
2020 STATE FUNDS

WINNING ELECTIONS AND ADVANCING POLICY

INTRODUCTION

Over the past 10 years, Democracy Alliance (DA) Partners scaled up the infrastructure necessary to promote progressive ideas, improve media coverage, develop new leadership, create sophisticated civic engagement strategies, and engage Young People, Latinos, and African-Americans.

Conservatives, however, have made unprecedented contributions to groups like ALEC and the Tea Party. The Court's decision in *Citizens United* and the deep pockets of the Koch brothers have helped Republicans to control 29 state legislatures and push waves of punitive and regressive laws. These investments at the national and state level have all had a catastrophic impact on our ability to make progress on the issues we care about.

Control of state and local governance has proven to be a winning strategy for conservatives in winning elections and policy that has shifted the playing field. The 2020 Vision framework elevates states and the New American Majority as central to our long-term success. These are the places where, and the people with whom, we must build power and win in order to see progress on our three connected goals: creating a fair democracy, building an inclusive economy, and nurturing a healthy planet. States are increasingly the sites of our most important political and policy battles. We need a broad coalition with strong community roots to engage successfully in these battles.

The DA is establishing the 2020 State Funds, an aligned set of collaborative funds that will make significant investments in twelve strategic states. Each fund will have its own strategy that helps us achieve collective goals. These funds will have their own advisory boards that will provide resources, expertise, and governance. Staff will help forge connections and collaborate across issue areas. The five new funds are:

- New America Majority Fund to build political power, organizational capacity and infrastructure, while centering these communities in the progressive movement;
- Inclusive Economy Fund to support campaigns that make real change in the lives of working families and expand the public's sense of what is possible in policy and politics;
- Climate Change Fund to expand public engagement in states to enact state and national climate policies;
- Democracy Fund to make voting easier and defend the right to vote; and
- State Engagement Initiative to support state-based electoral strategies

If we are successful, the 2020 State Funds will help:

- Change the electoral map by working to make targeted gains in state and federal elections with an eye on setting progressives up for more favorable redistricting maps post-2020;
- Build the progressive base by investing in the New American Majority and centering those communities in our strategies;
- Win significant policy gains through strong issue organizing work on climate, economic inequality, and voting rights;
- Build and sustain state infrastructure by engaging new donors and allies, strengthening donor tables, supporting convening and communication hubs, and building field, leadership and policy capacity.

THE STATES

The 2020 State Funds will initially focus on 12 states:

- **Challenge states** that are essential to restoring progressive power both at the state and federal level (FL, NC, NM, OH, PA, VA, WI)
- **Growth states** that are trending in a more progressive direction but are currently out of reach (AZ, GA)
- **Governing states** with progressive majorities that can pass exemplary policies that make systemic change in favor of progressives and create momentum for federal reforms (CO, MN, OR)

Not every fund will work in all of the states, but by having a common set of states in which to focus we can maximize resources and explore opportunities for alignment. Of course, active donor tables exist in other states in which a number of Partners participate, like the Texas Future Project which the DA helped to incubate, and additional states, such as CA, ME, MI, and NV could be added as resources allow, and exceptions may be made for promising yet unanticipated campaigns in states that fall outside of this initial geographic focus.

2020 STATE FUNDS PRIORITY STATES

A GRASSROOTS INVESTMENT STRATEGY

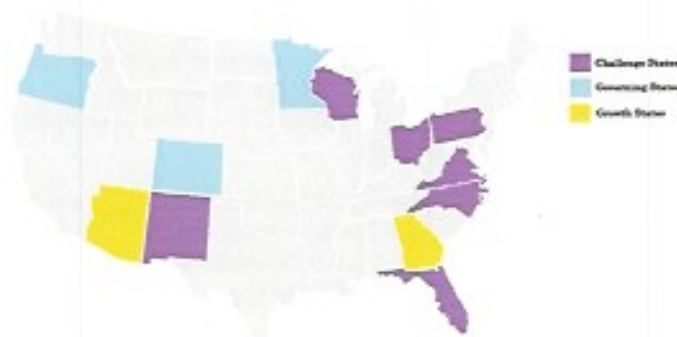
Thanks in part to the DA's decade-long investment in building infrastructure and strategic alignment, some issue- and civic engagement groups already collaborate across issue and electoral campaigns. The 2020 State Funds will expand these growing field efficiencies in states.

There is an acute need to provide funding earlier to ensure groups are better resourced and better coordinated year in and year out. We aim to make groups stronger and to assist in their seamless movement between electoral work and issue organizing and advocacy.

BENEFITS OF ALIGNED FUNDS

The 2020 State Funds build on DA's investment and experience in administering pooled funds. For example, the Election Administration Fund and Youth Engagement Fund were both created in the lead up to the 2008 election when there were concerns about voter protection and the need to engage young voters. When evaluations found them effective, future funds were developed including the Democracy Fund, the Latino Engagement Fund, and the Black Civic Engagement Fund. There are significant benefits to utilizing pooled funds including:

- Agile and targeted funding; able to respond quickly and at various support levels.
- Shared intelligence, and vetting of effective organizations for investment.
- Ability to share tools, training and capacity building assistance with groups.
- Opportunity to collaborate as donors, and leverage resources from multiple sources.
- Increasingly coordinated funding strategies and plans.
- Shared administrative resources such as staffing, technology, and finance.
- Multiple donors can tackle big issues collectively, having greater impact than on their own.
- Groups have less fundraising work, allowing them to focus on programmatic work.



STRUCTURE & GOVERNANCE

We propose a structure of governance and staffing that brings together the expertise and experience of practitioners and donors around the shared goals of expanding the impact of investments on electoral and policy outcomes, developing collaborative strategies across constituencies and issues, creating cost efficiencies, and increasing the overall level of investment in the field.

The 2020 State Fund is designed to enable donors to invest in the issues, constituencies, and states they care about most. Each Fund will have its own goals and strategy, and an independent advisory board. A representative of each Fund's advisory board will meet periodically as a group to share plans, lessons learned and to compare strategic insights. Whenever possible, DA advisors and staff will aim to align the work in particular states. Our goal is to develop the 2020 Funds to accommodate both general and designated support, and to institute oversight protocols that are comprehensive, responsive, and elegant.

This flexible structure enables each Fund to tap into the expertise of any other Fund. The Latino Engagement Fund, for example, has a deep understanding of community-based groups in many states. This independent assessment is particularly important for local groups not affiliated with national organizations that have sometimes been overlooked for funding despite their capacity.

Each Fund will develop state goals and plans in coordination with each other. Where strategic, these goals and plans will identify areas for shared goals, plans, and collaboration among Funds. DA staff, in partnership with advisory boards, will also take into account and promote closer partnership with other state and national donors - COS tables, foundations, and other c3 collaborative funds, etc. - to share costs, strategy, information, and relationships.

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2020 ECONOMY FUND

The pooled fund on the economy will invest in “breakthrough” moments that change the national debate by proving what is possible in both policy and politics in these three focus areas:

- **Innovative Wage Campaigns:** Campaigns to raise wages that set new standards for progressives in either policy or organizing tactics. We seek to be open and innovative—this category could include activities ranging from workplace organizing efforts aimed at raising hourly wages, to green jobs-based full employment initiatives, to efforts forcing low wage employers to reimburse state and local governments for costs they impose on the public.
- **Women’s Economic Agenda:** Efforts to forge common ground between low and middle-income women. A particular focus here will be new campaigns to expand access to affordable, quality childcare and improving standards for caregiving workers, who are overwhelmingly women.
- **Financialization:** Pilot campaigns, including work to reduce student debt, that build public support to address the power of financial elites and to counter the growing influence of big corporations on economic policy.

2020 CLIMATE FUND

The 2020 Climate Fund will help fill the critical gap in the battle to address the climate crisis: building the public and political will to act. Identifying and investing in place-based organizations to engage progressive constituencies on the issue of climate change and clean energy is a key component of building that will. Key organizations in priority states will increase their organizing presence and advocacy efforts on federal and state policies like the Clean Power Plan, carbon pricing, or clean energy measures that create jobs and help solve the climate crisis.

If we are successful, the climate movement will be more diverse and have increased capacity in priority states. The movement’s impact will be measured by growing attention to climate and clean energy issues in elections and successful clean energy policy outcomes, such as energy efficiency, renewables, carbon pricing and strong state-based clean power plans. The Fund will prioritize investments with the strongest promise for building long-term capacity and impacting near-term policy and electoral fights.

2020 DEMOCRACY FUND

Basic voting rights and access to the ballot are threatened more directly now than at any time since the 1950s, exacerbating low turnout among under-represented voters. The Supreme Court’s 2013 *Shelby County v Holder* decision largely severed federal oversight and involvement in the ways states and counties provide access to voting. The already chaotic patchwork of administrative rules and processes, which can differ dramatically from locality to locality, is now open to partisan exploitation and tactical voter suppression. Since 2012, more than 90 bills have been proposed in 43 states that would restrict access to voting in some way.

To redress and overturn these voter suppression initiatives and enact "game-changing" proactive campaigns that would dramatically expand the electorate, the Democracy Fund would support state and local organizations in a handful of key states that, in partnership with the national organizations in the DA's 2020 Vision Portfolio, would help to build a supply chain of essential roles, strategies, and messengers. The Fund would invest in the state-based organizations, including state affiliates of national organizing networks, that are developing community messengers and running coordinated programs aimed at educating and turning out New American Majority voters - even (and especially) when voter suppression policies make their participation difficult. Equally importantly, the Fund would invest in states where campaigns to make voting easier and accessible (e.g., automatic voter registration) have the opportunity to redefine the debate, dramatically expand the electorate, and ensure that future voter engagement funds can be used more effectively (e.g., for persuasion and turnout instead of registration).

2020 NEW AMERICAN MAJORITY FUND

The path to building long term progressive political power requires deep investment in states, and more specifically investment in unleashing the political power of the new American majority. As the 2008 and 2012 elections showed, when the full progressive coalition is engaged and mobilized, we win. And as the 2010 and 2014 elections proved, when our coalition is disengaged or uninspired, we lose.

Over the past several years, the Democracy Alliance has been committed to supporting the work to build infrastructure in communities of color, women and youth as key constituencies in the new American Majority (NAM). And although that work and investment has contributed to increasing capacity in these constituencies, we are not reaching the scale and scope needed to unleash the game-changing impact we know is possible through this work.

As demographics have shifted, the scale of investment has failed to keep up with the growth of key constituencies, therefore, the work continues to be significantly under-resourced; constituency focused strategic engagements are too often siloed from one another and the broader progressive engagement in states; the development of c4 capacity in these constituencies has lagged; and we are only engaging a fraction of the emerging constituencies that can change the political balance of power in America for decades to come.

The development of a New American Majority Fund (NAMF) responds to these immediate challenges, while also providing the space for partners to sharpen the existing strategy and expand focus to work with other emerging key constituencies (API, LGBTQ, White Working Class). The idea of the NAMF builds on the last few years of DA partner investment in Black, Latino, and Youth Engagement Funds, and the experiments and lessons learned on what it will take to bring this work to scale. The NAMF will streamline the current fund structures and governance, expanding our ability to:

- **Develop Cross-Cutting Strategy:** Our investments in sustainable infrastructure and breakthrough campaigns needs to be aligned behind a common strategy that cuts across constituencies - unifying our efforts and outcomes, and reducing resource competition and diffuse investments.
- **Strengthen and Build Capacity:** A unified fund will be able to assess the full field across constituencies and make strategic recommendations on investment across constituencies operating in the same geography, ensuring that we are focusing our investments on the areas of greatest need based on a comprehensive analysis. There will be a particular intentional focus on growing and strengthening c4 organizational capacity.
- **Identify New Efficiencies:** The NAMF will be positioned to support common capacities - communications, research, training, and leadership development - across constituencies.

2020 STATE ENGAGEMENT INITIATIVE

Recognizing the need to drive resources toward the states, in 2013 the Democracy Alliance (DA) launched the State Engagement Initiative (SEI) in partnership with COS. SEI is designed to encourage funding to strategic, well-vetted state programs that can engage, organize, and mobilize millions of voters ahead of the coming election. It will work in and beyond the states targeted by the above Initiatives.

The investments should flow from state plans, written by the staff and principles of the state infrastructure (State Voices ED, Progress Now ED, AV ED, COS Table ED). Donors who make significant investments can join the SEI advisory committee and participate in decision making.

All 12 priority states of the 2020 State Funds are also initially recommended as part of SEI and have important federal and state races on the ballot next year. They will be front and center in 2016; they could benefit from added capacity and resources in this critical election; and undoubtedly hold the key to state and national power in 2020 after the next round of redistricting.