

Can a donor voucher program broaden representation in local campaign financing?

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A new study investigated the effectiveness of Seattle, WA's Democracy Voucher program in expanding participation from marginalized communities in a local election, where voters were each given four, twenty-five-dollar vouchers to assign to the local candidates of their choice. The results, lessons learned, and implications of this fascinating study are published in *Election Law Journal*.

The article entitled "Diversifying the Donor Pool: How Did Seattle's Democracy Voucher Program Reshape Participation in Municipal Campaign Finance?" was coauthored by Jennifer Heerwig, Stony Brook University, NY, and Brian McCabe, Georgetown University, Washington, DC. The results indicate that the Democracy Voucher program moved the [donor](#) pool in a more representative direction and created a more egalitarian system. The researchers assess the representativeness both from a demographic and a geographic perspective.

Among the findings were that voucher users were less likely to be high-income and more likely to come from poor neighborhoods when compared to cash contributions. They were also more likely to be older. There was little difference in the racial make-up of the voucher users compared to cash donors.

Election Law Journal Editor-in-Chief David Canon, University of Wisconsin, states: "This study is a great example of the policy-relevant research that is the focus of our journal. As policymakers try to find tools to provide more egalitarian participation in campaign finance, they will want to consult this study."

More information: Brian J. McCabe et al, Diversifying the Donor Pool: How Did Seattle's Democracy Voucher Program Reshape Participation in Municipal Campaign Finance?, *Election Law Journal: Rules, Politics, and Policy* (2019). [DOI: 10.1089/elj.2018.0534](https://doi.org/10.1089/elj.2018.0534)

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