

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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Voqal Announces New Grants to Chicago Organizations

Chicago, April 3, 2017—The Voqal Fund is pleased to announce six new grants to organizations working in the Chicago area to enhance the community and strengthen social equity. The grants to Chicago Filmmakers (Chicago Digital Media Production Fund), BYP100, Illinois Coalition for Immigrant and Refugee Rights, City Bureau, State Innovation Exchange (SiX) and Illinois Humanities reflect Voqal Fund's commitment to support progressive movements for social change.

Chicago Filmmakers (Chicago Digital Media Production Fund)

Chicago Filmmakers is a not-for-profit media arts organization that fosters the creation, appreciation and understanding of film and video as media for artistic and personal expression, as well as media of important social and community impact. Thanks to the support of Voqal, the Chicago Filmmakers will once again support digital media works that encourage social change through its Digital Media Production Fund. The Digital Media Production Fund supports artists with varying levels of experience, both to recognize accomplished individuals, as well as to provide opportunities for young and emerging artists.

BYP 100

BYP100 is an activist member-based organization of Black 18-35 year olds, dedicated to creating justice and freedom for all Black people. It does this through building a collective focused on transformative leadership development, direct action organizing, advocacy and education using a Black queer feminist lens. Thanks to support from Voqal, BYP100 will build its local organizing capacity to engage in local and statewide advocacy work focused on ending criminalization, improving police accountability and increasing LGBTQ, gender and economic justice.

Illinois Coalition for Immigrant and Refugee Rights

Illinois Coalition for Immigrant and Refugee Rights (ICIRR) is dedicated to promoting the rights of immigrants and refugees to full and equal participation in the civic, cultural, social and political life of a diverse society. In partnership with its member organizations, the Coalition educates and organizes immigrant and refugee communities to assert their rights; promotes citizenship and civic participation; monitors, analyzes and advocates on immigrant-related issues; and informs the public about the contributions of immigrants and refugees. Thanks to support from Voqal, ICIRR will enhance youth civic engagement through education and empowerment using social media and technology.

City Bureau

City Bureau recruits and provides competitive stipends to journalists at all skill levels to mentor one another in a collaborative learning process, with community input every step of the way. It investigates issues with wide-ranging impact on people living in the South Side and West Side of Chicago: including education, housing, environmentalism, economic and urban development, criminal justice and politics. Support from Voqal will enable City Bureau to increase its capacity and dedicate staff positions to refining and strategically expanding its programming. This will allow City Bureau to continue its work to create a more democratic and responsive media landscape in Chicago.

State Innovation Exchange (SiX)

The State Innovation Exchange (SiX) is a national resource and strategy center that supports state legislators in advancing and defending progressive policies across the country. With a long-term vision of building progressive power and infrastructure at the state level, it has built a network of more than 1,500 elected officials who represent all 50 states. Voqal's funding will help support and coordinate a group of progressive legislators and state organizations around progressive legislative activity with the goal of positioning Illinois as a leader on progressive policy.

Illinois Humanities

Illinois Humanities works to build dialogue across all sectors of society to examine issues important to democracy in the focus areas of public policy, media and journalism, business and art. Voqal's funding will help support Illinois Humanities' *Reporting Back* series. This series aims to cultivate more civically responsive media coverage in under-reported Chicago communities through facilitated dialogue. Illinois Humanities will partner with media and community organizations to provide facilitation training and support for events that aim to provide a means for communities to shape and inform the way the issues that matter to them get covered.

Voqal is a national collaboration of EBS (Educational Broadband Service) licensees that work to advance social equity by creating an educated and informed public. Voqal provides grants and investments for organizations and individuals, affordable mobile internet and wireless spectrum advocacy. Our efforts center around using media and technology to increase access, community and knowledge.