

One Sky Giving Circle Grant Application

2018 Grant Focus: Empowerment of Women & Girls:
Legal, Equal & Constitutional Rights (Civic Engagement)

*Please complete and return this application by **Friday, March 23, 2018**. Brevity and bullet points welcome! Feel free to share additional information you believe is relevant in the Notes section. Thank you.*

Legal Name of Organization: VoteRunLead

Website URL: www.voterunlead.org

Headquarters Location: New York, NY

Name and Title of Primary Contact: Erin Vilardi, Founder and CEO

Email and Phone Number of Primary Contact: erin@voterunlead.org / (609)

Application Submission Date: March 22, 2018

Organizational Overview:

Organization Description: VoteRunLead is an independent, nonpartisan nonprofit organization, founded in 2014, that trains women how to run for office -- and win. With award-winning programs, an open online platform, and a network of alumnae and trainers dedicated to building women's power and inspiring a connected, supportive community, VoteRunLead envisions a future where powerful women leaders are a permanent fixture at every level of American government. Together with this leaders and our networks, we will create a more equitable, just, transparent democracy that flourishes and delivers on its promise for all citizens, and serves as a model for the world.

Mission Statement: VoteRunLead's mission is to train a diversity of women to unleash their political power, run for office, and transform American democracy.

Organizational Budget: US\$1,417,000

Program Budget: If your organization has a specific program focused on civic engagement, please list the name and budget for that program.

100 percent of VoteRunLead's focus is on civic engagement.

- Program name: N/A
- Program budget: US\$ N/A

Staffing: List the locations where you operate, and the number of staff in each location (you do not need to list staff names or titles)

- New York City: Four full-time staff members;
- Denver, CO: One part-time staff member.

In addition to staff, VoteRunLead works with approximately two dozen trainers who work as part-time consultants across the country to deliver leadership trainings in-person. Also, Board members are located in New York, Minnesota, Michigan, and Georgia, helping to train, advocate, and act as an on-the-ground presence and anchor in their communities.

Annual Report: Does your organization produce an annual report? Yes_x_

If the annual report is available on your website please add a link here or attach a copy to this form.

Though informal, VoteRunLead sends an impact report at the end of the year via email blast; a copy is attached. This year, the organization aims to create a more traditional report with financial reporting.

Organizational Activities: (check all that apply)

X_Direct Service

X_Advocacy

X_Capacity Building (training, etc.)

X_Awareness Building

X_Convening

__Research and Publications

__Membership Organization

X_Other(s): *political empowerment*

Organizational Strategy

VoteRunLead believes that an effective democracy is a diverse one, and that policies and practices in the U.S. will be most inclusive and beneficial when people of all backgrounds are represented in local government, as well as at the state and federal levels. Our tried-and-true leadership development for women is concrete enough to provide lasting impact for our trainees, and is also nimble enough to react to the current political climate.

Long-Term Organizational Goals. Over the long-term, VoteRunLead aims to tap into the potential of women, across party lines and across the country, who are motivated to and ready to lead. Since November 2016, we've experienced a 300 percent surge in interest in our programs -- and responding to this, we've developed a three-year strategy to leverage this unique moment in time. By 2020, the organization aims to:

- **Propel women into public leadership** so that representation reflects the actual population (currently, 51 percent of the U.S. is women; about 40 percent are women of color, but approximately 80 percent of government is led by men, and they are overwhelmingly white men);
- **Connect with 32,000 women** through in-person trainings in towns and cities across the country;
- Meet women where they are, leveraging existing platforms (Facebook Live, YouTube, etc.) to **train an additional 1.2 million women online;**
- **Witness 20,000 women running for office by 2020, with about half winning their races** at the local, state, and federal levels; and
- **In 2018 alone, VoteRunLead will double the number of women trained** online and in-person to reach at least 20,000 women, helping hundreds to candidacy in this important midterm election year.

By achieving long-overdue gender parity, VoteRunLead -- and its alumnae and supporters -- will shift the way government operates, making a positive shift toward transparency, inclusiveness, and effectiveness.

How Our Approach is Effective. VoteRunLead works -- and the proof is in our data. Last year, we trained 9,700 women, three times more than we have ever trained in a single year. Then, in November, **49 VoteRunLead alumnae were on the ballots** -- an impressive feat for an organization our size (another, similar organization which has a budget six times ours, helped 55 women on the ballots in November). Eleven of our winners are women of color, and two are openly transgender. Even more

impressive: **70 percent of our candidates won** and, though political newcomers can usually expect to win only 10 percent of the time, **our first-time candidates have a 64 percent win rate.**

Our approach is effective because our trainees are told to “Run As You Are.” No other leadership organization takes this approach. Our proprietary, comprehensive curriculum, available online and in-person, asks women to identify what they value and articulate their unique points of view. In this way, women grow to be authentic leaders, speaking with authority and offering their expertise. “Run As You Are” trainings also cover campaign nuts and bolts, and are supported by a nationwide network of trainees, candidates, elected officials, and leadership experts. Women emerge from trainings well-equipped, confident, and knowledgeable, and they have everything they need to continue their leadership path right into office.

VoteRunLead’s Intervention is Critical to Positive Change. VoteRunLead is one of the only leadership development organization for women that focuses on roles at the local and state level. We know it is effective because we’ve analyzed the numbers (see table below).

TABLE 3.1. *Governments in the United States*

	Number of Elective Bodies	Number of Elected Officials
Federal Government	1	
Executive branch		2
U.S. Senate		100
U.S. House of Representatives		435
State Government	50	
State legislatures		7,382
Statewide elected offices		10,036
State boards		1,331
Local Government		
Municipal governments	19,429	135,531
Town or township governments	16,504	126,958
County governments	3,034	58,818
School districts	13,506	95,000
Special districts	35,052	84,089
Total	87,576	519,682

Notes: Data on the breakdown of local governments are from the National League of Cities (2010), except the school district data, which were provided by the National Association of School Boards. State government elected officials data come from the National Conference of State Legislatures (2010a) and the Bureau of the Census (1992).

Among the 520,000 elected offices in our country, only 537 are at the federal level. Thus, achieving anything significant requires that women step into roles locally and statewide. We are focused on real, long-term, lasting change that will shape and improve our governance, reaching the 99 percent of 520,000 elected offices that rarely make the big news. [A Politico article from June 2017 called “Why Women Don’t Run for Office”](#) specifically mentioned state and local level offices as a key strategy for untapped female leaders, saying “recruiters are looking in the wrong place” with “most county party leaders of both parties...are far less likely to recruit among education and child-related

networks—precisely where they would find the most women with untapped political potential.”

Additionally, our alumnae don’t keep to themselves -- they recruit other women. A recent trainee said:

“Thank you VoteRunLead for giving us the encouragement and tools we need to bring more women into public office. I hope to do the same for the younger women in my own community. There’s another council race for the other three seats in two years, and I will be on the lookout for women to run.”

Partners Help Us Achieve Our Goals. VoteRunLead is an integral part of a network of organizations focused on developing women leaders who will activate their skills through public leadership. Additionally, we have identified several key women’s and issue organizations to reach a broad, diverse swath of women, including:

- The United State of Women
- Women, Food, and Agricultural Network (through our program dedicated to reaching rural women, called Plate to Politics)

- Gamma Phi Delta Sorority
- MomsRising.org
- 9to5 Working Women
- Civic Hall

Working with these organizations allows us to reach untapped leaders. All efforts will always prioritize underrepresented populations -- women of color, of rural areas, of lower income households, of the LGBTQ community -- to bring the full perspectives and power of women leaders forward. Additionally, creative partnerships with corporations such as WeWork, wherein space is donated for trainings and workshops, connect VoteRunLead to reach entrepreneurs, movers, and shakers in communities across the country.

VoteRunLead is unique because it is the only organization that takes emerging and mid-level leaders and employs key strategies to train them and build up their leadership. Thus, we occupy a key place in the leadership development continuum, where women can take that critical next step to “walk the talk” of representing women’s interests and fighting for women’s rights such as education, family planning, and all human rights.

Programs

Please describe the program(s) that best fits our funding focus – Civic Engagement (we understand that, in some cases, our funding topic will be the sole focus of your organization):

Civic Engagement is the sole focus of VoteRunLead. At the core of our strategy is the “Run As You Are” Methodology. The #RunAsYouAre methodology is made up of six core tenets:

1. Confidence & Qualifications
2. Campaigns & Elections
3. Government & Civic Literacy
4. Practice & Feedback Cycles
5. People & Networks
6. You: Reputation & Impact

Please refer to the table below for further details about the basis of our trainings.

	Level 1	Level 2	Change over time / level - where the woman ends up after VRL
Confidence & Qualifications	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Understand and know they are qualified Believe I am enough; strengths-based See personal experience is expertise See that it's possible: ex: can have a family and do this Dealing with "first and only," being "the diversity" Managing expectations 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Take their ambitions seriously Understand the journey is bumpy Resilience and persevere Motivation to maintain Role modeling - real women, real stories, real practitioners as trainers/speakers Power (movement building) in losses Tips/tools for breaking barriers Provide safe space for questions, concerns, exploration 	Move from doubts, to strengths-based view of self, to persist over time and leadership
Campaigns & Elections	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Demystify campaign process Basics of a campaign plan, field, fundraising and messaging What seat is for me: what's open and available and what suits my skills, what are core issues I care about. Understand what journey looks like to run: political landscape assessment, what is required of me uniquely (competencies, legal, time frame, family) What is current electoral climate in my district Building personal capital Difference between rural and urban campaigns 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Campaign fundraising and donor plan Steps in campaign plan, healthy skills and action taken: message in mail, phone, digital; voter targeting and contact plan Candidate v campaign manager differences or dual roles Political networks activated Personal strategy developed Have agenda or point-of-view Running a campaign that makes sense for your district Using tools/people at hand; when/why to hire consultants 	Move is from simply understanding landscape and self in relation to it, to operating in landscape with a goal
Government & Civic Literacy	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Functions of local, municipal and state Party roles and functions Role of civic institutions Understanding constraints of political systems Open to new systems and challenging old beliefs/ foundations 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Levers of power within a system Committees, chairs and leadership among leaders Party infrastructure leveraged Timelines and cycles Systems change accounted for in strategy Valued and implements inclusive democratic practice 	Move is from a foundational understanding of democracy to being someone who engages in pro-democratic practice
Practice & Feedback Cycles	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Share personal story, positive peer feedback Break fear / 1st time 1x personal coaching Facebook community / large peer group Intent / pre-declaration Try it on / Role Play 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Real-time and ongoing cycle of engagement (90 days?) Pairings or small group cohorts Set practice times and goals for improvement Access to experts Coaching over time (pre-candidacy political leadership coaching). 	Move is from "trying on" role to experimentation + feedback in role to coached on a plan of action
People & Networks	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> What is required of me and my family Asses networks, ID strengths and being to ID people for gaps: political (what do you have v. what do you need) Comfort in tapping your network for support (both dollars and time) Surround yourself with people who will give you strength Self-care understanding Networks into local political infrastructure 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Able to lean on others strategically and personally; kitchen cabinet active Understand campaign team around you Deputize others Leverage local politicians and influencers Utilizing and growing lists Donors are id'd and asked Doing for self: sisterhood, care, exercise 	From understanding and building your networks to leveraging and utilizing regularly and with efficiency towards goals
You: Reputation Impact	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> I am the type of person that can do this (don't have to be rich or lawyer, see others like her) Value I add to institution, policy decisions, civic debates Explore and identify personal motivations + values Assessment of skills/ self / know + don't know Understand personal story Know your why 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Envision unique pathway and act on it Define your political brand + top policies Several "go to" stories of leadership and experience Radical self-inquiry re: reputation, known for, how will you govern, priorities/work for Can translate into a stump speech 	From knowing what you don't know to understanding your motivations and building a personal reputation and track-record you can be proud of

VoteRunLead Programmatic Priorities. VoteRunLead is reaching women to run for office that most other organizations wouldn't see as viable. We are providing free, unbiased resources to immigrant women, rural women, younger women, moms, and those not yet ready to claim a party mantle -- and they are running and winning! Since our inception, we have targeted women who have been historically underrepresented, and we have set the bar for other women's organizations with an expansive definition of diversity.

As a nonpartisan organization, VoteRunLead does not follow party lines, but instead we work with each individual woman to identify and articulate her unique values, urging transparency, collaboration, empowerment, and effective decision-making.

VoteRunLead Programmatic Challenges. The organization's most pressing challenges are as follows:

- **Keeping up with demand.** VoteRunLead is excited about the thousands of women raising their hands to lead. We are eager to help them step into their full potential! With this demand, we must scale quickly, staffing up and developing online tools to ensure full participation. Fortunately, resources from new and unexpected places allow us to be nimble and responsive; and

- **Directing and opening the conversation, even with a brisk pace of growth.** VoteRunLead is constantly pushing for women's leadership to be a nonpartisan issue. We understand that together, women will bring a unique perspective to decision-making tables, inherently prioritizing and normalizing issues that women value, such as education, human trafficking, women's rights, and protection of vulnerable populations. We are excited to maintain this perspective in a highly politicized environment.

Impact

What, briefly, is your organization's approach to understanding your impact? What are your key output and outcome (or other) metrics? What has been your impact to date? (please include demographic information about who you serve and how many are impacted by your work, annually and to date)

In numbers, VoteRunLead has:

- **Trained approximately 33,000** to date, both online and in-person;
- **Trained nearly 10,000 in 2017** alone; and
- **Ushered 49 women to the ballots in 2017**, celebrating a 70 percent win rate for return candidates and a 64 percent win rate for first-time candidates. This is a remarkable feat, considering the typical win-rate for first-time candidates is 10 percent!

Additionally:

- **60 percent of our trainees are women of color;**
- **Nearly one-third are women who come from low-income households;** and
- **Approximately 25 percent are women under 35.**

In short, we are training the women whose voices have long been underrepresented in power-- the women who will make inclusive and effective changes in our government. When this diverse group of women are finally in power -- and we plan on putting them there by 2020 -- they will work for inclusive policies such as protecting voter rights and equal opportunities in all fields including male-dominated areas, such as technology, science, engineering, and more. Our alumnae are our best proof: :

- Alumna **Alicka Ampry-Samuel**, newly elected to New York City Council, is already working on addressing the housing crisis in East Brooklyn so that more families can afford to live safe and secure;
- Alumna **Kim Schofield** works in the Georgia General Assembly to protect healthcare and women's rights, and to ensure housing stays affordable and safe in her state's neighborhoods;
- Alumna **Nikema Williams**, newly elected to the Georgia State Senate, is committed to the economic development of all neighborhoods where she and her constituents live;
- Alumna **Ilhan Omar**, member of the Minnesota State House, is the first Somali-American legislator and works to overcome racial inequalities in her state and create equal access to opportunities, in addition to other inclusive policy work.

The alumnae above -- and hundreds more -- demonstrate that an investment in VoteRunLead is one that continues to give, years after a grant is made. Because we train women to activate their leadership, once they hone their skills and step into community roles, they begin to grow and positively change their communities.

Staffing

1. *How does your staff reflect the populations you serve? Do you hire locally, and if so what percentage of regional staff are from that region?*

VoteRunLead is committed to reflecting its trainees' diversity in its staff, which is 60 percent women, 40 percent LGBTQ, and 20 percent women of color. The organization hires locally in each office; currently, the New York headquarters have employees who are local to the city; 2017's Minneapolis Community Organizer was a local, limited-term hire, and training consultants stretch across the country, from New York to Los Angeles, offering in-person workshops focused not only on broad public leadership, but also on that city or town's specific issues. We believe that this nationwide reach helps us to stay nimble and connected to our constituents.

2. *Are there any key positions not currently filled?*

As VoteRunLead is expanding, the organization is creating new positions in 2018 which are not yet filled. Key hires will include a Data Analyst and Head of Product, E-Learning.

3. *How long has your executive director been in her or his current role?*

Erin Vilardi is the CEO and Founder, in place since the inception of VoteRunLead in 2014.

Governance

1. *Please attach a list of Board of Directors including affiliations, tenures, and terms.*

See attached.

2. *What percentage of the Board of Directors financially supports the organization?*

100 percent.

3. *To what extent do board members represent the populations you serve?*

The Board closely reflects the population VoteRunLead serves; 60 percent of the women we train are women of color and from all across the country, from various backgrounds. The Board of Directors is also 60 percent women of color, and is 100 percent women. They hail from all across the country as well.

Funders

1. *Please attach a list of current funders (or include the relevant link to your website).*

See attached.

2. *If you receive a grant from One Sky, how would the money most likely be used?*

VoteRunLead is respectfully requesting a grant in the amount of \$35,000 from the One Sky Giving Circle. If funded, the organization would apply this to the costs associated with our efforts to scale our programs, helping us double our training numbers in 2018. Expenses toward this goal include further development of the online training system, metrics tracking, and marketing to reach and respond to untapped women leaders.

With the ambitious goal of doubling our reach this year, VoteRunLead seeks support from key, aligned supporters such as One Sky. We believe that together, we can make a huge impact!

Charitable Purpose

Does your organization have audited financials? Yes_x

If available on your website, please include a link here, or attach a copy to this form.

See attached.

If US-based

- Is your organization a registered 501(c)(3)? Yes_x

Presenting to One Sky Giving Circle Membership

Each year the One Sky grant committee chooses a slate of four organizations (two domestic, two international) to present to our full membership for voting. We ask that a representative from each of those four organizations presents at our annual member meeting.

*This year our annual meeting, in San Francisco, California, is on **Wednesday, May 23rd, 2018, beginning at 7pm PST.** If your organization is chosen for the slate, would a representative be available on this date and time to present to our group, either in person or via Skype?*

Yes, definitely -- and thank you for the opportunity to apply for funding and share information about VoteRunLead!

Notes

VoteRunLead is fortunate to have a growing media presence, supported by an active network of trainees, alumnae, and experts who live our message of empowerment and inclusivity. These women sit on school boards and in state houses across America, are racially and ethnically diverse, and come from both rural and urban areas. Recent media coverage includes:

- The aforementioned alumna Ilhan Omar, a former refugee, Muslim, and mother of three was profiled in [Time](#) magazine's "Firsts" series. She was also featured by [NPR](#), [BBC](#), and [NBC](#);
- VoteRunLead was recently featured in [ABC's Nightline](#);
- [Politico](#) is talking about how VoteRunLead trainees are changing the game; and
- Coverage of VoteRunLead and our diverse alumnae network was also run by [New York magazine](#) and [The Cut](#).

Your support is critical in ensuring our success. We are nimble and tech-savvy, well-known for the racial and ethnic diversity of our leaders and alumnae. We're proudly nonpartisan—women don't need to be told their political views—and with half of millennials not affiliated with either major party, this independence speaks volumes. We have a proven curriculum, a track record of significant "wins," a network of powerful individuals and partnerships, and an engaged, diverse group of 10,000+ new women ready to vote, run, and lead. We are eager to make a seismic impact on the political practice and policies in our nation, to include all voices and create equal opportunity. Yet we need strong, aligned partners such as One Sky to make this happen!

This is not a moment, it's a movement. It leads the way for generations of women and girls who will be civically minded and politically active, and this movement includes all of us.

We hope that you will join us in leading the way toward this new frontier of inclusive, effective governance.