



NEWS RELEASE

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New Civics Practitioners Conference to help educators support the next generation of civically active youth with \$197,000 from Knight Foundation

Conference will bring together more than 200 educators

CHICAGO – June 23, 2015 – To provide teachers with the skills and resources they need to inspire students to be active participants in the political process, educators from across the country will gather in Chicago June 24-25 for the New Civics Practitioners Conference at the Navy Pier from 8am to 4pm. The John S. and James L. Knight Foundation is investing \$197,000 in the conference, which will be hosted by the Mikva Challenge and supported by the National Action Civics Collaborative.

The gathering will bring together educators from the [26 communities where Knight invests](#) and other cities for hands-on workshops and training to learn about the “New Civics” program. The program focuses on teaching students to shape the civic life of their school and communities through lessons on critical thinking, research of community issues, youth action and reflection.

“Creating a new generation of change agents who will help shape their communities is essential to city success,” said Carol Coletta, Knight Foundation vice president for community and national initiatives. “The New Civics Conference will equip educators with the latest tools and strategies to help young people get engaged with the democratic process and become active, thoughtful participants in civic life.”

“What’s exciting about this conference is we are strengthening the civic learning ‘toolkits’ of leading educators from around the country who can then help guide fellow educators in their respective cities in civic learning best practices,” said Brian Brady, Mikva Challenge executive director. “It is a movement building strategy that focuses on teachers and youth workers as the primary actors in developing the civic capacities of their communities.”

Conference participants will learn how to engage high school and middle students in the political process, focusing on elections, problem-solving and policymaking. They will also hear from leaders in action civics, digital civics and news literacy, and learn how “New Civics” strongly aligns with other educational trends.

Conference participants will attend workshops from a host of highly regarded civic education providers including: Mikva Challenge, Earth Force, Generation Citizen, Youth on Board, University Community Collaborative, the Constitutional Rights Foundation of Chicago, Facing History and Ourselves, and Generation Nation. Invited guest speakers include Diana Hess,



Ph.D., of the Spencer Foundation and Ted McConnell of the National Civic Mission of Schools.

Support for the New Civics Conference is one of Knight Foundation's efforts to invest in civic innovators who help cities attract and keep talented people, expand economic opportunity and create a culture of engagement. The foundation believes that designing places to achieve these goals is crucial to city success.

For more information visit mikvachallenge.org.

About Mikva Challenge

Mikva Challenge was founded on the premise that youth voice and participation matter, and that our civic and political life will be stronger when youth participate and help shape their own destinies. Mikva develops youth to be informed, empowered, and active citizens and community leaders. We do this by engaging youth in action civics, an authentic and transformative learning process built on youth voice and youth expertise. Mikva's highly regarded Democracy in Action and Elections in Action programs teach young people civic knowledge and leadership skills while transforming their attitudes about political participation. For more information – visit mikvachallenge.org.

About the John S. and James L. Knight Foundation

Knight Foundation supports transformational ideas that promote quality journalism, advance media innovation, engage communities and foster the arts. We believe that democracy thrives when people and communities are informed and engaged. For more information, visit knightfoundation.org.