



## 2024 – 2025 SOLVE Southern Spark Grants

**UPDATE: The deadline for applications to be submitted has been extended to Wednesday, June 26, 2024, at 11:59 PM CST. [Click here to access the Foundant application portal.](#)**

The Southern Leadership for Voter Engagement (SOLVE) Network is excited to announce a funding opportunity for Southern organizations and groups to increase civic participation and engagement in historically underrepresented communities across the region.

### **About SOLVE**

The SOLVE Network is a multi-state collaborative of organizations dedicated to sharing strategies, resources, and support in the ongoing struggle to protect and expand voting rights. The mission of the SOLVE Network is to provide a space for Southern grassroots and Southern state-based organizations to address and rectify policies that have weakened the voting strength of communities. SOLVE accomplishes its mission through grassroots mobilization by providing data-driven communications, organizing, advocacy, legal, and legislative strategies and support, as well as funding. For more information, visit [solvenetwork.org](https://solvenetwork.org).

### **About the Program**

The 2024-2025 SOLVE Southern Spark Grants are designed to provide support to community-based organizations in their efforts to fight for a participatory, responsive, inclusive, and expansive democracy. As we prepare for upcoming election cycles, these grants are intended to spark organizational capacity building related to election protection, civic education, engagement, and participation work around issues that are most pressing in their community.

The SOLVE Southern Spark Grants are one-year project support grants. Grant awards will be in the amount of \$10,000. We anticipate making 30 grant awards for this program across SOLVE's partner states: Alabama, Georgia, Florida, Louisiana, Mississippi, North Carolina, South Carolina, Tennessee, Virginia, and Texas. The SOLVE Leadership Council and other SOLVE-state-based evaluators will make funding decisions based on evaluations of the eligibility criteria and priorities below. Administrative support for the grant program is provided by Southern Coalition for Social Justice (SCSJ).

### **Eligibility**

To be eligible for the 2024-2025 SOLVE Southern Spark Grant opportunity, applicants must meet all of the following criteria:

- Organize for equitable and inclusive representation with historically underrepresented communities.
- Possess a vision for how voting rights advance social, economic, racial, political, and environmental justice.
- Be led by Black, Latinx/Hispanic, Indigenous, Asian American Pacific Islander, queer and trans, rural, low-wealth, and/or working-class communities.

- Leadership is defined as individual members of these communities who hold decision-making authority over the applicant's priorities. Examples of decision-making roles could include executive directors, founders, presidents, board members, an advisory council, or group leaders.
- Have an annual operating budget under \$1 million.
- Be located in Alabama, Florida, Georgia, Louisiana, Mississippi, North Carolina, South Carolina, Tennessee, Texas, or Virginia.

*Note: 501(c)(3) status is not required to apply, but please remember that projects must be 501(c)(3) compliant and/or not be listed in the "What We Cannot Fund" section. This opportunity is open to proposals from 501(c)(3)s, fiscally sponsored groups or organizations, LLCs, individuals, or unincorporated groups or organizations. Regardless of the project, we are unable to fund 501(c)(4)s. If you have any questions about IRS tax-exempt status, please contact [solve@scsj.org](mailto:solve@scsj.org).*

### **Funding Priorities**

We will prioritize supporting organizations or groups that meet one or more of the following criteria:

- A project proposal that focuses on civic engagement, specifically civic participation.
- A project proposal that focuses on building infrastructure for election protection efforts for the 2024 General Election.
- Have an existing civic engagement project serving historically underrepresented populations that could be expanded and bolstered with additional funding.
- SOLVE Network members.
- Previous SOLVE grant recipients and applicants.

### **What We Fund**

The 2024-2025 SOLVE Southern Spark Grants are one-year, \$10,000 project support grants intended to support projects focused on increasing civic participation and civic engagement in historically underrepresented communities. With anti-democratic efforts on the rise and given the need for increased civic engagement and election protection activities, we are most interested in projects that:

- Support communities in becoming civically involved and projects that support communities in their fight for the right to have their votes counted and their right to vote protected.
- Use advocacy, education, organizing, mobilization, and/or communications strategies to promote civic participation and engagement in underrepresented communities.
- Aim to help ensure that voters feel safe from harassment and intimidation at the polls.
- Aim to ensure that people understand what is needed to cast a ballot.

Below are examples of potential fundable, eligible projects:

- Training community members to be poll observers or canvass monitors.
- Community education initiative that provides information to voters about voter rights at the polls, how voters can obtain assistance should they need it while voting, or the materials necessary for a voter to cast a ballot.
- Education project about voter ID requirements, which disproportionately impact communities of color, disabled communities, trans communities, and many others.
- Communications campaign about the importance of voting and building the habit of voting in each election.
- Trainings for non-English speaking community members who are eligible to vote about what their rights are at polls.

- Projects that engage multiple identities and multi-racial alliance building as core to their pro-democracy work.

These are just examples of potential projects and are not an exhaustive list of projects that may be funded.

### **What We Cannot Fund**

- 501(c)(4) organizations.
- Projects that include voter registration activities.
- Projects that include [lobbying](#), political, or [partisan activity](#).
- Projects with indirect costs equal to or greater than direct costs. Direct costs are expenses specific to the project, while indirect costs are expenses required to run the organization as a whole.
- Projects that focus exclusively on direct services without a civic engagement or participation component.
- Organizations or groups who are current legal clients of SCSJ.
- Organizations, groups, and/or projects based outside of Alabama, Florida, Georgia, Louisiana, Mississippi, North Carolina, South Carolina, Tennessee, Texas, or Virginia.
- Organizations or groups that do not meet the eligibility requirements.
- SOLVE Leadership Council Member organizations.
- Current/Previous SOLVE grantees that are not in good standing with current/previous grants. Good standing means that for the 2022 Southern Movement Grants, the 2023 SOLVE Spark Grants, or multiple grants were/are in compliance (meeting all grant agreement terms and conditions) and that all grant reporting is complete and current.

For additional information, including examples and further descriptions of projects we can and cannot fund, please see our FAQ document, linked [here](#).

### **Process and Timeline**

#### Grant Application

Please click the link [here](#) to access the grant application portal. Instructions for completing your application are available in the portal. Further information about the grant process can be found in our [FAQ](#) and at [southerncoalition.org/voting-rights/solve/solve2024sparkgrants/](https://southerncoalition.org/voting-rights/solve/solve2024sparkgrants/). If you need help accessing the portal, please email [solve@scsj.org](mailto:solve@scsj.org).

The application deadline is **Wednesday, June 26, 2024, at 11:59 PM CST**.

#### Application Review, Evaluation, and Funding Decisions

The SOLVE Leadership Council and other SOLVE-state-based evaluators will evaluate all eligible applications and make funding decisions based on the eligibility criteria and priorities listed above. The SOLVE Leadership Council and grant program are supported by SCSJ. SCSJ staff will email applicants with any questions, concerns, or further information needed during the review process prior to evaluations. If contacted, your response is required for your application to be considered for funding.

#### Notifications

Applicants who submit proposals by the application deadline, June 26, 2024, will be notified about whether or not their project will be funded by the end of July 2024. Projects approved for funding will receive their grant awards once we receive their signed Grant Agreement and all required information.

Grant funds will only be distributed with a signed Grant Agreement and submission of all required information.

### Grant Reporting Criteria

All selected organizations must submit interim and final reports. Further reporting instructions will be provided in the Grant Agreement.

### SOLVE Support

An informational video about the program and application process can be found [here](#). We will also offer Open Zoom Hours for additional application support. To register for one of the Open Zoom Hours, please click [here](#). We recognize that SOLVE partners and others doing important work in the South have varying capacities. We do not want the application or reporting processes to be a burden or a barrier. If you have questions throughout the application process, please contact us via email at [solve@scsj.org](mailto:solve@scsj.org).

### Key Dates

Application opens: May 28, 2024

Application deadline: **June 26, 2024, at 11:59 PM CST**

Open Zoom Hours:

- [June 3, 2024](#), 6 – 7 pm EST
- [June 11, 2024](#), 2 – 3 pm EST
- [June 13, 2024](#), 6 – 7 pm EST

*Please click on the dates for the registration links to each Open Zoom Hour.*

*The informational video about the program and application process can be found [here](#).*

### Contact Information

Questions or concerns? Please contact us at [solve@scsj.org](mailto:solve@scsj.org) or visit our website, [southerncoalition.org/voting-rights/solve/solve2024sparkgrants/](https://southerncoalition.org/voting-rights/solve/solve2024sparkgrants/).