

# Trusted Elections Fund

The 2020 election will be the most important election of our lifetimes.

The real possibility of domestic or foreign interference, viral misinformation, political fear mongering, or contested election results are just a few of the worrying conditions that could undermine November's election and the integrity of our democracy.

Beyond supporting civic engagement and election protection, philanthropy has a responsibility to make sure that we are prepared for emergencies that could threaten our democracy. To help plan for, prevent, mitigate, and respond to these risks, several foundations committed to the health of our democracy are launching the Trusted Elections Fund.

## About the Fund

The Trusted Elections Fund ("Fund") will focus on quickly moving resources to increase capacity, prepare groups that work on these issues, and address fast-moving, unanticipated emergencies that threaten the integrity of our election system. The Fund will support non-partisan organizations fighting to ensure free and fair elections, and to protect the rule of law.

A bipartisan task force of national security, civil rights, election administration, and legal experts convened last year to identify the greatest potential risks for the 2020 election. The Fund will make investments to support preparations for and responses to high-risk scenarios, including:

- A foreign hack of voting machines, voter registration databases, or other critical election infrastructure
- Disputes regarding election results
- Election Day or post-Election Day violence
- A major emergency (such as a natural disaster, attack on the power grid, or health emergency) that affects polling places

The Fund itself is a project of the New Venture Fund, a 501(c)(3) organization that does not engage in partisan political activities. The Fund's steering committee will be led by the Democracy Fund, Wellspring Philanthropic Fund, and Spitzer Charitable Trust. It will be directed by Jennifer Flanagan, a leader in voting reform with experience as both a voting rights advocate and an election administrator in the role of Deputy Secretary of State of Colorado.

## Rapid Response Grantmaking

At this stage, we estimate that \$8-10 million will be needed for proactive and reactive strategies, including but not limited to:

1. **Engage with state and federal officials** to shore up weaknesses and to dry run crisis response protocols and communications processes, as well as advocate for model state election emergency legislation, policies, or regulations.
2. **Conduct public education campaigns** in response to potential crises.
3. **Conduct news media education.** Provide training and best practices for news media on how to respond to election emergencies in ways that educate the public without creating fear or undermining our democracy.
4. **Combat election mis/disinformation.** Prepare journalists and civil society organizations with tools to respond to mis/disinformation and cybersecurity issues.
5. **Prepare for litigation** that may be needed to mitigate crises, including unwarranted attacks on voter registration or other groups.

So far, the Fund has received early commitments of \$2 million. We anticipate needing at least \$5 million by the end of May to ensure the infrastructure is in place to plan for and mitigate the most critical potential emergencies. We anticipate holding about half of the Fund's resources through summer and fall 2020, including the weeks approaching Election Day to be deployed rapidly as potential crises emerge.

### JOIN THE FUND

For more information and updates on the fund, please contact Lauren Hill, Democracy Fund director of partnerships via email at [lhill@democracyfund.org](mailto:lhill@democracyfund.org) or phone at 202-420-7900.