

# THE JOHN RANDOLPH HAYNES AND DORA HAYNES FOUNDATION

*Governance & Democracy  
Grantmaking Initiative*

## Program Overview



The John Randolph Haynes and Dora

**HAYNES**  
FOUNDATION

# About the Haynes Foundation

## **The John Randolph Haynes and Dora Haynes Foundation**

Established in 1926 by a prominent, reform-minded physician and his suffragist wife, the John Randolph Haynes and Dora Haynes Foundation is a leading supporter of research for the betterment of Los Angeles. It is also the oldest private foundation in the city. Each year, the Foundation invests approximately \$3 million in grants and fellowships to various public and private institutions, most of them local. These funds mostly support university research into the underlying causes of social problems in Los Angeles and recommendations to address them. Over the years, the Foundation has funded hundreds of important studies in education, transportation, local government, elections, information and technology, public safety, demographics, public service, and natural resources. In so doing, the Foundation has remained true to its founding philosophy of promoting the well-being and betterment of humankind.

## Initiative Overview

### **Governance & Democracy Grantmaking Initiative**

In 2023, the Haynes Foundation launched a new initiative to focus its major research grants on Governance and Democracy in the Los Angeles region. The Foundation now centers its research grants around enhancing the quality, form, and results of democratic political participation and the performance of government institutions.

This initiative is firmly rooted in the Haynes Foundation's rich history, enduring mission, and century-old work of bridging high-quality research and public action to identify and advance solutions to complex challenges within our region.

This specific focus on governance and democracy emerged from conversations around our own board table and beyond, in gatherings and interviews with nearly forty diverse experts and leaders across multiple sectors and subject areas. What emerged from these future-focused conversations was a shared recognition that our public systems have not kept pace with our rapid, ever-changing environment

The Foundation will support solution focused research that provides data to shape innovative, evidence-based problem solving. Under this initiative, the Foundation will fund research to:

- Add significantly to knowledge and understanding of governance and democracy issues in the Los Angeles region (Los Angeles, Ventura, San Bernardino, Riverside, and Orange counties).
- Help influence policies and practices.
- Offer promise of improving the lives of our people and our communities.

We expect researchers to seek opportunities to collaborate with community-based organizations and/or policymakers. We are open to all fields of study and disciplines that address governance and democracy in the Los Angeles region.

Our research grants will be either:

1. **Planning:** one-year grants for up to \$100,000.
2. **Research-to-Action:** grants made for up to two years, with possible consideration for a renewable third-year. The grant maximum is \$250,000 per year. Depending on the research-to-action project's nature, a larger award may be considered.

The Foundation will accept grant applications for either planning or research-to-action grants, though the application process varies by grant type. Additionally, those who complete planning grants may later apply for research-to-action grants.

For planning grants, applicants submit a short proposal. For research-to-action grants, an initial Letter of Interest (LOI) is required. The Foundation will select from among the LOIs those that will be invited to submit full grant applications for the planning or research-to-action grants.

Proposals are expected to be timely, marked by scholarly excellence in design, execution, and evaluation, with meaningful engagement and indication of interest in the research topic by affected policymakers and stakeholders. Priority will be given to proposals that actively involve researchers and policymakers from governmental institutions together with affected community stakeholders.

### ***To what end?***

***We aim to support research projects that both identify data-supported solutions to a challenge within our region and drive implementation of these solutions to make a measurable impact on improving the well-being of people throughout the Los Angeles region. In every policy area, whether housing and homelessness, transportation, climate change, economic inequality, and many others, we need better governance and a deeper democracy to reach solutions.***

## Why this focus on strengthening democracy and governance?

- Our region faces a series of complex, multi-faceted, and stubborn challenges that defy easy solutions.
- Strengthening democracy and advancing good governance practices are at the heart of addressing many of the challenges our communities face.
- Bold ideas are out there that have the potential to solve some of our most thorny challenges.
- Quality research and data can and should guide decision-making and problem-solving and supersede political divides.
- No researcher, academic center, community organization, or policymaker can solve these challenges alone.
- The public sector has an important role to play in problem-solving, given the scale of resources it can mobilize and its mandate to serve the public good. But the public sector need not do so alone.
- Now is the moment to fund and think in new ways to build and support planning and research-to-implementation partnerships that will bring evidence-based solutions to our region.

### **WE BELIEVE THAT:**

The goals of advancing good governance and strengthening democracy are not only pertinent to Los Angeles, but also extend to our state, our nation, and the global community. Democracy can no longer be assumed as a given. The capacity of our democratic system to facilitate sound governance and efficient issue resolution faces mounting tests worldwide. Enhancing governance in one of the nation's most significant regions can fortify the foundations of our democracy, benefiting democratic systems both domestically and internationally. And a stronger and more vibrant local and regional democracy contributes mightily to a well-governed and responsive polity.

## The **VALUES** that will guide our new initiative are:

**QUALITY:** We value quality research — unbiased, fact-based, and scientific. High-quality research provides robust, ethical evidence, stands up to scrutiny, and can be used to inform policymaking. It must adhere to principles of professionalism, transparency, accountability, and auditability.

**COLLABORATION:** We value collaborative research conducted by researchers who build knowledge useful to practice. We value research that adheres to the principles of scientific inquiry conducted in partnership among stakeholders and policy/changemakers working toward the same ends in defining research questions and identifying viable solutions. We believe collaborative research tends to earn greater stakeholder buy-in and can help spot systemic problems that might be overlooked using more isolated methods.

**IMPLEMENTATION:** Moving beyond studying, talking, and handwringing, we value and prioritize the hard, imperfect work of implementing real, measurable solutions that further our collective drive to advance good governance and strengthen democracy.

**TRANSPARENCY:** We trust our grantees and the experience and expertise they bring to each project. We value clear, direct, accessible, actionable language in our communication, grant applications, and reporting of research results. We share information in a candid and timely manner.

**ACCOUNTABILITY:** We hold ourselves responsible for managing and directing the funds entrusted to our stewardship to achieve results and make a measurable impact on improving the well-being of people throughout the Los Angeles region.

**DIVERSITY, EQUITY and INCLUSION:** While Los Angeles is one of the nation's most diverse communities, there are also entrenched inequities and obstacles to inclusion that must be systematically addressed. We value research and action that help move our region in a more equitable and just direction, through analyzing obstacles that limit the opportunities for communities and individuals to participate and lead in the civic arena, and to expand the reach of governance into the grasp of all. A well-governed democratic system must be inclusive and accessible.

## What do we mean by **ADVANCING GOOD GOVERNANCE?**

Governance refers to the processes and structures by which governmental decisions are made to address and solve problems, how to get to the best solutions, how to implement these decisions to help people, and who is held accountable for effective performance.

Governance encompasses more than just the mechanics of governance itself; it extends to the intricate interplay between government and the broader civic and community spheres, influencing and molding decisions. At each juncture, the Foundation wholeheartedly embraces the concept of governance built on the interconnectedness among government process and expansive civic and community landscapes.

The challenge of advancing good governance considers such questions as: How do we increase citizens' connections to government agencies and the help they provide? How can we make public services more accessible? How do we build larger, more inclusive decision-making tables to ensure diverse voices are heard? Are we recruiting, attracting, training, and retaining the best leaders for public office and public service? Are our current governing structures (neighborhood councils, commissions, city councils, board of supervisors, board of education) effective and should they be reformed? How do we strengthen the government workforce? Should there be high-quality training for candidates and newly elected public officials? Are we holding government officials accountable to the constituents they serve? How do we increase a shared norm, belief, and value that government is a positive and necessary force in helping all people?

## What do we mean by **STRENGTHING DEMOCRACY?**

Engagement in the democratic process is more than just the act of voting. It should be embedded in every part of civic life, extending before and after an election. The doors of engagement should be open to all people to become and remain involved in their communities and to have a voice in issues that impact their lives. An engaged and informed citizenry is essential for representative democracy to function effectively.

The challenge of strengthening democracy considers such questions as: How do we foster communities built on mutual respect, representation, checks and balances, the importance of the law, and the interpretation of the principles

embedded in our US Constitution? How do we re-invigorate and deepen civics education to nurture a more informed and engaged community? How do we increase and widen voter participation, ensure fair elections, and rebuild trust in the election process? How do we create a shared understanding of our social compact and civic responsibility? How do we nurture and create a public square with space for safe, civil discourse and dialogue among diverse perspectives? An effective and responsive democracy is a crucial bulwark of good governance, and good governance enhances strong democracy.

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*Greater Los Angeles is a prime region for addressing issues of governance and democracy. Los Angeles County alone boasts 88 independent cities, including the City of Los Angeles along with independent school districts, including the nation's second largest, and many smaller ones. Furthermore, Los Angeles houses numerous regional agencies and dispersed centers of authority, making for substantial governance challenges. However, our abundant civic and community resources underscore the fact that the government doesn't have to tackle these issues alone.*

Raphael J. Sonenshein, Ph.D.  
Executive Director

The John Randolph Haynes and Dora Haynes Foundation

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## **Our INTENDED OUTCOMES are that...**

- Quality research is conducted in close partnership with the stakeholders most affected and advanced by policy and changemakers both inside and outside of government.
- Bold, innovative, actionable solutions are identified to advance good governance practices and strengthen democracy.
- Regional and local solutions are implemented, and their impact evaluated.
- The lessons we learn are disseminated to help others address and solve problems.
- Practical research and researchers are valued for their capacity to build knowledge useful to practice that adheres to the principles of scientific inquiry.
- When the research grant is complete, the parties involved in the research and impacted by the recommendations feel the value of their contributions.



**We welcome your questions, partnership and collaboration.**

**If you are interested in proposing a planning or research-to-action grant, we invite you to submit a request by visiting our website at [www.haynesfoundation.org](http://www.haynesfoundation.org)**

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