

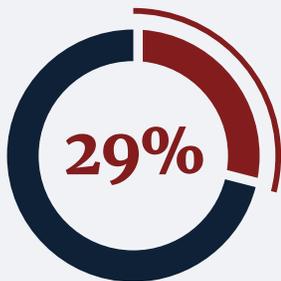
On the Frontlines of Democracy

America's Nonprofits Hold the Line on Civic Infrastructure

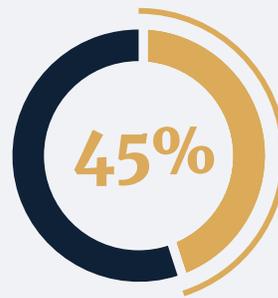
A strategic briefing on the opportunity and need for nonpartisan, nonprofit-led civic engagement and democracy building.

Nonprofit VOTE has worked for 20 years to strengthen the civic voice of the nonprofit sector. This mini-report draws on new findings from the 2025 Nonprofit Finance Fund (NFF) and Democracy Fund 2024 and 2025 surveys to show how nonprofits, already serving communities every day, are also building the civic infrastructure that sustains our democracy.

In early 2025, NFF surveyed more than 2,000 nonprofits nationwide, including questions on civic engagement and advocacy over the past year. The results reveal a sector stepping up:



of nonprofits reported engaging in civic activities such as voter registration and GOTV



reported participating in advocacy



We expand on this NFF survey data by looking at complementary data from Democracy Fund, which surveyed foundations supporting democracy work. Additional data from Nonprofit VOTE and others in this report offers a picture of both opportunity and urgency. **Trusted nonprofits are ready and eager to lead**, yet rising community needs and limited resources **threaten their ability to sustain this work**. This report captures that moment, connecting new data to a growing call for long-term investment in nonprofits as natural, and essential, civic infrastructure anchors.

Paving the Way Forward

Nonprofits as civic infrastructure builders

Across the fifty states, the same **nonprofit organizations** that connect millions to housing, food, and care are also showing up to build civic power.

Amid increasing demand and strained resources, these groups are educating, registering voters, and mobilizing while still meeting their community's needs.

They understand that equipping their communities, often our most vulnerable, to shape the policies that define them, IS the **frontlines of fighting for our democratic values.**

In a time when civic participation is challenged by polarization, misinformation, and barriers to access, the nonprofit sector remains one of the most trusted and effective bridges between communities and democracy. **Nonprofit leaders are renewing civic life itself, ensuring that engagement is local, inclusive, and lasting.**

Nonprofit VOTE stands at the intersection of service and civic participation, turning belief in community power into lasting impact. As the national hub for nonpartisan voter engagement, we help nonprofits weave civic participation into the fabric of their missions, equipping trusted messengers with the knowledge, tools, and confidence to reach those most often left out of the process. Together with our partners, we are cultivating a resilient civic infrastructure where every organization strengthens democracy through its everyday work.



Who Are the Nonprofits Engaging Their Communities?

New data from the **Nonprofit Finance Fund** show that **29% of nonprofits engaged their communities in civic activities** such as voter registration, education, and mobilization. The data further shows that nonprofits serving or led by affected communities were even more likely to do civic engagement work. This mirrors trends we saw in our 2022 America's Nonprofits Get Out The Vote (ANGOTV).

"And we just really came here together so that we can make sure that people who have been shut out of the system, who have been forgotten about, who have been ostracized and marginalized, still have the opportunity to vote...Because, these laws and these policies are going to impact them the most."

Desmera Gatewood, Democracy NC
Longtime Nonprofit VOTE Partner

Nonprofits Serving or Led by Underrepresented Communities Were Even More Likely to Do Civic Engagement Work Than The 29% Average

DEMOGRAPHICS

PRIMARILY SERVE COMMUNITIES OF COLOR 34%

LED BY A PERSON OF COLOR 35%

ECONOMICS

EXCLUSIVELY SERVE PEOPLE WITH LOWER INCOMES 32%

ADDRESSING ECONOMIC INEQUALITY AS A MAJOR FOCUS 39%

ACCESSIBILITY + LIVED EXPERIENCE

LED BY A PERSON WITH A DISABILITY 36%

LED BY A PERSON WITH SHARED LIVED EXPERIENCE 34%

CROSS-SECTOR WORK

WORK IN COMMUNITY/ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT SERVICES 34%

WORK IN SOCIAL JUSTICE AND RELATED SERVICES 57%

Challenges

The demand for services and the need for civic infrastructure are both **growing faster than available resources**.

America's nonprofits are being called on to meet urgent community needs while also sustaining long-term civic engagement. Among organizations engaged in civic engagement, including voter participation, **the strain is even greater**.

- 58% of civic-engaging nonprofits anticipate a significant increase in service demand, compared to 44% of other nonprofits.
- Only 40% expect to meet the service needs of 2025

"The data is clear: Even with increased demands and limited resources, nonprofits are still finding ways to help people they serve stay connected to use their voice in our democracy. That resilience is why this work matters"

Brian Miller, Executive Director, Nonprofit VOTE

Sustaining both community and civic infrastructure will require intentional investment. The capacity to do both is far from guaranteed. Thousands more nonprofits stand ready, trusted, and connected, eager to mobilize, **if given the resources to do so**.

Too often, America's nonprofits are asked to do it all with too little support. Empowering them can strengthen both our communities and our democracy.



46%

of funders in the Democracy Fund surveys analyzed for this report stated that pro-democracy philanthropy needs to do better in the future at supporting voter engagement efforts

Investing in Democracy

Across its 2024 and 2025 surveys, Democracy Fund gathered insights from a wide range of democracy funders, including foundations, individual funders, and those leading funding networks. Their responses point to a clear recognition of the challenges facing the field.

INVEST EARLY

55% of funders expressed needing to do better to meet pro-democracy needs with early or on-time funding for ongoing pre-election needs.

“As funders, we have a responsibility to not only invest in nonprofits’ programs, but in their capacity to lead and thrive. Strengthening the organizations at the heart of our communities is how lasting change takes root.”

Elaine Mintz, Fairfield Community Foundation

SAFETY AND SECURITY TAKE ON NEW IMPORTANCE

Funders expressed high levels of concern about harassment and intimidation of pro-democracy nonprofits. In 2024, **47% reported being very concerned** (46% somewhat concerned). By 2025, those numbers shifted sharply, with **66% very concerned** (28% somewhat concerned).

“Continuing to behave politely and simply moving from one cycle to the next, as though slight modifications to previous strategies will suffice, has already proven catastrophic”

Philanthropy Survey Respondent

Meet the Moment

Support Our Civic Infrastructure Protectors

The future cycle is here. The time to build momentum and infrastructure for 2026 is now.

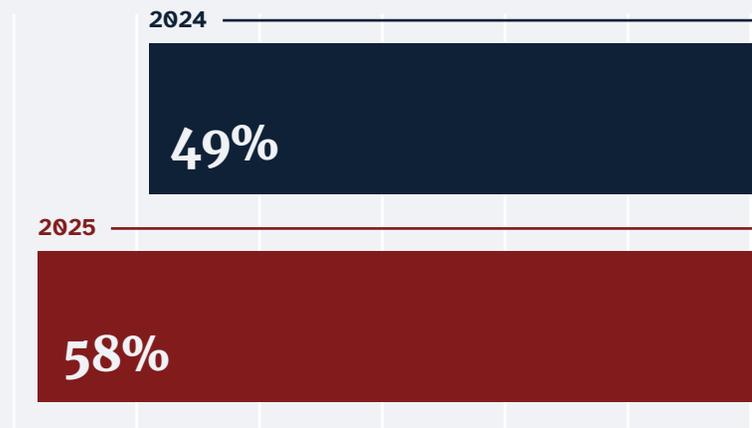
And Nonprofit VOTE is ready to expand and mobilize these trusted messengers to strengthen their civic infrastructure work.

Just as community needs never pause, democracy cannot be built in election years or crisis moments alone; it must be invested in year-round.

This is the foundation of democracy building, where investment meets impact and trusted nonprofits turn readiness into action. With sustained support, Nonprofit VOTE can ensure every community partner has a voice in shaping the future we share.



SUCCESS REQUIRES SUSTAINED FUNDING: FUNDERS EXPRESSED RISING CONCERN OVER DECLINING FUNDING AND DONOR INTEREST



Don't miss this moment to strengthen democracy. Invest in the trusted nonprofits on the frontlines of civic engagement.

Partner with us to ensure everyone of our communities has the tools, training, and voice needed to shape the future we share.

“Even in the hardest moments, nonprofits keep showing up for their communities. Our job is to show up for them and to make sure they have the support to keep people engaged in our democracy. If we do that, we’re building something lasting together.”

Brian Miller, Executive Director, Nonprofit VOTE

Data Appendix

2025 State of the Nonprofit Sector (Nonprofit Finance Fund):

Nonprofit Finance Fund conducted the “State of the Nonprofit Sector Survey” which captured financial and operational data from 2,206 nonprofits across the country. Our findings highlight insights and comparisons from 588 nonprofits that reported working to increase civic engagement in 2024. [Dive more into their insights here.](#)

2025 Where We Go From Here (Democracy Fund):

Democracy Fund and its partners at Freedman Consulting, LLC conducted a survey before and after the 2024 November election from 227 private foundations, individual donors, donor networks and collaboratives, funding intermediaries, and donor/philanthropic advisors. Results presented are from either survey or both. Organizations invited to participate provided an average of more than \$100k/year to nonprofits advancing work promoting a healthy American democracy. [Dive more into their insights here.](#)

2022 America’s Nonprofits Get Out the Vote (Nonprofit VOTE with Urban Institute data):

In 2022 Nonprofit VOTE published a report with data from the 2021 Urban Institute’s [“National Survey of Nonprofit Trends and Impacts Public Use Files”](#). The original Urban Institute survey was conducted in the spring of 2021 with an audience of 2,309 nationwide. In Nonprofit VOTE’s analysis, a subgroup of 266 was highlighted who received the “long form” survey which included a question about voter engagement. This report, much like the NFF survey data included in this mini-report, showed that nonprofits serving or led by underrepresented communities were significantly more likely to do voter engagement than their peers. [Read the full report here.](#)

For more information or to learn about financial giving options, please email info@nonprofitvote.org