

Zip-Level Geographic Concentration of Political Contributions

This note summarizes the geographic concentration of political contribution dollars using ZIP-code aggregations. The goal is descriptive: identify how concentrated dollars are by geography, and which metros / ZIP3 prefixes dominate the totals.

Data and method

- Contributions were aggregated to 5-digit ZIP code totals (count of contributions and total dollars per ZIP).
- ZIP totals were then joined to a ZCTA reference to map ZIPs to latitude/longitude and to a manually maintained metro label (stored as r.city).
- Approximately 96% of dollars match to geographic ZCTAs; the remainder are institutional or non-ZCTA ZIPs (e.g., PO boxes, corporate-only ZIPs, placeholders).

Important definitions used in the tables below

- COUNT = number of ZIP codes included in the metro (or ZIP3 prefix).
- AVG (Millions) = average *total dollars per ZIP* within that group — it is NOT the average donation amount.

Example: if a metro has \$2,000M across 150 ZIPs, AVG is about \$13M per ZIP.

- Percent and Cum_Percent are measured versus total dollars in zip_geo_totals_tbl.

Table 1 — Metropolitan concentration

(Table:1)

Metro	Zip Count	Contribution Count	Average Millions	Millions of Dollars	Percent	Cum_Percent
Washington Metro	152	1552628	\$13.67	\$2,077.78	13.486%	13.486%
New York Metro	499	2257638	\$2.38	\$1,185.46	7.694%	21.18%
Bay Area	205	1954424	\$5.02	\$1,028.17	6.673%	27.853%
Chicago Metro	388	1465245	\$1.81	\$703.51	4.566%	32.419%
Los Angeles	302	2225078	\$2.09	\$629.81	4.088%	36.506%
Palm Beach	57	480434	\$7.25	\$413.38	2.683%	39.19%
Austin	44	382618	\$8.92	\$392.63	2.548%	41.738%

Metro	Zip Count	Contribution Count	Average Millions	Millions of Dollars	Percent	Cum_Percent
Dallas	208	1229503	\$1.57	\$326.48	2.119%	43.857%
Boston	83	627609	\$3.83	\$317.77	2.062%	45.919%
Las Vegas	45	242255	\$5.62	\$252.77	1.641%	47.56%
Houston	277	1183167	\$0.91	\$251.48	1.632%	49.192%
Miami	63	292909	\$3.93	\$247.70	1.608%	50.8%
Jackson WY	19	17529	\$11.05	\$209.94	1.363%	52.162%
Philadelphia	118	611072	\$1.74	\$205.91	1.336%	53.499%
Atlanta	157	848451	\$0.94	\$146.81	0.953%	54.452%
Phoenix	182	985248	\$0.76	\$137.41	0.892%	55.343%
Seattle	38	480306	\$3.05	\$115.91	0.752%	56.096%
Minneapolis	169	651538	\$0.64	\$107.97	0.701%	56.797%
Denver	105	606308	\$1.03	\$107.97	0.701%	57.497%
Tampa	27	110718	\$3.94	\$106.48	0.691%	58.188%
Seattle Metro	55	472124	\$1.80	\$98.90	0.642%	58.83%
Detroit	178	697542	\$0.55	\$97.32	0.632%	59.462%
Charlotte	27	113326	\$1.16	\$31.40	0.204%	59.666%

Notes on interpretation

Metros are defined by ZIP-prefix rules (core city + selected suburban wealth belts). This is intended for concentration analysis rather than precise municipal boundaries.

Table 2 — Three-digit ZIP prefix concentration (Top 30)

(Table:2)

ZIP3	Zip Count	Contribution Count	Average Millions	Millions of Dollars	Percent	Cum_Percent
200	61	576213	\$27.47	\$1,675.54	10.875%	10.875%
100	64	892164	\$10.93	\$699.46	4.54%	15.415%
334	88	482516	\$4.71	\$414.17	2.688%	18.103%
787	74	388117	\$5.35	\$396.18	2.571%	20.674%
941	57	410685	\$6.23	\$355.15	2.305%	22.979%
606	73	383438	\$4.61	\$336.54	2.184%	25.163%
940	67	374846	\$4.73	\$317.10	2.058%	27.221%
891	69	245564	\$3.80	\$261.95	1.7%	28.922%
331	82	294420	\$3.04	\$249.14	1.617%	30.539%
600	88	411889	\$2.69	\$237.04	1.538%	32.077%
900	85	490139	\$2.60	\$221.23	1.436%	33.513%

ZIP3	Zip Count	Contribution Count	Average Millions	Millions of Dollars	Percent	Cum_Percent
021	81	329242	\$2.48	\$200.73	1.303%	34.816%
752	67	323403	\$2.95	\$197.35	1.281%	36.097%
823	18	4164	\$10.96	\$197.28	1.28%	37.377%
770	99	561127	\$1.80	\$177.81	1.154%	38.531%
222	30	215146	\$5.61	\$168.34	1.093%	39.624%
946	51	207407	\$3.21	\$163.48	1.061%	40.685%
101	60	72442	\$2.65	\$158.81	1.031%	41.715%
190	91	306248	\$1.69	\$153.80	0.998%	42.714%
068	60	152834	\$2.20	\$131.90	0.856%	43.57%
902	63	301183	\$1.94	\$122.31	0.794%	44.364%
981	64	482671	\$1.87	\$119.45	0.775%	45.139%
208	71	362012	\$1.62	\$115.04	0.747%	45.886%
024	59	271812	\$1.89	\$111.24	0.722%	46.608%
336	61	113407	\$1.79	\$109.02	0.708%	47.315%
926	82	452643	\$1.27	\$103.90	0.674%	47.99%
980	84	478245	\$1.22	\$102.10	0.663%	48.652%
201	81	241969	\$1.23	\$99.84	0.648%	49.3%
303	62	309606	\$1.57	\$97.43	0.632%	49.933%
950	72	268623	\$1.30	\$93.78	0.609%	50.541%

Closing summary

The key empirical result is the degree of geographic concentration: a small number of metros and ZIP3 prefixes account for a very large share of total political dollars. The metro and ZIP3 tables are consistent with one another, suggesting the result is robust to aggregation level.