The November general election is fast approaching and we want to make sure New Yorkers get to the polls! Our team at Hester Street developed the Atlas: Vote NYC* map to help fuel community-focused ‘get out the vote’ (GOTV) efforts for the 2020 election and future elections in 2021 and beyond.

The current map allows users to visualize voter data, demographics, community assets and polling locations across the 5 boroughs. We will be updating this map to support increased voter participation and inclusive engagement after November. We want to map opportunities and locations to expand the promise of democracy block by block throughout our City.

We hope this map helps to democratize data and support your organization, volunteers, and partners as they push forward with voter outreach, engaging New Yorkers that have been traditionally marginalized from civic participation. The following user guide outlines:

◊ User Research
◊ Our Approach
◊ Background on the data
◊ Ways to Use the Map

In the weeks leading up to the election, we will be holding technical assistance office hours to work with you on how to best utilize the Atlas: Vote NYC Map.

Sign up for a session here!

This election and upcoming elections will be important for key political positions - the Presidency in 2020, NYC’s Mayoral Election in 2021, and Congressional Redistricting in 2022 (as determined by the 2020 Census results). We’ll need to collectively think about how to expand polling sites, how to engage the disengaged, and how to ensure we are fairly represented for the decade to come.

If you have questions or feedback about the map contact vote@hesterstreet.org.

*Hester Street developed the Atlas: Vote NYC map using its previous Census 2020 Map. This new map uses the same demographic information to understand who we are as New Yorkers, and also includes new information to support GOTV efforts. While, the map no longer focuses on the Census, it continues to support another critical component of civic participation: our elections. This map will be updated and refined in the future.
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MAKING THE MAP

Methodology

We spoke with a variety of organizations working on voter participation. Organizations fell into one of three types of groups:

◊ Community-Based Organizations focused on voter outreach
◊ Groups specifically focused on democracy and advocacy efforts
◊ Cultural Non-Profits promoting civic engagement.

After speaking with these groups, we determined the type of data and features to support current outreach for the November election.

Problems

User interviews revealed three hurdles organizations face in this election:

1. There is no accessible platform to visualize relevant demographic data alongside election data.

2. It is difficult to visualize up-to-date polling locations within a specific geographic area.

3. The unwieldy process of working with this range and scale of data is time consuming and detracts from organization’s critical outreach on the ground.

Goals

For the November election, we prioritized three goals for the map’s development:

1. Clearly display voter participation data in relation to necessary demographic data such as race, internet access, and English proficiency.

2. Allow users to easily identify where and how they can vote in a neighborhood.

3. Save time for CBOs who use the map with preset and relevant data layers.
USING THE MAP

The map is split into two tabs. The ‘Demographic Layers’ tab shows neighborhood data and community assets, while the ‘GOTV’ tab shows information on polling locations and voter activity. There are several ways to use the Atlas: Vote NYC map and its different mapping tabs and data layers to support your voter outreach:

Understand Your Neighborhood:
Under the GOTV tab, you can use the Voter Participation Score to reveal which neighborhoods have registered voters who voted in past elections but have not gone to the polls.

Develop Focused Outreach Plans:
The Demographic Layers tab contains information which can help you and your team determine appropriate outreach methods. You can review information - like languages spoken, internet access, and age distribution - to connect with potential voters.

Build A Voting Plan:
In the GOTV tab, you can visualize the three different types of voting sites in a neighborhood. Search for a specific address and select the types of polling locations you’d like to focus on. You can help voters develop their voting plan in their polling location.

The following 5 pages (pgs. vi-xi) are step-by-step instructions on how to use the map. If you need additional support on how to use the map, you can sign up for our Technical Assistance office hours. Schedule your appointment here.
1. Neighborhood Information

1. Ensure you are on the Get Out the Vote (GOTV) tab of this map.

2. Click the drop down menu to open “Voter Information”.

3. Select the desired visual layer you want to see on the map.

4. Review the data visualized on the map.

2. Boundaries

1. Click the drop down menu to open “Boundaries”.

2. Choose the district boundary layer to overlay on the map.

3. Review the boundary overlaid on the electoral districts.
3. Ways to Vote

1. View the icons that represent the 3 ways to vote: by mail, at early voting polls or at election day polls.

2. Using the icons from Step 1, identify the voting methods you want to visualize on the map.

3. Select or “turn on” any combination of voting methods.

4. View the voting methods on the map.

5. To view a location’s address, hover your mouse over the desired location’s icon. Click on the icon to learn about its name and location.
4. Dashboard

Click the specific boundary to see its details. You will see a thick read outline on the selected boundary.

Simultaneously, a dashboard will pop-up on the bottom of the map.

On the dashboard, switch between the selected electoral district and the selected overlaid boundary such as a State Assembly District (if applicable) to review relevant data.

Determine which boundary’s data is needed for outreach.

5. Voter Participation

Make sure “Voter Participation” is clicked (should be on default).

View the Participation Score, which ranks voter participation within the selected boundary.

Read more about the Participation Score and use that score to inform outreach.
6. Voter Registration

1. Click the “Voter Registration” tab.

2. Review the data statistic on Party Affiliation and the % of registered voters who are affiliated with a party.

3. Review the data statistic on Voter Age.

7. Voting Locations

1. Click the “Voting Locations” tab.

2. Make sure you have an voting method selected (see “#3. Ways to Vote” on page vii).

3. Review the Voting Locations and use these to inform outreach.
8. Zoom + Locate

1. Search any address to locate that on the map.

2. Press the “+” and “-” buttons to zoom in and out respectively.

3. Press the compass button to north orient the map.

9. Demographic Layers*

1. Click the Demographic Layers “≡” tab to learn more about demographics throughout the City.

2. Click the drop down menu labeled “Neighborhood Information” to select a visual layer.

3. Click the drop down menu labeled “Boundaries” to select a boundary to be overlaid upon census tracts.

*The “Demographics Layer” of Atlas: Vote NYC was originally the NYC 2020 Census Map to support get out the count efforts for the Census. Toggle between this tab and the GOTV tab to refine out voter outreach work. To learn more about what and how to use the “Demographic Layers” portion of the map: sign up for one of our Technical Assistance office hours here.
Click the “>” next to the 3 Community Asset categories to review all asset options. Select or “turn on” any combination of assets to see them on the map.

Click any of the tabs within the dashboard to review demographic information on the selected boundary.

Review demographic data and assets. Combine this data with GOTV Voter Outreach data to better inform outreach.

10. Other Tabs

Click the Information “!” tab to learn more about data sources and usage.

Click the About “?” tab to learn more about who developed the map and how to contact us.
Key Terms

Voter Participation Score
A score developed by NYC Votes under the New York City Campaign Finance Board. This score identifies the percentages of active voters in a geographic area, and ranks them on how often they have participated in previous elections of all levels. The score we use is the “weighted” score, which weighs people who have lived longer in NYC more than people who have recently moved to NYC.

Early Voting
An alternative to Election Day voting that started in 2019. Early Voting in NYC for the November 3rd, 2020 Presidential Election begins on October 24th and continues until Election Day. Anyone planning to vote in person can vote early. However, locations in the City are limited.

Voter Registration
A term to describe people who have registered to vote.

Active Voters
Any voter that has voted in a past election.

Inactive Voters
Any voter that may have moved and/or has not responded to a voter confirmation notice sent to their address.

USPS Dropbox
A United States Post Office mailbox, where any person can drop post-stamped mail for an addressed recipient- this includes a mail-in ballot. These dropboxes exist on the street and inside buildings, notably USPS Post Offices.

Party Affiliation
A voter’s affiliation identifies what political party (i.e. Democratic, Republican, Green, Independent, etc.) they are registered under. A voter doesn’t have to be affiliated with a specific political party.
Data Sources

Voter Participation Score
Source: NYC Votes; NYCCFB

Voter Registration
Source: NYS Board of Elections

Early Polling Locations
Source: Vote Early NY

Polling Locations
Source: NYC Open Data

USPS Dropboxes
Source: USPS PO Locator via Github

Electoral Districts
Source: NYC Open Data

NOCCs
Source: NYC 2020 Census Office

Zip Codes
Source: NYC Open Data

School Districts
Source: NYC Open Data

Police Precincts
Source: NYC Open Data

Council Districts
Source: NYC Open Data

Community Districts
Source: NYC Open Data

Senate Districts
Source: NYC Open Data

State Assembly Districts
Source: NYC Open Data

Congressional Districts
Source: NYC Open Data
Connecting Now and in the Future

Let’s get out the vote!

Share this resource far and wide within your network of partners and collaborators, and email vote@hesterstreet.org with any questions, feedback, or thoughts on the future of this map. Your feedback will help us plan, expand and update this map for future elections and critical resident engagement. We’re looking forward to hearing from you and to continue sharing our map updates as we move into the new year.

Still want to learn more about how to use this map?

You can sign up for a TA session here.