



Application by Healthy Democracy Fund



Challenge designed and powered by Carrot.
© 2021. All rights reserved.

APPLICATION

Thank you for participating in the Stronger Democracy Award.

We recommend reading all requirements for this application before you begin. We encourage you to review the [Scoring Rubric](#) that will be used to assess all valid applications. Applications must be submitted in English. Your application may be published online and will be shared with others during the evaluation process. **Please visit the [Bold Solutions Network](#) to see what information is displayed from Lever for Change competitions.**

Be sure to review your application as it will appear after it's been submitted (link at the bottom of the page) and confirm your changes have been saved. When you have completed all of the requirements, a message will be displayed on the screen. At that point, you can submit your final application. Once you have submitted the application, you will no longer be able to make changes and the status on your dashboard will confirm submission (you will not receive an automated email confirmation).

You must submit your application no later than **Thursday, July 22, 2021 at 5:00 PM Pacific**.

A. QUICK PITCH

This is your opportunity to make a strong first impression. Offer a brief and compelling overview of your proposal. Avoid using jargon, abbreviations, or language that a layperson may not understand. **The information in this section is likely to be made publicly available in a variety of [online settings](#) and will be viewed by peers and judges of the competition.**

Project Title (10 words)

Provide the title of your project. Choose a name that easily identifies your solution and distinguishes it from any other project.

Initiative Conventions: Reimagining Direct Democracy Through Lottery-Selected Assemblies

Project Description (25 words)

Provide a short description of your project in one sentence.

The Initiative Convention System revitalizes state initiative processes by using lottery-selected assemblies to prioritize issues and propose ballot measures that address pressing problems.

Executive Summary (150 words)

Write a one-paragraph overview of your project that answers the following three questions:

- What is a brief description of the problem that you are trying to solve?
- How will you solve it?
- What are your intended outcomes? How will your solution address the lives of the people you wish to serve, including historically marginalized people within that population?

Your Executive Summary should be a stand-alone statement of the problem and solution. It should not require any other context to clearly explain what you are seeking to accomplish.

Our proposal fulfills the original potential of state initiative systems: to give everyday people unique political agency. However, most initiative systems are highly inaccessible and overrun by moneyed interests. In an Initiative Convention System, lottery-selected deliberative assemblies – as diverse as our states – write initiatives. First, an Agenda Assembly collects information about pressing policy concerns from diverse stakeholders and prioritizes two topic areas. Second, two Drafting Assemblies research and deliberate on each topic and write initiative language. Dedicated funds are reserved for acquiring signatures and finding advocates for each initiative. A Governance Commission made up of Assembly Members oversees each step to ensure process integrity. We select from ages 16 and up, guarantee universal accessibility, and design processes specifically supporting marginalized Members. We will pilot two full cycles of this System in two states – totaling eight created initiatives – while building political support to make the system permanent.

B. VIDEO PRESENTATION

You are required to submit a video that captures your project and describes why it should be funded. The video is an opportunity to showcase your passion and to pitch your story in a succinct format. We want you to share your vision with the judges in a way that is different from the written proposal format. This DOES NOT need to be a professionally produced video; video shot on a smartphone is acceptable.

In order to complete this part of your application, your team will upload a short digital film using YouTube. Set the Privacy Settings on your video to Public or Unlisted – do **not** set them to Private. **This will be viewed by peers and judges of the competition.**

Your video may be extracted from your submission and made available to the public and other donors. Appeal to a broad audience. Video submissions should follow these guidelines or else it will render the application ineligible:

- A length of no more than 90 seconds.
- Your pitch must be in English, or if in another language, subtitled in English.
- Your video must be captioned. See instructions [here](#) on how to caption YouTube videos.
- Your video should not contain any images of identifiable children (under age 18) without express parental consent.
- Your video should not include any copyrighted material (including, but not limited to, music) for which you do not have a license.

Here are general suggestions for delivering a high-quality video pitch:

- Introduce yourself and your organization(s) and/or team.
- Describe the problem that you are committed to solving.
- Explain your solution.
- Explain what is unique about your solution.
- Describe how you would plan to measure success and achieve broad but meaningful impact.
- Examples of videos from past competitions can be found on our [Video Supports](#) page.

Paste the full YouTube URL in the box below.

<https://youtu.be/0sRXVgbRVGI>

C. YOUR TEAM

Now that you've provided a brief overview of your project, focus on the talent and management of your team. **This section will be viewed by peers and judges of the competition.**

Lead Applicant

During registration, you identified the Lead Applicant responsible for receiving and taking accountability for any grant funds, as well as providing the direction, control, and supervision for the project. If the Lead Applicant has changed, **please *Edit Registration Form* from the *Profile* menu to update this information.**

Project Website or Social Media Page

(5 words)

Provide us with a URL to your project website or social media page of choice if one exists. Having a project website or preferred social media page is not a requirement for the competition and will not impact your eligibility. If you have not created a project website or a social media page, insert "Not Applicable."

<https://healthydemocracy.org/ics/>

Primary Area of Expertise for the Lead Applicant

Please select the primary area of expertise for the Lead Applicant.

Selected:

- Democracy

Team Collaboration

Does your team consist of two or more organizations with an executed memorandum of understanding (MOU) (signed and dated by all parties, including the lead organization submitting this proposal)?

- Team consists of two or more organizations but there is not an executed (signed and dated) MOU
- Team consists of two or more organizations and has an executed (signed and dated) MOU
- Team does not consist of two or more organizations

Partners

If your team consists of two or more organizations, please list them using the legal name of each partner. If your team does not consist of two or more partners, please enter "Not Applicable."

Key Partner #1: **Oregon's Kitchen Table**

Key Partner #2: **Sightline Institute**

Key Partner #3: **Not Applicable**

Key Partner #4: **Not Applicable**

Key Partner #5: **Not Applicable**

Why Your Team (250 words)

Describe your team's leadership, its members, and its collaborators or partners. If relevant, include details about how and why the collaboration was formed. Explain how your team is uniquely positioned to deliver results, and why you are the best choice to solve this problem. Emphasize that you have the right capabilities, experience, commitment, and authority to adopt the proposed solution and execute your project. We encourage collaboration, coalitions, and partnerships that can together present a credible and actionable reform path to strengthen US democracy. Lead applicants who are 501(c)(4) organizations are required to include, as part of the project team, a 501(c)(3) organization that is eligible to receive funds from a Donor Advised Fund (DAF).

Healthy Democracy is a US-based nonpartisan 501(c)(3) that designs and coordinates innovative deliberative democracy programs. In 2008, we launched the Citizens' Initiative Review (CIR) as a pilot program in Oregon. It became state law in 2011, resulting in the most significant reform to the initiative system in 110 years. We have led efforts to bring lottery-selected deliberative processes to the US, with the help of partner organizations who help us engage policymakers and the general public. After running CIRs in five states and three countries, piloting a statewide citizens' assembly in Oregon, and developing programs for local governments, we have the tools to further implement groundbreaking initiative reforms and the partnerships to make them permanent. Our core partners for this project:

Oregon's Kitchen Table is a joint program of the National Policy Consensus Center housed at Portland State University and Kitchen Table Democracy. They work to increase the voice of all Oregonians in public decision making. Oregon's Kitchen Table has staffed Oregon's CIR Commission, and has assisted Healthy Democracy on local and statewide panels by conducting outreach to experts and marginalized communities.

Sightline Institute is an independent nonprofit think tank with extensive experience advancing democratic reforms. Sightline will help coordinate the grassroots campaigns to gather support for the Convention System in Oregon and Montana – both states where they have a presence.

Additional partners – particularly organizations who would bring additional diversity and expertise to the team – may be added following our continuing outreach efforts described below.

Biographies of Key Staff

For each of the top three managers responsible for the success of the project, please provide a name (First/Last), the name of the organization the manager is affiliated with, and a brief biographical statement of up to 100 words. The biographical statement should include the title of the manager and emphasize those credentials and experiences which are most relevant to the project.

KEY STAFF #1:

FIRST NAME: **Linn**

LAST NAME: **Davis**

AFFILIATION: **Healthy Democracy**

BIOGRAPHY: Linn is the Program Co-Director at Healthy Democracy and has been with the organization since 2016. He brings a wealth of experience on deliberative process design and coordination. He has been the lead designer of six major lottery-selected assemblies, advised on six additional assemblies, advised on initiative reform bills in two states, and co-designed other state and local public engagement processes. He has advised on international standards and practices for lottery-selected deliberative processes with the Organization for Economic Co-operation and Development. He holds a Master's in Urban and Regional Planning from Portland State University and a BA from Grinnell College.

KEY STAFF #2:

FIRST NAME: **Wendy**

LAST NAME: **Willis**

AFFILIATION: **Oregon's Kitchen Table**

BIOGRAPHY: Wendy is the Founder and Director of Oregon's Kitchen Table, the Executive Director of the national nonprofit Kitchen Table Democracy, and the Executive Director of the learning network the Deliberative Democracy Consortium. She is a national leader in the field of civic engagement and citizen-centered decision making. She graduated magna cum laude from Georgetown Law Center and holds a BA from Willamette University.

KEY STAFF #3:

FIRST NAME: **Kristin**

LAST NAME: **Eberhard**

AFFILIATION: **Sightline Institute**

BIOGRAPHY: Kristin is the Director of Climate and Democracy at Sightline and a member of the Institute's management team. She is the author of *Becoming a Democracy: How We Can Fix the Electoral College, Gerrymandering, and Our Elections*. She graduated with honors from Stanford University, cum laude from Duke University School of Law, and earned a Master's of Environmental Management from Duke's Nicholas School of the Environment.

D. THE CHALLENGE

This section provides the opportunity for you to more fully explain the challenge you intend to solve and show that you understand the nuances of the challenge that have informed your strategy. **This section will be viewed by peers and judges of the competition.**

Challenge Statement (250 words)

Describe the specific challenges that your solution will address, using non-expert language. Focus on setting the stage for your solution (versus describing how you intend to solve it) and discuss who is impacted by the problem and why the problem exists.

- Who is impacted by the problem or challenges identified?
- Why does the problem exist in the current environment?
- What are the most influential ways to affect the necessary change, and where are the leverage points where the smallest change can have the biggest impact?

State ballot initiative systems offer a unique point of access for people to participate directly in the act of legislating. Creators of the initiative system foresaw what is painfully evident today: that legislators should not be the public's sole means of influencing policy decisions. The increasing frequency of walkouts and stalemates in state politics demonstrates state legislative vulnerability to the polarization of national politics. And three-quarters of Americans say that they don't trust the government in Washington to do the right thing all – or even most – of the time. Across the US, legislatures also generally fail to reflect the multiple diversities of their electorates. And legislators are poorly positioned to meaningfully reform the rules by which they themselves play, demonstrated by widespread failures to enact campaign finance laws and redistricting standards, which are overwhelmingly popular with the public. Citizen-proposed ballot initiatives offer a rare and invaluable counterweight to a legislative system that does not adequately legislate alone.

The creation and running of initiatives, however, is inaccessible to the vast majority of people. Signature-gathering campaigns alone cost an average of \$2.1 million in 2020, effectively restricting participation to highly experienced and well-funded interest groups. This has disproportionate impacts on groups who lack resources, expertise, connections, and representation – groups who also tend to be excluded from current democratic systems. Given these barriers, residents living in states with initiative systems are largely cut off from their sole opportunity for direct democratic participation, and the systems cut off from their wisdom.

E. YOUR SOLUTION

This section provides the opportunity for you to more fully explain how you intend to solve the challenge you have outlined above. **This section will be viewed by peers and judges of the competition.**

Solution Overview (250 words)

We are seeking solutions that drive structural reforms to help our government fully and competently represent its citizens. Strong solutions will address systemic barriers and advance structural reforms in policymaking, voting and elections, and/or civic engagement with the objective of incenting the government to be more responsive to the broader electorate and ensure government is staffed with high quality/high functioning institutions and people. Describe what your solution is or does, how it meaningfully contributes to solving the problem, and the short and long-term impact that your solution will have.

- Describe who will benefit from your intervention and the benefits or outcomes of your intervention.
- How does your solution meaningfully contribute to resolving the chosen problem?
- How will you know that you are making progress?
- Describe the impact that your solution will have on the chosen problem over an up to five-year grant period. Will it have broad impact on a large population or geography, or will it have deep and intense impact on a small population or geography?

We reimagine the initiative system to be the most transformative democratic structure possible, and we lay out a practical path for implementation. We will model a system of demographically representative, deliberative Initiative Conventions, then use these pilot projects to build the political support necessary to institutionalize the system.

The Initiative Convention System draws on our expertise in democratic lotteries and citizen-led deliberation to create a multi-tiered, self-governing democratic architecture with three key parts – each a different flavor of lottery-selected citizen assembly:

An Agenda Assembly accepts proposals from members of the public, interest groups, and legislators. It prioritizes the two most important, unsolved political issues to bring to voters. These issues are each sent to a Drafting Assembly to develop into an initiative.

The Drafting Assemblies hear from dozens of experts and stakeholders, consult with legal advisors, and draft initiative language based on the prioritized issues. Signature-acquisition mailings are then coordinated for each resulting initiative.

Throughout the process, a Governance Commission composed of members of each Assembly meet to evaluate process rules, disputes, and staff.

This full cycle will run twice in two states – Oregon and Montana – demonstrating a deep, inclusive, potentially permanent fixture in state politics. Through these two biennial cycles of the Convention System, our team will use the pilot projects as a catalyst to campaign for the system itself. We will engage in political organizing, donor cultivation, and grassroots advocacy to build support to institutionalize a self-sustaining Convention System in at least one state.

Theory of Change (200 words)

State your project's theory of change and the underlying evidence that supports the results you want to achieve. Emphasize the methodologies that you intend to employ and how they create a causal link to your shorter-term, intermediate, and longer-term goals. As you develop your response, consider these [Theory of Change resources](#).

In the long term, we aim to build trust in democratic governance by showing how, across all our differences, we can work productively and fairly together. While many reforms contribute to democratic faith and function, no institution has the untapped potential of the initiative system. Writing an initiative and bringing it to the ballot is a potent and immediate expression of political power. We seek to redistribute that power more broadly and inclusively, by giving everyone a periodic chance to wield it. Our methods – lottery selection and deliberation – deliver inclusivity and collaborative problem-solving better than any other tool we know. Research shows that even small-scale lottery-selected assemblies have the potential for sweeping improvements to public trust and efficacy.

In the short term, we will help boost faith in democracy by creating immediate opportunities for better policy. In a society with innumerable divisive issues, our current policy-making systems need the kind of cooperative capacity-building that deliberation offers. We need to modernize our public processes based on research, and that begins with bringing a microcosm of the state together in one room to express their world views, process high-quality information, and work together to solve our most pressing issues.

Innovation (200 words)

Share how your approach will more efficiently and/or more effectively lead to the intended outcomes for your target beneficiaries, and how it differs from, improves upon, and/or bolsters existing methods/practices. Highlight any unique features and any other information demonstrating creativity and innovation in your approach and proposed solution.

We know of no previous initiative reform with this proposal's paradigm-changing potential. To give everyday people, through a deliberative process, permanent access to the ballot is immeasurably powerful. Critics of deliberation often lament processes' inconsistent policy impact, while proposed initiative reforms typically fail to bolster accessibility and diversity. By marrying representative sampling with direct democracy, this project advances both accessibility and impact.

Furthermore, our proposal guarantees Assembly Members a level of agency heretofore undeveloped in our field. We recognize that the legitimacy of the Convention depends on the extent to which Members can govern their own process. It is Members who hold the most public credibility, so trust in the system depends on self-determination. To this end, a Governance Commission drawn by lottery from Members will have final power over process decisions.

This project learns an important lesson from our experience with the Citizens' Initiative Review: Even when institutionalized in statute, nothing is permanent without an independent funding source. That's why this program – rather than prioritizing official institutionalization – prioritizes permanence through a grassroots advocacy and capital campaign that will parallel the pilot projects from start to finish. In whatever final form the system takes, financial self-sustainability is vital.

Priority Populations

Select the priority population(s) as the primary beneficiaries for your solution. You must select at least one priority population, and you are welcome to provide up to three.

Selected:

- Adults
- Adolescents

Stakeholder & Community Engagement (250 words)

In order to be effective, solutions need support from the impacted community including funders, local leaders, decision-makers, residents, media, and others. Describe which stakeholders you have engaged in the design of your solution and how you will continue to engage relevant decision makers, beneficiaries, and other stakeholders at different levels—whether local, state, or federal—to ensure your solution successfully achieves your goals. Please identify any relevant stakeholders you do not plan to engage and the rationale behind your decision.

We have prioritized stakeholder and community outreach with two goals in mind: to improve our design and implementation of the Convention programs themselves and to increase the public reach and long-term political feasibility of the Convention System.

With regard to design and implementation, we have already drawn upon our extensive network of former assembly moderators and will continue to draw on this invaluable resource as paid co-designers. We have begun conversations with two BIPOC-led Portland-area organizations about partnership, paid design work, and caucus facilitation within each Convention. In addition, we plan to partner with international colleague organizations in the Democracy R&D network. So far, we have received valuable feedback as part of an OECD-organized roundtable, and several program elements borrow heavily from previous assembly systems in Belgium, Spain, and elsewhere. Our upcoming outreach priorities are: additional community-based organizations (disability rights, LGBTQ+, youth, rural), Montana-based organizations, and, importantly, former participants in our programs.

With regard to reach and advocacy, we have presented our proposal to over two dozen political and community leaders, funders, former initiative campaigners, and pollsters. Notably, we have received enthusiastic support from members of the League of Women Voters of Oregon's Governance Committee (instrumental in the passage of our CIR legislation in 2011) and staff of the Oregon Values and Beliefs Center (a nonprofit polling firm with extensive media contacts). We have spoken with political contacts in Montana but continue to prioritize advocacy there, as well as among current electeds and potential media partners in both states.

Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion (250 words)

Compelling proposals will fully demonstrate a commitment to the values of diversity, equity, and inclusion. Not only do we expect teams to be thoughtful about working with a range of beneficiaries, but we also expect teams to think carefully about how to actively plan for and include the most marginalized and/or vulnerable from within those populations in solutions design, program planning, and ongoing work. Explain how you will ensure, or have ensured, that the design and implementation of your solution authentically embraces diversity, equity, and inclusion across all aspects, including persons with disabilities, religious or ethnic minorities, people of color, native/Indigenous peoples, women, gender identity and sexual orientation. Provide additional details on how you will provide opportunities and reasonable accommodations for those populations to either engage with and/or benefit from your solution, including as staff, advisors, partners, et al.

Using a democratic lottery introduces two unique backstops to ensure diversity and inclusiveness:

1) Lotteries do not aim for diversity; they guarantee it with certainty. And, they guarantee representation across an unusually broad set of diversities. For this project, we plan to select for representation across age, gender, race/ethnicity, political affiliation, geographic location, educational attainment, disability experience, and voter frequency (a measure of current political participation).

2) Lotteries prioritize representation of those absent from current public decision-making, across all demographics. The extraordinary opportunity and potential influence of these bodies – and the generous stipend – help ensure that typically ~90% of Assembly Members have no previous civic participation experience.

This Convention, however, will go further than most lottery-selected assemblies. Anyone aged 16 and up – not just registered voters – will be eligible to participate. And invitations will be extended to residents experiencing houselessness through social service organizations, in addition to standard invitations sent to randomly selected addresses.

Universal accessibility is paramount in our programs; all must be able to fully participate. Members are paid and reimbursed for expenses. All materials will be large-print and translated. Meetings will be simultaneously interpreted for all Members (not only non-English-speakers).

This project adds several equity-based practices to the equality basis of lottery selection. Process resources will support Members in organizing non-dominant-identity caucuses within each Assembly. Project partners will help the Convention solicit policy ideas and advocacy from those traditionally marginalized from decision-making – through multilingual surveys, culturally specific focus groups, and targeted outreach.

Lobbying Activities (200 words)

Does your project involve any efforts to affect public policy through changes in existing legislation or the enactment of new legislation, and does your project require lobbying activities with respect to a specific legislative proposal?

If your project does involve any lobbying activities, then explain how the project involves any lobbying activities (as defined in the [Lobbying Policy](#)).

Lobbying activities must constitute less than 50% of the \$10 million budget. Please note: Advocacy activities are not considered lobbying and are an eligible use of funds with no budget limitations or requirements. Refer to our [Lobbying Policy](#) for clarification.

If your project does not involve any lobbying activities, then simply enter “Not Applicable.”

This project will involve political advocacy throughout its duration, as part of the public campaign to build support for the system and fundraise for a future endowment to ensure its permanence. However, advocacy for the project will not constitute advocacy for any specific legislation until, possibly, the last year of the project.

In that final year, we will decide on the best path to permanence in each target state. The project partners will then focus advocacy on one of three options: an initiative campaign to institutionalize the system into state law, a legislative campaign to do the same, or a private campaign to further capitalize, charter, staff, and launch an independent entity to carry on the system.

In the first two cases above, a portion of the remaining funds under the budget item “Advocacy, Ongoing” and most of the “Advocacy, Final Year” funds would be directed toward lobbying or campaign-related activities. These funds would constitute less than 10% of the total budget of the project.

A portion of each Convention’s funding will be used to help qualify resulting initiatives for the ballot through an automatic signature-acquisition mailing, but will not be used for campaigning on the issue in any way.

F. SUBJECT AREA AND LOCATION OF WORK

We will use primary subject area, locations of current work, and key words to tag your project in the [Bold Solutions Network](#), making it possible for other funders to identify projects they might find interesting to support. **This section will be viewed by peers and judges of the competition.**

Primary Subject Area

Select the primary subject area of the solution that you and your team are proposing.

Selected:

- Democracy

Key Words and Phrases (5 words)

Provide a list of up to 5 key words or phrases that can best be used to describe your project [ex. Social-enterprise, vocation, internship, training]. Choose key words that capture the essence of your project and its intended outcomes. The key words should be different from the selected “primary subject area.”

Deliberation, Citizens' Assemblies, Initiative Reform

Location of Current Work

Where are you currently implementing your solution? Select up to five locations that apply. If your work is national or regional, please select locations that best represent the work your organization does. If you are not currently implementing your project, you may select NOT APPLICABLE.

Country: **United States**

State / Province: **Oregon**

Locality / District / County: **Marion County**

Location of Current Work #2

If you have no additional locations for your current solution, you may select NOT APPLICABLE. If there is a second location for your current solution, provide the second location here.

Country: **United States**

State / Province: **Massachusetts**

Locality / District / County: **Middlesex County**

Location of Current Work #3

If you have no additional locations for your current solution, you may select NOT APPLICABLE. If there is a third location for your current solution, provide the third location here.

Country: **United States**

State / Province: **California**

Locality / District / County: **Sacramento County**

Location of Current Work #4

If you have no additional locations for your current solution, you may select NOT APPLICABLE. If there is a fourth location for your current solution, provide the fourth location here.

Country: **United States**

State / Province: **Arizona**

Locality / District / County: **Maricopa County**

Location of Current Work #5

If you have no additional locations for your current solution, you may select NOT APPLICABLE. If there is a fifth location for your current solution, provide the fifth location here.

Country: **United States**

State / Province: **Colorado**

Locality / District / County: **Denver County**

Location of Future Work

Where do you plan to implement your solution if awarded this grant? Select up to five locations that apply. These locations may or may not be the same as the locations where you are currently implementing your solution.

Country: **United States**

State / Province: **Oregon**

Locality / District / County: **Marion County**

Location of Future Work #2

If you have no additional locations for your future work, you may select NOT APPLICABLE. If there is a second location for your future work, provide the second location here.

Country: **United States**

State / Province: **Montana**

Locality / District / County: **Lewis and Clark County**

Location of Future Work #3

If you have no additional locations for your future work, you may select NOT APPLICABLE. If there is a third location for your future work, provide the third location here.

NOT APPLICABLE

Location of Future Work #4

If you have no additional locations for your future work, you may select NOT APPLICABLE. If there is a fourth location for your future work, provide the fourth location here.

NOT APPLICABLE

Location of Future Work #5

If you have no additional locations for your future work, you may select NOT APPLICABLE. If there is a fifth location for your future work, provide the fifth location here.

NOT APPLICABLE

G. PROJECTED IMPACT

This section provides the opportunity for you to provide evidence that supports your solution. **This section will be viewed by peers and judges of the competition.**

Evidence of Effectiveness (250 words)

What evidence do you have or why do you believe the solution you propose will work? Present any internal or formal academic evidence you may have, including any results from complementary or previous work. If necessary, you may cite academic literature or papers. Use brackets and numbers to indicate relevant citations [#], which you can later clarify in a separate Bibliography section. The purpose of providing citations throughout the application is to affirm that any claims have been investigated and/or verified by a credible source or authority.

The use of lottery-selected deliberative assemblies to influence public policy-making is one of the most studied and celebrated democratic reforms of recent decades.[1] The process enhances public trust in democratic institutions, increases government responsiveness to citizens' concerns, fosters collaboration across ideological differences, boosts diversity in public processes, and can transform the nature of public participation within entire policy arenas.[2,3,4] Moreover, many specific components of the Initiative Convention System have already proven successful in other international projects, including in high-profile referendum campaigns[5, 6] and permanent multi-tiered deliberative systems in which randomly selected people both set agendas and drive policy.[7]

In our track record as successful democratic reformers[8] we've run one of the most extensively researched and successful democratic reforms in the field of deliberative democracy – the Oregon Citizens' Initiative Review (CIR).[9] The CIR empowers everyday people to evaluate ballot measures by learning about complex policy issues from a wide range of experts, weighing pros and cons of controversial topics, and producing accurate information for the voters' pamphlet. Third-party research shows that this information is more accurate, comprehensive, and readable than most other information available to voters. And voters use it.[10] Throughout the CIR's 12-year history, we have maintained close partnerships with independent academic evaluators to ensure the efficacy and constant improvement of our programs. This robust evaluation was also instrumental in the Oregon State Legislature's decision to make the CIR a permanent fixture of Oregon's democracy, demonstrating that our longstanding practitioner-academic partnerships are effective in driving systemic democratic changes.

Ability to Scale (250 words)

Describe your plan for scaling your solution and its benefits. Scale may mean expanding to new populations or geographies, or it may mean how you intend to amplify your impact more deeply in one geography or population or context. If appropriate, explain whether and how you will need to tailor and adapt your solution for scaling and/or amplifying impact. What is the evidence, or why do you believe your results can be replicated? As you prepare your response, read [MSI's Scaling-Up: Tools & Techniques for Practitioners and Scaling-Up: Management Framework for Practitioners](#).

Lottery-selected assemblies are highly adaptable and have been used to represent the unique demographic characteristics of local, state, and even global populations. Our intervention will directly engage 600 Assembly Members in two states – Oregon and Montana – benefitting a combined 5.36 million residents who will vote on policies written by their friends and neighbors. By implementing the Initiative Convention in one Democratic-leaning and one Republican-leaning state, we will demonstrate that this deliberative model works in any US political context. Further, each Assembly Member's cumulative 120 hours deliberating on policy options and writing proposals will create a depth of engagement unparalleled by most policy processes open to members of the public. By giving Members full ownership over many aspects of the process, we believe the Convention System will be highly transferable and inherently flexible to fit the unique needs of each project area.

Healthy Democracy has demonstrated this transferability by successfully running the CIR in five states (Oregon, Arizona, Colorado, California, Massachusetts) and two other countries (Finland, Switzerland) to date. However, we recognize that pilot programs are not enough. In this project, we are committed to building support for permanent systemic reform by amplifying the impact of the Conventions using our extensive networks. Combined, we have ongoing partnerships with 50 organizations in Oregon and Montana and are actively working to build more. After demonstrating two full election cycles of the Convention System, we believe the possibility of systemic change will be irresistible.

Timeline and Milestones (250 words)

What is your expected timeline for project completion and what outcomes or milestones will you track to know if you are successful or on track to be successful? You may find these [evaluation resources](#) helpful.

The project will be successful after we accomplish three primary objectives: 1) the Oregon Initiative Convention pilot is complete; 2) the Montana Initiative Convention pilot is complete; and 3) the campaign to institutionalize the Initiative Convention System has built over five years into a sustaining endowment in at least one state, a plan for permanence in both states, and substantial grassroots support in both states. Key milestones during each Initiative Convention pilot project include: An Agenda Assembly spends 15 days (five three-day weekends) selecting priority policy areas; two Drafting Assemblies each spend 15 days (five three-day weekends) considering policy options and writing initiative language; a Governance Commission in each state meets monthly throughout the Convention's duration; and four Assembly-written initiatives go to the ballot in each state. The following outlines timeframes for each project component:

2022:

Continue partnership development and coalition building with stakeholders and public officials (with a focus on Montana).

Work with project partners in target states to develop detailed process designs.

Select Members for Agenda Assemblies.

2023 & 2025:

Conduct Oregon and Montana Agenda Assemblies.

Select Members for Oregon and Montana Drafting Assemblies.

2024 & 2026:

Conduct four Drafting Assemblies (two in Oregon, two in Montana).

Launch signature-acquisition processes for the Drafting Assemblies' initiative proposals (target elections: November 2026, November 2028).

Ongoing throughout grant:

Build a grassroots political and fundraising campaign to institutionalize the Initiative Convention System.

Promote all pilot Conventions to stakeholder groups, public officials, funders, and media.

Conduct iterative program redesign in response to evaluation.

Measurement of Results (250 words)

How do you plan to measure the effectiveness of your proposed project? You may find these [evaluation resources](#) helpful.

Every Healthy Democracy project includes multiple evaluation formats to ensure our processes meet the highest standards for deliberative quality. We will work closely with two independent academic evaluators whose decade of research on the CIR has been integral to the development of evaluative tools and frameworks across our field. Katherine Knobloch (Colorado State University) and John Gastil (Pennsylvania State University) will work with an international team of evaluators, which will follow each part of the process but will not be funded by this grant to prevent conflicts of interest.

Standard evaluative frameworks for lottery-selected assemblies measure the integrity of process design, the deliberative experience, and pathways to impact policy. An international set of evaluation guidelines is currently being finalized by the OECD, in collaboration with hundreds of scholars and practitioners (including Healthy Democracy). Once approved, we plan on evaluating the Conventions based on these principles. These metrics will be assessed through daily surveys completed by Assembly Members, small and large group observations by evaluators, and post-process monitoring.

Healthy Democracy also democratizes the evaluation of our programs so that – as with everything we do – everyday people have the final say over the quality of our work. The Governance Commission, made up of Assembly Members, will connect with independent evaluators and process designers to aid in the iterative improvement of the process as it moves to its next state pilot. To demonstrate broader impact and political viability, Sightline plans to conduct polling to measure interest in permanent systemic reform.

Barrier Assessment and Risk Mitigation (150 words)

How will you ensure your initiative is feasible and will work? Describe any barriers to success of the initiative, as well as any unintended consequences, and your plan to address those barriers. Discuss your experience and capacity to manage technical or logistical barriers.

We recognize that our team does not currently reflect several diversities present among Assembly Members themselves. Our ability to successfully run inclusive and equitable programming depends on the demographic representativeness of our moderators, process advisors, and program staff. To bolster identity-based diversity, we commit to hiring and developing more alliances with partners from marginalized identity groups. To address geographic representation, we plan to continue developing partners in Montana by leveraging existing relationships with community leaders.

We also acknowledge that we have limited experience putting initiatives on the ballot. In order to ensure the Assembly-written initiatives make it to voters, we will draw upon our colleagues who have run successful low-cost grassroots signature-acquisition campaigns. We will also enlist the help of relevant advocacy organizations to help champion each initiative.

Through our 12 years of running online and in-person multi-day events with dozens of attendees, we have extensive experience overcoming logistical challenges.

Bibliography (200 words)

If you included citations [#s] in the Evidence of Effectiveness section of your application, provide your bibliography with a corresponding bracketed number [#] for each citation. If you did not insert citations, offer a list of resources that may be used to validate general claims made in your application. Please link to any articles that may be accessed online, even if behind a paywall. We recognize there are many standards for writing a bibliography, and we do not enforce any particular format. It is your responsibility to make those citations easy-to-understand. If not applicable, please insert “Not Applicable.”

1. Gutman, A, Thompson, D. Why Deliberative Democracy
2. Nabatchi, T. Democracy in Motion: evaluating the practice and impact of deliberative civic engagement
3. Knobloch, K., Barthel, M., Gastil, J. (2020). Emanating Effects: The Impact of the Oregon Citizens' Initiative Review on Voters' Political Efficacy.
<https://journals.sagepub.com/doi/10.1177/003232171985225>
4. Jacquet, V., & Van der Does, R. (2021). Deliberation and Policy-Making: Three Ways to Think About Minipublics' Consequences. <https://doi.org/10.1177/0095399720964511>
5. Suiter, Jane. (2018). Deliberation in Action – Ireland's Abortion Referendum.
<https://doi.org/10.1177/2041905818796576>
6. Citizens' Assembly on Electoral Reform, V. B. (2004.). IMPROVING DEMOCRACY IN B.C.
<https://citizensassembly.arts.ubc.ca/>
7. Chwalisz, C. (2019). A New Wave of Deliberative Democracy.
<https://carnegieeurope.eu/2019/11/26/new-wave-of-deliberative-democracy-pub-8042>
8. Gastil, J., Knobloch, K. Hope for Democracy: how citizens can bring reason back into politics
9. Knobloch, K. R., Gastil, J., Reedy, J., & Cramer Walsh, K. (2013). Did They Deliberate? Applying an Evaluative Model of Democratic Deliberation to the Oregon Citizens' Initiative Review. <https://doi.org/10.1080/00909882.2012.760746>
10. Gastil, J., Broghammer, M., Rountree, J., & Burkhalter, S. (2019). Assessment of Three 2018 Citizens' Initiative Review Pilot Projects <http://sites.psu.edu/citizensinitiative/evaluation>

Other Considerations (150 words)

This is your final opportunity to raise any other considerations. Here, you may emphasize or expand upon a previous point or provide new information, as necessary.

A better initiative system will not only benefit the public; the continuous work of the Conventions will encourage more productive legislative deliberation and influence legislative priorities. State legislators often express frustration about ballot initiatives that are poorly written or have budgetary implications that are difficult to accommodate. Our proposal will help mitigate those issues and integrate these two systems.

Legislators can interact with the Initiative Convention in two primary ways: 1) by presenting policy ideas and information to the Assemblies alongside other experts, or 2) by using the Assemblies' recommendations to champion better bills in the legislature. In a climate of polarization and stagnation in state policymaking, the Conventions will aid legislators to do policy work even when other channels have failed. Witnessing high-quality deliberation among their constituents may even help elected officials strengthen their own collaborative capacities.

H. RESOURCE REQUIREMENTS

Indicate and describe the financial resources required to successfully implement your project. **This section will be viewed by peers and judges of the competition.**

Total Projected Costs

Share the total cost to implement your team's project (in US dollars); this can include costs beyond the total amount of the grant.

1000000

Budget Narrative (250 words)

Offer a general overview for how your team would use the \$10 million (USD) grant, including the projected needs by category. You may include any explanations of existing resources you have already secured. Please explain what portion of the budget, if any, is expected to be spent on capacity building (a perfectly acceptable use of funds) to ensure effective execution on the project. Please also specify what portion of the budget is expected to be spent on measurement and evaluation of results.

Nearly 80% of our proposed budget will go toward four Convention pilot projects. This is a new concept that needs to be proven effective to the public – and improved over several iterations – in order to have a path toward permanent implementation. Testing the process over two election cycles in two states will allow us to build that legitimacy. In keeping with our citizen leadership philosophy, about half of Convention funds will be either paid directly to Members (at \$20/hr) or used to ensure accessibility and inclusivity. Members will also benefit from targeted outreach to underrepresented communities as well as regional and identity-based caucuses that supplement the work of the full Assembly.

A full 10% of our budget will go toward our communications and advocacy campaign – spanning the duration of the grant – to ensure the Convention System becomes permanent. This will also include significant fundraising to ensure the System is self-sustaining in its final form, whether public or private.

Approximately 3% will fund ongoing evaluation and oversight by Governance Commission Members, program staff, and our external partners. Our evaluative capacity, however, is much larger than this number suggests. A team of independent academic evaluators will provide expert oversight using their own funding sources, including leveraging potential support from the National Science Foundation.

Approximately 20% – included in each Convention's budget – will fund additional staff capacity. Given the important role facilitation plays in creating space for high-quality deliberation, substantial diverse and experienced staff support is essential.

Budget

Provide specific line items from the budget narrative (above) for your work. To help us understand your priorities, please provide a detailed budget for how the \$10 million (USD) grant would be spent. Please make sure that any funds identified in this table reflect and clarify your general explanations provided in the budget narrative above. Budget should follow these guidelines or risk ineligibility:

- Your budget must total to \$10 million (USD).
- Lobbying activities must constitute less than 50% of the \$10 million budget.
- Your budget must allocate funds to support Monitoring, Evaluation, and Learning activities. Typically costs for these activities require anywhere from 3-15% of the total projected total costs. Review our [Guidance for Monitoring, Evaluation, and Learning](#) for more context.
- Familiarize yourself with the [Indirect Cost Policy](#) and represent how you intend to address any indirect cost categories.
- Your budget must afford reasonable accommodations to make your project accessible to people with disabilities, as implementors, participants, and beneficiaries. Estimates frequently used for an inclusive (i.e. non-disability-specific) project are 1-3% of administrative costs and 5-7% of program costs. Review this [Guidance on Budgeting for Inclusion](#) for more context.

LINE ITEM DESCRIPTION	AMOUNT (US DOLLARS)
Initial design work (forming design coalition, research, and prototyping)	\$84,000
Advocacy for permanence, ongoing: Communications & capital campaign for long-term sustainability (grassroots advocacy, stakeholder advocacy, media, and capital campaign development & implementation)	\$800,000
Advocacy for permanence, final year: Legislative lobbying, initiative campaign launch, and/or launch of independent private entity (dependent on final permanence strategy)	\$200,000
Accessibility & inclusivity: Technical equipment (microphones, simultaneous interpretation equipment, assistive listening devices, loaner computers, and loaner hotspots)	\$30,000
Accessibility & inclusivity: Member pay & expenses across all Conventions (lodging, food, travel, technical needs, childcare, and eldercare)	\$3,390,000
Accessibility & inclusivity: Translation & interpretation services across all grant activities	\$514,000
Accessibility & inclusivity: Targeted outreach (surveys, polling, and advocate outreach) across all Conventions	\$252,000
All other Convention expenses (staff pay & expenses, venue rental, materials, event-specific public affairs, and final initiative signature-acquisition by mail)	\$4,442,600
Evaluation & monitoring: Governance Commission (Commission Member pay and staff pay)	\$207,400
Evaluation & monitoring: Internal & partner evaluation and continuous program redesign (supplementary to separately funded academic evaluation)	\$80,000
TOTAL (must equal \$10M):	\$10,000,000

Total Resource Requirements (100 words)

If your total projected costs exceed \$10 million (USD), explain how you have secured (or plan to secure) the balance of any necessary funds and provide an overview of how those funds will be used. You may find [financial sustainability resources](#) helpful.

If your total projected costs do not exceed \$10 million (USD), insert “Not Applicable.”

Not Applicable

I. ADMINISTRATIVE INFORMATION

In this section, please provide additional information about the Lead Applicant. Before answering, use the [Organizational Readiness Tool](#) to understand your ability to be competitive according to the size of your annual operating budget. This section will be viewed by peers and judges of the competition.

Employer Identification Number (EIN)

Enter your Employer Identification Number.

27-1457207

Annual Operating Budget

What is the annual operating budget in United States Dollars (USD) of the Lead Applicant?

- Less than \$1 Million
- \$1.0 to 5.0 Million
- \$5.1 to 10 Million
- \$10.1 to 25 Million
- \$25.1 to 50 Million
- \$50.1 to 100 Million
- \$100.1 to 500 Million
- \$500.1 Million to \$1 Billion
- \$1 Billion +

Number of Employees

How many full-time employees does the Lead Applicant employ?

- Fewer than 10 Full-time Employees
- 10 to 25 Full-time Employees
- 26 to 50 Full-time Employees
- 51 to 100 Full-time Employees
- 101 to 300 Full-time Employees
- 301 to 500 Full-time Employees
- 501 to 1,000 Full-time Employees
- 1,000+ Full-time Employees

J. ADDITIONAL INFORMATION TO BE PROVIDED

If your team is invited to participate in any future phases of this competition, you may be required to provide additional information (refer to the [Rules](#) and [Timeline](#)), including but not limited to:

- A fully revised proposal based on feedback received and a comprehensive set of questions that will be provided. This will include: a robust project and scaling plan; a comprehensive Monitoring, Evaluation, and Learning Plan; and a detailed budget.
- The revised proposal process will be supported by a strategic advisor that will be provided to your team should you be named a Finalist.
- Additional documents:
 - - A Tax Determination Letter
 - - Audited/Updated Audited Financial Statements
 - - Articles of Incorporation, Charter, or similar documentation
 - - Existing policies, if any, addressing conflicts of interest, whistleblower, internal controls, anti-money laundering, intellectual property, human subjects research, code of conduct, ethics, gifts, and any similar policies governing the organization

Lever for Change and/or the Stronger Democracy Award team reserves the right to perform background checks on key individuals associated with the project, and the refusal by the key individuals to provide necessary authorizations will give reason to reject any application for further consideration. Background information and the results of any background checks will be kept confidential.