



# Where's the Money?

from the Esri GeoInquiries™ collection for Government

Target audience – Government learners

Time required – 15 minutes

## Activity

Examine variations in campaign financing for congressional elections through time and space.

## Social Studies Standards

**C3:D2.Civ.1.6-8.** Distinguish the powers and responsibilities of citizens, political parties, interest groups, and the media in a variety of governmental and nongovernmental contexts.  
**C3:D2.Civ.9.9-12.** Use appropriate deliberative processes in multiple settings.  
**C3:D2.Civ.11.9-12.** Evaluate multiple procedures for making governmental decisions at local, state, national, & international levels in terms of the civic purposes achieved.

## Learning Outcomes

- Students will compare the distribution of campaign funds at state and district levels.
- Students will examine sources of campaign contributions for House elections and possible implications.

Map URL: <http://esriurl.com/govGeoInquiry2>

## ? Ask

### How does campaign funding vary from state to state?

- Elections for the House of Representatives occur every two years. Funds for the 2016 congressional campaigns were raised in 2015–2016.
- Click the link above to launch the map.
- ? What is the range of money collected? [*Approximately \$10 to \$130 million*]
- ? In which states did candidates raise the most money? [*California, Texas, Florida and New York*]

## ↓ Acquire

### How does campaign funding vary from election to election?

- The data from the Federal Election Commission include all congressional races and primaries.
- Click Montana and examine the graph, and then repeat for New Mexico, Florida, and another state.
- ? How did campaign funding change over time? [*It varies by election, sometimes differing greatly.*]
- At the top of the left pane, make sure that Details is underlined, and then click Show Contents of Map.
- Check the box next to layer, Map Note.
- Select the bookmark, Delaware (*see the ToolTip on page 2*).
- Click the marker in the map and read the note.
- ? What might account for changes in election funding? [*More candidates in primaries, party challenges to the incumbent, and national attention.*]

## 🔍 Explore

### How could funding affect an election outcome?

- Select the bookmark, United States.
- Check the box to the left of layer, Exploring Funding. Turn off all other layers.
- The Exploring Funding layer shows funding divided by the 2010 population.
- ? How did the map change? [*Different states are highlighted.*]
- ? Why do you think that the pattern changed? [*A per-person average accounts for population differences.*]
- Examine the pop-ups of any three states.
- ? What conclusion can you draw? [*Generally, the party raising the most money wins the most seats.*]
- Uncheck the layer, Exploring Funding.

more ►

## Analyze

### How does campaign spending differ among districts within a state?

- Check the state layer of your choice.
- Under the layer name, click the button, More Options (three blue dots). Choose Zoom to.
- The map shows data for the candidate spending the most money in each district.
- ? What pattern do you observe? [*The darker the area, the more money spent.*]
- Examine the pop-ups for the districts.
- ? What is the major source of candidate funding? [*Individual contributions*]
- ? What surprises you about the funding sources? [*Few receive money from the party; candidates use their own funds.*]
- ? What is unusual about the amount spent? [*Sometimes, there is debt, even though there is cash on hand.*]

## Act

### Why is campaign finance reform controversial?

- ? How might cash on hand favor an incumbent? [*Excess funds could be used to support his or her next campaign.*]
- ? What is the second-highest source of campaign funds? [*Political action committees (PACs)*]
- ? Why do PACs contribute to a campaign? [*To gain support for their cause.*]
- ? Should campaign contributions be limited? [*Answers will vary.*]

### ZOOM TO A BOOKMARK

- Click Bookmarks.
- Click a bookmark name to zoom to a map location and scale.

### IDENTIFY A MAP FEATURE

- Click a feature on the map, and a pop-up window will open with information.
- Links and images in the pop-up are often clickable.
- An arrow icon in the upper right of the window indicates that multiple features have been selected.
- Click the button to scroll through the features.

## Next Steps

**DID YOU KNOW?** ArcGIS Online is a mapping platform freely available to public, private, and home schools. A school subscription provides additional security, privacy, and content features. Learn more about ArcGIS Online and how to get a school subscription at <http://www.esri.com/schools>.

**THEN TRY THIS...**

- Research the PACs supporting a candidate of your choice. Create a web app showing the out-of-state campaign contributors.
- Add layers from the Living Atlas of the World to explore the demographic characteristics of voting districts within your state.

## TEXT REFERENCES

This GIS map has been cross-referenced to material in sections of chapters from these high school texts.

- *Civics and Economics by Holt — Chapters 10 and 11*
- *Magruder's American Government by Pearson — Chapter 11*