Digital Innovation Fund

FINAL REPORT

Cooperative Impact Lab

THE MOVEMENT COOPERATIVE

About the Cooperative Impact Lab

The Cooperative Impact Lab (CIL) is the 501(c)4 sister organization to The Movement Cooperative. The mission of the Cooperative Impact Lab is to provide value to the progressive movement through innovative approaches and the promotion of cooperative models.

About The Movement Cooperative

The Movement Cooperative's (TMC) mission is to provide data and technology to the progressive movement through direct services, collectively pooled resources, and increasing access to data and technology. The cooperative has over 50 organizations participating, and our work is centered around moving the progressive movement forward with a shared purpose and infrastructure.

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Summary

The global corona virus pandemic and racial justice protests in 2020 have upended "business as usual" in a Presidential election year with implications for virtually every aspect of the campaign ecosystem. Organizations had to transition to digital programs across organizing, fundraising, and voter registration, often for the very first time.

In early fall, the Cooperative Impact Lab (CIL) partnered with 2020 Vision Ventures/Resilient Democracy Fund, Way to Win, and Schmidt Futures to form the Digital Innovation Fund (DIF). Established to support experimental and innovative digital organizing tactics for state-based organizing groups and sharpen organizer skills in digital strategy and data analysis, DIF was based on a prize methodology utilized in other fields to:

- Reach a wide and diverse applicant pool of organizations

- Incentivize new approaches by being non-prescriptive about "innovation"

- Get funding in the field quickly and responsive to the needs of organizers

- Center the experience of the grantee by simplifying the application and reporting process

The 18 funded projects ranged from experimenting with faith-based relational organizing, to engaging communities with in-language messaging apps, to running micro-influencer campaigns on Instagram and TikTok.

> The organizations that received grants from the Digital Innovation Fund made
>
> *half a million* calls to voters,
>
> *sent out 5.9 million* peer-to-peer text messages,
>
> *mailed out over 700,000* pieces of mail,
>
> *reached 72,000 voters* via relational organizing,
>
> *reached 922,000 people* via influencer marketing.

Almost all of the projects focused on engaging Black, Latina, Asian, Indigenous, and other BIPOC communities, and leveraging digital technologies to do so safely.

Summary

The grant process and projects led to several valuable insights and learnings. More detail on these is below:

1. The particular tools that organizations have access to can dramatically impact outcomes.

2. Diverse communities require a range of tools and tactics to do culturally relevant in-language app-based organizing.

3. COVID-19 widened a digital divide that made volunteering and voter contact more challenging.

4. Digital solutions aren't (always) a replacement for hands-on support.

5. Organizations and organizers need more capacity, training, and skills to run effective Facebook ads

6. Micro-influencer marketing is an affordable, effective way of reaching beyond traditional audiences

7. Numbers don't tell the full story – but data analysis is lacking and needed.

The Digital Innovation Fund grantees:

Rising Voices of Asian American Families (MI)
One Pennsylvania (PA)
One APIA Nevada (NV)
Washington Community Action Network (WA)
Poder Latinx (NV)
Community Change Action (MI, FL)
Somali Action Alliance Education Fund (MN)
Texas Freedom Network (TX)
New Florida Majority (FL)
Make The Road Nevada (NV)
Living United for Change in Arizona (AZ)
Leaders Igniting Transformation (WI)
Illinois Muslim Civic Coalition (IL)
Instituto Power (AZ)
We the People MI (MI)
Grassroots Collaborative/Grassroots Illinois Action (IL)
MOSES Action (MI)
Faith in Florida Action Fund (FL)
New Georgia Project (GA)

Impact

The Digital Innovation Fund funded organizations to experiment with digital organizing, often for the very first time. Several grantees reported they had exclusively run traditional field programs in previous election cycles and had to either drastically cut or eliminate door knocking as a strategy due to the pandemic. Pivoting field resources to the online space required preparation, skills, and resources.

The grant allowed grantees to invest in new tools and tactics. Several grantees experimented with influencer marketing for the very first time and used grant funds to pay micro-influencers who could reach target audiences. The Texas Freedom Network was able to gain access to digital tools like Upfluence, Social Rank, and the deepbench payment system through the grant and partnership with The Movement Cooperative. They spent their resources both building the digital infrastructure and directly paying influencers. Leaders Igniting Transformation used the funds to roll out influencer marketing and put on a virtual concert with two artists that reached half a million people.

The DIF team experimented with creating different pathways to building community for organizers and campaigners across states. including several learning sessions on specific issues like changes to Facebook ads or using TikTok for voter turnout. These optional learning sessions helped share lessons across states and generated ideas for future cycles.

> *"We loved the digital coaching and the learning calls to hear from other folks. Influencer marketing honestly was not on our radar and is now something we're building into our digital outreach toolkit for next year."*
>
> - Laura Misumi, Executive Director of Rising Voices of Asian American Families

DIF funding also meant that several organizations could hire digital and data staff and make previously temporary positions permanent. Washington Community Action, a small organization with only three organizers, said that the grant *"helped us build an infrastructure that was needed for our organization to enter the digital organizing realm."*

Guiding Design Principles and Process

DIF eliminated bureaucratic barriers for organizations with limited resources and time to make it as easy as possible to apply, including a simplified application process that took less than fifteen minutes to complete, and a very simple mid-point evaluation.

DIF awarded grants in two rounds:

- $15k grants to eighteen organizations actively experimenting with digital approaches
- $15k-$45k follow-on grants to six organizations who could prove scalability and impact through mid-term evaluations

In addition to funding, grant recipients received:

- Access to a community of practice
- Digital strategy coaching
- One-on-one data support
- Data analysis support
- Learning sessions on key topics

"The grant from DIF went directly towards our digital ads and capacity to respond to questions. Because of this additional budget, we were able to reach an additional

300k voters

and answer thousands of questions. This grant was hugely impactful in our support of Spanish speaking, first-time voters in Arizona. "

- Instituto

Projects that received both rounds of funding

New Florida Majority (FL) *

New Florida Majority recently launched a digital campaign targeting Gen Z and millennial Latinas in Florida. Latinas are demonstrated influencers in their families and communities and heavily lean Democratic compared to Latino males. NewFM used the DIF funding to integrate gamification principles into the existing digital campaign execution strategy. In the first four weeks of the campaign, New Florida Majority collected 131 pledges at about a 4.22% completion rate. They redesigned the landing page, tightened the messaging, and created a more straightforward experience for the second phase, and collected an additional 1,216 pledges and an incredible 6.6% completion rate.

Rising Voices of Asian American Families (MI) *

Rising Voices of Asian American Families ran a pilot program on relational organizing through in-language messaging apps: WeChat, WhatsApp, KakaoTalk, and Line. The short-term goal was to combat disinformation around the election, and the long-term goal was to address and combat anti-Black racism in Asian communities. Organizers also created and implemented a digital participatory research project with AAPI mothers in Michigan. By the end of the grant, they had recruited 42 volunteers, called 23,800 voters, texted 20,394 voters, and sent two pieces of mail to 59,000 AAPI households.

MOSES Action (MI) *

MOSES Action experimented with a hybrid model of traditional and digital organizing training "faith captains" (super volunteers) to text people using OutVote to reach their networks and congregations. Their goals for the project were to translate their organizing methodology into the digital space by building out a team of trained grassroots leaders and grow the number of people contacted via friend-to-friend texting (not just peer-to-peer texting). The grant allowed the organization to engage 260 volunteers and develop and train their first cohort of super volunteers. The faith captains reached 1,250 of their contacts to create voting plans and reached an additional 296,000 voters using peer-to-peer texting and knocked on 8,000 doors.

Projects that received both rounds of funding

Instituto Power (AZ) *

Instituto implemented a program called Aquí Se Vota!, an effort to engage Latinas in households to become Promotoras del Voto. The latest research shows that Latina matriarchs were the ones with the highest influence in a household when it comes to voting. Instituto set a goal to enroll 1,000 volunteer promotoras to a program that would help them get their family and community ready to vote in the election. The program reached 530,000 voters and was able to answer close to 5,000 questions about the voting process and information.

We the People Michigan *

We the People ran a robust, state-wide deep canvassing program that combined Race Class Narrative (RCN) messaging with digital overlay. VAN and Every Action were used to run phone banks across the state, supplemented by a Facebook group for interested contacts and peer-to-peer texting using Spoke. One component of the project focused solely on Indigenous voters who are largely absent from voter databases. The grant also allowed We the People to resource a digital media intern to create Race Class Narrative content specifically for young people on TikTok. They trained 315 volunteers, texted more than 200,000 voters, and called 35,000 people.

Leaders Igniting Transformation (WI) *

Leaders Igniting Transformation led a digital experiment reaching 18 - 25 year olds in Wisconsin using influencer marketing and an ad campaign with animated videos and memes for the very first time. Organizers put together a virtual National Youth Voter Day concert featuring nationally acclaimed artists Young M.A. and Super Duper Kyle which reached 700,000 people.

Projects that received first round of funding

One Pennsylvania (PA)

One Pennsylvania executed safe in-field tactics to register voters of color and get out the vote. Organizers used Empower as a relational organizing tool to allow members, volunteers, and staff to text their personal networks and Accelerate Change to organize community members on issues through Facebook messenger updates, surveys, and reminders. One PA was able to grow their organization by 2,576 members and collect close to 80,000 pledges after texting 1.4 million voters.

One APIA Nevada (NV)

Asian & Pacific Islander Americans are the fastest-growing minority group in Nevada. One APIA tested in-language messaging tools including WeChat (Chinese), KakaoTalk (Korean), Line (Taiwanese/Japanese), and Viber (Vietnamese) to recruit and engage new volunteers as an alternative to traditional relational organizing. These social apps are multi-function platforms that these communities use on a daily basis. Organizers created culturally relevant in-language channels and groups in these apps to create a space and information for community members to engage and organize their networks.

Washington Community Action Network (WA)

WACAN traditionally runs in-person canvasses aimed at engaging low-to-no propensity voters usually left out of GOTV efforts. The project DIF funded was about building a digital analog to the tried-and-true door-to-door canvass model by recruiting and training member leaders. They reached close to 2,000 voters in Tacoma & Olympia using peer-to-peer texting for the first time. Organizers were able to re-engage voters from a previous ballot initiative into deep base engagement and member leader development.

Poder Latinx (FL & AZ)

Poder Latinx ran a program using a traditional tool for get-out-the-vote efforts – text messages – but with an innovative twist that allowed organizers to test scripts, gather feedback, monitor response rate, and enable diverse audiences to participate. They tracked and designed the language to a broader Latinx audience that may fall under the same ethnic background through segmentation. The community is still very complex and responds very differently to political text messages. The opportunity to strategically use and modify content helped increase VBM enrollment and Voter Registration of Latinxs in Florida and Arizona.

Projects that received first round of funding

Community Change Action (MI, FL)
Community Change Action used Facebook and Instagram ads targeting progressive-leaning communities of color to generate volunteer leads via Phone2Action for a relational organizing program. Volunteers texted leads via Outvote, invited them to a strategy session, and trained new volunteers on Outvote to organize their friends and families. This volunteer group was a new strategy for Community Change Action deployed to add capacity – by the end of the program, they had recruited 954 new volunteers. Volunteers had more than 30,000 conversations with 22,000 friends & family members through phone and text. Additionally, volunteers also contacted close to 460,000 voters through peer-to-peer texting.

Somali Action Alliance Education Fund (SAAEF) (MN)
The Somali Action Alliance Education Fund (SAAEF) switched from congregate environments to small groups and digital methods during the pandemic. The project experimented with innovative methods to use digital tools for targeted voter contact including registration, persuasion, and turn-out in Somali communities in Seward, Lyndale, and Whittier neighborhoods in Minneapolis reaching people through Somali TV and radio stations as well as digital. The Somali Action Alliance Education Fund has five organizers on staff and took

advantage not just of the grant but also the learning calls, one-on-one digital strategy coaching, and one-on-one data support. The grant allowed SAAEF to recruit 35 new volunteers who engaged 800 voters in Minnesota.

Texas Freedom Network (TX)
Texas is one of only ten states that doesn't have online voter registration. Texas Freedom Network launched an influencer project focused on reaching the progressive, under thirty, Latinx community in Texas. They used the grant to test the efficacy of brand-collateral based voter registration asks. The influencers' content had an organic reach of more than 277,000 views.
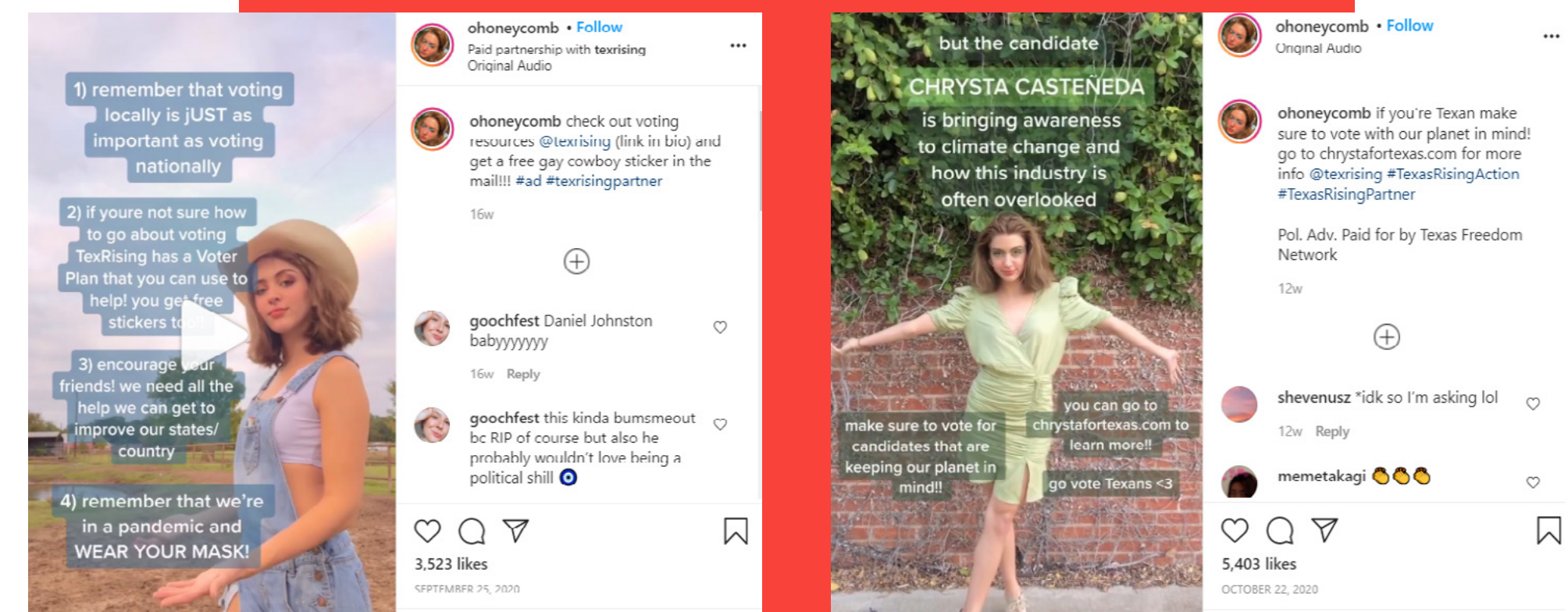
Projects that received first round of funding

Make The Road Nevada (NV)

Make The Road Nevada launched a bulk-messaging program via Facebook Messenger and a relational organizing program using OutVote. The grant allowed organizers to create a one-of-a-kind civic engagement and language bot. This interactive bot had two purposes: political education and teaching members English.

Living United for Change in Arizona (LUCHA) (AZ)

LUCHA built a project from learnings modeled after their large field campaign in 2018 that contributed to record-breaking turnout from voters of color and young voters. Their goal was to turn out one million Arizona voters through phone calls, text messages, one-on-one outreach and, when safe, in-person canvassing. They used relational organizing tool OutVote as well as micro-targeting and geofencing to find their audiences. By the end of the program, they had called more than 2.7 million voters, knocked on 58,000 doors, and texted 20,000 voters.

Illinois Muslim Civic Coalition (IL)

Illinois Muslim Civic Coalition ran a program to reach voters using in-language marketing campaigns through WhatsApp in Arabic, Urdu, and Gujarati. The project used the Voter Access Network and the Movement Project Civis Score tool to identify and reach low-propensity voters of color, MASA, and immigrant communities. They paired in-language critical information with well designed infographics and images. Organizers recruited 109 new volunteers and called close to 77,000 voters.

Grassroots Illinois Action (IL)

Grassroots Illinois Action ran a peer-to-peer texting campaign to engage and recruit low and moderate-income public school parents to join emerging parent organizing committees and to vote for the Progressive Income Tax. Organizers used ThruText to engage parents first through a survey about education equity and eventually a voter engagement script. They ran Facebook ads to generate traffic to the parent survey and generate leads for the campaign. Organizers reached more than 10,000 parent voters via text and recruited 32 new members to join the parent organizing committee.

Projects that received first round of funding

Faith in Florida Action Fund (FL)

Faith in Florida Action Fund led their electoral work using issues with deep resonance in the Black and Latinx communities to engage and turn out working class voters who are unlikely to be contacted by other campaigns. They combined mail, digital, and phone and used OutVote as a relational organizing tool. Their goal was to engage and train leaders and clergy around the role of the sheriff and State attorney, talk to voters in Orange, Broward, Pinellas and Hillsborough County, and identify a set of demands for an accountability campaign after the election

New Georgia Project (GA)

Finally ahead of the January 2021 Senate Runoff, DIF provided the New Georgia Project Action Fund with a 30K grant in December 2020 to help them mobilize hard to reach voters. They piloted a number of new digital outreach strategies to do voter education and get out the vote. These strategies included marrying their traditional GOTV voter contact methods across the state (which include volunteer canvassing, phone banking, and paid canvassing operations) with Facebook and strive messenger bot programs. They implemented gamified outreach programs on Instagram and Twitch to target younger voters, and ran digital ad programs focused on GOTV and spreading the word about a ride to polls program in partnership with ridesharing companies.

Learnings

1. The particular tools that organizations have access to can dramatically impact outcomes.

Digital technology is getting more sophisticated every election cycle. New tools are launched, others grow static. Cost often is a prohibitive barrier for organizations to use the best tools available for their work.

Faith in Florida Action Fund was using Predictive Dialer and Virtual Phone Bank during the 2020 primaries. The contact rates were low – organizers only reached 5,094 voters with 43,650 attempts. After receiving the Digital Innovation Fund grant, the organization upgraded to CallEvo Click Dialer. Immediately, their numbers skyrocketed. In just the first three days, they reached 479 voters out of 3,719 attempted contacts with 18 people phone-banking. *Volunteer and organizer morale shot up when contact rates improved.* Due to the success of the program, DIF provided a follow-on grant to Faith in Florida Action Fund.

> Getting the right tool for the tactic takes knowledge and funding. Affordability and user experience are critical for retaining volunteers, and ultimately, results in higher voter contact.

"The support from the Digital Innovation Fund helped to attempt a new, innovative approach to engage young Latinas… without the funding to support this special experiment we would not have had the opportunity to explore this project. The findings from this are valuable for future campaigns and initiatives where we hope to use a similar approach."

- New Florida Majority

Learnings

2. Diverse communities require a range of tools and tactics to do culturally relevant in-language app-based organizing.

Three grantees experimented with different messaging apps that were culturally relevant to their communities and translated all content (including memes!) as part of their projects.

One APIA Nevada used Kakao Talk (Korean), WeChat (Chinese), LINE (Japanese & Taiwanese), and Viber (Vietnamese) to organize their communities. These efforts strategically reached audiences using in-language content on social media and instant messaging tools paired with in-language mailers as well as partnerships with local newspapers – like the Las Vegas Korean Times – to cross-promote their social media accounts. The Illinois Muslim Civic Coalition similarly used WhatsApp to organize in Arabic, Urdu, and Gujarati and drove more than 76,000 calls.

Rising Voices of Asian American Families partnered with a coalition of AAPI organizations based in California to develop a set of research questions to implement through relational organizing. They called more than 23,000 contacts and texted an additional 20,000 voters. Organizers heavily employed

WeChat in contacting voters and learned that *combating trolls was the biggest challenge, in particular tracing and exposing disinformation.*

Several grantees talked about the obstacles in translation and the *need to build a reliable network of interpreters and translators* in each state. Rising Voices of Asian American Families explained that in-language materials are critical and really difficult to come by – "We had community members spot-check materials released by the Secretary of State and they were unreadable. If we had had more time and resources, we would have been able to do more to work to offer better translated materials."

> Organizations need clear protocols for how to combat disinformation and misinformation within specific cultural contexts.
>
> Easier access to translation and interpretation services would mean better and more accurate in-language materials.
>
> Meet communities where they are – this might mean specific language forums or tools and apps used by certain language groups.

Learnings

3. COVID-19 widened a digital divide that made volunteering and voter contact more challenging.

Organizations like Grassroots Illinois Action had largely used traditional organizing and field methods of door-knocking and phone-banking until the pandemic. The new digital strategies and tactics they were able to implement hold exciting possibilities for long- term goals of building power statewide in Illinois – but it took more time than anticipated to develop volunteer leaders' comfort level with the technology used.

Similarly, MOSES Action explains, "We are an intergenerational organization, and older leaders are not accustomed to using these tools. It is easier to engage older leaders in our traditional canvassing strategy, which was not possible this year due to COVID-19. We just needed to be patient and provide multiple trainings in order to build faith leaders' confidence in the technology, both texting and phone banking."

> Continued effort needs to be made to close the digital divide, especially for communities who are not comfortable with technology – this includes connectivity, training, and hardware.

4. Digital solutions aren't (always) a replacement for hands-on support.

Instituto in Arizona provided voters with two options: either click a link to get voting information or provide the organization with their contact details so that an organizer could search for the information and relay it back to the voter. They found that the majority of people chose to have a volunteer help them.

Organizers explain, "We needed to provide hands-on support all the way through the voting process. Most of the time, it wasn't enough to direct people to a link to find their polling location. We had to search for their polling location for them, tell them the address and times of operation. We spent time walking people through the whole process of finding a drop box, finding a polling location, how to fill their ballot."

> Voters continue to want individualized help with their voter experience. Even as digital tools become more automated and self-service, organizations should expect to keep some volunteers focused on more traditional (and more time-intensive) engagement.

Learnings

5. Organizations and organizers need more capacity, training, and skills to run effective Facebook ads.

Investing in online ads is a crucial part of every election. Yet the progressive ecosystem still has skills and resourcing gaps in state-based organizations who don't have access to consultants and agencies to keep up with ever-changing policies and tools.

We The People Michigan explains, "This was our first time running a bigger ad buy on Facebook during an electoral campaign, and also the first time that there were so many restrictions. We ran into some barriers including randomly having our account marked for suspicious activity and disabled for several days leading up to the election."

The DIF team held two training calls for grantees specific to Facebook ads. The range in skills was wide – some organizations were running ads for the first time and needed support in getting verified and other organizations were looking for deeper training on segmentation, targeting, and optimizing the ads they were already running.

"We brought on a data analyst who helped to capture data from our program and track our work. Now, we are working on using this data to tell the story of our work and share what we have done. We have impressive numbers but need to tie that data back to our storytelling about our work."

- MOSES Action

Navigating Facebook was a consistent challenge, especially for smaller organizations with minimal digital staffing. Progressive resources need to be put towards demystifying platforms and hand holding through the entire process.

Learnings

6. Micro-influencer marketing is an affordable, effective way of reaching beyond traditional audiences.

Several projects experimented with micro-influencer marketing campaigns on both Instagram and TikTok. The New Florida Majority influencer marketing campaign produced over 120k impressions, with a reach of 97k with 12.3k engagements. This is a 2.82% engagement rate. Organizers learned that working with one TikTok influencer resulted in double the amount of pledges received from several Instagram influencers over the course of the project for their particular audience.

Texas Freedom Network (TFN) also ran a successful influencer campaign and are now ready to scale their learnings and build their membership. TFN had worked with CIL previously through the Influencer Marketing project, and built on that effort for DIF:

"Our program is ready to take the next step with influencer marketing and plan innovative campaigns that advance our goals. Part of that step is creating user engagement pipelines in our landing places to absorb our influencers audiences into our own."

More investment is needed to incentivize state-based organizations to experiment with and optimize influencer marketing approaches. Longer-term programs can help organizations build relationships with trusted messengers who are newer to the political and organizing spaces but who will be critical for future cycles.

7. Numbers don't tell the full story – but data analysis is lacking and needed.

More than half of the grantees took advantage of CIL's data analysis support and coaching. Organizers often don't have the specialized skills or the capacity to set up tracking infrastructure let alone analyze their data to tell the story of the work. DIF often heard from organizations that they are seeing impressive numbers but need help to tie that data back to a narrative about the impact. Most organizations didn't have dedicated data support for their digital program beyond DIF coaches.

Learnings

Some of the specific data requests the DIF team received include:

- Help understanding their campaign performance using the metrics in Facebook Ads manager. Some metrics are real (ex. conversions) and others are vanity metrics (ex. impressions).

- Defining core metrics for a program, understanding where that data lives, and approaches toward counting program activity – especially in cases when the organization isn't able to capture an email address or cell phone number.

- Quantifying the organization's electoral impact, especially when there is not an embedded randomized controlled experiment.

- Looking at their program metrics by specific units of geography, ex. state senate districts.

- Aggregating data and program activity across multiple digital organizing tools.

- Reviewing previous campaign performance to help plan for and identify metrics for future campaigns.

- Tracking who showed up on a Zoom call and attributing the event to specific digital recruitment efforts.

There is also a tension between what the numbers tell us about relational organizing (often smaller numbers) compared to peer-to-peer texting (often large, impressive numbers). MOSES Action explains it best: "Relational organizing, even when conducted digitally, has a much more authentic feel because it leverages real community networks. *While the number of people reached this way was fewer than peer-to-peer texting, the messaging through trusted messengers is a far more effective way for actually getting people to take the desired action (in this case, voting).* Investing in the continual building of a network of trusted community messengers who can deliver messaging to their personal contacts is a better strategy."

> As more tools and approaches create more data, increasingly sophisticated infrastructure and analysis will be necessary to understand what the data says, and to differentiate between types of voter contact

Timeline

Applications

CIL opened up the application process in August, 2020 and received 60 applications from xxx states in a two-week open call.

Applications were reviewed by a panel of five judges, including political and digital experts from across the progressive ecosystem. Judges assessed each application based on

- How digital strategies and/or technologies facilitated new or innovative approaches
- The potential for the project to be replicated or scaled, and
- The potential to measure the efficacy and impact of the project

Projects

In September, DIF selected 18 organizations to receive grants of $15,000 each.

Each grantee filled out midpoint evaluations to determine which projects could scale with additional resources.

In October, DIF awarded a second round of grants to six of the groups ranging between $15,000 and $45,000.

Learnings

DIF hosted a final learning call and debrief in December and asked grantees to fill out final evaluations. This report is a synthesis of those learnings.

Every grantee participated in at least one learning session. Ten of the eighteen grantees took advantage of the digital strategy coaching and data analysis support which were hands-on one-on-one calls with experts across the movement landscape.

Conclusions and Recommendations

The Cooperative Impact Lab and our partners ran the DIF to get funding in the field, create a community of practice around digital tactics, and experiment with a prize methodology that is rarely used in the progressive space- using data and evidence to inform our investments, and moving money quickly and easily.

DIF believes that with some adjustments, this methodology is cost effective, centers the organizers, and allows for rapid iteration and improvement. The DIF team recommends the following for future iterations of the DIF or other grant programs:

Organizations need skills & training – but above all staffing capacity.

After the initial grants, the DIF team selected several organizations to receive a follow-up grant to scale their learnings and impact. New Florida Majority was able to expand their micro-influencer marketing campaign from Instagram & Facebook to TikTok thanks to this second grant. Rising Voices for Asian American Families used the second grant to resource an organizer and several fellows. MOSES Action was able to scale their digital program by hiring a social media manager to oversee the Facebook strategy – this person is staying on staff following the election to keep their online strategy going and growing.

We know that organizations need resources to add staffing capacity, not just funding for the direct costs of the tools and experiments. Rising Voices of Asian American Families says, "We could have used another organizer to really add capacity to our projects. We ran a lean team this year and could have gotten more of a start on some of our projects with more staff."

Grassroots Illinois Action tells us: "You did a great job of moving resources very quickly into the field. I wish we had been able to take advantage of the coaching. We just didn't have bandwidth to set up the meeting so that you could help us figure out what we needed."

Although most of the grantees took advantage of DIF's optional learnings sessions, trainings, and coaching – the DIF team kept hearing from organizations that there's just simply not enough time in the day to pause to learn new skills in the thick of a campaign. It's not enough to just offer support, because it takes capacity to take advantage of that support. In other words, *it takes capacity to add capacity.*

Conclusions and Recommendations

Programs like DIF are good to get funding into the ecosystem quickly, but it is important to streamline the application and reporting process as much as possible for organizations – and invest earlier.

CIL intentionally made the initial application process simple so that it wouldn't take longer than 15 minutes to complete. But the DIF team received feedback from grantees that the timeline was tight and the resources often came too close to the election for more meaningful planning and execution of experimental strategies.

As funders, CIL has a responsibility to move resources into the field with enough time for organizations to innovate culturally competent digital strategies to activate communities that are often ignored cycle after cycle.

Acknowledgments & Thank Yous

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Way to Win

The Movement Cooperative