

BOTH SHOWCASE SHOWDOWNS

The Great Economy Project | A Patriotic Millionaires Initiative



How a strategic investment in small, red towns in key states can stop authoritarianism, correct the pre-conditions that led to its rise, and secure democratic capitalism in America for the next 250 years.

“Runaway inequality is eroding trust in democratic societies and paving the way for authoritarian and nativist regimes to take root.”

— 2020 United Nations Report

“Economic and political inequality have grown so extreme that many are rejecting democracy. This is fertile ground for authoritarianism.”

— Dr. Joseph Stiglitz

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

The Great Economy Project (GEP) Expansion Proposal

PURPOSE

The Great Economy Project aims to catalyze a significant economic conversation shift among working-class conservatives in key states.

THE ASK

Patriotic Millionaires seeks \$2,000,000 in 501c3 funding to expand the GEP to 6 additional locations by March 1, 2024. Financial commitments are required by December 1, 2023, to support successful expansion.

OVERVIEW OF GEP

Equal parts focus group, deep canvass, and grassroots organizing, GEP engages and educates working-class voters in small towns by discussing economic issues over casual dinners. It encourages prioritizing economic concerns over social issues in political decision-making and supports activism by its participants.

PURPOSE

The Great Economy Project aims to catalyze a significant economic conversation shift among working-class conservatives in key states.

KEY POINTS

WHERE: Small conservative towns in key states with large working-class populations.

WHY: Rapid community engagement in these small towns to change thinking and actions around wages and taxes.

TIMING: GEP Expansion runs from January to December 2024.

METRICS: In-depth polling, focus groups, surveys, and volunteer engagement tracking for evaluation.

MEDIA LEVERAGE: Patriotic Millionaires' unique brand attracts substantial media coverage, contributing to increased attention on working-class voters' perspectives

DOCUMENTARY: A documentary about the GEP's Whiteville project will be released in January, 2024 to promote insights into this pivotal constituency.

PATRIOTIC MILLIONAIRES' ROLE: The organization's brand serves as a draw for participants, providing credibility and a unique perspective on the system.

GEP PROGRAM PHASES

Phase 1 (Recruitment, Education, and Intake Survey): Focuses on basic economic education and community building. Encourages participant engagement.

Phase 2 (Education, Empowerment, and Expansion): Continues economic education, empowerment, and community outreach.

CONCLUSION

GEP seeks to address economic and political inequality and its role in democratic capitalism's survival by focusing on wages and taxes and changing the minds of small town working-class voters.

The Great Economy Project offers an innovative approach to unite working-class voters and demand economic reform.

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

The Great Economy Project (GEP) Expansion Proposal

The Great Economy Project's primary goal is to save democratic capitalism and address the national dynamics that have divided us by driving a significant shift in economic discussions among working-class conservatives in key states. To achieve this, Patriotic Millionaires is seeking \$2,000,000 in 501c3 funding to expand the project to six additional locations by March 1, 2024.

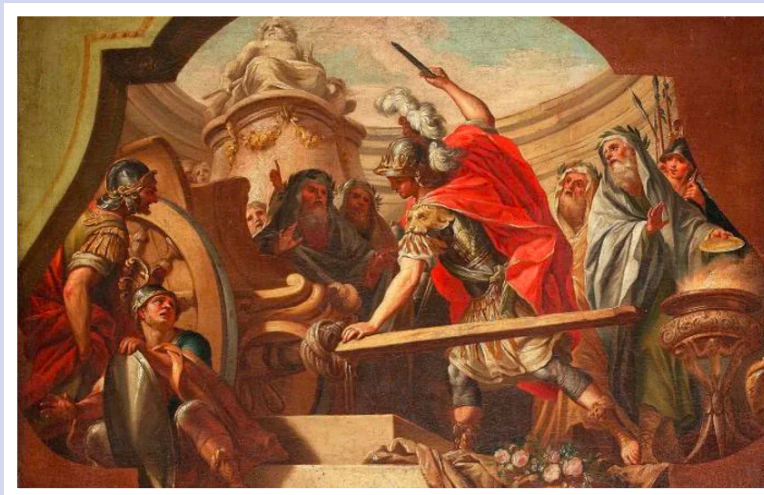
The Great Economy Project operates as a blend of a focus group, deep canvassing, and grassroots organizing, engaging and educating working-class voters in small towns that represent our national politics. The GEP fosters conversations about economic issues during casual dinners, urging participants to prioritize economic concerns over social issues in their political decision-making. This approach is complemented by in-depth polling, focus groups, surveys, and volunteer engagement tracking to evaluate the project's impact. Patriotic Millionaires' unique brand attracts significant media coverage, bringing heightened attention to our work to change working-class voters' perspectives.

The project is divided into two phases. Phase 1 focuses on recruitment, education, and intake surveys, emphasizing basic economic education and community building while encouraging active participation. Phase 2 continues economic education and empowerment, alongside community outreach. The overall aim is to address economic and political inequality, with a specific focus on wages and taxes, while changing the mindset of working-class voters in small towns. The Great Economy Project represents an innovative approach to unite these voters and advocate for economic reform.

The GEP's objective is to foster a change in economic discourse and empower working-class communities to demand economic reform, ultimately contributing to the sustainability of democratic capitalism.

The cutting of the Gordian Knot is an Ancient Greek legend regarding a complex knot. Reputedly, whoever could untie it would be destined to rule all of Asia. Alexander the Great was challenged to untie the knot. Instead of untangling it laboriously as expected, he cut through it with his sword with a single stroke.

The Gordian Knot is a metaphor for a seemingly intractable problem which is solved by exercising an unexpectedly direct, novel, rule-bending, decisive and simple approach.



THE GREAT ECONOMY PROJECT DONOR PROSPECTUS

Because every great country starts with a great economy.

PURPOSE

The goal of the Great Economy Project is to catalyze an economic conversation shift at scale among working class conservatives in key states.

THE ASK

Based on the promising results of two pilot programs, the Patriotic Millionaires organization is seeking \$2,000,000 of 501c3 funding to expand its **Great Economy Project (GEP)** into 6 additional locations by March 1, 2024.

- GEP Pilot Programs are currently running in Whiteville, NC, and Richland Center, WI. An additional program will launch in Mt. Pleasant, PA, on November 1;
- Pilot Programs show significant results in stimulating participant engagement and community activism;
- The 3 Pilot Programs are funded through 2024 within the base PM budget;
- Additional funding will bring the total number of GEP programs operating in 2024 to nine (three programs in each state: NC, PA and WI);
- PM's proven brand and prototypical nature of selected sites will generate substantial earned local and national media coverage;
- Nine programs will provide a sufficient data set to rigorously measure results by year end 2024.

THE GREAT ECONOMY PROJECT

Equal parts focus group, deep canvass, and grassroots organizing, the Great Economy Project engages a multi-racial, cross-partisan group of working class voters from small towns in regular conversations about the economy. Over a series of casual dinners at popular local venues, experts explain how the economy is rigged against working people and in favor of the rich, and engage participants in discussion about how this affects them and their communities. Each dinner includes incentives, a drawing for prizes, and child care. The GEP encourages participants to prioritize economic issues (specifically wages and taxes) over social issues in their political decision-making and supports the economic activism of program participants.

THE POINT

Over time, by learning together and breaking bread together, GEP participants build relationships across racial, ideological and social lines, creating the community of common purpose necessary to demand and get real economic reform. Where politicians seek to divide people, the Patriotic Millionaires seek to bring them together over the one thing that matters most in a capitalist democracy - money.

WHERE

The Great Economy Project targets small (pop. 5,000), conservative towns with large working class populations in key states that follow the federal minimum wage of \$7.25/hour.

WHY

Focusing on small towns allows us to reach a saturation level of engagement in each community quickly. GEP sites are prototypical of broader political dynamics in the state and country. We model in these prototypical “mini-markets” the changes we hope to see in communities around the country.

METRICS

Celinda Lake, Lake Research Partners, will serve as advisor and lead pollster for the project. Metrics will include the following:

- Pre-project and post-project polls (January / December)
- 2 additional quarterly polls (Q2 / Q3)
- 2 in-depth focus groups
- Program participant intake and outtake surveys
- Volunteer engagement tracking
- NOTE: Expanded polling memo may be provided to interested funders on request.

THE OPPORTUNITY

Our pilots prove that when you talk to one person in a small town, you are soon talking to everyone else in town. By targeting small, red towns that represent the prototypical dynamics of the larger public debate, the GEP offers an ideal laboratory in which to learn how information spreads through communities and to test and perfect a strategy to reach working class voters across the ideological spectrum.

THE PROGRAM

The Great Economy Project centers on a series of in-person events that include dinner and an economy-focused education program presented by experts. Every event is open to every resident in the town. Each household receives multiple personal invitations through the mail to each event in addition to more general advertising. Each event includes a drawing for prizes, adding an element of fun to the gatherings. Gift cards provide incentives to encourage multi-session participation. Families are welcome and child care is provided.

MEDIA LEVERAGE

The PM organization has a unique ability to attract earned media coverage. In 2022, the brand received \$160 million worth of media coverage in 98 countries and 50 states. So far this year, we have generated \$175 million worth of media. By showcasing our members' commitment to this work and by positioning the selected towns as microcosms of the broader political dynamics, we will generate increased media attention to the perspectives of working class voters. This increased attention will in turn push elected leaders to support policies that will meet the needs of this constituency or risk losing their support.

THE DOCUMENTARY

The Patriotic Millionaires' parent organization, Tesseract Research Center, has provided funding for a documentary about the GEP's Whiteville project that will be released in January, 2024. This documentary will be widely promoted among influencers, lawmakers and the media as a lens into this pivotal constituency.

WHY THE PATRIOTIC MILLIONAIRES?

The two current pilot programs suggest that the Patriotic Millionaire brand is a significant draw for potential participants. A general "Who the heck are the Patriotic Millionaires?" initially drives community interest. Wealth provides credibility. And as beneficiaries of the rigged system, the Patriotic Millionaire members offer a unique 'peek behind the curtain' of power in America.

PATRIOTIC MILLIONAIRE PARTICIPATION

The members of the Patriotic Millionaires are deeply committed to the success of the GEP. At least one PM member will participate in each event, often more, in addition to PM staff and experts from participating organizations.

THE CURRICULUM

Because most working class Americans, regardless of their political affiliation, believe that the economy is rigged against them (it is), that their wages are too low (they are) and that rich Americans don't pay enough taxes (they don't), and because it is only by actually addressing these issues that our capitalist democracy will survive its 250th birthday, the Great Economy Project centers its curriculum on these and related economic issues.

Phase 1 of the project focuses on economic education and community building. Phase 2 continues the economic education while layering-in training designed to empower participants in their activism with sessions from "how to talk to a lawmaker" to basic organizing skills. Throughout the GEP, participants are encouraged to share their experience with neighbors and friends. During the second phase of the project, participants use fairs, festivals and other public events to share economic information with their communities.

Phase 1: Recruitment, Education and Intake Survey

Phase 1 of the project focuses on economic education and community building. Phase 2 continues the economic education while layering-in training designed to empower participants in their activism with sessions from “how to talk to a lawmaker” to basic organizing skills. Throughout the GEP, participants are encouraged to share their experience with neighbors and friends. During the second phase of the project, participants use fairs, festivals and other public events to share economic information with their communities.

Each new participant completes an intake survey to officially join the program. The intake survey gauges ideological leanings and existing economic knowledge base. Incentives are reserved for participants who complete the post-program survey.

At the conclusion of Phase 1:

- Participants are thanked for their participation and asked to decide if they would like to continue with the volunteer portion of the program and to share what they’ve learned with their community;
- Each GEP Partner receives a GEP t-shirt and an online subscription to the Washington Post;
- Up to 4 leaders are selected as Town Captains. Captains are selected based on their participation and commitment to the program and reflect the ideological and social diversity of the cohort;
- Each Captain receives a weekly stipend of \$100 for up to 4 hours of work per week through the conclusion of the program;
- Town Captains work closely with GEP staff to strategize and execute community outreach and engagement.

Phase 2: Education, Empowerment and Expansion

This phase continues the regular dinner sessions with additional economic education as well as information designed to empower participants. Training includes: community organizing, lawmaker outreach, social media, public speaking, and telling your story.

During this phase, participants work with Town Captains to expand the program’s reach in the community. The group plans community-wide events and participates in festivals and fairs to spread the word.

Each program is encouraged to reach out directly to their lawmakers in a variety of ways on the issues of wages and taxes. Each program is encouraged to host a Town Hall to hear directly from candidates on where they stand on wage and tax issues.

The GEP curriculum is designed to:

1. Increase participants' understanding of the specific ways in which the economy is rigged through tax and wage policy and emphasize the cost of the rigged economy on themselves and their communities;
2. Persuade participants that economic issues, specifically the wage floor and the tax code, are more critical to their lives than assorted social issues;
3. Convince participants of the power they have as a group, that their specific community is uniquely powerful in this political moment, and that if they organize change will come.

Among other things, the curriculum will:

1. Provide a common understanding of "what happened" to the American economy beginning in the late 60s/early 70s through today, emphasizing the role both parties played in destroying the social contract;
2. Amplify the central role tax and wage policy play in the economy and identify specific ways tax and wage policy "rig" the economy in favor of the rich;
3. Dismantle the notion of the benevolent billionaire and challenge the idea of philanthropy as a substitute for government;
4. Train participants on the basics of both law-making and change-making (from who represents them, how laws get made and implemented to how to tell your story, how to ask for a meeting with a lawmaker);
5. Train participants in community organizing basics;
6. Explain the outsized power of the selected site and methods of increasing attention to participants viewpoints;
7. Facilitate personal connections between participants across ideological, professional and social differences.

SAMPLE SESSIONS

- **Why the Economy is Stupid. The Big Picture:** Erica Payne, Patriotic Millionaires
- **They Ain't Worth That Much: CEO Pay in America:** Sarah Anderson, IPS
- **Billionaire Faux-lanthropy and the Charity Lie:** Chuck Collins, IPS
- **Tax the Rich:** Morris Pearl and Erica Payne, Patriotic Millionaires
- **The American Dream and Other Fairy Tales:** Film by PM Dr. Abigail Disney
- **America's Best and Worst States to Work In:** Dr. Kaitlyn Henderson, Oxfam
- **Let's Make a Deal: Parameters of the Minimum Wage Debate**

- **The Corporation: the (Unfortunately) Necessary Sequel: Film**
- **The Threat of the Billionaire Class: Excessive Wealth Disorder Institute**
- **How Monopolies Ruin Everything**
- **Inflation Nation: Bidenomics or Greedflation?**
- **The Social Dilemma: Film**
- **Mr. Smith Goes to Washington: Film**
- **Pay Your Bills!: The Stupidity of the Debt Ceiling 'Debate'**
- **File This! Tax Prep Assistance**
- **How Do Laws (Really) Get Made**

SITE SELECTION CRITERIA

The members of the Patriotic Millionaires are deeply committed to the success of the GEP. At least one PM member will participate in each event, often more, in addition to PM staff and experts from participating organizations.

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| Small town (=5,000) | Reasonable walkability score | State follows federal minimum wage |
| Percentage of population with annual incomes below cost of living | Percentage of population considered working class (income < \$50,000) | Some form of local media outlet (weekly paper, local radio station) |
| Strategic relevance of town to state conversation | Strategic relevance of state to national conversation | Potential for outsized media attention |
| Presence of at least one ' key figure ' in community with decision-making power | Likelihood of site to attract outsized elected leader attention | Distribution of elected leaders by party affiliation and level of power |
| Cost of paid advertising | Ideological trendline | PM members with connection to state |
| Logistic considerations (distance to major airport, etc) | Presence of inherent narrative challenges | |

INTAKE SURVEY

Each GEP participant completes an intake survey that includes the following:

- General demographic information;
- Base level of economic knowledge specifically wages and the tax system;
- How important they believe tax and wage policy is to the strength of the economy;
- How they or their families will be affected by an increase in wages;
- Level of outrage at current system, placement of blame for current economy;
- General political leanings;
- Perspectives on the billionaire class;
- What drives their political engagement now;
- Personal affiliations and connections;
- Media consumption habits;
- What myths or misconceptions do they currently hold.

ANALYZING OUR IMPACT

We evaluate each GEP program as follows:

- Where does the economy rank on a list of political priorities before participants enter the program and how does it change by the end of 'The Basics' section of the curriculum?
- How do participants prioritize wages and taxes in their economic understanding and how does their prioritization of wages and taxes evolve over the course of the program?
- How many participants take an action who have never taken an action before?
- How many GEP participants become full-fledged activists (5-10 actions in 6 mo. period)?
- How many volunteer hours are generated for economic issues?
- How much does participant knowledge about wages evolve during the program?
- How much does participant knowledge about taxes evolve during the program?
- If participants didn't vote in the last election, do they plan to vote in this one (after action report about which ones actually did)?
- What are the voting patterns of participants before the program and do they plan to change their patterns after participating?
- Level of brand (PM, GEP, and AD) recognition in town among regular people.
- Level of brand recognition in town among elected officials.
- Media coverage generated.

A NOTE ABOUT METRICS

We had extensive conversations with Drs. Joshua Kalla of Yale and David Broockman of Cal-Berkeley about how to evaluate the effectiveness with statistical certainty. They concluded that it would require at least 9 active sites in addition to 14 inactive control sites to be able to ensure accuracy of the measurements. This important data can be collected and analyzed if the program is brought to scale with the funding requested in this document.

PROMISING PILOTS

There are currently three pilots: Whiteville, NC (launched September, 2022); Richland Center, WI (launched July, 2023); and Mt. Pleasant, PA (launch November, 2023). The results are promising and merit additional investment. Sample results are as follows:

Whiteville, NC



Program launched:
September, 2022



Cost to date:
\$110,000

8

Education sessions hosted
in Whiteville so far

136

People participated in
at least one GEP session

78

People participated in
at least three GEP sessions

51

People committed to
continuing the program

10

Volunteers staffed
a GEP booth for

5

Volunteers staffed
a GEP booth for

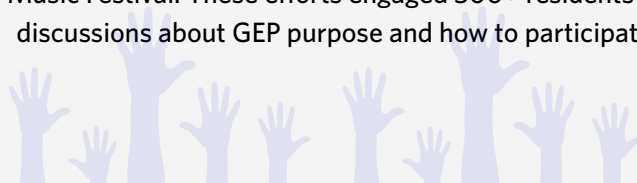
32

People canvassed

7

Community events

Including Gatorfest, Whiteville Fair, Strawberry Festival, Whiteville Golf Fundraiser, Juneteenth, and the Whiteville Music Festival. These efforts engaged 500+ residents in discussions about GEP purpose and how to participate



Whiteville, NC (continued)