

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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## **Voqal Announces New Grants to Chicago Organizations**

**Chicago, August 11, 2016**—The Voqal Fund is pleased to announce seven new grants to organizations working in the Chicago area to enhance the community and strengthen social equity. The grants to Chicago Votes, Common Cause Illinois, Communities United, Kartemquin, Young Invincibles, Roosevelt Forward and Free Spirit Media reflect Voqal Fund's commitment to support progressive movements for social change.

### **Chicago Votes**

Chicago Votes is a non-partisan, nonprofit organization building a more inclusive democracy by putting power in the hands of young Chicagoans. It engages and develops a new generation of leaders by opening the doors of government and politics to young people from all corners of the city. Thanks to the support from Voqal, Chicago Votes hopes to use training-based fellowship, internship and volunteer programs to break down barriers that keep young people of color from actively participating in the political process. Chicago Votes will actively work to leverage the youth vote during the 2016 election and beyond.

### **Common Cause Illinois**

Common Cause Illinois (CCIL) is a nonpartisan watchdog group whose mission is to promote open, ethical and accountable government at the local, state and national levels by educating and mobilizing the people of Illinois. With support from Voqal, CCIL looks to increase voter engagement in Illinois by working for a fairer election system that gets the money out of politics, increasing voter participation through the passage and implementation of automatic voter registration, and reforming the redistricting process to ensure legislative districts accurately represent their populations.

### **Communities United**

Communities United is a grassroots community organization that addresses the root causes of social, racial and economic injustice at a neighborhood, citywide, statewide and national level. Thanks to support from Voqal, Communities United will work to advance civic engagement efforts among millennials of color and engage in progressive policy agenda setting to address issues of school arrests and the ongoing criminalization of youth of color, shift the public narrative to a youth-led perspective, and move investment away from policing and incarceration to school and community support through a racial equity lens.

### **Kartemquin**

Kartemquin (KTQ) is a collaborative center for documentary media makers who seek to foster a more engaged and empowered society. KTQ's filmmaker development work centers on three flagship programs: Diverse Voices in Docs, the KTQ Internship program and KTQ Labs Feedback Screening program. With Voqal's support, KTQ will educate and engage diverse filmmakers in the changes in the documentary making field to ensure they are competitive practitioners of their profession

### **Young Invincibles**

Young Invincibles represents the interests of 18 to 34 year-olds and makes sure their perspective is heard wherever decisions about their collective future are being made. It conducts cutting-edge policy research and analysis, shares the stories of young adults, designs campaigns to educate them on important issue areas, informs and mobilizes millennials and advocates to change the status quo. Thanks to support from Voqal, its Student Impact Project will strengthen the voice of young adults on higher education policies in Illinois by providing advocacy tools for them to make their voices heard.

### **Roosevelt Forward**

Roosevelt Forward brings together thousands of thinkers and doers working to redefine the rules that guide our social and economic realities. It rethinks and reshapes everything from local policy to federal legislation, orienting toward a new economic and political system: one built by many for the good of all. Thanks to support from Voqal, Roosevelt will lead the NextGen Illinois Coalition in implementing a coordinated plan to strengthen youth civic infrastructure in Chicago and statewide.

### **Free Spirit Media**

Free Spirit Media (FSM) provides education, access and opportunity in media production to over 500 underserved urban youth every year. FSM is passionately committed to cultivating diverse youth voices on Chicago's south and west sides through high quality media-making programs. With Voqal's support, Free Spirit Media will strengthen its solutions-journalism practices and participatory distribution ventures to activate critical social dialogue and civic engagement in 2016 and 2017.

*Voqal is a collaboration of five nonprofit organizations that work to advance social equity by supporting nonprofit organizations and individuals that use technology and media to build an educated, empowered and engaged public. Voqal provides grants, fellowships, affordable mobile Internet, educational content and wireless spectrum advocacy.*