FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS

Eligibility Criteria

Who is eligible to apply for a Democracy Renewal Project grant?
Grants are open to researchers affiliated with a public or nonprofit U.S. college or university. The affiliated institution must administer the grant.

Is it acceptable for the same researcher to be a Co-PI on multiple projects? Would this affect either team’s eligibility?
Each proposal is considered on its own merits, so involvement as a Co-PI would not affect either team’s eligibility or the assessment of the proposed research.

I am affiliated with a university outside of the United States. Am I eligible to apply?
Scholars at non-U.S. colleges and universities can be part of a research team and can receive support via funded research. However, the PI must be affiliated with a U.S. college or university, and the grant must be administered by the U.S. institution.

I have multiple affiliations, including at a U.S. university. Am I eligible to apply?
Yes, as long as the college or university you are affiliated with administers the grant.

I hold a Juris Doctor degree from a law school, but not a doctoral degree. Am I eligible to apply?
Yes, researchers with a JD are eligible to apply for Democracy Renewal Project grants.

Will Public Agenda accept more than one Democracy Renewal Project grant proposal from the same institution?
Yes, we will accept proposals from multiple teams at the same U.S. college or university. Each proposal will be considered on its own merits.

Research

I’m not sure if my research is a good fit. How can I get feedback?
Please review our 2023 RFP for a general sense of our funding priorities. If you still have questions or would like feedback about whether your research project aligns with Public Agenda’s priorities, please email Emily Sandusky, Director of Research Accelerators.
Do proposed projects need to include research on both access to the electoral process and trust and confidence in elections, or is either one of these research areas sufficient?
Our focus for this cycle of the Democracy Renewal Project is both access to electoral participation and trust and confidence in the election process. Both of these goals are essential to the legitimacy and sustainability of democracy. We do not expect all proposed projects to equally address access and trust, but it is important that research does not focus on one of these goals without considering implications for the other.

What kinds of actionable evidence does Public Agenda expect grant-funded research to produce?
Public Agenda’s goal is to synthesize, translate, and communicate evidence from grant-funded research to pro-democracy practitioners as soon as possible. Our view of evidence is broad and includes research findings that can inform practitioners, advocates, policymakers, journalists, and funders in practical decision making related to program implementation, policy reforms, resource allocation, and public communication.

Partnerships

Is partnership with a practitioner organization necessary for applying for a Democracy Renewal Project grant?
No, partnerships are not required. However, we do encourage research partnerships between scholars and practitioners in cases when the partnership can contribute to both research and organizational goals.

Can Public Agenda assist practitioner organizations with making connections with potential research partners?
Yes, we are happy to help connect practitioner organizations and researchers where possible. While we cannot guarantee that we can connect researchers and practitioners in every case, we will gladly do what we can. Please email Emily Sandusky, Director of Research Accelerators, to get started.
Funding

What are some examples of costs that the Democracy Renewal Project grant covers?
Grants can fund a wide range of activities, including researcher salary and benefits, research assistance, data purchase, and costs associated with conducting experiments. Our grants cannot cover indirect overhead.

Does the $15,000 salary support maximum for the PI or Co-PIs include fringe benefits?
No, applicants may include fringe benefits in addition to the $15,000 salary support in the project budget. Please note the fringe rate in the budget section of the application.

Does the maximum $15,000 per academic year for salary support apply to the team of Co-PIs, or is it for each Co-PI?
The $15,000 for salary support per academic year applies to the PI or each Co-PI in the research team, subject to the maximum grant amount of $50,000.

Is it appropriate to apply for a Democracy Renewal Project grant to support ongoing research?
Yes, we encourage proposals to support ongoing research or fund a portion of a larger project. Please include a very brief description of all other secured or anticipated funding sources for the complete project, and make sure that the timeline indicates which portion of an ongoing project will be completed within the grant period.

Application Submission

Is it possible to submit proposals for more than one research project?
Yes, applicants may submit more than one proposal. We are unlikely to fund more than one full proposal from the same scholar/team, but each proposed research project will be considered on its own merits.

Should proposals be submitted by the PI or the university grant office?
We will accept proposals submitted by either party. However, if a proposal is successful, we will work with the university grant office/office of sponsored projects to complete the contract and administer the grant.
Are letters of support required for the grant application? Who should provide them?
Letters of support from partner organization(s), if applicable, may be submitted as part of the application to help us understand the relationship between researchers and practitioner organizations, but they are not required.

Proposal Evaluation

When do you expect to make final decisions about which projects you choose to fund?
We will notify successful applicants and begin the contracting process during the last week of February. A public announcement will be made in early- to mid-March.

Who will evaluate research proposals?
Proposals will be reviewed by our Advisory Panel, which includes academics and practitioners who represent a wide range of substantive and methodological expertise and on-the-ground experience, along with Public Agenda staff members.

If the proposed project includes methods or other special expertise not found on your advisory panel, will you go to an outside expert?
If a proposed project includes areas of expertise that are outside the knowledge base of our advisory panel, we identify relevant experts to ensure that the substantive questions and methodological approaches in all proposals are reviewed fairly.