

2010

Civic Life in America:

KEY FINDINGS ON THE CIVIC HEALTH OF THE NATION



ISSUE BRIEF

Corporation for
**NATIONAL &
COMMUNITY
SERVICE** 



NATIONAL CONFERENCE
ON
CITIZENSHIP

THE CORPORATION FOR NATIONAL AND COMMUNITY SERVICE

The Corporation for National and Community Service (CNCS), an independent federal agency, plays a vital role in supporting the American culture of citizenship, service and responsibility. CNCS is a leading grant-maker in supporting service and volunteering. CNCS is providing information on civic engagement as part of its mission to improve lives, strengthen communities, and foster civic engagement through service and volunteering. Through Senior Corps, AmeriCorps, and Learn and Serve America programs, CNCS provides opportunities for Americans of all ages and backgrounds to address critical community needs. To learn more information, visit www.nationalservice.gov.

NATIONAL CONFERENCE ON CITIZENSHIP

Founded in 1946 and chartered by the U.S. Congress in 1953, the National Conference on Citizenship (NCoC) provides information on the nation's civic life. The organization tracks, measures and promotes civic participation and engagement in partnership with other organizations. NCoC focuses on ways to enhance history and civics education, encourage national and community service, and promote greater participation in the political process. For more information visit www.ncoc.net.

ABOUT THIS PARTNERSHIP

This information about civic life is produced through a partnership between CNCS and NCoC. The Edward M. Kennedy Serve America Act, signed by President Obama in April 2009, authorized both organizations to produce this report annually with the assistance of the Bureau of Labor Statistics and the United States Census Bureau. This "Civic Health Assessment," as it is called in the Serve America Act, is meant to gauge how healthy America's communities are, based on how often residents engage in a variety of civic activities. As part of the joint release of *Civic Life in America*, CNCS and NCoC are also releasing a website to help community leaders better understand the state of their community's service and engagement activities. In conjunction with this release, CNCS and NCoC are providing training and technical assistance resources to help nonprofits and civic leaders capitalize on this knowledge. These resources will help communities augment and sustain diverse types of civic engagement and provide tools for communities to develop lasting solutions to their problems. For more information visit www.serve.gov/civic.

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Introduction

In his historic Gettysburg Address, President Abraham Lincoln expressed his hope for a new era of freedom and a nation that continued to be of the people, by the people, and for the people. He highlighted the importance of American participation in a healthy and thriving democracy. It is, in fact, this active participation in civic life that makes democracy in America work. The health of our republic relies on the opportunities made available for each citizen to contribute to building and maintaining the strength of their communities.

This Issue Brief, *Civic Life in America: Key Findings on the Civic Health of the Nation*, features national statistics, findings and key trends on civic engagement. These statistics, many of which are now published for the first time,¹ are produced through a partnership between the Corporation for National and Community Service (CNCS) and the National Conference on Citizenship (NCoC). The Edward M. Kennedy Serve America Act, signed into law by President Obama in April 2009, authorized both organizations to produce this report annually with the assistance of the Bureau of Labor Statistics and the U.S. Census Bureau.

CNCS provides this information in support of its mission to improve lives, strengthen communities and foster civic engagement through service and volunteering. This research also supports NCoC's objective as a congressionally chartered organization to promote important dialogue around civic engagement with the goal of strengthening citizenship in America. Most of the statistics presented here were collected through the Civic Engagement Supplement to the Current Population Survey (CPS), administered in November by the U.S. Census Bureau and the Bureau of Labor Statistics.² In the coming years, CNCS will continue to refine and develop measures of the capacity for individuals within communities to come together to address the nation's most pressing problems.

The "Civic Health Assessment," as it is called in the Serve America Act, is meant to gauge the health of America's communities by measuring how often residents engage in a variety of civic activities and to help civic leaders identify ways to strengthen the participation of citizens in their communities. The term "civic life", also used interchangeably with the term "civic engagement", can be used to describe diverse activities and generally includes *activities that build on the collective resources, skills, expertise, and knowledge of citizens to improve the quality of life in communities*.³ For the past few years CNCS has studied formal volunteering done through an organization. Now, with *Civic Life in America*, we are able to provide baseline data about how Americans engage civically in their communities through other formal and less formal means. In general, the data show that an overwhelming majority of Americans are engaged in at least one civic activity. This research marks the first time that such a comprehensive collection of data is available across these indicators for the nation, states and cities. It is with these data that we begin the serious conversation about the many ways people get connected to, and make a difference, in their communities. The results also offer an opportunity to learn and enhance our knowledge about civic engagement.

¹ Although other publications on civic engagement have been produced (including other federal government releases), this is the first of its kind. It contains information from CPS surveys from more than 100,000 people to produce statistics on national, state and city levels.

² For more information about the data used in this brief, please see the Technical Note on page 16.

³ This is a slightly abridged version of the definition used by the IUPUI Task Force on Civic Engagement, available at <http://schoe.coe.uga.edu/benchmarking/bei.html>, last accessed August 19, 2010.

Measuring Civic Life

Civic engagement is, in essence, the common thread of participation in and building of one's community. For example, political and non-political behaviors – which can be a part of civic engagement – range from traditional group-oriented activities, such as participation in community groups and membership associations, to activities that are done individually rather than collectively, such as voting. Civic engagement also encompasses activities that can be done either alone or with a group, such as volunteering. Finally, civic engagement can also include activities that people do with others, but which are less formal. These can include activities that family members or neighbors do together, such as talking about politics, exchanging favors with neighbors, gathering around the dinner table, or even engaging in online activities that allow people to stay connected to each other. Many of the most common forms of civic engagement are outlined within this Issue Brief.

While many varieties of social and civic activities could be classified as civic engagement, this Brief focuses on activities that fall within five main categories:

Service, including formal volunteering through an organization and less formal ways of helping others, such as working with neighbors to fix a community problem;

Participating in a Group, including memberships in associations and community organizations;

Connecting to Information and Current Events, including accessing news in print or online;

Social Connectedness, including the informal ways that people interact with their family, friends and others in their community, such as exchanging favors with their neighbors; and

Political Action, including registering to vote and voting.

Civic Life in America supports CNCS' strategic goals. Today our nation faces a number of daunting challenges, including economic recovery, under-performing schools, and unexpected needs arising out of disasters. We know that government cannot be the sole purveyor of solutions. It is precisely because of the magnitude and multitude of these and other complex challenges that we must reconfigure the way we think and talk about engaging Americans in addressing them. Today we face an all-hands-on-deck moment; the need is great, and these data help us to understand the ways people are already getting involved, as well as opportunities to increase and sustain diverse and new types of engagement, and make fact-based decisions to build tools and designate resources to meet community needs.

This rich set of data offers knowledge that allows community leaders to expand opportunities to serve (especially those in greatest need), build enduring capacity and embrace innovation. If we continue to consider service as only those activities done through formal organizations or programs, we miss the opportunity to promote and support the many other powerful ways Americans get involved. By challenging ourselves to think about service and engagement more broadly, we push ourselves and the service sector to innovative approaches to finding and using the most effective solutions and building enduring capacity of communities to solve problems.

The National Findings section beginning on page four provides a more robust description of each of the categories and their indicators, as well as their respective rates of participation. Table A on page 17 contains the full set of national results for all indicators used in the Issue Brief. Additional statistics for regions, states, and major metropolitan areas, as well as tools and resources that can help communities foster greater civic engagement, can be found at www.serve.gov/civic.

Key Findings in this Issue Brief include:

- Americans are coming together to solve challenges. They are tilting towards the issues and not running away from them.
- People who serve by volunteering are more likely to participate in the other elements of civic life.
- Although volunteering and voting are the most common forms of civic engagement, there are many other ways to get involved.
- Use of the Internet is positively related to and can be a real boon to our civic engagement.
- Veterans are generally more involved in their communities than nonveterans.

I. National Results

Service

AMERICANS SERVE OTHERS IN THEIR COMMUNITY THROUGH FORMAL VOLUNTEERING AND LESS-FORMAL SERVICE.

Americans use service activities to make a positive impact in their communities by working together to address critical issues. In the midst of a tough economy, this is particularly important. Among the indicators in the Service category, volunteering with or through organizations is the most common. The nation's volunteer rate in 2009 rose to its highest level since 2005; a total of 63.4 million adults age 16 and older volunteered with one or more organizations.⁴ This demonstrates that Americans are tilting toward the issues, not running away from them.

Although volunteering and voting are two of the most familiar forms of civic engagement, there are many other ways to get involved. Millions of Americans also participate in “neighborhood engagement” activities by working with neighbors to address a community problem and/or attending public meetings that involve community affairs. Informal activities such as neighborhood engagement are important engines for local civic life, since they are often organized by neighborhood residents themselves without the help of an organization or institution. Between 2007 and 2009, about 18.6 million adults worked with their neighbors to fix a community problem. Some people, however, engaged in both formal volunteering and informal service. In fact, during this time period, about 5.1 percent of Americans (over 12 million people) both volunteered with an organization and worked with their neighbors to solve community problems.

TABLE 1.1: SERVICE ⁵	
ACTIVITY	PERCENT PARTICIPATING
Volunteered With an Organization	26.5%
Worked with Neighbors to Fix a Community Problem	7.9%
Attended Public Meeting	9.3%
MAIN VOLUNTEER ORGANIZATION – TYPE	
Religious	35.6%
Educational or Youth Service	26.6%
Social or Community Service	13.8%
Hospital or Other Health-Related Service	8.3%
Other Organization Type	6.9%
Civic, Political, Professional or International	5.4%
Sport, Hobby, Cultural or Arts	3.5%
MAIN VOLUNTEER ORGANIZATION – MOST POPULAR ACTIVITIES	
Fundraise or Sell Items to Raise Money	26.6%
Collect, Prepare, Distribute or Serve Food	23.5%
Engage in General Labor; Provide Transportation	20.5%
Tutor or Teach	19.0%

The percentages under Main Volunteer Organization – Type represent the percentage of volunteers who serve primarily with this type of organization. The percentages under Main Volunteer Organization – Activities represent the percentage of volunteers who perform this activity with their main organization.

For more on these results, please see the Technical Note on page 16.

⁴ Data for the Service indicators are collected through the CPS Volunteer Supplement, which has been administered by the Bureau of Labor Statistics and the Census Bureau every September since 2002. The rate reported in this sentence is the single-year rate for 2009. The 2009 national volunteer rate, however, is still lower than it was from 2003-2005, when it was 28.8 percent each year. For more statistics from the Volunteer Supplement, see the Volunteering in America (VIA), www.VolunteeringInAmerica.gov, last accessed August 19, 2010.

⁵ Data for these indicators come from the combined 2007-2009 Volunteer Supplements, to match the data published on the VIA website. Also, to match the VIA data, these statistics are based on the population of adults age 16 and older.

Participating in a Group

PARTICIPATING IN A GROUP AND/OR A VOLUNTARY ASSOCIATION IS CONSIDERED A STRONG LITMUS TEST FOR THE STRENGTH OF CIVIC ENGAGEMENT.

Although volunteering and other service activities are some of the most familiar forms of civic engagement, there are other ways to get involved. Observers have long noted the importance of participation in groups and membership associations in American civic life. Almost two hundred years ago, Alexis de Tocqueville saw voluntary associations as the primary engine for American democracy, allowing citizens to form bridges between their communities and their governments.⁶

Today, approximately 35 percent of Americans age 18 and over⁷ participate in one or more groups – the most common of which are groups associated with religious institutions, such as churches, synagogues, mosques and other religious organizations (18 percent).⁸



TABLE 1.2: PARTICIPATING IN A GROUP⁹

GROUP TYPE	PERCENT PARTICIPATING
Church Group or Religious Association	18.0%
School Group	15.4%
Sports or Recreation Association	10.3%
Service or Civic Association	6.8%
Other Group	5.6%
Participating in One or More Groups	35.1%
Served as Group Officer or Committee Member	10.1%

For more on these results, please see the Technical Note on page 16.

⁶ Elazar, Daniel J. 1999. "Tocqueville and the Cultural Basis of American Democracy." *PS: Political Science and Politics*, Vol. 32 No. 2 (June), pp. 207-210.

⁷ Data from the CPS Civic Supplement, which include voting statistics, are based on responses from individuals age 18 and older, as the minimum age to vote is 18.

⁸ In addition to participation in religious groups, many Americans connect with other members of their communities by attending religious or faith-based services. However, the religious groups question does not capture attendance at religious services or membership in a congregation.

⁹ Data for these indicators come from the combined CPS Civic Supplements from November 2008 and November 2009. We use the best available data for our statistics. Pooled data are more reliable than single-year data, especially for rankings found on the www.serve.gov/civic website. The data for the Service indicators, which are taken from the Volunteer Supplement, are pooled over three years (2007-2009), while the data that come from the Civic Supplement are pooled over two years (2008-2009) because we only have two years of data from the Civic Supplement. We will pool three years of data for the Civic Supplement results next year.

Connecting to Information and Current Events

ACCESS TO INFORMATION IS CENTRAL TO HELPING PEOPLE LEARN ABOUT THE STATUS OF THEIR COMMUNITY AND HOW COMMUNITY NEEDS ARE RELATED TO TRENDS IN THE AREA, STATE AND COUNTRY.

The indicators in this category address where people get information about civic affairs and how often they encounter information from various sources.¹⁰ For many, newspapers, television channels and other avenues for accessing news provide key sources of information on emerging trends, upcoming electoral issues and community events.

This Brief focuses primarily on how often people receive news and information from broadcast and print media. Of these media, television far and away remains the most popular source of information: 86 percent of adults get news from television “frequently” (at least a few times a week), while only 7.6 percent never use television as a news source. Given the levels of Internet usage and social media, it might be surprising that Other Internet [News] Sources such as blogs are comparatively far less common.



TABLE 1.3: CONNECTING TO INFORMATION AND CURRENT EVENTS¹¹

SOURCES OF NEWS AND INFORMATION	PERCENT ACCESSING SOURCE		
	FREQUENTLY ¹²	OCCASIONALLY ¹³	NOT AT ALL
Television	86.0%	6.4%	7.6%
Newspaper	67.5%	13.7%	18.9%
Radio	54.5%	11.9%	33.7%
News Magazine	16.8%	21.4%	61.8%
Other Internet Sources	19.7%	9.2%	71.1%
Discuss Politics with Family and Friends	39.3%	34.3%	26.4%

For more on these results, please see the Technical Note on page 16.

¹⁰ However, the questions also mention the Internet or online equivalent of each of these media. Thus, some of the respondents who get their news from a print or broadcast source may instead be using online media to gain access to news content.

¹¹ Data on these indicators come from the November 2008 CPS Civic Supplement. The questions were discontinued after 2008.

¹² The category “frequently” includes the original response categories “basically every day” and “a few times a week.”

¹³ The category “occasionally” includes the original response categories “a few times a month” and “once a month.”

Social Connectedness

SOCIAL CONNECTEDNESS ACTIVITIES FURTHER STRENGTHEN THE COMMON TIES BETWEEN PEOPLE AND PROMOTE CIVIC PARTICIPATION.

The indicators in the Social Connectedness category encompass everyday forms of social interaction with family members and community members. Unlike many of the activities in the other categories, these activities often do not take place within formal groups or organizations. They promote interest in working with others, which is an essential ingredient in many civic activities, and often stimulate more formal types of civic participation, such as group membership, political participation and engagement in service activities. The most common activity in this category is eating dinner with other members of the household. This can be a great activity to help jumpstart people’s interest in engaging in their communities in other ways. It is at the dinner table that families, friends and neighbors share their stories of the service they have done and about the groups with which they participate.



TABLE 1.4: SOCIAL CONNECTEDNESS¹⁴

ACTIVITY	PERCENT PARTICIPATING		
	FREQUENTLY ¹⁵	OCCASIONALLY ¹⁶	NOT AT ALL
Eating Dinner with Other Members of Household ¹⁸	89.1%	7.1%	3.8%
Talking to Family/Friends via Internet	53.6%	14.0%	32.4%
Talking to Neighbors	45.8%	35.9%	18.3%
Exchanging Favors with Neighbors	16.2%	41.3%	42.5%

For more on these results, please see the Technical Note on page 16.

¹⁴ Data for these indicators come from the combined CPS Civic Supplements from November 2008 and November 2009.

¹⁵ The category “frequently” includes the original response categories “basically every day” and “a few times a week.”

¹⁶ The category “occasionally” includes the original response categories “a few times a month” and “once a month.”

¹⁷ By design, survey respondents who lived alone were not asked how often they ate dinner with one or more members of their households. As seen in Table A, if residents of one-person households are included in the analysis, the “not at all” category increases from 3.8 percent of the population to 19.7 percent. Tables B, C, and D, which show the relationships between civic indicators, contain results for both versions of this indicator.

Political Action

VOTING IS ONE OF THE MOST COMMON WAYS IN WHICH AMERICANS PARTICIPATE IN PUBLIC LIFE.

Activities within the Political Action category represent attempts to influence local and national events and broader political outcomes through elections and other non-electoral ways. Voting is arguably one of the most traditional acts of civic engagement in America.¹⁸ Non-electoral forms of Political Action are not as common in the U.S. as voting; nonetheless, over 26 percent of Americans participated in one or more of the five additional Political Action activities covered by the survey.



TABLE 1.5: POLITICAL ACTION¹⁹

ACTIVITY	PERCENT PARTICIPATING
ELECTORAL PARTICIPATION	
Voted in the 2008 Election	57.1%
Was Registered to Vote, 2008 Election	64.9%
NON-ELECTORAL PARTICIPATION	
Showed Support for Party or Candidate	14.8%
Bought or Boycotted Product or Service Because of Producers' Political Values	10.7%
Contacted Public Official to Express Opinion	10.4%
Attended Meeting Where Political Issues Were Discussed	10.3%
Took Part in March, Rally, Protest or Demonstration	3.1%
Engaged in One or More Activities	26.3%

For more on these results, please see the Technical Note on page 16.

¹⁸ The national voting rate, a Political Action indicator reported in Table 1.5 above and in Table A on page 17, is calculated from certified vote totals in the 2008 presidential elections, divided by the estimated voting-age population, or VAP (18 and over). See the Technical Note on page 16 for details about data sources.

¹⁹ Data for registration come from the November 2008 CPS Voting Supplement. Data for the non-electoral participation indicators come from the November 2008 CPS Civic Supplement. Three of these indicators — showing support for a party or candidate, attending a meeting where political issues were discussed, and taking part in a march, rally, protest or demonstration — were discontinued after 2008.

II. Relationships Between Elements of Civic Engagement



ADULTS WHO VOLUNTEER ARE MORE LIKELY TO PARTICIPATE IN EVERY OTHER FORM OF CIVIC ENGAGEMENT.

The data in Table B on page 18 show that Americans who serve others by volunteering through or with an organization are more likely to participate in all of the elements of civic engagement identified in this Brief: joining in all of the political activities, participating in every kind of group, connecting to news and current events, and connecting socially with others. The same is true for other indicators in the service category;²⁰ working with neighbors to solve community problems and attending public meetings are both positively related to the other elements of civic engagement.

These positive relationships are particularly strong in the area of political action. Adults who participate in service are especially more likely to attend political meetings. In fact, 32.4 percent of those who worked with their neighbors to solve a community problem also attended political meetings, while only 8.5 percent of those who did not work with their neighbors did the same.

The relationships are also strong in the area of group membership – especially between service as an officer or participating as a member of a committee. For instance, 29.4 percent of volunteers also served as officers or members of a committee compared to only 4.4 percent of non-volunteers.

These results can be used by community leaders and service organizations to increase the level of citizen participation in solving community challenges. Some studies offer interesting reflections on the role of service in strengthening areas of citizen participation. One such study provides evidence that volunteering among youth today leads to civic engagement (particularly voting and volunteering) in adulthood.²¹ Another discusses the impact that national organizations have had on local civic engagement throughout American history and argues that service that reinforces a sense of national belonging is most likely to encourage meaningful community engagement.²²

²⁰ The service measures reported in the national profile and in Table A are calculated from 2007-2009 CPS data. The other participation rates for Service activities in Table B are calculated using data from people who participated in both the November 2008 Civic Engagement Supplement and the September 2009 Volunteer Supplement.

²¹ Hart, Daniel, Thomas M. Donnelly, James A. Youniss, and Robert Atkins. 2007. "High School Community Service as a Predictor of Adult Voting and Volunteering." *American Educational Research Journal*, Vol. 44, #1, March 2007, pp. 197-219.

²² Kersh, Rogan. 2007. "Civic Engagement and National Belonging." *International Journal of Public Administration*, Vol. 30, #6, pp. 595 – 613.

ADULTS WHO HAVE MORE FREQUENT SOCIAL INTERACTIONS WITH FRIENDS, FAMILY AND NEIGHBORS ARE MORE LIKELY TO PARTICIPATE IN OTHER CIVIC ACTIVITIES.

The Social Connectedness category contains four indicators: eating dinner with other members of one's household; talking with friends or family via the Internet; talking to one's neighbors (in person); and exchanging favors with one's neighbors. Scholars of civic engagement argue that regular social interaction breeds trust in others and increases access to information about social, political and economic events – both of which lead to increased civic engagement.²³

The results in Table C on page 20 support the idea that people who are socially engaged are more likely to be civically engaged in more conventional ways. The Political Action results in Table C show that people who stay in more frequent social contact with others are more likely, in general, to participate in electoral and non-electoral political activities. Additionally, the association between staying connected to friends and family via the Internet and participation in Political Action is particularly strong.²⁴ This could indicate that, rather than taking the place of more traditional forms of civic engagement, staying connected “virtually” is positively related to many forms of political participation.

Those who are more socially connected are also more likely to engage in formal and informal service activities²⁵ and are more likely to belong to groups or associations regardless of group type. Here, too, talking with friends and family via the Internet is more strongly associated with participation than the other forms of social connectedness.



²³ Henkin, Nancy, and Jenny Zapf. 2006-2007. “How Communities Can Promote Civic Engagement of People Age 50-Plus.” *Generations*, Winter 2006-2007, pp. 72-77. Kersh, Rogan. 2007. “Civic Engagement and National Belonging.” *International Journal of Public Administration*, Vol. 30, #6, pp. 595 – 613. Shah, Dhavan V., McLeod, Jack M. and Lee, Nam-jin. 2009. “Communication Competence as a Foundation for Civic Competence: Processes of Socialization into Citizenship.” *Political Communication*, Vol. 26, #1, pp. 102 -117. Verba, Sidney, Henry Brady, and Kay Lehman Schlozman. 1995. *Voice and Equality: Civic Voluntarism in American Politics*. Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press.

²⁴ The Kruskal's gamma (γ) statistic, reported in each table, is used to measure the strength of the association between two indicators. Values close to 1 indicate a strong positive relationship: engaging in one activity, or doing it more often, increases the likelihood of doing another activity or doing it more often. Conversely, values close to -1 indicate a strong negative relationship, and values close to zero indicate a weak or nonexistent relationship.

²⁵ Participation rates for Service activities in Table C are calculated using data from people who participated in both the November 2008 Civic Engagement Supplement and the September 2009 Volunteer Supplement. Formal service activities include volunteering with an organization; informal service activities include attending public meetings and working with neighbors to fix community problems.

USE OF THE INTERNET IS POSITIVELY RELATED TO AND CAN BE A REAL BOON TO OUR CIVIC ENGAGEMENT.



People who have access to the Internet in their homes and people who use the Internet wherever they have opportunity are more likely to get involved in every type of activity studied in this Issue Brief; moreover, adults who use the Internet on a regular basis, regardless of where they access it, are even more likely to be civically engaged.

Table D on page 22 shows that access to the Internet, using the Internet, and civic engagement are all positively related to one another. Published Census results from the Internet and Computer Use Supplement show that a large and growing percentage of Americans live in households that have Internet access (67.1 percent in 2007), but that a smaller percentage actually use the Internet (62.4 percent) from some location, inside or outside their homes.²⁶

Almost all the results in Table D show that people who live in a household with Internet access are more likely to be civically engaged than people living in a household without it, and that people who use the Internet are more likely to be civically engaged than non-users. What this tells us is that what we call the “digital divide” is not only about Internet access, but it is also about Internet use – particularly when it comes to determining who is most likely to engage civically. For example, residents of “Internet households” have a voting rate that is about 19 percentage points higher than that of non-Internet households. Furthermore, use of the Internet is positively related to and can be a real boon to our civic engagement. This difference increases to over 22 percentage points when Internet users are compared to non-users. Similar patterns emerge for most of the other indicators of civic engagement within the categories of Political Action and Participating in a Group.

Participation rates for the indicators in the Service category were also higher for people who live in households that have Internet access and higher for people who use the Internet. However, for the Service indicators – volunteering, working with neighbors to solve community problems and attending public meetings where community issues are discussed – there is no notable difference between those who use the Internet from their home and those who use the Internet from any location.

²⁶ These numbers are taken from Table 2, “Reported Internet Usage for Individuals 3 Years and Older, by Selected Characteristics: 2007,” which is available at <http://www.census.gov/population/www/socdemo/computer.html>, last accessed August 19, 2010. The Census statistics are based on all Americans ages 3 and above, while the statistics in Table D (on pages 22-23) are based on the 18-and-over population.

III. Demographic Findings

America’s richness exists in great part because of its diversity. The findings below demonstrate how different demographic groups are engaging civically. While in some cases there are similarities, in other cases there are not. Those differences provide an opportunity for us to further understand the ways in which groups of individuals are currently engaging, and opportunities to engage them further in other civic activities.

IN GENERAL, PEOPLE WHO HAVE HIGHER LEVELS OF EDUCATION ARE MORE LIKELY TO PARTICIPATE IN CIVIC ACTIVITIES.²⁷

As Table 3.1 shows, among adults over the age of 25, college graduates are the most likely to participate in key civic activities. The exchanging favors with neighbors category shows the least variation in participation across educational attainment categories, as the majority of Americans of all educational levels exchange favors with their neighbors to at least some degree.

TABLE 3.1: CIVIC ENGAGEMENT BY EDUCATIONAL ATTAINMENT

ACTIVITY	LESS THAN A HIGH SCHOOL DIPLOMA	HIGH SCHOOL GRADUATES, NO COLLEGE	SOME COLLEGE OR ASSOCIATE DEGREE	BACHELOR’S DEGREE OR HIGHER	HIGH SCHOOL GRADUATES (ALL) ²⁸
Voting, 2008 Election (CPS 2008)	31.3%	53.1%	67.7%	73.7%	64.5%
Participating in one or more non-electoral political activities (CPS 2008)	9.3%	17.8%	30.5%	42.3%	30.1%
Volunteering with an organization (VIA 2007-2009)	9.0%	18.5%	30.4%	42.2%	30.2%
Working with neighbors to fix a community problem (VIA 2007-2009)	3.0%	5.5%	9.4%	14.2%	9.6%
Exchanging favors with neighbors (at all) (CPS 2008-2009)	50.1%	57.7%	61.3%	64.7%	61.2%
Participating in one or more groups (CPS 2008-2009)	16.5%	26.5%	39.3%	52.3%	39.4%

For more on these results, please see the Technical Note on page 16.

²⁷ The BLS convention (as in the *Volunteering in the United States* brief, published by BLS and available at http://www.nationalservice.gov/pdf/volunteer_study_09.pdf, last accessed August 19, 2010) reports educational attainment only for adults age 25 and older, since many adults under age 25 might still be pursuing their education.

²⁸ This category contains all adults age 25 and over who have at least a high school diploma or its equivalent – that is, everyone in columns 2 through 4.

BABY BOOMERS ARE GENERALLY THE MOST CIVICALLY-ENGAGED GENERATION AT THIS POINT.

The results in Table 3.2, seen below, show that members of the Baby Boomer generation participate in many civic activities at a higher rate than other generations. Previous volunteering research indicates that there is a lifecycle of service; participation generally increases with age until mid-life, and then it begins to decrease as the volunteer moves into older age.²⁹ Table 3.2 suggests that a similar pattern occurs for many other civic indicators with the prominent exception of voting. If so, we would expect Generation X may soon surpass Baby Boomers as the most civically engaged generation as its members approach midlife.

TABLE 3.2: CIVIC ENGAGEMENT BY GENERATION				
ACTIVITY	MILLENNIALS (BORN 1982 OR AFTER)	GENERATION X (BORN 1965- 1981)	BABY BOOMERS (BORN 1946- 1964)	OLDER ADULTS (AGE 65 AND OLDER)
Voting, 2008 Election (CPS 2008)	35.6%	52.2%	64.4%	68.1%
Participating in one or more non-electoral political activities (CPS 2008)	17.8%	24.6%	30.7%	27.2%
Volunteering with an organization (VIA 2007-2009)	21.2%	27.7%	29.7%	23.7%
Working with neighbors to fix a community problem (VIA 2007-2009)	3.8%	7.7%	10.2%	8.4%
Exchanging favors with neighbors (at all) (CPS 2008-2009)	42.7%	57.6%	62.7%	61.7%
Participating in one or more groups (CPS 2008-2009)	27.6%	36.7%	37.6%	36.3%

For more on these results, please see the Technical Note on page 16.

²⁹ See *Volunteer Growth in America: A Review of Trends Since 1974*, by the Corporation for National and Community Service at http://www.nationalservice.gov/pdf/06_1203_volunteer_growth.pdf, last accessed August 19, 2010.

CIVIC ENGAGEMENT ACTIVITIES SHOW SIMILAR SCALES OF POPULARITY AMONG AMERICA’S RACIAL AND ETHNIC GROUPS.³⁰

For the majority of the racial and ethnic groups in Table 3.3 below, the most commonly practiced civic activity was exchanging favors with neighbors, followed by voting, being a member of a group, volunteering, participating in non-electoral political activities and working with neighbors to fix a community problem. For black/African Americans and for Americans who self-identify with more than one race, however, voting was the number one activity, rather than exchanging favors with neighbors, and non-electoral political action was more common than volunteering.

The greatest variation in engagement rates in a single category shown in Table 3.3 was in the category of voting, with more than a 29-percentage-point difference between the voting rates of black/African Americans in the 2008 election and Americans of Latino or Hispanic ethnicity. Voting rates for black/African American adults also exceeded those of every other racial and ethnic group.

TABLE 3.3: CIVIC ENGAGEMENT BY RACE AND ETHNICITY

ACTIVITY	MORE THAN ONE RACE DESIGNATED	AMERICAN INDIAN / ALASKAN NATIVE	ASIAN	BLACK OR AFRICAN AMERICAN	PACIFIC ISLANDER / NATIVE HAWAIIAN	WHITE	LATINO OR HISPANIC ETHNICITY, MAY BE ANY RACE
Voting, 2008 Election (CPS 2008)	54.3%	39.9%	32.1%	60.8%	40.0%	59.6%	31.6%
Participating in one or more non-electoral political activities (CPS 2008)	32.0%	18.0%	14.3%	23.1%	17.1%	27.5%	13.0%
Volunteering with an organization (VIA 2007-2009)	27.3%	20.8%	18.5%	19.1%	23.0%	28.0%	14.2%
Working with neighbors to fix a community problem (VIA 2007-2009)	8.8%	6.9%	3.8%	6.6%	7.8%	8.4%	3.4%
Exchanging favors with neighbors (at all) (CPS 2008-2009)	50.8%	50.3%	44.1%	46.7%	56.3%	60.0%	47.3%
Participating in one or more groups (CPS 2008-2009)	34.8%	31.3%	27.1%	32.0%	23.5%	36.1%	22.0%

For more on these results, please see the Technical Note on page 16.

³⁰ The CPS uses the standard race and ethnicity questions used by the U.S. Census Bureau. Respondents are asked whether they identify with each of five racial designations: White, Black or African American, American Indian / Alaskan Native, Asian, Native Hawaiian/Pacific Islander. Then, respondents were asked whether they identified as Latino or Hispanic (ethnicity), regardless of how they answered the race question. The race categories reported here include respondents who identified with one group only; respondents who identified with more than one group comprise a sixth race category. See www.serve.gov/civic for more data on civic engagement by race and ethnicity.

PEOPLE WHO HAVE SERVED IN THE MILITARY ARE GENERALLY MORE LIKELY TO PARTICIPATE IN CIVIC ACTIVITIES THAN THOSE WHO HAVE NOT.

Veterans³¹ are more likely than non-veterans to participate in all of the forms of civic engagement listed in Table 3.4 below, with one exception: They volunteer at a rate similar to the rest of the population. They are especially more likely to vote than non-veterans, with a difference in their voting rate of over 14 percentage points. Recent research shows that returning veterans want to serve their communities on the home front and that those who volunteer have easier transitions home than those who do not.³²

TABLE 3.4: CIVIC ENGAGEMENT BY VETERANS' STATUS		
ACTIVITY	VETERANS	NON-VETERANS
Voting, 2008 Election (CPS 2008)	70.9%	56.8%
Participating in one or more non-electoral political activities (CPS 2008)	33.1%	25.6%
Volunteering with an organization (VIA 2007-2009)	26.3%	26.4%
Working with neighbors to fix a community problem (VIA 2007-2009)	10.5%	7.8%
Exchanging favors with neighbors (at all) (CPS 2008-2009)	63.4%	56.9%
Participating in one or more groups (CPS 2008-2009)	39.5%	34.6%

For more on these results, please see the Technical Note on page 16.

PEOPLE LIVING IN CITIES ARE GENERALLY LESS ACTIVE IN CIVIC LIFE THAN PEOPLE LIVING IN THE SUBURBS OR IN RURAL AREAS.

For all the activities in Table 3.5 below, people living in suburban areas are about as likely to participate as those who live in rural areas. Except for non-electoral political activities, however, urban residents are less likely to participate in civic activities than people living in either suburban or rural areas. Rural residents are slightly more likely to work with their neighbors to fix a community problem and to exchange favors with their neighbors than people living in cities or suburbs.

TABLE 3.5: CIVIC ENGAGEMENT BY LOCATION OF RESIDENCE			
ACTIVITY	URBAN RESIDENTS	SUBURBAN RESIDENTS	RURAL RESIDENTS
Voting, 2008 Election (CPS 2008)	53.2%	59.7%	59.8%
Participating in one or more non-electoral political activities (CPS 2008)	25.9%	26.1%	25.6%
Volunteering with an organization (VIA 2007-2009)	22.5%	27.5%	28.4%
Working with neighbors to fix a community problem (VIA 2007-2009)	7.3%	7.9%	8.6%
Exchanging favors with neighbors (at all) (CPS 2008-2009)	51.0%	59.1%	62.3%
Participating in one or more groups (CPS 2008-2009)	32.2%	36.6%	35.0%

For more on these results, please see the Technical Note on page 16.

³¹ Active military personnel are not included in the CPS sample. The category of “veterans” includes those who have ever served on active military duty in the past – not necessarily during wartime – but are not currently in the military.

³² Yonkman, Mary, and John Bridgeland. 2009. *All Volunteer Force: From Military to Civilian Service*. Washington, DC: Civic Enterprises, November.

More information about civic indicators for other demographic groups can be found at www.serve.gov/civic.

Throughout the country, Americans participate in many different kinds of activities that address community problems and strengthen ties between family, friends and neighbors. The statistics in this Issue Brief, published here for the first time, show both the range of civic activities and how closely related they are to each other. People who are involved in service activities – from the formal (through or for an organization) to the informal (helping to fix a community problem) – are more likely to be involved in other types of civic activities, especially those considered to be the more traditional ones such as voting and group involvement. Also, those who stay connected to family, friends, neighbors and others in their social networks, even through the Internet, are more likely to participate in traditional civic activities.

TECHNICAL NOTE

Most of the statistics reported here come from the CPS Civic Engagement Supplement, which has been conducted by the U.S. Census Bureau each November since 2008 as part of the Current Population Survey (CPS). In even-numbered years, the Civic Engagement Supplement is paired with the CPS Voting Supplement, which the Census Bureau uses to produce data on voting and registration in national elections. The national voting rate, which is a Political Action indicator reported in Table A, is calculated from certified vote totals in the 2008 presidential elections, divided by the estimated voting-age population, or VAP (18 and over). Data on votes cast come from Dave Leip's Atlas of U.S. Presidential Elections; data on estimated VAP come from the Census Bureau's Population Estimates program. The CPS Voting Supplement is the data source for the rest of the voting and registration results used in the Brief, especially the cross-tabulations used to produce Tables B, C and D.

The civic engagement indicators in the Service category – volunteering with an organization, attending a public meeting and working with neighbors to fix a community problem— are collected through the CPS Volunteer Supplement, which has been administered by the Bureau of Labor Statistics and the Census Bureau every September since 2002. The indicators in the Social Connectedness and Connecting to Information and Current Events categories each had five response options in the CPS Supplement. For our purposes, the category “frequently” includes the original response categories “basically every day” and “a few times a week.” The category “occasionally” includes the original response categories “a few times a month” and “once a month”.

Several of the results published in Section II are calculated using the overlapping portion of the CPS samples from two different supplements. In Table B on page 18, the results are based on data from people who responded to the Volunteer Supplement of September 2008 and the Voting and Civic Engagement Supplements of November 2008 (about 41,800 responses).

In Table C on page 20, to investigate the relationships between the Service indicators and Social Connectedness indicators, the November 2008 Civic Supplement was merged with the September 2009 Volunteer Supplement to form a dataset composed of people who responded to both supplements (about 12,700 responses in all).

In Table D on page 22, the results are based on data from people who responded to the Internet and Computer Use Supplement of October 2007, and the Voting and Civic Engagement Supplements of November 2008 (about 27,400 responses). The exceptions are the results for the Service category, which come from respondents to the October 2007 Computer Use Supplement and the September 2008 Volunteer Supplement (about 28,400 responses).

In Tables B, C and D, Kruskal's gamma (γ) statistic is used to measure the strength of the association between two indicators. Values close to 1 indicate a strong positive relationship: engaging in one activity, or doing it more often, increases the likelihood of doing another activity or doing it more often. Conversely, values close to -1 indicate a strong negative relationship, and values close to zero indicate a weak or nonexistent relationship.

TABLE A: NATIONAL TOPLINE RESULTS

SERVICE	NATIONAL RESULTS	ROUNDED # PARTICIPATING
Volunteering with an Organization	26.5%	62,000,000
Main Organization - Civic, political, professional or international	5.4%	3,400,000
Main Organization - Educational or youth service	26.6%	16,500,000
Main Organization - Hospital or other health	8.3%	5,200,000
Main Organization - Religious	35.6%	22,000,000
Main Organization - Social or community service	13.8%	8,500,000
Main Organization - Sport, hobby, cultural or arts	3.5%	2,100,000
Main Organization - Other	6.9%	4,300,000
Working with Neighbors to Fix Community Problem	7.9%	18,600,000
Attending Public Meeting	9.3%	21,800,000
Top Four Activities - Fundraise or sell items to raise money	26.6%	16,500,000
Top Four Activities - Collect, prepare, distribute or serve food	23.5%	14,600,000
Top Four Activities - Engage in general labor or provide transportation	20.5%	12,700,000
Top Four Activities - Tutor or teach	19.0%	11,800,000
SOCIAL CONNECTEDNESS		
Eating Dinner with Household Members - Frequently	89.1%	164,400,000
Eating Dinner with Household Members - Occasionally	7.1%	13,100,000
Eating Dinner with Household Members - Not at all	3.8%	7,100,000
Eating Dinner with Household Members - Frequently*	74.3%	164,400,000
Eating Dinner with Household Members - Occasionally*	5.9%	13,100,000
Eating Dinner with Household Members - Not at all (incl. lives alone)*	19.7%	43,600,000
Talking to Family/Friends via Internet - Frequently	53.6%	113,900,000
Talking to Family/Friends via Internet - Occasionally	14.0%	29,800,000
Talking to Family/Friends via Internet - Not at all	32.4%	69,000,000
Talking with Neighbors - Frequently	45.8%	99,600,000
Talking with Neighbors - Occasionally	35.9%	78,100,000
Talking with Neighbors - Not at all	18.3%	39,900,000
Exchanging Favors with Neighbors - Frequently	16.2%	35,100,000
Exchanging Favors with Neighbors - Occasionally	41.3%	89,500,000
Exchanging Favors with Neighbors - Not at all	42.5%	92,000,000
PARTICIPATING IN A GROUP		
School Group	15.4%	34,000,000
Service or Civic Association	6.8%	15,000,000
Sports or Recreation Association	10.3%	22,800,000
Church or Religious Association	18.0%	39,800,000
Other Group	5.6%	12,300,000
Participating in One or More Groups	35.1%	79,500,000
Served as Group Officer or Committee Member	10.1%	22,200,000
CONNECTING TO INFORMATION AND CURRENT EVENTS		
News from Newspaper - Frequently	67.5%	147,600,000
News from Newspaper - Occasionally	13.7%	29,900,000
News from Newspaper - Not at all	18.9%	41,300,000
News from Magazine - Frequently	16.8%	36,500,000
News from Magazine - Occasionally	21.4%	46,700,000
News from Magazine - Not at All	61.8%	134,800,000
News from Television - Frequently	86.0%	188,500,000
News from Television - Occasionally	6.4%	14,000,000
News from Television - Not at All	7.6%	16,800,000
News from Radio - Frequently	54.5%	118,400,000
News from Radio - Occasionally	11.9%	25,800,000
News from Radio - Not at All	33.7%	73,200,000
News from Internet - Frequently	19.7%	40,900,000
News from Internet - Occasionally	9.2%	19,200,000
News from Internet - Not at All	71.1%	147,800,000
Discuss Politics - Frequently	39.3%	85,600,000
Discuss Politics - Occasionally	34.3%	74,800,000
Discuss Politics - Not at All	26.4%	7,500,000
POLITICAL ACTION		
Voting, 2008 Election	57.1%	131,400,000
Registered to Vote, 2008 Election	64.9%	146,300,000
Showed Support for Party or Candidate	14.8%	32,400,000
Bought or Boycotted Product or Service because of Producers' Political Values	10.7%	23,400,000
Contacted Public Official to Express Opinion	10.4%	22,700,000
Attended Meeting Where Political Issues Were Discussed	10.3%	22,500,000
Taken Part in March, Rally, Protest, or Demonstration	3.1%	6,700,000
Participated in One or More Activities	26.3%	59,300,000

* Residents of one-person households are coded as "not at all" rather than being excluded from the analysis. "Frequently" = "basically every day" or "a few times a week"; "Occasionally" = "a few times a month" or "once a month". For further information about the indicators, please see the note after Table D (page 23) or the Technical Note (page 16).

TABLE B: RELATIONSHIPS BETWEEN SERVICE INDICATORS AND OTHER CIVIC ENGAGEMENT INDICATORS

	NATIONAL	VOLUNTEERED	DID NOT VOLUNTEER	ATTENDED A PUBLIC MEETING	DID NOT ATTEND A PUBLIC MEETING	WORKED WITH NEIGHBORS	DID NOT WORK WITH NEIGHBORS
SOCIAL CONNECTEDNESS							
Eating Dinner with Household Members - Frequently	89.1%	93.6%	89.8%	94.6%	90.5%	94.7%	90.6%
Eating Dinner with Household Members - Occasionally	7.1%	5.1%	7.1%	4.1%	6.8%	4.1%	6.7%
Eating Dinner with Household Members - Not at all	3.8%	1.4%	3.1%	1.3%	2.7%	1.2%	2.7%
Strength of Association:		0.246		0.291		0.302	
Eating Dinner with Household Members - Frequently*	74.3%	77.3%	70.5%	76.5%	72.1%	76.2%	72.2%
Eating Dinner with Household Members - Occasionally*	5.9%	4.2%	5.6%	3.3%	5.4%	3.3%	5.4%
Eating Dinner with Household Members - Not at all* (incl. lives alone)	19.7%	18.5%	23.9%	20.1%	22.5%	20.5%	22.4%
Strength of Association:		0.165		0.103		0.089	
Talking to Family/Friends via Internet- Frequently	53.6%	65.9%	46.7%	66.5%	50.6%	65.1%	51.1%
Talking to Family/Friends via Internet - Occasionally	14.0%	14.6%	14.4%	15.1%	14.4%	14.6%	14.4%
Talking to Family/Friends via Internet - Not at all	32.4%	19.5%	38.9%	18.4%	35.0%	20.3%	34.5%
Strength of Association:		0.370		0.320		0.281	
Talking with Neighbors - Frequently	45.8%	55.4%	45.3%	62.6%	46.4%	65.6%	46.4%
Talking with Neighbors - Occasionally	35.9%	35.4%	36.1%	31.9%	36.4%	29.8%	36.6%
Talking with Neighbors - Not at all	18.3%	9.1%	18.6%	5.5%	17.2%	4.6%	17.1%
Strength of Association:		0.222		0.337		0.392	
Exchanging Favors with Neighbors - Frequently	16.2%	19.0%	15.8%	24.0%	15.8%	25.0%	15.8%
Exchanging Favors with Neighbors - Occasionally	41.3%	52.5%	40.2%	54.7%	42.4%	56.1%	42.5%
Exchanging Favors with Neighbors - Not at all	42.5%	28.5%	44.0%	21.3%	41.8%	18.9%	41.7%
Strength of Association:		0.234		0.345		0.383	
PARTICIPATING IN A GROUP							
School Group	15.4%	32.7%	10.1%	41.5%	13.6%	40.4%	14.1%
Strength of Association:		0.623		0.638		0.610	
Service or Civic Association	6.8%	15.3%	3.9%	19.2%	5.7%	17.9%	6.0%
Strength of Association:		0.633		0.598		0.545	
Sports or Recreation Association	10.3%	21.8%	7.0%	24.4%	9.6%	22.6%	10.1%
Strength of Association:		0.573		0.504		0.444	
Church or Religious Association	18.0%	39.4%	12.0%	38.5%	17.7%	37.6%	18.2%
Strength of Association:		0.652		0.487		0.460	
Other Group	5.6%	12.9%	3.4%	16.2%	4.9%	14.4%	5.3%
Strength of Association:		0.618		0.580		0.502	
Participating in One or More Groups	35.1%	51.6%	17.7%	57.7%	23.4%	55.6%	24.2%
Strength of Association:		0.664		0.634		0.594	
Served as Group Officer or Committee Member	10.1%	29.4%	4.4%	36.7%	8.5%	35.3%	9.1%
Strength of Association:		0.803		0.726		0.691	

TABLE B: SERVICE RELATIONSHIPS (CONTINUED)

	NATIONAL	VOLUNTEERED	DID NOT VOLUNTEER	ATTENDED A PUBLIC MEETING	ATTEND A PUBLIC MEETING	DID NOT WORK WITH NEIGHBORS	DID NOT WORK WITH NEIGHBORS
CONNECTING TO INFORMATION AND CURRENT EVENTS							
News from Newspaper - Frequently	67.5%	77.0%	65.9%	81.5%	67.5%	79.5%	68.0%
News from Newspaper - Occasionally	13.7%	12.6%	13.9%	11.3%	13.9%	11.9%	13.7%
News from Newspaper - Not at all	18.9%	10.3%	20.1%	7.3%	18.6%	8.5%	18.2%
Strength of Association:		0.269		0.357		0.293	
News from Magazine - Frequently	16.8%	20.1%	15.2%	23.4%	15.7%	22.4%	16.0%
News from Magazine - Occasionally	21.4%	26.3%	19.8%	30.0%	20.6%	28.7%	20.9%
News from Magazine - Not at All	61.8%	53.6%	65.0%	46.7%	63.7%	48.8%	63.1%
Strength of Association:		0.199		0.283		0.242	
News from Television - Frequently	86.0%	88.8%	86.7%	90.1%	86.9%	90.4%	87.0%
News from Television - Occasionally	6.4%	6.1%	5.9%	5.5%	6.1%	4.9%	6.1%
News from Television - Not at All	7.6%	5.1%	7.4%	4.4%	7.0%	4.7%	6.9%
Strength of Association:		0.103		0.156		0.167	
News from Radio - Frequently	54.5%	64.3%	51.9%	68.2%	53.9%	69.0%	54.0%
News from Radio - Occasionally	11.9%	11.2%	12.1%	10.1%	12.1%	10.2%	12.0%
News from Radio - Not at All	33.7%	24.5%	36.0%	21.6%	34.1%	20.8%	33.9%
Strength of Association:		0.238		0.278		0.293	
News from Internet - Frequently	19.7%	23.1%	16.6%	25.3%	17.6%	24.8%	17.8%
News from Internet - Occasionally	9.2%	11.0%	8.4%	11.6%	8.8%	11.0%	8.9%
News from Internet - Not at All	71.1%	65.9%	75.0%	63.1%	73.5%	64.2%	73.2%
Strength of Association:		0.201		0.221		0.196	
Discuss Politics - Frequently	39.3%	52.2%	39.8%	57.6%	41.5%	57.5%	41.8%
Discuss Politics - Occasionally	34.3%	34.7%	32.9%	32.6%	33.5%	30.9%	33.7%
Discuss Politics - Not at All	26.4%	13.2%	27.3%	9.8%	24.9%	11.5%	24.5%
Strength of Association:		0.273		0.333		0.309	
POLITICAL ACTION							
Voting, 2008 Election	57.1%	78.3%	55.5%	83.2%	59.3%	81.3%	59.9%
Strength of Association:		0.486		0.546		0.489	
Registered to Vote, 2008 Election	64.9%	82.7%	62.9%	87.0%	66.2%	85.3%	66.7%
Strength of Association:		0.476		0.547		0.485	
Contacted Public Official to Express Opinion	10.4%	20.6%	7.1%	33.1%	8.2%	30.2%	8.9%
Strength of Association:		0.542		0.694		0.630	
Attended Meeting Where Political Issues Were Discussed	10.3%	21.7%	6.5%	39.5%	7.2%	32.4%	8.5%
Strength of Association:		0.597		0.789		0.675	
Bought or Boycotted Product or Service because of Producers' Political Values	10.7%	19.0%	7.6%	23.9%	9.2%	24.4%	9.4%
Strength of Association:		0.479		0.511		0.511	
Taken Part in March, Rally, Protest, or Demonstration	3.1%	5.9%	2.1%	8.3%	2.5%	8.3%	2.6%
Strength of Association:		0.493		0.555		0.546	
Showed Support for Party or Candidate	14.8%	24.5%	12.0%	35.1%	13.1%	32.3%	13.8%
Strength of Association:		0.407		0.564		0.498	
Participated in One or More Activities	26.3%	33.4%	14.3%	48.7%	16.2%	45.0%	17.0%
Strength of Association:		0.501		0.663		0.598	

Strength of Association: Kruskal's gamma (γ) statistic is used to measure the strength of the association between two indicators. Values close to 1 indicate a strong positive relationship; values close to -1 indicate a strong negative relationship; and values close to zero indicate a weak or nonexistent relationship.

* Residents of one-person households are coded as "not at all" rather than being excluded from the analysis. "Frequently" = "basically every day" or "a few times a week"; "Occasionally" = "a few times a month" or "once a month". For further information, please see the note after Table D (page 23) or the Technical Note (page 16).

TABLE C: RELATIONSHIPS BETWEEN SOCIAL CONNECTEDNESS INDICATORS AND OTHER CIVIC ENGAGEMENT INDICATORS

	NATIONAL	EATING DINNER WITH HOUSEHOLD MEMBERS- FREQUENTLY	EATING DINNER WITH HOUSEHOLD MEMBERS- OCCASIONALLY	EATING DINNER WITH HOUSEHOLD MEMBERS- NOT AT ALL	EATING DINNER WITH HOUSEHOLD MEMBERS- FREQUENTLY*	EATING DINNER WITH HOUSEHOLD MEMBERS- OCCASIONALLY*	EATING DINNER WITH HOUSEHOLD MEMBERS- NOT AT ALL (INCL. LIVES ALONE)*
SERVICE							
Volunteering	26.5%	30.5%	21.3%	15.3%	30.5%	21.3%	24.7%
Strength of Association:			0.287			0.154	
Work with Neighbors	7.9%	9.5%	4.7%	4.3%	9.5%	4.7%	9.3%
Strength of Association:			0.368			0.058	
Attended Public Meeting	9.3%	12.2%	6.8%	3.0%	11.7%	6.3%	11.3%
Strength of Association:			0.415			0.064	
PARTICIPATING IN A GROUP							
School Group	15.4%	11.7%	6.3%	2.6%	17.2%	11.9%	9.4%
Strength of Association:			0.320			0.297	
Service or Civic Association	6.8%	7.0%	4.7%	2.3%	7.0%	4.7%	6.7%
Strength of Association:			0.298			0.047	
Sports or Recreation Association	10.3%	11.8%	9.6%	4.8%	11.8%	9.6%	7.2%
Strength of Association:			0.210			0.226	
Church or Religious Association	18.0%	19.2%	13.1%	7.3%	19.2%	13.1%	14.5%
Strength of Association:			0.304			0.169	
Other Group	5.6%	5.6%	5.0%	2.4%	5.6%	5.0%	6.6%
Strength of Association:			0.160			-0.060	
Participating in One or More Groups	35.1%	37.8%	28.8%	14.1%	37.8%	28.8%	28.8%
Strength of Association:			0.312			0.190	
Served as Group Officer or Committee Member	10.1%	10.8%	7.4%	2.4%	10.8%	7.4%	9.0%
Strength of Association:			0.325			0.110	
CONNECTING TO INFORMATION AND CURRENT EVENTS							
News from Newspaper - Frequently	67.5%	68.7%	59.4%	38.4%	68.7%	59.4%	64.6%
News from Newspaper - Occasionally	13.7%	13.5%	17.6%	11.5%	13.5%	17.6%	13.2%
News from Newspaper - Not at all	18.9%	17.7%	23.0%	50.1%	17.7%	23.0%	22.2%
Strength of Association:			0.313			0.104	
News from Magazine - Frequently	16.8%	17.1%	14.9%	10.9%	17.1%	14.9%	15.7%
News from Magazine - Occasionally	21.4%	21.4%	22.1%	13.5%	21.4%	22.1%	21.5%
News from Magazine - Not at All	61.8%	61.5%	63.0%	75.6%	61.5%	63.0%	62.8%
Strength of Association:			0.115			0.030	
News from Television - Frequently	86.0%	87.3%	76.6%	59.3%	87.3%	76.6%	83.2%
News from Television - Occasionally	6.4%	6.0%	12.4%	6.8%	6.0%	12.4%	6.1%
News from Television - Not at All	7.6%	6.6%	11.0%	33.9%	6.6%	11.0%	10.7%
Strength of Association:			0.459			0.184	
News from Radio - Frequently	54.5%	56.7%	47.9%	32.6%	56.7%	47.9%	47.6%
News from Radio - Occasionally	11.9%	11.7%	14.7%	7.8%	11.7%	14.7%	11.7%
News from Radio - Not at All	33.7%	31.6%	37.3%	59.6%	31.6%	37.3%	40.6%
Strength of Association:			0.248			0.157	
News from Internet - Frequently	19.7%	20.3%	22.5%	14.7%	20.3%	22.5%	16.6%
News from Internet - Occasionally	9.2%	9.4%	11.3%	5.3%	9.4%	11.3%	8.0%
News from Internet - Not at All	71.1%	70.4%	66.2%	80.0%	70.4%	66.2%	75.5%
Strength of Association:			0.011			0.078	
Discuss Politics - Frequently	39.3%	45.5%	36.6%	25.9%	45.5%	36.6%	38.3%
Discuss Politics - Occasionally	34.3%	32.5%	35.8%	18.1%	32.5%	35.8%	31.6%
Discuss Politics - Not at All	26.4%	22.0%	27.6%	56.0%	22.0%	27.6%	30.1%
Strength of Association:			0.263			0.145	
POLITICAL ACTION							
Voting, 2008 Election	57.1%	69.1%	62.1%	42.5%	69.1%	62.1%	59.7%
Strength of Association:			0.274			0.187	
Registered to Vote, 2008 Election	64.9%	76.4%	71.0%	52.1%	76.4%	71.0%	67.8%
Strength of Association:			0.268			0.194	
Contacted Public Official to Express Opinion	10.4%	10.6%	7.1%	3.4%	10.6%	7.1%	10.7%
Strength of Association:			0.308			0.028	
Attended Meeting Where Political Issue Were Discussed	10.3%	10.3%	8.5%	4.0%	10.3%	8.5%	10.7%
Strength of Association:			0.204			-0.001	
Bought or Boycotted Product or Service because of Producers' Political Values	10.7%	10.9%	8.6%	4.8%	10.9%	8.6%	10.7%
Strength of Association:			0.208			0.028	
Taken Part in March, Rally, Protest, or Demonstration	3.1%	3.0%	3.7%	1.6%	3.0%	3.7%	3.4%
Strength of Association:			0.001			-0.078	
Showed Support for Party or Candidate	14.8%	15.1%	12.8%	6.0%	15.1%	12.8%	14.8%
Strength of Association:			0.200			0.023	
Participated in One or More Activities	26.3%	27.3%	22.3%	11.4%	27.3%	22.3%	26.6%
Strength of Association:			0.236			0.034	

TABLE C: SOCIAL CONNECTEDNESS RELATIONSHIPS (CONTINUED)

TALKING TO FAMILY/FRIENDS VIA INTERNET-FREQUENTLY	TALKING TO FAMILY/FRIENDS VIA INTERNET-OCCASIONALLY	TALKING TO FAMILY/FRIENDS VIA INTERNET-NOT AT ALL	TALKING WITH NEIGHBORS FREQUENTLY	TALKING WITH NEIGHBORS OCCASIONALLY	TALKING WITH NEIGHBORS NOT AT ALL	EXCHANGING FAVORS WITH NEIGHBORS FREQUENTLY	EXCHANGING FAVORS WITH NEIGHBORS OCCASIONALLY	EXCHANGING FAVORS WITH NEIGHBORS NOT AT ALL
37.2%	30.8%	17.2%	32.9%	29.3%	15.9%	34.6%	34.5%	20.3%
	0.370			0.213			0.261	
11.2%	10.2%	5.9%	11.9%	8.7%	1.8%	13.6%	11.8%	4.4%
	0.246			0.355			0.378	
14.7%	11.9%	6.7%	13.8%	11.2%	4.5%	15.8%	14.0%	6.7%
	0.311			0.256			0.311	
21.3%	15.5%	7.7%	20.3%	13.9%	6.2%	22.3%	19.6%	8.6%
	0.412			0.344			0.359	
8.6%	6.5%	4.7%	8.8%	6.3%	3.0%	10.3%	9.2%	4.3%
	0.252			0.290			0.311	
15.9%	10.1%	4.3%	13.5%	10.0%	5.5%	14.4%	13.5%	6.7%
	0.490			0.260			0.286	
22.3%	16.8%	12.7%	22.6%	16.5%	8.9%	24.4%	22.2%	11.2%
	0.263			0.293			0.313	
7.9%	5.5%	3.0%	7.1%	5.6%	2.6%	7.0%	7.5%	3.5%
	0.369			0.253			0.255	
45.3%	35.6%	23.6%	43.4%	34.4%	18.9%	45.6%	43.8%	24.0%
	0.365			0.315			0.338	
15.0%	9.0%	4.5%	13.4%	9.5%	3.8%	13.8%	13.7%	5.5%
	0.464			0.327			0.333	
76.3%	67.8%	55.3%	73.6%	67.9%	50.2%	72.6%	73.1%	59.6%
11.9%	18.7%	14.0%	11.7%	16.3%	13.8%	11.3%	13.8%	14.7%
11.7%	13.6%	30.7%	14.6%	15.8%	36.0%	16.2%	13.1%	25.8%
	0.357			0.272			0.224	
23.2%	14.5%	8.6%	19.4%	15.6%	11.9%	21.6%	17.6%	13.9%
24.8%	27.1%	14.6%	22.4%	24.1%	13.9%	19.7%	25.7%	18.0%
52.0%	58.5%	76.8%	58.2%	60.3%	74.2%	58.6%	56.8%	68.1%
	0.375			0.161			0.154	
87.1%	85.1%	84.3%	90.0%	86.4%	74.5%	89.4%	89.2%	81.3%
6.7%	9.2%	5.0%	4.9%	7.6%	8.0%	4.8%	6.1%	7.4%
6.2%	5.8%	10.7%	5.1%	5.9%	17.5%	5.8%	4.7%	11.3%
	0.101			0.322			0.256	
61.5%	54.4%	44.1%	59.1%	55.2%	40.6%	59.8%	59.2%	47.5%
11.3%	16.4%	10.7%	10.8%	14.4%	9.8%	10.1%	13.2%	11.2%
27.2%	29.2%	45.2%	30.1%	30.4%	49.6%	30.1%	27.5%	41.3%
	0.260			0.185			0.182	
31.7%	14.8%	3.5%	21.0%	19.2%	17.4%	22.2%	20.6%	17.9%
11.9%	15.7%	2.5%	8.8%	11.4%	6.2%	8.0%	11.2%	7.8%
56.4%	69.5%	94.0%	70.2%	69.4%	76.4%	69.8%	68.2%	74.3%
	0.663			0.061			0.090	
53.9%	38.5%	31.0%	49.8%	41.7%	31.7%	52.6%	47.2%	36.5%
31.3%	42.0%	30.8%	31.2%	37.8%	25.5%	27.9%	36.1%	30.8%
14.7%	19.6%	38.2%	19.0%	20.5%	42.8%	19.5%	16.6%	32.7%
	0.368			0.230			0.223	
77.1%	72.3%	55.7%	72.7%	70.6%	52.4%	71.2%	74.9%	60.4%
	0.369			0.222			0.213	
83.2%	79.5%	65.9%	79.9%	77.9%	62.1%	78.7%	81.7%	69.1%
	0.357			0.232			0.224	
14.9%	8.9%	5.1%	13.6%	9.5%	3.9%	14.6%	13.5%	5.8%
	0.430			0.330			0.335	
15.0%	9.1%	4.5%	13.7%	9.2%	4.0%	14.3%	13.5%	5.6%
	0.464			0.340			0.338	
15.8%	9.9%	4.3%	13.0%	10.6%	5.3%	13.5%	14.0%	6.5%
	0.487			0.238			0.282	
4.7%	2.4%	1.2%	3.8%	2.9%	1.6%	4.0%	3.7%	2.1%
	0.488			0.233			0.219	
20.4%	14.5%	7.8%	18.4%	14.2%	7.4%	18.9%	18.6%	9.6%
	0.397			0.265			0.272	
36.5%	26.0%	15.3%	33.2%	26.1%	13.5%	33.8%	34.0%	17.7%
	0.420			0.296			0.306	

Strength of Association: Kruskal's gamma (γ) statistic is used to measure the strength of the association between two indicators. Values close to 1 indicate a strong positive relationship; values close to -1 indicate a strong negative relationship; and values close to zero indicate a weak or nonexistent relationship.

* Residents of one-person households are coded as "not at all" rather than being excluded from the analysis. "Frequently" = "basically every day" or "a few times a week"; "Occasionally" = "a few times a month" or "once a month". For further information, please see the note after Table D (page 23) or the Technical Note (page 16).

TABLE D: RELATIONSHIPS BETWEEN INTERNET USE AND ACCESS AND CIVIC ENGAGEMENT INDICATORS

	NATIONAL	INTERNET HOUSEHOLD	HOUSEHOLD WITHOUT INTERNET	USES INTERNET (FROM ANYWHERE)	DOES NOT USE INTERNET
SERVICE					
Volunteering	26.5%	33.0%	15.7%	34.3%	14.3%
Strength of Association:		0.451		0.515	
Work with Neighbors	7.9%	11.0%	5.5%	11.5%	4.8%
Strength of Association:		0.360		0.443	
Attended Public Meeting	9.3%	12.8%	5.8%	13.3%	5.2%
Strength of Association:		0.410		0.475	
SOCIAL CONNECTEDNESS					
Eating Dinner with Household Members - Frequently	89.1%	92.7%	89.3%	92.7%	89.6%
Eating Dinner with Household Members - Occasionally	7.1%	5.8%	6.8%	5.8%	6.6%
Eating Dinner with Household Members - Not at all	3.8%	1.5%	3.9%	1.4%	3.7%
Strength of Association:		0.207		0.197	
Eating Dinner Household Members - Frequently*	74.3%	80.3%	55.9%	77.6%	62.8%
Eating Dinner Household Members - Occasionally*	5.9%	5.0%	4.3%	4.9%	4.6%
Eating Dinner Household Members - Not at all (incl. lives alone)*	19.7%	14.6%	39.8%	17.5%	32.6%
Strength of Association:		0.526		0.344	
Talking to Family/Friends via Internet - Frequently	53.6%	62.8%	23.3%	66.0%	18.7%
Talking to Family/Friends via Internet - Occasionally	14.0%	16.8%	10.0%	17.5%	8.9%
Talking to Family/Friends via Internet - Not at all	32.4%	20.3%	66.7%	16.5%	72.4%
Strength of Association:		0.695		0.789	
Talking with Neighbors - Frequently	45.8%	48.8%	52.5%	48.8%	52.2%
Talking with Neighbors - Occasionally	35.9%	38.2%	31.9%	38.7%	31.2%
Talking with Neighbors - Not at all	18.3%	12.9%	15.7%	12.4%	16.6%
Strength of Association:		-0.029		-0.013	
Exchanging Favors with Neighbors - Frequently	16.2%	16.6%	19.5%	16.3%	20.0%
Exchanging Favors with Neighbors - Occasionally	41.3%	48.5%	40.3%	49.2%	39.3%
Exchanging Favors with Neighbors - Not at all	42.5%	34.9%	40.2%	34.5%	40.7%
Strength of Association:		0.041		0.043	
PARTICIPATING IN A GROUP					
School Group	15.4%	21.2%	9.2%	21.7%	8.8%
Strength of Association:		0.453		0.485	
Service or Civic Association	6.8%	9.3%	5.2%	9.2%	5.7%
Strength of Association:		0.305		0.253	
Sports or Recreation Association	10.3%	14.4%	5.0%	15.1%	4.2%
Strength of Association:		0.526		0.601	
Church or Religious Association	18.0%	22.2%	16.3%	22.7%	15.6%
Strength of Association:		0.191		0.229	
Other Group	5.6%	8.0%	4.3%	8.3%	3.9%
Strength of Association:		0.318		0.383	
Participating in One or More Groups	35.1%	30.7%	18.3%	31.8%	17.2%
Strength of Association:		0.327		0.382	
Served as Group Officer or Committee Member	10.1%	15.4%	6.1%	16.0%	5.5%
Strength of Association:		0.473		0.528	

TABLE D: INTERNET USE AND ACCESS (CONTINUED)

	NATIONAL	INTERNET HOUSEHOLD	HOUSEHOLD WITHOUT INTERNET	USES INTERNET (FROM ANYWHERE)	DOES NOT USE INTERNET
CONNECTING TO INFORMATION AND CURRENT EVENTS					
News from Newspaper - Frequently	67.5%	74.3%	62.2%	75.3%	60.9%
News from Newspaper - Occasionally	13.7%	12.6%	13.5%	12.6%	13.4%
News from Newspaper - Not at all	18.9%	13.1%	24.4%	12.1%	25.7%
Strength of Association:		0.275		0.325	
News from Magazine - Frequently	16.8%	18.7%	11.5%	18.9%	11.5%
News from Magazine - Occasionally	21.4%	24.7%	17.6%	25.5%	16.2%
News from Magazine - Not at All	61.8%	56.7%	70.8%	55.5%	72.3%
Strength of Association:		0.274		0.315	
News from Television - Frequently	86.0%	88.4%	87.8%	88.1%	88.3%
News from Television - Occasionally	6.4%	6.1%	4.9%	6.4%	4.5%
News from Television - Not at All	7.6%	5.5%	7.3%	5.5%	7.2%
Strength of Association:		0.036		0.002	
News from Radio - Frequently	54.5%	61.3%	47.9%	62.0%	47.4%
News from Radio - Occasionally	11.9%	12.0%	12.4%	12.1%	12.2%
News from Radio - Not at All	33.7%	26.7%	39.6%	25.9%	40.4%
Strength of Association:		0.254		0.279	
News from Internet - Frequently	19.7%	22.2%	7.4%	23.4%	5.5%
News from Internet - Occasionally	9.2%	11.1%	4.7%	11.8%	3.5%
News from Internet - Not at All	71.1%	66.7%	87.9%	64.7%	91.0%
Strength of Association:		0.548		0.671	
Discuss Politics - Frequently	39.3%	48.5%	34.4%	49.1%	34.0%
Discuss Politics - Occasionally	34.3%	34.7%	32.0%	35.3%	30.8%
Discuss Politics - Not at All	26.4%	16.9%	33.6%	15.6%	35.2%
Strength of Association:		0.305		0.340	
POLITICAL ACTION					
Voting, 2008 Election	57.1%	69.0%	50.1%	70.7%	48.3%
Strength of Association:		0.378		0.441	
Registered to Vote, 2008 Election	64.9%	74.4%	58.4%	76.1%	56.3%
Strength of Association:		0.347		0.424	
Contacted Public Official to Express Opinion	10.4%	14.8%	6.1%	15.2%	5.7%
Strength of Association:		0.458		0.498	
Attended Meeting Where Political Issues Were Discussed	10.3%	14.2%	6.0%	14.9%	5.1%
Strength of Association:		0.445		0.533	
Bought or Boycotted Product or Service because of Producers' Political Values	10.7%	15.0%	5.7%	15.8%	4.6%
Strength of Association:		0.491		0.592	
Taken Part in March, Rally, Protest, or Demonstration	3.1%	3.8%	1.6%	4.1%	1.2%
Strength of Association:		0.411		0.560	
Showed Support for Party or Candidate	14.8%	19.3%	9.1%	20.0%	8.4%
Strength of Association:		0.411		0.462	
Participated in One or More Activities	26.3%	23.6%	11.5%	24.7%	10.2%
Strength of Association:		0.408		0.488	

Strength of Association: Kruskal's gamma (γ) statistic is used to measure the strength of the association between two indicators. Values close to 1 indicate a strong positive relationship; values close to -1 indicate a strong negative relationship; and values close to zero indicate a weak or nonexistent relationship.

* Residents of one-person households are coded as "not at all" rather than being excluded from the analysis. "Frequently" = "basically every day" or "a few times a week"; "Occasionally" = "a few times a month" or "once a month". For further information, please see the Technical Note (page 16).



Civic Life in America

KEY FINDINGS ON THE CIVIC HEALTH
OF THE NATION

