

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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## **Voqal Invests \$583,000 to Support Progressive Organizing and Media in Chicago**

**February 22, 2019**—Voqal is excited to announce 11 grants to organizations working in Chicago to strengthen the community through progressive organizing and media. The grants of \$153,000 to Chicago Filmmakers, \$50,000 to Action Now, \$50,000 to Center for Racial and Gender Equity, \$50,000 to Chicago Votes, \$50,000 to Illinois Coalition for Immigrant and Refugee Rights Action Fund, \$50,000 to Jane Addams Seniors in Action, \$50,000 to SOUL in Action, \$50,000 to United Working Families, \$30,000 to Kartemquin Films, \$25,000 to Urban Gateways and \$25,000 to One People’s Campaign, reflect Voqal’s commitment to supporting a vibrant progressive organizing and media landscape in Chicago.

### **Chicago Filmmakers**

Chicago Filmmakers 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. Voqal funds enable Chicago Filmmakers to support another cohort of the Chicago Digital Media Production Fund. This program provides financial assistance to digital media projects directed at advancing social change.

### **Action Now**

Action Now is focused on building the people power needed to move the equity needle forward, mobilizing individuals and families to fight for racial, social and economic justice. With Voqal’s support, Action Now is expanding organizing in predominantly Black wards in Chicago and developing online organizing strategies in support of several campaigns including rent stabilization, racial equity in marijuana legalization, police reform, education funding equity and progressive revenue solutions for the state of Illinois.

### **Center for Racial and Gender Equity**

Center for Racial and Gender Equity engages Black jobseekers – especially those with conviction histories – around the political decision-making processes that impact them and educates them on how their civic participation can lead to an impact on their economic conditions. Support from Voqal is helping Center for Racial and Gender Equity build independent political power for these marginalized Black communities in Chicago and all of Illinois.

### **Chicago Votes**

Chicago Votes brings together young, driven Chicagoans who are ready to get their hands dirty and learn the grassroots basics of democracy. Voqal support allows Chicago Votes to organize

in youth dense wards to turn out more young people to vote and to develop a youth policy agenda to advocate for and hold elected officials accountable to once they are in office.

### **Illinois Coalition for Immigrant and Refugee Rights (ICIRR) Action Fund**

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. Voqal's grant is supporting ICIRR's efforts to identify issues that intentionally bring Black and immigrant groups together and build relationships between organizing groups led by these two communities to collectively hold Black and Latino elected officials accountable around a shared agenda.

### **Jane Addams Seniors in Action**

Jane Addams Seniors in Action unites the power of seniors and its allies in an active grassroots organization, which works to build racial, social and economic justice. Voqal's funds enable Jane Addams Seniors in Action to strengthen its organizing base by building and activating an army of seniors capable of engaging voters on issues of budget, health care, long-term care and affordable housing issues across Chicago.

### **SOUL in Action**

SOUL in Action seeds leadership and strengthens civic engagement in communities of color on the South Side and southern suburbs of Chicago. Voqal's grant assists SOUL in Action in advancing its racial and economic equity platform by creating opportunities for marginalized individuals to engage in rebuilding their communities.

### **United Working Families**

United Working Families expands, inspires and activates the rising American electorate, builds progressive political infrastructure and wins structural changes that address the root causes of inequality. With Voqal's support, United Working Families is laying the foundation for the broad-based coalition work needed to achieve statewide impact through bold issue campaigns that center on the demands of working-class communities of color.

### **Kartemquin Films**

Kartemquin Films empowers documentary makers who create stories that foster a more engaged and just society. Voqal's grant supports Kartemquin Films signature Diverse Voices in Docs programs. This program is a professional mentorship and development program for documentary filmmakers of color, led by Kartemquin Films in partnership with the Community Film Workshop.

### **Urban Gateways**

Urban Gateways believe that all youth deserve equitable access to opportunities that support their personal development, social well-being and passion for lifelong learning. Voqal's grant is supporting the Urban Gateways Street Level program. Street Level promotes self-expression, communication and social change by providing youth in Chicago a media arts center where they can make anything from a mixtape to a movie with instant access to high-end computers, studio equipment and cameras.

### **One People's Campaign**

One People's Campaign works to ensure that all types of people are at the table when important policy decisions are made, and that the table is remade when it is set up to exclude people. Voqal supports One People's Campaign efforts to educate and register voters, build an issue platform, meet with candidates and to get out the vote during important elections.

"We are proud to support these organizations as they work to create a more socially equitable world and enriching progressive media environment for Chicago residents," said Voqal board member Daniel X. O'Neil.

*Voqal is a national collaboration of EBS (Educational Broadband Service) licensees that work to advance social equity by creating an educated, empowered and engaged public. Voqal makes grants and impact investments, expands internet access and digital equity, offers fellowships and protects the public airwaves. Our efforts focus on the education and enrichment of all, not just those who are well-off socially, economically and politically.*