools will allow the member organizations to decrease overhead costs and put more of their resources directly into issue and engagement program work. The focus on collaboration ensures a cost-effective use of resources - time, money, technology and talent – to maximize the value of each organization’s efforts and increase the impact of funds spent by each group.

Because this table is just beginning to form, at the time of this writing the director has yet to be hired. It is currently spearheaded by Alexa Wesner, a prominent donor and rainmaker who currently serves as a member of President Obama’s Committee on the Arts and Humanities. In 2008, Wesner started a PAC where she raised \$1 million in two months and, in 2009, founded “Be One Texas,” a donor alliance focused on building lasting social justice infrastructure through civic engagement of the under-served.

Wesner is supported by Eli Lee, who has been contracted to lead the formation of the table. Lee, from Albuquerque, NM, is the well regarded former director of USP grantee Center for Civic Policy. Lee received very positive reviews for his panel participation at the December 2008 U.S. Programs Board Meeting, inspiring Diana Morris to invite him to visit OSI-Baltimore and share his state-based power building expertise as a possible guide for Maryland. Eli is a key national thought leader in state-based capacity building and strategies and we have no doubt he will put those skills to good use in Texas. He will provide the structural framework to help launch the new table entity while commencing the search for an in-state executive director.

We are pleased to present this grant recommendation for the Texas Civic Engagement Table.