

DEMOCRACY NC

Donor Briefing

Summer
2025



BUILDING A BRIGHTER FUTURE FOR NORTH CAROLINA, ONE STUDENT CHANGEMAKER AT A TIME...

*"Because of your support, first-year Friendterns across the state are creating incredible civic engagement projects on their home campuses—projects that are building Gen Z and Gen Alpha voter power and **bringing new voices into our democracy.**"* - Kennedy Lighty, '23 & '25 Democracy Summer Alumna

This summer, the 26th Class of Democracy Summer Friendterns showed us what's possible when young people lead with purpose. Together, all 20 student organizers raised more than \$6,000 to fund powerful voter engagement work on their campuses this fall.

HELP US GROW YOUNG LEADERS. SUPPORT OUR WORK FOR A STRONGER DEMOCRACY.

With every dollar raised and every event planned, these young leaders are planting seeds of change across the state. Thanks to your support, they're not just preparing for the next election—they're shaping the future of democracy.



PROGRAM SPOTLIGHT: Building the Bench

Why Leadership Development Matters

At Democracy North Carolina, we believe that true change is driven by those closest to the issues—and that means investing in grassroots leaders who are ready to organize their communities and reimagine what’s possible.

Pathways to Power is our statewide leadership development program designed to do just that. Through intensive regional trainings, digital workshops, and real-world organizing experience, participants gain the skills, confidence, and relationships needed to become effective civic leaders.

Whether it’s learning how power operates in their communities, understanding how campaigns win, or crafting strategies to activate neighbors around the ballot box, participants leave equipped to lead with clarity and conviction.

“Leadership development is the heartbeat of any sustainable movement,” says Marques Thompson, Democracy NC’s Organizing Director. **“If we’re serious about building a multiracial democracy, we have to train, mentor, and uplift the people who will carry that work forward long after any single election cycle.”**

This year, organizers across North Carolina are facilitating Pathways to Power sessions tailored to their own regions—from the mountains to the coast—ensuring that the training is responsive to local needs, challenges, and opportunities.

With local elections heating up and the 2026 midterms on the horizon, Pathways to Power is not just a training—it’s an investment in the future of North Carolina’s democracy.



JOIN THE MOVEMENT TODAY!

Contact Organizing Director Marques Thompson at marques@democracync.org to find out how you or your organization can plug into Pathways to Power in your region.



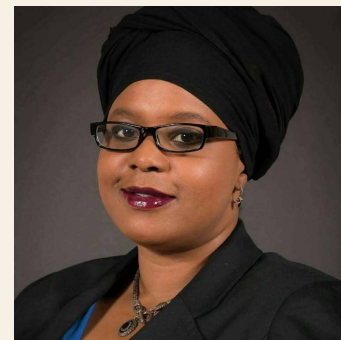
Did you know that more than 500,000 North Carolinians are eligible to vote but have not registered? Let’s change that! Democracy North Carolina is the anchor organization for National Voter Registration Day. Contact Desmera Gatewood at desmera@democracync.org to learn more about how you or your group can get involved.

MEET OUR NEW BOARD MEMBERS

★ Thessa Pickett - CEO, MCSV Corp | Certified Financial Professional

Thessa Pickett is a visionary leader, business strategist, and community advocate. As CEO of MCSV Corp, she drives growth while championing social justice, homelessness solutions, and economic empowerment.

"Whether leading MCSV Corp or advocating for social justice and economic empowerment, my goal is to create lasting impact through innovation and service. My work with organizations like the NC NAACP and YWCA reflects the same values Democracy NC champions—equity, sustainability, and empowering communities."



★ Emily Grace - Doctoral Student | Community Advocate

Emily Grace is a dedicated civic advocate with deep roots in North Carolina. As a Democracy NC board member, she brings her passion and skills to advancing voting rights and civic engagement.

"The work of Democracy NC has never been more important in these polarizing times! Civic education and activism are critical, and I'm excited to bring my passion and skills to the table. North Carolina is my home, and I want to do everything I can to make it the best it can be."



PLANNED GIVING

Will you consider a Legacy Gift, today?

Preserving and protecting our democratic principles is a long-term process requiring vigilance and careful nurturing. Your Legacy Gift will fund this work and ensure that Democracy NC is here to defend these fundamental democratic principles for generations to come.

The most common ways to make a Legacy Gift include: naming Democracy NC in your will or trust as a beneficiary of a life insurance policy as a beneficiary of your IRA, 401(k), or other qualified retirement plans as a gift of appreciated real property. A will or trust is an important legal document. Please discuss a legacy gift with your family, potential heirs, financial planner, and legal advisors.

Your gift will help safeguard our democracy for generations to come.

Meaningful investments in our democracy are how we will achieve true equity and community power. With your financial support, we will protect the future of voting rights in North Carolina, fully fund community organizing programs statewide, and expand voter outreach and education for generations to come.

We are here to help and would be pleased to work with you and your financial or legal advisor to help you achieve your goals. To make a donation, please visit our online form. Our Federal Tax ID is 56-2271150. For any questions, please contact Shannon Heck at 919-908-7915 or email us at development@democracync.org.

MAKING A TRIBUTE GIFT

Honor someone you admire with a gift that reflects their values—and fuels the fight for justice.

A tribute gift to Democracy NC is a powerful way to celebrate a loved one's legacy or recognize someone who inspires you. Your donation supports nonpartisan organizing, leadership development, and voter protection across North Carolina—all in their name.

Whether you're honoring a memory or lifting up a living role model, your gift helps build a better future rooted in justice, civic care, and community leadership.

Make a tribute gift today and turn their values into lasting impact at democracync.org/donate.





DEMOCRACY NC

A movement built of, by, and for the people!

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STAFF MEMBER SPOTLIGHT

★ Siesa Shuman

Volunteer Program Associate

"The volunteer program at our Morrisville headquarters is expanding to cultivate more engaged community members. I'm developing 3rd space initiatives that offer opportunities for advocates to participate in community-driven dialogues and learning."

Our new Democracy NC Book Club will promote literacy and critical media consumption, connecting authors like Octavia E. Butler with real examples of resistance and organizing in the South.

The Volunteer Empowerment Program aims to share trained staff skills with advocates, empowering them to increase their impact in their communities. I'm excited to create meaningful ways for people to help Democracy NC protect voting rights while developing their skills as organizers and advocates."

With a Bachelor's degree in International and Global Studies from Appalachian State University, Siesa Shuman is a force for social justice within her community. Siesa's desire to serve with joy and innovation has inspired our local volunteers to remain dedicated to the preservation of democracy.

