

OREGON STRATEGIC PLANNING

Centering New American Majority Communities in Oregon's Democracy/Money in Politics Movement

SUMMARY

The Asian Pacific American Network of Oregon (APANO), the NAACP Portland Branch, and Common Cause Oregon seek to jointly design, convene and execute a strategic planning process for a core group of New American Majority stakeholders to establish a shared vision and policy agenda on democracy/money in politics for Oregon. We aim to unite a new cohort of leaders whose constituencies face significant barriers to democratic participation, representation and policy results due to the corrupting and chilling effect of private money in politics.

Oregon has a mixed history of strengthening our democratic processes, and in this unprecedented political moment, we envision leveraging the momentum from positive developments with local initiatives in Portland and Multnomah County, and a growing statewide presence, to cement the role of New American Majority stakeholders to be at the table for advancing meaningful democracy reforms.

With our state's changing racial demographics, and the critical role of young people and women in a healthy democracy, it is our hope the Piper Fund will help us establish a common strategic plan, grounded in a shared understanding of the root causes, that will increase the confidence and commitment of leaders and organizations from under-represented communities to be more deeply and consistently engaged.

BACKGROUND & GOALS

Organizations

APANO (Asian Pacific American Network of Oregon) is the state's oldest and largest organization advocating for the interests of Oregon's 250,000 Asian and Pacific Islanders. APANO centers community organizing, leading social justice campaigns and working to shift culture so all Oregonians have the rights, resources and recognition to thrive. APANO was active in the efforts to establish and then preserve the City of Portland's Voter Owned Elections. More recently, APANO worked to pass the Multnomah County measure 26-184, contributing to the Citizen's Review Commission and educating voters for the successful campaign finance initiative. APANO plays a central role as a founding organization of the Coalition of Communities of Color, Fair Shot for All Coalition and the Oregon Health Equity Alliance, key coalitions that center the leadership of New American Majority constituencies. Long-term, APANO and our affiliate 501(c)(3) APANO Communities United Fund seek to increase voter participation and elected leadership from our communities.

NAACP Portland Branch... The NAACP mission is to eliminate racial discrimination for all people and to hold policymakers accountable for policies and practices that reinforce systems of discrimination and disparate outcomes for communities of color and other marginalized community members. My work on money in politics goes back to Portland Voter Owned Elections where my volunteers organized to pass this measure at Portland City Council. Grassroots volunteers were trained and support to present to talk to the public about PVOE and meet with elected leaders to push this reform. The group who led this effort were low-income, exfelons primarily people of color. This was their first opportunity to participate on a public policy decision and to share both the policy and the advocacy to pass it at the city council. The NAACP has been a long time support of radically reforming our democracy so the voices of all are able to access government and all racial and economic groups can run and sever in public office. The NAACP Portland Branch is a 501(c)4 organization led by our members who vote consistently to support campaign finance reform measures that reform our democracy so it works for us all. The NAACP Portland Branch also worked to pass the Multnomah County Measure 26-184 and the City of Portland's new public finance system. We are also partners at the state level attempting to move a public finance system this legislative session.

Common Cause Oregon is the state chapter of Common Cause, a national nonpartisan grassroots organization dedicated to upholding the core values of American democracy. Common Cause strives to fulfill the unrealized promise of democracy, promoting equal rights, opportunity, and representation for all. Toward that end, the organization has a long history of leadership on the issue of money in politics, and frequently convenes broader coalition efforts on this issue. Currently, with partial funding from the Meyer Memorial Trust, we have launched a three-year project here in Oregon to support increased strategizing and collaboration among stakeholder organizations to grow our collective capacity and power for a more proactive set of campaign finance reforms and related democracy reforms. The strategic planning process proposed here – aimed at involving a core set of organizations that strengthen political voice for some of the most politically underrepresented and marginalized populations – stems from this broader project.

Project Goals

We aim to facilitate an intensive process that will educate, empower and engage New American Majority stakeholders in Oregon's Democracy/Money in Politics movement. Our project team will establish relationships with stakeholders to develop a more precise shared analysis of the problem, adopt a collaborative policy agenda, and lay the groundwork for future investments.

Our project will center New American Majority stakeholders, prioritizing community based organizations with a base-building program, to increase their ownership and visible leadership in future strategies. Recognizing the rapid demographic changes with communities of color now comprising over 23% of Oregon, we expect to build the new capacity with new leadership including immigrants and refugees who are persistently under-represented in the democratic process. Long-term, we aim to increase the capacity for communities who are directly affected by disparities to be able to identify and win the solutions they need.

We will bring a deep assessment of the current conditions and challenges, engaging with experts in the field to ensure we have the best available research, polling and data to inform our strategic direction. We will also assess levels of support and what is needed from ally stakeholders including more traditional mainstream advocates for campaign finance reform.

Project Workplan Overview

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| <p>Phase I: Design & Input</p> <p>June 2017 to August 2017</p> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Formalize workplan ● Research and summarize Oregon democracy/money in politics movement history ● Identify stakeholders, allies, experts ● Conduct, document and evaluate 20 one-on-one interviews with stakeholders ● Establish scope of work, recruit and select planning consultant ● Plan Stakeholder Convening for September 2017 |
| <p>Phase II: Strategic Planning</p> <p>September 2017 to November 2017</p> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● September 23rd, 2017 Stakeholder Convening (day-long) ● Prioritize and adopt strategic plan ● Assessments (issue, capacity) ● Communications plan |
| <p>Phase III: Integration</p> <p>December 2017 to January 2018</p> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Publish written summary of strategic plan ● Develop budget proposal ● Conduct report back with participants and ally stakeholders ● Execute communications plan ● Host funders briefing |

POLITICAL CONTEXT

The power of private money in politics has always been a source of inequality in democracy. But in recent years, with both federal and Oregon courts rolling back regulations, we're now experiencing a flood of money in politics beyond anything we've ever experienced before, with much of this money hidden from public view. Oregon has even weaker regulations than most other states, with no campaign contribution limits at all, little public financing, and lacking some basic transparency requirements. As a result, Oregon's elections are among the most expensive per capita in the country, making it unrealistic for candidates representing low-wealth

communities to run competitive campaigns for office. Those who do represent us in public office face strong financial pressure to prioritize the interests of the large campaign contributors who fund their election campaigns and their political parties. State legislative agendas are significantly prescribed behind the scenes by the campaign donor class.

Oregon's communities of color, low-income communities, and other populations historically disenfranchised from political power are certainly not unfamiliar with being marginalized in state decision-making; however, as money in politics increases, the inequality deepens.

As money's exaggerated influence in Oregon politics worsens, leaders of community organizations increasingly recognize this problem as a key priority. However, none of us has the capacity to tackle this alone. And for under-resourced community groups working on multiple pressing issues, it's hard to make time for one more. Nevertheless, knowing that inequity in the democratic process is at the root of other inequities we face, a number of organizations are increasingly coming together on this. For example, some of us joined forces in 2015 to support then Secretary of State Kate Brown's legislative proposal for campaign contribution limits. Some of us also worked together last year to pass major city-level public financing reform in Portland. And some of us continue to work together to shore up this Portland reform, while advancing it at the state level. Various configurations of our organizations have met on and off over the past few years to discuss aspects of this issue. Our fledgling collaborative leadership has in fact been a factor helping to ripen this issue here in Oregon, opening up better prospects for transformative change.

Oregon policymakers are feeling more pressure and showing more receptivity to passing reforms. After failing to pass the bill we advanced for campaign contribution limits in 2015 (after key labor organizations opposed the measure), the legislature set up a task force on campaign finance reform to begin exploring solutions, which continues to meet. Off record, we've heard that some legislators from the majority party have pushed dissenting labor unions to get on board for some path forward so that legislators can respond to public demand. Our own coalition efforts led to building consensus with labor allies on public financing, opening up opportunity to advance this reform. Currently, the House Majority Leader Jennifer Williamson and House Senior Whip Dan Rayfield are championing an effort to advance small-donor matching reform at the state level, and several state legislators from both major political parties are working with Common Cause to get legislative council and the state Attorney General to reconsider a now two-decades-old legal opinion by then Attorney General Hardy Meyers which has prohibited basic transparency measures for years. If successful, this would open up room for better transparency policies.

In addition, public support for reform is now at an all-time high. Broadly across the country, virtually all Americans across party lines and demographics recognize that there's something fundamentally wrong with our democracy today, with an astounding 91% agreeing that money in politics is a serious problem (Global Strategy Group). In Oregon, solid majorities support specific reforms including campaign contribution limits and publicly financed elections. (DHM & GBA Strategies). Beyond the raw data, it's clear to anyone who regularly engages with

Oregonians on this issue that there is enormous frustration and a strong appetite to restore sensible balance to both our state and federal democratic processes.

A window of opportunity has opened. This is a moment where our collective work over the next several years could have real impact.

CAPACITY

We are confident we can secure several in-kind contributions to support this project proposal, however due to the short timeline and focused scope of work, we are not anticipating any additional fundraising until after we've completed the strategic plan. This process is aligned with larger efforts being facilitated by Common Cause of Oregon. Common Cause has already raised \$150,000 in initial seed funding from the Meyer Memorial Trust to cover some of their own staffing costs to support coalition planning and collaboration over a three-year period. Common Cause is now working to raise additional funds for coalition partners and a broader coalition budget.

Piper Fund funding would support a small but critically important piece of this larger project, a strategic planning process among a subset of stakeholder organizations who are particularly invested in advancing an equal political voice for New American Majority and other historically disenfranchised populations. This grant would cover the staffing costs for APANO and NAACP to co-convene this planning process, and would cover the concrete costs of the process, such as consultants, venue, food and travel.

It is our hope that the Piper Fund would then consider further investment – and would help us attract other funders to invest – in whatever plans emerge from this process.

BUDGET

\$5,000 – Planning Consultants (12 hrs facilitation , 38 hrs prep & follow-up, report, @ estimated \$100/hr)

\$5,000 – Convening Expenses: Venue (\$300), Food (\$600), Transportation (\$700), Hotel (\$600) Childcare (\$300), Participant Stipends (25 @\$100)

\$10,000 – APANO (covers staff time to co-convene)

\$10,000 – NAACP (covers staff time to co-convene)

\$3,000 Admin Overhead (10% of project budget)

\$33,000 - Total

PROJECT DIRECTORS

Rev. Joseph Santos-Lyons, APANO

Rev. Joseph Santos-Lyons serves as Executive Director of APANO, Oregon's oldest and largest Asian Pacific Islander organizing and advocacy group. APANO leads campaigns and social change initiatives to counter oppression and advance the rights and resources for all people to thrive. Joseph is also an ordained minister affiliated with the First Unitarian Church of Portland, and previously worked as a national director in the Office of Young Adult and Campus Ministry for ten years. In an era of intense division and retrenchment, Joseph's political work and ministry intersect on building power with communities most affected, grounded in "one of the most radical things we can do is to introduce people to one another." Rev. Santos-Lyons is President of DRUUMM, a national UU People of Color ministry, on the Board of OPAL Environmental Justice Oregon, and a former performer with Portland Taiko. A graduate of the University of Oregon and Harvard University, Joseph enjoys approaching the universe as a lifelong learner. Joseph identifies as biracial Chinese/Czech, uses he/him pronouns, and builds with his partner Aimee Santos-Lyons and their three children.

Jo Ann Hardesty, President NAACP Portland Branch

Hardesty is the owner of Consult Hardesty a multipurpose firm that provides training for nonprofit and for profit business interest. Hardesty serves on the steering committee for the Albina Ministerial Alliance Coalition for Justice and Police Reform, the community organization that obtain standing in the federal courts to reform Portland Police. Hardesty currently serves as the President, NAACP Portland Branch; host a weekly public affairs program on KBOO (Thursday mornings at 8:00am). Ms. Hardesty has over 25 years experience working on issues of racial, social and economic justice

Over the last 3-years Hardesty has re-established the NAACP Portland Branch as a strong voice for racial justice. Under Hardesty's leadership the NAACP Portland Branch has begun to engage in broader community coalition outreach that has led to significant visibility and actions on behalf of our membership. Nationally the NAACP has been a long time supporter of campaign finance reform efforts.

Kate Titus, Common Cause

Kate Titus serves as executive director of Common Cause Oregon. She joined the organization in 2013, after two decades work in public policy, advocacy, and community organizing. A longtime Oregonian, she previously served as executive director of Oregon Action, a statewide grassroots membership organization that she helped revitalize as a multi-class, multi-racial voice of democracy for people on the downside of power (and which has since merged with the Center for Intercultural Organizing to form Unite Oregon). In that capacity, she also served on the boards of the Northwest Federation of Community Organizations and USAction, and on the Jobs with Justice workers' rights board in Portland. Kate has also worked for the national Change to Win labor federation, and for Public Citizen, as deputy director of their global trade watch division. She is a graduate of Connecticut College and Harvard.

