



Frequently Asked Questions (FAQ)

What is Action for Democracy?

Action for Democracy is a US-based 501(c)(4) that empowers democratic actors to defend and rebuild their democracies. We are committed to an inclusive and democratic future and we aim to build and mobilise an international pro-democracy movement at the grassroots that pushes back against the rising threat of autocracy around the world. We believe in the values of freedom, human dignity, and democratic decision-making. We partner with diaspora communities and frontline democracy organisations to broaden democratic participation, promote genuine elections, encourage transparency and accountable governance, and combat hate, fear, and exclusion.

What are the stakes?

Across the world, autocrats, dictators and anti-democratic forces are laying siege to democracy. These forces are helping anti-democratic rulers tighten their grips on power by ending the rule of law, hijacking the media, rigging the courts, and instilling a culture of hate against immigrants and the LGBTQ community. What is more, anti-democratic forces have formed an international cabal, protecting each other and exchanging notes on anti-democratic practices. It is high time democratic forces around the world do the same.

Who is involved?

Action for Democracy is a grassroots organisation that is building a global alliance of democratic actors. It draws its support from the bottom-up from a growing pro-democracy movement. Our work is driven by our Board and guided by an Advisory Council with deep experience and passion in defending democracy. Our Advisory Council only provides strategic counsel and they do so in their personal capacities. They are not part of day-to-day decision- and grant-making at Action for Democracy and are not privy to the details of our supporting activities in our focus countries.

Is Action for Democracy backing candidates to influence elections?

No, A4D does not direct support or advocate for any specific candidate or political party. We believe democracy works, and works best when people can participate in free, fair, and transparent elections. Our aim is to help create an even playing field, broaden genuine participation in the democratic process and push back against authoritarian encroachment. A4D supports civil society organisations standing up for democratic values and against authoritarianism and runs informational and get out the vote campaigns in a non-partisan fashion. A4D and its grantees are not precluded in any shape or form however from criticizing undemocratic actors and practices, and pointing to blatant violations of democratic values and principles.



What exactly does Action for Democracy do?

Action For Democracy raises funds to support civil society organisations on the frontline of defending democracy. We strengthen pro-democracy organisations, and support civil society and independent media through grants, expert advice, and networking locally. This also includes voter registration drives with special regard to the diaspora, and voter education.

Who are Action for Democracy’s funders?

Action for Democracy is powered by people who care about democracy and want to fight back against anti-democratic forces dedicated to undermining the rule of law. We are mounting digital and offline donation campaigns and accept donations from institutional and private donors in the United States, Canada, Europe and beyond.

How much did Action for Democracy raise and deploy so far?

We have been humbled by the positive response of our community. We have been honoured to see a wide range of supporters come in from thousands of people who donated smaller amounts as well as more substantial individual and institutional contributions. We are also proud and encouraged by the number of recurring donations we have been receiving. Action for Democracy operates with a very low overhead and donates more than 95% of the money raised to frontline civil society organisation grantees.

What do we “expect” from our donors and grantees?

We expect our donors and grantees to broadly share our values and principles and have a genuine care for democratic development and revival. We do not accept or grant funding with strings attached.

Has Action for Democracy received funding from any government or government funded organisation?

No, and we plan to continue to rely on donations from private individuals and independent institutions.

How do we evaluate our grantees and our work?

We ask all our grantees to submit an activity report in December every year. We will publish these reports as they come in. We will also periodically undergo independent audits to improve efficiency and transparency.



What are the digital fundraising best practices we leverage?

Action for Democracy believes strongly that the more citizens that participate in the political process, the healthier a democracy is. This includes voting and activism, but also donations. As shown clearly in the US over the last decade, small donations are an easy, fast, and meaningful way for ordinary citizens to participate in elections and advocacy campaigns.

Therefore, through list building in the US and abroad in the countries where we are active a list of supporters of democracy has been built. This is done with best practices for each location. In the United States, this included list rentals, ads and organic signup processes. In Europe it has been mostly ads and petitions optimised for GDPR opt-in. The list is then emailed and texted regularly with information about the campaigns Action for Democracy is running and a link to a compliant contribution form in whichever jurisdiction they are in.

Action for Democracy uses the best possible tools in each region which has included ActBlue forms in the United States, and Action Network forms abroad. These choices, as well as the tactics, are considered current best practices in small donor fundraising and have been informed through deep strategic engagement with leading fundraising experts on both sides of the Atlantic.

Where is Action for Democracy engaged?

Action for Democracy first focused on Hungary. With our grants our primary aim was twofold: 1. to promote pro- democracy and anti-authoritarian narratives in Hungarian public spaces to convey the pivotal importance of the election and the referendum on LGBTQ rights in a broader geostrategic context as well, and 2. to mobilise the Hungarian diaspora to get out their vote and raise financial support for embattled civil society organisations within Hungary.

While we remain committed to helping the Hungarian civil society fighting for democracy and will look for positive ways to play a role, for Q2-Q4 this year we have been focusing our energies on Brazil and Italy pushing back against intolerant, authoritarian agendas, and we are preparing for the next critical year in Poland.