



Ohio Organizing Collaborative

Relational Organizing Phase I Progress Report

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Overview

This is a summary of the Ohio Organizing Collaborative's successes and challenges in our relational organizing program over the first three quarters of 2020 and outlines our plans to finish the final three weeks of get out the vote efforts strong while building lasting civic capacity in our communities.

Background

We know relational organizing works for voter turnout. The results from our 2018 Analyst institute study showed a remarkable 3.8% increase in turnout among low and no propensity voters. In 2016, the last presidential year, an AI study showed a 4.2% increase in turnout. This is 42 times as impactful as the average progressive tactic measured by the Analyst Institute in 2016 (which had a 0.1% increase in turnout). **The challenge is always a question of scale** -- can we construct relational programs large enough to meaningfully expand the electorate?

With intention, relational organizing programs reach people no one else can. In our 2018 study, 70% of the voters in our relational program did not match to the voter file before the program but did afterwards -- and 36% of those voters had no prior vote history at all. These voters would have been impossible to target through traditional voter engagement tactics because they are not in the voter file and those that are often do not have accurate contact information.

In a pandemic and a noisy presidential election, relational tactics break through the noise. As impersonal tactics and misinformation ramp up from all types of campaigns, people are far more likely to read and trust messages from someone they know.

2020 Learnings

As we prepare to scale for our final GOTV push, we are working to learn as we go in order to incorporate best practices and adjust programmatic elements accordingly. Thus far we've seen compelling indicators of success in these key areas

- 1. Relational works for turnout, it's extremely impactful and possible (but hard!) to scale.**

Studies have consistently shown that relational tactics are objectively the most impactful, but they are difficult to scale. We have had mixed success in Ohio this year getting to scale -- the Coronavirus pandemic has made almost entirely virtual organizing necessary and has created challenges in getting people trained, oriented and active on the App.

Organizers and groups with longstanding community relationships have been able to overcome tech barriers to recruit volunteers where new organizers and groups new to civic engagement have struggled with the onramp.

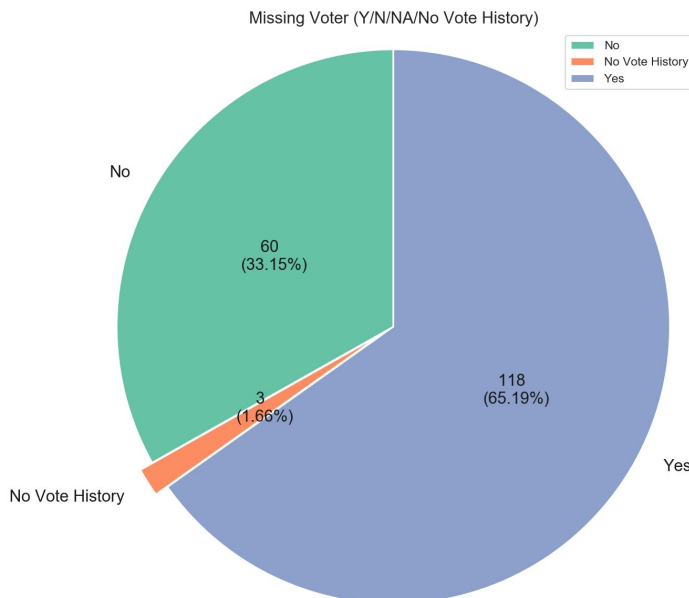
Nevertheless, through innovations in site-based relational organizing, we are confident we will be able to recruit additional volunteers who may not have gotten engaged through virtual organizing.

Thus far we have 1,256 volunteers who have downloaded our relational organizing app called Outvote and 665 currently active volunteers who have reached **6,389 relational contacts**. Our goal is to reach 20,000 voters through 2,200 relational leaders which would be the equivalent of 240,000 - 420,000 cold SMS contacts / from 7 million SMS attempts (6% response rate) OR 120,000 - 200,000 TV reach (repetitive) OR 100,000 - 160,000 phone contacts / from 5 million attempts (2% response rate).

2. **With intention, relational organizing can reach the right people.** Low to no propensity or “missing” voters, who tend to be young people and people of color that traditional campaigns cannot reach.

The voters we are reaching through our site based relational canvass are missing voters. 65% of relational contacts in our pilot program were “missing voters.” Meaning these contacts are either unregistered, infrequent voters, or have no prior vote history.

OOC’s Site-Based Relational Canvass Pilot Program Missing Voters Vote History Analysis



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- a. 60% of all relational contacts are between 18 and 39; Of that, **80% are missing** voters.

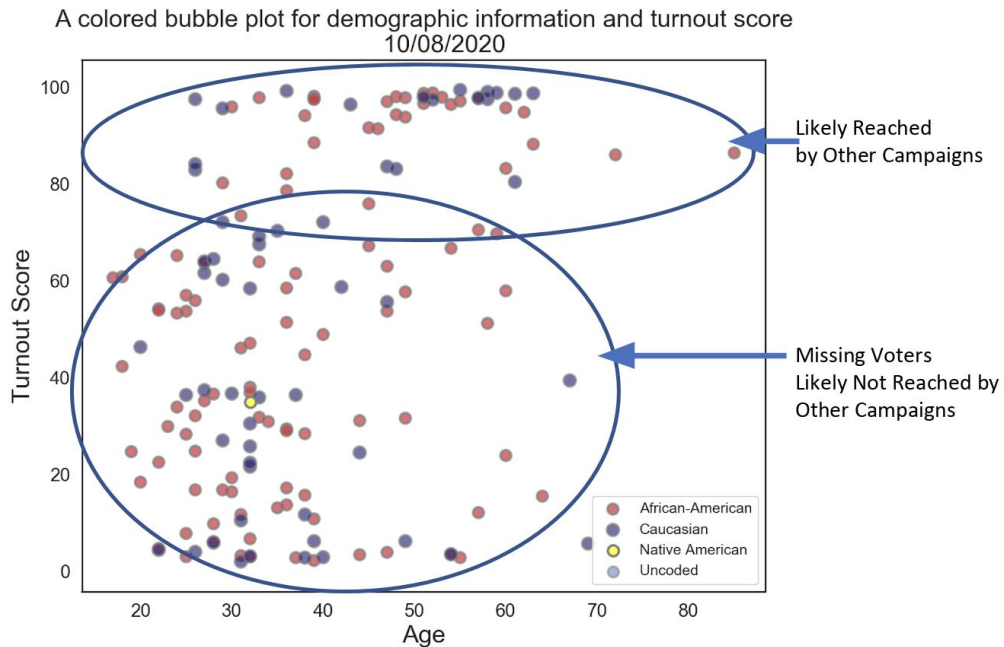
- b. 64% of all relational contacts are African American; Of that, **65% are missing voters.**
- c. Of the voters who matched in the VAN, 70% had incorrect phone numbers or no phone contact at all.

3. **Breaking through the noise.**

- a. Our program is reaching missing voters who are likely not reached by other campaigns through trusted messengers rather than a stranger.
- b. Because we have the most up to date contact information on these relational contacts and are empowering their friends and family to contact them directly, [recent Outvote studies have indicated we will be up to 8.3 timely more likely](#) to break through the noise of a missing voter deciding between voting or not voting.

OOC's Site-Based Relational Canvass

Pilot Program Missing Voters Demographic & Turnout Analysis



“Relational organizing is uniquely suited to the coronavirus era, and not just because traditional options aren’t available to campaigns. As trust in government and institutions has shrunk and Americans have sorted into news silos, relational

organizing relays information through trusted messengers rather than strangers. With misinformation and deliberate voter suppression already rife, the pandemic will create the most chaotic election in modern history with millions learning to cast mail-in ballots. “You had a trust deficit before COVID,” says Carter. “Now, it’s hard to imagine people not being even more particular about where they get information, who you talk to. The need to have trusted messengers couldn’t be more immediate.” - [The Secret to Beating Trump Lies With You and Your Friends, Mother Jones](#)

2020 Impact to Date

Topline Program Impact - [as of 10/05/20]

Volunteer Analysis:

- **1,256 volunteers** who have downloaded our relational organizing app - Outvote
- **665 active volunteers** who are actively engaging in our program.

Voter Analysis:

- **6,389 relational contacts** reached through friends and family networks
- **462,361 voters** reached through traditional voter engagement tactics

Action Analysis:

- **8,096 relational actions** taken by people calling or messaging friends and family
- **1,520,366 text messages** sent to (non relational) voters

GOTV Expansion Plan & Projections

We are implementing three key programmatic avenues for the last three weeks of the election.

I. Expanding relational contacts through scaled paid field

In order to reach our statewide 2020 goals for reaching no-to-low propensity voters through relational contacts we are expanding on the ground outreach efforts.

1. We are expanding our organizing program reach through organizers recruiting volunteers to participate in site-based “vote tripling” efforts to get voters to reach out to friends and family.
2. We are transitioning our paid voter registration canvass team to do community based relational canvasses to recruit volunteers to participate as Democracy Builders - relational leaders in their communities.

GOAL: 20,000 relational contacts. Reaching this many voters through high-impact relational contact is the equivalent of 7 million SMS cold text or 5 million phone calls.

II. Reaching Scale by Reaching our Voters

1. Since 2012 the Ohio Organizing Collaborative has registered nearly 385,000 voters in their communities across Ohio. We are reaching back out to every person that we've registered to make sure they have a plan to vote and continue the conversation with a trusted community messenger.
2. In the May primary we piloted a massive vote by mail chase program. We are scaled up and ready to run a thorough vote by mail chase program again to make sure that everyone who has requested a ballot is reminded to turn it in.

GOAL: 480,000 traditional voter outreach contacts.

III. Layered Narrative Impact through Digital & Mail

We are gearing up to run a \$100,000 digital ad program to motivate voters to get to the polls through our Race Class Narrative campaign "[All in for Ohio](#)." We are transitioning our program from encouraging people to register to vote to now planning their vote -- voting early, voting by mail and on election day. We are focusing on amplifying [inspiring content](#) that motivates voters of color and young voters to make their voices heard all the way down the ballot on critical local elections.

GOAL: 6,000,000 impressions, 6,000 conversions