2012 CIVIC ENGAGEMENT PROGRAM
Preliminary Evaluation and Results
In 2012, SEIU International made key investments in community-based groups across the country to bolster voter registration and voter contact efforts. The Ohio Organizing Collaborative engaged our local members, reached key communities, and ran an efficient and model program collecting half of all the c3 voter registrations in Ohio.

Erin Kramer
Vice President, SEIU Local 1
Director of Ohio and Indiana

OHIO ORGANIZING COLLABORATIVE

Formed in 2007, the Ohio Organizing Collaborative (OOC) is an innovative and experimental statewide organization uniting community organizing, labor unions, faith organizations, and policy institutes across the state. OOC currently consists of 12 member organizations with representation in every major metropolitan area in Ohio. OOC also houses one of the nation’s largest movement building projects.

It is OOC’s vision to build a transformative base of power in Ohio to bring about positive social change through racial and economic justice. OOC carries out its mission through investment in a diverse portfolio of organizing strategies, movement building work, non-partisan 501c3 electoral programs, and integration with policy partners.

CIVIC ENGAGEMENT PROGRAM

In 2012, OOC developed a large-scale civic engagement program with the goal of aligning long term organizing strategies with mass mobilization through electoral work. Our program had four areas of focus: seniors, the Rising American Electorate (RAE)\(^1\), students, and the faith community.

OOC operated in six geographic regions that covered 12 counties, as shown in the map to the left. Each OOC program was designed to incorporate cross-program integration and was linked to ongoing organizing strategies across the state. Key to the success of this strategy was anchoring our statewide jobs campaign, Fighting for Ohio Jobs, and using every voter contact to talk about jobs, the economy, and the impact of unemployment in our communities.

STATEWIDE PROGRAM IMPACT

Employing 180 on-the-ground staff at our peak, OOC registered 40,891 individuals to vote in 2012.

Our canvassers made 93,010 attempts at the door that led to 20,287 contacts, 16,934 vote pledges, and 19,175 issue identifications. OOC phone bankers made 340,075 calls that led to 51,362 contacts and 25,718 completed conversations. In addition, 183,454 pieces of direct mail were targeted toward voters preceding the election. Overall, OOC’s direct voter contacts (conversations either by phone or on the doors) equals 1.3% of the total 2012 vote share in Ohio.

1 RAE identified by OOC: people of color and infrequently voting students

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>OOC Voter Registrations Across Ohio</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Akron</td>
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<tr>
<td>4,730</td>
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# VOTER REGISTRATION

Beginning in June 2012, OOC rolled out a small but thorough program of voter registration in six urban areas: Akron, Canton, Youngstown, Toledo, Dayton and Cincinnati. In late August, after an evaluation of our program, SEIU International made a significant investment which allowed us to triple our program size, expanding into Cleveland and Columbus - collecting nearly 35,000 registrations in the four weeks before the deadline.

In total, OOC averaged 2.8 cards per hour while collecting 40,891 voter registration cards: half of the total voter registration cards collected by in-state c3 organizations. OOC had a 60 percent rate of collecting phone numbers with registration cards.

OOC placed strong focus on educating returning citizens (individuals with criminal records), informing them that their voting rights are returned upon registering after incarceration. To the left is an education piece used by voter registration staff to educate returning citizens on their voting rights and inform them of a state law that OOC helped pass in 2012 removing some barriers from employment for returning citizens.

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<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Registrations</th>
<th>Door Knocks</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
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<td>93,010</td>
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</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

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**Voter Registration**

- **People with felony records are RETURNING CITIZENS and may be ELIGIBLE TO VOTE in this election!**
- **Can you vote if you were convicted of a felony?**
  - **YES:**
    - If you are not currently incarcerated for your conviction
    - If you are on parole or probation
    - If you are living in a halfway house
    - If you register at your new address after any incarceration
  - **NO:**
    - If you are currently incarcerated for a felony conviction
    - If you have twice been convicted of violating Ohio’s elections laws. (Ohio Rev. Code § 3595.01)
    - Being convicted of a misdemeanor does not cancel your voter registration.
- **But, you must be registered to vote at your current address by October 9th.**
  - Call 1.866.OUR.VOTE if you have any questions about your voting eligibility.

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**Returning Citizens' Voices Matter and Change Can Happen When We Unite!**

- Be sure to vote on November 6th — because YOUR VOICE has an impact on the future of returning citizens in Ohio.
- Senate Bill 337 is a great example of what we can do when we unite. Returning citizens worked together over the last year to help pass this legislation, which will take effect in January 2013. This new law will make it easier for Ohioans with records to find jobs by:
  - Giving people more options for cleaning up their records. (Ohio Rev. Code Ann. §§ 2953.33)
  - Opening up more professions to returning citizens.
  - Creating a Certificate of Qualification for Employment, which can ease legal restrictions in situations where employers want to hire returning citizens. (Ohio Rev. Code Ann. § 2953.23)
- Join the movement or learn more by visiting www.ohorganizing.org or call (614) 469-8175.

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**And VOTE YES on Issue 2 to ensure that we are picking our elected officials, not them picking us.**

- When elections are fair, THE PEOPLE WIN. Vote YES on 2.
- Because when elections are fair, the people win!
- Visit www.VotersFirstOhio.com for more information.

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**Phone Calls**

- 51,362 phone contacts made
- 16,934 vote plans
- 19,175 issue identifications

**Direct Mail**

- 183,455 pieces mailed

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**Ohio Organizing Collaborative**

- Reclaim Your Right to VOTE
- Ohioans with felony records are RETURNING CITIZENS and may be ELIGIBLE TO VOTE in this election! Can you vote if you were convicted of a felony? YES:
  - If you are not currently incarcerated for your conviction
  - If you are on parole or probation
  - If you are living in a halfway house
  - If you register at your new address after any incarceration
  - NO:
    - If you are currently incarcerated for a felony conviction
    - If you have twice been convicted of violating Ohio’s elections laws. (Ohio Rev. Code § 3595.01)
    - Being convicted of a misdemeanor does not cancel your voter registration.
- But, you must be registered to vote at your current address by October 9th.
  - Call 1.866.OUR.VOTE if you have any questions about your voting eligibility.
SENIORS: CARING ACROSS GENERATIONS

In Ohio, 14.3 percent of our state population is over the age of 65, compared to 13.3 percent across the nation. One could say that senior voters are part of the state’s growing Rising American Electorate (RAE) voters. In coordination with our national partner, Caring Across Generations, OOC created three main strategies to reach out to senior voters in Ohio:

✦ Mobilize and educate in key areas with large senior populations;
✦ Talk to frequently voting seniors early in the cycle to educate them on the importance of protecting social programs like Medicare, Medicaid, and Social Security; and
✦ Focus on early vote and election day voter mobilization for infrequently voting seniors.

For the first goal, OOC developed a cadre of senior leaders to organize a series of direct actions including two Care Congress events in Boardman (Mahoning County) and Canton (Stark County), which assembled over 700 seniors to talk about retirement security and care jobs. Additionally, OOC participated in national days of action with Caring Across Generations in Washington DC, made several visits to congressional offices both in Ohio and on the Hill, staffed call-in days, and published letters to the editor in newspapers across the state.

Postcards, like the one below, were sent out to frequently voting seniors. Following that, personalized letters went out to infrequently voting seniors in targeted communities including Columbiana, Mahoning, Portage, Stark, and Summit Counties: reaching a total of 34,804 voters. These letters were coordinated for delivery just before Secretary of State Jon Husted mailed the first round of vote-by-mail applications to all registered Ohio voters. Once OOC confirmed that the Secretary of State sent the applications, our phone bankers made follow-up calls to these

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Protect Medicare and Social Security from dangerous cuts.

My husband worked at a steel company here in the Mahoning Valley for 36 years, and we were looking forward to retirement. That ended when his company went bankrupt and closed down. The retirement benefits we were counting on were gone, and we even lost our medical coverage. The worst part was watching him worry about how he was going to care for me — my health was failing fast, the bills were piling up, and there was virtually no hope in sight. Then relief finally came...I got my Medicare card in the mail. These benefits saved my life.” Juanita
Join me in voting early!

Your voice matters! We all know that protecting Medicare and Social Security benefits is important, and that is why it is so important to VOTE.

You should have received a vote by mail application from Secretary of State Husted. This will enable you to have your ballot mailed directly to you — so you can vote from the comfort of your home. If you haven’t already done so, please make sure you mail in your application today to ensure your voice is heard in this election. Don’t forget proper postage, which is a 45-cent stamp.

If you did not receive an application, don’t worry, as you will be receiving a new one next week. Be sure to fill in all the necessary information — including your birthdate and either your Ohio Driver’s License number or the last 4 digits of your Social Security number — and return it immediately. If you don’t provide this information, your request for a ballot may be rejected.

Please remember that your vote is important to protect retirement benefits not only for yourself, but also for future generations.

To request a vote-by-mail application, please call (614) 466-2585.
If you have questions about voting, please call 1-866-OUR-VOTE.

voters to ensure that they were completing their vote-by-mail applications and returning them.

We made 101,717 phone attempts and held conversations with 8,110 of these voters. Additional reminders were mailed as the second round of vote-by-mail applications were sent to senior voters, with the focus on creating a plan to vote. Above is a postcard sent to infrequent voting seniors in October to push them to turn in their vote-by-mail applications.

To help us evaluate the effectiveness of pushing senior voters to early vote with a strong, personal social pressure program, OOC created and tracked a control group of infrequent senior voters. Grassroots Solutions is evaluating the program, with results available in April 2013.

As a grantmaker, we see civic engagement as a strategy that compliments the community organizing work we support in the Mahoning Valley. The ability to register thousands of voters, knock on thousands of doors, and encourage residents to see elections as a vital tool in advancing their interests is an essential element to building power.

Gordon Wean
R.J. Wean Foundation
RISING AMERICAN ELECTORATE

After the voter registration deadline on October 9, 65,000 newly registered voters and infrequently voting people of color were targeted for personal contact through our door knocking program in nine counties. In addition, we mailed and phoned this universe of voters in 267 precincts with a specific focus on vote-by-mail applicants.

It was OOC’s goal to knock on their doors 2.5 times between mid-October and Election Day, in order to help these individuals make a plan to vote. We placed a strong focus on early voting, both in-person and by mail, which was coordinated with senior, student, and faith programs.

During this program, we not only focused on helping people make a plan to vote, but also identified the issue they were most concerned with and if they wanted to become engaged with the OOC Jobs Campaign, had an organizer follow up with them to set up a one-to-one meeting. The program had three phases:

✦ Early vote push on phones, doors, and mail from October 9 through October 29;
✦ Ballot chase and early vote in person on doors and phones from October 29 through November 5; and
✦ Election Day voter contact on doors and phones on November 6.

In order to help our message break through in a busy election year, OOC regionalized our literature and used real stories to make local community connections. To the left is an example of literature used at the doors in partnership with the AMOS Project in Cincinnati.
Additionally, canvassers and phone bankers identified potential voters on Issue 2 and their biggest concerns in this year’s election.

As shown in the chart to the right, the Ohioans we contacted were most concerned about Jobs (44 percent), Healthcare (19 percent), and Education (11 percent). Following that, concerns listed were Retirement Security, Safety, and Reentry Reform.

Because the people with whom we engaged in this election are less likely to have a reliable phone or email, OOC organizers began using the data collected to follow up with these individuals immediately - in order to get them involved in state and local issues.

**STUDENTS: OHIO STUDENT ASSOCIATION**

In 2011, OOC formally launched the Ohio Student Association (OSA), a network of students on college campuses across Ohio working on issues of student debt and privatization of public universities. With the support of the Youth Engagement Table, OSA ran a robust voter registration and engagement campaign in Ohio that moved thousands of students to vote.

This year, OSA registered 3,814 voters at a rate of 2.92 voter registration cards per hour (3.71 without counting the final week of voter registration). OSA also collected 1,401 phone numbers and registered students on over 15 Ohio college campuses with our partner organizations - including the Children’s Defense Fund and All Hands On Deck (VoteMob and HoodieVote).

At the Ohio State University, Ohio University, and Kent State University, OSA ran a vigorous voter engagement campaign after voter registration efforts concluded. OSA employed 14 part-time staff with a team lead on each campus. Over the course of four weeks, OSA had 171 door shifts and 54 phone shifts. At the doors, we engaged students about tuition, student debt, and how to build student power through the ballot. We had thousands of conversations at the doors, on the phone, and in-person by hosting events, direct actions, dorm storms, and clip-boarding.

OSA found the youth electorate in Ohio to be energized and excited to exercise their power. OSA knocked on 15,600 doors and talked to 2,420 students. Through voter registration, canvassing, surveys, and direct actions, OSA gathered detailed information for 3,552 students interested in future involvement.

**The twin crises of skyrocketing tuition and debt, and the criminalization of youth of color through the school-to-prison pipeline are devastating Ohio’s youth. As state funding for K-12, community centers, and higher education continues to fade, we need to elevate the voices of students who are directly impacted by these problems to the forefront of the debate. OSA is building power for Ohio’s youth.**

Alwiyah Shariff
Junior, OSU
Since 2007, OOC has developed robust electoral programs within congregations throughout the state. In 2012, the OOC faith program, in partnership with the PICO National Network, used a Democracy Fellow model that imbedded local leadership in a set of congregations.

Those Democracy Fellows then recruited, trained, and activated dozens of volunteers and led a large-scale early vote program called “Souls to the Polls”. The Fellows also organized multiple direct actions across Ohio to demand that Secretary of State Jon Husted preserve early and weekend voting, and mobilized thousands of voters in the weeks before the election.

The OOC Faith Vote program was led by Ohio Prophetic Voices, the AMOS Project, and the Ohio Baptist State Convention. It involved a core group of 73 churches in Cincinnati, Cleveland, Columbus, Dayton, Toledo, Warren, and Youngstown. Key results include partnering with colorofchange.org, Stand Up for Ohio, and State Voices to collect and deliver over 80,000 online petition signatures to Secretary of State Jon Husted demanding that he reinstate weekend voting in Ohio, staging Souls to the Polls events at 22 churches the weekend before Election Day, collecting hundreds of voter registration cards through churches, and contributing volunteers to canvass and phone bank shifts.

The church has always been called to stand with and speak for those who find themselves on the margins. God has told us that divine interest is not so much in what we do in our places of worship, but what we do to seek justice for those on the bottom rungs of the social ladder, as the prophet Isaiah has said: "Is not this the kind of fasting I have chosen: to loose the chains of injustice and untie the cords of the yoke, to set the oppressed free and break every yoke?" (Isaiah 58:6) Religion liberates, it brings people together, it helps us find our voices as we speak to God’s dream for the world and all God’s children. Civic engagement is a part of our ministry. We saw the impact that had when we worked together on Souls to the Polls and fighting for the right to vote early. We made a tremendous impact in the state with Ohio Prophetic Voices.

Rev. Susan Quinn Bryan
Mount Auburn Presbyterian Church, Cincinnati

OPV mobilized thousands of voters in the weeks before the election, and delivered 80,000 signatures to Secretary Husted.
ONLINE ORGANIZING

The goal of the OOC online organizing team was to be the integrated piece that connected movement building, traditional organizing, electoral organizing, faith organizing and traditional communications. The team developed most of its infrastructure from scratch in 2012, creating online tools that included the use of Facebook, Twitter, email lists and SMS (text messaging) to effectively communicate activities happening on the ground.

OOC’s primary email list was built using some list acquisitions from partners and creating online petitions. This initiated an electoral email list that grew to 16,434. The online team used email as a means to encourage individuals to take action, from signing petitions to attending events and direct actions. Other social media tools were utilized to share information with the public in real time.

Traditional and social media were used successfully to communicate our push against the Secretary of State’s office, changes to early voting, and education regarding voting hours. The image to the left (known as a meme) is an example of this work.

Communicating OOC’s jobs messaging was a critical part of the team’s work; our “I Am A Jobs Voter” memes featuring OOC organizers, members, and leaders were disseminated daily during early voting. Our Facebook fans were encouraged to “like” or “share” these memes to distribute them to their individual networks.

For example, the meme shown to the left generated 103 “likes” and 52 “shares” on the Fighting for Ohio Jobs Facebook page. This does not include the number of likes and shares that were received on people’s personal Facebook pages.

PRESERVING VOTING RIGHTS IN OHIO

Like many states, Ohio is facing an assault on voting rights. In 2011, an effort to roll back years of work to make voting more accessible and easier for all Ohioans was passed into law: HB 194. This legislation severely cut early voting opportunities both in person and by mail, and eliminated the last three days of early voting – historically, the busiest weekend for in-person early voting by African Americans at early vote centers in Ohio. Voting rights experts estimated that this legislation would have suppressed 400,000 votes in the 2012 election.

In opposition to the bill, Ohio’s community and labor allies gathered enough signatures to force HB 194 onto the November ballot for an up-down vote. Fearing that they would lose the ballot initiative, the state legislature rescinded their own legislation - but the fight was not over. Secretary of State Jon Husted issued a series of orders that confused voters and limited early voting opportunities, and his office waged legal battles in federal court over provisional ballots aimed at disenfranchising Ohio voters.
OOC played a leading role in fighting voter suppression efforts. We partnered nationally with the Advancement Project and Color of Change, and statewide with Ohio Voice. We integrated our online organizing, grassroots organizing, and legal strategies, and adjusted OOC’s electoral program to include a strong education component on mail, at the doors, and over the phones - successfully preventing voter suppression in the state.

Together with the Advancement Project, OOC sued the Secretary of State in July to ensure that provisional ballots would be counted and formally launched a joint public education project that challenged voter suppression and built a base of individuals committed to protecting the vote beyond the election. Simultaneously, Ohio Prophetic Voices organized 35 top clergy from across the state to meet with Secretary Husted, demanding that he preserve early voting on the weekends; a critical opportunity for low-income families and people of faith to cast their votes. Husted refused to do so.

In September, OOC’s online team joined the Color of Change to step-up the pressure on the Secretary of State by collecting and delivering over 80,000 petition signatures demanding that weekend voting be reinstated. OOC built a list of more than 16,000 online supporters for this campaign using email, Facebook, and Twitter. Following this effort, the Federal Court ruled that early voting opportunities must be made available during the final weekend before the election and forced Husted to comply.

In less than two weeks, OOC organized "Souls to the Polls" events at 22 locations across Ohio - bringing hundreds of voters to the polls, broadly encouraging early voting, and lifting a powerful on- and offline campaign to educate the public on new early voting hours.

Statewide, tens of thousands of people voted during that final weekend, with more than 1.78 million individuals voting early - larger numbers than even the 2008 election.

Following the election, lawmakers vowed to change Ohio’s voting laws to further limit early voting, strengthen the voter ID law (currently one of the strongest in the country), and possibly eliminate third-party voter registration. So in 2013, our fight continues as OOC will maintains its leading role in the fight to preserve voting rights in Ohio.

We’ve begun to see civic engagement as a key part of what our congregation does. From Souls to the Polls to fighting for early voting hours to registering voters on Sunday, we have made a tremendous impact across the state with OPV and the OOC.

Pastor Tallmadge Thomas
Mt. Zion Baptist Church, Toledo

OOC played a lead role in fighting voter suppression efforts; together with our partners, we preserved weekend early voting.
SELECTED MEDIA COVERAGE

5/19/2012: Los Angeles Times “Obama could have a prayer among Ohio’s white evangelicals”
articles.latimes.com/2012/may/19/nation/la-na-ohio-evangelicals-20120520

8/21/2012: Columbus WOSU “Voting Rights Advocates Press Franklin County For More Hours”
wosu.org/2012/news/tag/ohio-organizing-collaborative/

8/27/2012: Canton Repository “Canton council to banks: Clean up foreclosures”
www.cantonrep.com/news/x821893645/Canton-council-to-banks-Clean-up-foreclosures

9/12/2012: Capital Blog (Columbus) “Weekend Voting”
blogs.dixcdn.com/capitalblog/2012/09/weekend-voting/

9/12/2012: Cleveland WCPN “Group Petitions Husted For Weekend Voting”
www.ideastream.org/news/feature/48944

9/12/2012: Examiner (National) “Voting rights coalition delivers petition signatures to Jon Husted”

9/25/2012: Cleveland FOX19 “OOC Celebrates National Voter Registration Day with Drives”

10/5/2012: Youngstown Vindicator “Get a Ride Tuesday to Vote Early”
www.vindy.com/news/2012/oct/05/get-ride-tuesday-vote-early/?nw

10/9/2012: CNN “Wanted: Voters with foreclosed homes”

10/9/2012: Cleveland FOX19 “OOC providing free rides to early voting locations”
ohorganizing.org/index.php/newsmedia/media-coverage/242-ooc-provides-free-rides-to-polls

10/9/2012: Toledo WNWO “Church group brings Souls to the Polls”

10/17/2012: Cincinnati WCPO “Early Voting in Ohio”
ohorganizing.org/index.php/newsmedia/media-coverage/250-early-voting-in-ohio

10/27/2012: Columbus Dispatch “Activists seek to quell endemic East Side violence”

11/4/2012: Cleveland Plain Dealer “Huge turnout, long lines for early voting in Ohio”

11/5/2012: Columbus Dispatch “Campaigns rely on the ground game”
www.dispatch.com/content/stories/local/2012/11/05/campaigns-rely-on-the-ground-game.html

www.morningjournalnews.com/page/content.detail/id/263337/Candidates--Ohio-volunteers-push-get-out-the-vote-.html?isap=1&nav=5020
ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

OOC would like to thank the following national and state partners for their contribution to the success of this year’s electoral program in Ohio:

Advancement Project
The AMOS Project*
Caring Across Generations
Center for Community Change
Children's Defense Fund
Color Of Change
Communications Workers of America, District 4*
The Kirwan Institute at OSU*
Mahoning Valley Organizing Collaborative*
National People's Action
Northeast Ohio Alliance for Hope*
Ohio Alliance
Ohio Baptist State Convention*
Ohio Justice and Policy Center*
Ohio Prophetic Voices*
Ohio Student Association*
Ohio Unity Coalition
Ohio Voices
PICO National Network
Policy Matters Ohio*
Progress Ohio
SEIU International
SEIU Local 1*
UFCW 75*
Vote Mob

For more questions about our civic engagement program, please contact Karen Gasper, OOC Civic Engagement Director at karen@ohorganizing.org.

* Denotes OOC member organization