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Executive Summary

If it was easy, it would have been done already. We heard ourselves make this statement repeatedly as we described to people what we wanted to do and why we wanted to do it.

What did we want to do? We wanted to address the problem of candidates refusing to debate each other in public. Why did we want to do it? Because we believed people who want to earn votes in order to get elected to public office should face the public and respond to questions and concerns the public has for them. These questions and the answers to them led us to create the Ohio Debate Commission, a collaboration of media, academic, and civic organizations dedicated to fostering fair and substantive debates that encourage participation in our democracy.

This report details the origin of the idea, the steps we took to give life to that idea, and the results of our work over the course of the 2018 Ohio general election cycle. The first section describes the start-up phase. The second section tells the story of how we flew the plane while still building it. And the third section describes the outcomes, lessons learned, and recommendations for the future.

In the most basic terms, success for the collaboration would be measured by whether others would support the idea with time and money, whether they would collaborate to organize and plan debates, and then, would they do whatever was needed to help produce debates that would meet the high quality being demanded. By all those measures, we succeeded. However, the Ohio Debate Commission is comprised of determined partner organizations who, in the context of a new collaboration with a lofty focus, frequently discussed expectations that turned out to be beyond our capacity in this initial cycle. These included media innovations intended to expand public participation from around the state as well as targets we wanted to meet for how our efforts would reflect Ohio’s diverse population.

The effort succeeded as a result of the commitment made by dozens of individuals and organizations. We hope this review of how the effort began and what it accomplished will help improve our future efforts and the efforts of others who share these perspectives.
I. Initiating the Project

Over several months in 2017, as The City Club of Cleveland worked with campaigns and political parties to organize primary debates in the Ohio governor’s race, a glaring need became apparent. When it comes to debates, there is no agreed upon authority, no shared sense of what the best practices are, and no clear idea among the various stakeholders and civic groups as to what debates ought to look like or strive to accomplish. What that means in practice is that organizing debates is often left up to organizations unprepared for the responsibility and unfamiliar with the work. Additionally, the events become vulnerable to manipulation by campaigns eager to gain any advantage or perception of advantage they believe they can acquire.

Given these factors and the growing need in our communities for civic leadership, the concept of a debate came from the belief that well-managed debates play a critical role in informing citizens about the issues and candidates. The City Club expanded on this idea in its initial seed grant application to the George Gund Foundation, in which it proposed hiring a consultant to investigate the feasibility of an Ohio Commission on Political Debates (now called the Ohio Debate Commission, the Commission, or ODC for short). The work, to occur over approximately three months, would include 1) identifying and contacting potential Commission members to determine their interest in participating, 2) meeting with party and political leadership statewide to understand their concerns and suggestions for the scope of work of the Commission, and 3) convening a meeting of people and organizations who commit to discuss the feasibility, role, and scope of responsibilities for a commission. Like many feasibility projects, this first phase work also would function as an early tool for marketing and engagement to stakeholders.

In this initial stage, the goals of the work were 1) to explore best practices and technical support for hosting debates, and 2) to determine the feasibility of launching a statewide commission to disseminate those practices and support. At the conclusion of the planning phase, findings from research, interviews, conversations, and the statewide meeting would be offered in the form of a written report that would include recommended next steps. The Gund Foundation approved the application and work began in late February 2018.

What Else Was out There

The original outcome of the grant’s work was expected to be a resource that provided best practices and technical support to organizations looking to host debates —League of Women Voters, media organizations, colleges and universities, and others. We believed that such a resource could put the power back in the hands of voters and the organizations who represent them.

However, within two weeks of the initial grant period, our research showed that a more apt approach might be to create a collaboration that would host debates. Specifically, we learned that over the last 12 to 13 years, journalists, academics, and civic boosters in at least three states - Indiana, Utah, and Washington State - had come together and formed statewide debate commissions as a solution to the same problem we had identified.
Based on extensive interviews with these commissions’ leaders and a review of their bylaws, articles of incorporation, websites, annual reports, 990s, and promotional documents, we compared the efforts in these three states. We looked in-depth at four specific areas: finances, governance, technical, and content. We used this information as an educational tool at our initial convening in April 2018 and later in forming the Ohio commission.

The top takeaways from our contact with the other statewide debate commissions include:

- the commonality of the concern around the decline in candidates saying yes to election year debates;
- the success that can be achieved with collaborations of media, universities, and civic organizations in getting candidates to say yes to high quality, widely televised political debates;
- the unanimity in the desire to have the media, academic institutions, and civic organizations assert a kind of template and set of expectations for what public debate should look like; and
- the primacy of having a plan for financial sustainability.

This research led us to re-frame our focus: We concluded that, if we’re going to gather presidents, vice presidents, general managers, news directors, and other highly-placed individuals from Ohio media, academic institutions, and civic organizations, then the recommendation for how to address the problem should be the formation of a commission that would host debates, and not merely a hub of information to be tapped by others.

**Surveying Support**

The convening date was set for Thursday, April 26, 2018 at the Columbus Foundation which provided space on an in-kind basis. The Columbus Metropolitan Club provided assistance with staffing and logistics.

More than 100 individuals from approximately 80 different media, academic, and longstanding civic institutions were invited to participate. In preparation for the meeting, we spoke at length with people who couldn’t attend but wanted to be involved as the project progressed. A week before the meeting, each expected attendee received a one-page backgrounder on the project’s hopes, plus documents summarizing interviews with the heads of the Indiana Debate Commission and the Seattle CityClub Washington State Debate Coalition, and a list of people expected to attend the meeting.

On April 26th, more than 50 leaders attended in-person and six participated by phone in a 2.5 hour meeting focused on discussing the concept and creation of a statewide organization that
would host political debates. [See Appendix One] The participants were leaders from civic organizations, commercial and public broadcast, digital, and print media organizations from across Ohio, as well as professors and administrators from institutions of higher education.

The first hour was dedicated to describing the problem and solutions in place in other states. Then the leaders caucused at their tables for approximately twenty minutes to brainstorm 1) obstacles to forming a statewide commission and 2) assets each individual and organization could bring to such an effort. The group broke for lunch and reconvened to discuss the core values a commission would need to embrace. Following this portion, a straw poll of those present indicated unanimity in wanting to take action that would further the creation of a commission. After almost half the room indicated an interest, more than 20 people signed up to join the committees (called formation committees) that would be set up to create the commission and put on the debates. Before leaving, the group agreed that success likely would include a minimum of two debates to be held in Fall 2018 under the moniker of the debate commission.

After the meeting, a press release was written and distributed to approximately 90 individuals in media, academia, and civic organizations. It resulted in a modest amount of coverage around the state and across platforms. In addition, plans were made for three attendees of the convening to drive to Indianapolis on April 30th and observe the Indiana Debate Commission’s in-studio debate for their three-way U.S. Senate GOP primary. The representatives of the newly formed commission spent over two hours discussing debate operations with several Indiana board members and volunteers.

Creating the Collaboration

The project consultant from the first phase proceeded to coordinate the individuals who had identified themselves at the April meeting as willing to work by committee to design the commission. The three committees were Governance (structure, 501c3 or not, etc.), Technical (delivery, distribution, etc.), and Content (debate format, question gathering and vetting, moderators/panelists, etc.). Each committee had approximately 10 members who either self-selected onto a committee or were placed on one or more in order to balance the type of media, location within the state, gender, and so on reflected in each committee.

From May through August, the committees communicated through email and joint conference calls that took place every other Monday. Those calls became weekly at the start of September. Additionally, the members of each committee spoke with one another as scheduled in coordination with the committee’s chair and members. For nearly all these calls, agendas were developed and shared prior to the call, minutes were taken and shared, and any questions or tasks that were identified as needing attention were pursued by the project director or project intern, and at times, committee members.

Primary topics discussed on the conference calls and considered throughout May and June included but were not limited to the following:

- agreed upon values that would drive decision-making
- the number of debates to be put on by the commission
- the electoral races to be considered for a debate
- location of the debates, in terms of the geographic location and venue
- whether there should be a live audience versus a studio-only debate
- the form and format for the debates
- criteria for candidate invitation to the debates
- moderator selection criteria and process
- question submission and selection process
- innovation around presentation and use of the content created by the debates

Nearly all decisions were made by consensus of who was on the call and, when appropriate, through email communications to the entire formation committees membership. Participation on the calls, based on a total of approximately 30 members across the three committees, was between 15-25 throughout the six months following the April convening.

On rare occasions, a question or survey was sent out to all the April convening attendees. For example, the formation committees members felt that the first threshold question was, how many debates should be put on. We created and sent out a Google form to all April convening attendees and asked them to let us know if they supported the newly formed commission putting on one or two debates. The response was overwhelmingly supportive of two debates and the formation committees’ members accepted that decision.
II. Building While Flying

The primary work during the six-months following the April convening centered on commission operations and putting on two debates in October 2018. Through the committee work, the collaboration:

- chose a name for the effort (Ohio Debate Commission);
- created a logo for the Ohio Debate Commission;
- created and launched a fully functional website;
- created and launched a Facebook page, Twitter handle, and Mailchimp newsletter;
- created, launched, and began to use a Slack workspace for communications;
- pursued and invited partners who had been unable to attend the April 26th meeting or had yet to respond to the idea of the commission to participate;
- sought out additional individuals and organizations interested in supporting the effort in whatever capacities seemed appropriate;
- solicited financial support from the 35-40 partner organizations already engaged;
- developed a template for a memorandum of understanding (MOU) to be used when meeting with candidate campaign representatives; and
- developed a budget with The City Club of Cleveland advancement staff that covered putting on two debates and pursued a fundraising plan to ensure resources would exist to meet the budget.

Although making significant inroads on all the expectations represented by the above list proved challenging in the face of the demands of putting on two high-quality debates and on the personnel and financial resources available, the collaboration’s capacity was sufficient for bringing the commission into being and producing the debates.

The committee structure and membership, especially for tech and content, in addition to the partner organizations’ commitment to the overall concept, enabled significant progress:
Total money raised equalled 75% of the projected budget, limiting the actual budget shortfall (very generously covered by The City Club of Cleveland) to 8.5% of the projected budget.

Other needs were met with in-kind contributions such as a satellite truck, facilities, and production staff time. [See Appendix Two]

Volunteers and additional debate personnel were secured.

Venue availability and expenses adjusted to the commission’s needs.

Logistical support was provided.

College students worked behind the scenes for both debates.

Media exposure and coverage of both the debates and the debate commission occurred.

In sum, the three formation committees functioned well and succeeded in using consensus to move forward on nearly every major decision made to put on the debates. The following descriptions of the decision-making process offer examples of the variety of choices we faced and how we faced them.

Selection of Races to Cover, Where, and When

Aiming to plan and put on debates for statewide candidates in five months was ambitious. For example, we learned from the other three statewide debate commissions that they each spent a minimum of twelve months and up to two years organizing and planning before they hosted a single debate. However, a survey of the partner organizations showed great support for putting on debates for two statewide races in Fall 2018. Reasons that drove this decision include 1) the lack of any gubernatorial debates in the 2014 election cycle, 2) all statewide positions would be open plus one U.S. Senate seat would be on the ballot, and 3) there would be no such races again until 2022.

The next decisions the ODC made were about electoral seat, geographic location, and date. The formation committee’s members agreed that the commission would aim to have one gubernatorial debate and one senate debate. While it would have been best for the commission to have multiple debates for one electoral seat, in its first time out and to establish credibility, doing two different races would serve as a better proving ground.

The recommendation for location was delegated to the technical committee. After a couple of discussions, it was agreed that Columbus should be the location for both debates. The formation committee members believed that Columbus offered a central location beneficial to the candidates, would likely have the most venue options, the Glenn College of Public Affairs at The Ohio State University generously and graciously offered to cover the facility rental costs if we used an OSU venue, and these reasons together meant that some of the most significant logistical challenges could be neutralized.

The primary concern resulting from this decision was that numerous parts of Ohio rarely if ever get to host statewide electoral debates. Several Commission participants voiced this concern and it was taken seriously in that we made sure to incorporate the statewide nature of what we were hoping to accomplish through other debate elements as they came up for decisions (e.g., moderators, question selection, getting the feed to as many regions in Ohio as possible, looking
to future debate cycles for venues outside the “three C’s” – Cleveland, Columbus, Cincinnati).

Regarding date selection, we reviewed the other statewide commissions’ general election debate schedules and also asked them about their experiences. Then, we took into consideration the limited time we had for pulling together the debates, and noted that Ohio’s early vote ballots would start to be sent out on Wednesday, October 10th. In the end, we targeted the first two weeks of October as being when we wanted to find venues available and hold debates.

Selection of Debate Venues

At least two of the three already-existing statewide debate commissions use an open call process to select venues. The commissions provide detailed information regarding what a possible venue needs to consider in order to be a contender, make the submissions available online, and then conduct in-person site visits before considering and selecting venues.

For Ohio’s first cycle, we asked the tech committee to guide us. Given the Glenn College’s valuable offer, we researched and visited several options at OSU. In addition, an ODC participant from Cox Media Group Ohio, based in Dayton, provided information related to the University of Dayton’s interest in hosting a debate. That interest and additional research led the ODC to look at several venues on UD’s campus. Last, several formation committee members inquired about the downtown Cleveland facilities of ideastream, located in Playhouse Square. As peers, several of the committee members knew of and recognized the uniquely comprehensive nature of ideastream’s capacities, as well as its history of hosting numerous successful, well-produced, and watched debates over many years. However, Cleveland was considered a location of last resort due to the central role The City Club of Cleveland played in initiating and supporting the early work of the Commission and the desire to embrace and demonstrate statewide balance in how the Commission operated.

With a project plan deadline of August 1 for the selection of debate venues, plans for and visits to venue began in late June and early July. Over approximately six weeks, 15 venues in three cities (Cleveland, Columbus, and Dayton) were visited in-person by a total of 11 formation committee members from different parts of the state, while another five to ten venues were named and researched but were not visited in-person.

By the middle of August, it became clear that neither Columbus nor Dayton were going to be viable options in the eyes of the candidates’ campaigns. With agreement from the ODC partner organizations, the geographic venue location was changed to Cleveland. The venue options then were narrowed to the Glasscock Family Foundation Ballroom on the campus of Cleveland State University for the gubernatorial debate and ideastream’s Westfield Studio Theatre for the U.S. Senate debate.

Negotiations with the Campaigns

Political debate negotiations are often one of the main stress points in planning a debate, according to the other statewide debate commissions and several formation committee members. To address this concern, the Commission partner organizations spent time, in advance of speaking with any campaign or its representatives, thinking through a variety of elements related
to debates. This work set the basics for the memorandum of understanding the Commission developed and used when meeting with the campaigns’ representatives.

To build the template, we began with a review of an agreement and an addendum to that agreement provided to us by the Indiana Debate Commission. We also used an example of a document used by The City Club of Cleveland for its candidate debates. Next, we tweaked a draft document that combined these forms with the priorities and preferences voiced by commission partner organizations. Finally, this draft was tailored to the U.S. Senate campaigns and the gubernatorial campaigns prior to meeting with their debate representatives. It was then proffered to the representatives when we met with them as a starting point.

Contact between the relevant candidate campaigns and the Commission was initiated by a partner organization. Once the campaigns’ representatives agreed to meet with commission representatives, the members of the formation committees were invited to represent the ODC in those meetings. In all, a total of nine individuals from nine different organizations represented the ODC with campaign debate representatives in preparation for two debates and one forum (one meeting for the governor’s race, one for the U.S. Senate race, and one for the Governor of Ohio forum).

Three distinctions about this process should be noted:

1) The Commission, from its inception, has sought to honor and respect the effort an individual puts forth when he or she runs for an elected office and demonstrates a sincere effort to serve the public. The Commission therefore feels strongly that such efforts deserve well-produced and widely viewed debates that highlight the authentic candidate while also engaging the public. By having the Commission set a high standard for the basic elements of the debate, we believe more time, thought, and attention can be given to substance and content.

2) The other three statewide debate commissions made strong recommendations that we determine debate basics in advance of speaking with the campaigns, and to treat those basics as non-negotiable. This advice extended to dates, locations, and time, as well as format, moderators, tickets, and audience, among other aspects. The reasoning behind this stance was that one purpose and goal in having a statewide debate commission is to neutralize the ability or likelihood of political campaigns and candidates using the existence or possibility of a debate as a political foil. By setting the basics and the tone of how the debate would unfold, the Commission can demonstrate the expectation that people who run for public office will debate in public.

3) The Commission expected to use the same MOU template for both debates. However, as previously mentioned, interactions in pursuit of the two separate debates unfolded differently, especially once the Commission representatives began to directly discuss debate specifics with the campaign representatives.

While we consider both debates successful, internal processes and resource allocation and consumption differed substantially. These differences affected the experience from an operating
standpoint. Going forward, we expect to examine these areas of difference more thoroughly for the benefit of future cycles and others' debates.

Specifically, we observed the following two sets of differences between how the gubernatorial debate as compared to the U.S. Senate debate came together:

1) Approach to and perspective on the Commission

The gubernatorial campaign representatives for the two major party candidates met with the Commission because they thought a commission was a good idea whose time had come and they wanted to help the Commission come into being. The U.S. Senate campaigns' representatives met with the ODC representatives because they trusted the involvement of the various partner organizations as being reliable producers of debates.

This difference in approach resulted in different styles of engagement between the gubernatorial campaigns and the Commission, and the U.S. Senate campaigns and the Commission, particularly as interactions began. Thus, gaining familiarity with one another and sustaining our focus on producing the highest quality debates we could, in conjunction with the candidates and their teams, helped ensure our working together.

2) Interactions with campaign representatives and memorandums of understanding

The gubernatorial campaign representatives for the two major party candidates had a combined experience of several decades across multiple campaigns. When ODC representatives met with them, they told us they were actively involved in extensive deliberations and compromises in an effort to reach an agreement for 2018 general election debates. They informed us that if and when they committed to participation in debates, they would let us know. The MOU that resulted from their talks and eventual decision to participate was signed by the campaigns; the template the Commission developed was not utilized. A handoff of debate responsibilities to different campaign personnel added a layer of communications when questions or concerns arose and we sought to follow the ODC's mission and vision while staying within the campaign's MOU.

For the senate debates, the representatives were campaign managers and communications people, who remained the same from the beginning of interactions through the end of and following the debates. The MOU that governed the senate debate was essentially the template shaped by the Commission and filled in with specifics as agreed to by the campaigns' representatives and the ODC representatives. It served as a document that was amended as the need arose, usually as the result of a request for clarification. This process resulted in a debate that included more elements reflective of the style and substance the Commission anticipates for the future. These factors also led to a simplified chain of communications when issues arose.
Development of Criteria for Debate Invitations

Commission discussions around debate invitation criteria began shortly after the formation committees organized in May 2018. The conversations included consideration of multiple elements:

- review of criteria used by the other statewide debate commissions (each uses different criteria);
- regular checks of the Ohio Secretary of State website to see who had been certified for inclusion on the statewide ballot;
- search and review of polls conducted for the Ohio gubernatorial race and the U.S. Senate race;
- requesting polling firms to add the name(s) of non-major party candidates in the gubernatorial and U.S. Senate races;
- research into the feasibility of the Commission conducting its own poll; and
- examination of the campaigns of the non-major party candidates regarding money raised, social media presence, public event appearances, endorsements, media coverage, number of donors, etc.

After spending weeks gathering this information and considering it in light of the mission, vision, and goals of the Commission in its first year, the formation committee members agreed:

1) Invitations would be made to candidates within the “major parties” as defined by the Ohio Revised Code.

2) We would craft other methods that would provide opportunities for the public to hear from and learn about others candidates for governor and senate beyond the major party candidates.

3) This information would be publicized on the Commission website in order to be transparent as well as offer a way for people with questions or concerns to contact us via email, a contact form or telephone.

These decisions were not made lightly or without a sense that the best case scenario would be for the Commission’s capacity to expand to the point where its clout and its resources would allow it to embrace a broad definition of inclusivity, including when it comes to criteria for extending debate invitations.

By the third week of September, in accordance with a desire to provide a vehicle through which Ohioans could learn about all candidates for governor (there were no U.S. Senate candidates other than the major party candidates on the ballot), a date was set and invitations were sent to all gubernatorial candidates inviting them to the Governor of Ohio Forum, held at The City Club of Cleveland on October 15, with the traditional City Club format of a moderated discussion followed by 30 minutes of question and answer.

In the days following the October 8, 2018 gubernatorial debate in Cleveland, the Libertarian Party
of Ohio and the Green Party of Ohio pursued complaints against The City Club of Cleveland (based on its serving as fiscal agent for the ODC) and numerous other entities in Ohio through the Ohio Elections Commission (OEC) hearing process connected to their not being on the debate stage with the two major party candidates. In December 2018, the OEC found no violations and dismissed the complaints.

Putting on the Debates

By the end of the first week of September, dates, locations, and venues were agreed to for two one-hour televised debates: an Ohio gubernatorial debate at the Glasscock Family Foundation Ballroom in the Cleveland State University Student Center on Monday, October 8 at 7pm, and a U.S. Senate debate at the Westfield Studio Theatre at the Idea Center, also in Cleveland, on Sunday, October 14, at 6pm. This timing gave the Commission approximately four weeks to put on the gubernatorial debate and five weeks to put on the senate debate.

During those weeks, the Commission’s formation committee members worked on numerous sets of activity. The tech committee and content committee took the lead in areas appropriate to their expertise:

- campaign communications, for working with the campaigns to respond to any questions or concerns that arose
- production team activities, including making sure all production needs got met (i.e., lighting, staging, any and all other equipment, personnel, broadcasting capabilities, etc.)
- venue-related specifics such as making sure each venue possessed all the necessary spaces and amenities including parking, catering, security, tech and audiovisual capacity for the media
- debate particulars including all work related to moderators and panelists, ticketing and building an audience, question submission and selection, publicizing the debate, and relationships with the venues
- media credentialing and broadcast feed registration tasks

It had always been the Commission’s expectation that between the two debates, we would have variations in order to help us compare formats, styles, and processes, as well as other elements. Examples include:
● audience or no audience
● size of audience if we had one
● methods for getting an audience
● moderator and panel combinations
● question submission (online, social media, YouTube etc.)
● question origin differences (Ohioans, moderators, journalists, etc.)
● watch parties that might provide content before and after the debate
● social media gallery in the debate venue doing live coverage

While a number of these aspects provided experiences for comparison in future cycles, the two elements that made the biggest impression on us, both during the execution and for purposes of planning were 1) venue type (space already equipped to broadcast, versus hall or auditorium without built-in broadcast capabilities) and 2) date and time.

Regarding venue type, the other three statewide debate commissions all indicated to us that doing a debate outside of a broadcast studio could be prohibitively expensive unless the venue was willing to in-kind its facility rental fees and would be able to meet and cover the expenses of some or all of the production needs that would have to be brought in. This proved to be all too true: the gubernatorial debate which took place in a ballroom on the campus of an urban public university cost tens of thousands of dollars in invoiced and in-kind expenses. Meanwhile, the cost of putting on the U.S. Senate debate, which was held in the ideastream studio theatre, a space already equipped to broadcast and with seating for up to 200+ individuals, was approximately 5% of the gubernatorial debate total.

For these reasons and others noted in the “Lessons Learned” section below, we note here how hard it would be to overstate the extent of ideastream’s contribution to the ODC effort and how indispensable their contribution was to both the affordability and the quality (as detailed in the “Lessons Learned” section below) of the entire ODC initiative. Likewise, The City Club of Cleveland’s commitment to the quality of the debates extended to significant financial support that proved essential to the ODC meeting debate venue expenses, and covering a shortfall previously noted in this report.

In terms of date and time, the formation committee members agreed that the first two weeks of October would be the best weeks for holding a debate for a statewide political race. This decision was based on the amount of time desired for putting the debate together, the amount of time available between the debates and election day, and the often cluttered calendar for September due to holidays, sports, academic, and conference schedules. However, legislative session and campaign schedules influenced the date and time in ways that deeply affected one of the primary goals of the Commission: to have the debates broadcast live in every DMO in the state.

The reasons this goal became difficult to meet were that 1) campaigns prioritize their legislative schedule and this leads to legitimate challenges coming from Congress’s session schedule, 2) football season is in full swing, and 3) an uninterrupted programming hour is a lot of opportunity cost to ask commercial broadcast entities to take on. The Commission wanted to to make sure the partner organizations needs were heard and prioritized as we planned and executed the debates. Thus, the Commission partner organizations accepted the Monday, 7pm time on
October 8 (Columbus Day) for the gubernatorial debate, and Sunday, 6pm on October 14 for the U.S. Senate debate. We will continue to prioritize dates and times that optimize the live broadcast reach of our debates.
III. Outcomes and Lessons Learned

Stories of Success

Each of the three statewide debate commissions in existence when we began our effort told us that in their first year, they defined success as being able to put on a debate, plain and simple. Later in this report we describe a few measures that are more specific, but we agree that being able to make the debates happen and at the level of expectation that we had, in the amount of time we had, was indeed a success.

Moreover, within that effort, many instances - some planned, some not so planned - occurred that also are evidence of success. Here are just three stories of success from the ODC’s initial cycle:

1. Creating new and different opportunities for student engagement

Since its inception, the Ohio Debate Commission had plans to engage with Ohio’s institutions of higher education and by extension, the students at those institutions.

To that end, multiple universities are involved at the partner organization level, and that included two professors from Ohio University’s Scripps College of Communication, Ben LaPoe, Visiting Assistant Professor Director of the Political Communication Certificate, and Jerry Miller, Professor and Associate Director for Undergraduate Studies. Professors LaPoe and Miller initiated the idea of student trips to each of the two debates and proceeded on their own to sign up students and, in consultation with both the tech and content committees, plan a trip for them to the debates. Driving both ways in one day, Prof. LaPoe and three students volunteered at the gubernatorial debate, and Prof Miller and four students volunteered at the senate debate (two of those students were also credentialed and worked out of the media room). We’ve received numerous kind accolades from them as a result of the participation but most recently received this from Ben: “I did want to pass on many, if not all, of the students who were able to get involved said their experiences with the debates were the highlight of the semester for them.”

2. Connecting partner organizations with each other in new ways

For purposes of the initial convening in April 2018, our outreach to potential partner organizations extended to dozens more organizations beyond the initial 15 identified in the Phase 1 proposal. This effort led to between 40 and 50 organizations from across the state and across media platforms participating in that April convening. Following that meeting and increasing in frequency
over time, the news directors, general managers, presidents, editors, and producers asked us either to be connected to a specific person or organization they’d encountered as a result of the Commission work, or asked us, as a resource, if we knew someone who could assist them with something. On a handful of occasions, these individuals would specifically remark on how appreciative they were for us bringing this group together, because of the way in which it was breaking down silos, both natural (between kinds of work) and constructed (because of competition). The value of this function was cited by the partner organizations at our December post-election cycle debrief as a benefit of the Commission’s existence. In addition, the camaraderie that developed and the belief in what the ODC was achieving influenced broadcasters to make their feeds of debates, whether an ODC debate or not, available for free to other broadcasters when previously they’d never taken that step.

3. Exciting the public in a positive way about elections and debates at a challenging time

For both debates, the public was invited to submit both written and video questions online. For the senate debate, two questions were selected to be asked by members of the live audience and project director Jill Zimon had the honor of calling those two people to let them know that their question had been selected and to confirm that they were still expecting to be present in the audience and would be prepared to ask the question. The genuine excitement and pleasure the two people expressed on the phone and in person on the night of the debate is nearly indescribable. One of the two was coming from Columbus with his 20-something daughter and spoke with incredible seriousness about how critical he thought this engagement with the debate and the electoral process was not only to him, but even more so as a parent to a voting-age child. This kind of feedback motivates and inspires us to remain committed to putting on debates, even with it being a labor and resource intense tool of democracy.

C-SPAN catalogue of videos for the Ohio Debate Commission (screenshot)
Lessons Learned

We initially identified four measures by which we would determine “success” for our work in the first cycle:

1. Number and diversity of Commission participants
2. Quality of the two debates that are produced in 2018
3. Awareness and perception of the Commission among the general public
4. Support for building an ongoing Ohio Debate Commission

Regarding each measure:

1. Number and diversity: Appendix One lists the Commission participants and includes information about sector (media, academic, or civic institution), and geographic location. We wanted to be sure we heard from organizations representing as much of the state as possible, but were uncertain as to the level of interest we’d encounter, so we planned for 25-40 individuals for the original convening. After reaching out to over 100 people, nearly 60 individuals attended either in-person or by phone. Once that group committed to forming the commission, we wanted a minimum of 20 people to join the formation committees and we eventually had 33-35.

2. Quality of the debates: We point to the following aspects of the ODC’s debates as metrics related to assessing quality:
   a. The debates were moderated by Ohio-based media industry professionals selected through a process used by the formation committee members, and followed by a smaller ad-hoc committee focusing on final moderator selection.
   b. The debate moderators and selected Ohioans (two by YouTube video and two in-person, all at the senate debate) administered well-considered questions. The process for collecting and vetting questions involved steps such as the public submission of questions, an ad-hoc vetting committee review of every question submitted, and a subsequent review and decision-making process conducted by the moderators of the specific debate and the lead production individual.
   c. The desired production quality was ensured by the unwavering commitment to the ODC by ideastream. The expertise of their organization and personnel resulted in the highest quality in both ODC debates, regardless of the medium through which people engaged with the content. These elements include but are not limited to each venues’ specifics, as well as overall set design, equipment, furniture, lighting, cameras, and numerous other aspects. For the debate held outside a studio (Cleveland State University Glasscock Ballroom), partner organization and NBC-affiliate in Cleveland WKYC’s mobile production unit enabled the ODC to broadcast the event professionally.
   d. Making certain that there were as few unknowns as possible prior to each debate allowed for energies to be available if and when they were needed, wherever they might be needed. Walk-thrus with the candidates and run-thrus with the moderators provided time for everyone to acclimate to the staging, timing systems, sound systems, and cameras.

3. The general public’s awareness of the ODC began after the publication of news items that covered the April 30, 2018 convening. We sought to increase awareness with the launch of a periodic newsletter, Twitter handle, and Facebook page. Once the senate and gubernatorial
debates were announced, awareness could be measured by the number of Ohioans using online tools to communicate with the ODC directly, request tickets for the senate debate, and submit questions for either or both debates. Our partner organizations often mentioned the ODC in their coverage of Ohio’s 2018 elections; this coverage helped widen the ODC’s geographic footprint. We received approximately 200 emails and phone calls, more than 230 requests for tickets, approximately 75 questions to be considered for inclusion in the debates, had 216 Twitter followers, and nearly 400 “likes” and followers of our Facebook page. In addition, during both debates, our designated hashtag (#ohsendebate and #ohgovdebate”) showed up as trending according to Twitter.com and Trendsmap.com. For the senate debate, the hashtag actually trended nationally with more than 4600 tweets in 14 hours.

4. Directly following the two debates held in October 2018, the partner organizations communicated by phone, through emails, and in-person at a debrief. They stated a desire not only to continue to work together but to move forward on creating an independent organization capable of formalizing, and further developing the work already begun. In the first quarter of 2019, among activities indicative of their desire to build an ongoing statewide debate commission, the partner organizations approved 1) having the Cleveland Marshall law clinic prepare documents for incorporation and a 501c3 application, 2) bringing on professional fundraisers to strategize and pursue ODC financial sustainability, and 3) stepped up to assess the application for the 2020 presidential debates.

Anecdotally, we also had the following realizations:

1. From the beginning, we articulated a priority in “building for balance” and wanted to have a diverse set of partner organizations from media, academia, and civic organizations, reflective of Ohio. However, the composition overall in the first year was media-heavy and we must investigate how to get more education and service organizations engaged in the work, particularly as we create roles for governance, membership parameters, and otherwise establish the ODC as an ongoing entity.

2. Although the Commission took care and thought in developing a template for the MOUs, building while flying resulted in many aspects of the debates being far less firm prior to signing the memorandum than desired. This would include aspects such as dates, times,
location, moderator, and audience composition and size being more negotiable than might be advisable.

3. The expense of the gubernatorial debate was beyond our means, and possibly also beyond what we could advise as being worth it in the future, unless substantially more funding comes to the Commission and other terms were met. Much of the expense was due to the specificity of the MOU’s pre-set arrangements and our eagerness to make everything work. In the future, we hope for a far better balance.

4. Although there was some trepidation about not demanding that partner organizations view debate commission debates as exclusive (meaning they would cease solicitation or production of their own gubernatorial or U.S. Senate debates), by sticking with this approach, we engendered cooperation and collaboration, and enabled new connections among media across the state. In some instances, other debate organizers followed the Commission’s lead in terms of working to make their debates widely available and for no cost.

5. Several goals were identified but not fully pursued due to a need for all resources - both human and financial - to be put into production of the two debates. These goals include:

- Secure support from political parties, legislative caucus groups, political office-holder associations, and other similar political groups.
- Communicate the Commission’s strategy and progress to a larger group of interested parties including funders, elected officials, etc.
- Identify and invite participants from numerous concentric circles of stakeholders to join the effort including voters, students, special interest groups, partisan and nonpartisan organizations, etc.
- Develop marketing and engagement tools for all Commission stakeholders.
- Support fundraising activities including developing sponsorship strategies that identify qualified partners, helping to prepare proposals and reporting on progress and next steps.
IV. Conclusion

The Ohio Debate Commission was created as a response to the decline in the frequency and number of public debate invitations electoral candidates would accept. Its creation, as a solution to that problem, took into account why this decline was occurring and how a nonpartisan, statewide collaborative of media, civic, and academic institutions could reverse or at least halt that decline. This idea and approach generated enough interest and support for the resulting project to host and produce two high quality statewide debates, both of which were accessible to all Ohioans across a wide variety of media platforms. This report has offered a deep dive into this initial effort at stopping and turning around the decline in public debate appearances by candidates. As an initiative for which support continues in earnest, we believe it is one that benefits all Ohioans and look forward to what comes next.

Classic Productions truck and exterior of Cleveland State University Student Union and Glasscock Ballroom

Playhouse Square chandelier outside ideastream, October 14, 2018 evening of U.S. Senate debate at Westfield Theatre
V. Recommendations

Based on the expressed belief from the partner organizations that these last several months have been an investment in a solution to the problem of a decline in public debates by candidates running for public office, we make the following recommendations regarding next steps in creating a sustainable and effective Ohio Debate Commission:

**Recommendation #1** The Commission’s public activity will slow down but it should continue to operate.

Why: The partner organizations agree that 2019 should be spent firming up and further developing the ODC organization itself. Therefore, the resources available for continuing the work of the ODC needs to be focused on activities that fulfill those goals.

**Recommendation #2** The Commission’s operations should transition to a focus, most immediately, on sustainability (i.e., funding), structure (i.e., lean agile 501c3 or a skeletal year-round staff augmented with a seasonal volunteer corps, etc.), and governance. Activities would include building a budget and securing interim funding to maintain momentum through December 2019.

Why: The partner organizations have a desire to continue the ODC and its work by transitioning from fiscal agency with The City Club of Cleveland to an independent organization. This transition is desired because being an independent entity will offer greater flexibility to pursue the mission of fostering fair and substantive debates that encourage participation in our democracy.

**Recommendation #3** A discussion around projected future needs in terms of debates should be undertaken by the Commission.

Why: The mission was created in mid-2018 in response to a specific set of perceived needs that had accumulated over several years. An assessment of those needs should be ongoing. This assessment would be both specific – in terms of forecasting which seats are open when, but also around the extent to which the ODC should provide any other services such as being a support for other organizations.

**Recommendation #4** The Commission should take time to examine the questions for democracy that exist within the concept and implementation of political debates, and consider how answers to those questions might inform what debates look like down the road.

Why: Changes in the media industry, voting systems, demographics, and even governance demand that we consider not only tradition but also innovation and the emergence of new demands or needs of citizens. The ODC needs to examine these aspects in a planful, thoughtful way and determine their impact on the work the ODC does and hopes to do.
**Recommendation #5** The Commission should continue to work with the other statewide debate commissions and plan to come together with them and other people interested in the creation and functioning of statewide debate commissions at a 2019 national summit or unconference.

Why: As of March 2019, people from at least 11 states have either expressed an interest in creating or have established a statewide debate commission, including five states just in the 2018 cycle (California, Maryland, Nebraska, Ohio, and Virginia). We were able to get up and running within less than a year because of the experience and willingness to share of the Indiana, Utah, and Washington debate commissions’ work. We want to make sure that our learning from one another continues apace with the demand and is available to those who can benefit from it.

**Recommendation #6** The Commission needs to to determine candidate debate invitation criteria, and should ensure that this work is done in a timely way and shared widely.

Why: The existence and emergence of candidates who are not affiliated with one of the two political partisan parties currently recognized as a “major party” under Ohio law is a constant and in some states, is on the rise. For us in Ohio, this means we need to discuss and decide upon criteria for candidate debate invitations in order to fulfill our mission to Ohioans.

**Recommendation #7** The Commission should follow up on and explore suggestions made by its current partner organizations as to how to position itself as a potential presidential primary debate host in 2019 or 2020.

Why: In 2018, the partner organizations felt their new collaboration had succeeded in ensuring that Ohioans across the state would be able to experience at least one gubernatorial and one U.S. Senate debate. Their satisfaction with this accomplishment has them hoping the ODC can host a 2018 presidential primary debate, and further press the case that statewide debate commissions are a tangible answer to the concerns the ODC’s creation has set out to address.

**Recommendation #8** Financial sustainability must be a top priority following the creation and launching of a structure.

Why: The enthusiasm and desire to create and participate in the ODC collaboration carried its efforts in 2018 but cannot, should not, and must not be relied upon beyond that initial experimentation period. Based on ongoing research related to the appeal and need of a statewide debate commission, locally and nationwide, we believe the recognition is there and the case can be made for supporting the establishment of an independent Ohio statewide debate commission and the ODC is in position to pursue this recommendation.
Acknowledgements

Major contributors to the Ohio Debate Commission:

   - The City Club of Cleveland
   - The Char and Chuck Fowler Family Foundation
   - Cleveland Foundation
   - Cleveland State University
   - The George Gund Foundation
   - Ideastream
   - The Nord Family Foundation

Thanks to the following organizations for their expertise, time and financial support of the Ohio Debate Commission:

   - 91.7 WVXU Cincinnati
   - Akron Beacon Journal/Ohio.com
   - The Blade, Toledo
   - Cleveland.com
   - Cincinnati.com
   - The Columbus Dispatch
   - Columbus Metropolitan Club
   - Dayton Daily News
   - The Enquirer - Part of the USA Today Network
   - Hannah News Service, Inc.
   - John Glenn College of Public Affairs
   - League of Women Voters of Ohio
   - Miami University
   - Ohio Association of Broadcasters
   - Ohio News Media Association
   - Ohio Politics
   - Ohio Public Radio and Television Statehouse New Bureau
   - Ohio University Political Communication Certificate Program
   - Paul Beck, Emeritus Professor of Political Science at the Ohio State University
   - The Plain Dealer
   - The Press Club of Cleveland
   - Radio One
   - Spectrum News (Charter Communications)
   - WBNS
   - WHIO Radio
   - WHIO TV
   - WKSU-FM
   - WKYC-TV, Channel 3
   - WLWT Cincinnati
   - WOSU Public Media
   - Your Voice Ohio
Appendices

Appendix One: List of Partner Organizations
Appendix Two: Activity List
Appendix Three: Statement of Income and Expenses
Appendix Four: Media Coverage, Photographs, Archival Links
Appendix Five: Website Resources
## Appendix One: List of Partner Organizations

The list below includes the fifteen entities originally named in the grant proposal (noted with an asterisk), attendees of the April 2018 convening, and entities considered to be "partner organizations" of the Ohio Debate Commission.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Organization</th>
<th>City/Region</th>
<th>Sector</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Advance Ohio/Cleveland.com*</td>
<td>Cleveland/Northeast Ohio</td>
<td>Media</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Akron Beacon Journal/Ohio.com*</td>
<td>Akron</td>
<td>Media</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Akron Press Club*</td>
<td>Akron</td>
<td>Media/Civic</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The Blade</td>
<td>Toledo</td>
<td>Media</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Cincinnati.com*</td>
<td>Cincinnati</td>
<td>Media</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The City Club of Cleveland*</td>
<td>Cleveland</td>
<td>Civic</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Columbus Dispatch*</td>
<td>Columbus</td>
<td>Media</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Columbus Metropolitan Club*</td>
<td>Columbus</td>
<td>Civic</td>
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<tr>
<td>Dayton Daily News*</td>
<td>Dayton</td>
<td>Media</td>
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<td>Dispatch Magazines</td>
<td>Columbus</td>
<td>Media</td>
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<tr>
<td>The Enquirer - Part of the USA Today Network*</td>
<td>Cincinnati</td>
<td>Media</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>John Glenn College of Public Affairs*</td>
<td>Columbus</td>
<td>Academic</td>
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<tr>
<td>Greater Cleveland Association of Black Journalists</td>
<td>Greater Cleveland</td>
<td>Media/Civic</td>
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<td>The George Gund Foundation</td>
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<td>Civic</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Hannah News Service</td>
<td>Columbus/Statewide</td>
<td>Media</td>
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<tr>
<td>ideastream (WCPN/WCLV/WVIZ)*</td>
<td>Northeast Ohio</td>
<td>Media</td>
</tr>
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<td>League of Women Voters of Ohio*</td>
<td>Columbus/Statewide</td>
<td>Civic</td>
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<td>Miami University</td>
<td>Oxford, Ohio</td>
<td>Academic</td>
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<td>NBC4 / WCMH Media Group</td>
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<td>Media</td>
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<tr>
<td>Ohio Association of Broadcasters</td>
<td>Columbus/Statewide</td>
<td>Media/Civic</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ohio Debate Commission</td>
<td>Cleveland/Statewide</td>
<td>Civic</td>
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<tr>
<td>Ohio News Media Association; AdOhio &amp; Ohio News Media Foundation</td>
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<td>Media/Civic</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ohio Politics</td>
<td>Dayton</td>
<td>Media</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ohio Public Radio and Television Statehouse News Bureau</td>
<td>Columbus/Statewide</td>
<td>Media</td>
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<tr>
<td>Ohio University*</td>
<td>Athens</td>
<td>Academic</td>
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<tr>
<td>OSU/College of Arts and Science and Mershon Center*</td>
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<td>Academic</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The Plain Dealer*</td>
<td>Cleveland/Northeast Ohio</td>
<td>Media</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The Press Club of Cleveland</td>
<td>Cleveland</td>
<td>Media/Civic</td>
</tr>
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<td>Radio One</td>
<td>Cleveland/Statewide</td>
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<td>Spectrum News (Charter Communications)</td>
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<tr>
<td>University of Akron Bliss Institute of Applied Politics*</td>
<td>Akron</td>
<td>Academic</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>WBNS</td>
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<td>Media</td>
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<td>WXIX</td>
<td>Cincinnati</td>
<td>Media</td>
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<td>WYSU*</td>
<td>Youngstown</td>
<td>Media</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Youngstown Vindicator*</td>
<td>Youngstown</td>
<td>Media</td>
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Appendix Two: Activity List

Partial list of activities accomplished by the Ohio Debate Commission after initial April 2018 convening of prospective partner organizations:

- Established three committees that balanced organizational type and regional representation.
- Identified co-chairs for each committee.
- Set goals and objectives for each of the committees.
- Conducted tri-weekly, then biweekly, then weekly group phone calls with the two most active committees: Tech and Content.
- Conducted three polls of partner organizations to make strategic decisions about the debates.
- Researched more than two dozen possible venues statewide.
- Set guidelines for venue site visits.
- Conducted 15 site visits in three cities (Columbus, Dayton, and Cleveland).
- Developed strategy for debate moderator selection.
- Developed process for managing outreach and vetting of public questions.
- Crafted a template MOU to use during debate negotiations with the campaigns.
- Built a website, and established a Twitter handle and Facebook page.
- Solicited ODC member organizations for contributions to help support the project raising more than $15,000.
- Created systems for committee communication including Google Drive and Slack workspace.
- Held informational meetings with community organizations and funders.
- Held debate negotiations with representatives of four statewide campaigns.
- Met with university representatives regarding a range of engagement from hosting debates to engaging students.
- Created a Mailchimp newsletter that was sent weekly from xx to xx to the xx people who signed up on our website.
- Identified a number of possible sponsors and philanthropic funders who were approached about funding the project. These included Ohio AARP, Knight Foundation, Ohio News Media Foundation, Ohio News Media Association, Nord Family Foundation, Columbus Foundation, Cleveland Foundation, The George Gund Foundation, and Char and Chuck Fowler Family Foundation.
- Created budgets for each debate to track expenses and in-kind contributions.
- Created and documented work and materials for the purpose of compiling a playbook for future debates and organizations interested in putting on debates.
- Planned and executed two statewide debates and one candidates forum.
- Developed a strategy for managing media credentials and shared access to content to all media partners.
- Conducted tech walk-thru meetings for each debate location.
- Coordinated volunteer activity to support the debates.
- Implemented media promotions for two debates and the gubernatorial candidates forum.
- Hosted a post-election meeting with member organizations in Columbus to review outcomes, budget, and next steps.
Appendix Three: Statement of Income and Expenses

Ohio Debate Commission

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Revenues</th>
<th>Project to date</th>
<th>Project Budget</th>
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<tr>
<td>Contributions and support</td>
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<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>Commission members</td>
<td>$ 15,250</td>
<td>$ 15,000</td>
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<tr>
<td>Other support</td>
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<td>Foundation</td>
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<td>50,000</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Total Contributions and Support</strong></td>
<td><strong>65,250</strong></td>
<td><strong>97,720</strong></td>
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<td>Other income (in-kind)</td>
<td>104,811</td>
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<td><strong>Total Revenues</strong></td>
<td><strong>170,061</strong></td>
<td><strong>227,120</strong></td>
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<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Expenses</th>
<th></th>
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<td>Direct program expenses</td>
<td>91,963</td>
<td>64,300</td>
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<td>Project personnel</td>
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<td>Legal and grant writing</td>
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<td>Marketing expenses</td>
<td>23,500</td>
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<td>Website and telephone, supplies</td>
<td>1,757</td>
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<tr>
<td>Parking, dues, staff travel and meetings</td>
<td>4,356</td>
<td>1,600</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Total Expenses</strong></td>
<td><strong>189,276</strong></td>
<td><strong>227,120</strong></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Income (Loss) from Operations $ (19,215) $ -

Commission Members

| Advance Ohio                    | $ 1,000         |                |
| Cleveland State                 | 3,500           |                |
| Cincinnati Enquirer             | 1,000           |                |
| Columbus Metropolitan Club      | 1,000           |                |
| Cox Media Group                 | 1,000           |                |
| Hannah News Service             | 500             |                |
| Ohio News Media Foundation      | 500             |                |
| Press Club of Cleveland         | 250             |                |
| Radio One                       | 1,000           |                |
| Toledo Blade                    | 250             |                |
| League of Women Voters          | 250             |                |
| Spectrum                        | 1,000           |                |
| WLWT                            | 1,000           |                |
| WOSU                            | 1,000           |                |
| WVXU                            | 1,000           |                |
| Ohio Association of Broadcasters| 1,000           |                |

$ 15,250

Foundation

| The George Gund Foundation      | $ 20,000        |                |
| Cleveland Foundation            | 15,000          |                |
| Fowler Family Foundation        | 10,000          |                |
| Nord Family Foundation          | 5,000           |                |

$ 50,000

In-kind Donations

| Falls Communications            | $ 3,500         |                |
| University of Chicago           | 5,000           |                |
| Classic Teleproductions Inc.   | 1,000           |                |
| Cleveland State University      | 12,311          |                |
| WKYC                            | 3,000           |                |
Appendix Four: Sample Media Coverage

Debate News Coverage


Coverage about the Ohio Debate Commission


- Ohio Debate Commission to host forum for all gubernatorial candidates at The City Club of Cleveland (https://my.lwv.org/ohio/article/ohio-debate-commission-host-forum-all-gubernatorial-candidates-city-club-cleveland)

Ohio Debate Commission mentions in national articles

- End the debate over campaign debates (https://www.washingtonpost.com/opinions/end-the-debate-over-campaign-debates/2018/09/21/7b26df1a-b51f-11e8-a2c5-3187f427e253_story.html)

- Local view: Nebraska needs dedicated independent debate commission (https://journalstar.com/opinion/columnists/local-view-nebraska-needs-dedicated-independent-debate-commission/article_e98a11a7-2f40-58f8-b7a3-e6fa49ff82ac.html)

Appendix Five: Website Resources

Mission, Vision, Partner Organizations: https://ohiodebatecommission.org/about

Watch debate archives: https://ohiodebatecommission.org/debatearchives

FAQs: https://ohiodebatecommission.org/faq

Contact Ohio Debate Commission
Email: info@ohiodebatecommission.org
Phone: (440) 544-6614