



# MISSOURI CIVIC HEALTH ASSESSMENT

# 2010



*Civic Participation in the Show Me State:*  
Challenges and Opportunities



**Missouri State**  
UNIVERSITY



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Since 1995 Missouri State University has had a statewide mission in public affairs. The 2010 Missouri Civic Health Assessment was produced in the Sociology Program with support from the University's President, Provost, and Dean of the College of Humanities and Public Affairs. Data used in this report were gathered by researchers with the National Conference on Citizenship, which also provided editorial and publishing support.

## MISSOURI STATE UNIVERSITY

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# EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

This assessment, which is the first of its kind for the state, documents the health of Missouri's civic sector. The report describes various indicators of civic life in Missouri. It also brings the workings of civil society into a broad discussion about what kind of institutional structure will best support democracy.

Historical trends show that some forms of civic participation are declining. However, analyses of social capital, civic participation, and access to information show that there are foundations that can be built upon to revitalize the state's civic health. The information in this report can be used to motivate and inform broad, statewide discussions of how to enliven civic participation in Missouri and strengthen the social fabric of the Show Me State.

## KEY FINDINGS

### 1. Missouri has made significant efforts to facilitate some forms of civic engagement across the state. These include:

- Senate Bills 845 and 641, which put in place easier procedures for overseas voters to cast their ballots, and ease voting burdens by enabling voters to cast their ballots in advance of elections.
- The Missouri Community Service Commission, which aims to engage Missouri residents in community service and volunteerism, and helps to coordinate and administer federal funding to service programs throughout the state.
- Missouri Service-Learning Regional Centers administer free support to teachers and students wishing to implement service-learning in their school districts.
- Within Missouri's public schools, a statewide civics test gauges the civic education of students on topics related to American history and the U.S. government.

### 2. Missouri performs better than the national average on several important indicators of civic engagement, including:

- Volunteering
- Working together to solve community problems
- Voter turnout and voter registration
- Non-electoral political participation

### 3. There is cause for concern that civil society in Missouri is deteriorating as the data suggest that civic engagement has been declining in recent years. For example:



- There has been a decline in voter turnout in recent presidential elections.
- The percentage of Missourians who volunteer has been declining since 2004.
- Attendance at public meetings in Missouri is lower than the national average.

### 4. Missouri has a stronger “blue-collar base” for civic engagement than most states.

Several of our findings suggest that Missouri has a stronger “blue-collar” base for civic engagement than is typical of the nation as a whole. In general, higher levels of education are associated with more participation. However, even though college-educated Missourians are more engaged than those without college experience, less-educated Missourians are participants and leaders at higher rates than residents of other states.

### 5. The data suggest that Missouri scores lower than the national average on several key indicators of social capital, including:

- Connecting with others
- Discussing politics
- Group association and leadership

### 6. Obstacles to strengthening civic participation in Missouri include:

- Declining employment in manufacturing, construction, and transportation may weaken Missouri's “blue-collar base” for civic participation.
- Cuts to higher education may limit the development of future civic leaders in the state.

# INTRODUCTION

## THE IMPORTANCE OF CIVIL SOCIETY

Much of our thinking and discourse about the health of society is framed in terms of activities in the private and public sectors. We hear daily about the market's workings and the government's actions, and we rightly debate what the proper relationship should be between the two sectors. Unfortunately, this obscures the recognition of civil society and what goes on in our communities. This report analyzes and describes various indicators of civic life in Missouri. It also brings the workings of civil society into a social discourse about what kind of institutional structure will best support democracy.

Although the institutional structures of the market and state are recognized and understood reasonably well by most Americans, civil society remains amorphous. Few Americans know what civil society is, how it works, and what goods it provides. One of the central aims of producing a Civic Health Assessment is to call attention to civil society and evaluate it.

Civil society consists of all the households, religious groups, voluntary associations, philanthropic organizations, and clubs that make up a community. It is where we live, and it operates with social capital. Robert Putnam has defined social capital as social networks and the norms of reciprocity and trustworthiness that arise from them.<sup>1</sup> The key here is the idea of social networks; humans form ties with others based on trust and reciprocity. As capital, these ties have value, make us more productive, and are the foundation of our social selves. The reason social networks are so important is that collective resources, skills, expertise, and knowledge are embedded in them. One of the major reasons to construct a Civic Health Assessment is to examine how the structure of social networks provides access to collective resources needed to address society's problems.

## STUDYING THE CIVIC HEALTH OF MISSOURI

Because of the prolonged recession of recent years, much discussion has centered on Missouri's struggling economy. Although this focus is understandable and necessary, more and more observers have noted that the state's private sector both affects and is affected by developments in the civic sphere. No segment of society stands as an island; all are interconnected. This report, which is the first of its kind for the state, documents the health of Missouri's civic sector. Historical trends show that some forms of civic participation are declining. However, analyses of social capital, civic participation, and access to information show that there are foundations that can be built upon to revitalize the state's civic health. The information in this report can be used to motivate and inform broad, statewide discussions of how to enliven civic participation in Missouri and strengthen the social fabric of the Show Me State.

This spring, Missouri State University agreed to participate in the national 2010 Civic Health Assessment. This project was originated by the nonprofit National Conference on Citizenship (NCoC). NCoC was founded in 1946 to sustain the spirit of cooperation and civic commitment that blossomed during World War II. In 1953, Congress recognized the importance of efforts to maintain and build the nation's civic infrastructure by granting NCoC a formal charter and charging the organization with the responsibilities of monitoring the well-being of civic life and developing ways of promoting effective citizenship. During the 1950s, both Presidents Truman and Eisenhower were involved with the development of NCoC. Through its long history, NCoC has worked with other organizations to encourage the development of informed, engaged citizens and to increase civic participation. Among other events and programs, NCoC has held an annual conference to showcase private and public initiatives to strengthen citizenship.

In 2006, NCoC launched a landmark initiative to create a national index measuring the state of America's civic health. For decades, various organizations had published indices of leading economic indicators. However, no such measure existed to gauge the condition of the nation's civic sphere. Working with the Corporation for National & Community Service in Washington, the Center for Information and Research on Civic Learning and Engagement (CIRCLE) at Tufts, Harvard's Saguaro Seminar on Civic Engagement in America, and distinguished scholars and private sector leaders, NCoC crafted an index of indicators of social capital and social and political participation to measure the level of civic engagement and the health of our nation's democracy.

Missouri was one of 13 states and four cities that participated in the 2010 Civic Health Assessment. The state's involvement was centered in the Sociology Program at Missouri State University (MSU) in Springfield. MSU is the state's higher education public affairs institution, and the university sponsors a wide range of programs to promote civic engagement among its students, staff, and faculty. Missouri's participation in the national assessment is one of a number of initiatives that leaders have established to enhance civic participation among state residents.

## STRENGTHENING CIVIC LIFE IN MISSOURI

State officials recently have enacted laws and procedural changes to facilitate voting. Located within the Missouri Department of State, the Missouri Voting Rights Center maintains a website with voting information, including details ranging from voter registration policies to polling locations.<sup>2</sup> Effective in August of 2010, Senate Bill 845 put



in place easier procedures for overseas voters to vote via absentee ballot.<sup>3</sup> Senate Bill 641 also aims to ease voting burdens by enabling voters to cast their ballots in advance, starting in January of 2011.

The Missouri Community Service Commission, part of the Missouri Department of Economic Development, aims to engage Missouri residents in community service and volunteerism. The Commission's mission is to connect "Missourians of all ages and backgrounds in an effort to improve unmet community needs through direct and tangible service."<sup>4</sup> Additionally, the Commission helps to coordinate and administer federal funding to service programs throughout the state. According to Volunteering in America, Missouri averaged 1.3 million volunteers and more than 159 million hours of service annually from 2007-2009, ranking the state 24th among the 50 states and Washington, D.C.<sup>5</sup> Using more than \$13.5 million in federal support from the Corporation for National and Community Service in the 2009-2010 year, Missouri was able to engage approximately 15,000 residents in service programs such as Senior Corps, AmeriCorps, and Learn and Serve America.<sup>6</sup>

Although no statewide service-learning requirement exists in Missouri schools, the Missouri Department of Elementary and Secondary Education provides resources for service-learning programs and initiatives. School groups interested in incorporating service in the classroom can apply for Student Led Mini-Grants, which range from \$100-\$1,000 and are administered by the Missouri Service-Learning Advisory Council.<sup>7</sup> Missouri Service-Learning Regional Centers administer free support to teachers and students wishing to implement service-learning in their school districts. In the fall of 2010, the Missouri Service-Learning Network will bring together service-learning participants, teachers, community-based partners and program coordinators for a fall conference on issues related to service-learning within the state.

Within Missouri's public schools, a statewide civics test gauges the civic education of students on topics related to American history and the U.S. government. A passing grade on the End-of-Course Government Assessment, administered by the Missouri Assessment Program, is a requisite for high school graduates. Hoping to "enable students to master important knowledge and skills in the area of civic knowledge and responsibility,"<sup>8</sup> the Missouri Department of Education is one of only a handful of states that administers a test focusing specifically on civic knowledge.

Along with participation in the National Civic Health Assessment, statewide initiatives in voting, volunteering, service-learning, and civic education clearly demonstrate that Missouri is among the states at the forefront of efforts to restore the civic and democratic vitality of the nation.

## KEY TERMS, INDICATORS, AND METHODOLOGY

Three key concepts related to civil society are measured and analyzed in this report: social capital, civic engagement, and access to news and information.

**Civic Engagement** is a broad concept that refers to people's overall level of participation in community affairs and political processes. We use volunteering with an organization, working with neighbors to fix a community problem, and attending one or more public meetings to measure involvement in community affairs. Individuals' level of political participation was gauged by whether or not they are registered to vote, voted in the 2008 presidential election, and took part in one or more non-electoral activities (bought or boycotted a product or service because of the producer's political stance, showed support for a party or candidate, contacted public officials to express an opinion, attended a meeting where political issues were discussed, or took part in a march, rally, protest, or demonstration).

**Social capital** refers to the connections among people and the norms of trust and reciprocity that arise from those relationships. We measure personal connectedness and group membership as indicators of social capital. Four activities measured people's personal connectedness: how frequently they eat dinner with household members, talk with family and friends via the Internet, visit with their neighbors, and exchange favors with neighbors. Participation in groups was measured by the percentage of people who are members of one or more organizations, and by the proportion of individuals who are leaders (officers or committee members) in one or more associations.

Democratic institutions and strong communities require informed citizens, people who understand current issues and appreciate other people's views and interests. Two major indicators of **access to information and news about current events** are used in this report. First, we looked at how frequently people get news and information from one or more of the following sources: newspapers, magazines, television, radio, or the Internet. Second, people reported how regularly they discuss politics with family or friends.

The data reported below are based on information compiled by CIRCLE from the Census Bureau's Current Population Survey (CPS). Volunteering estimates are from the CPS September Volunteering Supplement, 2007, 2008, and 2009, and the Volunteering in America website at [www.volunteeringinamerica.gov](http://www.volunteeringinamerica.gov). Voting and registration data come from the CPS November Voting/Registration Supplement, 2004 and 2008. All other civic engagement indicators, such as access to information and connection to others, come from the 2008 and 2009 CPS Civic Engagement Supplement. For these indicators, the 2008 and 2009 data were combined whenever possible to achieve the largest possible sample size and to minimize error.

# STATE RANKING ON CIVIC ENGAGEMENT INDICATORS

In this section, percentage estimates of several important civic indicators are presented along with a relative ranking for Missouri among all 50 states and Washington, D.C. Although each indicator represents an important aspect of the civic health of Missouri, no one indicator should be treated as the sole representation of the state's civic health.

## SERVICE AND VOLUNTEERING

Missouri ranked 24th in the nation for volunteering among residents ages 16 and older in 2009. More than one in four residents reported that they volunteered at least once in the past twelve months. The volunteering rate for Missouri is above the national average, and it has remained stable since 2008.

According to [VolunteeringinAmerica.gov](#), an estimated average of 1.3 million residents volunteered each year in Missouri between 2007 and 2009, and served for approximately 159 million hours. The average value of volunteer time for the state of Missouri is estimated to be approximately \$18.70 per hour,<sup>9</sup> and Missourians contributed nearly \$3.3 billion in service between 2007 and 2009. The top four activities that Missouri volunteers participate in are fundraising (28.5%), collecting/distributing food (27.1%), general labor (21.8%), and tutoring/teaching (19.5%). Missouri's volunteers are most likely to participate in their communities through religious organizations (38%), followed by educational institutions (24%), social service organizations (13.4%), and hospitals (8.6%).

In addition to volunteering, Missourians also tend to work together to solve community problems. The state was ranked in the top 20 (19th) in working with neighbors to solve community problems in 2009. Missouri scores above the national average for this indicator,

and about one in ten people reported that they worked with their neighbors to solve a problem at least once in the past twelve months. Nationally, there has been an upward trend in the rate of people working with neighbors, according to the [Volunteering in America Report<sup>10</sup>](#) (Corporation for National and Community Service, 2010). The data for Missouri reveal that the rates of people who work with their neighbors have been generally stable the past three years.

## VOTING AND REGISTRATION

Missouri ranked 23rd in voter turnout in the November 2008 election. About two out of three eligible voters participated in the election. Missouri's voter turnout has declined by three percentage points compared with the turnout for the 2004 presidential election. Voter turnout in the state was slightly higher than the national voter turnout.

Missouri ranked 15th among all states in the voter registration rate for all eligible citizens in 2008. This rate was higher than the national voter registration rate. About three out of four eligible citizens were registered to vote in Missouri. However, it should be noted that Missouri's voter registration rate has declined by seven percentage points since the presidential election of 2004, while the national rate has only declined by a little more than one percentage point.

## NON-ELECTORAL POLITICAL ENGAGEMENT

Slightly more than one out of four Missourians participated in at least one type of non-electoral political activity, ranking Missouri 30th among the states.<sup>11</sup> Missouri's score on this indicator was higher than the national average. There is no available historical data from CPS on this indicator.

## SUMMARY OF CIVIC ENGAGEMENT FINDINGS FOR MISSOURI

|   | MO Percentage (2008/2009) | MO Ranking | National Average (2008/2009) |
|---|---------------------------|------------|------------------------------|
| Volunteering  | 28.8%                     | 24th       | 26.8%                        |
| Working with neighbors                              | 10.3%                     | 19th       | 8.8%                         |
| Voting (2008)                                       | 65.8%                     | 23rd       | 63.6%                        |
| Registration (2008)                                 | 74.5%                     | 15th       | 71.0%                        |
| Engaged in one or more non-electoral political acts | 27.1%                     | 30th       | 26.3%                        |

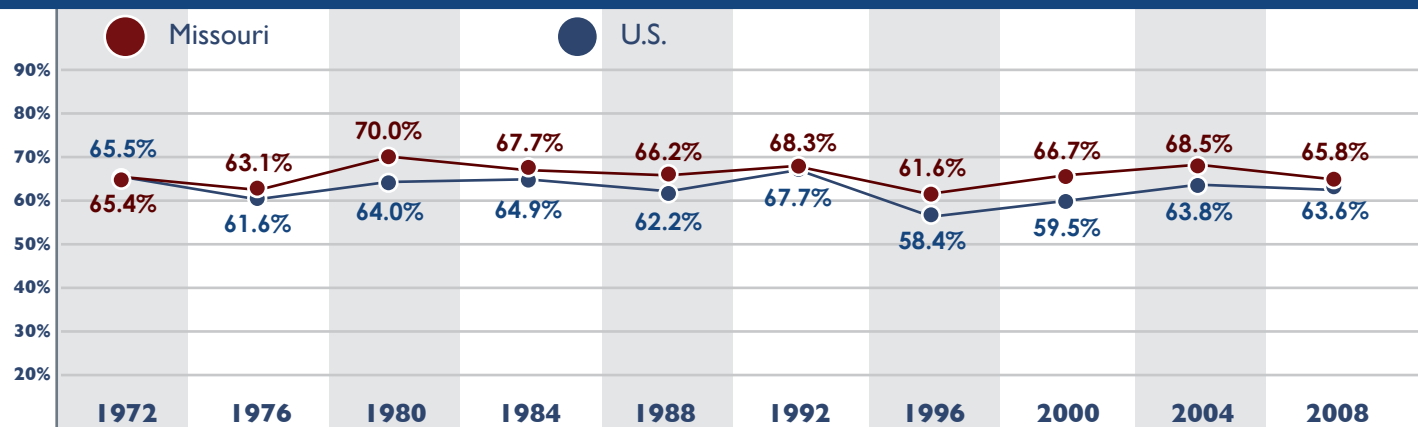
# HISTORICAL TRENDS IN INDICATORS OF CIVIC ENGAGEMENT

## VOTING

There has been little change in the percentage of Missourians who voted in presidential elections since 1972. However, it should be noted that the percentage of Missourians who voted dropped in 2008 after increasing for two straight elections between 1996 and 2004. While a decline over one presidential election cycle does not necessarily indicate a trend, the decrease is a cause for concern.

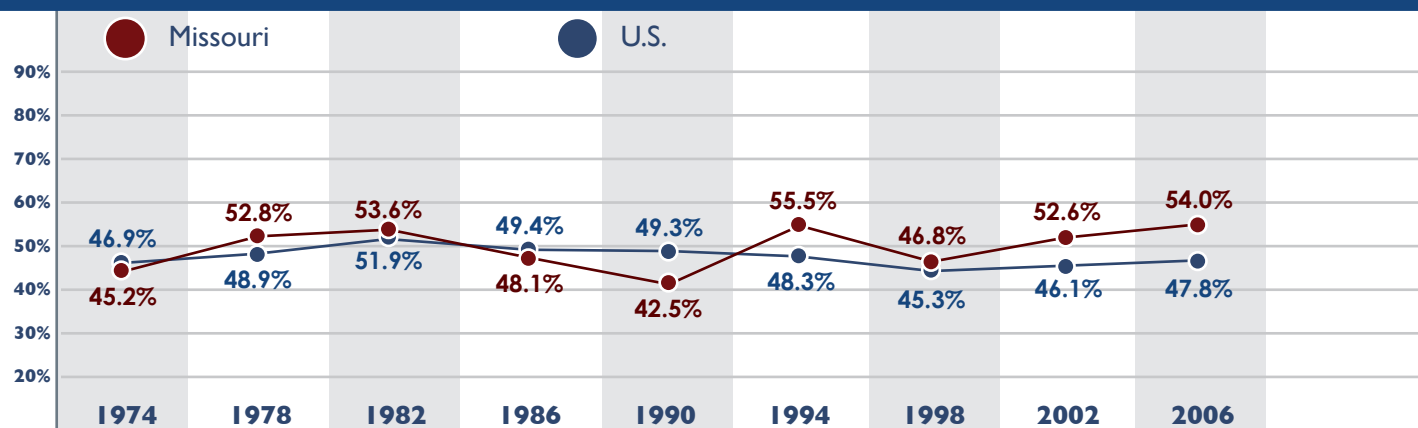
Over time, a higher percentage of Missourians have voted in presidential elections than in the nation as a whole. However, the gap between Missouri and the U.S. has narrowed considerably since 2004.

### VOTER TURNOUT AMONG CITIZENS 18+ FOR PRESIDENTIAL ELECTIONS IN MISSOURI AND THE UNITED STATES (1972-2008)



Contrary to the trend data for voting in presidential elections, the midterm election rate has increased for the last two elections (2002 and 2006). Relatively speaking, there has been nearly a 20% increase in the percentage of Missourians who voted in midterm elections from 1974 to 2006, which is larger than the 6% increase in the percentage of all Americans who voted in midterm elections over that same period. Notably, voter turnout for midterm elections in Missouri has been higher than the national average since 1994.

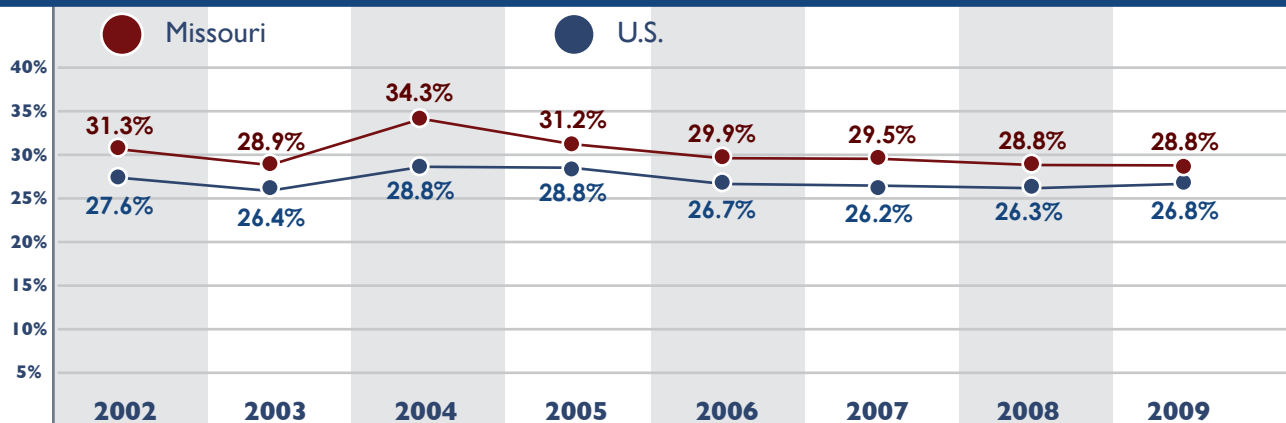
### VOTER TURNOUT AMONG CITIZENS 18+ FOR MIDTERM ELECTIONS IN MISSOURI AND THE UNITED STATES (1974 TO 2006)



## VOLUNTEERING

Volunteering hit a six-year low in 2008 and did not show signs of increase in 2009.

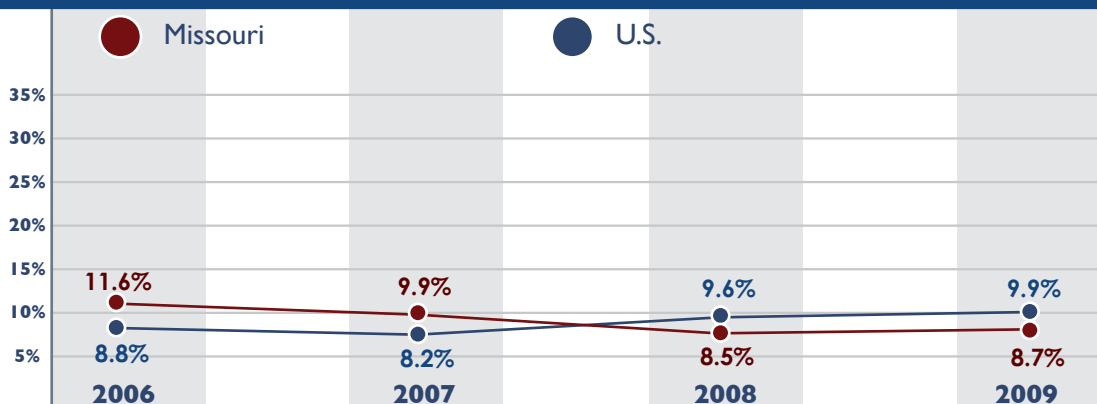
### VOLUNTEERING IN MISSOURI AND THE UNITED STATES (2002-2009)



## PUBLIC MEETINGS

There has been a slight increase in the percentage of Americans who have attended a public meeting between 2006 and 2009. The percentage of Missourians who have attended a public meeting has declined by nearly three percentage points over that same period. Strikingly, although the percentage of Missourians who have attended a public meeting was higher than the national average in 2006, by 2009 it was lower than the national average.

### ATTENDING PUBLIC MEETINGS IN MISSOURI AND THE UNITED STATES (2006-2009)





# DEMOGRAPHIC TRENDS IN CIVIC ENGAGEMENT

Missouri follows national trends closely in the portion of people who participate in civil society in various ways (60.1% non-participants, 31.9% participants, and 8.0% leaders<sup>12</sup>).

In Missouri, more than one quarter (27.7%) of group officers and committee members have never been to college. The state's score on this measure is more than ten percentage points higher than the national average (16.6%). About five percent (5.2%) of Missouri's non-college-educated adults are group leaders, a score higher than the national average (3.5%). Thus, the data suggest that Missouri's civic leadership is more diverse in education and social class, and is therefore likely to be more representative of the population as a whole than in many other states.<sup>13</sup>

Nationally, membership and participation in voluntary associations is highly predictive of civic behaviors. This makes sense, because formal membership, and especially taking a leadership role, generally provides people ample opportunities to serve the community and work with others.

Missouri follows this clear trend: more than four in five leaders reported volunteering, while a minority of non-participants (about one in five) reported that they volunteered. Having group affiliations alone is also related to a higher volunteering rate in Missouri. Leaders are more likely to work with neighbors to improve the community than others. The data show a deep divide in community involvement between those who have group affiliation and those who do not. This is a cause for concern, because Missouri is below the national average in group membership.

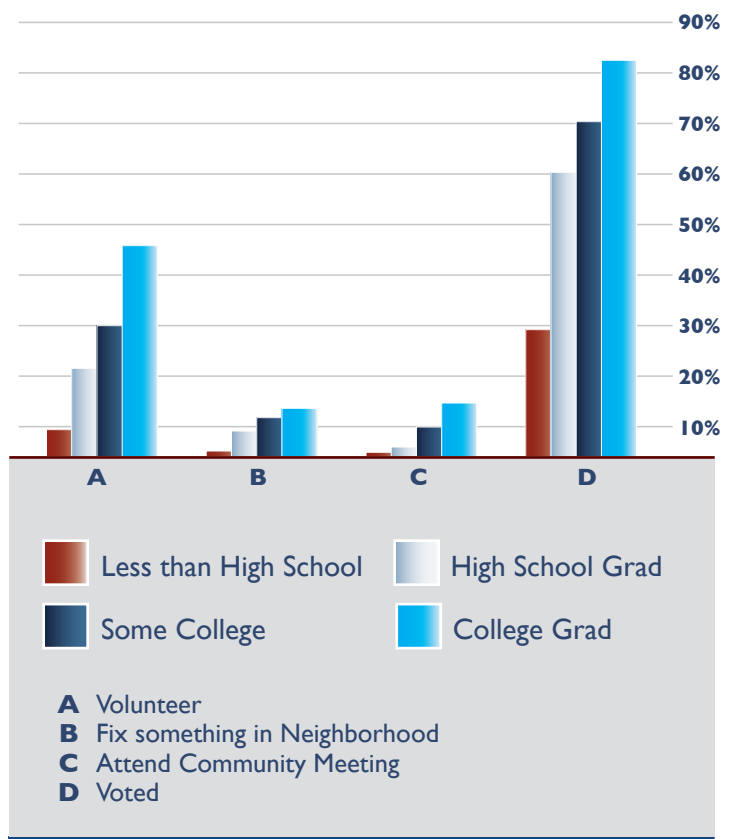
## MISSOURI'S BLUE-COLLAR BASE FOR CIVIC PARTICIPATION

Several of our findings suggest that Missouri has a stronger "blue-collar" base for civic engagement than is typical of the nation as a whole. In general, trends in the relationship between education and civic participation in Missouri track the national trends; higher levels of education are associated with more participation. However, even though college-educated Missourians are more engaged than those without college experience, the education gap in civic participation in the state is smaller than elsewhere. Less-educated Missourians are participants and leaders at higher rates than residents of other states.

## CIVIC ENGAGEMENT BY EDUCATION

- Following national trends, levels of education are strongly related to all four measures of civic engagement in Missouri.
- Missouri's college graduates are nearly five times more likely to volunteer than those without high school diplomas, and they are twice as likely as high school graduates to volunteer.
- College graduates in Missouri are nine times more likely to have attended a public meeting than those without high school diplomas, and they are three times more likely to have attended a public meeting than those with high school diplomas.
- Additionally, Missourians with college degrees are nearly two and a half times more likely to vote than those without high school diplomas, and they are 25% more likely to vote than those with high school diplomas.

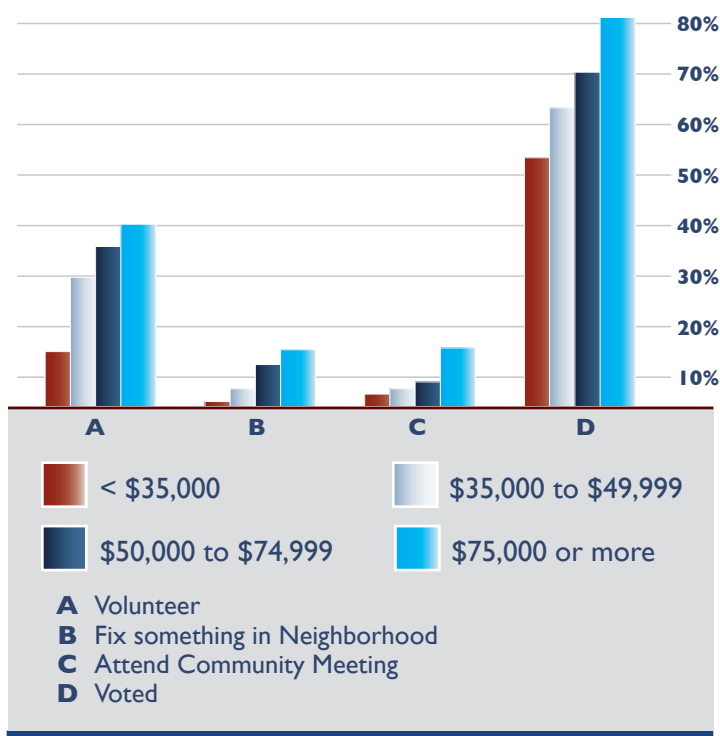
## CIVIC ENGAGEMENT BY EDUCATION (AGES 25+)



## CIVIC ENGAGEMENT BY INCOME

- Although it is not as strong as the relationship with education, there is a positive relationship between civic engagement and income in Missouri. The relationship between income and civic engagement in Missouri follows national trends in this regard.
- Missourians with family incomes above \$75,000 volunteered at a rate that was nearly 23 percentage points higher than those with family incomes lower than \$35,000.
- Missourians with family incomes above \$75,000 were nearly three times (or 12 percentage points) more likely to have worked with neighbors to fix something in their communities than those with family incomes lower than \$35,000.<sup>14</sup>
- There is also an income gap in attending public meetings in Missouri. Missourians with family incomes above \$75,000 are more than three times more likely to have attended a public meeting than those with family incomes lower than \$35,000, and they are almost two times more likely to have attended a public meeting compared with those whose family incomes are between \$50,000 and \$74,999.
- There is also a large income gap in the voting rate in Missouri. The voting rate among Missourians with family incomes higher than \$75,000 is nearly 30 percentage points higher than the voting rate among Missourians with family incomes lower than \$35,000, nearly 20 percentage points higher than the voting rate among Missourians with family incomes between \$35,000 and \$49,999, and nearly 10 percentage points higher than the voting rate among Missourians with family incomes between \$50,000 and \$74,999.

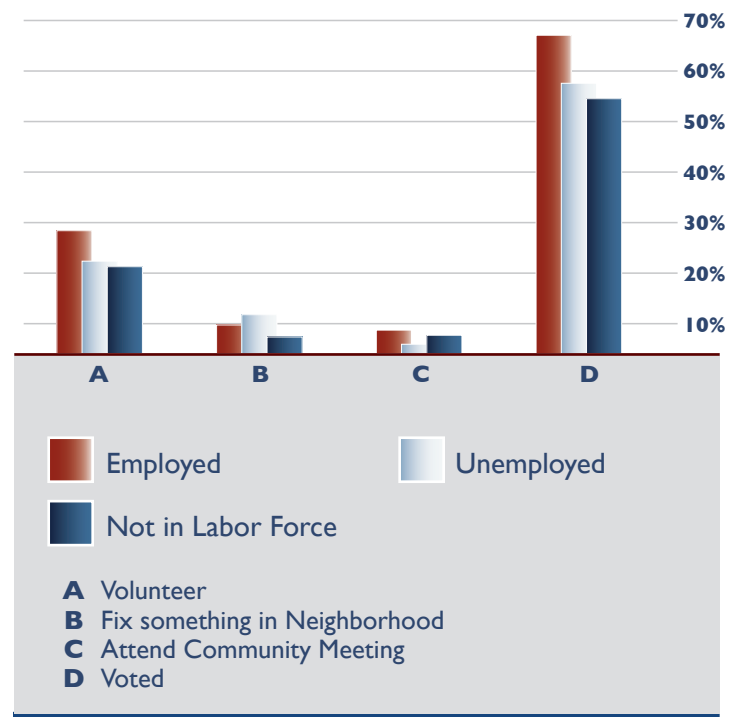
## CIVIC ENGAGEMENT BY INCOME



## CIVIC ENGAGEMENT BY EMPLOYMENT STATUS

- The relationship between the indicators of civic engagement and employment status is not as straightforward as it is for education and income in Missouri.
- Employed residents are most likely to vote, and are somewhat more likely to volunteer and attend public meetings than unemployed Missourians or those who are not in the labor force.
- Unemployed residents are more likely to have worked to fix something in their neighborhoods than those who are employed or not in the labor force.

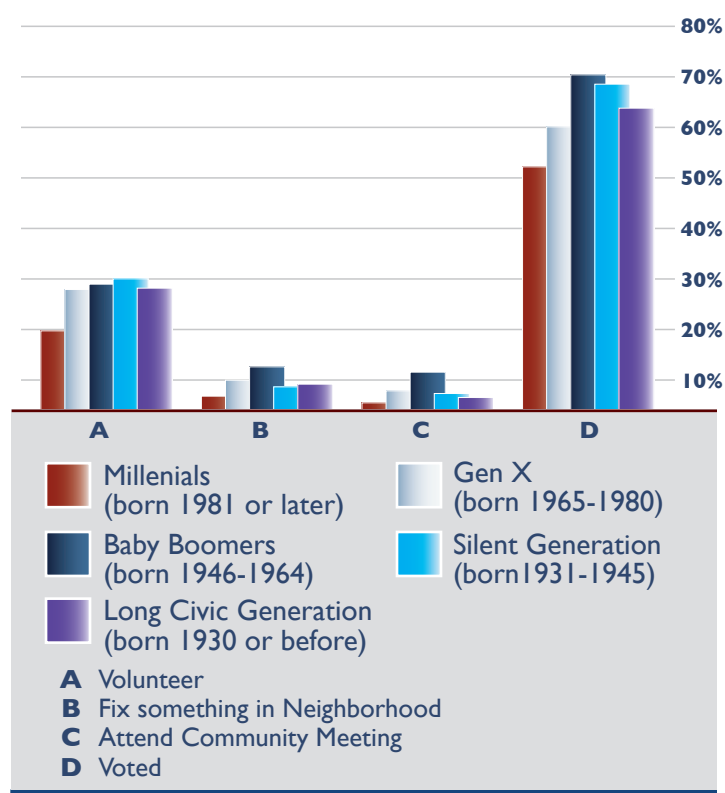
## CIVIC ENGAGEMENT BY EMPLOYMENT STATUS



## CIVIC ENGAGEMENT BY GENERATION

- In general, there is a curvilinear relationship between civic engagement and generational status in Missouri.
- Volunteering in Missouri generally increases across generations, but it dips slightly for the Long Civic Generation. Gen X'ers, Boomers, and members of the Silent Generation all participate at about the same rate, and Millennials have the lowest rates of volunteering.
- In Missouri, Baby Boomers are the most likely to have worked with neighbors to fix something in their communities, and Millennials are the least likely to have done so.
- The percentage of Missouri residents who attend public meetings increases steadily across the younger generational cohorts, peaks with the Baby Boomer generation, and then steadily declines for the oldest generations. Millennials are the least likely to have attended a public meeting.
- The percentage of Missourians who vote rises steadily across the younger generational cohorts until peaking with the Baby Boomer generation, and then it steadily decreases for the older generations. Millennials were the least likely cohort to have voted in the 2008 presidential election.

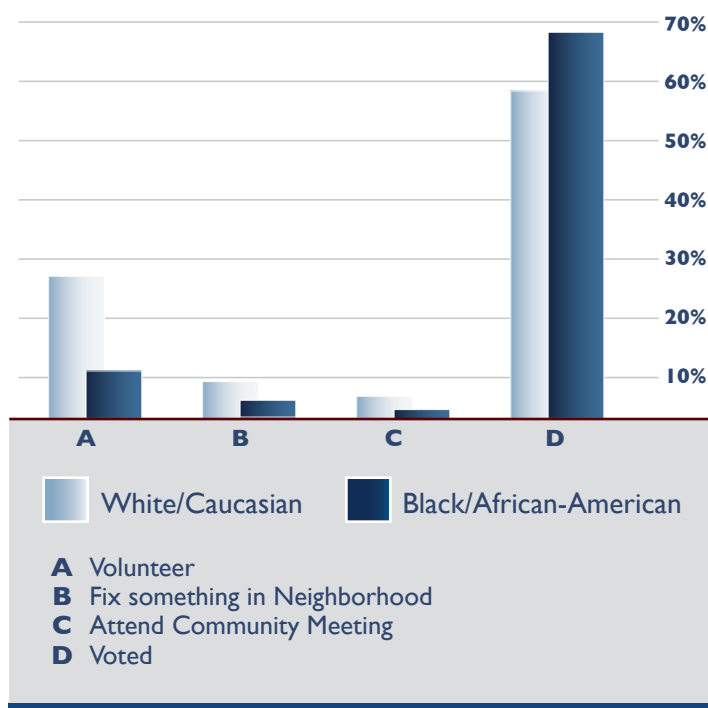
## CIVIC ENGAGEMENT BY GENERATION



## CIVIC ENGAGEMENT BY RACE<sup>15</sup>

- There is a significant race gap in levels of civic engagement among Missourians.
- Caucasians in Missouri are twice as likely to volunteer when compared with African-Americans.
- White Missourians were also nearly twice as likely to have worked with neighbors to fix something in their communities when compared with African-Americans.
- A higher percentage of white Missourians attended public meetings when compared with African-Americans.
- African-Americans scored better than caucasians on voting in the 2008 presidential election. This mirrors the national trend; turnout was historically high for African-Americans across the country in this election.

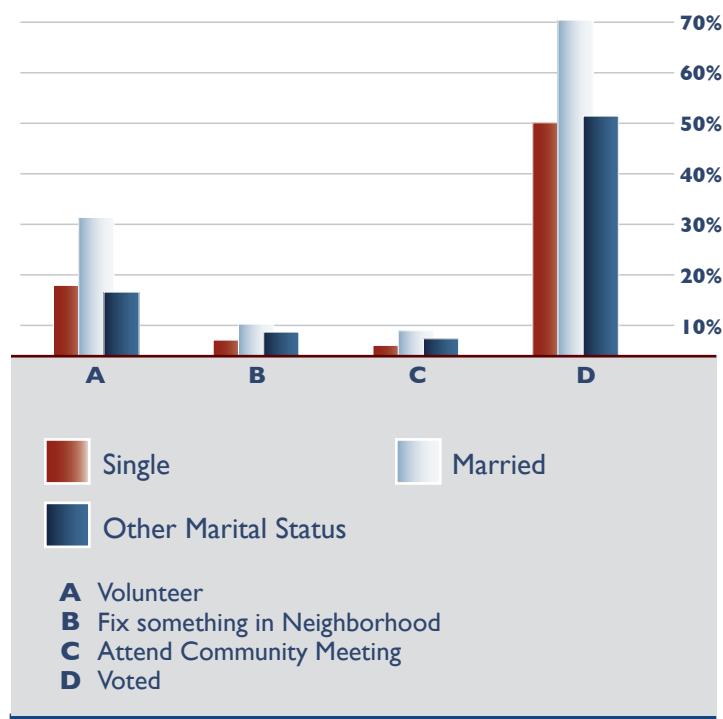
## CIVIC ENGAGEMENT BY RACE FOR MISSOURI



## CIVIC ENGAGEMENT BY MARITAL STATUS

- There is a clear pattern in the relationship between civic engagement and marital status in Missouri. Married people are more engaged than those who are not married.
- In Missouri, married residents are more likely than single Missourians, or Missourians of other marital statuses,<sup>16</sup> to volunteer, to work with their neighbors to fix something in their community, to attend public meetings, and to vote.

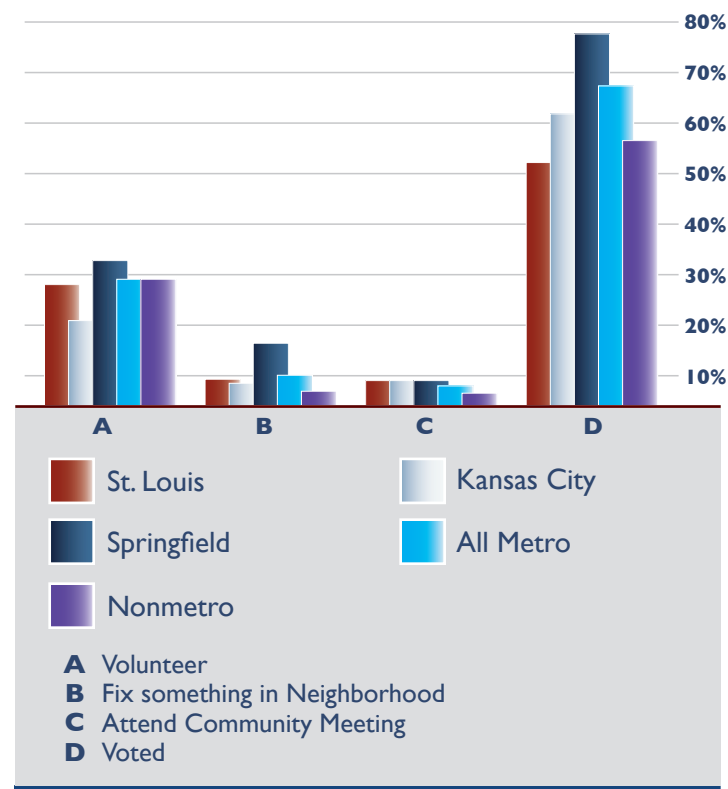
## CIVIC ENGAGEMENT BY MARITAL STATUS



## CIVIC ENGAGEMENT BY METRO AREA<sup>17</sup>

- There are some differences in civic engagement among Missouri's three largest metropolitan statistical areas (MSAs) and between the overall rates for Missouri's metro and rural areas.
- The Springfield metro area has higher rates of volunteering than either Kansas City or St. Louis and a higher rate than the average for all metro areas.
- Springfieldians also have a higher rate of working with their neighbors to fix something in their community than residents of Kansas City and St. Louis and a higher rate than the average for all metro areas.
- Kansas City, St. Louis, and Springfield all have about the same levels of attending public meetings, and they are all slightly above the average for all of Missouri's metro areas.
- Springfield has the highest rate of voter turnout, followed by Kansas City and St. Louis.

## CIVIC ENGAGEMENT BY METRO AREA





# STATE RANKING ON SOCIAL CAPITAL INDICATORS

## CONNECTING WITH OTHERS

Missouri ranked 39th in the percentage of people 18 and older who exchanged favors with their neighbors. The state's score is slightly lower than the national average for this indicator. There is no trend data available from the CPS for this indicator.

Missouri ranks 6th in the rate of people 18 and older who say that they eat dinner with family at least a few times per week. The state's score for this indicator is more than three percentage points higher than the national average. There is no trend data available from the CPS for this indicator.



## POLITICAL DISCUSSION

The state of Missouri was ranked 36th in the percentage of people who talked about politics with friends and family a few times per week or more last year. Nearly two out of every five Missourians reported that they frequently talk with family and friends about politics, and the state's score was slightly below the national average for this measure. There is no trend data available from the CPS for this indicator.

## GROUP ASSOCIATION AND LEADERSHIP

Missouri ranked 34th in the rate of people 18 and older who belong to religious, neighborhood, school or sports groups in their communities.<sup>18</sup> Furthermore, almost 9% of people reported taking a leadership role in an organization by serving as an officer or on a committee of an organization. The state scored nearly one percentage point lower than the national average for both group association and the percentage of people who served in leadership roles. There is no available historical data from CPS on this indicator.

## SUMMARY OF SOCIAL CAPITAL FINDINGS FOR MISSOURI

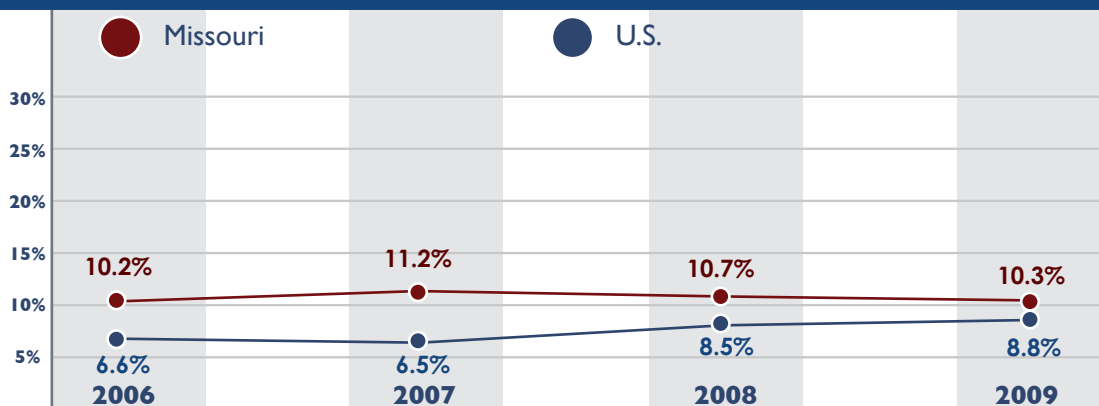
|  | MO Percentage (2008/2009) | MO Ranking | National Percentage (2008/2009) |
|--|---------------------------|------------|---------------------------------|
| Exchange favor with neighbors                          | 15.3%                     | 39th       | 16.0%                           |
| Eat dinner with a member of household almost every day | 92.2%                     | 6th        | 89.1%                           |
| Talk about politics with friends and family            | 38.1%                     | 36th       | 39.3%                           |
| Group membership                                       | 34.1%                     | 34th       | 35.1%                           |

# HISTORICAL TRENDS IN NEIGHBORHOOD COOPERATION

The percentage of Missourians who have worked with neighbors to fix something in their neighborhood has been above the national average since 2006. However, the gap between Missouri and the nation has narrowed considerably in that period of time. In 2006, the percentage of Missourians who worked with their neighbors to fix something was almost twice the percentage of all Americans who worked with neighbors to fix something. By 2009, that gap had nearly vanished



## WORKED WITH NEIGHBORS FOR MISSOURI AND THE UNITED STATES (2006-2009)



# DEMOGRAPHIC TRENDS IN SOCIAL CAPITAL<sup>19</sup>

Missourians are similar to the nation in the way people relate to one another and do favors for neighbors (16.3% are connected and do favors in Missouri, compared with 15.9% in the nation). However, Missouri is unusual in that people with no college experience are more likely to be connected and do favors for neighbors (18.3%) compared with those with college experience (14.6%).<sup>20</sup> On the other extreme, however, Missourians with no college experience are more likely to be isolated (11.4%) than those who have gone to college (3.6%).

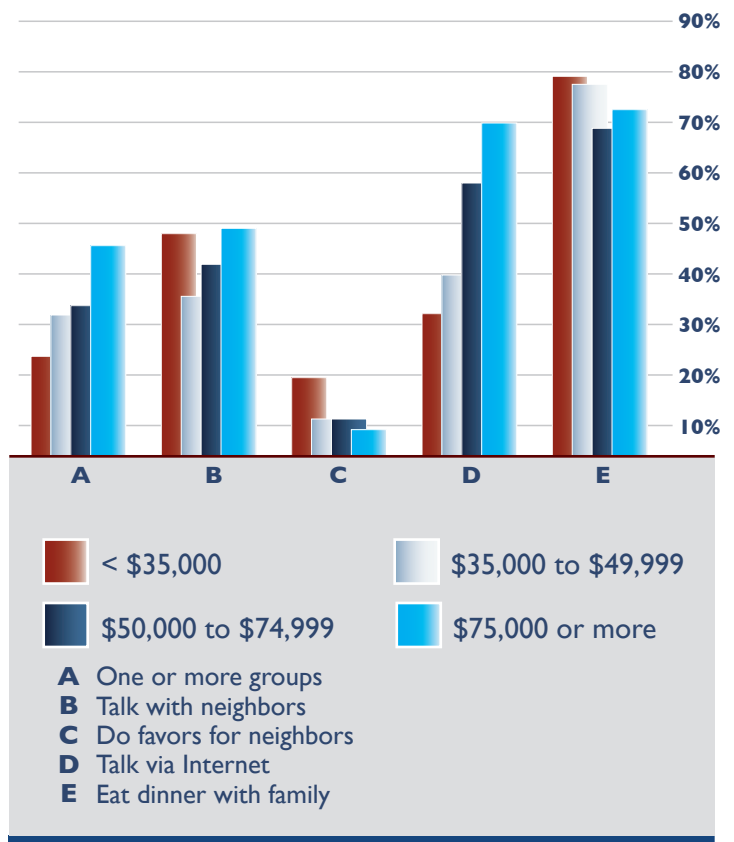
In Missouri, having close personal ties is related to much higher rates of volunteering (35.6%) than those who lack such ties (18.1%). Missourians who also do favors for their neighbors (in addition to having close ties) are about as likely to volunteer (34.6%) as those who only have close personal ties. Those who do both volunteer at a high rate (41.9%). Having close personal ties does not predict whether Missouri residents work with neighbors to fix problems.

## SOCIAL CAPITAL BY INCOME

- Overall, in Missouri there is a positive relationship between income and group membership and between income and talking to family and friends via the Internet. There is a negative relationship between income and the percentage of Missouri residents who eat dinner with family just about every day and the percentage who do favors for their neighbors.
- There is a large gap in group membership between Missourians with family incomes greater than \$75,000 and those with family incomes less than \$35,000.
- There does not appear to be a relationship between income and the frequency with which Missourians talk to their neighbors. About the same percentage of those with family incomes greater than \$75,000 talk to their neighbors frequently compared with those whose family incomes are less than \$35,000.
- There is a negative relationship between income and doing favors for neighbors in Missouri. Those with family incomes less than \$35,000 are almost twice as likely to do favors for their neighbors a few times per week or more often than those with family incomes greater than \$75,000.

- There is a strong positive association between income and the frequency with which Missourians communicate with their friends and family via the Internet. Missourians with family incomes greater than \$75,000 are twice as likely to communicate frequently with their friends and family via the Internet when compared with those whose family incomes are less than \$35,000.
- Missourians with family incomes less than \$35,000 are slightly more likely to eat dinner with family nearly every day compared with those whose family incomes are greater than \$75,000.

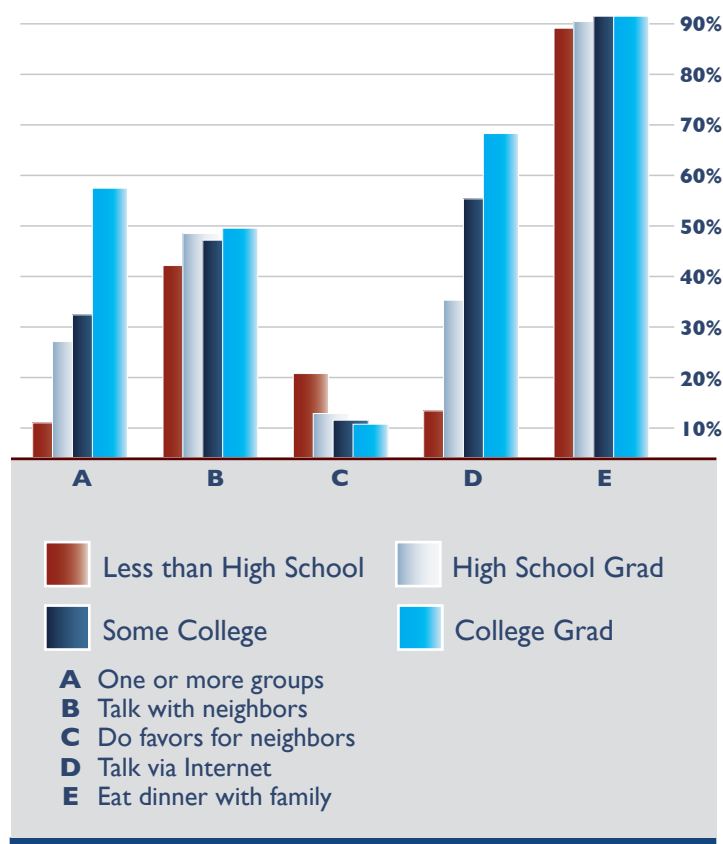
## SOCIAL CAPITAL BY INCOME



## SOCIAL CAPITAL BY EDUCATION (AGES 25+)

- There are mixed results when it comes to the relationship between the indicators of social capital and education in Missouri.
- There is a strong positive relationship between education and group participation. College graduates are by far the most likely to participate in at least one group. Their participation rate is nearly 45 percentage points higher than for those without high school diplomas, nearly 30 percentage points higher than for those with high school diplomas, and nearly 25 percentage points higher than for those with some college.
- There is no relationship between education and the frequency with which people talk to their neighbors.
- There is a negative relationship between education and doing favors for neighbors. People without high school diplomas do favors for their neighbors at a rate that is 10% higher than the rate for those with college degrees.
- There is a strong positive relationship between education and the frequency with which people talk to friends and family via the Internet. Those with college degrees are 53 percentage points more likely to have talked frequently to friends and family via the Internet a few times per week or more often than those without high school diplomas.

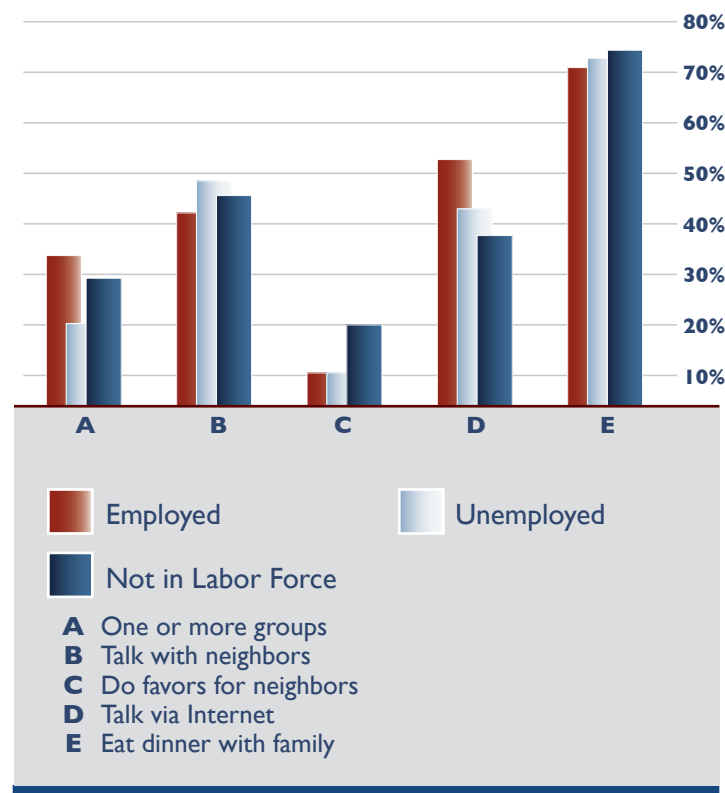
## SOCIAL CAPITAL BY EDUCATION (AGES 25+)



## SOCIAL CAPITAL BY EMPLOYMENT STATUS

- There are mixed results when it comes to the relationship between social capital and employment status in Missouri.
- Missouri residents who are employed are more likely to belong to at least one group and to talk to their friends and neighbors via the Internet frequently than residents who were unemployed or not in the labor force.
- Unemployed Missourians are more likely to talk frequently with their neighbors than employed residents or residents who are not in the labor force.
- Missourians who are not in the labor force were more likely to do favors for neighbors and to eat dinner with their families just about every day than residents who are employed or unemployed.

## SOCIAL CAPITAL BY EMPLOYMENT STATUS



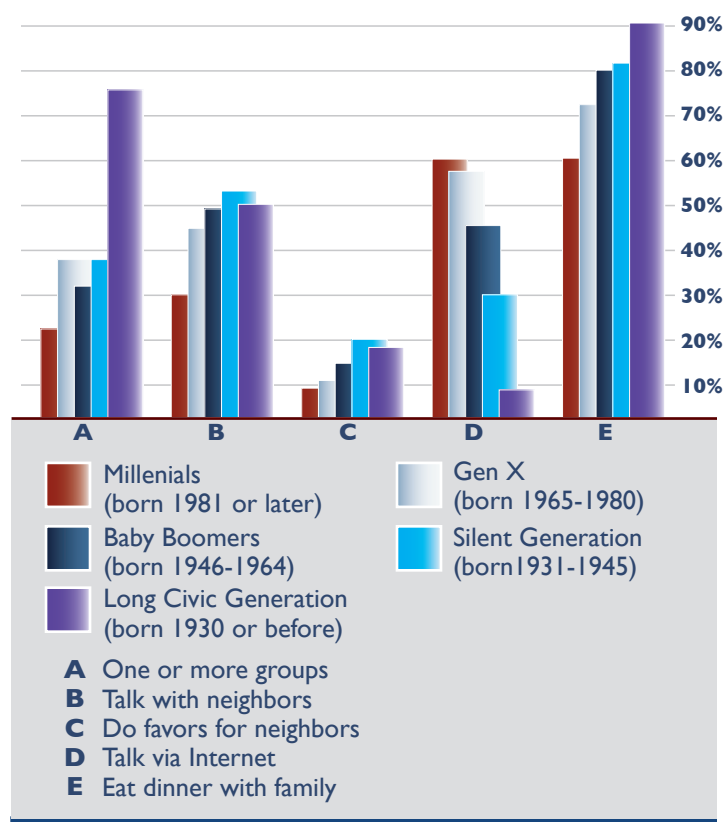


## SOCIAL CAPITAL BY GENERATION

- Group participation generally rises across generation cohorts, with a slight dip between Gen X'ers and Baby Boomers, and a sharp increase between the Silent and Long Civic Generations.
- The percentage of Missourians who talk with their neighbors frequently increases across generation cohorts. It peaks for the Silent Generation and declines for the Long Civic Generation.
- Doing favors for neighbors rises across generations, peaks for the Silent Generation and declines for the Long Civic Generation.
- The percentage of Missouri residents who talk to friends and family via the Internet is highest for the Millennial generation, and it steadily declines across generational cohorts.
- The percentage of Missouri residents who eat dinner with family just about every day steadily increases across generations.



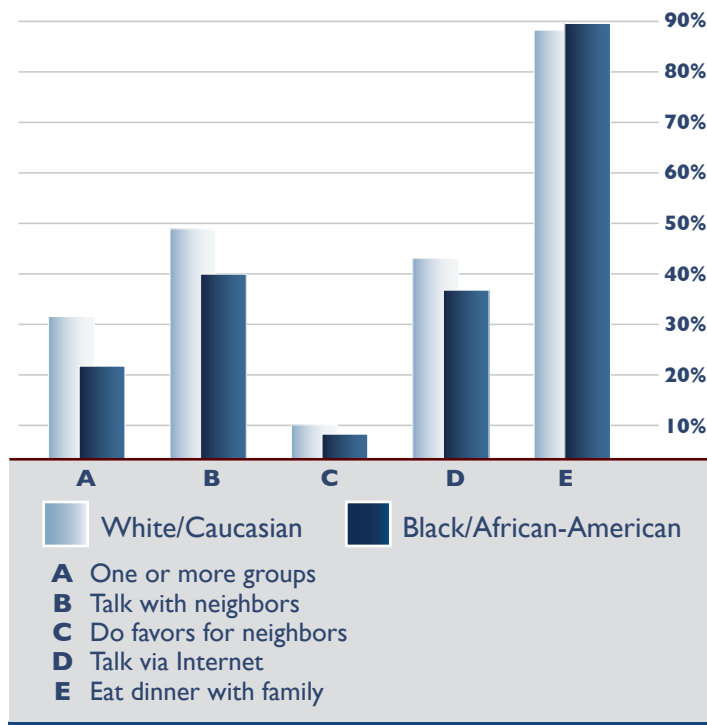
## SOCIAL CAPITAL BY GENERATION



## SOCIAL CAPITAL BY RACE

- There is a black/white gap in Missouri on four of the five measures of social capital. The exception is eating dinner with family almost every day.
- Whites are more likely than African-Americans to participate in groups, to talk with neighbors frequently, to do favors for neighbors, and to talk to friends and family via the Internet.

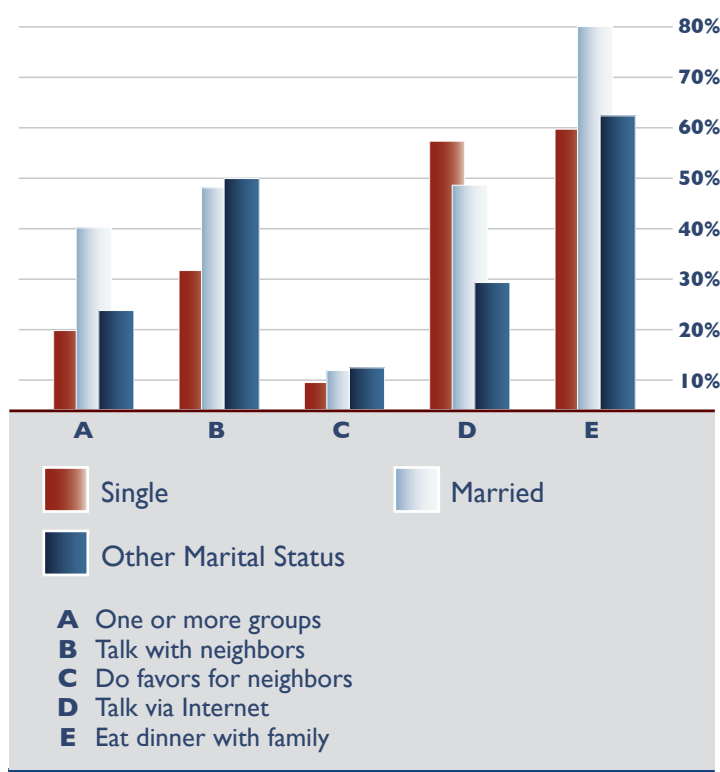
## SOCIAL CAPITAL BY RACE



## SOCIAL CAPITAL BY MARITAL STATUS

- In Missouri, married residents are more likely to belong to one or more groups and to eat dinner with family than single residents or residents of other marital statuses.
- Missourians who are neither single nor married are the most likely to talk with neighbors.
- Single Missourians are more likely to talk to their friends and family via the Internet than either of the other marital statuses.

## SOCIAL CAPITAL BY MARITAL STATUS

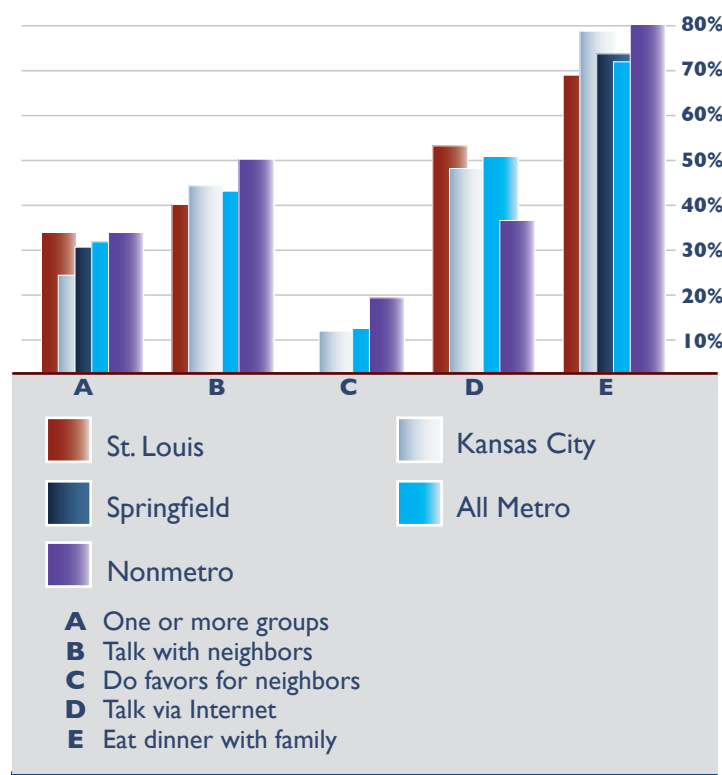


## SOCIAL CAPITAL BY METRO AREA<sup>21</sup>

- Overall, group participation is similar in Missouri's metro and nonmetro area.
- Residents from nonmetro areas are more likely to eat dinner with their families just about every day.
- Missouri residents from nonmetro areas were the most likely to talk with neighbors frequently.
- There is a metro/nonmetro divide in talking to friends and family via the Internet. Metro area residents have a much higher rate of using the Internet to communicate.

- The percentage of St. Louis residents who participate in at least one group is higher than the percentage for Kansas City and Springfield.
- In Springfield, a higher percentage of residents participate in at least one group than in Kansas City.
- Kansas City residents are the least likely to participate in at least one organization.
- Of the metro areas for which data were available, Kansas City had the highest percentage of residents who talk with neighbors frequently.
- Of the three MSAs for which data were available, Kansas City had the highest percentage of residents who eat dinner with their families every day.

## SOCIAL CAPITAL BY METRO AREA\*



\*Due to small sample size, data were unavailable for Springfield for talking with neighbors, doing favor for neighbors, and talking via Internet.

# ACCESS TO INFORMATION AND CIVIC ENGAGEMENT

Missouri is very similar to the national trends in the way people follow news and discuss politics with others (28.6% low news/low discussion, 25.1% high news/low discussion, 15.5% low news/high discussion, and 30.8% high news/high discussion).

Contrary to the national trend, however, access to news and having political discussions are not related to higher rates of volunteering in Missouri. Engagement in political discussions, but not keeping up with news, predicts whether people work with their neighbors to solve community problems.

In Missouri those who both keep up with news and discuss politics with others are three times more likely to work with their neighbors to solve community problems than all others.

Access to information is not highly predictive of whether people donate money in Missouri, though those who both keep up with news and discuss politics are more likely to do so.



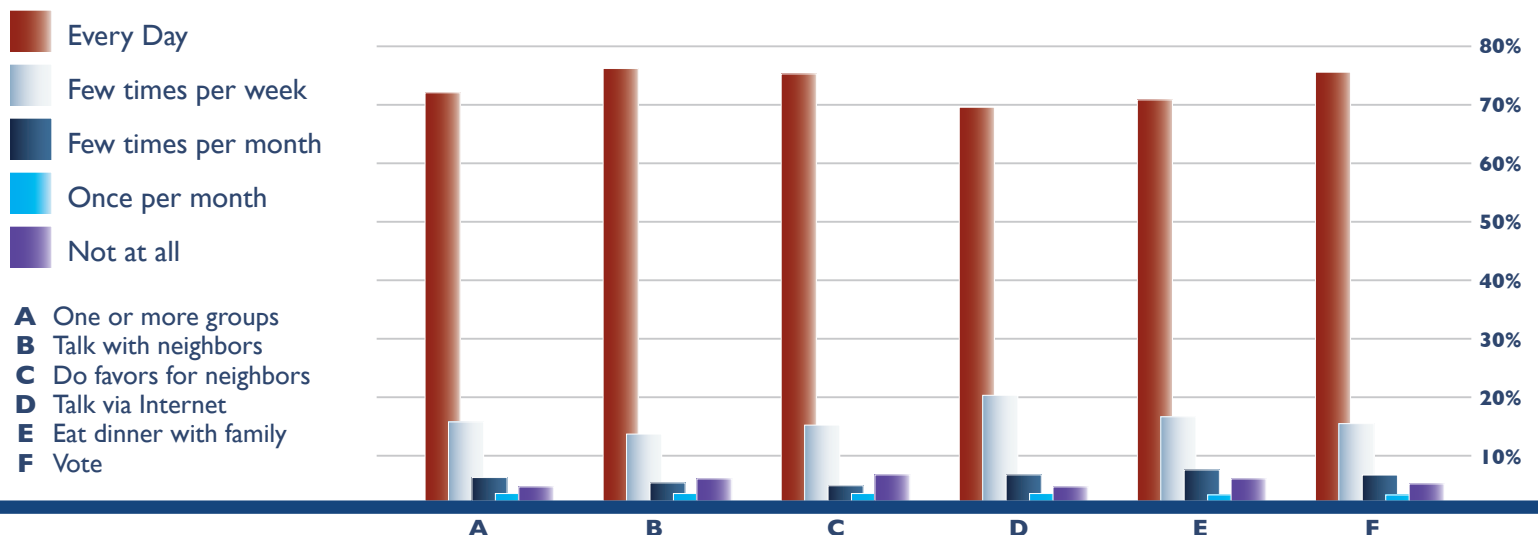
## ACCESS TO INFORMATION BY SOCIAL CAPITAL AND VOTING

Many scholars of democracy argue that a well-informed citizenry is necessary for a vibrant civil society. As the data reported below reveal, this is true in Missouri. The tables below show that there are clear relationships between how often Missourians access news and information through various types of media and their levels of social capital and voting.

### TELEVISION

- There is a very strong, positive association between the frequency with which Missourians watch the news on television and their levels of social capital and voting.
- Missourians who watch the news on television daily have much higher levels of social capital and vote at a much higher rate than those who watch the news less frequently.

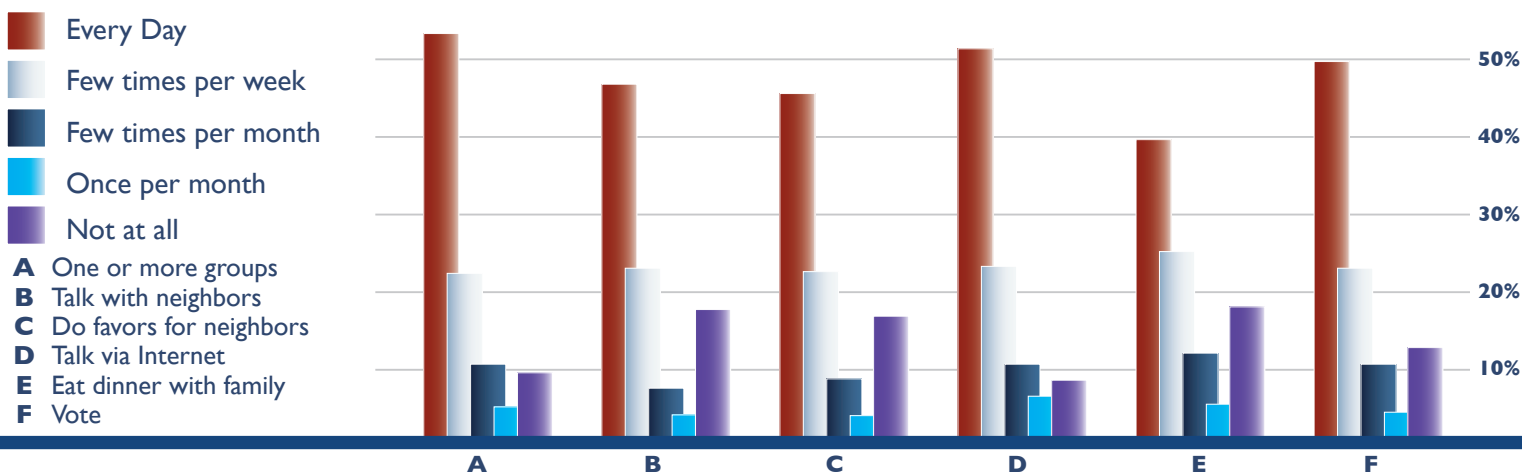
### NEWS FROM TELEVISION (OR TV INTERNET SITE)



## NEWSPAPER

- While the association is not as strong for newspaper readership, there is clearly a positive relationship between the frequency with which Missourians read newspapers in print or online and their levels of social capital and voting.
- Missourians who read a newspaper daily had higher levels of social capital and voting than those who read the news less frequently.
- Interestingly, a higher percentage of Missourians who do not read a newspaper participate in at least one group compared to those who read a newspaper once per month,
- A higher percentage of Missourians who do not read a newspaper are also more likely to talk with their neighbors, do favors for their neighbors, eat dinner with their family, and vote, than those who read a newspaper a few times per month or once per month.

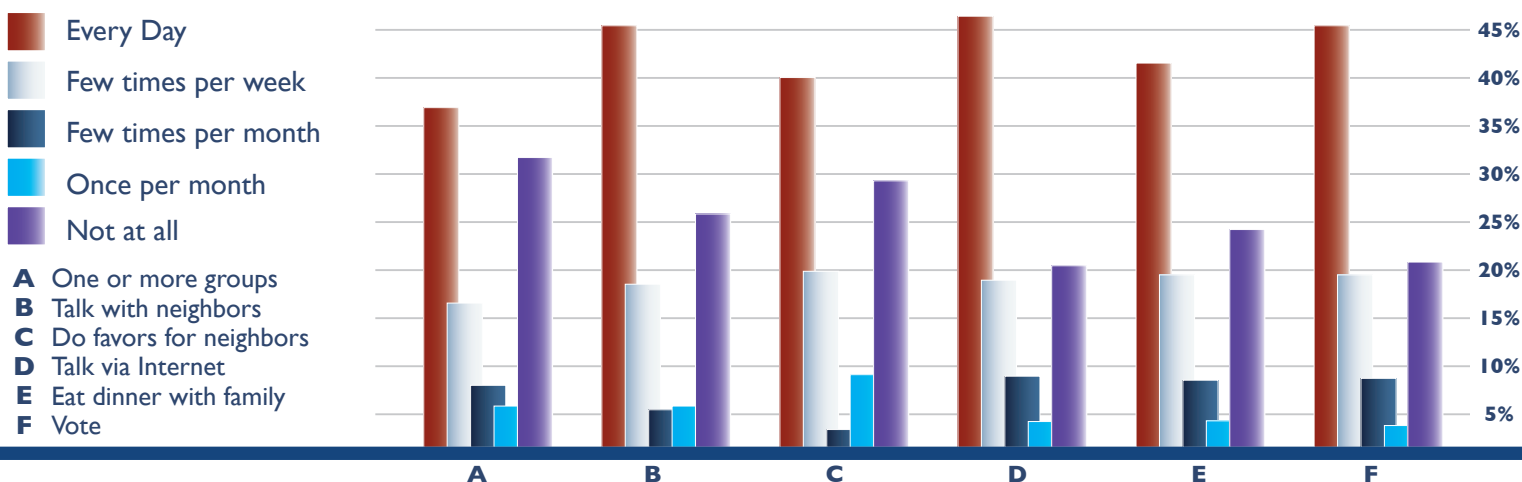
### NEWS FROM NEWSPAPER (PRINT OR INTERNET)



## RADIO

- In general, there is a positive relationship between the frequency with which Missourians get their news and information from the radio and their levels of social capital.
- However, while levels of social capital and voting decline as the frequency of accessing news from the radio declines, it is noteworthy that there is a sharp increase in every measure of social capital and voting for those who do not access news from the radio at all.

### NEWS FROM RADIO (OR INTERNET RADIO)





# CONCLUSION

## ENHANCING CIVIC LIFE IN MISSOURI: OPPORTUNITIES AND OBSTACLES

The state's programs to boost voter registration and turnout, foster volunteering, and support service-learning and civic education all are opportunities to enliven civic life and strengthen democracy in Missouri. Numerous faith-based groups, nonprofit organizations, and businesses across the state are rekindling the spirit of civic participation by encouraging service to others. The efforts of public and private organizations to rev up civic participation indeed are promising. However, several negative trends in the state may undermine those efforts and threaten the future civic health of Missouri.

Missouri has more of a "blue-collar" base for civic participation than other states. Unfortunately, economic restructuring and the long recession have hit Missouri's blue-collar workers hard. From 2000 to 2009, the Missouri economy shed nearly 79,000 jobs.<sup>22</sup> However, this net decline in total private and public employment masked significant shifts in the types of jobs available to Missouri workers. The three traditional blue-collar sectors of construction, manufacturing, and trade, transportation, and utilities shrank by more than 186,000 jobs. This was partially offset by an increase of nearly 91,000 jobs in education and health services, and leisure and hospitality services. There are several problems associated with this restructuring of the state's economy. First, workers displaced from traditional blue-collar jobs need to be retrained or re-educated for employment in the growing service sectors. Otherwise, they will experience extended periods of joblessness, which may weaken their social capital, undermine their trust in private companies and public institutions, and dampen their enthusiasm for civic participation. Second, pay typically is lower in the growing service sectors than in the declining blue-collar areas. The average weekly earnings in 2009 of employees in construction and manufacturing were \$990 and \$941, respectively. The average weekly paychecks for employees in education and health services, and leisure and hospitality services were \$649 and \$310, respectively. With an average weekly pay rate of \$912, professional and business services is the only category of service jobs that offers pay comparable to construction and manufacturing. Unfortunately, the state lost 3,000 jobs in that sector in the past decade.

Income and employment status by themselves do not determine a person's level of civic and political engagement. For example, unemployed Missourians have more time to work with others to fix



something in the neighborhood. However, the data above and other studies suggest that consistent employment and stable incomes are important economic foundations upon which people build other portions of their lives, including their participation in community affairs. If downturns in employment and earnings continue, then those economic trends may very well erode people's willingness and ability to be engaged in civic life.

A second red flag trend is dwindling state financial support for higher education. Higher education is one of the strongest factors related to leadership in groups and organizations and to people's overall level of civic engagement in Missouri. Like officials in most states across the country, Missouri government leaders have wrestled with how to distribute declining tax revenues to a wide range of important programs. In Missouri, this fiscal tug of war has left higher education with declining state financial support. After adjusting for inflation (using the Midwest CPI-all urban consumers), state monies to fund colleges and universities shrank by 16% from fiscal year 2001 to fiscal year 2008.<sup>23</sup> Legislators and the governor used federal stimulus dollars to maintain flat budgets for 2009 and 2010. Even with federal stimulus funds, in fiscal year 2009 Missouri still ranked 40th among states in per capita state financial support for higher education. Because enrollments rose, per student state financial support dropped in 2009 and 2010. The two-year federal stimulus monies end in 2011, so state funding for higher education is predicted to drop substantially. The end result is that working- and middle-class Missouri students and their families will struggle more than they have in decades to afford college educations. If nothing is done, this may weaken civic engagement in Missouri in the long run.

So far, the increasing costs of attending college are being absorbed through rising student debt (school loans and credit cards), and enrollments still are growing slightly in many universities in Missouri. However, this trend is not sustainable. At some point, the increasing costs will prevent students from attaining their educational goals. This may adversely affect their social capital, limit their economic productivity, and weaken their commitment to civic and political participation. Thus, the rising financial barriers to college attendance constitute a major threat to the future civic health of the state. As was noted in NCoC's Executive Summary of the National Civic Health Assessment<sup>24</sup>, "The best boost for our nation's civic health is to ensure all children graduate from high school and complete college, enhancing the likelihood that they will become active volunteers, joiners, givers, and participants in the lives of their communities, state, and nation."



**Rethinking the role of civil society:** A public sociology framework was presented in the opening section of this report. This model conceptualizes society as having three major institutional structures: the state, the market, and civil society. Each of these institutional structures works with a distinct form of capital, generates a specific type of social relation, and promotes unique roles. The central feature of this tripartite institutional structure is that the market, state and civil society are functionally interdependent, which requires that the different forms of capital be coordinated and balanced. The interrelationship of the spheres (and their accompanying forms of capital, social relationships, and roles) has important policy implications about how society allocates its resources to support democracy.

TRIPARTITE INSTITUTIONAL STRUCTURE

| Institution   | Capital         | Social Relation   | Roles               |
|---------------|-----------------|-------------------|---------------------|
| civil society | social capital  | reciprocity/trust | community member    |
| market        | private capital | gain/lose         | Producer & consumer |
| state         | public capital  | command/obey      | citizen             |

In this model, "private capital" refers to anything that enhances a person's ability to perform economically useful work. In the conventional wisdom of economics, "capital" refers to those things that increase the ability to produce goods and services sold in markets. "Private" means that the owner of capital has rights to control capital and access to it. Access is determined by market forces of supply, demand, and price created by actors competing in the production, buying, and selling of goods. The market has developed into an effective institutional structure for organizing the production and distribution of private goods, and it is a major pillar of modern societies.

One important function of the state is to represent the public interest by providing goods and services that everyone needs but that markets won't provide in adequate quantities. It works with public capital from tax revenues to provide public goods, such as safety and education, and infrastructural necessities, such as bridges and roads. What the state provides is accessible to everyone.

Missouri and states across the nation face a multitude of very serious challenges, including but not limited to economic restructuring and problems in education. As the authors of the national report on civic health point out, to understand and meet those challenges "we must reconfigure the way we think and talk about engaging Americans." Recognizing the tripartite nature of society is one way to reconfigure the way we think about, discuss, and form government policies, community programs, and business initiatives to meet the challenges to the future civic health of the state and of the nation.

A growing body of evidence suggests that the balance among the three institutional spheres has been thrown off. We have been neglecting civil society, and the market and state spheres may be suffering as a result. A September 2010 poll conducted by *The Associated Press* and the National Constitution Center showed that only 6% of American adults are very confident or extremely confident in the people who run banks and major financial institutions, and 8% have high confidence in leaders of major companies.<sup>25</sup> Politicians

fared only slightly better, with just 10% of people expressing strong trust in federal and state political leaders, and 14% having a great deal of confidence in local government officials. This declining trust in society's major institutions indicates a weakening of the social capital that holds communities together, and it poses a threat to civic participation in Missouri and throughout the nation.

Scholars have argued that one factor that is contributing to the erosion of trust in large businesses and government is widening income gaps in the United States. People who live in states with low levels of income inequality have greater trust in others than residents of states with high levels of income inequality. Cross-national studies show that the quality of social relations is highest in countries with the least income inequality.<sup>26</sup>

In its current infrastructure report card, The American Society of Civil Engineers gives a grade of "D" for roads and transit systems, levees and dams, drinking water and wastewater facilities, schools, and public parks and recreation areas.<sup>27</sup> The society estimates that \$2.2 trillion would need to be invested over a five-year period to bring America's physical and social infrastructure up to passing level. This trend indicates a weakening of public capital in the nation that, if left unaddressed, could also have negative implications for civic participation.

The evidence is mounting that the tripartite institutional structure is badly tilted. Society needs integration and balance among the three spheres, and it requires all three forms of capital to operate smoothly and to produce the diversity of private and public goods and services that people need. There needs to be balance between private, public, and social capital; between civil society, the market, and the state. Private capital would have a hard time producing and distributing its commodities without the existence of public capital in the form of roads, bridges, canals, and ports. Similarly, public capital couldn't produce its goods without the tax revenues generated by the exchange of private goods. A parallel relationship exists between the state and civil society. Civil society needs the safety provided by public servants, such as firefighters and police officers, while the state needs social capital for political participation, and it depends on civic groups like the PTA for the successful operation of public schools. Finally, the market needs social capital to reduce transaction and informational costs, and civil society needs many of the commodities provided by private capital.

It is important to acknowledge that recessionary economic conditions, education problems, eroding trust, insufficient investments in physical and social infrastructure, and growing economic inequality present substantial challenges to the civic health of Missouri and the nation. However, there are positive trends. Many schools, faith-based organizations, and private companies are encouraging

their members to make a difference in their communities through volunteering. State and federal government leaders are crafting policies to enhance political engagement. The impact of these efforts to revitalize civic life will be strengthened if leaders craft policies that invest in the civic infrastructure of communities while simultaneously considering the bigger institutional picture, and working to restore a sustainable balance among the private, public, and state spheres of society.



# ENDNOTES

- <sup>1</sup> See, for example, Putnam's bestselling book *Bowling Alone* (New York: Simon & Schuster, 2000).
- <sup>2</sup> Missouri House of Representatives, Senate Bill 845 [http://www.senate.mo.gov/10info/BTS\\_Web/Bill.aspx?SessionType=R&BillID=3209158](http://www.senate.mo.gov/10info/BTS_Web/Bill.aspx?SessionType=R&BillID=3209158)
- <sup>3</sup> Missouri House of Representatives, Senate Bill 651 [http://www.senate.mo.gov/10info/BTS\\_Web/Bill.aspx?SessionType=R&BillID=3157616](http://www.senate.mo.gov/10info/BTS_Web/Bill.aspx?SessionType=R&BillID=3157616)
- <sup>4</sup> Missouri Community Service Commission, <http://www.movolunteers.org/>
- <sup>5</sup> 2007-2009 average, <http://www.volunteeringinamerica.gov/MO>
- <sup>6</sup> Information on the 2009-2010 program year current as of March 10, 2010, [www.nationalservice.gov](http://www.nationalservice.gov).
- <sup>7</sup> Department of Elementary and Secondary Education, [http://dese.mo.gov/divcareered/sl\\_about.htm](http://dese.mo.gov/divcareered/sl_about.htm)
- <sup>8</sup> Department of Elementary and Secondary Education, Missouri Assessment Program, <http://dese.mo.gov/divimprove/assess/eoc.html>
- <sup>9</sup> According to IndependentSector.org. See [http://www.independentsector.org/volunteer\\_time](http://www.independentsector.org/volunteer_time) for details on how the value of volunteer time is calculated.
- <sup>10</sup> The report can be downloaded at <http://www.volunteeringinamerica.gov/>.
- <sup>11</sup> Defined as doing one of the following: a) contacted or visited a public official -- at any level of government -- to express your opinion?; b) bought or boycotted a certain product or service because of the social or political values of the company that provides it; c) attended a meeting where political issues are discussed; d) taken part in a march, rally, protest, or demonstration; e) Showed your support for a particular party or candidate by, for example, attending a meeting, putting up a poster, or in some other way.
- <sup>12</sup> We define participants as those who belong to at least one group or attend a meeting at least once per month. We define *leaders* as those who meet the criteria of participants and also hold offices or committee memberships.
- <sup>13</sup> While the civic leadership is more diverse in Missouri than in most states, there is still a very strong association between education and civic leadership in the state. For example, Missourians are almost twice as likely to lead groups if they have college backgrounds.
- <sup>14</sup> This finding should be interpreted cautiously due to the small sample size for those making less than \$35,000.
- <sup>15</sup> Due to small sample size for other race/ethnic groups, we were only able to examine black/white differences in civic engagement for this report.
- <sup>16</sup> This category includes those respondents who were either divorced or widowed.
- <sup>17</sup> Due to small sample sizes, we were only able to compare Missouri's three largest MSAs, St. Louis, Kansas City, and Springfield.
- <sup>18</sup> The percentage point estimate refers to the portion of people who said they belong to any of the groups presented (religious, school, neighborhood, or sports/recreation).
- <sup>19</sup> For the data that are reported in the charts below percentages were presented for respondents who reported that they were members of at least one group, talk with their neighbors "a few times per week or more often," do favors for their neighbors "basically every day" or "a few times per week," talk to their friends and family via the Internet "a few times per week or more often," and eat dinner with their family "about every day."
- <sup>20</sup> Those who are "connected" eat dinner with their family "about every day," talk to their neighbors at least a few days a week, or talk to their family or friends via Internet at least once a month.
- <sup>21</sup> Due to small sample size, data were only available for two indicators, group participation and frequency eating dinner with family, for the Springfield MSA.
- <sup>22</sup> All job and pay figures used in this section are from the Bureau of Labor Statistics Employment, Hours, and Earnings annual data series. <http://www.bls.gov/data/#employment>
- <sup>23</sup> Data on state financial support for higher education are from the Grapevine journal published by the Center for the Study of Educational Policy at Illinois State University, <http://www.grapevine.ilstu.edu/>. The CPI-U inflation index is from the Bureau of Labor Statistics, <http://data.bls.gov/bls/inflation.htm>
- <sup>24</sup> The Executive Summary and the full report on the Civic Health Assessment for the United States are available to download at <http://www.ncoc.net/CivicHealth2010>.
- <sup>25</sup> View results of the poll at <http://surveys.ap.org/data/GfK/AP-GfK%20Poll%20August%20NCC%20topline.pdf>
- <sup>26</sup> See pages 49-62 of Richard Wilkinson and Kate Pickett's, *The Spirit Level*. (New York: Bloomsbury Press, 2009).
- <sup>27</sup> See the ASCE's Report Card at <http://www.infrastructurereportcard.org/>







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Since 2006, NCoC has produced America's Civic Health Index, the nation's leading measure of citizen actions and attitudes. In April 2009, NCoC was included in the Edward M. Kennedy Serve America Act. To help our communities harness the power of their citizens, the Corporation for National and Community Service and the U.S. Census Bureau were directed to work with NCoC to expand the reach and impact of these metrics through an annual Civic Health Assessment.

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