



"Zuckerbucks" Followed Biden Voters in Pennsylvania

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Overview

During the 2020 election cycle, the Chan Zuckerberg Initiative poured \$400 million into election jurisdictions for election activities. Most of the money was funneled into local jurisdictions through the Center for Tech and Civic Life (CTCL), a non-profit run by a former Obama Foundation fellow, while \$50 million went to the Center for Election Innovation and Research.¹⁻²⁻³

While Mark Zuckerberg and others claimed these grants were necessary to administer an election amid the COVID-19 pandemic, very little of the money was spent on personal protective equipment (PPE), but these "Zuckerbucks" seem to have influenced election outcomes.⁴⁻⁵⁻⁶

New Data Shows Even More Zuckerbucks in Pennsylvania than Previously Estimated

FGA's preliminary analysis of the "COVID-19 Response Grants" in Pennsylvania revealed that more than \$20 million was funneled into 23 election jurisdictions.⁷ But new data retrieved from public records requests indicates even more Zuckerbucks flowed into the Keystone State than previously thought.

CTCL actually allocated more than \$22.5 million to Pennsylvania.⁸ These numbers do not account for an additional \$13.3 million the state was awarded by Center for Election Innovation and Research.⁹⁻¹⁰

ZUCKERBUCKS POURED INTO PENNSYLVANIA IN 2020

COUNTY/ MUNICIPALITY	ZUCKERBUCKS AMOUNT	COUNTY/ MUNICIPALITY	ZUCKERBUCKS AMOUNT
Philadelphia	\$10,516,074	Erie	\$148,729
Chester	\$2,558,080	Monroe	\$113,634
Delaware	\$2,172,858	Mercer	\$54,414
Allegheny	\$2,052,251	Northumberland	\$44,811
Montgomery	\$1,167,000	Somerset	\$37,104
Centre	\$863,828	Armstrong	\$27,078
Lehigh	\$762,635	Pike	\$26,070
Dauphin	\$482,165	Wayne	\$25,098
Lancaster	\$474,202	Venango	\$21,218
Berks	\$470,929	Mifflin	\$17,930
York	\$321,600	Juniata	\$11,364
Luzerne	\$173,236	TOTAL¹¹	\$22,542,308

Sources: APM Reports and Foundation for Government Accountability

Biden Counties Received Far More Zuckerbucks than Trump Counties

According to CTCL, “grant amounts scaled with jurisdiction size.”¹² However, the distribution of Zuckerbucks across Pennsylvania does not correspond with a population-based approach. Grant amounts varied widely, with counties receiving between \$0.60 and \$9.97 per registered voter.¹³ Even more troubling, a higher number of dollars appear to have flowed to counties that ultimately voted for Joe Biden.

Indeed, counties won by Biden in 2020 received an average of \$4.99 Zuckerbucks per registered voter, compared to just \$1.12 for counties won by Trump.¹⁴

In addition, *one* Biden county received less than \$1.00 per registered voter. By contrast, almost all (77 percent) of Trump counties that received Zuckerbucks did so at a rate of less than \$1.00 per registered voter.¹⁵

While CTCL may have considered population numbers when calculating grant awards, it clearly could not have been the only factor used to determine award amounts.

DOLLARS FOLLOWED DEMOCRATS

COUNTY/ MUNICIPALITY	REGISTERED VOTERS¹⁶	ZUCKERBUCKS	ZUCKERBUCKS PER REGISTERED VOTER	OUTCOME
Philadelphia	1,054,459	\$10,516,074	\$9.97	Biden
Allegheny County	926,911	\$2,052,251	\$2.21	Biden
Montgomery County	594,243	\$1,167,000	\$1.96	Biden
Delaware County	407,398	\$2,172,858	\$5.33	Biden
Chester County	368,534	\$2,558,080	\$6.94	Biden
Lancaster County	344,090	\$474,202	\$1.38	Trump
York County	311,942	\$321,600	\$1.03	Trump
Berks County	263,421	\$470,929	\$1.79	Trump
Lehigh County	239,598	\$762,635	\$3.18	Biden
Luzerne County	220,563	\$173,236	\$0.79	Trump
Dauphin County	189,970	\$482,165	\$2.54	Biden
Erie County	177,773	\$148,729	\$0.84	Biden
Monroe County	113,634	\$113,634	\$1.00	Biden
Centre County	105,139	\$863,828	\$8.22	Biden
Mercer County	71,896	\$54,414	\$0.76	Trump
Northumberland County	57,896	\$44,811	\$0.78	Trump
Somerset County	49,120	\$37,104	\$0.76	Trump
Armstrong County	44,892	\$27,078	\$0.60	Trump
Pike County	42,944	\$26,070	\$0.61	Trump
Wayne County	34,716	\$25,098	\$0.72	Trump
Venango County	33,143	\$21,218	\$0.64	Trump
Mifflin County	27,355	\$17,930	\$0.66	Trump
Juniata County	14,395	\$11,364	\$0.79	Trump

Sources: Pennsylvania Department of State, APM Reports, and Foundation for Government Accountability

Conclusion

Pennsylvania should take action to prohibit private organizations from financing and exerting influence over elections. Permitting third-party actors to finance the administration of elections creates disparities between election jurisdictions and erodes voter confidence. Policymakers in Pennsylvania can restore trust by preventing local election jurisdictions from receiving funds from private parties.

¹ Nicholas Riccardi, "Mark Zuckerberg donates \$100M more to help election offices," AP News (2020), <https://apnews.com/article/virus-outbreak-election-2020-technology-local-elections-elections-c2dcfde7fc750b7dd64243b0cf7fbb69>.

² Tianna Epps-Johnson, Center for Tech and Civic Life, <https://www.techandciviclelife.org/team/tiana-epps-johnson/>.

³ Michael Scherer, "Mark Zuckerberg and Priscilla Chan donate \$100 million more to election administrators, despite conservative pushback," Washington Post, (2020), https://www.washingtonpost.com/politics/zuckerberg-chan-elections-facebook/2020/10/12/0e07de94-0cba-11eb-8074-0e943a91bf08_story.html.

⁴ Mark Zuckerberg, Facebook post, (2020), <https://www.facebook.com/zuck/posts/10112459455098901>.

⁵ Hayden Dublois and Nic Horton, "How 'Zuckerbucks' infiltrated & influenced the 2020 Florida Election," Foundation for Government Accountability, (2021), <https://thefga.org/research/zuckerbucks-florida-election/>.

⁶ Trevor Carlsen and Hayden Dublois, "How 'Zuckerbucks' infiltrated and influenced the 2020 Pennsylvania election," Foundation for Government Accountability, (2021), <https://thefga.org/research/how-zuckerbucks-infiltrated-and-influenced-the-2020-pennsylvania-election/>.

⁷ Ibid.

⁸ Author's calculations based on APM Reports reported grants and responses to public records requests.

⁹ Center for Election Innovation & Research, "CEIR 2020 Voter Education Grant Program," Center for Election Innovation & Research, (2021), <https://electioninnovation.org/research/ceir-2020-voter-education-grant-program/>.

¹⁰ Grant amount is the amount awarded. According to CEIR, the "Final grant amount [is] pending. Any unspent funds are to be returned, reducing the total grant." See <https://electioninnovation.org/research/ceir-2020-voter-education-grant-program/>.

¹¹ This total excludes an additional grant to the PA Department of State for which a dollar amount has not yet been disclosed. According to the terms of the grant, the minimum award amount was \$5,000, suggesting a minimum of another \$5,000 in Zuckerbucks spent in Pennsylvania for a total projected minimum amount of \$22,547,308. Amounts are rounded to nearest dollar.

¹² Center for Tech and Civic Life, "Election offices that received CTCL COVID-19 Response Grants," Center for Tech and Civic Life, (2021), <https://www.techandciviclelife.org/grant-update-march/>.

¹³ Author's calculations based on APM Reports reported grants and responses to public records requests using Pennsylvania Department of State voter registration statistics. See <https://www.dos.pa.gov/VotingElections/OtherServicesEvents/VotingElectionStatistics/Pages/VotingElectionStatistics.aspx>.

¹⁴ Ibid.

¹⁵ Ibid.

¹⁶ Pennsylvania Department of State, "Voting & Election Statistics – Voter Registration statistics by county," Pennsylvania Department of State, <https://www.dos.pa.gov/VotingElections/OtherServicesEvents/VotingElectionStatistics/Pages/VotingElectionStatistics.aspx>.