



## **Notice of Funding Opportunity**

**Title:** Inclusive Democracy - Ensuring Voting Rights in Native American Communities and for the Formerly Incarcerated in the United States

**Award amount:** Up to \$30,000

**Number of awards:** Three (3) - four (4)

**Application Issue date:** April 9, 2024

**Application closing date:** May 2, 2024

**Contact information:** [uselections2@cartercenter.org](mailto:uselections2@cartercenter.org)

### **Background:**

Inclusivity is a cornerstone of a credible democratic election. All eligible voters should be able to register to vote and cast their ballots without undue barriers to access. Yet Native American communities and citizens who have had their voting rights restored — among others — often face structural barriers that prevent them from fully or easily exercising their right to vote. During the 2024 election year, these challenges may resurface — even as there are new opportunities in many states for greater inclusion and participation.

Native Americans, particularly those who reside on reservations, frequently encounter challenges to exercising their right to vote, including inadequate and inconsistent internet access, inaccessible and remote polling locations, lack of legally required mailing addresses, and a lack of language translation and assistance. Though challenges persist, local organizations have accomplished great successes through litigation and the passage of laws like the New Mexican Native American Voting Rights Act, which aims to make voting more accessible to Native American communities. Proper implementation and local awareness of the new voting processes and policies will be key to ensuring the goals of these changes are fully realized.

Additionally, many states continue to restrict voting rights of citizens who were previously incarcerated. Returning citizens often receive misinformation about their voting rights and/or are the target of disinformation and intimidation. Though challenges persist, some states have recently made their laws less restrictive, restoring the voting rights of people upon their release from incarceration. In those cases, there will be challenges to ensuring these voters are registered, know their rights, understand the voting process, and have proper access to the polls.

The Carter Center seeks proposals from organizations with a focus on a single state or a smaller geographic footprint using creative strategies to facilitate voter participation, and which are interested in assessing the 2024 election cycle.

The Carter Center will consider proposals for grants of up to \$30,000 per organization to implement these programs. Carter Center staff and consultants will be available to provide input as desired and can assist in connecting organizers with each other. Organizations located in states including Michigan, Montana, New Mexico, and California might have additional opportunities to connect and coordinate with Carter Center initiatives supporting democracy strengthening in these states.

Activities that could be supported under this award include but are not limited to:

- Educating voters in impacted communities about their rights and voting processes.
- Voter education through in-person activities, social media, text, cultural products, or other forms of communication.
- Meeting and working collaboratively with elections officials to ensure proper implementation of voting laws both new and old.
- Supporting measures that will make voting more accessible for all eligible people.
- Observing and publicly reporting on early voting processes, Election Day voting, post-election activities such as vote counting, or other stages of the election process such as voter registration or candidate nomination procedures.
- Working with other organizations and election administrators to monitor and report on threats and discrimination during the voting process.
- Data collection and/or visualization of challenges to access, impact of outreach, or other election-related issues.

Funds cannot be used for the following activities:

- Catering
- Conferences
- Alcohol
- Political activities as defined by section 501(c)3 of the US tax code

**About The Carter Center:** The Carter Center, founded by Jimmy and Rosalynn Carter, has helped citizens in new and emerging democracies to promote transparent, secure, and inclusive elections for decades. The Carter Center has observed 115 elections in 40 countries around the world. In 2022, The Carter Center conducted pilot nonpartisan election observation efforts in the United States. In Fulton County, Georgia, The Carter Center deployed the nation's first comprehensive nonpartisan election observation effort, observing all three weeks of early voting, election day processes, and post-election efforts. The Center also observed the post-election risk-limiting audit in Georgia for a second time. Simultaneously, The Carter Center conducted a more limited nonpartisan election observation program in Arizona — seeking to provide voters throughout the state with impartial information about the conduct of the election where possible under current state law. You can learn more at [www.cartercenter.org](http://www.cartercenter.org).

### **Timeline of Process**

- **Applications Open:** April 9, 2024
- **Final Day to Forward Questions:** April 24, 2024

- **Applications Close:** May 2, 2024
- **Initial Review & Selection Period:** May 3, 2024, to May 9, 2024
- **Notification of Advancement to Next Round:** May 10, 2024
- **Finalist Budget Development & Additional Documentation Submission Period:** May 13, 2024, to May 17, 2024
- **Final Review & Selection Period:** May 20, 2024, to May 24, 2024
- **Notification of Award:** May 28, 2024
- **Estimated Duration of the Award:** June 7, 2024, through Feb. 15, 2025
- **Final Narrative Report Due:** March 15, 2025

### **Eligibility:**

Though not required, a successful applicant will likely demonstrate some or all the following:

- Applicants should be nonpartisan groups with deep roots in a particular county or counties with large numbers of impacted people.
- Applicants should have demonstrated an interest in and experience with ensuring voting laws are properly implemented through civic education and engagement targeted at Native Americans or citizens returning from incarceration.
- Applicants should be organizations that root their work in the needs of the communities they serve and that center impacted people in the work that they do.
- Applicants should be organizations that work not only at election time but throughout the year.
- Applicants should be able to coordinate effectively with local county election officials and other organizations in these efforts.
- Applicants should demonstrate a commitment to protecting and expanding participation among all Americans, especially the traditionally disenfranchised.

### **How to Apply:**

Applicants must submit the below information to <https://filerequestpro.com/up/rfp-inclusivedemocracy>

A **Proposal** of no more than five (5) pages including the following details:

- A cover page including:
  - Organization legal name
  - Project title
  - High-level breakdown of total funding requested
  - Primary location where the project will take place (State/City/Neighborhood)
  - Contact information
- Background of your organization.
- Previous experience your organization has with voting rights and participation in the impacted community.
- Activities that you conduct in these communities not related to voting, if any.
- The specific community or communities you plan to work in. Include reference to the size of the impacted population in those communities.
- The challenges and opportunities that you plan to work on to promote and advance participation in one of these communities.
- Your ideas and strategies for doing this work and any plans that you may already be preparing.
- Your approach to any partnerships (if applicable) and relevant stakeholders and any existing relationships the organization may have.

- The composition of the project team, including key personnel, describing their responsibilities and the skills and experience they will contribute to the proposed objectives.

Shortlisted organizations will be required to submit additional documentation, including a detailed budget using a template that we will provide. The Carter Center will provide some support to candidate organizations in their production of required documents.

Shortlisted organizations may also be asked to respond to further questions or take part in a live interview at the Carter Center's discretion.

**Additional Notes:**

**Questions about the proposals** may be submitted in writing to [uselections2@cartercenter.org](mailto:uselections2@cartercenter.org) by **April 24, 2024**.

The **deadline to submit your proposal application is April 24, 2024**. Please submit proposals to <https://filerequestpro.com/up/rfp-inclusivedemocracy>.