

DEMOCRACY

The Joyce Foundation's Democracy Program promotes an informed, engaged, and representative democracy by supporting work in two areas – fair elections and media.

We invest in fair elections to protect voter rights and access, reforms to end gerrymandering, and a fair and accurate count in the 2020 census.

Our media grants support vigorous public interest journalism to inform voters, hold government accountable, and motivate public engagement.

FOCUS AREAS

Fair Elections

Our voter rights and access work addresses all aspects of registration, voting, and ensuring that votes are accurately counted. We support making registration simpler and more accessible through policies such as online registration, automatic voter registration, and election-day registration. We support efforts to make voting more accessible, such as expanding early voting hours. We also focus on election administration and infrastructure to make sure all votes are collected and counted. Our work in voting rights and access also involves defending rights that are under attack, i.e. challenging restrictive voter ID laws.

Redistricting reform has taken on new life recently, as popular interest sparked by hyper-partisanship gridlock and other problems has been catching up with concerns voiced over the years by reform groups. We support approaches to end gerrymandering, as well as public education and advocacy to improve citizen participation so we wind up with maps more representative of our communities.

The third issue under the Fair Elections umbrella is the 2020 census – what questions are asked, how it's funded, and how it's managed. Joyce is deeply involved in this work, partnering with local, state, and national organizations to make sure the 2020 census achieves a full and fair count, with no one left behind. Census data is critical for fair redistricting, voting rights, federal and state appropriations, understanding where social services are needed, and a host of other purposes.

Media

With the well-documented challenges of traditional media, nonprofit newsrooms have emerged over the past decade to help fill gaps in deep investigative or explanatory coverage of vital issues such as the environment, education, social justice, and state and local government.

Joyce's funding priorities for media grant making are to support this kind of public interest journalism and promote the health of the media ecosystem in the Great Lakes states. We are also looking at the pipeline of journalists to address persistent racial gaps between our communities and the journalists who cover them. Another area of interest is how innovation in reporting and distribution can contribute to the health of the media ecosystem in our region.

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