



PRIORITIES USA

ZIP it  
to Flip it

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**PRIORITIES**  
USA

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# Briefing Roadmap

**What is a ZIP**

**Benefits of ZIP Targeting**

**How to Select ZIPs**

**Where ZIPs Fall Short**

**Strategies for Buying with ZIPs**

**Key Takeaways**



## FAQ

# What is a ZIP?

### **What is a ZIP code and who uses them?**

ZIP stands for Zone Improvement Plan. It is a system of 5 digit codes used by the US Postal Service - and other mail delivery networks.

### **What do the numbers mean?**

There is a method to the madness.

- 1st digit represents certain group of states
- 2nd and 3 digits represent a region in that group
- 4th and 5th digits represent a group of delivery addresses within the region

### **Do ZIP codes ever cross state lines?**

Yes. Because ZIP codes are intended to aid with efficient mail delivery, there are a few cases when a ZIP code crosses state boundaries.

# BENEFITS OF ZIP TARGETING

## Why is it a valuable tool?

1. The smallest unit accepted by all platforms online
2. Broader reach can be more effective in persuading and mobilizing voters
3. Data about ZIPs is easily accessible
4. Allows for experimentation across a wider range of platforms





## BENEFITS OF ZIP TARGETING

# Available Across Digital Platforms

- It is more precise than county level or DMA targeting - which means you can be more specific about who you're trying to reach.
- As 1P targeting gets restricted on more platforms, and match rates decline, ZIPs are an accurate, scalable, and more durable alternative.

	Facebook	YouTube	Spotify	Pandora	Hulu	Roku	Search	Programmatic Vendors
ZIPs	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y
1P	Y (71% match rate)	N* (51% match rate)	N	N	N	N	N*	Y

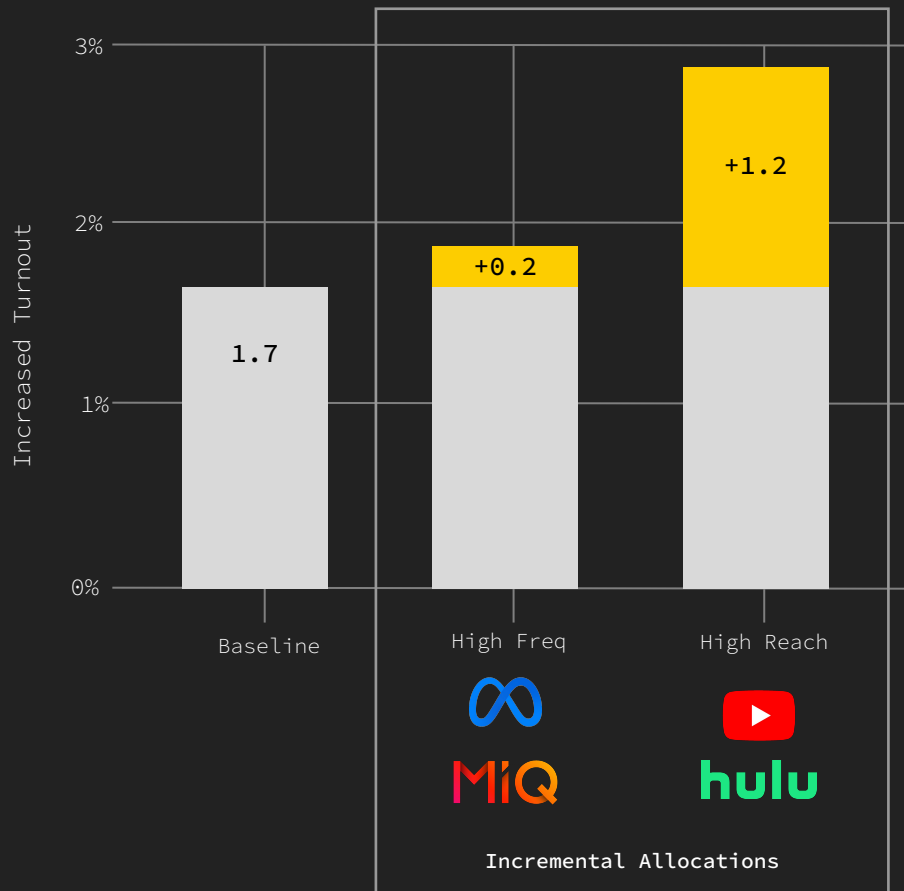
\* 1P allowed on youtube/search for down ballot + nonpartisan gotv



## BENEFITS OF ZIP TARGETING

# Value of Broader Reach

- Broadening reach significantly improves performance over hammering the same voter file list
- Even among first party targets, the additional layering of high-reach tactics improved treatment effects
- We can strike the balance of reaching our most important targets with scale through ZIPs
  - Going broader means lower CPMs, generally speaking



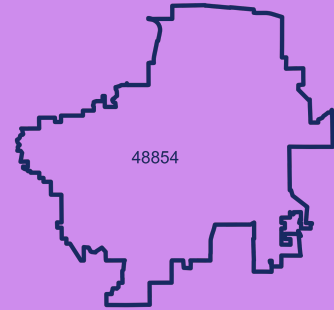


## BENEFITS OF ZIP TARGETING

# Understanding ZIP Data

- Data about ZIPs is fairly accessible through the Voter File, Census, or other resources
- Available variables to analyze include:
  - Population
  - Race / Ethnicity
  - Household Income
  - Education Level
  - Employment (Unemployment rate, Industries)
  - Age
  - Gender
  - Modeled scores (Avg. Partisanship, Avg. Turnout)
  - Electoral Data (Vote History, Dem Vote Share)

## ZIP Profile



**Location:** Mason, MI  
**Population:** 19,804  
**Perc. Black:** 1.9%  
**Perc. Latino:** 4.7%  
**Median HHI:** \$79,992  
**Perc. College-Edu:** 37.2%  
**Employment Rate:** 62.1%  
**Median Age:** 40.1  
**Perc. Women:** 51.8%  
**Avg. Partisanship:** 51  
**Avg. Turnout 2024:** 70

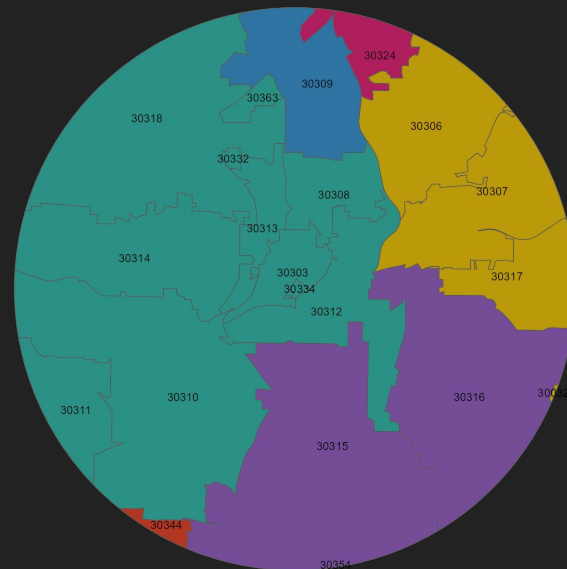


## BENEFITS OF ZIP TARGETING

# Experimenting with ZIPs

- Experiments do not have to be limited by first-party targeting restrictions and can more closely mirror actual media plans
- There are enough ZIP codes to ensure sufficient power to experiments
  - Create geo blocks to minimize contamination between treatment groups

Atlanta Zoom In  
5 Mile Radius





# HOW TO SELECT ZIPs



## Methods For Audience Selection

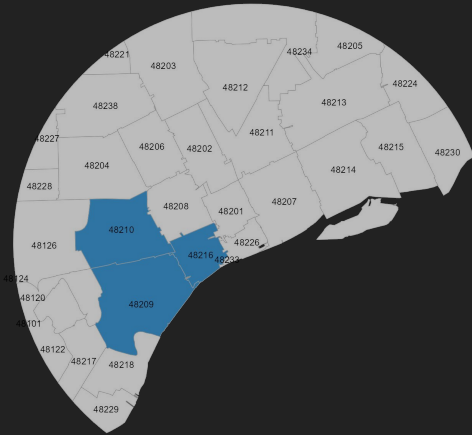
1. **Density:** Select the top-ranking ZIPs by density of a first-party defined audience.
2. **ZIP Features:** Select ZIPs based on information about the entire ZIP such as average partisanship or turnout scores, or past electoral information.



## SELECTING ZIPS

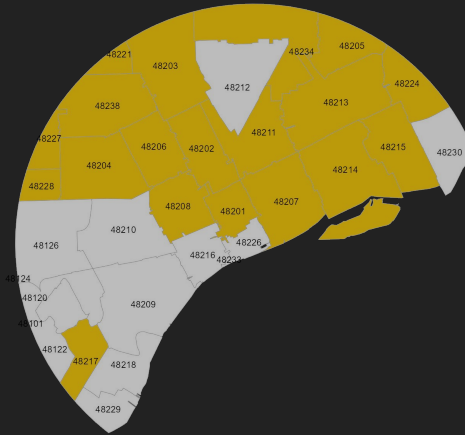
# Targeting Based on Demographic Density

Targeting Latino Voters  
Detroit, MI. Eight Mile Radius



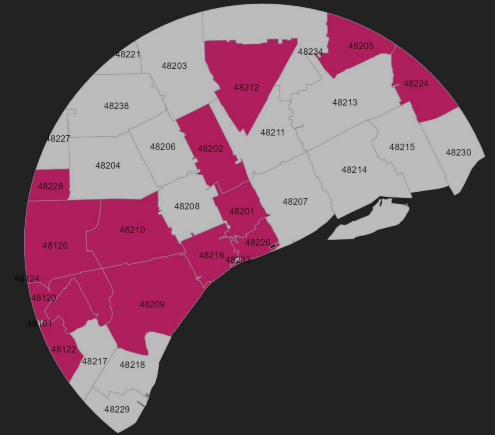
ZIPs selected with a Latino voter density 20%+

Targeting Black Voters  
Detroit, MI. Eight Mile Radius



ZIPs selected with a Black voter density 50%+

Targeting Young Voters  
Detroit, MI. Eight Mile Radius



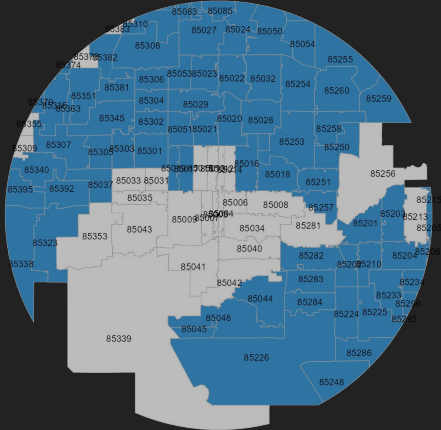
ZIPs selected with a young voter density 30%+



## SELECTING ZIPS

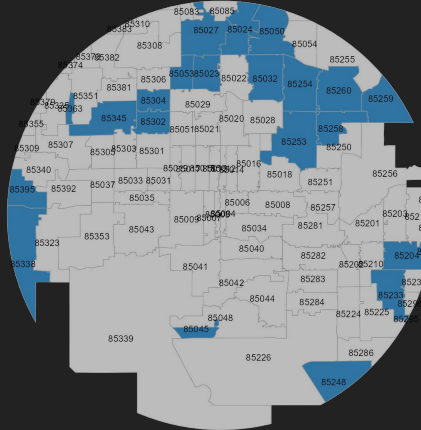
# Targeting Based on ZIP Level Features

Targeting Based on Avg. Partisanship Score  
Phoenix, Arizona. Twelve Mile Radius



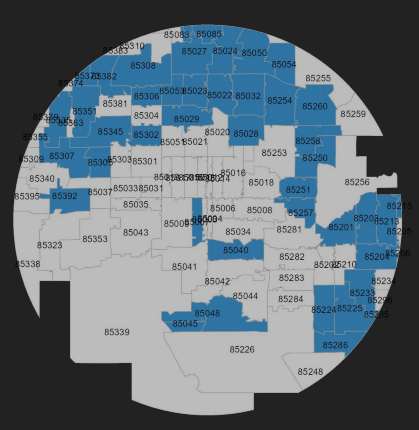
ZIPs selected with Avg. Partisanship Scores Close to 50

Targeting Based on Presidential Margin in 2020  
Phoenix, Arizona. Twelve Mile Radius



ZIPs selected with Tight 2020 Margins

Targeting Based on Dem Vote Share Swing  
2020 to 2022  
Phoenix, Arizona. Twelve Mile Radius



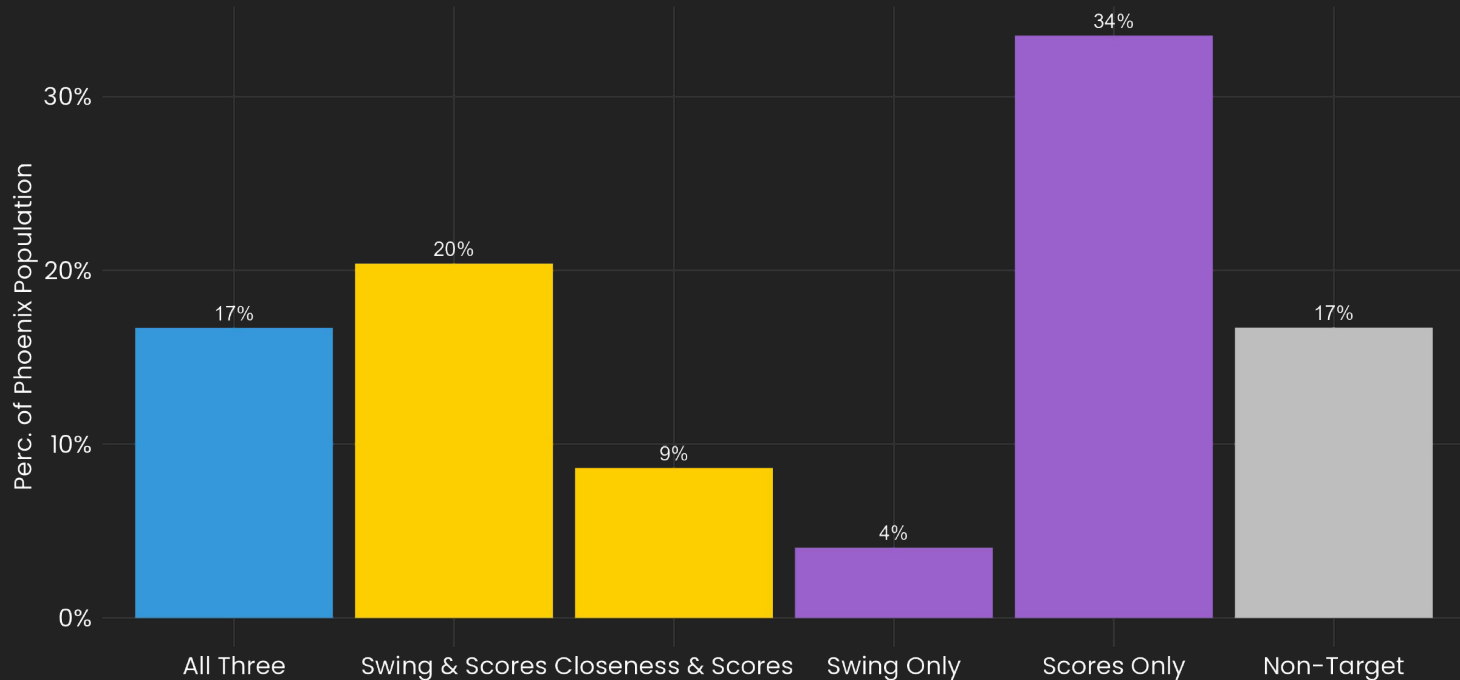
ZIPs selected with Positive Swing if Lean R,  
and Negative Swing if Lean D



## SELECTING ZIPS

# Targeting Based on ZIP Level Features

Overlap Between Three Different Persuasion Audience Definitions in PHX

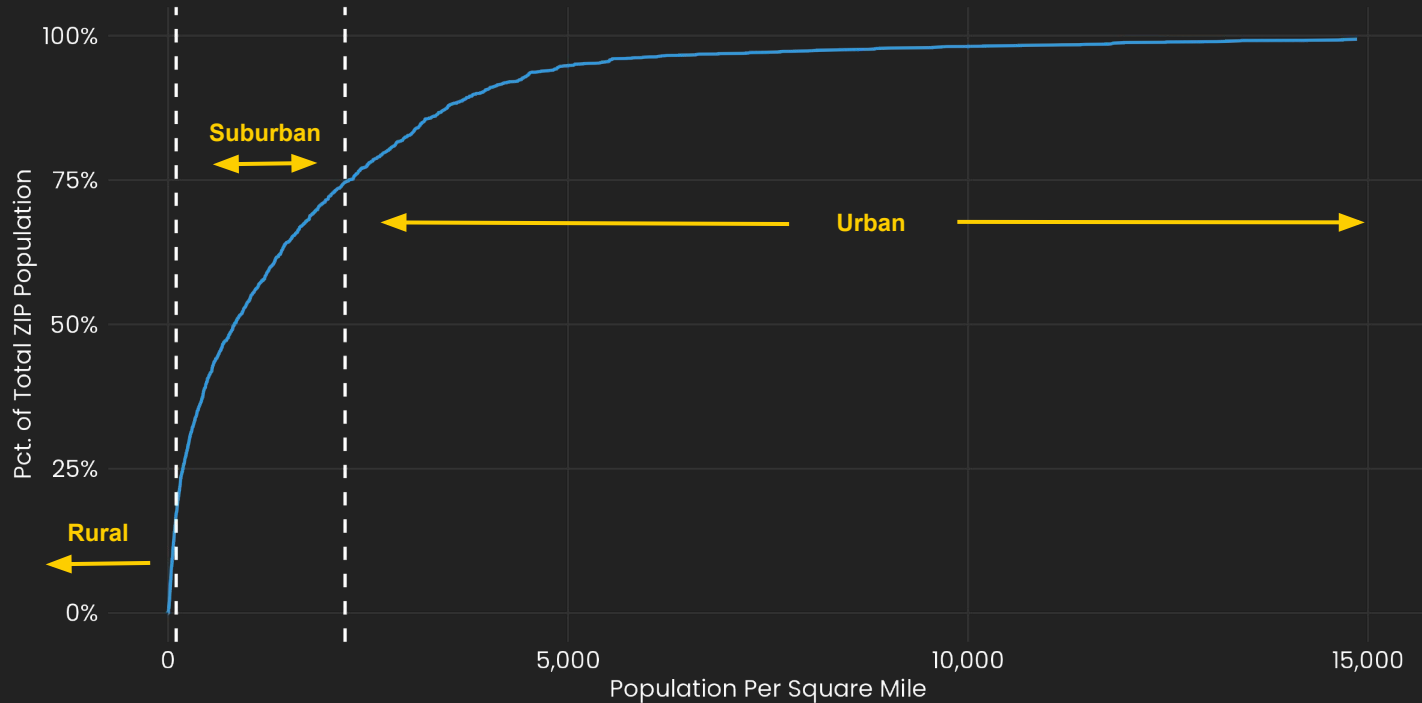






THINGS TO CONSIDER

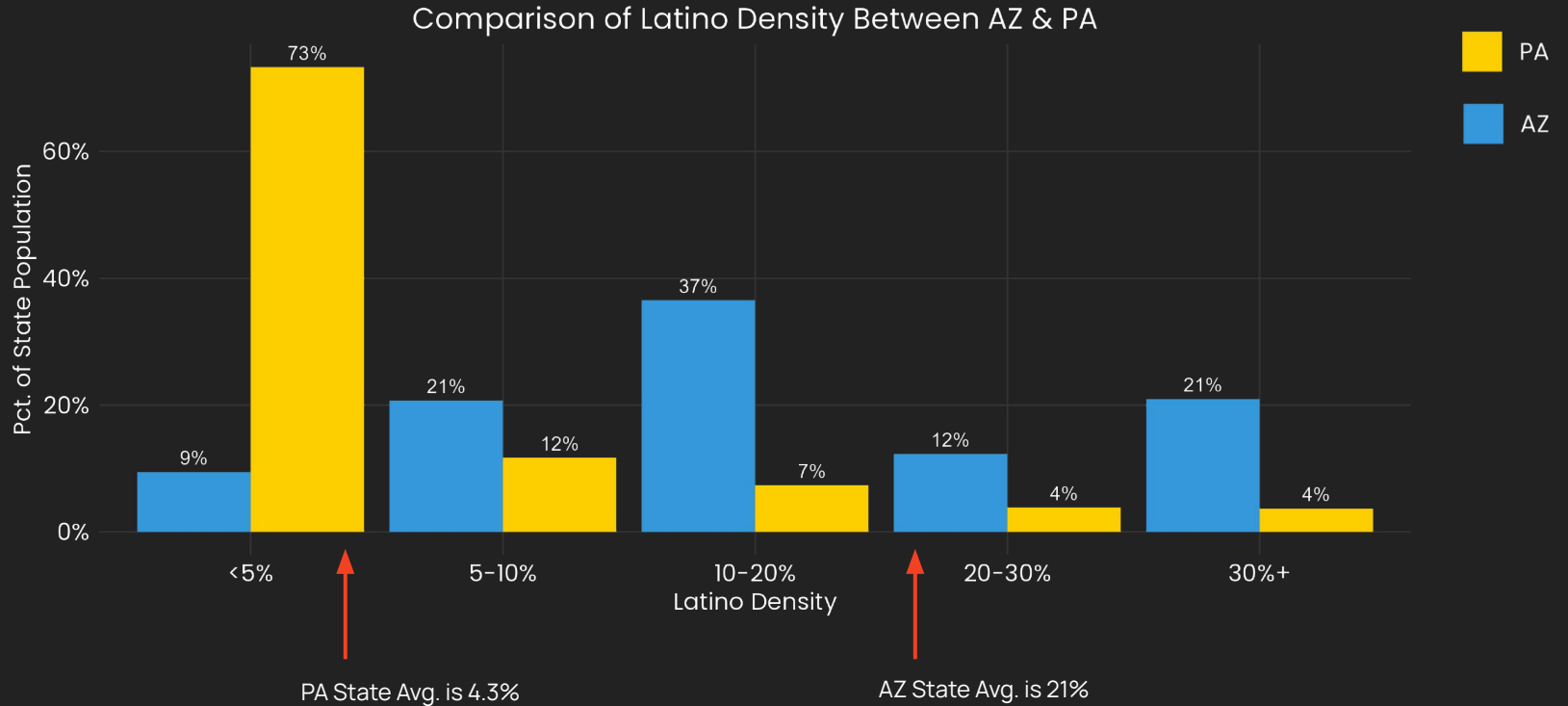
# Proxies for Targeting by Urbanicity





THINGS TO CONSIDER

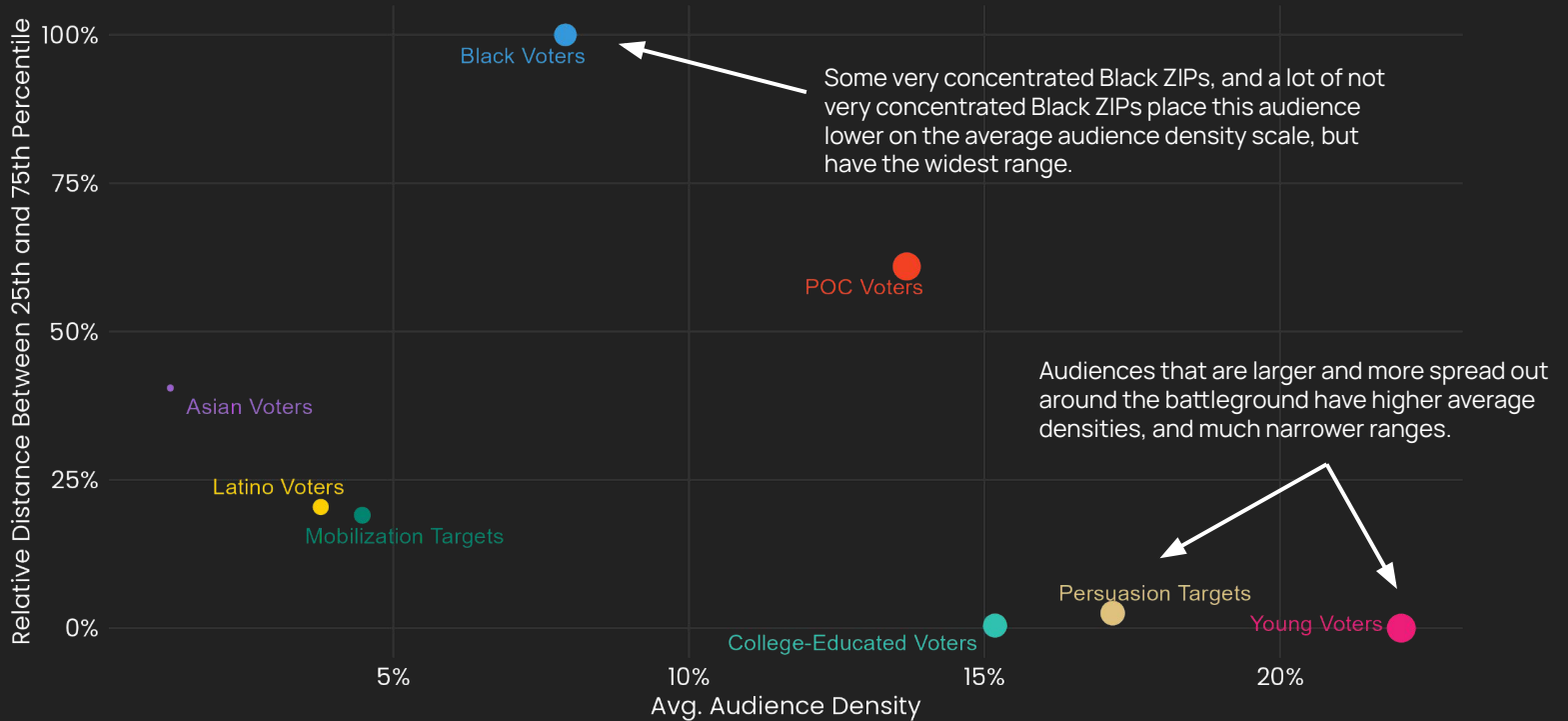
# Audience Density Varies





THINGS TO CONSIDER

# Spread Across ZIPs Impacts Ability to Target

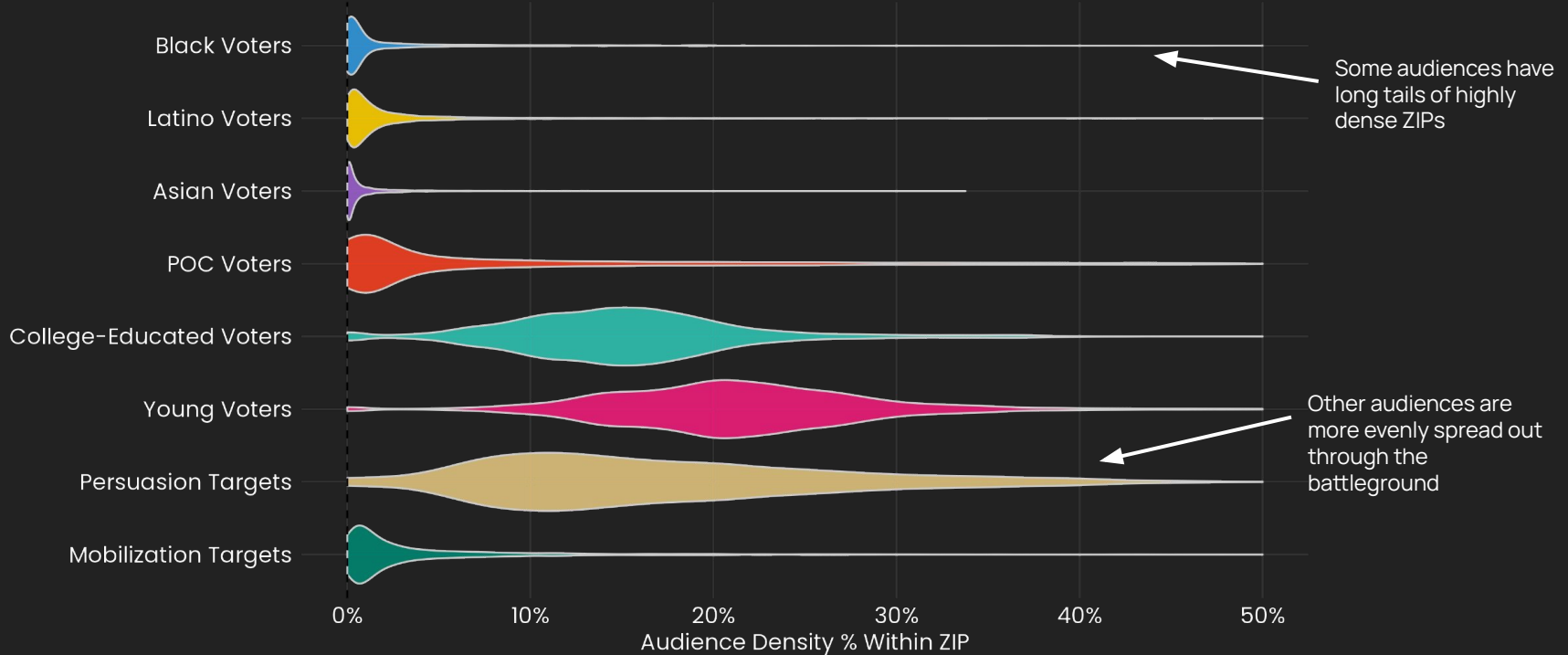






THINGS TO CONSIDER

# Density Distribution Across Battleground

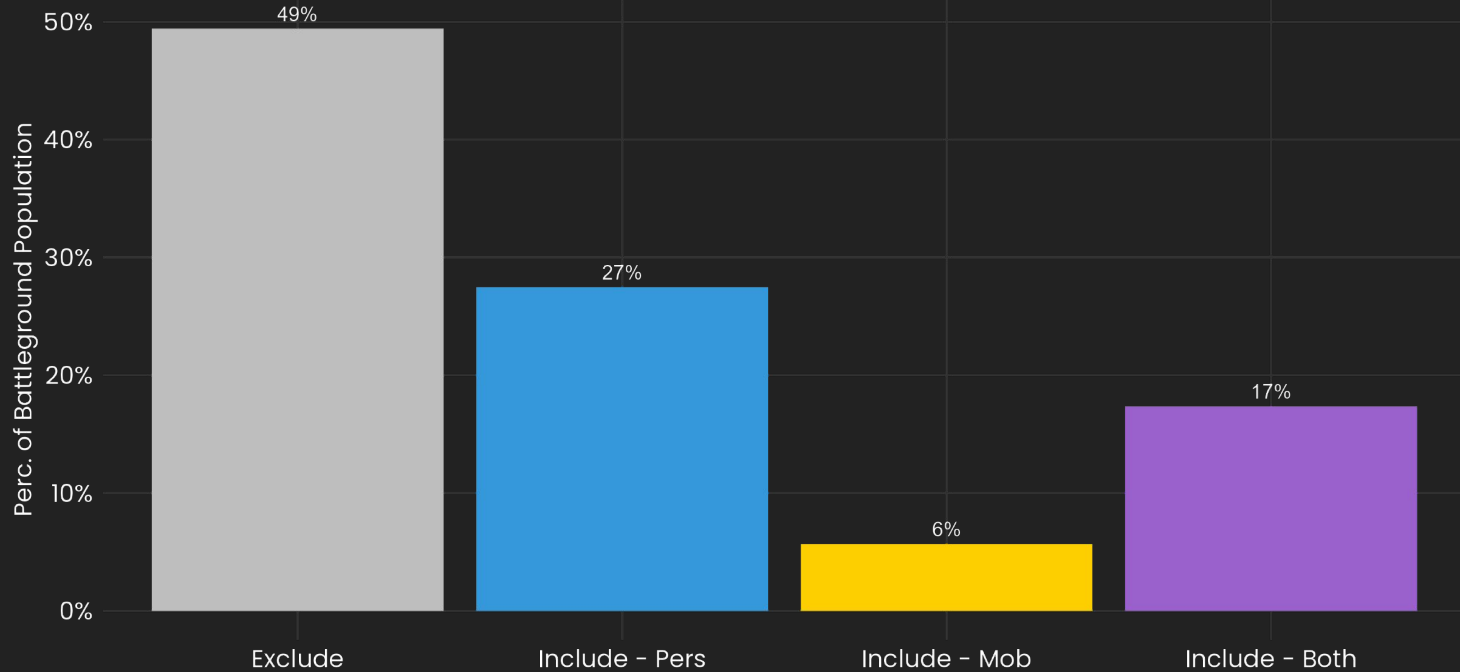




THINGS TO CONSIDER

# Persuasion and Mobilization Overlap

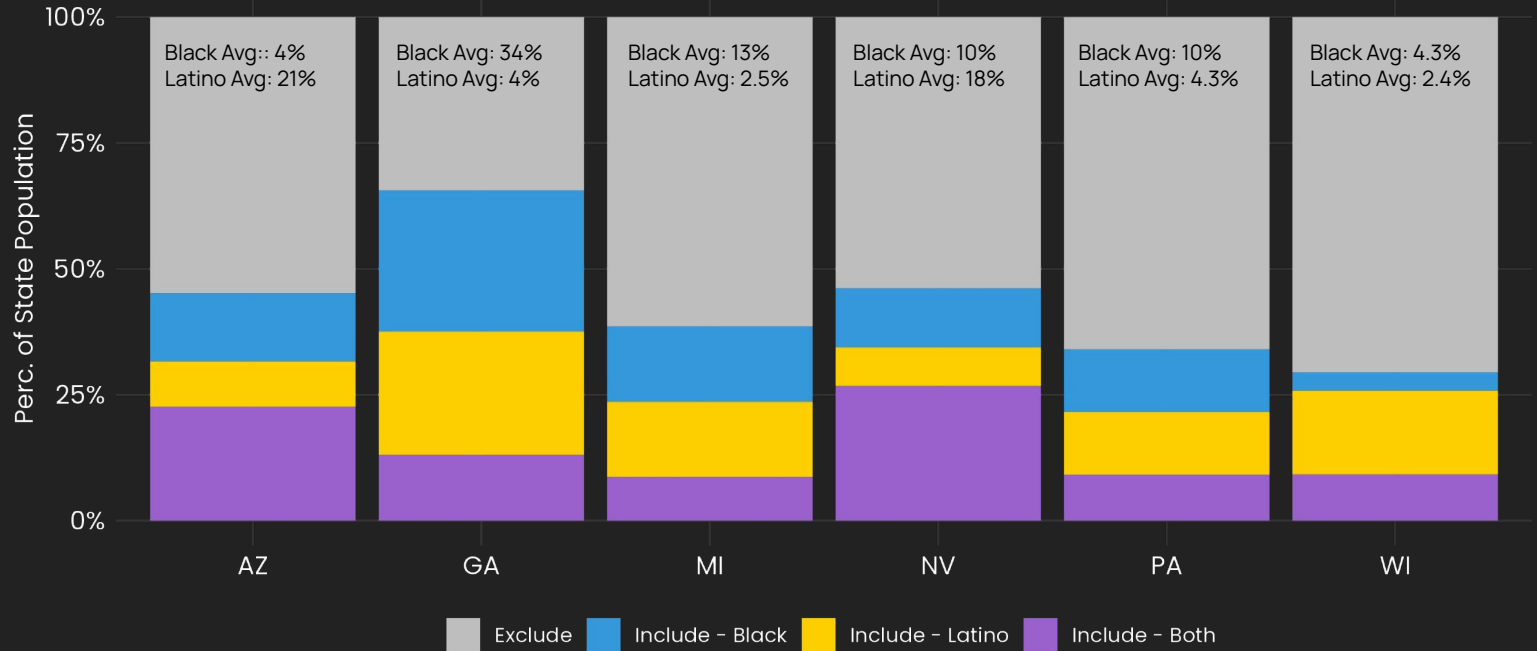
Overlap Between Persuasion and Mobilization Audiences in the Battleground





THINGS TO CONSIDER

# Overlap Between Latino and Black Dense ZIPs

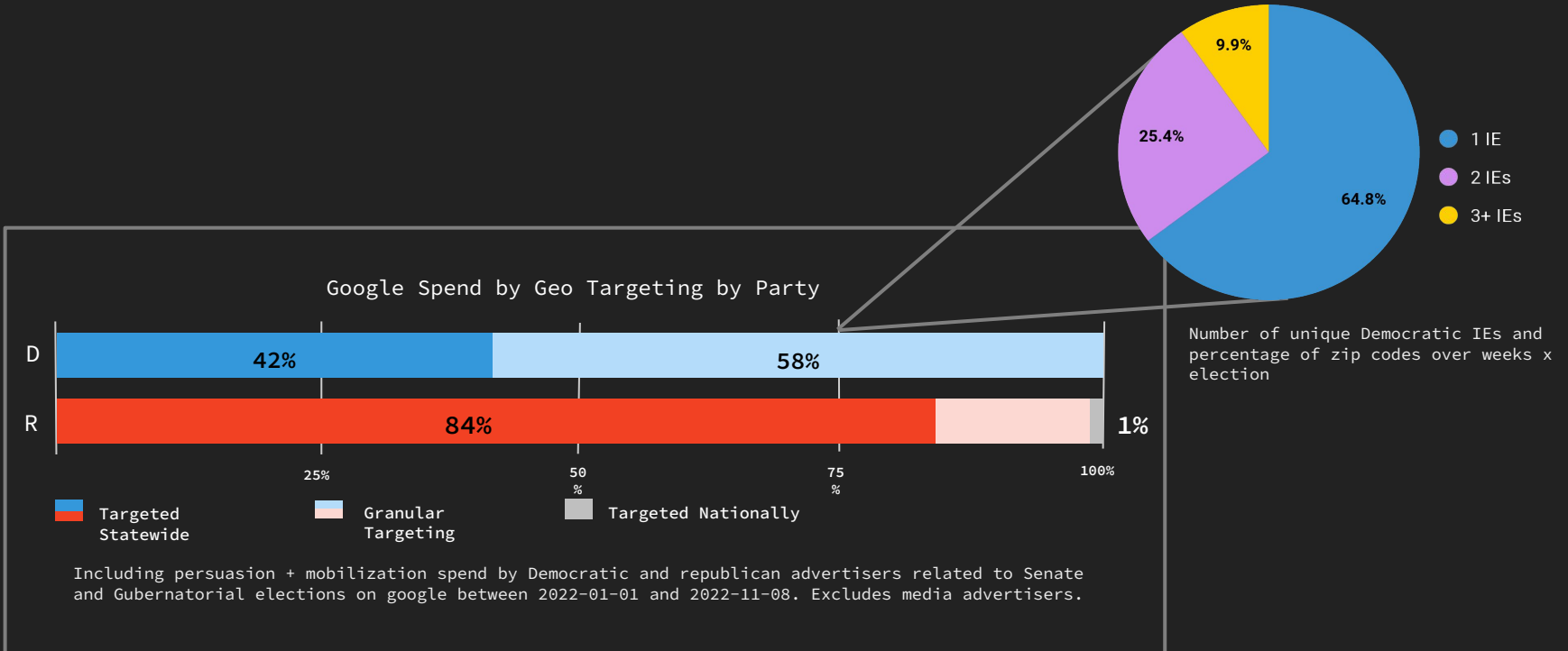


Include ZIPs with Above Avg. Density Percentages



THINGS TO CONSIDER

# Coordination Can Help Spread Resources



# WHERE ZIPs FALL SHORT



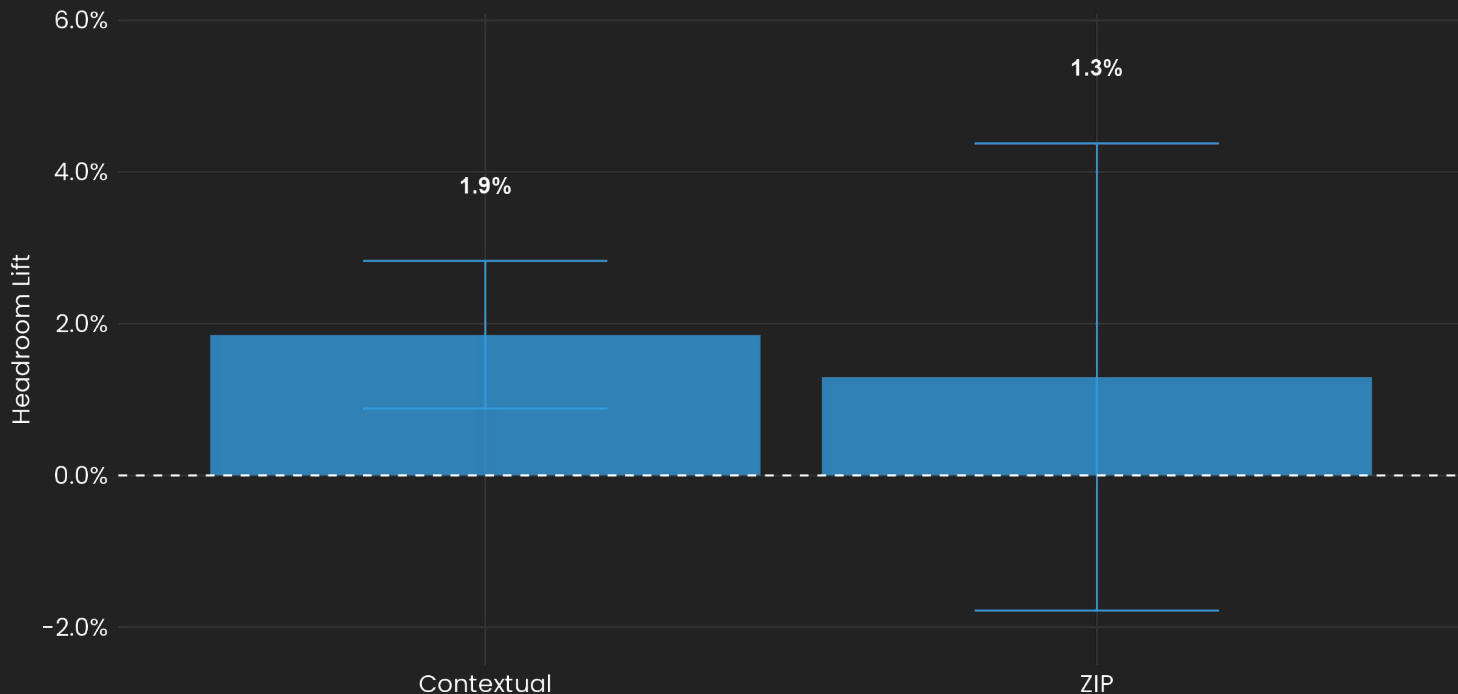
## Consider Alternatives to ZIP Targeting When:

1. **Targeting by age, gender, or CD.** In-Platform options are more efficient than selecting ZIPs.
2. **Targeting by consumption or behavior.** Platforms have valuable data on their viewers that should be leveraged to persuade and mobilize voters.
3. **Expanding reach beyond heavily-invested areas.** Other forms of targeting can more efficiently reach targets in ZIPs with lesser audience densities.



THINGS TO CONSIDER

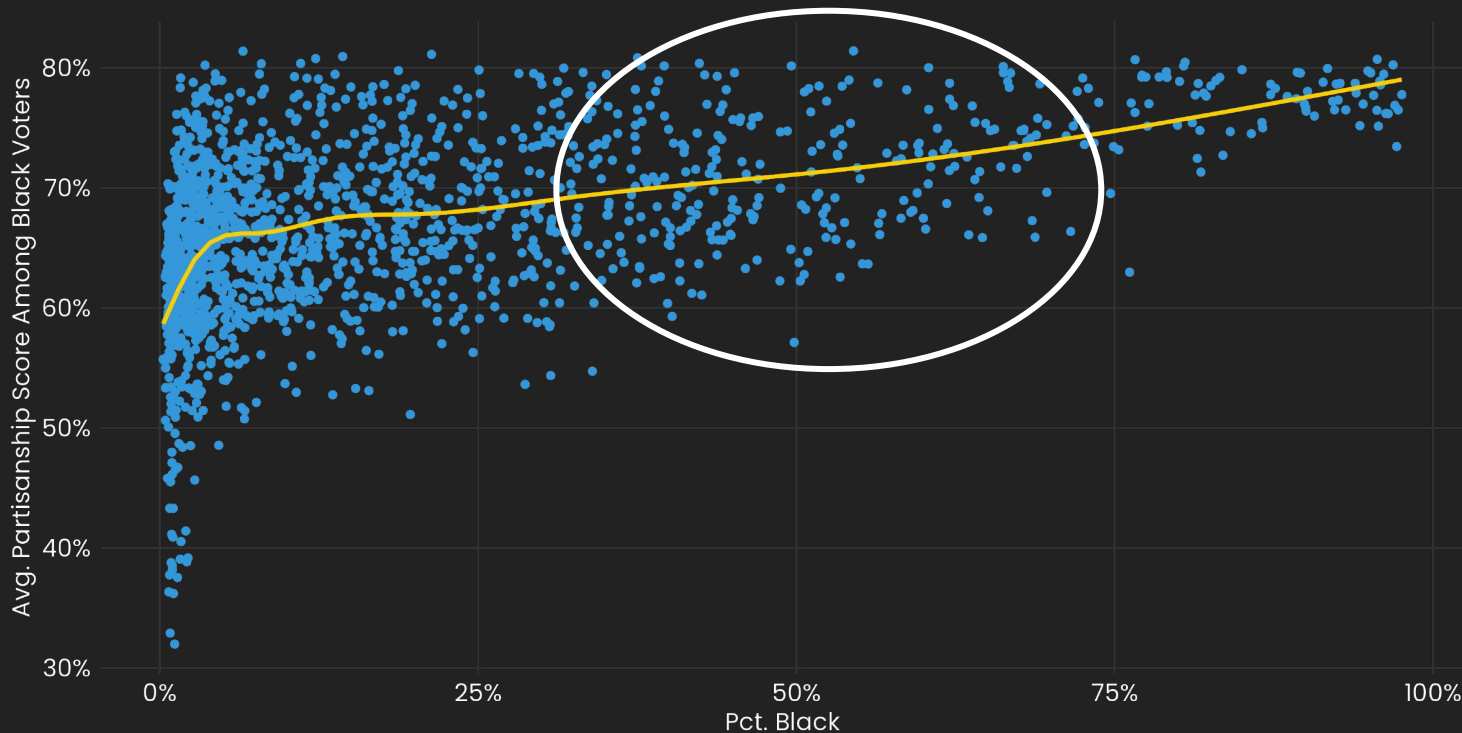
# Contextual vs. ZIP Performance





THINGS TO CONSIDER

# High-Dense ZIPs are Not Always The Ideal Target

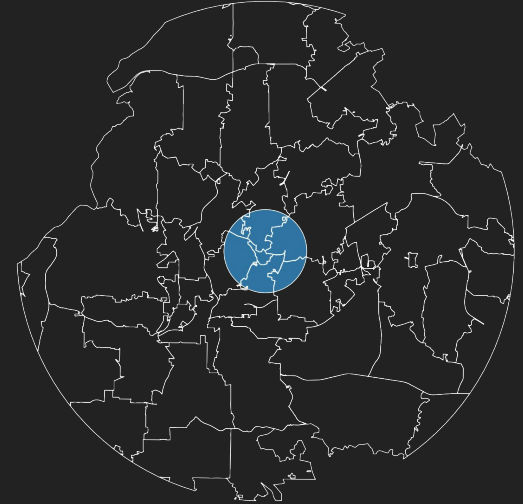


## THINGS TO CONSIDER

# Pin Drops When Targeting a Particular Location

- ZIPs are less efficient options when attempting to target a particular location
- Platforms allow pin drop targeting to deliver media within a certain radius of geographic coordinates
- Consider this strategy when trying to target:
  - College Campuses
  - Cultural Events such as concerts, sporting events, or festivals
  - Surrounding areas of a new infrastructure project

Targeting the Emory University Campus  
Atlanta, GA. Two Mile Radius



Blue circle shows radius around Emory University. Full map includes ZIPs in Fulton and DeKalb Counties, within 12 miles of campus.

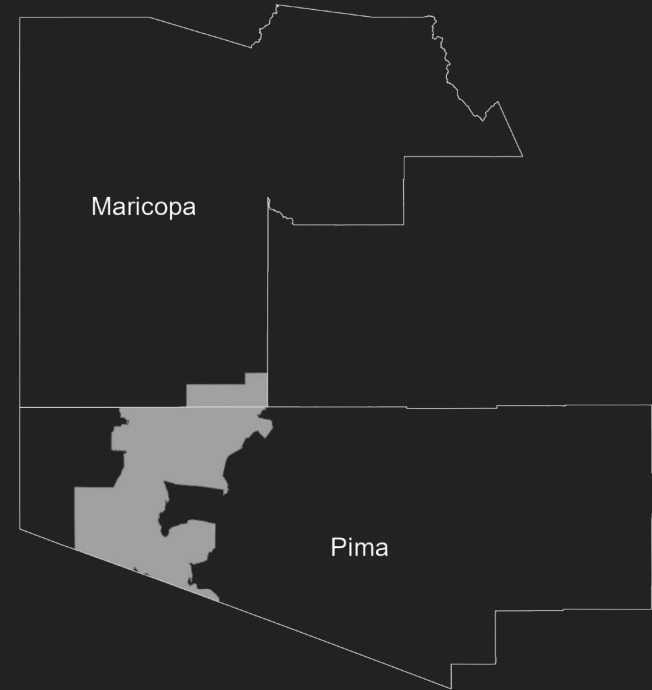




WHERE ZIPS FALL SHORT

# Targeting by Political Geography

- Cannot rely on ZIPs to align with political units such as Congressional Districts or Counties
  - Approximate what ZIPs best fit into these political regions through weighted population calculations
- Similarly, ZIPs do not equate to polling locations
  - Sharing specific voter information by ZIP is not possible
- If it is your goal, target by the political region if possible



ZIP 85321 Crosses Maricopa and Pima County in Arizona

# STRATEGIES FOR BUYING WITH ZIPs



## Media Delivery by ZIP is Impacted By:

1. **How a Platform defines “ZIP”.** Some platforms assign a user a ZIP based on device location, other use user-inputted information.
2. **Layering with other tactics.** ZIPs can be used in tandem with other targeting methods to expand or limit reach.
3. **Movement Between ZIPs.** Patterns of travel such as commutes or tourism can impact who impressions are delivered to.



## STRATEGIES FOR BUYING

# How is ZIP location defined on each Platform?

- Platforms may define a person's ZIP using device location or user inputted information
  - Some devices are more *mobile* than others!
- Not all impressions can be associated with a ZIP code
  - Inclusive ZIP targeting would mean not delivering these impressions
- Managing reach and frequency is more challenging with ZIP targeting than 1P targeting due to how unpredictable movement between ZIPs can be

	Facebook	Google	Snapchat	Pandora	Hulu	Programmatic Vendor
<b>Definition</b>	Device Location (Unconfirmed)	Device Location (IP Address)	Device Location (GPS Mainly)	User Registration Data	Device Location + Billing Address	Device Location
<b>Avg. Coverage</b>		92% of ZIP pop	33% of ZIP pop	25% of ZIP pop		High

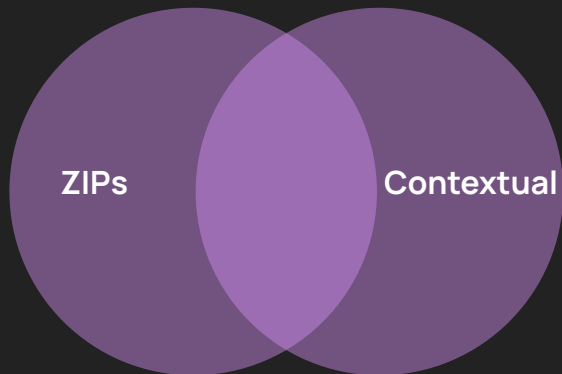


## STRATEGIES FOR BUYING

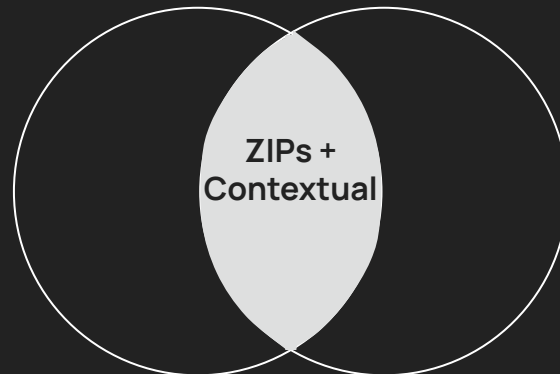
# Inclusive and Exclusive Targeting with ZIPs

- ZIP targeting can be layered with other targeting methods (contextual, behavioral, language) to either expand or narrow your reach.
- Consider when your goal is to *include* a certain set of ZIPs, or *exclude* a certain set of ZIPs

## INCLUSIVE TARGETING



## EXCLUSIVE TARGETING





## STRATEGIES FOR BUYING

# Tips & Tricks

- Not all ZIP codes can or should be targeted
  - Exclude PO Boxes
  - Consider Airports, Military Bases
- Platforms don't always recognize ZIPs accurately
  - Ensure you are targeting only the US
- Facebook no longer allows advertisers to exclude tourists or commuters
  - Consider excluding areas that are typically populated by visitors

07/1000

Restrict locations within a country (optional) Search

19602, Pennsylvania, United States	Target	Exclude	✕
17113, Pennsylvania, United States	Target	Exclude	✕
19611, Pennsylvania, United States	Target	Exclude	✕
19012, Pennsylvania, United States	Target	Exclude	✕
17034, Mecklenburg-Vorpommern, Germany	Target	Exclude	✕

To narrow your targeting from all countries and territories, add a location

Cancel Save



## STRATEGIES FOR BUYING

# ZIP Targeting Calculator

Our calculator allows you to define a demographic or political audience, and then export a list of ZIPs to be uploaded to any platform.

Criteria	
Assumption	Value
Audience	AAPI Density ▾
States	NV
Minimum Audience Density in ZIP	20%
Minimum Audience Population in ZIP	10,000
Minimum Audience Density Percentile	90%
Minimum Share of Statewide Audience Within ZIP	5.00%
ZIP Audience Density > State Audience Density	No ▾
Audience is Plurality	Yes ▾
Results	
ZIPs	14
Total Population	347,585
Audience Population	66,496
Audience Density	19.1%
% of Total Audience	38.0%

AAPI Density Audience ZIPs				ZIPs	AAPI Density %
ZIP	State	County	CD	AAPI Density %	
<b>Total:</b>				14	19.1%
89148	NV	CLARK	NV-03	23.07%	
89147	NV	CLARK	NV-03	18.08%	
89178	NV	CLARK	NV-03	21.24%	
89139	NV	CLARK	NV-03	27.36%	
89141	NV	CLARK	NV-03	19.70%	
89103	NV	CLARK	NV-03	12.65%	
89183	NV	CLARK	NV-03	17.54%	
89113	NV	CLARK	NV-03	23.91%	
89135	NV	CLARK	NV-03	13.84%	
89044	NV	CLARK	NV-01	12.88%	
89138	NV	CLARK	NV-03	16.42%	
89118	NV	CLARK	NV-03	17.73%	
89179	NV	CLARK	NV-03	20.75%	
89158	NV	CLARK	NV-01	23.20%	



# Key Takeaways

**ZIPs are the smallest targeting unit available on all digital platforms.**

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**A lot of data is available to help practitioners select the best ZIPs to reach their intended audience.**

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**ZIPs are an important tool, but not the solution to all targeting needs.**

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