

NOW FOUNDATION

Civic Engagement Grants

Request for Applications (RFA) - 2026 Grant Cycle

RFA Summary	Details
Issuance Date	June 25, 2026
Application Period	June-September 2026
Application Review	Rolling basis
Award Notifications	Rolling basis, as applications are reviewed and approved
Project Implementation Period	July-November 2026
Final Report Due	30 days after the project ends, and no later than December 31, 2026.
Total Funding Pool	\$60,000
Individual Award Range	\$500-\$15,000

1. Program Overview

The NOW Foundation Civic Engagement Grants support strictly nonpartisan, 501(c)(3)-compliant voter education, voter registration, voter engagement, and get-out-the-vote activities during the 2026 midterm election cycle.

These grants are intended to help NOW chapters, state entities and approved NOW-affiliated entities strengthen civic participation among women, young voters, students, and communities directly impacted by issues central to NOW Foundation's mission, including reproductive rights, economic justice, gender-based violence, voting rights, and equal rights.

All grant-funded work must be strictly nonpartisan. Grant funds may not be used to support or oppose any candidate, political party, PAC, partisan committee, or partisan campaign.

2. About the NOW Foundation

The NOW Foundation is a 501(c)(3) charitable organization dedicated to advancing women's equality through education, advocacy, and community engagement. As a charitable organization, the Foundation supports nonpartisan educational activities that promote women's equality, civic participation, and social justice.

All grant-funded activities must comply with 501(c)(3) requirements and with any additional grant conditions established by NOW Foundation. This RFA is intended to provide a clear framework for applicants, reviewers, award administration, compliance review, payment, and reporting.

3. Funding Information

- Total 2026 Funding Available: \$60,000.
- Individual Award Range: \$500-\$15,000.
- Award amounts will be determined based on project strength, scope of work, demonstrated need, project feasibility, compliance readiness, expected impact, budget reasonableness, and available funding.
- NOW Foundation reserves the right to fund any or none of the applications submitted and to make awards in amounts different from those requested.
- Funds may not be spent until the grant agreement has been fully executed and the project has been approved.

4. Proportionate Documentation Requirements

Application and documentation requirements will be proportionate to the amount requested and the complexity of the proposed activities. Larger requests or projects involving more complex voter engagement activities must include more detailed planning and compliance documentation.

Request Tier	Request Amount	Expected Application Detail	Additional Review/Documentation
Small Project	\$500-\$2,500	Brief project narrative, basic budget, timeline, target audience, and compliance certification.	Standard review; training required before implementation.
Standard Project	\$2,501-\$10,000	Detailed project plan, itemized budget, implementation timeline, outreach plan, metrics, and compliance plan.	Materials/scripts may require preapproval; documentation required with final report.
Expanded Project	\$10,001-\$15,000	Comprehensive project plan, detailed outreach and implementation strategy, itemized budget, staffing/volunteer plan, metrics, risk/compliance plan, and reporting approach.	Enhanced review before award; preapproval of scripts/materials where applicable; more detailed reporting and receipts required.

5. Eligibility

- Be an officially recognized NOW chapter, state organization, or approved NOW-affiliated entity.
- Be in good standing and current on required reporting and compliance obligations.
- Demonstrate capacity to complete the proposed project during the grant period.
- Comply with all 501(c)(3) nonpartisan voter engagement requirements and any additional NOW Foundation grant conditions.
- Participate in required training before implementation of grant-funded activities.
- Track outcomes, maintain documentation, and submit a final report.

Applicants with outstanding compliance issues may be required to resolve them before receiving an award.

6. Eligible Activities

Grant-funded activities may include, but are not limited to:

- Nonpartisan voter registration.
- Nonpartisan voter education.
- Nonpartisan get-out-the-vote activities.
- Phone banking using approved nonpartisan scripts.
- Door-to-door canvassing using approved nonpartisan scripts and neutral targeting criteria.
- Tabling at community events or in targeted areas selected using neutral, nonpartisan criteria.
- Leafleting and educational materials distribution.
- Peer-to-peer texting using approved nonpartisan scripts and compliant tools.
- Social media outreach and digital communications using approved nonpartisan messaging.
- Community forums or educational events.
- Youth and student civic engagement.
- Transportation-related voter engagement support, where legally permissible and approved in advance.

- Other approved 501(c)(3)-compliant voter engagement activities.

All activities must be designed and implemented without supporting or opposing any candidate, political party, PAC, partisan committee, or partisan campaign. Targeting must be based on neutral, nonpartisan criteria and may not be based on party affiliation, candidate preference, likelihood of voting for or against a candidate, or desired electoral outcome.

7. Allowable and Non-Allowable Costs

Allowable expenses may include:

- Venue rental.
- Educational materials.
- Outreach and communications materials.
- Accessibility accommodations.
- Speaker honoraria and facilitator costs.
- Event-related costs, such as logistics, audio/visual, and permits.
- Program-related supplies and materials directly tied to the approved project.
- Voter engagement tools or platforms, where approved and directly tied to the project.
- Transportation or accessibility costs, where legally permissible and approved in advance.

Grant funds may not be used for:

- Salaries or ongoing compensation of chapter staff or officers.
- Lobbying activity.
- Partisan political activity.
- Support for or opposition to any candidate, political party, PAC, partisan committee, or partisan campaign.
- Candidate endorsements or contributions to candidates, campaigns, political parties, PACs, or partisan committees.
- Coordination with candidate campaigns, political parties, PACs, or partisan committees.
- Membership drives.
- General operating expenses unrelated to the approved project.
- Cash assistance or unrestricted financial support to individuals.
- Expenses outside the approved project budget.
- Materials or communications that have not been approved by NOW Foundation, if preapproval is required.

8. Training and Compliance Requirements

All grantees must participate in required NOW Foundation training before implementing grant-funded activities. Training is required for the 2026 grant cycle regardless of whether a similar training was provided in a prior cycle.

Training may include:

- Permissible 501(c)(3) voter engagement.
- Nonpartisan voter registration, voter education, voter engagement, and GOTV activities.
- Prohibited partisan activity and campaign intervention.
- Neutral targeting criteria and approved messaging.
- Scripts, materials, digital communications, and review requirements.

- State and local law considerations for voter registration, voter assistance, transportation, texting, and related activities.
- Grant reporting, documentation, receipts, metrics, and final report requirements.

At least one project lead from each funded applicant must complete required training before any grant-funded activities begin. NOW Foundation may require review and approval of written, digital, printed, text, phone, canvassing, or social media materials before publication or use.

Applicants are responsible for complying with applicable federal, state, and local laws governing voter registration, voter assistance, transportation, texting, privacy, and related civic engagement activities.

9. Application Requirements

Applications must be submitted through the official online application form. The application should include all information needed for NOW Foundation to evaluate the proposed project, budget, timeline, compliance readiness, expected impact, and reporting capacity.

- Applicant Information: chapter/state/affiliate name, state, mailing address, primary contact name/title/email/phone, good-standing confirmation, and required reporting/compliance confirmation.
- Project Summary: project title, amount requested, proposed start/end dates, brief project description, and intended impact.
- Project Goals and Audience: goals, communities or geographic areas to be reached, and explanation of why those audiences or locations were selected using neutral, nonpartisan criteria.
- Planned Activities and Implementation: specific activities, implementation plan, project lead, volunteers/partners, and responsibilities for compliance and reporting.
- Project Timeline: planning, training, outreach, implementation, and reporting milestones.
- Budget: itemized budget and narrative showing how grant funds will be used for reasonable, necessary, and project-related expenses.
- Compliance Plan: explanation of how activities will remain strictly nonpartisan and 501(c)(3)-compliant.
- Metrics and Evaluation Plan: how results will be tracked and reported.
- Materials/Scripts: upload or describe any draft scripts, flyers, social media content, voter guides, partner materials, or digital communications, if available.

10. Review and Selection Criteria

Applications will be reviewed on a rolling basis while funds remain available. Applications may be evaluated using a scoring rubric based on:

- Alignment with the purpose of the Civic Engagement Grants.
- Strength and clarity of the project plan.
- Community need and relevance.
- Feasibility of the timeline, budget, staffing, and volunteer plan.
- Ability to reach the proposed audience using neutral, nonpartisan criteria.
- Compliance readiness and clarity of compliance plan.
- Expected impact and strength of metrics/evaluation plan.
- Applicant capacity to implement, document, and report on the project.
- Budget clarity, justification, and reasonableness.

NOW Foundation may request clarification, revisions, additional documentation, budget changes, or compliance modifications before making an award.

11. Award Process

Approved applicants will receive:

- Formal award notification.
- A grant agreement outlining responsibilities and restrictions.
- Training and compliance requirements.
- Payment instructions.
- Reporting requirements and reporting template.

Funds must be used solely for approved project activities. Any material changes to the approved project scope, activities, timeline, budget, messaging, materials, or implementation approach require prior written approval from NOW Foundation.

12. Reporting Requirements

All grantees must submit a final report no later than 30 days after project completion and no later than the final deadline established by NOW Foundation.

Final reports must include:

- Summary of activities completed.
- Description of audiences reached.
- Final metrics and outcomes.
- Copies or samples of materials used.
- Photos, stories, or testimonials, if available and appropriate.
- Financial summary of expenditures.
- Receipts or supporting documentation for grant-funded expenses, consistent with the documentation tier and any award conditions.
- Explanation of any unused funds.
- Lessons learned and recommendations for future voter engagement work.

Funds used outside approved scope may be subject to repayment. Grantees must retain financial and program documentation for at least three years after project completion or longer if required by NOW Foundation policy.

13. 501(c)(3) Compliance Certification

By submitting an application, the applicant certifies that:

- All proposed activities will be strictly nonpartisan.
- No grant funds will be used to support or oppose any candidate, political party, PAC, partisan committee, or partisan campaign.
- No grant-funded activities will be coordinated with a candidate campaign, political party, PAC, or partisan committee.
- Targeting will be based on neutral, nonpartisan criteria.
- All project materials and communications will comply with 501(c)(3) requirements and any NOW Foundation review/approval conditions.

- The applicant will participate in required training and compliance review before implementation.
- The applicant will maintain receipts and documentation for all grant expenses.
- The applicant will submit required metrics and a final report.
- No chapter officer, member, or related party may receive personal financial benefit from grant funds, except for pre-approved, reasonable, and necessary project-related expenses that are permitted under the approved budget.

14. Questions and Submission

Questions about the Civic Engagement Grants should be directed to grants@now.org.

Applications should be submitted through the NOW Foundation's designated online application form.

Application link: <https://airtable.com/appx4kT7pummO4ZyV/shr8KRBfDNRUCmzLh>

Final deadline: September 15, 2026

15. Additional Information

Issuance of this RFA does not constitute a funding commitment. NOW Foundation reserves the right to modify, suspend, or cancel this RFA at any time. Funding decisions are subject to available funds, compliance review, and approval by NOW Foundation.