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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

New McCormick Grants Help Restore Original Civic Mission of Schools: Developing Informed, Engaged Citizens

“Knowledge of our system of governance and our rights and responsibilities as citizens is not passed along through the gene pool. Each generation of Americans must be taught these basics.” – Justice Sandra Day O’Connor

CHICAGO, February 12, 2012— The idea of incorporating civic education in schools is not new. Our nation’s public schools were founded to develop citizens with knowledge, skills and character to sustain and strengthen American democracy. Yet formal civics has almost vanished from the curriculum of most schools. In response to a growing need, this year the [Robert R. McCormick Foundation](#) will be providing \$1.5 million to support civic education and engagement initiatives in the Chicago region.

“The bottom line is our democracy cannot thrive if our citizens do not have the knowledge and the interest to maintain it,” said David Hiller, President and CEO, Robert R. McCormick Foundation. “Citizens who are involved in civic learning and civic engagement opportunities at a young age gain the skills and confidence they need to make a difference in their schools and communities, and are more likely to continue this engagement into adulthood.”

“We are committed to developing stronger communities and a more vibrant democracy,” said John Sirek, Civics Program Director, Robert R. McCormick Foundation. “Through both our grants and programs, we support fundamental change in our current system of civic education—helping teachers and schools provide students with the tools necessary to be active and engaged citizens.”

In addition to its recent grants and ongoing support, the McCormick Foundation held its annual convening of the [Illinois Civic Mission Coalition](#) on March 9 to discuss promising initiatives related to civic education and engagement. One of the primary areas of focus for this year’s conference was the integration of civics education across high school and middle school curricula.

Grants Supporting Civic Education and Engagement

1. [Citizen Advocacy Center](#), Chicago, IL
\$80,000 over two years
For support of the Civic Empowerment Zone, as series of lesson plans that focuses on the concepts of good citizenship and community participation
2. [Constitutional Rights Foundation Chicago](#), Chicago, IL
\$160,000 over two years
To support the Illinois Youth Summit and the Illinois Democracy Laboratory
3. [Mikva Challenge](#), Chicago, IL

- \$125,000 one-year grant
To support the Youth Peace Councils and for general support
4. [Chicago Area Project](#), Chicago, IL
\$80,000 over two years
For support of the Youth as Resource program that focuses on creating future leaders in low-income communities
 5. [Illinois Campus Compact](#), Chicago, IL
\$80,000 over two years
To support a range of civic engagement and service learning initiatives at the administrative, faculty and student levels.
 6. [Illinois Coalition for Immigrant and Refugee Rights](#), Chicago, IL
\$60,000 one-year grant
To support the New American Youth Civic Leadership Academy
 7. [Northwestern University](#), Chicago, IL
\$130,000 over two years
For support of the Center of Civic Engagement

About the Robert R. McCormick Foundation

The Robert R. McCormick Foundation is committed to fostering communities of educated, informed and engaged citizens. Through philanthropic programs, Cantigny Park and museums, the Foundation helps develop citizen leaders and works to make life better in our communities. The Foundation was established as a charitable trust in 1955, upon the death of Colonel Robert R. McCormick, the longtime editor and publisher of the *Chicago Tribune*. The Robert R. McCormick Foundation is one of the nation's largest foundations, with more than \$1 billion in assets. For more information, please visit www.McCormickFoundation.org.

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