

# CIVIC SPRING PROJECT

## summer grantees

### ELIZABETH, NJ



Every ten years municipalities in New Jersey review their policies and programs to adjust to current events. The City of Elizabeth is in the process of developing their 10 year Master Plan, including development, transportation, housing, and community health. Our goal for the Civic Spring grant is to position our Groundwork Youth team, which is made up of a team of diverse youth aged 14-24, to take a leadership position to work with members of those who make decisions about community health, specifically issues related to COVID-19 and other possible disease outbreaks. Members will include Trinitas Regional Medical Center, the City's only hospital, the City of Elizabeth and Union County Health Departments, the public housing community, other nonprofits, and the community at large. We aim to provide opportunities for youth voices to coordinate suggestions that can mitigate the effects of this pandemic and propose solutions for policies that will prepare the community for probable similar experiences while educating them about the difference that civic actions can make.

### HOUSTON, TX



Shift Press is a youth-led, youth-produced publication that highlights the ways young people build, influence, and experience power in the Greater Houston area. This summer, Shift Press will respond to the pandemic and build community among youth through a partnership with government agencies (City of Houston Mayor's Office of Education and Houston ISD school board members), local non-profits (OCA Houston and Mi Familia Vota), and grassroots organizing groups (ONE Houston).

Shift Press will be run by the Institute of Engagement, a collective that helps young people take responsible ownership of their Houston. Their team consists of 6 current college students and class of 2020 college graduates, all graduates from a diverse range of Houston ISD public schools.

### KINSTON, NC



Kinston Teens is a youth-led nonprofit organization with a mission of empowering young people through service, leadership, and civic engagement. As community organizers, we find it critical to constantly assess and respond to the needs of our community, and we've been on the frontlines advocating against voter suppression, responding to devastating hurricanes and flooding, addressing needs that rise from the COVID-19 crisis, and more.

NC FIELD is a 501(c)3 non-profit organization based in Lenoir County that works with migrant and seasonal farmworker youth and families utilizing grassroots organizing principles to teach leadership, promote education and facilitate opportunities.

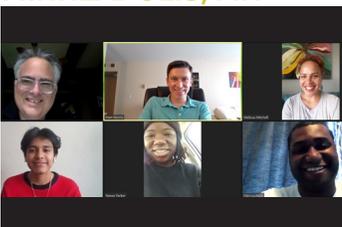
### LEXINGTON, KY



The "Coping with COVID Student-to-Student Study" is a student-driven initiative launched in the wake of statewide school closures to understand Kentucky students' social-emotional and learning experiences during the first months of the COVID-19 crisis and integrate student voices into the broader discourse around education policy, practice, and decision-making.

This study is being led by approximately 100 secondary school students who make up the Prichard Committee Student Voice Team in partnership with adult researchers from the University of Kentucky. It consists of a quantitative analysis of the nearly 13,000 students from all of Kentucky's 120 counties who responded to a student-designed survey and 50 peer-to-peer interviews with students representing the diversity of the state. The results and recommendations will be presented to the Kentucky Board of Education this August, and additional analysis, as well as the story behind how citizen student researchers conducted it, will be shared with other students, educators, education advocates, and policymakers, to help inform Kentucky's response to diverse education needs through and beyond the COVID-19 crisis.

### MINNEAPOLIS, MN



Minnesota's young people are at the center of a youth-led struggle for equity in pandemic support. Over the past two months, several high school youth have enacted a broad-based campaign to overturn a state law that prevents the State of Minnesota from providing unemployment benefits or pandemic unemployment assistance to an estimated 25,000+ otherwise eligible youth enrolled in high school.

These issues have sparked significant engagement and passion among youth, especially youth from low-income families and communities of color, and this heightened awareness and desire to engage in civic action offers an unparalleled opportunity to substantially grow the civic knowledge and capacities of Minnesota young people. To that end, Minnesota-based Youthprise will partner with Bridgemakers (a newly-formed, youth-led grassroots organization based in Minnesota's Twin Cities.)

### NEWARK, NJ



Through a mix of art, research, policy briefs, advocacy training, personal narrative writing, videography, and photography, Newark youth will grapple with the effects of COVID-19 on their community. They will also study the deep disparities in health that it reinforces. The youth will participate in the city's Summer Youth Employment Program, and will conduct action research with two community-driven organizations—the Abbot Leadership Institute and the Gem Project. Participants will both document the world as it is today in the middle of a pandemic, and envision a world of the future that is equitable. Each program will take a slightly different approach to empowering youth as changemakers, historians, advocates, and civic leaders. Youth will document their present, understand how the past informs it, and imagine their future.