

Talarico's \$25 Million Black Voter Outreach Operation

Subject: James Talarico's 2026 U.S. Senate campaign

Purpose: Black voter outreach and turnout

Date: 2026

CAMPAIGN ANNOUNCEMENT

Democratic U.S. Senate nominee James Talarico has committed **\$25 million** to an expanded effort aimed at engaging and turning out Black voters in Texas as he prepares for the November general election against Republican Ken Paxton.

The campaign's effort follows Talarico's March 2026 Democratic primary victory over U.S. Rep. Jasmine Crockett, a prominent Black congresswoman whose political base includes substantial support among Black Democratic voters.

During a July Houston town hall, Talarico acknowledged the challenge of earning the support of voters who had backed Crockett. He said his campaign would invest heavily in Black communities through advertising, organizing, voter registration, community events and related outreach.

The campaign has subsequently announced three Black senior advisers for its Black voter outreach operation:

AISHA J. MCCLENDON

McClendon is a veteran Democratic political operative with experience in national and Texas politics.

She served as **national director of African American outreach for Beto O'Rourke's 2020 presidential campaign**. Before joining O'Rourke's campaign, McClendon served as chief of staff to Texas state Rep. Toni Rose and worked in the Clinton White House.

Her political work has included African American voter outreach and constituency organizing.

Source: ABC News reporting on O'Rourke's hiring of McClendon; campaign and professional biographies.

DELILAH AGHO-OTOGHILE

Agho-Otoghile has extensive experience in Democratic voter mobilization.



She served as **Texas state director for Beto O'Rourke's presidential campaign** after previously working as field director for **Stacey Abrams' 2018 campaign for governor of Georgia**.

Her earlier campaign experience includes work for Hillary Clinton and Martin O'Malley during the 2016 presidential cycle, as well as organizing work with Battleground Texas and Equality Texas.

Agho-Otoghile later became co-founder and president of VoteSimple, a Texas voter-registration organization, and executive director of the Texas Future Project, a progressive political organization that raises and directs funding toward Democratic civic-engagement efforts.

Sources: The Texas Tribune; NextGen America; Texas Future Project; VoteSimple.

CLIFF WALKER

Walker is a longtime Democratic political organizer and communications strategist.

He has worked with the Texas Democratic Party and has been involved in efforts to recruit, train and support diverse Democratic candidates.

Walker is also co-founder of **Seeker Strategies**, a communications and advocacy firm that describes itself as Black- and Brown-owned and progressive.

In March 2026, Walker publicly discussed the challenge facing Talarico after the Democratic primary, telling Texas Public Radio that the party's task following a contested primary would be to reunite Democratic voters.

Source: Texas Public Radio; Seeker Strategies; professional biographies.

THE MEDIA OPERATION

Talarico's campaign has also hired three Black-owned media firms for targeted outreach:

Bryson Gillette

Television and digital advertising.

Bryson Gillette is a political and strategic communications firm founded in 2020 by Bill Burton, a former Obama administration official. The firm has worked extensively in political communications and paid media.



Foston International Communications

Radio advertising.

Founded by Judy Foston, the Houston-area communications firm has decades of experience in political advertising and ethnic-market outreach. Its published client history includes Beto O'Rourke's 2018 U.S. Senate campaign.

Advantage Communications Media Group

Print advertising.

The Houston firm is led by Linda K. Brown, who has described the company as a communications organization serving Black communities and institutions.

WHY THE HIRING MATTERS

The personnel assembled by Talarico represent a recognizable Democratic political network.

The career paths of the advisers and associated political professionals run through:

Clinton-era Democratic politics → Obama-era Democratic politics → Beto O'Rourke → Stacey Abrams → Texas Democratic Party infrastructure → James Talarico.

The \$25 million investment therefore represents more than a generic advertising campaign. It places experienced Democratic constituency organizers and specialized media firms around a candidate who needs to consolidate the party's Black electorate after defeating Crockett.

Talarico's campaign has not publicly characterized the expenditure as an effort to repair damage caused by the primary. The political circumstances, however, provide the obvious backdrop: Crockett's supporters must now be persuaded to unite behind the candidate who defeated her.

PRIMARY SOURCES AND SUPPORTING REPORTING

- Texas Public Radio, March 18, 2026, reporting on Talarico's challenge with Crockett's Black voter base.
- The Texas Tribune, September 10, 2019, documenting Delilah Agho-Otoghile's role in Beto O'Rourke's presidential campaign and her previous work for Stacey Abrams and Hillary Clinton.
- NextGen America biography of Agho-Otoghile documenting her work with Beto O'Rourke, Stacey Abrams, Win Justice and the New Georgia Project.
- Texas Tribune, August 23, 2022, reporting on Agho-Otoghile and the Texas Future Project's effort to raise \$25 million for progressive political organizations.

