

Milwaukee Public Library & Election Commission
Civic Engagement Grant Proposal

Background

Milwaukee Public Library (MPL) is an anchor institution that helps build healthy families and vibrant neighborhoods – the foundation of a strong Milwaukee. Since 1878, Milwaukee Public Library has been a free provider of education and information for residents of Milwaukee with a mission to help people read, learn, and connect. With 13 locations, MPL offers convenient and equitable access to a rich collection of materials and community resources. Literacy is core to the mission of the library and MPL plays a leading role in fostering civic engagement and literacy by creating inclusive spaces for community discussions, providing educational programs, and connecting individuals to resources they need to enhance their civic participation. Key activities include hosting events like the National Voter Registration Day Carnival to promote civic participation, providing a space for the League of Women Voters to offer non-partisan voter registration and voter resources, and assisting patrons with the online voter registration and absentee process. Through these initiatives, MPL serves as a hub for community members of all backgrounds to engage with ideas and each other, and actively contributes to equipping all community members with the necessary tools for informed decision-making.

The Election Commission has eleven full-time staff who administer all aspects of voting in the City of Milwaukee: voter registration and voting by mail, staffing and operating 6-10 early voting locations, staffing and operating 180 polling places on Election Day, serving as the filing officer for all municipal candidates, and providing voter education resources around the democratic process. While the Commission does not have the ability to conduct direct outreach with residents to provide voter information, the Commission is the subject matter expert at creating easy-to-understand, accurate, and concise voting information. At a time when election mis-, dis-, and mal-information risk is heightened, the Election Commission is determined to establish themselves as the primary source of election information from local residents. As a result, partnering with other City departments and non-partisan, trusted anchors in the community is essential in order to reach residents.

MPL and the Election Commission believe that by combining our individual departmental strengths and expertise, residents throughout the City of Milwaukee will be empowered to participate in our democracy, not only exercising their right to vote, but also by accessing government resources and programs. The Election Commission will serve as the subject matter experts to ensure any information provided around voting is accurate, while the Library will employ its expertise in resident outreach and engagement as we work together on this non-partisan campaign.

Overview

The Milwaukee Public Library & Election Commission intend to launch a citywide, non-partisan public education campaign branded as ONE MKE to increase civic connection among residents. The goal of ONE MKE is to help Milwaukee residents find and understand the services the city has to offer to support residents and the city.

ONE MKE provides trustworthy, transparent information on how to:

- Engage with local, state, and federal civic services that can save you money and improve your well-being
- Attend events to meet other residents and get involved in the community
- Participate civically and access nonpartisan voter resources

ONE MKE envisions a future in which every Milwaukee resident (regardless of age, race, gender, or political affiliation) understands how active civic engagement can enrich our lives and communities. By increasing civic engagement, we can help create a healthier, stronger city. Because together, we are ONE MKE.

Campaign Description

Regularly engage with Milwaukee residents to inform them about a diverse range of social service programs offered by local, state, and federal governments.

- Send monthly text messages that connect with residents about services available or important issues that may impact their household.
 - Additional outreach tactics may include city mail inserts, QR codes, and direct mail or email communications from the city.
- Encourage ALL residents to register to vote, sign up to vote by mail, vote early, and update their state ID/driver's licenses by providing non-partisan, easy-to-understand resources
- Create a culture of being a Milwaukee resident that is civically engaged through continual engagement and a visibility campaign.

TACTICS

Website

Ideally, the website would be ONEMKE.org

Content:

- Voting Information & Quick Links
 - FAQ on Voting Eligibility
 - Registration
 - Vote by Mail / Absentee Voting
 - Find my polling location
 - Early Vote Information & FAQ
- Government Programs & Services
 - Any programs that may be helpful to residents of the city
 - Potentially, any programs or services business partners could offer
- Campaign Coalition
 - Partners (logo, & hyperlink to website)
- Sign-up page
 - Sign up page for important updates & events
 - Pledge to vote & reminder of pledge close to election day (Counter)

Banners & Widgets

Identify any high-traffic city or partner websites that would be willing to host a banner that directs to the campaign website - ensure the landing page has the most relevant information.

Or integrating a pop-up widget that hits our high priorities when possible. After providing the necessary information for the widget, the resident should be redirected to the campaign website.

Texting

Communicate monthly with residents on key social service programs, registration deadlines, and election dates.

Inserts & QR Codes

City mail inserts that direct residents to the campaign website with non-partisan messaging about priority topics during portions of the campaign. Placement of QR codes on city mailings, posters, and other branded campaign materials to direct residents to the campaign website.

Visibility/Signage

All signs will include the campaign name, QR codes, and a quick link to the website. Remain consistent with the campaign brand and non-partisan messaging. During peak moments of the campaign, we will redeploy signage that shares key information:

- Registration deadlines
- Election Dates
- National Voter Registration Day

Identified Public Locations: libraries, health centers, HACM locations, City Hall prior to Election Day, Fire Houses, possibly schools.

Non-Partisan Civic Engagement Coalition

Create a non-partisan civic engagement coalition that helps amplify campaign messaging and communicates with its audience as a trusted messenger.

- Begin to build a list of key members of the Civic Engagement Coalition:
 - Business, Faith, Civic, Community, Nonprofit and Philanthropic Leaders
- Create a menu of options that members of the coalition can implement to engage their audience on the importance of voting
- Secure logos for partners on the landing page

Street Outreach Team

Hire a street outreach team of 4-5 part-time employees, ensuring at least 2 are bilingual in Spanish.

Responsibilities:

- Attend events & venues to connect with residents about ONE MKE
- Collect concerns from residents
- Share services available to residents
- Answer questions about voting and registration
- Support elected officials at events and venues
- Pledge to vote cards
- Share swag

Timeline

2024	
Tactic	Content
February	
Website	Develop a website for campaign activities
Mail Insert	Announce Campaign Social Service Programs & Voting Information

March	
Email Communication	Service - ideal tax prep help
Text	Announce Campaign
April	
Text	E-Day Reminder
4/2 General & Presidential Primary	
QR Code on mailing	Directs to campaign website
May	
Street Outreach Team	Begin hiring & training for summer activities
Text	Summer Programs & Services
June	
Street Outreach Team	Attend Events - Discover concerns, connect to services, registration, VBM
Text	Connect to Summer Programs & Events
QR Codes	Direct to website
July	
Street Outreach Team	Attend Events - Discover concerns, connect to services, registration, VBM
Insert	Services
Text	Registration
7/24 Registration Deadline	
August	
Street Outreach Team	Attend Events - Discover concerns, connect to services, registration, VBM
Letter	Letter to parents about voting & services
Text	Election Reminder
8/13 Fall Primary	
QR Code	Direct to website - VBM
September	
Street Outreach Team	Attend Events - Discover concerns, connect to services, registration, VBM

Canvass	Partner with CBOs who are already doing door-to-door connections to promote ONE MKE resources with first contact	
Text	Registration	
Insert & QR Codes	Registration	
Launch Canvass Program	Follow-up & Registration	
October		
Canvass Program	Follow-up, registration, make an election plan convos	
Text	Service, Registration/VBM	
Inserts & QR Codes	Service & Registration	
Text	Early Vote starts	
Text	Early Vote	
November		
Canvass	Follow-up with residents	
Text	Election Reminder	
Text	GOTV	
Budget		
	Launch	Cost
Campaign Director	Feb - December	\$75,000
Street Outreach Team	May - October	\$60,000
Texting	March 2024 - E-day	\$60,000
Printing & Advertising	March – October	\$55,000
Total		\$250,000