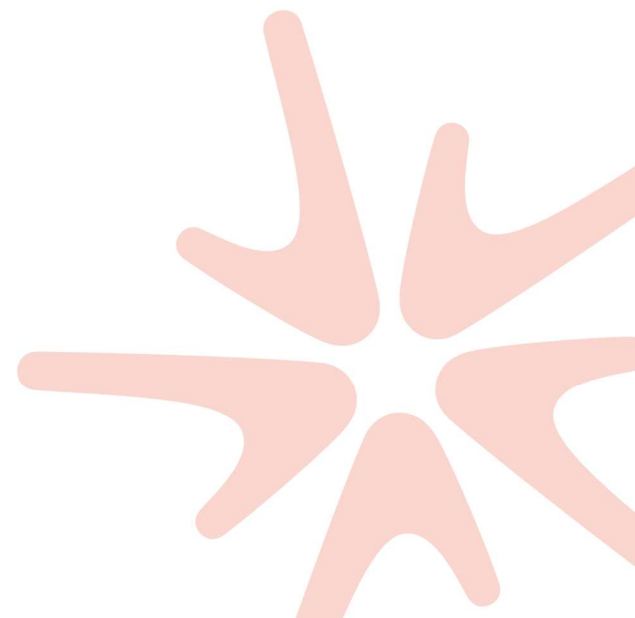




Healthy Democracy Grantee Convening
Participant Guide



Purpose:

This event brings grantees together for a shared moment of reflection and forward planning, creating space to look honestly at the successes and challenges of the past two election cycles while strengthening collective readiness for the 2026 midterms. Through open conversation and peer learning, participants will examine what helped communities engage, where obstacles emerged, and how the electoral landscape continues to shift. The gathering also encourages grantees to think beyond the immediate cycle, focusing on how today's strategies, partnerships, and leadership development efforts can help build the more inclusive and resilient democratic future they are working toward.

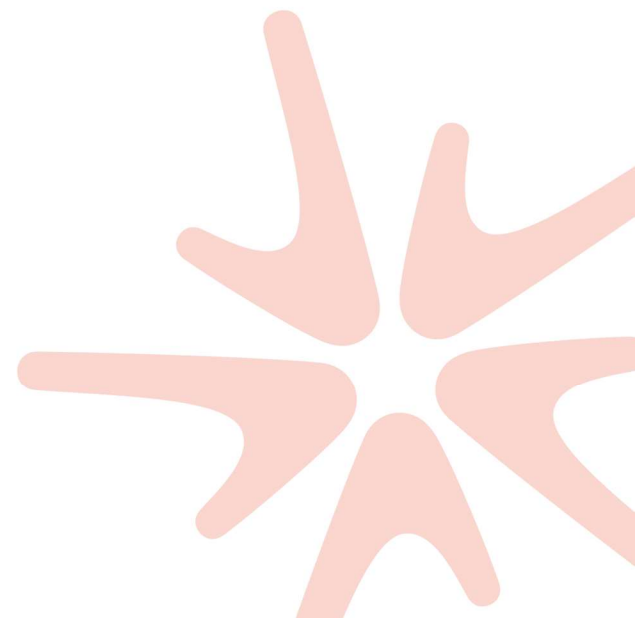
Individual Prework (10 minutes):

During day one, we will invite each organization to have one representative share what your organization will be focusing on over the next 6 to 12 months. We understand that your portfolios are extensive, so please concentrate on how you plan to protect our democratic processes and engage with constituents in your updates. The goal of this session is to foster connections and collaboration among colleagues working in similar areas. Please consider including answers to the following questions:

1. What are your top strategic priorities/focus areas for the 2026 election cycle?
2. What major lessons or insights from the past election cycle(s) are shaping your approach in 2026?
3. As you plan for 2026, what strategies/approaches are staying the same? What shifts/adjustments have you made?
4. What are your biggest needs, perceived risks, or uncertainties heading into 2026 elections?
5. Where do you see potential value in connecting with peer organizations?
6. Looking past 2026, what is your organization's priority (e.g., 2028 presidential elections, census, redistricting, 2030 mid-terms)?

Session Attendees

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Session Agendas

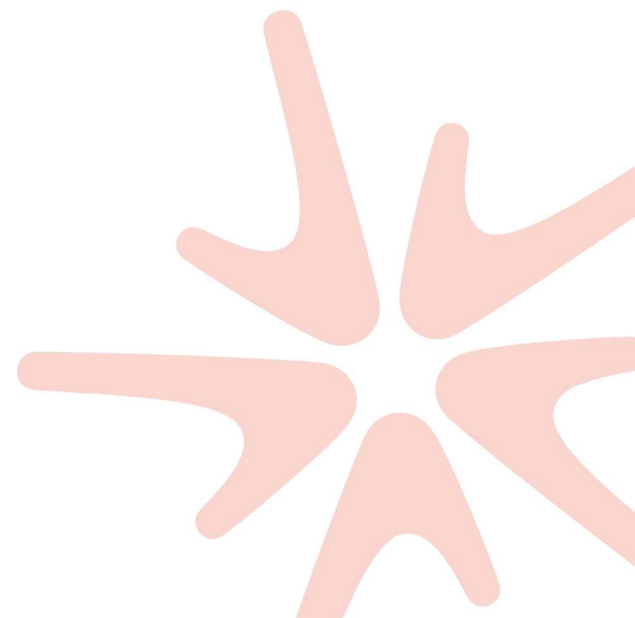
Day 1

- 9:00 a.m. Breakfast (optional)
- 10:00 a.m. Welcome and Day 1 Kick-Off
- 10:15 a.m. **2026 Political Forecast Speaker**
- 11:15 a.m. **2026 Election Cycle Planning | Breakout #1**
- 12:20 p.m. Breakout Session #1 Debrief
- 12:30 p.m. Lunch
- 1:30 p.m. **Organizational Round Robin | Pre-work Conversation**
- 2:30 p.m. Break (snacks are available between 2:30 p.m. - 3:30 p.m.)
- 2:40 p.m. **Building Local Power and Winning Narratives | Breakout #2**
- 3:40 p.m. Breakout Session #2 Debrief
- 3:50 p.m. Reflections and Next Steps
- 4:00 p.m. Adjourn

- 5:00 p.m. Reception
- 7:00 p.m. Reception ends

Day 2

- 9:00 a.m. Breakfast (optional)
- 10:00 a.m. Welcome and Day 2 Kick-Off
- 10:15 a.m. **Visioning Beyond 2026 | Breakout #3**
- 11:15 p.m. Breakout Session #3 Debrief
- 11:30 a.m. **State Strategy Labs | Breakout #4**
- 12:30 p.m. Lunch
- 1:30 p.m. **Gallery Walk**
- 1:40 p.m. **Now What | Breakout #5**
- 2:30 p.m. Reflections and Next Steps
- 2:45 p.m. Adjourn
- 2:50 p.m. Post Event snacks are available between 2:30 p.m. - 3:30 p.m.



Breakout Sessions

Breakout #1: 2026 Election Cycle Planning

Purpose:

This conversation surfaces what has been learned from the 2024-25 election cycles and explores which approaches still hold up for 2026 and which may require meaningful adjustment given the current landscape and political forecast. Participants will share successes and challenges, connect insights to the 2026 political forecast, and surface field-wide “continue” and “pivot” recommendations.

Breakout Groups:

Group 1:

Facilitator:

Group 2:

Facilitator:

Group 3:

Facilitator:

Group 4:

Facilitator:

Guiding Questions:

As you think about the last election cycle (2024–25), reflect on the successes and challenges of your experience:

- **Success:** What is something your organization experienced or worked on that you found especially successful? What made that moment/success possible? What was the impact on your team or community? Which parts of this approach still feel relevant for 2026?
- **Challenge:** What is a challenge you experienced or something that didn't go as planned? What led to this moment or situation? What was the impact? What does this suggest needs to be adapted or pivoted for 2026?

Breakout #2: Building Local Power/Winning Narratives

Purpose:

This conversation explores what strengthens local power-building and how communities come to trust, support, and elevate local leaders. It offers space to map where organizations are currently active in the leadership pipeline, reflect on the narrative and structural factors that shape leader development, and surface priority areas of focus for 2026.

Breakout Groups:

Group 1:

Facilitator:

Group 2:

Facilitator:

Group 3:

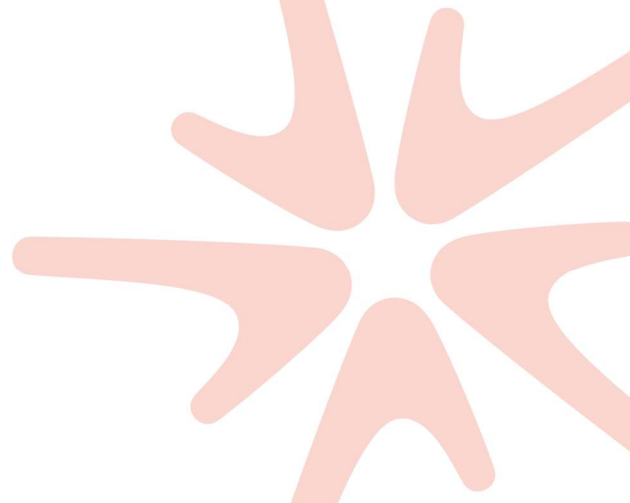
Facilitator:

Group 4:

Facilitator:

Guiding Questions:

- Where does your organization's work currently sit within the leadership pipeline, and where might deeper emphasis be needed heading into 2026?
- What helps communities see local leaders as ready to move into greater influence, and how might that be strengthened this election cycle?



Breakout #3: Visioning Beyond 2026

Purpose:

This conversation looks ahead to what meaningful progress could look like by 2028 and 2030 and considers the shifts needed to move toward that future. It invites reflection on long-term aspirations, current strengths and vulnerabilities, and the pre-2028 pivots that might help bridge the gap between today's realities and tomorrow's goals.

Breakout Groups:

TBD based on conversations from day 1

Guiding Questions:

- What would meaningful leadership pipeline progress look like by 2028 or 2030?
- What assumptions or vulnerabilities could shape the path toward that future?

Breakout #4: State Strategy Labs

Purpose:

This conversation examines how long-term priorities and "essential moves" may need to shift depending on how the 2026 cycle unfolds. Will the outcomes create challenging conditions, momentum, or something in between. It helps identify which strategies are resilient across scenarios, which may need adaptation, and where alignment or collaboration could strengthen outcomes.

Breakout Groups:

Group 1:

Facilitator:

Group 2:

Facilitator:

Group 3:

Facilitator:

Group 4:

Facilitator:

Guiding Questions:

- Which strategies remain essential no matter how the 2026 landscape develops?
- How might these strategies need to adjust under more challenging or more favorable conditions?

Breakout #5: Now What

Purpose:

Organizations will have dedicated time for reflection to bring together insights from across the convening and consider what commitments and actions will guide their work in 2026 and longer term.

