



2023

Annual Report

Prepared By :

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President and CEO**

INNOVATION OHIO
innovationohio.com

2023 Annual Review

Founded over a decade ago, Innovation Ohio (IO) is an aggressive and strategic catalyst of research, communication, and policy activity that fills a crucial gap in our state's progressive infrastructure.



IO's goal for the next 10 years is ambitious and straightforward:

With all statewide offices and the General Assembly controlled by conservatives, we seek to build and scale the essential elements of a movement – research, communications, policy and people power– necessary for a multi-cycle progressive comeback in Ohio and to defeat the right-wing extremist agenda.



Changing the Conversation: Winning Big in Ohio

2023 was an exciting and successful year at Innovation Ohio. From expanding our team, to winning on issues that matter to Ohioans, growing our social media presence, and reporting on matters that are urgent in our state, it almost felt like there was nothing we couldn't accomplish!

The August Issue 1 Election was an important step in defending our democracy. By saying no to Issue 1, Ohioans fought to protect our values, which proves that the strength of collective decision-making is powerful. This win is a testament to the power of the people's voice, a celebration of democracy in action, even as our gerrymandered lawmakers attempted to limit progressive values at the statehouse. Ohioans can take pride in this exciting victory as it highlights our active role in shaping the future of our state. We care deeply about the state of our home and its future, and are willing to do the work to protect it. Innovation Ohio's efforts in the matter included daily research on the social media conversation and news coverage of the election, social media updates about the election, and providing the Ohio Voter Guide, which explained what voting "yes" or "no" on Issue 1 would have meant, and reached 1 in 6 voters in the August election. The victory in August was a reminder that every vote counts, and when our community comes together to make a stand, it's a win for everyone involved!

We continued to build on the momentum from August, and again worked together to win the Issues 1 & 2 campaigns in November. Ohioans voted overwhelmingly to approve "The Right to Reproductive Freedom with Protections for Health and Safety" amendment to our state constitution, passing Issue 1 with a loud Yes vote. This amendment protects abortion access and reproductive care access for generations to come in Ohio. And with the passage of Issue 2, Ohio became the 24th state to end marijuana prohibition and approve recreational marijuana use. Once again, Innovation Ohio provided valuable research on the social media conversation happening around reproductive access in Ohio leading up to the election, social media updates about the election, and the Ohio Voter Guide.

These ballot measures reflect the collective will of the people. Our victories were a reflection of a progressive values-based Ohio. The passage of these measures demonstrate a shared vision for a more equitable state.

It's thrilling to see citizens actively participating in shaping the policies that will impact our lives—especially in the face of extreme agendas and well-funded disinformation campaigns. The 2023 Big Wins go beyond the ballot box, inspiring hope and optimism for the future of the Buckeye State. Because of the support of generous donors and volunteers, we were able to participate in such an exciting election cycle.

Voter Guide

The Ohio Voter Guide provides voters with an easy-to-use, accessible resource that offers accurate, unbiased information about the candidates and issues found on their ballot. With the increasing importance of civic engagement and the proliferation of misinformation, it is more crucial than ever to provide voters with reliable and trustworthy information.

By entering their Ohio address, voters are provided with details about the candidates and issues they will see on their ballots, allowing them to make informed decisions and encouraging greater participation in the democratic process. Through a paid media campaign, the Ohio Voter Guide generated nearly 20,000,000 impressions. During the 2022 election cycle, Innovation Ohio's Voter Guide saw over 550,000 page views, representing nearly 1 in 8 votes cast. More recently, in the August 2023 special election, the site generated over 495,000 page views, or nearly 1 in 6 votes cast statewide.

What sets the Ohio Voter Guide apart is its easily accessible and user-friendly design, with information tailored directly to individual addresses paired with turnout tools to ensure a voter is registered and has information they need to cast a vote by mail or in person.





Ohio's Missing Voters Report

IOEF (Innovation Ohio Education Fund) undertook a comprehensive analysis of publicly-maintained and commercial voter lists within the Ohio voter file. Our objective was to gain deeper insights into the population of unregistered and inactive voters across Ohio. Leveraging data sources from Catalist, the US Census, and the Ohio Secretary of State, our focus was on the geographical distribution of these voters, their demographic composition, and provide potential recommendations.

Ohio has always played a pivotal role in shaping the nation's political direction, and it is our responsibility to ensure that every eligible citizen's voice is heard in our democratic process.

Ohio experienced a notable 3.4 percentage point decline in voter turnout from the 2018 to the 2022 midterm elections, with the most significant drops occurring in densely populated urban counties, namely Cuyahoga, Franklin, and Hamilton, where turnout decreased by 6 to 8 percentage points. These urban areas, collectively representing 40% of the state's registered voters, saw considerable declines in voter engagement. Additionally, major urban and suburban counties exhibited significant gaps between registered Democrats and the voting-age population, leading to a sizable unregistered and inactive voter population, particularly among Black voters. The combined number of inactive and unregistered Black voters in urban counties surpassed the margin of victory in the 2022 US Senate race, highlighting a crucial need for targeted efforts to engage these demographic groups.

The findings in our report underscore the urgency of targeted efforts to engage unregistered and inactive voters, especially in Ohio's major urban and suburban counties. To revitalize the democratic process, we recommend a focus on comprehensive registration campaigns, active engagement strategies, and motivating voters, particularly among young and Black demographics. By addressing these challenges, Ohio can build a more inclusive and representative democracy, offset recent turnout declines, and ensure a stronger foundation for its electoral system.

The findings in our report shed light on the untapped potential of Ohio's missing voters and will serve as a critical foundation for informed discussions and policy decisions. We believe that addressing this issue is vital to promoting justice, equity, and the true representation of our diverse population in our electoral system.

Heartland Hype

In 2023, Innovation Ohio launched Heartland Hype, a relational organizing program and “grasstops” effort to build volunteer Organizers across the state to build a progressive online community. This community will be focused on combating right-wing disinformation, promoting progressive values, and building voter turnout to have a meaningful impact in the 2024 election and beyond. Heartland Hype will work to keep everyone updated on what elected leaders are doing, building online spaces for progressives across the state to stay in touch and organize together, and creating training and tools to turn our passion for progressive values into real, meaningful change in this state. We want Heartland Hype to be the go-to place for progressives to come together and organize for a better Ohio.

Along with this digital community, Heartland Hype is developing a content library and communications mobilization app, Megaphone, to equip volunteers with the latest research-backed and audience-tested messaging and visual content to communicate with our Organizer’s networks. This app, along with exclusive training, will turn our volunteer Organizers into effective political actors to fight for our values in local, state, and federal politics.

We are well on our way to meeting our engagement goals and looking forward to exceeding expectations with our incredible team of Organizers. Heartland Hype plans to continue recruiting volunteers from across the state and partnering with other organizations that share our politics to grow our reach and be the driving force for progressive organizing in Ohio.



Comms Hub

The Comms HUB is a progressive coalition of communication professionals within the Ohio political arena. We review trending topics, share actions, and uplift each other's work. We assign homework every week for partners to enhance our reach and overall impact on Ohioans. We had several wins in 2023:

- 10M organic impressions
- Equipped and promoted messaging guidance to ensure victories for reproductive freedom, democracy, and marijuana in August and November elections
- Spread voting information to 513k visitors using the Ohio Voter Guide
- Gathered 5k online petition signatures and constituent letters
- Equipped citizens with messaging guidance to provide public testimony in committee
- Combat disinformation regarding the East Palestine derailment



Research & Reports

In 2023, our team was instrumental in providing critical information regarding the data on Ohio voters. Our white papers and reports provided support to state and national partners interested in learning more about the state of democracy in Ohio. Through multiple levels of communication and reporting, Innovation Ohio strategically provided the most accurate and up-to-date information. Our Justice Agenda reports reached millions of people. Information in these reports include breakdowns on the 2 million Ohioans who are unregistered to vote, the nearly 700,000 Ohioans who registered to vote, but do not, and policy recommendations to support higher voter turnout, greater equity in voting and voter turnout, and ways to better support Black women and equity for Black voters.



REPORT: A Justice Agenda – Ohio's Missing Voters



REPORT: A Justice Agenda for Black Women and Girls

Looking Ahead

Innovation Ohio (IO) will continue providing the necessary research that influences important debates and public policy. IO's public policy research will continue to appear in national, statewide and local news stories, helping to expose the real-life impact of conservative policies.

Battleground Research will generate, develop, and distribute research to paying clients, including progressive candidates, campaigns, advocacy organizations, and other elements across the progressive spectrum using a subscription model.

IO will continue to provide real-time rapid response to current events. The media actively seeks out IO's leadership and staff team for commentary on critical issues. In addition to print and digital media, Innovation Ohio has appeared on hundreds of radio and television shows to advocate for progressive policies and push back against conservative policies.

Innovation Ohio is committed to meeting people where they are. By expanding our relational organizing program called Heartland Hype, Innovation Ohio will continue working to engage more people by utilizing diverse tactics to open doors in smaller communities.

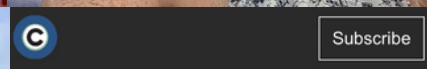
Innovation Ohio will continue educating the public and policymakers on the dangers of conservative agendas. IO has created and strategically released DOZENS OF MAJOR POLICY REPORTS and white papers that garnered extensive media coverage about the continuing threats of conservative policies.

By providing POWERFUL PUBLIC TESTIMONY, Innovation Ohio will continue to move the needle of progressive policy by frequently offering public testimony on critically important issues such as redistricting, voting rights, education, criminal justice, and social justice.

INNOVATION OHIO

In the News and Around the Nation

INNOVATION OHIO ANNUAL REPORT 2023



NEWS

As Republicans dominate Ohio elections, progressive group studies disengaged voters: Q&A

Updated: Oct. 24, 2023, 3:57 p.m. | Published: Oct. 24, 2023, 3:41 p.m.



Desiree Tims is president and CEO of Innovation Ohio.

Watch forum on Ohio Issue 1, abortion and reproductive rights effort

Kayla Bennett Columbus Dispatch
Published 9:20 p.m. ET Oct. 15, 2023 | Updated 12:27 p.m. ET Oct. 24, 2023



Spectrum News anchor Curtis Jackson moderated Ohio Decides: Issue 1 Forum on the reproductive rights amendment on the November ballot. Participants included Issue 1 supporter Desiree Tims (center), president and CEO of Innovation Ohio, and Issue 1 opponent Mahak Cooke, spokeswoman for Protect Women Ohio and an attorney, Anthony Shoemaker.

By the Numbers

This year Innovation Ohio grew our reach across all aspects of our programming. We took the time to lean in and learn what Ohioans really want to know about. Our efforts saw results! Check out IO by the numbers!

Topic	Growth
IO Email List	+186%
Social Media Following	+14%
Social Media Impressions	+3.7 million
Direct Actions to Legislators	5,987 actions
Press Hits	409

InnovationOhio.org

Page Views this Year (Jan - Dec):
27,389

Page Views last Year (Jan 2022 - Jan 2023): 38,404

Organic

Email list growth: 21,224 (+186%)

Social media followers: 62,100 (+14%)

Organic Social Media Impressions:
3.7M impressions

- IO TikTok: 282k views
- PO Tiktok: 52k views

Ohio Voter Guide

- 513,139 page views in 2023
 - 1 in 14 voters used our tool in all of 2023
 - Paid Impressions: 19,151,454
- 517,700 page views in 2022

Action Network

6 actions

5,987 Activists used our direct actions (petition, letter writing, etc)

Earned Media

490 press hits mentioning "Innovation Ohio" or "Desiree Tims"

178M reached

Ohio's Missing Voters

13 press hits named us (IO), 3.6M reached

Using our Data = 208 press hits , 40M reached

Norfolk Southern Report

4 press hits named us (PO), 1.76M reached

Using our Data = 1,980 press hits, 216M reached

Team IO



Desiree Tims
President & CEO



Terra Goodnight
Director of Policy



Nick Tuell
Senior Communications Strategist and
Paid Media Buyer



Zach Sparks
Digital Organizing Director



Lily Furgeson
Communications and Research
Associate



Nova Dugan-Mezensky
Social and Digital Content Associate



Kyle Johnson
Digital Organizer



Maxime Gaudoin-Perry
Digital Communications Associate