

Concentrated Influence: Following the Money in NJ Politics (2019–2024)

Part 1: State Level Data and Insights

[Next Page](#)

www.nj21st.com

Contributions to Candidates and PAC's Totaled Over \$280 Million From 2019 Through 2024

Total Amount Contributed Based on Six Year Dataset

\$284,119,446.27

N. of Contributions in Data Set

168,837

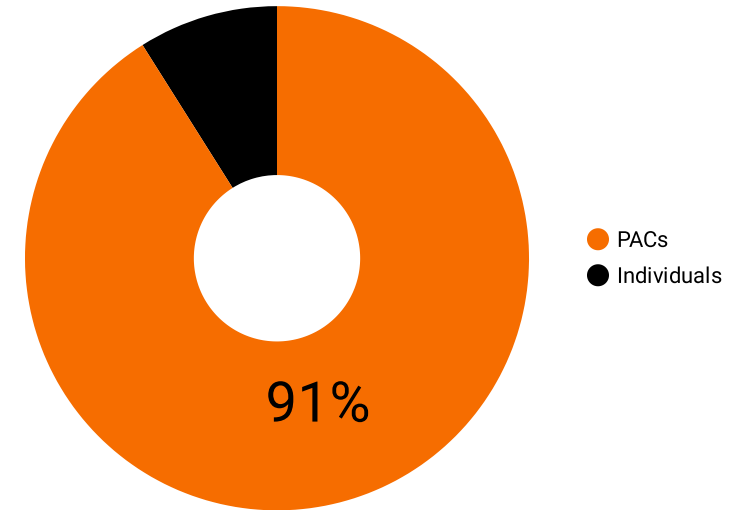
Average Individual Contribution

\$413.42

Average Non-Individual Contribution (PAC)

\$2,505.09

The majority of this money came from non-individual contributors – organizations, PACs, and interest groups – forming one web of masked money flowing into another potential layer of influence.



Top Ten Non Individual Contributors

Rank	NonIndName	ContributionAmount
1...	GARDEN STATE FORWARD	5,575,000
2...	NEW JERSEY EDUCATION ASSOCIATION	4,939,596.04
3...	AIRBNB INC	4,355,842.06
4...	NEW JERSEY REPUBLICAN STATE COMMITTEE	3,652,235.89
5...	GOPAL FOR SENATE	3,322,791.32
6...	DEMOCRATIC ASSEMBLY CAMPAIGN COMMIT...	2,893,494.66
7...	GREATER NJ CARPENTERS PEC	2,372,868
8...	NJ DEMOCRATIC ASSEMBLY CAMPAIGN COM...	2,344,424.41
9...	DEMOCRATIC GOVERNORS ASSOCIATION	2,301,468.29
1...	CARPENTERS ACTION FUND	2,000,000

Top Ten Recipients

Rank	EntityName	ContributionAmount
1...	MURPHY, PHILIP	15,955,728.86
2...	CIATTARELLI, JACK	15,866,123.44
3...	OUR NJ	8,283,268.29
4...	GARDEN STATE FORWARD	4,850,620.71
5...	KEEP OUR HOMES	4,348,442.06
6...	BRIGHTER FUTURE FORWARD	3,665,000
7...	GOPAL DONLON & PETERPAUL	3,343,470.31
8...	COMMITTEE TO BUILD THE ECONOMY	3,075,000
9...	GOPAL, VIN	2,605,582.14
1...	COUGHLIN, CRAIG J	2,255,249.75

Concentrated Influence: Following the Money in NJ Politics (2019–2024)

Part 1: State Level Data and Insights

[Previous Page](#)

[Next Page](#)

www.nj21st.com

Non-Individual Entities Consistently and Significantly Dominated Contributions

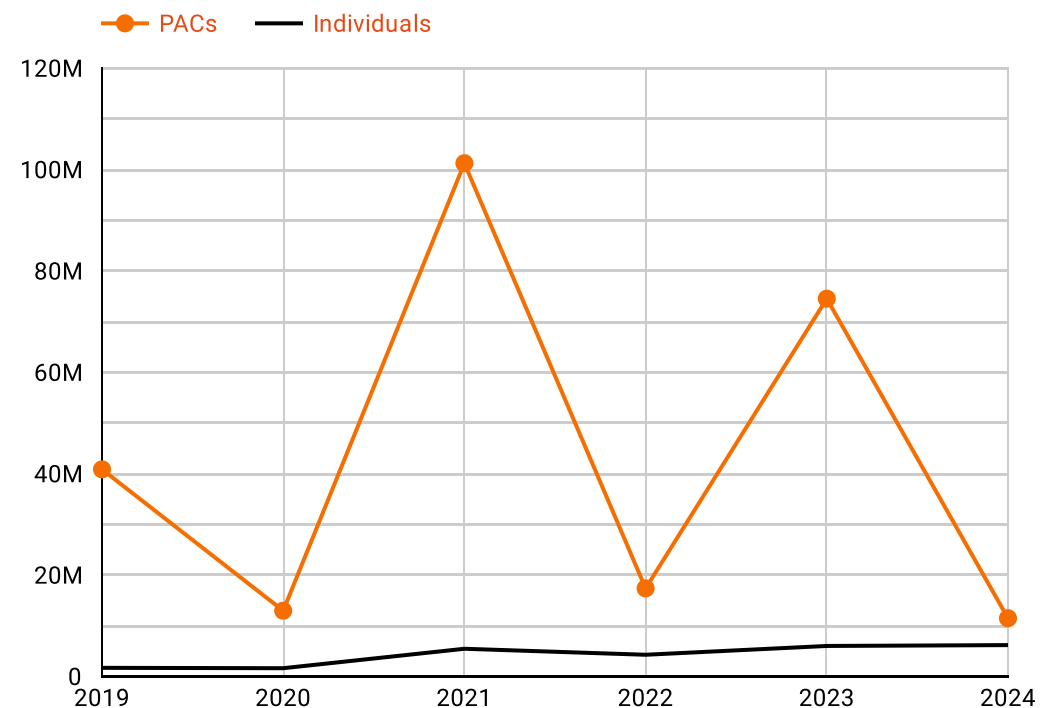
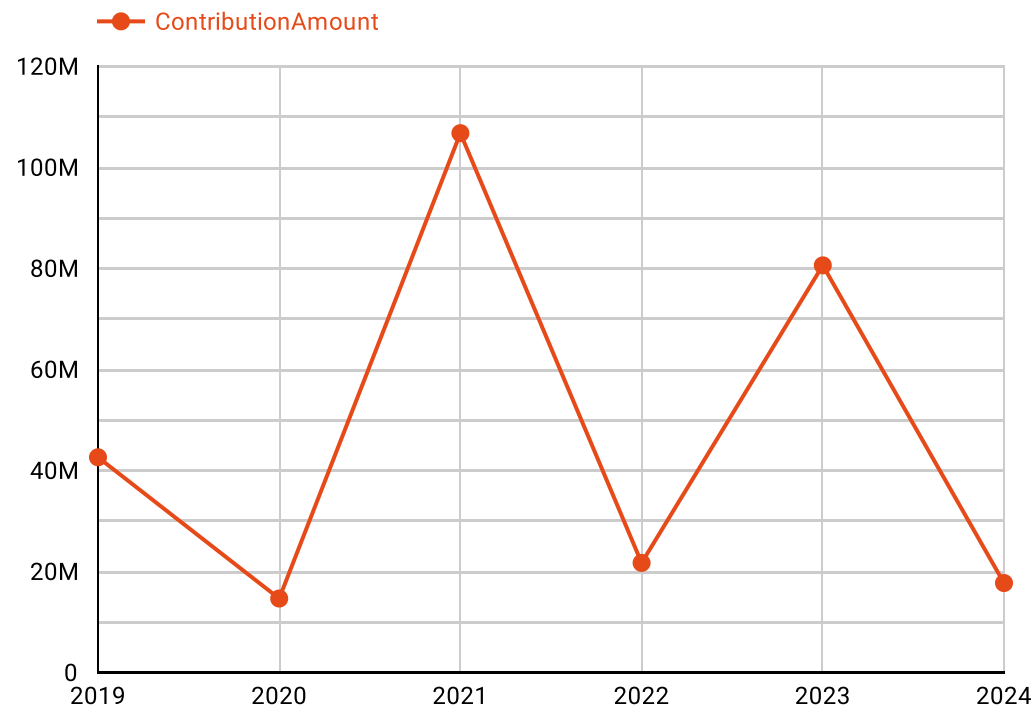
This pair of line charts highlights campaign contribution trends in New Jersey from 2019 through 2024.

The Left Chart: Shows total campaign contributions per year, combining all sources.

The Right Chart: Breaks those contributions into two categories – PACs (orange) and individuals (black).

Non-Individual Entities dominate campaign financing in nearly every year, with large spikes in 2020 and 2022. Individual contributions remain consistently flat, rarely breaching \$10 million annually.

The total contributions over the six-year period exceeded \$280 million, with the overwhelming majority flowing through non-individual entities such as Political Action Committees (PACs), unions, and corporate groups.



Concentrated Influence: Following the Money in NJ Politics (2019–2024)

Part 1: State Level Data and Insights (cont.)



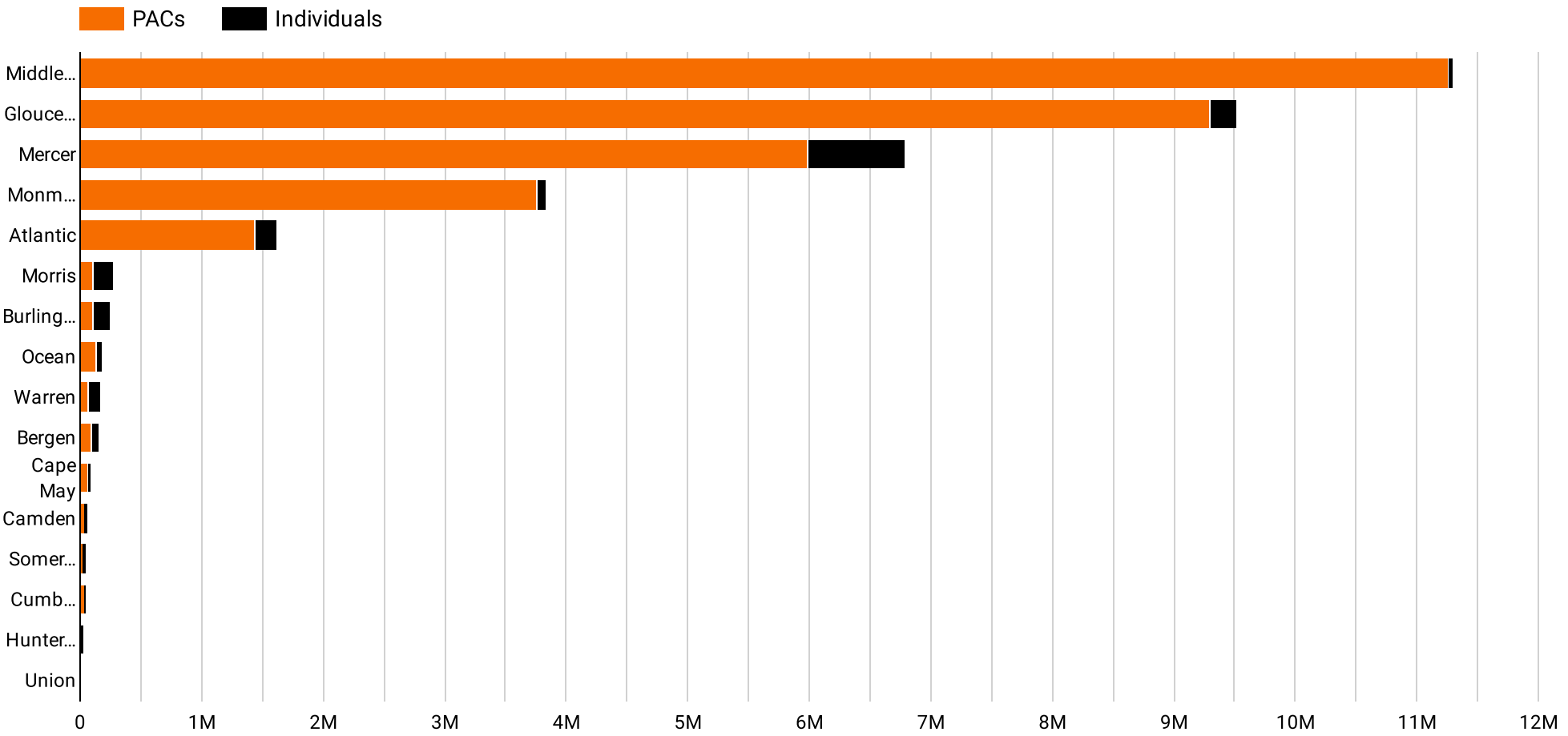
[Previous Page](#)

[Next Page](#)

www.nj21st.com

Non-Individual Contributions (PACS for Example) Dominated Most Counties

Where counties were able to be matched to townships, this chart shows the breakdown of campaign contributions by contributor type. Non-Individual contributions (orange bars) overwhelmingly dominate in most counties, with Middlesex, Gloucester, and Mercer leading the state in total non-individual dollars. Individual contributions (black bars), by contrast, are relatively limited – though Mercer and Monmouth counties show higher individual activity compared to others. This visualization underscores how concentrated non-individual giving is in certain regions, and how political money often clusters in counties with dense organizational or political infrastructure.

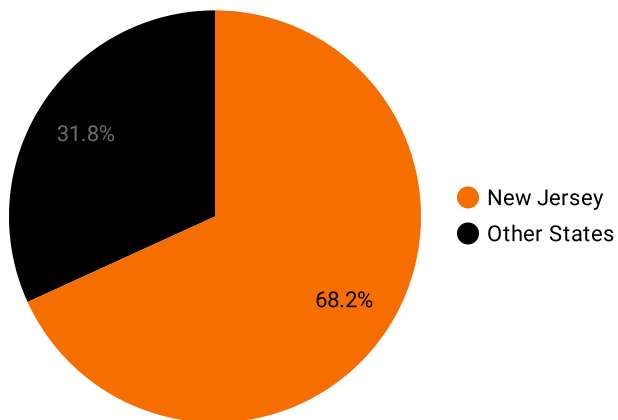


Source NJELEC:
www.elec.nj.gov

Out of State Dollars and their Source Were Notable

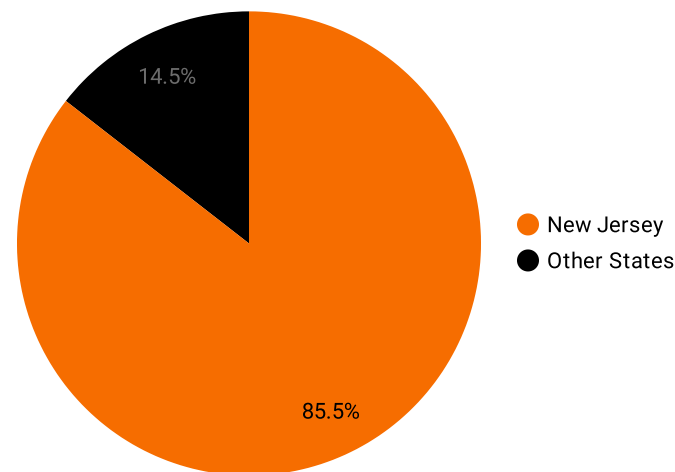
While New Jersey residents made up 68.2% of all contributors, nearly one-third (31.8%) came from out-of-state – suggesting significant external engagement in New Jersey’s political landscape.

% of Contributors by State of Residence



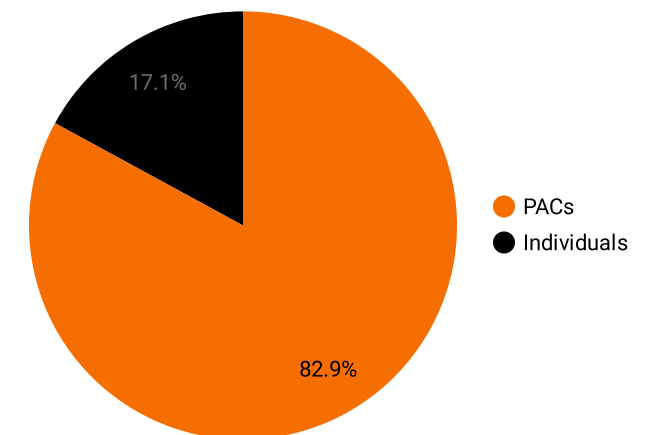
New Jersey residents accounted for 85.5% of total contribution dollars.

% of Contributions by State of Residence



Among out-of-state contributions, PACs represented 82.9% of total funds, with individual donors making up only 17.1%. This shows that organized interests, rather than individuals, dominate out-of-state political giving in New Jersey.

% of Out of State Dollars by Contributor Type



Concentrated Influence: Following the Money in NJ Politics (2019–2024)



Part 1: State Level Data and Insights

[Previous Page](#)

[Next Page](#)

www.nj21st.com

Small Groups Dominate the Political Landscape

Where we were able to match both contributors and recipients, **this chart highlights the flow of political contributions between major non-individual donors (e.g. PACs, unions, corporations) and key recipients (e.g. candidates, PACs, or campaign committees)**. Each cell represents the total contribution amount from the entity on the left (NonIndName) to the recipient listed along the top (EntityName). The deeper the orange shading, the larger the contribution.

Key Takeaways

Garden State Forward gave \$2.5M to Our NJ and \$1M to Carpenters Action Fund.

NJEA (New Jersey Education Association) contributed over \$4.85M to Garden State Forward, making it a major upstream donor.

AIRBNB Inc provided over \$4.34M to Keep Our NJ Safe, suggesting targeted corporate support.

Some recipients like **Gopal for Senate and Democratic Governors Association** received multi-source support, hinting at **coalition or coordinated funding**.

A few names appear on both axes (e.g. GARDEN STATE FORWARD, CARPENTERS ACTION FUND), possibly indicating intra-network transfers.

This visual emphasizes how a relatively small group of influential contributors and recipients dominate the landscape, with funds often recirculating through interconnected committees.

Top 10 - EntityName / ContributionAmount

Top 10 - NonIndName	OUR NJ	GARDEN S...	KEEP OUR ...	BRIGHTER ...	GOPAL DO...	COMMITT...	GOPAL, VIN	COUGHLIN...	ZWICKER ...	LAGANA T...
GARDEN STATE FORWARD	2,500,000	-	-	-	-	3,000,000	-	-	-	-
NEW JERSEY EDUCATION ASSOCI...	-	4,850,620.71	-	-	-	-	2,632	-	-	-
AIRBNB INC	-	-	4,348,442.06	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
NEW JERSEY REPUBLICAN STATE...	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
GOPAL FOR SENATE	-	-	-	-	1,746,911.11	-	221,198.36	-	-	-
DEMOCRATIC ASSEMBLY CAMPAI...	-	-	-	-	-	-	35,042.15	-	-	-
GREATER NJ CARPENTERS PEC	-	-	-	-	-	-	37,900	26,500	-	-
NJ DEMOCRATIC ASSEMBLY CAM...	-	-	-	-	626,714.15	-	-	-	574,860.13	347,485.51
DEMOCRATIC GOVERNORS ASSOC...	1,983,268.29	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
CARPENTERS ACTION FUND	1,000,000	-	-	1,000,000	-	-	-	-	-	-

Concentrated Influence: Following the Money in NJ Politics (2019–2024)



Part 1: State Level Data and Insights

[Previous Page](#)

[Next Page](#)

www.nj21st.com

Non-Individual Contributions Are Concentrated, Strategic & Goal Oriented

This heat map reveals the financial relationships between the top ten non-individual contributors (organizations, companies, advocacy groups, etc.) and the top five non-individual recipients operating in New Jersey between 2019 and 2024.

Each row represents a non-individual contributor (e.g., Garden State Forward, Scotts Co., American Energy Action), and each column represents a PAC or non-individual recipient (e.g., Committee to Build the Economy, Progress for NJ PAC).

The darker the cell, the larger the contribution amount from that donor to that recipient. This allows patterns of influence to emerge visually: Garden

State Forward made a \$3 million contribution to the Committee to Build the Economy, a standout in both amount and alignment.

The Republican State Leadership Committee received over \$800,000 from its namesake donor, underscoring a direct pipeline between national Republican funding entities and local PACs.

Scotts Co. made a large single contribution (\$700,000) to Building Stronger Communities, highlighting the corporate angle of campaign financing.

Other examples not listed in the map below include UA Political Action Fund, and education-related contributors like the New Jersey Education Association and Great Schools for All Inc..

Top 5 - EntityName / ContributionAmount					
Top 5 - NonIndName	COMMITTEE TO BUILD THE E...	BUILDING STRONGER COMM...	REPUBLICAN STATE LEADER...	GREAT SCHOOLS FOR ALL P...	PROGRESS FOR NJ PAC
GARDEN STATE FORWARD	3,000,000	-	-	-	-
REPUBLICAN STATE LEADERSH...	-	-	800,904.85	-	-
SCOTTS CO	-	700,000	-	-	-
AMERICAN ENERGY ACTION	-	-	-	-	255,000
THE GOOD GROWTH ALLIANCE	-	205,000	-	-	-

Methodology

This report is based on publicly available contribution records from the New Jersey Election Law Enforcement Commission (ELEC), covering the years 2019 through 2024.

The dataset includes over 168,000 records and captures contributions made to political committees, including Political Action Committees (PACs), state and local party entities, and related organizations.

Data was cleaned and prepared using the following steps:

Contributor Classification: Contributions were categorized using the IsIndividual field – Yes values indicate individuals, while No indicates non-individuals such as PACs, unions, corporations, or other organizations.

Code Cleanup: Erroneous ZIP entries (e.g., partial codes, formatted as text or decimals) were corrected or replaced with "00000" to ensure compatibility with BigQuery and Looker Studio.

County Matching: Where possible, contributor ZIP codes were matched to New Jersey counties using a standardized lookup file.

Deduplication & Validation: Duplicate records were removed, and totals were validated against original ELEC exports to preserve accuracy. The total contribution volume in this cleaned dataset is \$284 million, including both individual and non-individual contributions.

Considerations

While this dataset provides a comprehensive view of PAC-related contributions in New Jersey from 2019 to 2024, several factors should be considered when interpreting the results:

Transfers Within the Political System: A portion of the contributions captured may reflect internal transfers between affiliated PACs or party committees rather than original fundraising activity. These transactions can amplify the appearance of financial volume without representing new or external funding sources.

Incomplete or Ambiguous Contributor Data: In some cases, contributor names or classifications were incomplete or ambiguous (e.g., “Non-Reportable Contributions”), limiting the ability to fully identify the source. ZIP Code–Based County Mapping: County information was derived from ZIP code lookups where available. Contributions with missing, malformed, or out-of-state ZIP codes could not be matched to a New Jersey county.

Out-of-State Influence: Contributions from donors located outside New Jersey are included. While legal, these contributions may reflect influence from national organizations or interests beyond state borders.

Reporting Errors and Omissions: The data relies on timely and accurate filings submitted to NJ ELEC. Late amendments or misclassifications in the original disclosures may affect specific records.

This analysis is designed to enhance transparency and inform the public, not to draw conclusions about legality or intent behind contributions.

Open Access

This report was created using publicly available data from the [New Jersey Election Law Enforcement Commission \(ELEC\)](#).

We encourage journalists, researchers, and civic organizations to explore the data behind this report. A cleaned version of the full dataset (2019–2024) is [available as a downloadable CSV](#).

If you're interested in replicating or extending the analysis, feel free to reach out to team@nj21st.com. We welcome collaboration and transparency.

nj21st.com is licensed under [CC BY-NC-SA 4.0](#)