



Media contact:
press@techandcivicliflife.org



Media contact: David J. Becker
media@electioninnovation.org

PRISCILLA CHAN AND MARK ZUCKERBERG COMMIT \$300 MILLION DONATION TO PROMOTE SAFE AND RELIABLE VOTING DURING COVID-19 PANDEMIC

September 1, 2020

WASHINGTON, DC -- The Center for Tech and Civic Life (CTCL) and The Center for Election Innovation & Research (CEIR) announced today that Priscilla Chan and Mark Zuckerberg have committed \$300 million to promote safe and reliable voting in states and localities during the COVID-19 pandemic.

Chan and Zuckerberg have committed \$250 million to CTCL, a nonprofit, nonpartisan organization dedicated to creating a more engaged democracy, which will regrant funds to local election jurisdictions across the country to help ensure that they have the staffing, training, and equipment necessary so that this November every eligible voter can participate in a safe and timely way and that their vote is counted.

Chan and Zuckerberg have also committed \$50 million to CEIR, a nonprofit, nonpartisan organization whose mission is to assist state and local election officials to ensure elections are secure, voters have confidence in election outcomes, and democracy thrives as civic engagement grows.

"We all depend on election officials to provide safe and secure voting options to the public. Unfortunately, election departments face unprecedented challenges in 2020 due to COVID-19," said Tiana Epps-Johnson, Executive Director of Center for Tech and Civic Life. "This expansion of our COVID-19 Response Grant program provides our country's election officials and poll workers with the critical resources they need to safely serve every voter."

"State election officials are facing unprecedented challenges during this election season. The COVID-19 pandemic is resulting in election options and procedures different than voters have ever seen, while the threat of disinformation could greatly diminish voters' confidence in democratic process," said David Becker, Executive Director of The Center for Election Innovation & Research. "This donation will greatly assist election officials as they seek to inform voters about their voting options and any changes, educate them about how they can successfully ensure their ballot is received and counted, and bolster transparency and legitimacy."

"Due to the unprecedented challenges COVID-19 will have on voting across the country, election officials are working around the clock to make sure that every voter has the ability to participate safely and have their vote counted," said Priscilla Chan and Mark Zuckerberg. "Many counties and states are strapped financially and working to determine how to staff and fund

operations that will allow for ballots to be cast and counted in a timely way. These donations will help to provide local and state officials across the country with the resources, training and infrastructure necessary to ensure that every voter who intends to cast a ballot is able to, and ultimately, to preserve the integrity of our elections.”

“As 150 million Americans vote during a global pandemic, there are a lot of things that are going to be different than previous elections,” said Jocelyn Benson, Michigan Secretary of State. “This grant will be of tremendous assistance as we work to get the word out to voters, and help them plan for a successful voting experience.”

“In a time when so much is changing around us, Americans need to know now more than ever how to make their voice heard in this fall’s election,” said Frank LaRose, Ohio Secretary of State. “That requires getting them the information they need from trusted sources, and these dollars are going to go a long way to making that happen.”

“This investment is critical for election departments, whether they are large, small, urban, or rural. CTCL works with, and understands, jurisdictions of all types, and the COVID-19 response grant program is another example of their developing plans that meet election officials’ most urgent needs,” said Pam Anderson, Executive Director of the Colorado County Clerks Association.

BACKGROUND ON THE CTCL DONATION FOR LOCAL JURISDICTIONS

The \$250 million CTCL donation will be used specifically to support a variety of efforts by local jurisdictions to expand voter access, including:

- Poll worker recruitment, hazard pay, and training
- Polling place rental
- Temporary staffing support
- Drive-through voting
- Equipment to process ballots and applications
- Personal protective equipment (PPE) for poll workers
- Nonpartisan voter education from cities and counties

Launched in 2015, CTCL is focused on connecting Americans with the information they need to become and remain civically engaged and ensure that U.S. elections are more professional, inclusive, and secure by educating voters and supporting local election administration. CTCL works to collect and standardize the information that all eligible citizens need to be able to vote and to ensure that local election officials have the tools and trainings they need to conduct more trustworthy, inclusive elections, and troubleshoot problems ahead of Election Day.

This new donation will allow CTCL to scale its efforts to support election infrastructure and local election officials nationwide. CTCL will issue an open call to local election officials in all states, offering support on the initiatives listed above to help ensure Americans across the country can rely on a strong electoral system this November and know that their votes will be counted. Efforts will be made to ensure that a diverse set of counties are included: urban, suburban, exurban and rural. Jurisdictions that apply will be awarded funding based on their population.

Additionally, in states where CTCL is already active, funds will be allocated at the county and municipality level to support work already in progress. This encompasses urban and rural counties in every corner of America. The list of counties and states will grow across the country as other counties and municipalities apply for assistance.

BACKGROUND ON THE CEIR DONATION FOR STATES AND LOCALITIES

CEIR was founded by David Becker in 2016, after working for two decades in elections, leading Pew's efforts to improve elections, and serving as a voting rights attorney in the Justice Department under both Democratic and Republican administrations. CEIR has a proven track record of working in a nonpartisan manner with election officials from around the country and from both sides of the aisle, building voter trust and confidence, increasing voter participation, and improving the efficiency of election administration.

CEIR has worked for years to combat the threat of foreign interference that seeks to further divide our nation and depress citizen engagement, and strengthen election infrastructure against potential attacks. As the pandemic further challenges voter confidence and engagement, CEIR has been working with election officials of both parties to engage in more effective civic outreach to adapt processes to our new reality, combat disinformation, and inform voters of their options to vote this fall and changes from previous elections.

This donation will enable CEIR to further scale up this work, helping election officials across the nation reach their voters with critical information about voter registration, mail voting, early voting, polling locations and hours, and the vote-counting process to make participating in this election convenient and secure for all eligible voters.

###