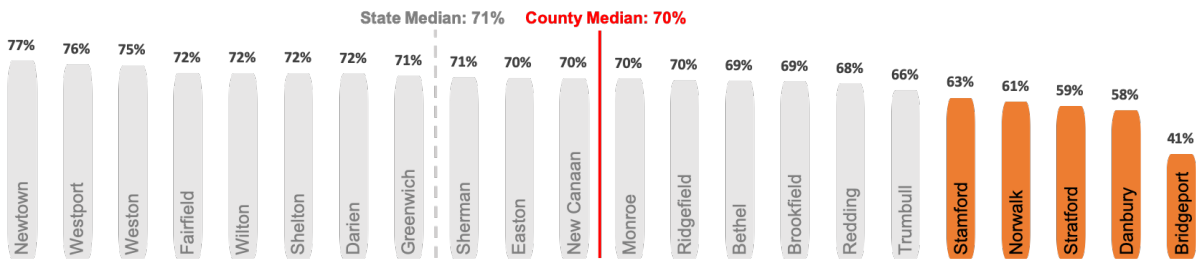**Fairfield County's Community Foundation's**
Civic Education Grants Program

Purpose of the Request for Proposal

In 2018, Fairfield County's Community Foundation launched a new Civic Engagement Initiative because active resident engagement in civic life is critical to a healthy democracy and to the success and vitality of our county. The first component of the initiative, the inaugural *Get Out The Vote (GOTV) Grants Program*, was designed to increase voter registration and participation for all county residents and particularly members of communities that are historically underrepresented in the political process. Due to overwhelming interest from our nonprofit partners to support voter engagement, the initial *GOTV Grants Program* project budget was doubled, resulting in voter registration and/or activation of more than 10,000 county residents.

This year, the Community Foundation is continuing its commitment to strengthening civic engagement through a *Civic Education Grants Program*. The foundation is concerned with declining and/or limited focus on civic education in formal educational systems that contributes to decreased knowledge about democratic institutions and low voter participation in the county's urban communities. The chart below reflects 2018 general election voter turnout data for Fairfield County[1]:

Fairfield County Voter Turnout for 2018 CT General Election

Source: CT Secretary of State – Statement of Vote 2018
Created by: Adhlere Coffy

The *Civic Education Grants Program* will support organizations engaging in efforts to improve civic knowledge and information access for historically disengaged and/or disenfranchised resident populations in Bridgeport, Stratford, Norwalk, Stamford and Danbury.

Up to five grants, ranging from $10,000-$20,000, will be awarded to support projects that strengthen understanding about the history, principles and foundations of our local, state and/or federal democracies and citizens' abilities to participate in the democratic process. The

---

[1] Voter turnout data is based on active voters. Active voters are those who are registered **and** voted in at least two consecutive federal elections prior to the cycle measured. Data does not reflect turnout percentages for total registered voters or the total voting-age population.

size of each grant will be based on the scope of the project, the anticipated size of the population served, the number of institutions involved, and the projected impact outcomes.

Criteria for Proposals

The Community Foundation welcomes participation from a diverse array of nonprofit institutions, including community colleges, liberal arts colleges and research universities, advocacy organizations, organizing groups, direct service providers and interest-based groups.

The grant period will run from **August 1, 2019 to January 31, 2020**.

All expenses must be incurred during this time. Requests from both single institutions and multiple institutions partnering together will be considered. Target populations include youth and young adults, formerly incarcerated individuals, new Americans, persons with disabilities, communities of color and/or low-income communities.

Special consideration will be given to projects that accomplish any of the following, in addition to the request's core civic education goals:

- Bridge connections across sectors, e.g. nonprofit, higher education, government
- Foster civil discourse across diverse populations
- Demonstrate the potential for sustainability
- Identify clear, measurable impact goals
- Leverage and/or scale the impact of work currently underway or anticipated
- Utilize a grassroots approach, building on established relationships with local community partners and resident leaders

Select applicants will be invited to interview as part of the selection process. An interim and final grant report must be submitted to the foundation. Due dates will be set based on project details. The foundation will offer a recorded webinar on Tuesday, June 18th from 12:30 – 1:00PM to answer questions about the RFP.

Application Timeline

June 13 – July 12	Application Period
June 18, 12:30 - 1:00PM	Q&A Webinar about RFP
July 15 – July 26	Select Applicant Interviews
August 1	Awards Announced and Checks Mailed

Submission Guidelines

Please submit a project plan, including:

1) a description of the activities that will be undertaken and a timeline for execution;
2) a project budget that outlines revenues and expenses and explains the grant amount requested;
3) a team description that outlines the relevant experiences, roles and responsibilities of any project leaders, partners or collaborating organizations; and
4) proposed performance measures to evaluate the project's impact.

Proposals should address the following questions:

I.   Design

1) Please describe the project and explain how it will strengthen understanding about the history, principles and foundations of our local, state and/or federal democracies and/or citizens' abilities to participate in the democratic process. Please be sure to specify the dosage of presentations, dialogues, conversations, etc., if applicable.

2) Please describe how the project will help reduce inequity by targeting and engaging disengaged and/or disenfranchised resident populations, such as youth and young adults, formerly incarcerated individuals, new Americans, persons with disabilities, communities of color and/or low-income communities.

3) Describe the strategy or approach you will employ to pursue the project's outcomes. What information do you have to suggest that the proposed strategy/approach will be successful?

4) Does the planned work build upon any infrastructure or current initiatives in the community in which it will be executed? If so, how will the project leverage and/or collaborate with current efforts?

5) Does the lead organization have a track record of working cross-sector? If so, please describe. Will work on this project engage cross-sector partners? If so, please describe how.

II.   Impact

6) What are the project's intended outcomes?

7) How many individuals do you anticipate reaching and through what methods?

8) How will you measure, track and evaluate project success?

III.   Team

9) Please specify the project leader(s) and describe the project-related experience, roles and responsibilities of all team members.

10) Please describe the lead organization's experience with civic education/engagement, advocacy and/or public policy. If multiple organizations will partner on this project, please describe each organization's role and related experience.

11) Please describe any history of collaborative work among the project partners.

IV.   Resident Voice and Participation

12) How will the voices of members of the project's target population be represented and authentically engaged in the project planning and execution?

13) Will members of the target population serve on the core project team?

14) Will the work help foster civil discourse across diverse populations? If so, please describe how.

V.   Sustainability

15) How will this work be sustained at the end of the grant period?

16) Have you secured or do you plan to pursue additional funding for the proposed work? If so, please provide information on current or potential funding sources.

To apply click here