

# [***President Joe Biden is lapping Donald Trump when it comes to campaign cash — and he'll need it***](https://advance.lexis.com/api/document?collection=news&id=urn:contentItem:6BNS-K5X1-JC5B-G0N8-00000-00&context=1516831)

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**Body**

WASHINGTON — President Joe Biden’s reelection campaign is [*raising gobs of cash*](https://apnews.com/article/democrats-election-2024-fundraiser-new-york-ebfbc81d3b70f38745ae00c7ce6a382d). And it has an election-year strategy that, in a nutshell, aims to spend more — and spend faster.

Not only has Biden aimed to show himself off as a [*fundraising juggernaut*](https://apnews.com/article/election-2024-biden-campaign-fundraising-b108bb7e26ec765917ec2f6d6a04bcda) this month, but his campaign is also making [*significant early investments*](https://apnews.com/article/biden-campaign-strategy-state-of-union-trump-36731990165e47bd451235d6b5ff31ab) both on the ground and on the airwaves — hoping to create a massive organizational advantage that leaves [*Republican Donald Trump scrambling to catch up*](https://apnews.com/article/republican-presidential-election-trump-battleground-community-centers-e2ff949e3dd0d0bd278b9ce4b5bcfc2d).

But while the money pouring in has given [*Biden and the Democrats*](https://apnews.com/hub/joe-biden) a major cash advantage, it’s also becoming clear Biden will need it. Throughout his life in business and ***politics***, Trump’s provocations have earned him near limitless free media attention. Biden, meanwhile, has often struggled to cut through the noise with his own message despite holding the presidency.

That means Biden is going to need oodles of cash to [*blanket battleground states*](https://apnews.com/article/biden-trump-battleground-super-tuesday-republican-democrat-c02530a6e86e63f72eb6a616c16b0b4a) where a few thousand votes could mean the difference between victory or defeat. Add to that the challenge of reaching millennials, as well as even younger voters, who formed an important part of his 2020 coalition, in a far more fractured media ecosystem that skews toward streaming services over conventional broadcast and cable.

Biden's organizational and outreach effort began in earnest this month, with the campaign using his [*State of the Union address*](https://apnews.com/article/state-of-union-biden-gaza-ukraine-israel-1a42ff9d4ef3e0f2753e43ac8d39fc18) as a launching pad to open 100 new field offices nationwide and boosting the number of paid staff in battleground states to 350 people. It’s also currently in the middle of a $30 million television and digital advertising campaign targeting specific communities such as Black, Hispanic and Asian voters.

In one example of the incumbent president's organizational advantage, his reelection campaign in February had 480 staffers on the ground, compared with 311 to that of Trump and the Republican National Committee, according to Biden campaign officials.

"We’re ramping up campaign headquarters and field offices, hiring staff all across the country before Trump and his MAGA Republicans have even opened one single office," Biden boasted Friday in New York [*during a meeting of his national finance committee*](https://apnews.com/article/biden-democrats-unity-fundraiser-gaza-palestine-obama-colbert-clinton-bf5ee813454735ebb24ac4c50ff372bc), which included 200 of his largest donors and fundraisers from in and around the city.

A massive ground game disadvantage didn’t prevent [*Trump*](https://apnews.com/hub/donald-trump) from winning the presidency in 2016, a fact Democrats keenly remember.

“It’s one of the stubborn challenges of Trump,” said Robby Mook, campaign manager for Hillary Clinton’s 2016 presidential bid. “Trump is Trump’s best organizer, and Trump can motivate people from the podium.”

But, Mook added, the [*Biden campaign*](https://apnews.com/article/trump-biden-2024-strategy-a542c061048ed8556a4955e83b480ec9) is doing what it needs to do, pointing to the State of the Union as a powerful example of how to effectively mobilize the base and harness the anti-Trump energy that will inevitably motivate many Democrats this year.

“The most magical and the scariest part of ***politics*** is, you never know until Election Day,” Mook said. “And so I wouldn’t want to leave anything on the table if I were them, and the great part about having a resource advantage is, you get to have all these different things.”

Even Biden’s bricks-and-mortar campaign is likely to be far more costly this year.

Unlike 2020, when many Americans were hunkered down due to the pandemic, Biden will need to travel more while also building a political infrastructure that will be far more expensive than the socially distanced, virtual campaign he waged from his basement the last time around.

His reelection campaign will also have expenses that Trump won’t have to confront, such as [*reimbursing the federal government for use of Air Force One*](https://apnews.com/article/president-biden-campaign-travel-664a7d5265d98469ce20869050924242). So far, it has reimbursed $4.5 million for use of the official presidential aircraft for political activity, according to the campaign.

Mook said decisions about how to strategically invest the campaign’s cash are never as nimble as the staff wants them to be, and there is not only a risk in spending too much, too fast — but also spending far too late in an election year.

Last fall and summer, Democrats fretted about Biden’s early lack of fundraising and campaign activity. Writers’ and actors’ guild strikes in Hollywood didn’t help, either — [*effectively sidelining the pro-labor union president*](https://apnews.com/article/biden-california-fundraiser-hollywood-2024-campaign-spielberg-a46108115a7037c81d8490c29bbb5493) from raising money in a region that has long bankrolled the party’s political ambitions.

Fast forward to the present and the second-guessing about his fundraising operation has tamped down. Aside from raking in millions at high-dollar events around the country — and bringing in $26 million at an event featuring Biden, Barack Obama and Bill Clinton on Thursday evening — the president has frequently pointed to the 500,000 new donors who have contributed in recent weeks, arguing that he's expanding his appeal.

Now, even donors lukewarm to the president are contributing, Democratic Party donors and fundraisers say.

“I think people really want to hear what they have to say,” said Michael Smith, a major Hollywood donor and fundraiser, who hosted a Los Angeles event earlier this year featuring rocker Lenny Kravitz and held another event last week in Palm Springs with the president’s wife, Jill Biden. “They realize this is an investment.”

Trump campaign officials concede that Biden and the Democrats will likely have more cash to spend, though they argue that Trump will still be able to run an effective campaign given his ability to attract media coverage.

“Our digital online fundraising continues to skyrocket, our major donor investments are climbing, and Democrats are running scared of the fundraising prowess of President Trump," said Steven Cheung, communications director for the Trump campaign. "We are not only raising the necessary funds but we are deploying strategic assets that will help send President Trump back to the White House and carry Republicans over the finish line.”

But given Trump’s propensity for making explosive remarks, that can also cut both ways, which Democrats are sure to exploit by using their cash advantage to run ads. Trump’s legal fees from the myriad of court cases he is tied up with are also sure to be a drag on his cash situation. Records show his political operation has shelled out at least $80 million to cover court costs over the past two years.

“Trump promises to be a Dictator on Day 1, suspend our Constitution and bring back political violence even worse than January 6. His MAGA agenda is so toxic and extreme that hundreds of thousands of Republicans in swing states voted for Nikki Haley over him, even after she dropped out — how unique!” Biden campaign spokesperson Lauren Hitt said. “Donald Trump has no resources or even the will to bring those critical voters back.”

There’s also the open question of whether Trump will be able to break through in the same ways he did in 2016, when he was a political novelty. Or as he did during the 2020 election, when he held the presidency and was a ubiquitous presence at a time when locked-down Americans were glued to their TVs.

“The media landscape and where voters get their news has changed and so assumptions based on Trump’s ability to dominate mainstream media conversations should be questioned,” said Josh Schwerin, a Democratic strategist who formerly worked at Priorities USA, the Democrats’ primary super PAC during the 2020 presidential campaign.

“Fewer voters are getting their news from traditional outlets and finding ways to get information in front of them is getting harder and harder — and that takes money," he said. "Both candidates are going to have to do this. And this is one place where having a financial advantage is going to be a big benefit to the Biden campaign.”

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