Charge-Up Collaborative Statement on Election Day

Change requires not only ideas, but also tangible action. The Charge-Up Collaborative, a collection of nonprofit capacity-building organizations from across Maryland, DC, and Virginia, was established to leverage individual ideas into sector-wide change. To better live up to their commitment to racial equity and social justice, many of the organizations in the Charge-Up Collaborative are adding Election Day as a paid day off for their teams.

This “day of action” for their teams will allow employees to vote, take other civic actions they believe in, and fully participate on Election Day without needing to juggle work responsibilities or find time before or after the work day.

While making this day of action available to their teams is important, it is also an effort to highlight and bring attention to the legacy of voter disenfranchisement and suppression of the Black and Latino vote and the impact this has had and still has in Black and Latino communities and in perpetuating poverty.

This action also seeks to raise awareness of the millions of Americans who do not get Election Day as a paid day off. For many, especially hourly employees, those working in the service industry, and day laborers, voting on Election Day can be incredibly challenging. Often, it can literally mean leaving money on the table, which for many is not a viable option – not to mention that work obligations, childcare, health issues, and/or accessibility issues make the logistics of how to get to a polling place seem insurmountable.

By making Election Day a paid day off, and urging others to as well, the Collaborative hopes to encourage more people to vote and to think about the barriers to voting that exist for so many. The right to vote should never be taken for granted and it is our responsibility as leaders to give our team the space to participate in this critical civic activity.

By taking this step, the Collaborative hopes to lead by example for other community-based nonprofits. Racial equity and civic participation are values many nonprofits hold, but all too often the immediate demands of our day-to-day program work prevents us from focusing on living out those values. By giving our teams space to fully exercise their voting rights, and committing at least one day to focus on civic action, we hope we will spur more reflection on, conversations about, and actions related to these important issues.

This action represents our desire for our teams to live out our values, and for our organizations to serve as examples to fellow nonprofits, local businesses, and communities as a whole. If we want our neighbors to vote and engage civically, we need to give them the space to do so. And this day of action is an important start.

If you are interested in making Election Day a paid day off for your team, you can go here to view a sample policy template.
Participating Charge-Up Collaborative Organizations include:

- Catalogue for Philanthropy: Greater Washington
- Center for Nonprofit Advancement
- DC Bar Pro Bono Center
- Fair Chance
- Maryland Nonprofits
- Nonprofit Montgomery
- Nonprofit Prince George’s County
- Nonprofit Village
- ProInspire
- United Way of the National Capital Area