



ZUCK BUCKS 2.0: THE U.S. ALLIANCE FOR ELECTION EXCELLENCE

*Exposing the left's latest attempt to influence
the election process*



EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

The Left's Latest Election Scheme

In April 2022, the left-wing [Center for Tech and Civic Life](#) and a coalition of likeminded nonprofits and companies formed a new \$80 million initiative called the [U.S. Alliance for Election Excellence](#). The Alliance targets local election offices, offering participants an extensive portfolio of grants, trainings, resources, and consulting services.



U.S. Alliance
for Election
Excellence

The Alliance claims to be nonpartisan and intended only to “bring together” elections officials “around a set of common values and standards.” However, documents obtained by HEP expose that the Alliance is a reinvention of CTCL’s scheme to use private funding to strongarm election policy nationwide.

In 2020, CTCL was at the heart of the liberal effort to use more than [\\$400 million](#) provided by Mark Zuckerberg to influence the way election offices functioned and to steer funds disproportionately to jurisdictions that voted Democratic. Alliance members are also backed by a constellation of liberal dark money groups, including eBay Chairman Pierre Omidyar’s [Democracy Fund](#) and Arabella Advisors’ [New Venture Fund](#), and are led and staffed by people with deep ties to the Democratic Party and partisan progressive organizations.

Skirting the Law and Avoiding Accountability

Membership and grant agreements uncovered by HEP reveal an unusual and complex structure that seem designed to thwart meaningful oversight and accountability. For instance, after the Alliance had recruited its first cohort of members it announced plans to begin charging offices to join. One election official in Clark County, Nevada called this switch “a little disheartening and unexpected.”

However, the Alliance also created “scholarships” to cover those membership costs, which are instantly converted into “credits” that member offices can use to buy services from CTCL and other Alliance partners. As a result, offices receive funds they can spend exclusively on services provided by left-wing companies and nonprofits, entirely outside normal public funding channels. These services range from “legal” and “political” consulting to public relations and training guidance.



“I get something and give something.”



Records also reveal the Alliance to be a two-way street. Grants issued by CTCL come with significant strings attached, despite [public claims](#) to the contrary. According to notes from one Brunswick County, North Carolina official, “I get something and give something.” In exchange for grants and services, offices are expected to provide CTCL and its partners substantial in-kind contributions, at taxpayer expense. Offices are expected to help the Alliance develop its programming and to turn over a vast array of information regarding their inner workings. Members are expected to work with the Alliance to develop and implement an “improvement plan” that reshapes each office’s operations.

Communications also show that the group is training officials to rebut public complaints about participation in the Alliance. In one instance, Sara LaVere, Board of Elections director in Brunswick, dismissed concerns raised by a Republican member of the Brunswick County Board of Elections. In her response, she relied on CTCL talking points and even bragged about her extensive use of trainings, documents, and materials from CTCL and other Alliance members. She also revealed that The Elections Group – part of the Alliance – helped her write columns that she published in her own name during the election.

Counties Face Public Scrutiny Over Participation

The serious concerns raised about CTCL’s political bias, and their grants has led to some jurisdictions thinking twice about participating in the program. Almost half of the original CTCL cohort have either withdrawn from the program, refused grants, or faced public scrutiny for joining. Ottawa County, Michigan has [withdrawn](#) from CTCL attributing the move to concerns about an extravagant \$1.5 million grant the county clerk never sought. In Greenwich, Connecticut there has been [public debate](#) over joining CTCL, and so far the town has not joined the Alliance. In [North Carolina](#), both Brunswick and Forsyth counties are declining grants from CTCL even though Brunswick has accepted the CTCL “scholarship” and plans to seek reimbursement for travel and other related costs from the Alliance.

Evading Private Funding Bans

As of December 2022, 24 states have enacted [bans](#) or restrictions on private funding of local election offices. These laws are widely considered essential safeguards against the corrupting influence of dark money-funded programs like the Alliance for Election Excellence. Unfortunately, some [states](#) have had private funding limits vetoed by Democratic governors, leaving their offices exposed to the influence of special interests and organizations like the Alliance for Election Excellence. Indeed, CTCL and its partners exclusively selected the first cohort of “Centers for Election Excellence” from states without private funding limits. Nevertheless as time has passed, the Alliance has begun to expand into states with bans or limits in place including Cache and Weber



counties in [Utah](#) and DeKalb County in [Georgia](#). In Georgia, to get around state law, CTCL directed the grant funding through the county finance office which in turn appropriated the money to the Board of Elections.

Banning private election funding is a necessary step to thwart the influence of private election funding, but the Alliance's expansion into states with these bans is proof they are not a silver bullet. Vigilant oversight by lawmakers, rigorous reporting requirements, additional changes to state laws, and total transparency from election offices are also key to maintaining the integrity of elections. Indeed, documents obtained by HEP show deep preexisting relationships between Alliance partners and officials in both Forsyth and Brunswick counties. Tim Tsuji, Board of Elections director in Forsyth, serves on CTCL's advisory committee, while Sara LaVere's emails reveal she was already making use of materials and resources from CTCL's partners before being selected. Other records make it clear that the Alliance aims to grow in scale and scope, emphasizing the importance of constant vigilance.