



2023 ANNUAL REPORT

LETTER FROM JAMIE

For the past seven years, Voters Not Politicians and Voters Not Politicians Education Fund have been working to put voters in charge of their democracy by bringing issues to the ballot and letting the voters of Michigan decide how they want their government to work.



We started by drafting and championing Proposal 2 in 2018, then played a critical role in getting Proposal 2 on the ballot and passed in 2022. Together with 2018's Proposal 3, we've created a democracy in Michigan that is stronger, more accessible, and more pro-voter than ever before.

With the successful passage of Proposal 22-2, we set out to make sure the will of voters was fully protected in the implementation process. That's why Voters Ed Fund transformed our Nights & Weekends program into a broader Clerk Engagement volunteer program to serve as a bridge between election clerks, the Secretary of State's office, and the public.

2023 was also an election year in Michigan, and Voters Ed Fund was on the ground supporting voters in both local and statewide elections. We launched Democracy Academy, a brand new program that focused on increasing voter turnout for local elections. We continued building our successful My City Votes program by hosting events to drive voter participation in key municipalities. And we filled over 200 nonpartisan poll challenger shifts to monitor elections in communities that hosted the first early voting pilot programs for Michigan.

All of this work has prepared us for an ambitious program plan for 2024. We will engage clerks, partner organizations, volunteers, and voters to drive voter turnout, especially in our target communities, while participating in an election protection coalition to make sure every voter is able to exercise their constitutional right to vote in this year's important elections.

We are also facing a surprise priority for 2024. In December of 2023, a panel of federal judges ruled that the Michigan Independent Citizens Redistricting Commission violated the Equal Protection Clause of the US Constitution by relying heavily on race when drawing Detroit area districts, and ordered a redraw of six state senate and seven state house districts. Nothing in the court's decision calls into question the process that voters overwhelmingly approved in the Proposal 18-2 redistricting amendment, and Voters Ed Fund is fully committed to protecting the independent, transparent, and citizen-led redistricting process that Michigan voters demanded.

From the beginning, Voters Not Politicians has been a grassroots organization built on a guiding truth: All political power is inherent to the people. As we expand and evolve our programs, and take on challenges both existing and new, our supporters and volunteers can rest assured that we remain committed to that principle and to strengthening democracy in Michigan through public education and civic participation.

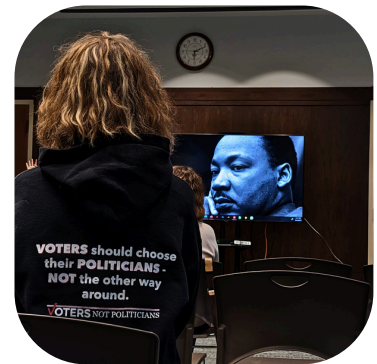
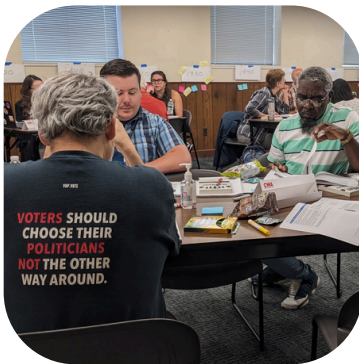
Jamie Lyons-Eddy, Executive Director

About Us

The Voters Not Politicians Education Fund (Voters Ed Fund) is a nonpartisan 501(c)(3) organization that educates the public and conducts advocacy dedicated to strengthening democracy. We envision a truly representative democracy, where the will of the voters drives government decision-making and public policy in Michigan.

Voters Ed Fund is expert in redistricting policy, grassroots organizing, advocacy organizing, and communications. Our organization is eager to use our expertise and experience to continue our work to increase voting access and empower Michigan voters to participate in the political process.

Voters Ed Fund is associated with, but distinct from, the 501(c)(4) Voters Not Politicians. The two organizations share much in common in terms of values and vision, but Voters Ed Fund is also charting its own course.



Vision

Voters Ed Fund envisions a truly representative democracy, where the will of the voters drives government decision-making and public policy in Michigan.

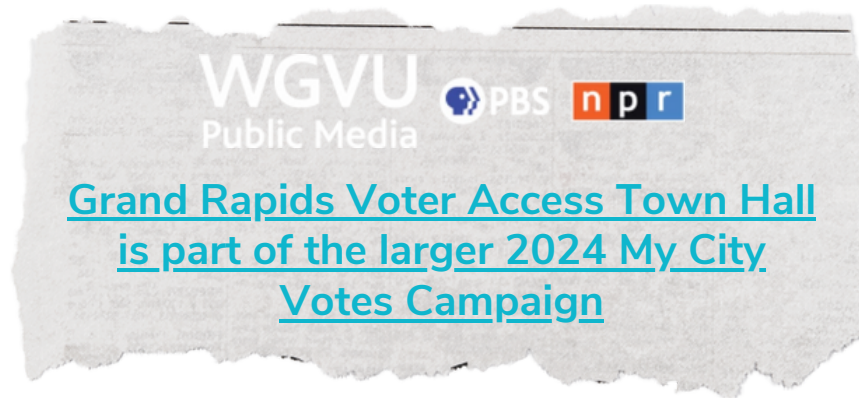
Mission

Voters Ed Fund is a nonpartisan organization dedicated to strengthening democracy in Michigan through public education and civic participation.

Values

Integrity
Inclusiveness
Empowerment
Innovation
Impartiality
Excellence

Top Headlines



- [Low voter turnout topic of Aug. 17 workshop at the IHM Motherhouse](#) Monroe Evening News | August 11, 2023
- [Debate planned for Benton Harbor city candidates](#) WSJM | September 15, 2023
- [Democracy Academy: Government — elections the focus](#) Mining Journal | September 16, 2023
- [Michigan earns high marks on redistricting in new report, with room for improvement](#) Michigan Advance | October 16, 2023
- [Grand Rapids Voter Access Town Hall is part of the larger 2024 My City Votes Campaign](#) WGVU | December 7, 2023

2023 Fundraising Updates

Individual Donors	\$97,689
Grants	\$1,035,500
TOTALS:	\$1,133,189

Nonpartisan Election Challengers

With the introduction of new voting options and procedures this year, Voters Ed Fund partnered with Promote the Vote's Election Protection Program to re-launch our Nonpartisan Election Challenger and Observer program. Trained volunteers observed election administrators and poll workers at early voting pilot sites as well as Election Day sites in select municipalities to ensure procedures were followed and voters' rights were protected.

Voters Ed Fund volunteers completed 225 shifts in 26 municipalities across the state. The result? A smooth and easy election! Very few issues were reported, and those that came up were flagged by VNP poll challengers so that clerks were able to address any disenfranchisement of voters. We are grateful to the clerks who piloted Michigan's very first early voting period, and happy for the opportunity to practice this new poll challenger experience before the full rollout of early voting in 2024.

225

poll challenger shifts completed across

26

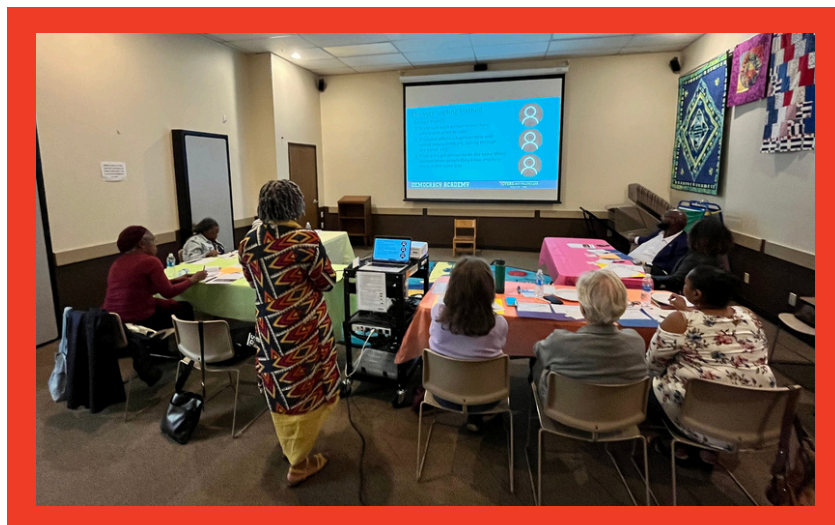
municipalities

Democracy Academy

A volunteer committee of 12 members was critical to the development and implementation of this program. Democracy Academy volunteers helped to develop curriculum, conducted outreach to encourage attendance, and assisted with event planning and execution. The volunteers, together with Voters Ed Fund staff and local partners, developed custom-tailored classes built to uniquely reflect the diversity and character of each of the five communities in which we hosted a workshop.

The Democracy Academy team of Voters Ed Fund staff and volunteers partnered with community-based organizations that reflected the diverse and underrepresented populations of the cities where we hosted our workshops. We are proud to have partnered with numerous organizations that represent young voters, BIPOC voters, LGBTQ+ voters, and community advocates. Our partners this year included American Association of University Women, Asian & Pacific Islander American Votes, Northern Votes, Lansing NAACP, Kalamazoo NAACP, Outfront Kalamazoo, Vine Neighborhood Association, and Stronger Together Huddle.

In the first year of this program, Voters Ed Fund hosted five Democracy Academy pilot workshops in Kalamazoo, Lansing, Marquette, Monroe, and Warren. 89 participants attended this first round of workshops. Attendees included members of partner organizations, local community activists, and even local candidates for office. Participants enjoyed the subject matter, which focused on how communities can bolster turnout in off-year local elections.



Clerk Engagement

With the passage of Proposal 22-2, Michigan voters had more rights to voting access than ever before. Implementation of these new requirements demands a lot from our municipal and county clerks, from nine days of early voting to expanded drop box access. Voters Ed Fund understood that the support of voter advocacy organizations like ours could help alleviate some of the burdens on clerks as they worked to implement these new guidelines before the presidential primary.

The Voters Ed Fund's Clerk Engagement Program recruited 225 volunteers from 126 cities and townships across 47 counties to survey, support, and advocate for clerks in implementing these new voting provisions. Over the course of the year, our volunteers met with 73 municipal clerks and 6 county clerks to gather information on Proposal 22-2 implementation plans. The goal of these meetings wasn't just to gather survey results, but to develop teams of community advocates to build bridges between constituents and clerks, and rally behind them to combat voter misinformation and disinformation. We collaborated in this work with other voting rights organizations such as the ACLU, APIA Vote, the League of Women Voters of Michigan, and ACCESS to reach clerks in some of the state's largest municipalities.

Thanks to the support of our clerk engagement volunteers statewide, our clerks know they will have extra support from their community members and voting rights organizations in navigating this new chapter of Michigan elections. According to volunteer Laurence Kloss, Clerk Jessica Flintoff in Scio Township reported that she feels a "deep appreciation to Voters Not Politicians for all the hard work we've done since the original (MICRC) Prop 2."

Our volunteers have also greatly benefited from the clerk engagement program. As constituents, they've gained a greater understanding of their new voting rights and the electoral process in their communities. Faye Schuett from Farmington shared, "I am honored to help VNP in this continued effort to make voting more accessible to Michigan voters."

225
clerk engagement volunteers covering
126
municipalities, and over
2.25 million
Michigan voters

My City Votes

My City Votes is a strategic collaboration with city officials and community partners to maximize voter education of key dates and deadlines, and expanded voting services before election day, prioritizing voters with the lowest propensity to vote.

As we build on the success of our 2022 My City Votes campaigns, Voters Ed Fund has spent this year laying the groundwork to launch My City Votes 2024 with an expanded roster of Michigan cities: Grand Rapids, Benton Harbor, Muskegon Heights, Pontiac, and Flint.

Our preparation has included hosting local candidate forums and Voter Access Town Halls, conducting volunteer meetings to expand our volunteer base in key areas, and meeting with partners and stakeholders who share our goal of increasing voter participation in communities that have been historically marginalized in our democracy.

In Grand Rapids, for example, volunteers participated in a text bank to invite 3,000 Grand Rapids voters to the Grand Rapids Voter Access Town Hall. And in Muskegon Heights and Benton Harbor, 20 participants attended their local Town Halls to learn more about their options for voting in the 2024 elections. One attendee surveyed after the Muskegon Heights Voter Access Town Hall wrote that the event was “the best interactive meeting [they] have gone to to date from a non-partisan standpoint! Looking forward to changes taking place in the near future!!”

This outreach was possible thanks to the work of local community leaders and our partner organizations, including Berrien Forward, Present Pillars, Muskegon Young Black Professionals, Urban Core Collective, LINC UP, Community Collaboration on Climate Change, NAACP Great Grand Rapids.



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