



PACE FALL 2026 MEMBER MEETING

Reading the Signals:

What Kind of Country are Americans Telling Us They Want?

November 17–19, 2026 | Detroit, Michigan

The U.S. has been experiencing rapid demographic, technological, political, economic, and social shifts over the last few years. Amid all this upheaval, we cannot assume that what we thought we knew about Americans still holds. Fortunately, Americans are signaling what kind of country and communities they want to live in through their votes, their responses to polls and surveys, and the ways they choose to participate—or not—in civic life. Our work as funders is to read these signals and understand what they are telling us, as well as to imagine and build what comes next.

PACE's Fall 2026 Member Meeting will gather funders together to better understand how Americans are thinking about our country right now, drawing on fresh analysis of the **Midterm Elections**, the lived experiences of **Detroit and Michigan** residents, and new research on the **Exhausted Majority**. Underlying all of it—and inspired by the economic and cultural revitalization of our host city—will be a question we know many members are actively wrestling with: What is the role of the **economy** in shaping Americans' attitudes toward democracy and civic life, and what does that mean for civic funders moving forward?

Our time will include great talks by strategists and researchers, huddles on topics of your choice, and casual opportunities to connect with other sophisticated civic funders over coffee and cocktails.

The backdrop to our time together will be Detroit, Michigan—a city that offers a shining example of resilience and revitalization. Shaped by the people and industries that transformed it into a global city, Detroit reminds us that thriving communities are built by people, over time, with lots of reinvention along the way. This is an essential reminder to anchor our time together.

We are thrilled to be hosting the Fall 2026 Member Meeting with support and guidance from PACE's Michigan-based members and partners: **Kresge Foundation, New Economy Initiative, Song Foundation, Mott Foundation, and the Ford Foundation**. Thank you!

EVENT NOTES

Participants will be primarily grantmakers (with a few expert speakers as exceptions).

A friendly reminder that solicitation is not allowed at PACE events. Please see the non-solicitation policy included at the end of this agenda for a refresher.

The event will not be recorded by visual or audio. We follow the basic principle that what is shared must stay, and what is learned can travel.

Please note that Detroit is in Eastern Standard Time and agenda times below reflect EST.

AGENDA

Tuesday, November 17

Location: *To be announced*

5:00pm–7:00pm

Welcome Reception

Join fellow PACE members for drinks and appetizers as we say hello and catch up informally.

Wednesday, November 18

Location: *The Department at Hudsons, 1000 Nick Gilbert Way, Detroit, MI 48226*

9:00–9:30am

Arrival & Breakfast

9:30–10:30am

Welcome

Our interactive opening session will orient participants to the agenda, the space, and each other.

10:30am–12:00pm

Signal Sense-Making: The Midterm Elections

On the heels of the midterm elections, we will explore what Americans told us through their votes about the types of leaders they want and the issues they care most about in this moment. How much were voters motivated by concerns about democracy, their own economic circumstances, or other factors? What changed from previous elections—and what stayed the same? What can we see in the results nationally, and what does Michigan tell us about where the country may be headed? Importantly, what does all of this mean for civic funders moving forward?

12:00pm–1:00pm

Lunch

1:00pm–2:00pm

Member Huddle #1

PACE members have been consistent in their feedback: Give us an opportunity to turn to each other on topics most pressing to us! Member Huddles are designed to do just that. Case studies, research insights, and big picture thinking make great sparks for huddles. Share an idea for a huddle in your registration.



Wednesday, November 18 (continued)

Location: The Department at Hudsons, 1000 Nick Gilbert Way, Detroit, MI 48226

2:00pm–2:30pm	Break
2:30pm–4:00pm	Signal Sense–Making: Detroit, Michigan <i>Detroit, Michigan, is not just our meeting location; it is also an important case study in two ways. First, Michigan offers a snapshot of the forces shaping civic life and important clues about what Americans want for themselves, their communities, and our country. Second, Detroit shows us what it looks like to listen and respond to what a community needs and wants over time. Its unusually collaborative philanthropic community has played an important role alongside residents, civic leaders, businesses, and others in the city’s ongoing revitalization – offering inspiration for other civic funders.</i>
4:00pm–6:00pm	Free Time
6:00pm–8:00pm	Dinner: Experiencing Detroit <i>Location: To be announced</i>

Thursday, November 19

Location: The Department at Hudson’s, 1000 Nick Gilbert Way, Detroit, MI 48226

9:00am–9:30am	Arrival & Breakfast
9:30am–10:00am	Welcome <i>Our welcome session on day 2 will recap what we covered the day before and share where we are headed with our remaining time, while also continuing to help members get to know each other.</i>
10:00am–11:30am	Signal Sense–Making: The Exhausted Majority <i>More in Common’s 2018 <u>Hidden Tribes</u> research uncovered the “Exhausted Majority,” the roughly 67% of the American public who feel fatigued and alienated by political polarization and are the most open to finding middle ground. This is an important group for civic funders to understand. More in Common’s refreshed 2026 research gives us an opportunity to explore what has shifted over the last decade, what signals the Exhausted Majority is sending us today, and how we might apply that to our work as civic funders.</i>
11:30am–12:30pm	Lunch

Thursday, November 19 *(continued)*

Location: The Department at Hudson's, 1000 Nick Gilbert Way, Detroit, MI 48226



12:30–2:00pm

Member Huddle #2 / In-Person Funder Labs

Participants will have another opportunity to turn to each other on topics most pressing to them. In addition, members engaged with the Civic Learning Funders Lab and the Civic Culture Funders Lab will meet to push forward their work, respectively.

2:00pm–2:30pm

Break

2:30pm–4:00pm

Signal Math: What does this all add up to?

We will have spent much of our time together exploring the signals Americans are sending about the kind of country and communities they want. Our last session will help us turn that learning into action in two ways. First, we will look closely at what these signals mean in terms of new coalitions that are forming. Second, we will spend time determining what civic funders can do in response. We will have time for reflections and next steps as we wrap up the meeting.

PACE Non-Solicitation Policy

*PACE maintains a **non-solicitation policy** for all meetings and events. Our goal is to create an open, trusting space for learning and collaboration—so **solicitation of any kind is not permitted** during member convenings. This includes requesting business, offering fund management services, distributing grant proposals, or seeking grant funding (except when reviewing proposals as part of a pooled funding initiative).*

Connections made through PACE events may naturally lead to follow-up conversations or collaborations; any such engagement should occur by mutual agreement and at the discretion of individual participants, not through broad or mass outreach.

We encourage relationship-building and sharing about current projects. Please remember that a colleague's enthusiasm for their work does not constitute solicitation.

To maintain the integrity of our space, anyone found to be in violation of this policy may be asked to leave the event, and egregious or repeated violations could affect participation in future PACE gatherings.

Questions? Please reach out to info@PACEfunders.org.