



## Koret Foundation Announces \$3.7 Million in Grants to Boost Civic Education Across California

*New initiative builds student knowledge and supports teacher training to promote democracy and address disinformation in the Bay Area and beyond*

**SAN FRANCISCO** – To address an urgent need to prioritize civic education and strengthen American democracy at the federal, state and local levels, the Koret Foundation today announced a new **\$3.7 million Civic Learning Initiative** to support and improve the quality of civic education in California and beyond. The three-year initiative will include professional learning for teachers, along with digital and media literacy programming for students.

Beneficiaries of the new grants include the following organizations:

- iCivics
- The Commonwealth Club of California
- Common Sense Media
- KQED

The strength of American democracy and self-governance depends on informed and engaged citizens. When there is a lack of understanding about our system of government, civic engagement falters and disinformation fills the knowledge vacuum. We can already see the impact of this erosion as young people today face a world of hyper-partisanship, intolerance of different viewpoints, distrust of our democratic process, and news and misinformation presented side by side on social media. In recent decades, civics education in K-12 education has been a lower priority compared to other subject areas, creating generations of students who have not received the necessary education in history and civics needed to prepare them for participation in our government.

Koret's Civic Learning Initiative seeks to reinvest in and rebuild civic education. These programs will pilot projects in California that can be scaled for a national impact. Partnering with national leaders in the civics space, Koret's investment will provide high-quality learning and guided resources—workshops, lesson plans, case studies, materials, assessments, and learning cohorts—at no cost to schools and educators.

“We are seeing the impact of a generation of neglect of solid civic learning in our K-12 education system, failing to adequately equip our students who represent the future citizens and leaders of American democracy,” said Michael Boskin, president of the Koret Foundation. “These initiatives will equip teachers and inspire students to learn about and engage with our democracy. A new generation educated on the fundamentals of our government is the strongest way to ensure democracy for decades to come.”

**iCivics** is the country's leading provider of civic education content and is driving a movement to help educators give their students the best civic education possible. Founded in 2009 by Justice Sandra Day

O'Connor, iCivics will offer high-impact professional learning for California teachers via a train-the-trainer program: each year, 20 master teachers will be responsible for training 600 new teachers in the region. The goal is to raise the quality of civic education all students get – and share expertise and best practices through an annual convening of teachers from across the country.

The **Commonwealth Club's Creating Citizens** initiative has already had an impact on the conversation of civic education and pedagogy since its launch in 2020. With funding support from Koret, the initiative will expand to include more educator resources, student field trips, intergenerational programming and a Youth Advisory Committee to incorporate student insight into the planning of events and academic experiences.

With young people consuming so much information on a daily basis in digital spaces, they are exposed to and susceptible to disinformation. Koret's collaboration with **Common Sense Media** will help students build their digital and media literacy skills – identifying reliable sources of news, combating disinformation, and understanding how media influences perceptions, stereotypes, and identity. To achieve this, Common Sense will pilot new content in Bay Area schools and develop a distribution strategy to reach students nationwide. Koret is also building educators' confidence and competence in teaching media literacy skills by supporting **KQED**, the Bay Area's PBS and NPR member station. KQED will expand its Media Academy for teachers by migrating it to the popular professional learning platform Teachable and allowing educators to earn credentials toward a PBS Media Literacy Educator Certification.

Collectively, these four programs will elevate and evolve the field of civic learning at the most politically polarized of moments.

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### **About the Koret Foundation**

Based in the Bay Area, the Koret Foundation is a private foundation dedicated to creating thriving, vibrant communities. Koret's work, guided by Jewish values, is committed to elevating the quality of life for all who live in the Bay Area and supporting the vitality of the Jewish community worldwide. The foundation identifies, supports, and strengthens community leaders and key institutions to do the most good for the most people by funding educational opportunities, arts and cultural initiatives, and Jewish community projects.

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