

## **Proposal for a Joint List Acquisition and Enhancement Project**

Project Vote proposes the creation of a List Acquisition and Enhancement program that will serve the needs of organizations, both large and small, with a strategic plan to build and maintain statewide voter files in targeted states. The file would be hosted by a non-501c3 entity to allow for maximum usage of the data by progressive organizations. The development of files will include acquisition of voter data, enhancements with demographic and consumer data where appropriate, and the long-term maintenance of the file which gives our organizations a better understanding of the electorate. Building upon the energy and experiences of the 2004 electoral cycle, this project will begin in 2005 with a long-term vision towards 2006, 2008 and beyond.

Many organizations are engaged now in discussions about creating a much-needed centralized voter file. Project Vote's proposal is intended not to pre-empt those discussions, but to stimulate the convergence of proposals into the creation of a usable file for 2005 and beyond. Most of the projects being discussed in the voter participation community are too ambitious to be in place in the short term, and we believe that a program that starts in the 2005 is a critical need to fill. Another major challenge to be addressed for the creation of a centralized data bank for 501c3, c4 and 527 organizations is the legality of such an entity. Though that question has not been answered, this proposal seeks to build a centralized data bank for 501c3 organizations with the ability to accommodate and interface with other non 501c3 organizations where legally appropriate.

Project Vote, USAction and Clean Water Action will serve as the facilitators of this partnership and will work to serve the needs of all the partner organizations through list sharing, database improvements and strategic targeting of resources. Large and small organizations alike will benefit from this partnership on a financial and strategic level. Thirty groups all trying to raise money for voter file acquisition, and then spending those limited resources on individual programs is duplicative and a poor use of the funding community's money. Developing a coherent plan that incorporates economies of scale and hosts data in one location, and is serviced by a knowledgeable and accessible staff that is responsive to the partner organizations, will allow groups to focus on field mobilization knowing they have the best data available.

The ability to effectively communicate with our memberships is directly limited by access to resources and our ability to manipulate data and target constituencies effectively. While some of the larger groups have the ability to do targeting and data work internally, many organizations do not and will not have this capacity. A partnership that provides these resources to the larger community would fill the current void and maximize the strength of our organizations' voter mobilization efforts.

Initially, we would not acquire files for all jurisdictions but instead would focus on states where partner organizations have strength and/or interest for the 2005-2006 election cycle. The file would be built in several stages: a 2005 test phase with 3 or 4 states, a 2006 mid term stage growing from 2005 and adding geographies of interest and then a full build out for 2007 and beyond. The list of states to be included in each stage are as follows:

## **2005 Test Phase**

New Jersey  
Virginia  
Ohio  
Florida

## **2006 Mid Term Phase**

Michigan  
Arizona  
Pennsylvania  
Washington  
Minnesota

## **2007 and Beyond**

Arkansas  
Georgia  
Wisconsin  
Oregon  
Nevada  
New Mexico  
North Carolina  
Maryland  
Delaware

Other States and Congressional Districts as Requested

While the list of states will change, the first step is purchasing data the Phase 1 states. Once we acquire those initial lists we will configure them in a standard format and enhance them with publicly available demographic data. This demographic data will include information about income, housing, educational background, ethnicity and employment. In addition to this data, we will also add phone numbers, email addresses (where available cost effectively) and important field contact information that has been collected from prior elections. This information, to be acquired from participating groups, will be augmented by the addition of issue identifiers which will be created from membership records. To protect the privacy of this information, group identifiers will be issue based such as 'environmental, civil rights, economic justice'. This will allow users of the data to gain valuable insight into the electorate that cannot be obtaining through traditional commercial sources. Our plan is to move immediately on initial steps where there is consensus while an ongoing conversation continues about other possible enhancements to the file.

By pooling the resources and talents of the largest voter mobilization groups in the country we will create a voter file that will serve as the backbone of our voter mobilization efforts for years to come. The 2004 election cycle was a good first step towards a common voter file, and now is the time to learn from the lessons of 2004 and create a new partnership that serves the needs of voter mobilization groups as we work to build long-term infrastructure and capacity.