Who We Are

The Healthy Democracy Fund (HDF) is a Tides Foundation pooled grantmaking fund that partners with social justice donor networks and movement leaders focused on building a more just and representative democracy. The Healthy Democracy Fund invests in civic engagement efforts by granting funds to fill urgent gaps while simultaneously building long term power in historically underrepresented communities - especially communities of color, young people, and the economically disadvantaged. Since its launch in September 2019, the fund has directed more than 115 grants totaling over $7 million to approximately 80 organizations nationwide.

Civic Engagement Priorities

**Defend against voter suppression** targeting people of color, young voters, and other marginalized groups, and advance pro-voter policies in states where gains are possible.

**Break the “boom and bust” cycles of election year funding** with immediate grants to 2020 grantees to build and sustain leadership, volunteer engagement, organizational infrastructure, issue advocacy, and mobilization in HDF priority states.

**Fight partisan gerrymandering** and ensure fair representation through critical redistricting efforts now that the 2020 Census is complete.

**Counter disinformation campaigns** deliberately targeting Black, Latinx, Asian American, Pacific Islander, and other communities of color to suppress civic engagement and voting.
Grantmaking

The pillars of American democracy are under attack. As a nation, we should be making it easier — not harder — for ALL citizens to participate in our democracy, and especially communities of color, young people, and other underrepresented voices.

This year the Healthy Democracy Fund worked to bolster movement and organizational infrastructure and defend the progress made in 2020. When resources are pulled back in non-election years, organizations lose staff and the capacity to build power over the long term. Therefore, our 2021 summer grant cycle focused on supporting many of the organizations we funded in the past. As we expand the work of the Healthy Democracy Fund, our goal is to grant multi-year funding that will ensure these groups can work sustainably and effectively without the constant pressure of boom and bust election cycle funding that plagues multi-issue, multi-racial civic engagement groups.

HDF GRANTEES:

Supporting Movement Leaders

Action St. Louis Power Project
ACTIONN
Arizona Advocacy Foundation, Inc.
Arizona Center for Empowerment
Asian American Advocacy Fund
Asian Americans Advancing Justice Atlanta, Inc.
Asian Community Development Council
BLOC Education Fund
Blueprint North Carolina
Center for Racial and Gender Equity NFP
Detroit Action
Engage Foundation, Inc.
Engage Miami Civic Foundation
Family Action Network Movement, Inc.
FLIC Votes, Inc.
Florida Rising
Forward Justice
Four Directions Inc.
Georgia Latino Alliance for Human Rights, Inc.
Leaders Igniting Transformation Action Fund, Inc
M O S E S Metropolitan Organizing Strategy
Enabling Strength
Make the Road PA
Michigan Organizing Project
Michigan Voices
Mijente, Inc.
NAKASEC Action Fund
North Carolina Asian Americans Together
Ohio Voice

HDF GRANTEES:
Defending Against Voter Suppression

BVM Capacity Building Institute Inc
CASA in Action
New Georgia Project Incorporated

Organize Pennsylvania [(c)(3)]
Pennsylvania Stands Up [(c)(3)]
Pennsylvania Voice
Poder Latinx
PODER!
ProGeorgia State Table, Inc.
Silver State Voices
Southern Coalition for Social Justice
State Voices Florida
TakeAction Minnesota Education Fund
Texas Organizing Project Education Fund
Voces De La Frontera
Wisconsin Voices, Inc.
Working Families Organization, Inc.

HDF by the Numbers

$2.4M distributed in 2021
47 Organizations benefited in 2021
$7.5M Total giving since inception in 2020
85% BIPOC leadership in 2020*
95% Women leadership in 2020

*What does BIPOC-led mean? Visit climate.donorsofcolor.org/faq/ to learn more.
Learnings From the Field

The Healthy Democracy Fund is working with a strategic learning partner, Project Evident, to evaluate our 2020 grantmaking. Their work addresses the following questions:

1/ What more can we learn about the impact we had in 2020?
2/ What worked about our grantmaking process and what did not from the grantees’ point of view?
3/ How can we improve — on impact and on process — to inform future grantmaking?

**Topline:** Project Evident found that the Healthy Democracy Fund has fulfilled its commitment to provide grants to close the voter turnout gap and defend the voting rights of communities of color, young voters, and the economically disadvantaged.

Georgia, Pennsylvania, and Arizona, where the Healthy Democracy Fund invested heavily, experienced significant increases in the percentage of Black, Indigenous, and people of color (BIPOC) individuals that cast a ballot. While there are numerous factors that contribute to higher voter turnout rates, testimonials from grantees suggest that the Fund played an essential role in building these numbers.
While a more extensive report of findings is forthcoming, here are initial discoveries from our grantees:

“Challenges to civic engagement are not just limiting early vote hours and not having a ride. There are also real structural issues... All of those things are kind of compounded on itself about why democracy isn’t always accessible to communities of color.”

“Without investment from funders like HDF, we are less able to make ‘riskier’ investments with newer groups that change the face of who’s at the table doing civic engagement work.”

Grantee Black Voters Matter Capacity Building Institute (BVM) used Healthy Democracy Fund resources to host innovative and fun events to cut through election season clutter. For example, during the 2020 election cycle the constituents of our grantee pool received over one billion voter engagement/education text messages (through November 2020). With this in mind, BVM organizers got creative. Each BVM state coordinator hosted multiple “Party at the Polls”. In North Carolina, BVM hosted 29 “Party at the Polls” events in collaboration with Roanoke Chowan Housing Authority during early voting. Each site had a DJ and a food truck for hundreds of people to enjoy the act of voting in a welcoming and upbeat community setting.

In response to the pandemic, BVM also launched drive-through voter engagement caravans in several states. Partners lined up in caravans with large QR code car magnets so that people could easily take a photo with their phones and automatically receive a voter registration form, as well as information about mail-in voting and early voting.

With varying strategies from state to state, grantees like Poder Latinx, Faith in Action, and Make the Road PA supplied local partners with tablets to accelerate their get out the vote efforts and personal protective equipment (PPE) to keep organizers and volunteers safe during the pandemic. PPE kits included internet hotspots, sanitizer, disposable masks, gloves, and face shields for the election season. More importantly, these resources and direct services built relationships and trust with community members that will go far beyond any one election cycle.

Looking Ahead

The Healthy Democracy Fund continues to learn from movement groups and leaders as we set our priorities for 2022. Our grantees are already deep in planning for the mid-term elections, and the time to support them is now. The core of the fund’s focus in 2022 will be on funding voter education, registration, and turnout activities in our key states. Beyond that, we will continue to provide targeted funding where HDF resources can make a meaningful difference in the following areas:

Fair Redistricting

Redistricting and racial gerrymandering, the drawing of district lines to dilute the voting power of underrepresented people, have been used for decades to undermine the political power of Black and brown communities. Where and how lines are drawn influences policies and resources for healthcare, education, the environment, voting rights, and more.
The Healthy Democracy Fund will maintain and grow our support for community-based organizations who will register, educate, and turn out underrepresented communities in key states. We aim to support organizations whose efforts include in-state coordination, education, and mobilization campaigns across neighborhood networks to advocate for fair maps. The Healthy Democracy Fund plans to invest in messaging and language access efforts as well as efforts to understand how redistricting data connects to resource allocation, representation, and empowerment.

**Fighting Disinformation**

In 2021 the nation experienced a disinformation-fueled insurrection, rebellion against basic public health measures, attacks on fundamental voting rights, and confirmation of our continuing dependence on social media and the internet as our most likely means of connection. **We continue to see a proliferation of misleading content about the pandemic, the 2020 presidential election, and immigration — leaving economically disadvantaged communities, especially communities of color, more exposed and susceptible to disinformation.**

The Healthy Democracy Fund will focus on supporting hyperlocal engagement with groups who are assembling creative content teams embedded in different communities and who are creating tailored, culturally-sensitive messaging and content to leverage local influencers and corporate partners to increase accountability and hold elected officials and digital media channels accountable for the information they spread.

**Supporting the Right to Protest**

Tides is also partnering with local and national organizations to support litigation that addresses access to ballots and defending voters against anti-protest laws. The anti-protest litigation is an important fight that has implications not only for democratic values but also in the fight for racial equality. Florida lawmakers (in the wake of George Floyd’s murder) introduced a law to curb demonstrations by increasing penalties on “rioters” and decreasing liability on those who might injure or kill a demonstrator. According to the Brennan Center for Justice, between January 1 and September 27, 2021, at least 19 states enacted 33 laws that make it harder for Americans to vote. The states that have instituted restrictive laws tend to be ones in which voting is already relatively difficult. The 33 laws enacted so far in 2021 have far-ranging impacts, including making mail-in voting and early voting more difficult, imposing harsher voter ID requirements, and making faulty voter purges more likely.
The Healthy Democracy Fund works to advance and defend everyone’s right to a voice and a vote — because a just and equitable society depends on it. We believe we can only solve the big issues of our time — economic inequality, racial justice, and climate change — if we have a democracy that is responsive to all of its people. Your generous partnership supports the ongoing work to foster a healthier, more inclusive, and more representative democracy. We thank you.