



OurSociety

2018 Annual Report

# Letter from our Executive Director

I founded OurSociety with the purpose of opening up access to local politics for both candidates and voters. Our hypothesis is that by creating a way to make the process of local political engagement easy, convenient, and above the traditional barriers to entry, voters will significantly increase their participation within our local political elections. This deepening of democracy will give more people agency in the transformation of both society and themselves.

The structure of our beta free election campaign platform is a non-partisan, 501c3 non-profit. OurSociety's platform purpose is to address two specific challenges facing local elections; the financial barriers associated with running for office and community access to their candidates. Two thousand eighteen marked the launch of our beta platform in New Jersey. We are humbled by the support we have received from community members and leaders. We're happy to share that the experiment has proven to be a worthwhile endeavor.

The data we've collected tells us much about the state of local elections here in New Jersey. We observe aspects of our local elections that are need of dramatic improvement. The information we share suggests that there are genuine benefits to giving citizens access to local candidates in our online format. Our journey was filled with challenges and lessons which are cataloged in this report. All of this made possible through the support of individuals in our community who offered their time, talent, and capital to help us move the mission forward.

This report is a deep dive into our actions. Structured in summary format with full content examples and details located within the index. I intend that this document may serve as a tool for anyone who would want to contribute to the project collaboratively or independently in alternative directions. Our intertwining of a social activism cause and an access platform is an experiment in imagining alternative visions of the future. By opening up access to government leadership for more people, we build the foundation necessary to support new ideas unrestricted by socioeconomic status or political establishment barriers.

OurSociety's free election campaign platform has numerous potential pathways forward and we're committed to achieving our vision of transparent and open local elections in New Jersey and beyond.



In appreciation,

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read 'Ron Rivers'. The signature is stylized and fluid, with a long horizontal line extending to the right.

**Ron Rivers**

Founder & Executive Director - *OurSociety*<sub>2</sub>

# Progress 2018

Efforts and results

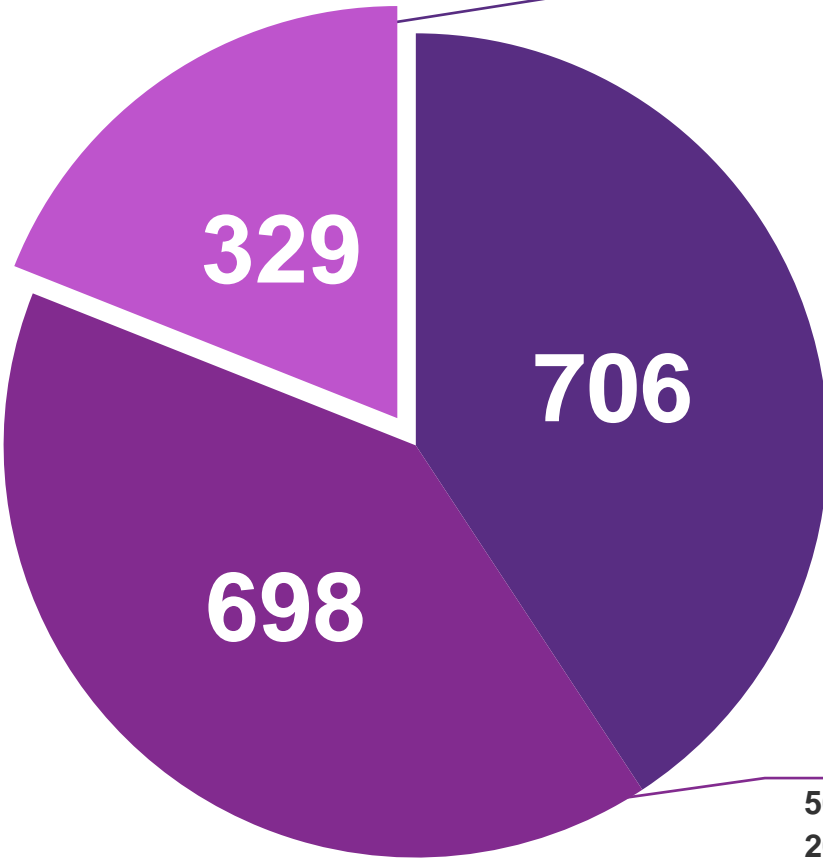


# Identifying A Serious Problem

Information about local election candidates in New Jersey is severely lacking.

## Candidates running for local offices

2018 Mayoral, Council, and Committee candidates



n = 1404

### Dedicated campaign website

In 2018 only 23% of candidates running for local office in New Jersey had a dedicated website or Facebook page about their campaign. **77% of local candidates had no online presence related to their campaign for office.**

### Personal Facebook only

50% of candidates for local office in 2018 had no dedicated campaign website or Facebook page but had a personal Facebook page.

### No online presence

50% of candidates running for New Jersey local offices in 2018 had no personal or campaign presence online.

Our discovery process was attempted for each candidate through the following process:

1. Mailed physical letters to every candidate running for office in 2018 informing them of free platform service. (2164 total)
2. Searched Facebook for a dedicated Campaign page.
3. General web search formatted as:
  - Candidate name
  - Municipality
  - Contest
  - "John Doe North Brunswick Council"
3. If both methods failed to produce results we then attempted to search for a personal Facebook page for the candidate. These efforts were used to both identify the data behind our problem as well as perform outreach to candidates letting them know about our free help.

Identifying data taken from County Election Committee records.





Evaluating the data

# NJ Voters Deserve Better

Our focus is creating *more democracy* in New Jersey. In order to accomplish that goal we must ensure that every citizen has access to information about who their candidates are and why they are running.

We believe the information must be accessible in a format that resonates with the majority of people - online and easy to access. **77% of local candidates having no online presence about their local campaigns is unacceptable and should deeply concern New Jersey residents.**

The data collected through our 2018 efforts demonstrated the significant lack of information available to local communities in regards to their potential leadership options.

# Building Our Solution

<http://beta.oursociety.org>

Deepening democracy is the goal. Providing an easy and convenient way to increase participation through access to information and agency in decision making is the process.

Our approach for our Beta launch was to go beyond the restrictions traditional lobbying and legislature and develop a free solution to provide directly to candidates and voters.

We believe our platform will need to to serve three different types of users so we developed functionalities into our platform to ensure that we were offering genuine value everyone user no matter how interested or disinterested you are in the political process.

**Everyone wants to make better decisions.** OurSociety provides voters and candidates a genuine method to do so where it matters most – our communities.

1

## Social Value Matching

We developed an algorithm in the form of a questionnaire for both candidates and voters to fill out. Voters are provided both aggregate and category specific matching percentages based on their compared answers. Empowers voters to make better data-driven decisions about who to vote for.

## Virtual Ballots

Citizen users were able to see a *Virtual Ballot* that displayed all candidates with an OurSociety profile who would be on their ballot. Voters could see a matching percentage and click the candidates picture for access to their full profile.

2

3

## Candidate Profiles

All candidates had the ability to setup a profile containing pictures, a biography, articles, and videos about why they were running for office and plans for the community they would implement if elected. Profiles were displayed to voters in their community.

4

## Easy and Consistent

By centralizing local candidate information into a single location and formatting it in a way to deliver maximum exposure in a consistent format, we can create a low-cost solution to dramatically improve the way citizens run for local office and participate in elections.



# Informing Citizen Users

With the majority of our 2018 budget dedicated to developing our platform we focused on creative methods to spread the word about OurSociety.

- Weekly Blog Content
- Weekly Video Content
- Weekly Newsletters
- Community Organizing\*
- Voter Registration Drives
- Conducted six Civics classes for North Brunswick Township High School
- Networking with local activist Groups
- Consulting other activist groups on Social media best practices
- Canvassing communities – providing flyers to residents about our free service.
- Conducted multiple focus groups in relation to platform design

\* Focused on non-partisan efforts

# General User Data

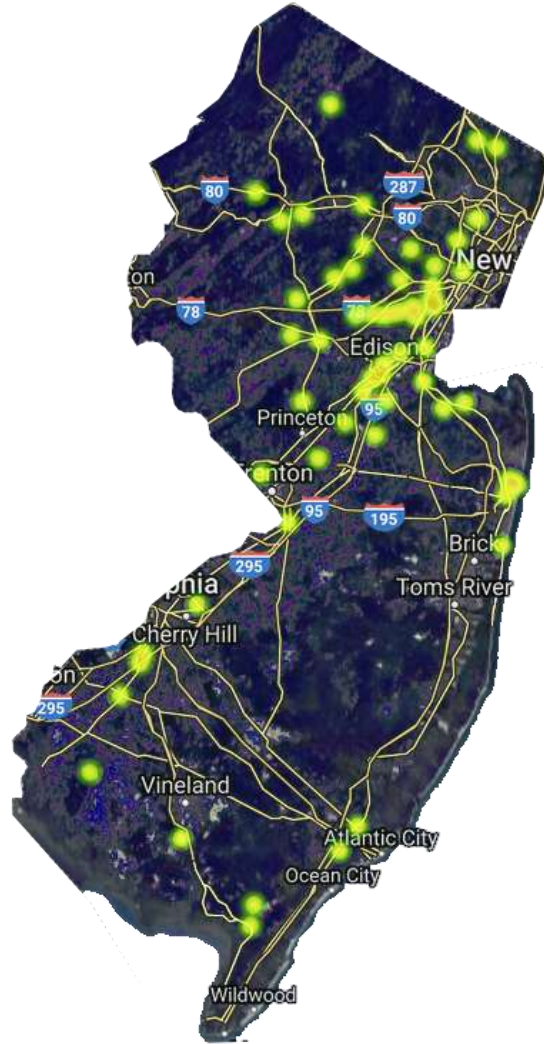
Information about our Beta users

## Citizen Users

Citizen User Accounts	Total Questions Answered
192	3444

## User Totals by Municipality

User Count	# Of Municipalities with User Count
34	1
23	1
5	1
4	3
3	5
2	9
1	42
43	No Municipality Chosen



Heat map displaying users geographic locations

## Candidate Users

### Breakdown by Contest (June 2018 Primary Election)

House 3

### June 2018 Primary Results

Winning Users 0

Losing Users 3

### Breakdown By Contest (2018 General Election)

Senate 1

House 1

Mayor 2

Council / Committee 10

School Board 1

### Nov. 2018 Election Results

Winning Users 4

Losing Users 11





# Expanding our candidate's reach

We supported our candidate users by using the promotion of the OurSociety platform to get their information in front of citizen users in their municipality. All candidates received exactly equal financial support through our individualized campaigns and none of our advertisements endorsed a candidate. See index for full details.

**Total outreach impressions: 19,773**

**Total outreach clicks: 988**

**7 of 18 candidates responded to our Feedback Survey**

- **Social Value Matching** was the most popular feature among candidates
- **71%** were *Extremely* or *Very* satisfied with the beta platform.
- **100%** said that free access to local candidate info online was *Extremely* or *Very* valuable.
- **71%** would support the NJ legislature to **legally require** all local





Evaluating our user data

# People want to know more

Both our Citizen and Candidate users expressed their satisfaction with our platform prototype and desire for expanded feature sets.

Multiple municipalities had Citizen Users signed up where no candidate was participating which leads us to believe that if their candidates were using the platform they would have engaged deeper. Our advertisements attracted users to directly access their candidates profiles. Citizens expressed feedback about access without account creation showing that some users would prefer access to the profile data without the matching feature.

Candidate users gained exposure they otherwise would not have had. The candidate feedback survey indicates an understanding of the value provided.

# Future - Areas of Improvement

What needs to happen for OurSociety to expand on our present efforts



## Team Building

We intend to shift from our full volunteer model into a full-time employment model for organizational leadership and development



## Fundraising

To expand our efforts 2019 will have a major focus on receiving grants and fostering small dollar user donations to continue our efforts.



## User Acquisition

Through existing and new programs designed to instruct and engage citizen and candidate users.



## Platform Development

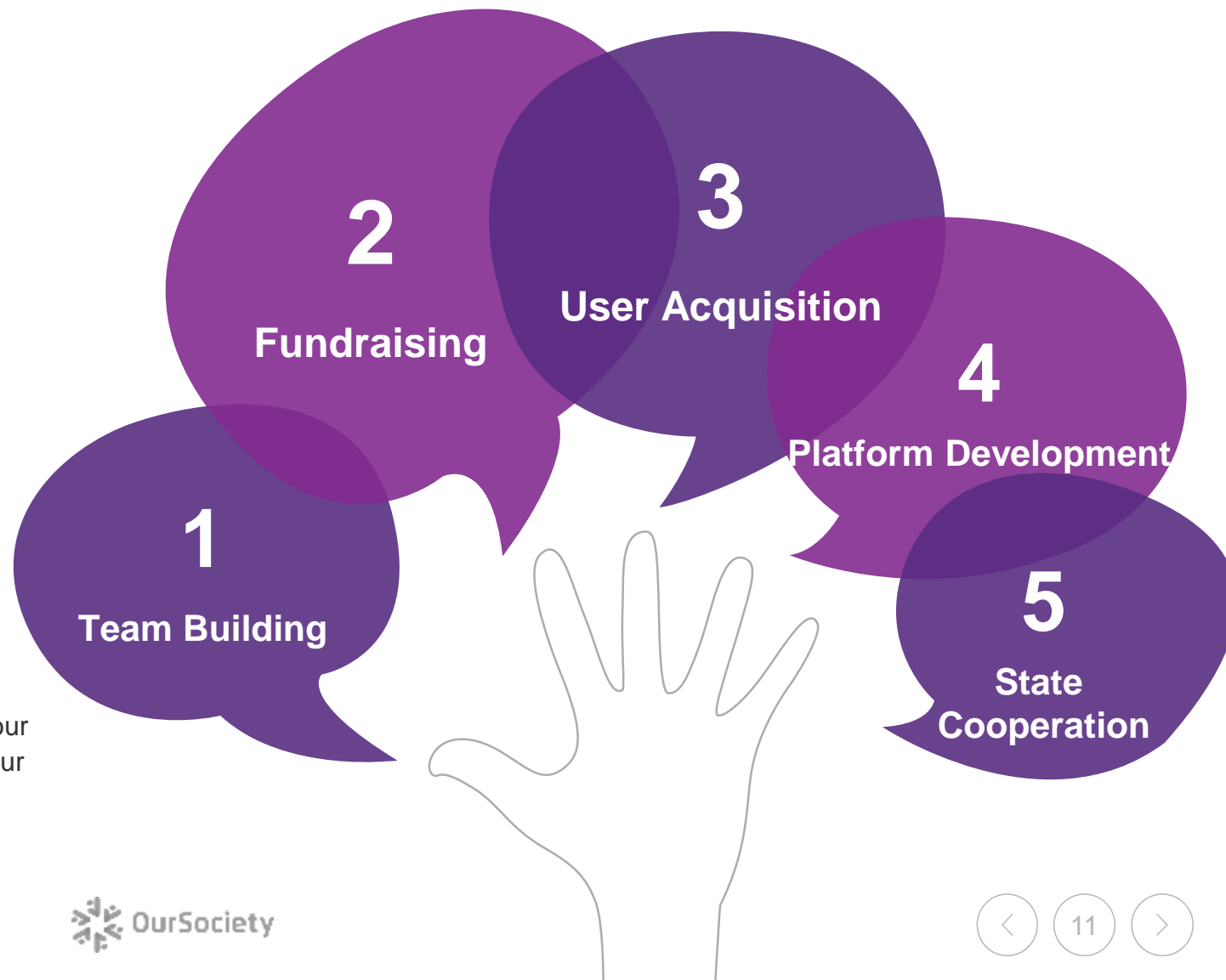
Our full product roadmap may be found here:

<https://www.oursociety.org/knowledge-base/oursociety-platform-roadmap/>



## State Cooperation

We intend to become more involved with working with our state legislators to pass laws requiring participation in our online platform. 77% of candidates having no online information demonstrates significant opportunities for improvement.



# Future - Long Term Sustainability

In the future **candidates who win their election** will pay a fee based on their position and term. Payments can be in full or monthly.

STANDARD USERS	CANDIDATES	CONTEST WINNER: MUNICIPAL	CONTEST WINNER: STATE	CONTEST WINNER: CONGRESS
Personal Value Profile	Personal Value Profile	Personal Value Profile	Personal Value Profile	Personal Value Profile
Personal values summary	Photo / Bio / Resume	Photo / Bio / Resume	Photo / Bio / Resume	Photo / Bio / Resume
Community contribution via questions	Value Matching to Users	Value Matching to Users	Value Matching to Users	Value Matching to Users
Centralized information source	Article & Video Submission	Article & Video Submission	Article & Video Submission	Article & Video Submission
Access to elected officials	Searchable Profile	Searchable Profile	Searchable Profile	Searchable Profile
Virtual Ballot based on location	Citizen User Functionality	Citizen User Functionality	Citizen User Functionality	Citizen User Functionality
Candidate Matching	OurSociety Team Support	OurSociety Team Support	OurSociety Team Support	OurSociety Team Support
Receive data reports on common trends	Contact Info	Contact Info	Contact Info	Contact Info
<b>FREE FOREVER</b>	<b>FREE FOREVER</b>	<b>\$20.00</b> /month	<b>\$50.00</b> /month	<b>\$50.00</b> /month

This pricing model allows us to become self-sufficient and generate revenue for platform improvements without total reliance on grants and donations. Most importantly it stays true to our core purpose – removing the financial barriers to access. Under this model **candidates can use OurSociety for free forever.**

**Fee schedule subject to change**



# Index

Detailed efforts, results, and data

---

[Volunteers](#)

[Board of Directors](#)

[Financial Supporters](#)

[In-Kind Donors](#)

[Candidate User Data](#)

[User Acquisition Efforts – Google Ad Words](#)

[User Acquisition Efforts – Facebook / Instagram](#)

[Candidate Introduction Mailer](#)

[Civics Course Agenda](#)

[Civics Course Educational Requirements](#)

# Volunteer Team

OurSociety owes its success to the contributions of our volunteers who dedicated their time & effort to support better democracy in New Jersey



Ron Rivers

Ron served as the Executive Director of OurSociety and the majority volunteer. He focused on the strategic planning, coordination, and implementation of OurSociety's efforts.

Professional he seeks to explore society, technology, and maximizing the human potential. He is an active blogger focused on the concept of systemic reformation for social transformation.



Tressa Rivers

Tressa supported OurSociety through significant behind-the-scenes effort such as data collecting and candidate user outreach.

Tressa is a graphic designer based out of Manhattan, NY. Tressa has been working in graphic design for over 7 years focusing on apparel. Recently Tressa has opted for other avenues of professional work to better combine her passion for helping to serve local communities and empowering young woman to rise above the current narrative about what defines one's self worth



Jason Witkowski

Jason acted as a platform development consultant and has been dedicating volunteer time towards OurSociety since our inception.

Jason is a Infrastructure and DevOps engineer specializing in architecture, design, and automation. With over 12 years of experience building and scaling businesses technology infrastructure he has lead the OurSociety technology team since its inception.



Michael Klaser

Michael generously volunteered his time to edit videos for the OurSociety YouTube vlog. His dedication helped divert countless hours towards more user acquisition.

Michael is an occasional geologist, amateur videographer, photographer, and video editor. He is a 10 year U.S. Navy veteran, with seven deployments aboard a Ballistic Missile Submarine, and a tour of duty in Navy Law Enforcement. Michael is passionate about science, civil rights, education, and the environment. He holds both B.S. and M.S. degrees in Geological Sciences from Rutgers University.



Matt Ouille

Matt served as a technical consultant for the project and has helped lead efforts to explore open sourcing the OurSociety election campaign platform.

Matt Ouille is a systems engineer and software developer located in Dallas, TX. Matt's passion for technology is seconded only by his determination to share how to make it with others. He's a frequent contributor to open-source projects, writer, speaker, and workshop classroom instructor in his spare time. If you're looking for him, he can be easily spotted with his dog Peach adventuring across the great state of Texas



Ben Bakelaar

Ben was instrumental in the ideation and discovery process of OurSociety. We hired Ben as a UX design consultant for our initial ideation and discovery process. Ben continued to support our efforts by connecting us with his wide local network of activists and elected officials.

Ben holds a M.S. in Library and Information Science from Rutgers University.



Maria Vint

Maria supported the OurSociety experiment as an editor of our blog content.

Maria teaches first-year writing and Language and Justice, and coordinates sophomore program success initiatives at John Jay College of Criminal Justice. She received her master's degree in Language and Literacy, with a focus on pre-college and college-level developmental education for adult learners and is currently applying to doctoral programs in composition and applied linguistics.

A special thank you to the hundreds of individuals in New Jersey who offered advice, feedback, networking, and opportunity to further the efforts of the OurSociety Experiment.



# Board of Directors

Our Board of Directors supported the OurSociety Experiment through their time, talent, and capital donations.



Ron Rivers

Ron served as the Executive Director of OurSociety and the majority volunteer. He focused on the strategic planning, coordination, and implementation of OurSociety's efforts.

Professionally he seeks to explore society, technology, and maximizing the human potential. He is an active blogger focused on the concept of systemic reformation for social transformation. He has a B.A. from Hofstra University with a double major in Marketing and Management. Outside of OurSociety is the Founder/CEO of Love2brew Homebrew Supply.



Sarah Kelly

Sarah is a founding Director of OurSociety.

Sarah has varied experience in non profit boards ranging from national level to county level. She has served as the Secretary of the Environment Section of the American Public Health Association, the Treasurer and President of the New Jersey Public Health Association and the Campus Liaison for the Middlesex County National Organization for Women Chapter, in addition to other non-profit boards. Sarah has a BA in Women's and Gender Studies and a MPH in Health Policy and Environmental/Occupational Health. Both degrees are from Rutgers, The State University of New Jersey. Sarah's passion is social justice with a specific interest on issues related to gender.



Sean Berry

Sean was a founding Director of OurSociety – serving until July 2018

Sean has diverse experience in accounting and financial management for the nonprofit sector. In his role with BTQ Financial, he serves as the consultant chief financial officer for his nonprofit clients. He previously worked in a small business environment in the transportation industry. Sean graduated with a B.A. from CUNY Queens College with a double major in Political Science and Urban Studies, and recently completed an MPA specializing in Nonprofit Administration from the Marxe School of Public and International Affairs of CUNY Baruch College. Sean believes in a more inclusive and equitable society made up of informed and invested citizens.



# Our Financial Supporters

These citizen donors made the OurSociety beta experiment possible. We owe our success to their generosity and belief in our purpose!

Sean Berry  
Brittney Witkowski

Monthly Contributors

Simon Tang  
Jason & Chelsea Witkowski  
Barbara Passwaters  
Michael Klaser  
Nate Ray

\$0 – \$999

Ron & Tressa Rivers

\$10,000 - \$99,999





# In-Kind Supporters

These organizations donated valuable services and support towards our mission.



Google awarded OurSociety a non-profit advertising grant of \$10,000 AdWords credits per month. Funds were used to share information about OurSociety with New Jersey residents.

CloudStruct acted as a technical consultant and DevOps manager for the entirety of the project. Volunteered their time to implement and manage our Amazon Web Services

Slack provided OurSociety with free professional licenses for their team communication tools. Slack was the primary communication and coordination tool for our volunteers and paid developers.



# Candidate User Data

Candidate participation data for profile information provided

Candidate Name	Articles	Videos	Questions Answered	Position	Education	Awards	Vitals
<a href="#"><u>Madelyn Hoffman</u></a>	3	1	89	N	Y	N	Y
<a href="#"><u>Charlie Kratovil</u></a>	5	2	20	N	Y	N	Y
<a href="#"><u>Peter Kane</u></a>	1	0	79	Y	Y	N	N
<a href="#"><u>Joseph Signorello III</u></a>	4	4	96	Y	Y	N	Y
<a href="#"><u>Peter Pizar</u></a>	6	0	0	Y	Y	N	N
<a href="#"><u>Diane Moxley</u></a>	5	1	156	Y	Y	N	N
<a href="#"><u>Monica Lazer</u></a>	2	0	10	Y	N	N	N
<a href="#"><u>John Fahy</u></a>	0	0	0	Y	Y	N	N
<a href="#"><u>Dan Payne</u></a>	2	0	256	Y	N	N	Y
<a href="#"><u>Marvin Schuldiner</u></a>	5	0	0	Y	Y	N	N
<a href="#"><u>Lindsay Goodloe</u></a>	3	0	0	Y	Y	N	N
<a href="#"><u>Don Rodgers</u></a>	4	0	0	Y	N	N	N
<a href="#"><u>Fatima Mughal</u></a>	1	0	0	Y	Y	Y	N
<a href="#"><u>Victor Sordillo</u></a>	2	1	0	Y	Y	N	N
<a href="#"><u>Georgia Cassidy</u></a>	4	0	0	Y	Y	Y	N
<a href="#"><u>Donald Treich</u></a>	1	0	20	Y	Y	N	Y
<b>Total</b>	<b>48</b>	<b>9</b>	<b>726</b>				

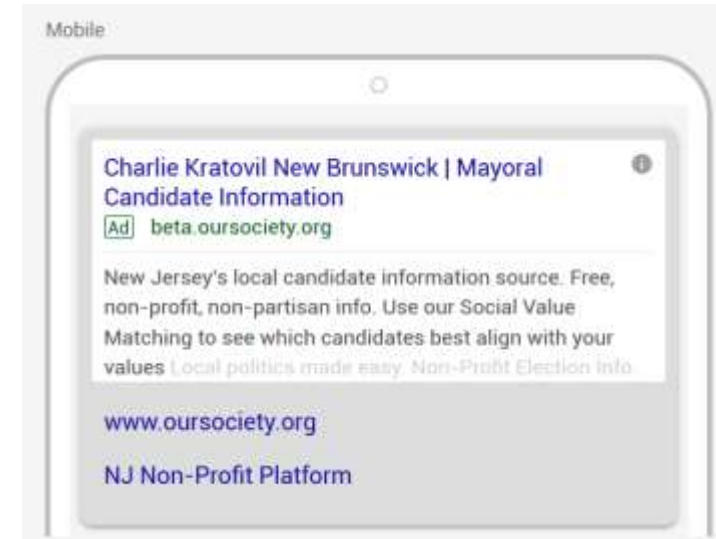
# User Acquisition Efforts – Google Adwords

Data detailing our efforts to acquire candidate and citizen users through paid and unpaid methods.

Campaign / Campaign ID	Impressions	Clicks
<a href="http://beta.oursociety.org">http://beta.oursociety.org</a> - Direct Link	4790	494
<a href="#">Madelyn Hoffman</a> - Candidate Page Link	1532	209
<a href="#">Charlie Kratovil</a>	1103	45
<a href="#">Peter Kane</a>	304	19
<a href="#">Joseph Signorello III</a>	273	15
<a href="#">Peter Pizar</a>	207	11
<a href="#">Diane Moxley</a>	182	10
<a href="#">Monica Lazer</a>	143	8
<a href="#">John Fahy</a>	44	7
<a href="#">Dan Payne</a>	70	6
<a href="#">Marvin Schuldiner</a>	9	4
<a href="#">Lindsay Goodloe</a>	181	3
<a href="#">Don Rodgers</a>	23	2
<a href="#">Fatima Mughal</a>	34	2
<a href="#">Victor Sordillo</a>	104	2
<a href="#">Georgia Cassidy</a>	4	1
<a href="#">Donald Treich</a>	5	0

As a nonpartisan 501c3 organization it was important to ensure that no candidate received preferential treatment. Our individualized ad campaigns were structured identically, swapping out the names and municipalities of the candidate users. All other wording was identical.

All candidate users received identical budgets for their individualized campaigns. Budgets fluctuated from \$5-\$15 per candidate per day.



Candidate Information Advertisement Example

# User Acquisition Efforts – Facebook / Instagram

Data detailing our efforts to acquire candidate and citizen users through paid and unpaid methods.

## Paid Facebook Ads – General Awareness

Ad Campaign	Budget	Budget Type	Reach	Impressions	Spend Amount
#1	\$5.00	Daily	3181	5535	\$82.01
#2	\$5.00	Daily	1375	2418	\$37.2
#3	\$5.00	Daily	1275	2056	\$35.73
<b>Total:</b>			<b>5831</b>	<b>10009</b>	<b>154.94</b>

Facebook Ad Campaign #1 - Image

Social media promotional efforts focused on citizen user recruitment.

Ads directed voters to account creation landing page.

No candidate specific paid social media ads were run.



## Unpaid Social Media Promotions - Individual

Social Views:	FB Views	FB Clicks	IG Views
<a href="#">Madelyn Hoffman</a>	31	0	5
<a href="#">Charlie Kratovil</a>	96	9	10
<a href="#">Peter Kane</a>	28	2	2
<a href="#">Joseph Signorello III</a>	34	2	5
<a href="#">Peter Pisar</a>	26	1	6
<a href="#">Diane Moxley</a>	32	2	4
<a href="#">Monica Lazer</a>	41	5	5
<a href="#">John Fahy</a>	33	3	6
<a href="#">Dan Payne</a>	75	5	12
<a href="#">Marvin Schuldiner</a>	27	2	4
<a href="#">Lindsay Goodloe</a>	25	3	9
<a href="#">Don Rodgers</a>	132	3	6
<a href="#">Fatima Mughal</a>	46	4	5
<a href="#">Victor Sordillo</a>	25	1	7
<a href="#">Georgia Cassidy</a>	75	2	7
<a href="#">Donald Treich</a>	30	2	11
<b>Total</b>	<b>756</b>	<b>46</b>	<b>104</b>



# Introduction Mailer

Letter sent 2164 candidates running in the New Jersey 2018 elections.

Hello (NAME),

We're writing to introduce you to OurSociety, a **501c3 non-profit, non-partisan** organization dedicated to bringing the citizens of New Jersey more access to information about their local candidates and elections. We're writing because we want to help you with your campaign, for free!

## Free services we offer to help you campaign

We've built [www.oursociety.org](http://www.oursociety.org), a free and open election campaign platform. The idea is simple; put all of the candidate information for local contests in one centralized location that is *easy* and *convenient* for citizens to use!

Our studies have shown that citizens who know more about their candidates are more likely to vote – improving turnout for you and your election!

- **Your constituents:** We make voting locally *easier* and *more convenient* than ever for people living in your district. Signing up is free and, they can immediately access *your profile!*
- **Tell Your Story:** Add video and article content to your profile about why you're running and what changes you would like to make.
- **Free advertising:** We were awarded \$10,000 in Google Ad Grants to spend *each month* to help promote OurSociety to New Jersey – that means if you're signed up we're advertising to your constituents!
- **Free Media Creation:** For *early responders* we will coordinate meetings to shoot some free YouTube content for you, discussing why you're running for office and what problems you are aiming to solve! Because time is limited, it is unlikely we will be able to do this for everyone. You must contact us at [info@oursociety.org](mailto:info@oursociety.org) to set this up.
- **Social Value Matching:** This is an optional feature we created to help connect you with citizens who want to make better voting decisions but don't have the time/will to read about every candidate (e.g. youth voters). If you choose to participate and answer the questions we show citizen users in your municipality how their values compare to yours over 27 different categories! Think of it as a dating website for candidates and citizens.
- **Quick and Easy Setup:** We're here to help you with live support – just email [info@oursociety.org](mailto:info@oursociety.org) or call us at (347) 352-5538! It takes about 10 minutes to set up.
- **Free! Free! Free!** Did we mention that using the platform is free?

### Your free account is active:

<http://beta.oursociety.org/representative/«slug»>

**Claim your account:** Call us at (PHONE) or email [info@oursociety.org](mailto:info@oursociety.org)!

**Note:** For security purposes please be prepared to verify your identity.

**Easy Getting Started Videos:** <http://bit.ly/joinOS>

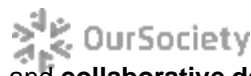
## Get Started Today



# Civics Course Agenda

Volunteer outreach program developed to connect with High School Seniors about why civic engagement is more important now than ever.

Topic	Notes	Mins.
Introduction	<p>Personal Intro (Ron/Founder of OS/NBTHS Grad)</p> <p>Class Purpose: The purpose of this seminar is to have an open discussion about what civic engagement is and why it matters today more than ever.</p> <p>“We’re also doing this because we believe your generation matters, that you will be one of the most significant political catalysts the U.S. has ever seen.”</p> <p>“While the world has always changed the pace of innovation has never been faster than it has been today.”</p> <p>“This discussion is as much a learning experience for me as it I intend it to be for you.”</p>	2
Voting Discussion	<p><b>Frame Our Discussion:</b> Why don't people vote. What would have to change for more people to vote?</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Use chalk board to record answers and open up discussion.</li> <li>• Focus on fostering discussing between the students, not at the instructor.</li> </ul> <p><b>Some facts:</b>            55.7% Of Eligible voters voted in the pres. Election            38.6% Voted in the gubernatorial election (2017).</p> <p><b>Comparing other western democracies:</b>            Belgium (2014)* 87.20%   South Korea 2017 77.90%   Sweden (2014) 82.60%   Denmark (2015) 80.30%</p> <p>“Voting is the most basic form of civic engagement – before we get into some relevant data I'd like to hear your perspective on why voting does or does not matter.”</p> <p>-- Have participants engage in question answering.</p> <p><b>Data Review</b>            Now from your perspective why would you imagine voter turnout would be so low?            -- People have to work / People don't feel knowledgeable enough to make a decision / People don't care            -- No good options / Gerrymandering (Review Handouts)</p> <p>What is a potential problem with having low voter turnout?            -- No real collective decision making / The vocal minority has decision making power /            Is there anyone who might benefit from low voter turnout?            - Special Interests Groups / Those in Power</p>	28
OurSociety Introduction	<p><b>Sharing our vision</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Overall Summary of organization</li> <li>- Beta Vision / Social Movement Aspect</li> <li>- Platform Sharing and discussion</li> </ul> <p>Wrap up with discussion about systemic alternatives and <b>collaborative democracy.</b></p>	30



# Civics Course Educational Requirements

Our Civics courses met the following New Jersey State Educational Requirements

**Provided to Education Administrators to demonstrate course value.**

**Companion Summary:** OurSociety Inc. is a non-partisan, non-political 501(c)(3) charitable organization. EIN number 82-1919398. Our purpose is to promote civic engagement in local communities and open opportunities for more people to participate in democracy through the use of our free technological solutions. As part of our organization's purpose, we work with High Schools located in the communities participating in the OurSociety platform to foster discussion and exploration of what civic engagement is and why it is important. Below we outline how our program and how it coincides with the New Jersey Social Studies standards as outlined in the 2014 State Standards Document.

**Learning Objective:** Students will learn the value and importance of civic engagement in a modern age from the perspective of both local communities and collective national engagement. Cooperating with local elected officials we will demonstrate to the students that community engagement has a tangible impact which can contribute to the greater good of society. In addition we introduce them to the OurSociety platform to demonstrate that becoming involved is easier than ever thanks to technology.

**Seminar Summary:** Seminars are broken into two sessions, an initial engagement and then a follow-up engagement to review the students' contributions. The first seminar includes an open discussion about civic engagement exploring what it is and the problems it can solve both at a national and local level. At the conclusion of the first seminar, we will ask for educator cooperation in assigning an assignment geared towards community improvement. Students will enter groups and identify one thing that can be improved within the community and/or become involved in the public discussion about an ongoing community project. After completing the project within an assigned time frame students will submit their ideas to the township through the OurSociety platform – allowing both elected officials and community members to read and review the plans. Afterwards, we will return for a second seminar with an elected official (Council Member or Mayor) to discuss their submissions from the communities' perspective.

**Our program meets the following state standards for education (NJ): [Click here](#)**

**Social Studies – 6.3 Active Citizenship in the 21st Century:**

*Section 6.3.12.A.1:* Develop a plan for public accountability and transparency in government related to a particular issue(s) and share the plan with appropriate government officials.

*Chronological Thinking:* Analyze how change occurs through time due to shifting values and beliefs as well as technological advancements and changes in the political and economic landscape.

*Critical Thinking:* Gather relevant information from multiple sources representing a wide range of views (including historians and experts) while using the date, context, and corroborative value of the sources to guide the selection.

*Critical Thinking:* Gather relevant information from multiple sources representing a wide range of views (including historians and experts) while using the date, context, and corroborative value of the sources to guide the selection.

*Presentational Skills:* Take a position on a current public policy issue and support it with historical evidence, reasoning, and constitutional analysis in a written and/or oral format.

**THANK  
YOU!**



@oursocietyorg



@oursocietyorg



@oursocietyorg info@oursociety.org



<https://www.youtube.com/channel/UC5TZzYA1xv7msOksF8POw1Q>

[www.oursociety.org](http://www.oursociety.org)

<https://donorbox.org/oursociety>