



# PENNSYLVANIA CIVIC HEALTH INDEX

# 2010



NATIONAL CONSTITUTION CENTER



# TABLE OF CONTENTS

I	EXECUTIVE SUMMARY
2	INTRODUCTION
3	HOW PENNSYLVANIA COMPARES TO THE NATION
4	PENNSYLVANIA RANKINGS
5	WHO VOTES? WHO HELPS? WHO SHAPES PENNSYLVANIA?
14	CONCLUSION
15	TECHNICAL NOTES

## ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

### David Eisner

President and CEO, National Constitution Center

### John Bridgeland

CEO Civic Enterprises; Chairman, Board of Advisors, National Conference on Citizenship; and former Assistant to the President of the United States & Director, Domestic Policy Council & USA Freedom Corps

### David B. Smith

Executive Director, National Conference on Citizenship

### The Pennsylvania Coalition for Representative Democracy

### Kei Kawashima-Ginsberg

Lead Researcher, Center for Information and Research on Civic Learning and Engagement (CIRCLE) at the John M. Tisch College of Citizenship and Public Service at Tufts University

### Karen Kaskey

Executive Director, PennSERVE, Governor of Pennsylvania's Office of Civic Service

### Catherine Wolfgang

Chief Service Officer, City of Philadelphia Office of Civic Engagement and Volunteer Service

# EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

This *Civic Health Index* is the first assessment of its kind in the state of Pennsylvania. It explores various “civic indicators” that are thought to predict and explain levels of citizen participation in our democracy. Some of those indicators, such as voting and levels of volunteerism, are classic examples of active citizenship. Others are less expected. How many Pennsylvanians eat dinner with their families almost every night? How many talk to their neighbors several times a week? This report reveals how Pennsylvanians compare with the rest of the country — what they are doing right and where there are opportunities for improvement.

## SEVEN OVERARCHING RESULTS

### 1. The most powerful force in American Democracy is the connection among citizens.

Pennsylvanians that are connected to their families, friends, and neighbors are more likely to vote, register to vote, volunteer, make charitable contributions, work with neighbors to fix something in the neighborhood, and attend meetings where public issues are discussed.

### 2. Pennsylvanians are not voting.

When it comes to voting, Pennsylvanians are falling behind. In the historic Presidential Election of 2008 where record numbers of voters went to the polls, including an unprecedented turnout among young voters, Pennsylvania actually saw a drop in:

- a. voter turnout
- b. voter registration
- c. voter turnout among 18-29 year olds
- d. voter fulfillment (the amount of registered voters that actually voted)

### 3. Pennsylvanians are expressing their political voice in non-electoral ways.

They outperformed the nation in:

- a. contacting a public official
- b. buying or boycotting a product or service
- c. attending a rally or protest

### 4. Pennsylvanians are more involved in civic networks than the rest of the nation.

At higher rates than the rest of the nation, PA citizens:

- a. belong to more groups
- b. serve as leaders to those groups much more than the national average

### 5. Pennsylvanians connect best with their family and friends.

They rank 20th in the nation, the state's highest rank in all civic indicators, in the following categories:

- a. eating dinner with their families several times a week (20th)
- b. talking to their neighbors several times a week (20th)

### 6. Pennsylvanians don't use their social connections to solve problems.

- a. Less than half of the people that report talking to and exchanging favors with neighbors, report working with those neighbors to solve a problem in the community.
- b. Although 37% of people report belonging to a group, only 9% report attending any community meeting .
- c. Although half of Pennsylvanians report keeping in touch with family members via the Internet and rank 20th in the nation in having dinner with one another—they rank 45th in the nation (the state's worst ranking) when it comes to discussing politics with family and friends.

### 7. Hispanics, single (never married), unemployed, and high school dropouts consistently fall behind their peers in almost every public action civic indicator.

- a. voting
- b. registering to vote
- c. donating money
- d. fixing something in the neighborhood
- e. volunteering
- f. attending public meetings

# INTRODUCTION

## WHAT IS A CIVIC HEALTH INDEX?

Founded in 1946 and chartered by the U.S. Congress in 1953, the National Conference on Citizenship (NCoC), a leader in promoting our nation's civic life, has been tracking, measuring, and promoting civic participation and engagement in partnership with other organizations on a bipartisan, collaborative basis. NCoC focuses on ways to enhance history and civic education, encourage national and community service, and promote greater participation in the political process.

In 2006, NCoC, in partnership with the Civic Health Index Indicators Working Group, launched *America's Civic Health Index*, measuring civic trends over the last 30 years. The now annual report elevates the discussion of our nation's civic health by measuring a wide variety of civic indicators. *America's Civic Health Index* is an effort to educate Americans about our civic life and to motivate citizens, leaders, and policymakers to strengthen it.

This year, NCoC has called upon partners to launch the 2010 report, this time enhancing the national report by publishing individual civic health indexes of 12 states and four cities. The National Constitution Center in Philadelphia is honored to be analyzing and disseminating the results for Pennsylvania. The National Constitution Center is an independent, non-partisan, and non-profit organization dedicated to increasing public understanding of, and appreciation for, the Constitution, its history, and its contemporary relevance. Through an interactive, interpretive facility within Independence National Historic Park and a program of national outreach, the National Constitution Center seeks to attain its goals so that "We the People" may better secure the Blessings of Liberty to ourselves and our Posterity.<sup>1</sup>

The *Pennsylvania Civic Health Index* will contain data that has never before been collected or reported. For the first time, Pennsylvanians will know how much they participate in **non-electoral** acts of engagement such as donating to a campaign or attending a protest. They will find out for the first time where their fellow citizens are getting their information—television, newspapers, the Internet, for example.



## THE PENNSYLVANIA STORY

Pennsylvania is the birthplace of our nation's democracy. It is in Philadelphia where our independence was declared and where the founding fathers spent three sweltering months behind closed doors deliberating and writing the document that would provide the foundation for our government and in turn, our society. The Constitution, however, does not mark the beginning of Pennsylvania's rich civic history. As one of the original 13 colonies, Pennsylvanians are not strangers to politics and the importance of active and engaged citizenry.

Today Pennsylvania strives to uphold its civic heritage in the face of economic difficulties challenging the entire nation. It is committed to stimulating economic investment, growth, and employment opportunities; developing innovative public-private partnerships; supporting the development and training of workers; providing adequate housing for those in need and improving the state's transportation system.<sup>2</sup> As can be expected, during times of economic crisis, however, accomplishing political agendas and keeping citizens inspired to participate in the democratic process can be difficult. *The Pennsylvania Civic Health Index* will monitor the trends of civic participation and provide insight into the best opportunities to further motivate Pennsylvanians to engage.

Upon leaving Independence Hall, after the close of the Constitutional Convention, Benjamin Franklin was approached by a concerned citizen. She asked the statesman what kind of government he and his peers had created during their secretive meetings. Franklin's response? "A republic, madam, if you can keep it." *The Pennsylvania Civic Health Index* will annually track how well Pennsylvanians are "keeping it."



# HOW PENNSYLVANIA COMPARES WITH THE NATION

## PUBLIC ACTION

## PENNSYLVANIA

## NATIONAL

### VOTER REGISTRATION AND FULFILLMENT RATES (2008)

Voter registration (18+ citizens)	70.1%	71.0%
Voter turnout (18+ citizens)	62.4%	63.6%
Voter turnout for 18 to 29-year-olds	51.1%	52.9%
Voter fulfillment (18+ citizens)	89.1%	89.6%

### EXPRESS POLITICAL VOICE IN OTHER WAYS

Discuss politics with family and friends	34.7%	39.3%
Participate in non-voting political activities	27.1%	26.3%
<i>Political activities include:</i>		
Contacted or visited a public official	11.2%	10.4%
Attended a meeting where political issues were discussed	8.8%	10.3%
Bought or boycotted a product or service	10.9%	10.7%
Took part in a political march, rally, protest, or demonstration	3.5%	3.1%
Gave time or money to a candidate or party	13.5%	14.8%
Worked with neighbors to fix a community problem	7.3%	8.8%
Volunteered in 2009	27.6%	26.8%
Made contributions of \$25 or more	52.2%	50.0%

### CIVIC KNOWLEDGE: FOLLOW THE NEWS AND STAY INFORMED

*Follow news several times a week or more:*

Read newspaper (print, Internet)	68.4%	67.5%
Read newsmagazine (print, Internet)	13.3%	16.8%
Watch news (TV, Internet)	87.4%	86.0%
Listen to news (radio, Internet radio)	50.8%	54.5%
Get news from blogs, chat rooms or independent news	16.2%	19.7%

## PRIVATE SOCIABILITY/DEMOCRATIC DELIBERATION

### MAINTAIN CLOSE TIES TO FAMILY, FRIENDS, AND NEIGHBORS

Eat dinner with family or household at least a few times a week	90.4%	89.1%
Talk with family and friends via email or on the Internet at least a few times a week	51.1%	53.6%
Talk with neighbors at least a few times a week	46.9%	45.8%
Exchange favors with neighbors at least a few times a week	15.9%	16.0%

### PARTICIPATE AND PROVIDE LEADERSHIP TO ORGANIZATIONS

Attended meeting of any group or organization	23.7%	21.5%
Belong to group or organization*	36.7%	35.1%
Served as officer or committee member in last 12 months	12.2%	10.1%

\* Examples of groups or organizations include school, neighborhood or community associations, service or civic organizations, sports or recreation organizations, churches, synagogues, mosques or other religious institutions.

## SUMMARY: PENNSYLVANIA RANKINGS

INDICATOR	2008/2009 PENNSYLVANIA	RANKING
Voter registration	70.1%	35th
Voter turnout	62.4%	39th
Voter turnout for 18 to 29-year-olds	51.1%	24th
Voter fulfillment	89.1%	33rd
Discuss politics with family and friends	34.7%	45th
Contacted or visited a public official	11.2%	29th
Attended a meeting where political issues were discussed	8.9%	38th
Bought or boycotted a product or service	10.9%	24th
Took part in a political march, rally, protest, or demonstration	3.5%	17th
Gave time or money to a candidate or party	13.5%	35th
Read newspaper (print, Internet)	68.4%	32nd
Read newsmagazine (print, Internet)	13.3%	35th
Watch news (TV, Internet)	87.4%	11th
Listen to news (radio, Internet radio)	50.8%	39th
Get news from blogs, chat rooms, or independent news	16.2%	43rd
Eat dinner with family or household almost every day	90.4%	20th
Talk with family and friends via email or on the Internet	51.1%	37th
Talk with neighbors several times a week or more	46.9%	20th
Exchange favors with neighbors	15.9%	34th
Attended meeting of any group or organization	23.7%	29th
Belong to a group or organization that meets regularly	36.7%	29th
Served as officer or committee member in last 12 months	12.2%	23rd
Worked with neighbors to fix a community problem	7.3%	41st
Volunteered in 2009	27.6%	30th
Made contributions of \$25 or more	52.2%	28th

# WHO VOTES? WHO HELPS? WHO SHAPES PENNSYLVANIA?

This portion of the *Civic Health Index* details the various civic engagement indicators measured by NCoC and its partners to ascertain the state of civic health in Pennsylvania. Civic engagement is defined as a broad composite that includes several of the most frequently measured and discussed forms of civic participation. The balanced and broad definition includes public action, democratic deliberation or private sociability (how often people are discussing government and how well they are connected to their friends, family and neighbors), and civic knowledge (where citizens are getting their information).

**PUBLIC ACTION:** This is where citizens intersect with their government and communities. These indicators encompass forms of civic engagement such as voting and volunteering—any action that directly affects or influences government or community.

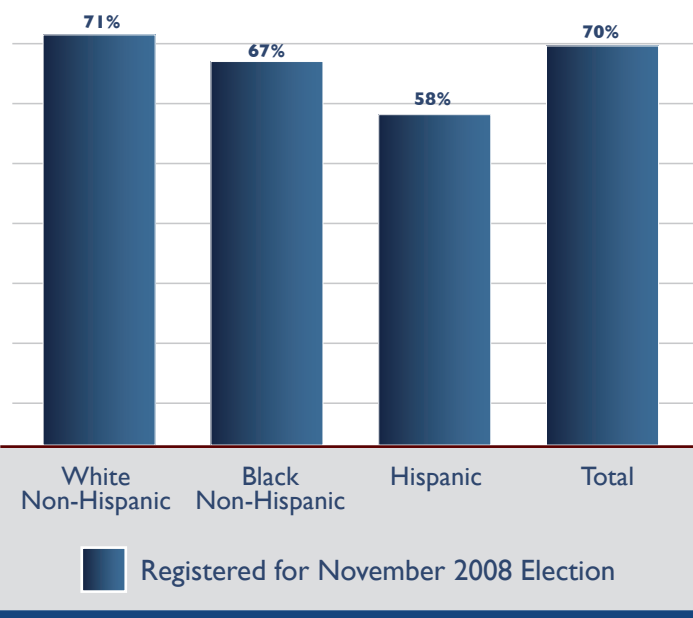
## INDICATOR 1: VOTER REGISTRATION

2008 Pennsylvania Average 70.1%

2008 National Average 71.0%

Pennsylvania ranked 35th among all states in voter registration rate, at 70.1%, equivalent to the national voter registration rate for all eligible citizens in 2008 (71.0%). Pennsylvania's voter registration rate remained relatively stable, with a decline of one and a half percentage points compared with the registration rate of the last Presidential Election in 2004.

### REGISTRATION RATE BY RACE IN PA (2008, CPS)



## INDICATOR 2: VOTER TURNOUT

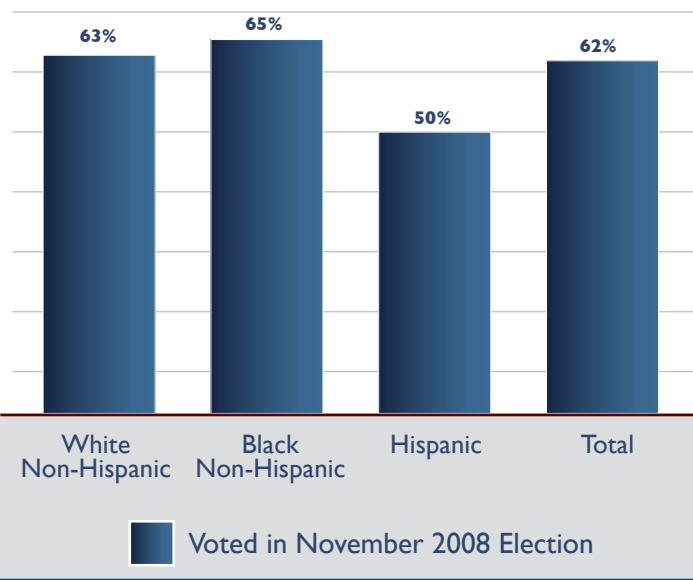
2008 Pennsylvania Average 62.4%

2008 National Average 63.6%

Pennsylvania ranked 39th in voter turnout among those 18 and older in the November 2008 election. 62.4% of all eligible voters turned out at the polls in Pennsylvania compared with 63.6% nationally. Pennsylvania's number marks a decline of two percentage points compared with the average turnout of the 2004 Presidential Election.

Consistently, Pennsylvania has followed the national trends concerning voter turnout while remaining significantly above the national average with the exception of the 2004 and 2008 Presidential Elections.

### TURNOUT ESTIMATES BY RACE IN PA (2008, CPS)



## Opportunities for Growth

According to the data for the 2008 Presidential Election, Pennsylvania has an opportunity to increase the rate of voter turnout by:

### 1. Targeting the demographics with the lowest voter turnout

- Pennsylvania voters of Hispanic origin vote 12.4 percentage points less than non-Hispanic voters.
- Single Pennsylvanians that have never been married performed 12.7% lower than their married counterparts when it came to voting. This is largely due to the fact that young Pennsylvanians are less likely to be married.
- Unemployed Pennsylvanians vote 16% less often than their employed peers.



### 2. Closing the gap between voter registration and actual voter turnout (voter fulfillment)

- African Americans had the best voter fulfillment at 95.9% with only a 2.7 percentage points difference between the portion of eligible voters registered and the portion that actually went to the polls in 2008.
- 8.8% fewer Hispanics voted than were registered the same year, with an 85.2% fulfillment rate.
- 8.0% fewer Whites voted than were registered, with a fulfillment rate of 88.6%.
- 10.9% fewer Pennsylvanians with some high school education voted than were registered, with a fulfillment rate of 77.2%.
- 8.9% fewer unemployed Pennsylvanians voted than were registered, with a fulfillment rate of 84.8%.

### 3. Increasing the education level of Pennsylvania voters

Only 25.9% of Pennsylvanians have a college degree.<sup>3</sup> The data illustrates the inextricable direct link between voting and education. The numbers decrease precipitously as education level decreases.

- At 84.7%, Pennsylvanians with a college degree had the highest voter registration rate. Of that number 80.2% actually voted—a 94.7% fulfillment rate. These were the highest numbers in all three categories (registration, turnout, fulfillment) among all voter subgroups.
- 64.7% of Pennsylvanians with only a high school diploma registered to vote. Of that number 55.2% actually turned out to vote—an 85.3% fulfillment rate.
- 47.7% of Pennsylvanians with less than a high school diploma registered to vote. Of that number 36.8% actually turned out to vote—a 77.2% fulfillment rate. These were the lowest numbers in all three categories among all voter subgroups.

## INDICATOR 3: PARTICIPATE IN ONE OR MORE NON-ELECTORAL POLITICAL ACTIVITIES

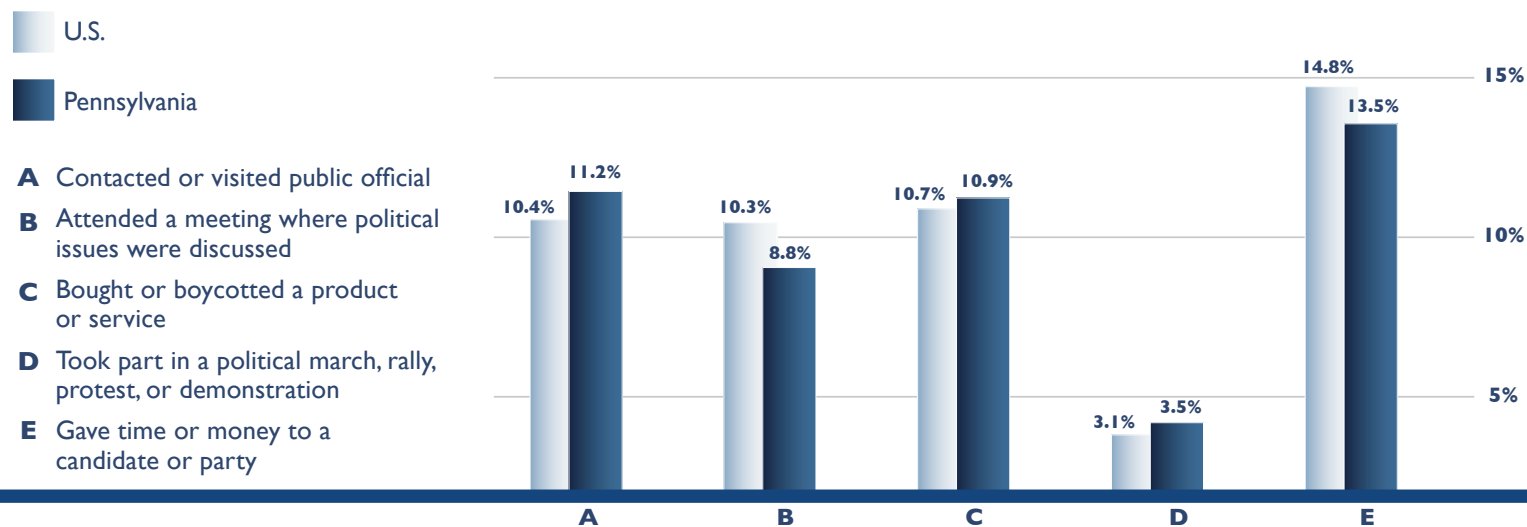
2008 Pennsylvania Average 27.1%

2008 National Average 26.3%

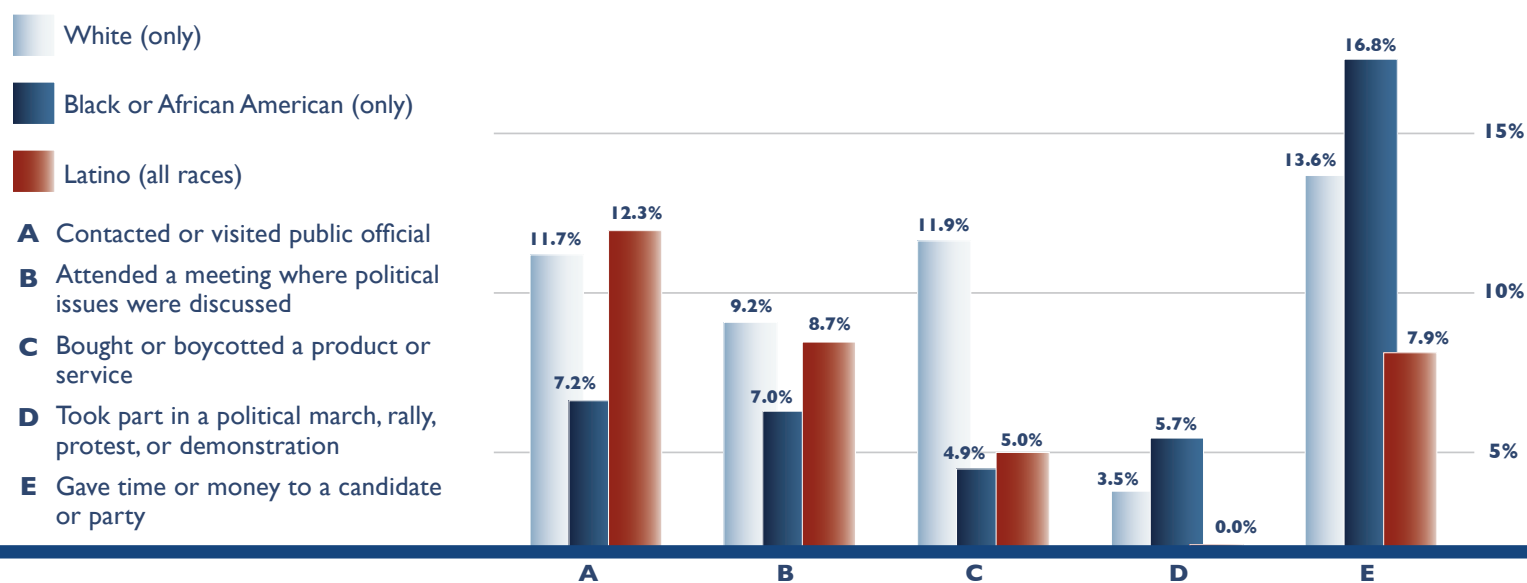
Pennsylvanians are actively engaged citizens in many ways other than voting (non-electoral political acts). The Census Current Population Survey asks if in the last year people have contacted or visited with a public official, attended a public meeting about political issues, bought or boycotted a product for political reasons, taken part in a political march, rally or demonstration, and/or given time or money to a candidate or party. Pennsylvania ranks 31st in the nation in this indicator, slightly higher than the national average by .8%.



## PARTICIPATION IN NON-ELECTORAL ACTS



## PARTICIPATION IN NON-ELECTORAL ACTS BY RACE



### Opportunities for Growth

Pennsylvanians are people of action. They attended a rally or protest, bought or boycotted a product or service, and contacted their public officials at a rate higher than that of the national average. This indicates that they vote not only at the ballot box but with their dollars and their time. This suggests that Pennsylvanians can grow in the areas of civic engagement where they fall behind the rest of the nation:

- Pennsylvanians are only slightly behind the national average (14.8%) in giving time or money to a political candidate (13.5%).
- Despite the fact that 36.7% of Pennsylvanians report belonging to a group, only 8.9% of people reported attending a meeting where local issues were discussed. This illustrates Pennsylvanians aptitude for relating to one another but failing to make the extension from issues that directly affect them to issues that affect the entire community.

If Pennsylvanians are willing to use their wallets to express their political voice when buying or boycotting a product or service, it suggests that they may also use their dollars to support a candidate that shares their political views. This applies as well as to attending a meeting where political issues are discussed. If Pennsylvanians feel comfortable contacting their public officials, it is likely they would attend more meetings where political issues are discussed if given the opportunity and information.

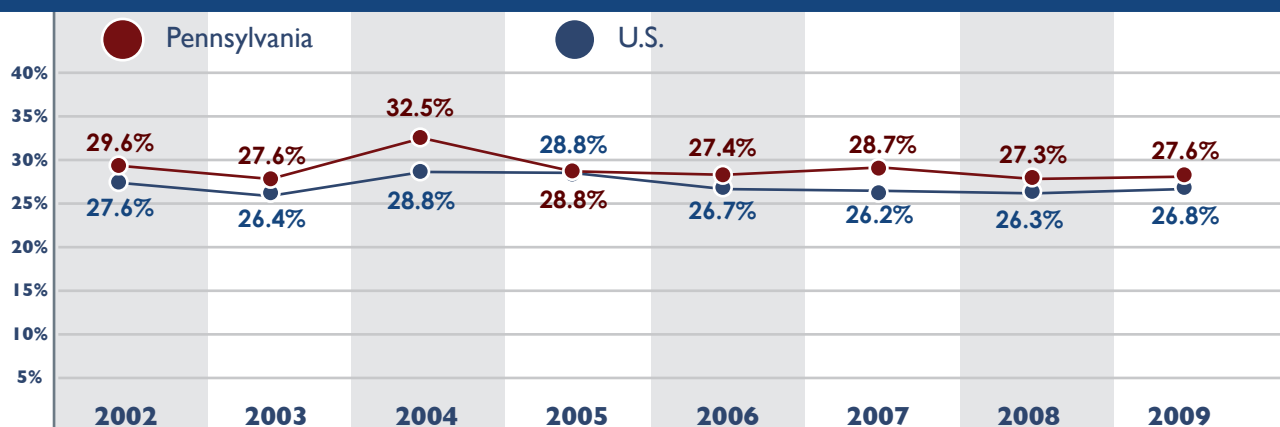


## INDICATOR 4: VOLUNTEERING

Pennsylvanians 16 and older volunteer at only a slightly higher rate than the national average with 27.6% reporting volunteering at least once in the past 12 months resulting in a rank of 30th in the nation. Nationally, 26.8% of Americans report volunteering at least once in the last year. According to [www.volunteeringinamerica.gov](http://www.volunteeringinamerica.gov), an average of 2.8 million residents per year volunteered in Pennsylvania between 2007 and 2009. The state's volunteering rate has remained relatively stable since 2008.



### VOLUNTEERING 2002-2009



### Opportunities for Growth

#### 1. Closing the generational gap

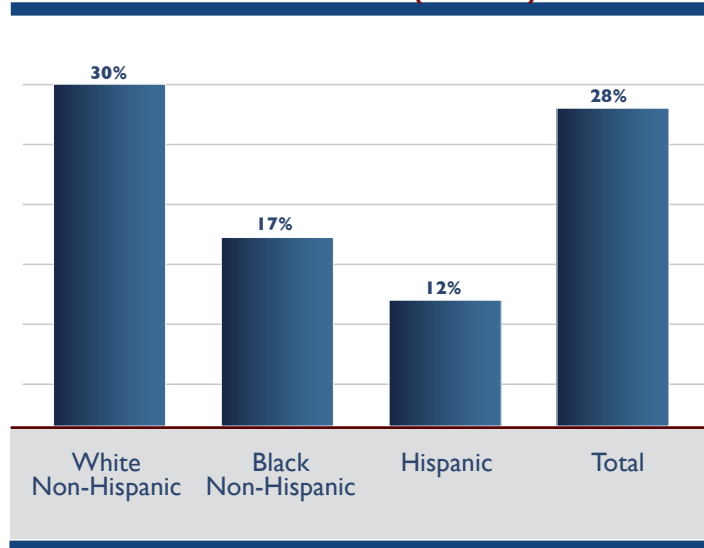
- In 2009, those born between 1965 and 1980 volunteered the most of any other age group with 34.2% reporting that they gave their time to an organization at least once in the last 12 months.
- Pennsylvania's senior citizens are volunteering the least with 19.6% of those born before 1930 reporting volunteering.
- Those born in 1981 or later come in close to last place with only 24.1% reporting that they volunteered within the last year.

The data indicates that we need Pennsylvania's youngest and oldest to feel invested in their communities by volunteering. This can be done by making both demographics feel valuable and important to the political process through outreach specifically targeted to each group.

#### 2. Encouraging participation among all demographics

- Hispanics living in Pennsylvania volunteer the least of all subgroups—a number that corresponds with their low voting numbers—suggesting, perhaps, if Hispanics go to the polls more, they will feel inspired to volunteer more as well.
- African Americans, despite their higher voter fulfillment rate, do not volunteer at a rate nearly as high, with only 16.1% reporting volunteering in the last 12 months. The challenge with this demographic is to then translate the initiative they show during election season into giving back to the community through volunteerism.

#### PA VOLUNTEERING RATE IN 2009 (BY RACE)



### 3. Closing the gap between Pennsylvanians marital/ family status

- The data shows that 35.6% of married Pennsylvanians volunteer—almost twice the number of single people who volunteer (19.5%).
- The data also shows that Pennsylvanians who have their own children under the age of 18 are almost twice as likely to volunteer (42.1%) as compared to those without children under 18 (23.0%).

This disparity suggests Pennsylvanians who feel directly responsible for another person—a spouse or a child—feel a greater responsibility for the community. The key here is to motivate single Pennsylvanians without families of their own to realize they can be directly responsible for many people through volunteering.

### 4. Encouraging those who are unemployed or not in the labor force to volunteer

- The data shows that only 20.2% of unemployed Pennsylvanians and 22.2% of Pennsylvanians not in the labor force volunteered in the last twelve months—compared with 31.8% of people with jobs who volunteered last year.

During the dramatic economic downturn of recent years, more Pennsylvanians are unemployed than ever. By encouraging jobless Pennsylvanians to volunteer in their local communities, it is possible to turn this unfortunate set of circumstances into something positive for the state.

### 5. Increasing the education level of Pennsylvanians

- As with voting, college graduates volunteer the most at a rate of 46.7%, starkly contrasting to the 9.9% of Pennsylvanians without a high school diploma who report volunteering once in the last year.
- As education increases so does volunteerism—high school graduates at 19.4% and those with some college at 29.7%.

## INDICATOR 5: WORK WITH NEIGHBORS TO FIX SOMETHING IN THE NEIGHBORHOOD

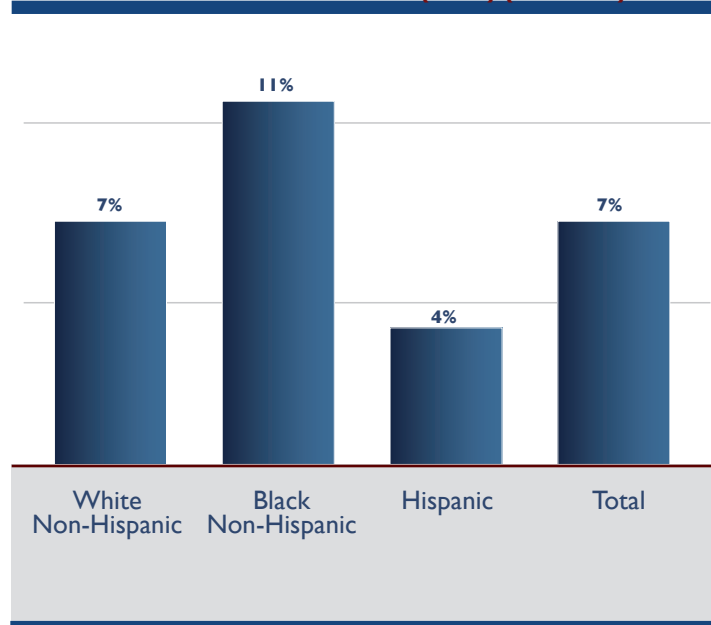
Pennsylvania ranks 41st in the nation with only 7.3% of people 18 and older reporting that they work with neighbors to fix something. This is a surprising figure considering more than double that amount report exchanging favors with neighbors at least a few times a week, a statistic which will be explored in depth in the private sociability section of this report. The key then lies in making the link between doing things for one another and doing things together for the community.

### *Opportunities for Growth*

#### 1. Closing the generational gap

The youngest Pennsylvanians (born 1981 or later) get involved in their neighborhoods the least, as they fall behind all other generations at 4.6% other than the oldest citizens of the state (born 1930 or before) who fix things at a rate of 3.2%.

**WORKED WITH NEIGHBORS IN PA (2009) (BY RACE)**



**DONATION RATE BY GENERATION IN PA**

Millennials (born 1981 or later)	4.2%
Generation X (born 1965-1980)	9.6%
Baby Boomers (born 1946-1964)	10.2%
Silent Generation (born 1931-1945)	13.4%
Long Civic Generation (born before 1930)	6.8%

As with other similar civic indicators such as volunteering, those born between 1965 and 1980 are most likely to work with their neighbors to fix something in their neighborhood.

## 2. Encouraging all demographics to work to fix something in the neighborhood

- In keeping with all of the civic indicators measured in this report, Hispanics come in last in this category as well with only 4.3% working with their neighbors to fix something in their neighborhood.
- African American Pennsylvanians are the best at working with their neighbors with 10.8% doing so in the last year.

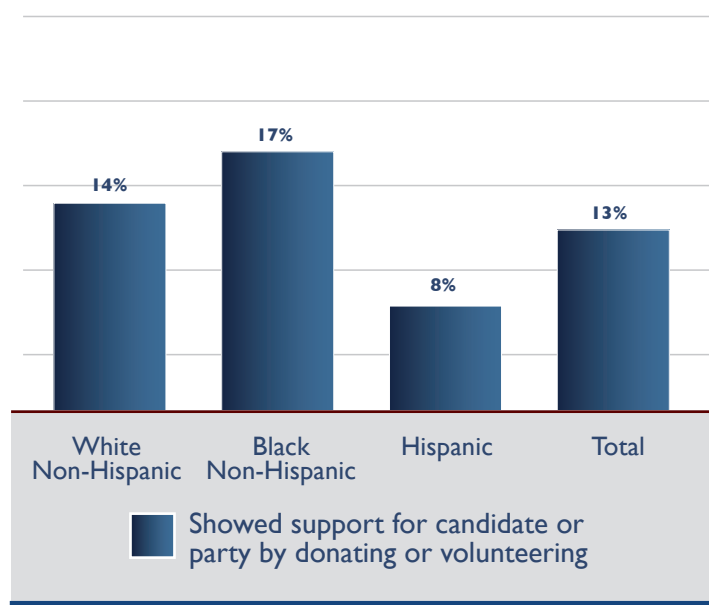
## 3. Closing the gap between marital/family status

- Married Pennsylvanians fix things in the neighborhood twice as much (9.6%) than their single counterparts (4.4%).
- The gap narrows slightly between Pennsylvanians with children 18 and under working to fix something (9.6%) and those without (6.7%).

## INDICATOR 6: GAVE TIME OR MONEY TO A POLITICAL CANDIDATE

Only 13.5% of Pennsylvanians gave their money or time to a political candidate.

### SUPPORT OF CANDIDATE/PARTY IN PA (BY RACE)



## INDICATOR 7: MADE CONTRIBUTION OF \$25 OR MORE

Fifty-two percent of Pennsylvanians reported making a charitable donation last year, higher than the national average. This figure is surprising considering only 13.5% of Pennsylvanians gave a financial contribution to a political candidate last year. The dramatic jump of more than half of Pennsylvanians giving to charity indicates perhaps a link between unwillingness to donate and the current distrust of political institutions.<sup>4</sup> This figure also suggests Pennsylvanians, when given the choice to donate to a cause of their own choosing, do so in high numbers.

### Opportunities for Growth

#### 1. Closing the age gap for donating

- Those born in 1981 or later donate money the least at 28.2% giving \$25 or more in the last year, while those born between 1931 and 1945 donated the most (63.2%). These figures suggest that the increased likelihood of donating is directly related to increased salaries—assuming the youngest Pennsylvanians earn the least of all age groups.

#### 2. Closing the gap between Pennsylvanians marital/family status

- A recurring theme among married Pennsylvanians: They donate more than half as much (68.2%) than their counterparts in the state who have never been married (30.4%).
- The gap narrows considerably, however, when it comes to Pennsylvanians with children 18 and under who donate (62.3%) and those who do not have children (49.0%).

#### 3. Increasing the education level of Pennsylvanians

- As with every other civic indicator, Pennsylvanians with a college education donate significantly more (75.1%) than their counterparts with less education.
- Echoing previous civic indicators, donation rate decreases as education level decreases. Those without a high school diploma report donating at a rate that is less than half of those with a college education. The figure increases to 50.7% for those who graduated high school, and up to 60.0% for those with some college.

## CIVIC KNOWLEDGE: WHERE DO PENNSYLVANIANS GET THEIR INFORMATION?

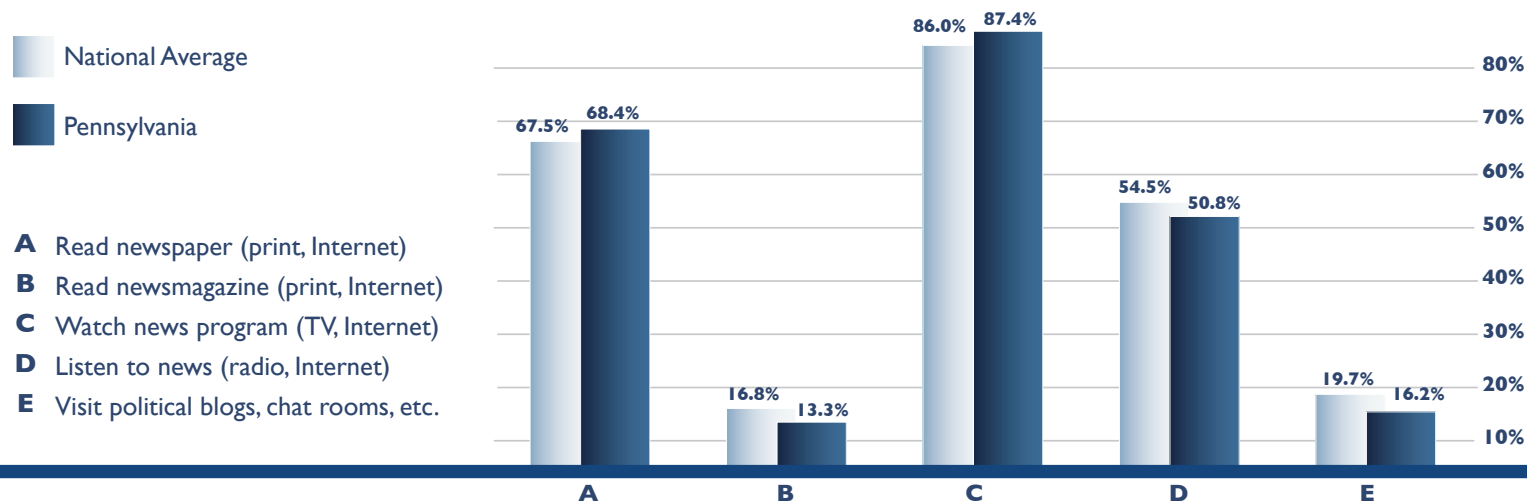
In order to be an engaged citizenry, Pennsylvanians must also be an informed citizenry. They must be abreast of current events and understand the issues they present, both locally and nationally. The *Pennsylvania Civic Health Index* identifies how often and where Pennsylvanians are getting their news.

### INDICATOR 8: NEWS SOURCES

When asked where they turn to educate themselves regarding current events, Pennsylvanians responded in the following manner:

- 68.4% Read the newspaper a few times a week (print, Internet)
- 13.3% Read a newsmagazine a few times a week (print, Internet)
- 87.4% Watch news (TV, Internet)
- 50.8% Listen to radio a few times a week (radio, Internet radio)
- 16.2% Get news from blogs chat rooms or independent news

### STAYING INFORMED (US—PA COMPARISON ON NEWS CONSUMPTION)



## PRIVATE SOCIABILITY/DEMOCRATIC DELIBERATION

### INDICATOR 9: DISCUSS POLITICS WITH FAMILY AND FRIENDS

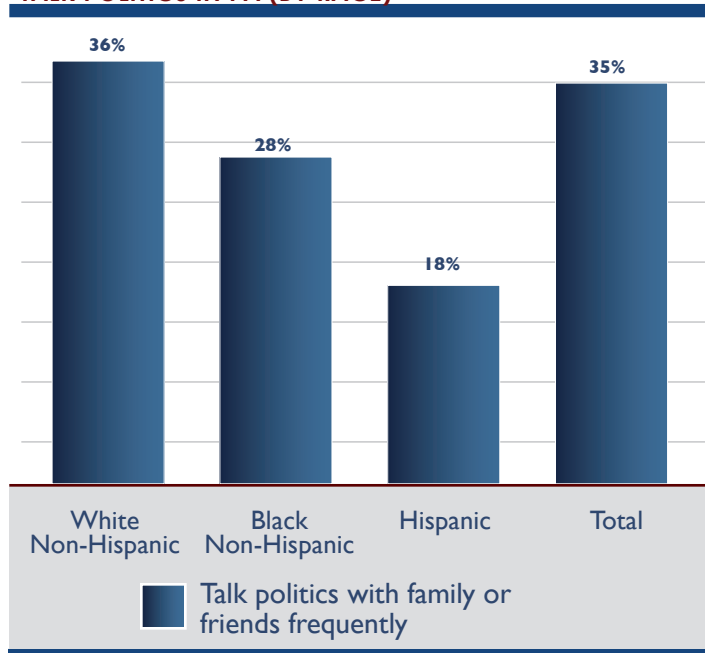
**Political Discussion:** Staying informed is one component of civic health. What are Pennsylvanians doing with the information they receive through various media? Are they discussing the implications of the news they read or hear with one another? The data shows, in fact, they aren't. Pennsylvania ranks 45th out of the 50 states, its lowest rank among all civic indicators, in political discussion. We are not talking about what we hear and what we believe. Democratic deliberation is a key component of being an active, engaged citizen.

#### Opportunity for Growth:

#### I. Encouraging all Pennsylvanians to engage in political discussion

- Discussing politics with family and friends is an opportunity to share and to process the information provided by news sources and to exchange knowledge drawn directly from experience. Pennsylvanians discuss politics at a rate of five percentage points lower than the national average.

### TALK POLITICS IN PA (BY RACE)



## INDICATOR 10: EAT DINNER WITH FAMILY AND HOUSEHOLD MEMBERS

Pennsylvania ranks 20th in the nation—its highest ranking among all civic indicators—with 90.4% of families reporting they eat dinner with household members at least a few times a week.

### *Opportunities for Growth*

1. Encouraging families to convene several times a week will increase volunteerism, charitable contributions, and meeting attendance.

Across the board, those that eat dinner with their families several times a week are more civically engaged.

- 72.9% of those who dine with their families were more likely to vote in the 2008 election vs. 64.8% of those who did not.
- 80.3% of those who report having dinner with their families registered to vote for the last presidential election at a higher rate vs. 74.6% of those who did not.
- 32.1% of those who eat dinner with their families volunteer vs. 21.6% of those who do not.
- 58.9% of communal diners donate to charity vs. 44.6% of those who do not dine together.
- 24.5% of dining families attend meetings, whereas 14.0% of those who do not eat together attend.

2. The data suggests that perhaps more family dinners may help to increase the low rate at which Pennsylvanians discuss politics with one another. It is possible convening several times a week with one another, will give Pennsylvanians the opportunity to engage in such discussion.



## INDICATOR 11: TALK WITH NEIGHBORS SEVERAL TIMES A WEEK

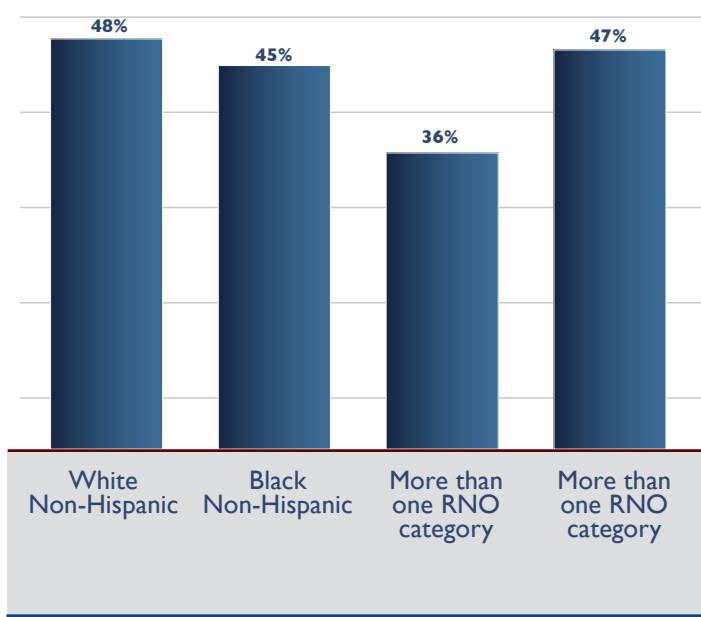
Pennsylvania ranks 20th in the nation—its highest ranking among all civic indicators—with 46.9% of individuals reporting they talk with their neighbors at least a few times a week.

### *Opportunities for Growth:*

1. Encouraging Pennsylvanians to talk with their neighbors several times a week will increase voting, registration, volunteerism, charitable contributions, working with neighbors to fix something in the neighborhood, and meeting attendance.

- 77.7% of those who talk with their neighbors several times a week voted in the 2008 election vs. 70.2% of those who do not.
- 83.1% of those who report speaking to their neighbors registered to vote for the last presidential election vs. 70.2% of those who do not.
- 37.0% of those who talk to their neighbors volunteer vs. 27.4% of those who do not.
- 63.4% of those who speak to neighbors donate to charity vs. 56.7% of those who do not.
- 30.6% of neighborhood talkers attend meetings, whereas 18.7% of those who do not speak to their neighbors attend.
- 11.2% of those who speak to their neighbors also have worked with them to fix something in the neighborhood over the last year vs. 6.6% who do not.

### TALK WITH NEIGHBORS BY RACE IN PA





INDICATOR 12: EXCHANGE FAVORS WITH NEIGHBORS

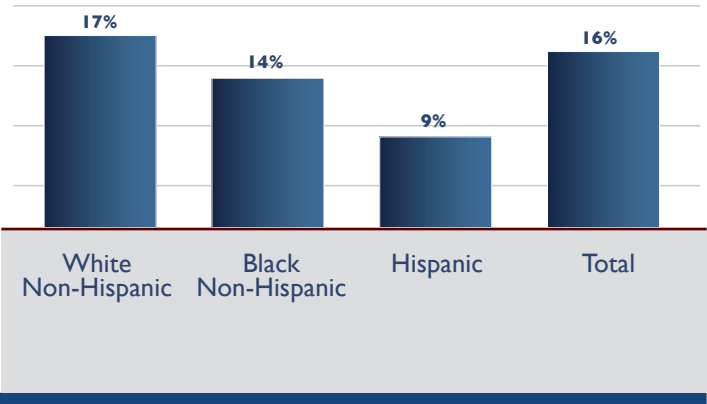
Pennsylvania earns its 3rd highest ranking of 34th in the nation with 15.9% of its citizens reporting exchanging favors several times a week. However, this indicator does not seem to predict an increase in all forms of civic participation measured by this report like eating dinner with family and speaking with neighbors. In fact, those who report exchanging favors with neighbors vote, register to vote, and donate less often than those who do not exchange favors with neighbors.

Opportunities for Growth:

I. There are indications that encouraging Pennsylvanians to exchange favors with their neighbors would increase the rate of volunteerism and the rate of those attending meetings as well as get more Pennsylvanians to work with their neighbors to fix something in the neighborhood.

- 37.0% of those who talk to their neighbors volunteer vs. 27.4% of those who do not.
- 30.6% of neighborhood talkers attend meetings, whereas 18.7% of those who do not speak to their neighbors attend.
- 11.2% of those who speak to their neighbors also have worked with them to fix something in the neighborhood over the last year vs. 6.6% who do not.

EXCHANGE FAVORS WITH NEIGHBORS BY RACE IN PA



INDICATOR 13: BELONG TO AT LEAST ONE GROUP

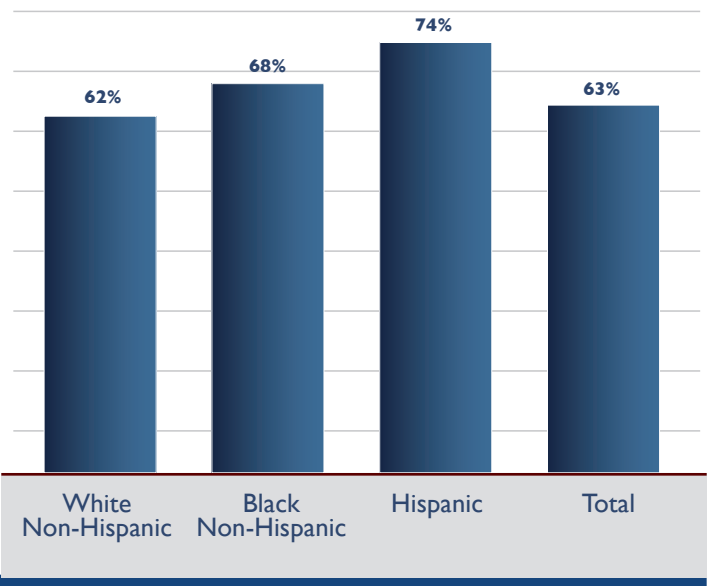
Pennsylvania ranks 29th in the rate of people 18 and older who belong to religious, neighborhood, school, or sports groups in their communities with the rate of 36.7%. Furthermore, 12.2% of people take a leadership role in an organization by serving as an officer or serving on a committee of an organization. Nationally, 35.1% of Americans are members of at least one group or organization and 10.1% serve as officers or committee members.

Opportunities for Growth:

I. Encouraging Pennsylvanians to be more active in their groups

- Despite the fact a high rate of Pennsylvanians belong to a group (36.7%), only 8.9% of them report attending a meeting of that group once in the last year. This is a dramatic decrease.
- Nationally, 21.5% of Americans report attending a meeting of a group to which they belong.

GROUP INVOLVEMENT BY RACE



# CONCLUSION

The *Pennsylvania Civic Health Index* paints a comprehensive picture of the state's current civic health. It celebrates Pennsylvanians' civic might as well as illustrates what aspects of their civil society they need to fully develop in order to have a healthier one.

## HOW DO WE MOVE FORWARD?

Individually, Pennsylvanians can contribute to the goal of total civic health by seizing the opportunities for growth outlined in this report. They can encourage one another to:

**1. Stay in school**—not only to get their high school diplomas, but to go on to attend and graduate from college.

**2. Rally the demographics that are consistently falling behind.**

Pennsylvanians are in this together. It is not enough for just a few to participate.

- Millennials (age 18-29)
- Hispanic Pennsylvanians
- Unemployed Pennsylvanians
- Single (never married) Pennsylvanians

**3. Pennsylvanians must translate their aptitude for relating to one another into:**

- discussing politics with each other
- attending public meetings to deliberate issues
- working with one another to fix problems in the community
- voting
- volunteering

In addition to the personal responsibility of every Pennsylvania citizen to contribute to the state's civic health, its community organizations are continuing to work hard to create a vibrant and thriving society, and to support Pennsylvania residents in their civic endeavors. To engage more citizens in volunteerism, for example, PennSERVE acts as the hub for volunteering and community service in Pennsylvania. In 2009-2010, PennSERVE distributed more than \$33,400,000 from the Corporation for National and Community Service to Pennsylvania communities throughout the state to support three national service initiatives: Senior Corps, AmeriCorps, and Learn and Serve America. PennSERVE

also oversees the Benjamin Franklin Citizenship Initiative, "a public education and outreach effort that educates, enlists and engages Pennsylvanians in the essence of participatory democracy."<sup>5</sup>

Recently, Pennsylvania also has inaugurated Allentown, Easton, Harrisburg, Parker, Philadelphia, Pittsburgh, Reading, Scranton, and Wilkes-Barre as "cities of service." The Cities of Service initiative, founded in New York City on September 10, 2009, by 17 mayors from cities around the nation, is a bipartisan coalition of mayors who have committed to work together to lead a multi-year effort to expand impact volunteerism.

Pennsylvania supports greater student understanding of government through various **civic education** initiatives as well. The Pennsylvania Coalition for Representative Democracy (PennCORD), for example, grew out of the *Civic Mission of Schools Report* (CMSR) published in 2003. Like the *Pennsylvania Civic Health Index*, the CMSR relayed crucial civic information—that civic education was in dire straights in Pennsylvania schools. It reported that Social Studies was being relegated to only a few minutes a week in some grade levels. Led by Pennsylvania's First Lady, Judge Marjorie O. Rendell, the "[coalition] of educational, advocacy and governmental organizations committed to improving civic learning for students in K-12" formed "in order to improve civic education in the hopes of increasing student participation in communities, society and government." PennCORD supports all aspects of teaching and learning. Its programs: award thousands of dollars in stipends to teachers to reinvigorate civics in their classrooms, host and facilitate professional developments for new, experienced and pre-service teachers, and constantly bring civic education to the forefront.

The *Pennsylvania Civic Health Index* is the crucial first step in setting the agenda for what's next in civic engagement in this state. With the information it provides, policy makers, educators, organizations and citizens can monitor civic trends and have the conversations necessary to set significant, measurable, and attainable goals for Pennsylvania. In addition to illustrating the state's civic standing, the *Civic Health Index* shows how Pennsylvania fits into the larger picture of democratic participation in the country—the results of which provide a launching pad for discussion as to the future of the state as a leader of civic engagement in the nation. Equipped with this data, lawmakers and citizens of this state can begin to take the necessary steps to ensure that Pennsylvania will reemerge as the cradle of democracy in this country.

# TECHNICAL NOTES

Findings presented above are based on CIRCLE's analysis of the Census Current Population Survey (CPS) data. Any and all errors are our own. Volunteering estimates are from CPS September Volunteering Supplement, 2002 - 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, 1972-2008, and 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 was combined whenever possible to achieve the largest possible sample size and to minimize error.

Estimates for the volunteering indicators (e.g., volunteering, working with neighbors, making donations) are based on U.S. residents ages 16 and older. Estimates for civic engagement and social connection indicators (e.g., exchanging favor with neighbor, keeping up with news, using Internet to communicate) are based on U.S. residents ages 18 and older. Voting and registration statistics are based on U.S. citizens who are 18 and older (eligible voters). The relationship between educational attainment and engagement estimates are based on adults age 25 and older, based on the assumption that younger people may still be completing their education.

For the Pennsylvania Report, the sample size for citizen engagement was 6,350 citizens; the sample size for volunteering included an additional 3,262 citizens.

Because we draw from multiple sources of data with varying sample sizes, we are not able to compute one margin of error for the state across all indicators. In Pennsylvania, the margin of error for major indicators varied from +/- 0.8% to 1.9%, depending on the sample size and other parameters associated with a specific indicator. Any analysis that breaks down the sample into smaller groups (e.g., gender, education) will have a smaller sample size and therefore the margin of error will increase. It is also important to emphasize that our margin of error estimates are approximate, as CPS sampling is highly complex and accurate estimation of error rates involves many parameters that are not publicly available. To download a copy of this report, visit <http://NCoC.net/PA>

## ENDNOTES

- <sup>1</sup> National Constitution Center Mission Statement [http://constitutioncenter.org/ncc\\_about\\_Landing.aspx](http://constitutioncenter.org/ncc_about_Landing.aspx)
- <sup>2</sup> Pennsylvania Agenda 2006-2010 <http://www.portal.state.pa.us/portal/serverpt?open=512&objID=2991&mode=2>
- <sup>3</sup> Data source is the American Community Survey, pooled 2006-2008 data.
- <sup>4</sup> Data source is the National Constitution Center and AP Constitution Day Poll, 2010 data.
- <sup>5</sup> PennSERVE [http://www.portal.state.pa.us/portal/serverpt/community/pennserve/10382/about\\_penserve/552319](http://www.portal.state.pa.us/portal/serverpt/community/pennserve/10382/about_penserve/552319)

## ABOUT THE NATIONAL CONSTITUTION CENTER

The National Constitution Center, located at 525 Arch St. on Philadelphia's Independence Mall, is an independent, nonpartisan, nonprofit organization dedicated to increasing public understanding of the U.S. Constitution and the ideas and values it represents. The Center serves as a museum, an education center, and a forum for debate on constitutional issues. The museum dramatically tells the story of the Constitution from Revolutionary times to the present through more than 100 interactive, multimedia exhibits, film, photographs, text, sculpture and artifacts, and features a powerful, award-winning theatrical performance, "Freedom Rising." The Center also houses the Annenberg Center for Education and Outreach, which serves as the hub for national constitutional education. Also, as a nonpartisan forum for constitutional discourse, the Center presents—without endorsement—programs that contain diverse viewpoints on a broad range of issues. For more information, call 215.409.6700 or visit [www.constitutioncenter.org](http://www.constitutioncenter.org)





# NATIONAL CONFERENCE ON CITIZENSHIP

## Board of Directors

Norma Barfield  
Barry Byrd  
Philip Duncan  
Eric Federing  
Thomas Gottschalk  
Gail Leftwich Kitch  
Martin Krall  
Dennis McGinn  
A.G. Newmyer  
John Reeder  
Thomas Susman  
Craig Turk  
Michael Weiser (Chair)  
Jocelyn White

## Board of Advisors

Diana Aviv  
James Basker  
John Bridgeland (Chair)  
Jean Case  
Frank Damrell  
John J. Dilulio, Jr.  
Jane Eisner  
Chester Finn, Jr.  
William Galston  
Stephen Goldsmith  
Scott Heiferman  
Walter Isaacson  
Amy Kass  
Michelle Nunn  
Michael Pack  
Robert Putnam  
Charles Quigley  
Ian Rowe  
Tobi Walker

Founded in 1946 and federally chartered by the U.S. Congress in 1953, the National Conference on Citizenship (NCoC) is a leader in advancing our nation's civic life. We track, measure and promote civic participation and engagement in partnership with other organizations on a bipartisan, collaborative basis. We focus on ways to enhance history and civics education, encourage national and community service, and promote greater participation in the political process.

Many distinguished Americans have been involved with the growth and development of NCoC over the years including Presidents Harry S. Truman and Dwight D. Eisenhower and Chief Justices Earl Warren and Warren Burger. The roster of board members, advisors and guest speakers at NCoC events represent a diverse spectrum of leaders from across government, industry, academia, community and nonprofit organizations and the media, including Senators Robert Byrd and Lamar Alexander, Justices Sandra Day O'Connor, Stephen Breyer, Anthony Kennedy, Ruth Bader Ginsburg, and Antonin Scalia, philanthropists Ray Chambers and Eugene Lang, authors David McCullough and Walter Isaacson, scholars Robert Putnam and Stephen Goldsmith, TIME Magazine's Richard Stengel, MTV's Ian Rowe, ABC's Cokie Roberts, actor Stephen Lang, AOL's Jean Case, Facebook's Sean Parker, former Clinton Administration advisor William Galston and former Bush Administration advisor John Bridgeland.

NCoC's accomplishments are many, ranging from fueling the civic energy of the Greatest Generation freshly home from WWII to helping lead the celebration of our nation's Bicentennial in 1976. NCoC helped establish the observance of Constitution Day, each September 17, and our charter mandates we hold our annual conference close to this date with a focus on building a more active and engaged citizenry.

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.

To advance our mission, better understand the broad dimensions of modern citizenship, and to encourage greater civic participation, NCoC has developed and sustained a network of over 250 like-minded institutions that seek a more collaborative approach to strengthening our system of self-government.

For more information, please visit [www.ncoc.net](http://www.ncoc.net)

## 2010 America's Civic Health Assessment

### Civic Life in America: Key Findings on the Civic Health of the Nation

To download to iPhone or Android, scan these barcodes with the free [stickytickets](#) app

#### Executive Summary



#### Issue Brief



#### More information:

[NCoC.net/CivicHealth2010](http://NCoC.net/CivicHealth2010)

#### State and City rankings:

<http://Civic.Serve.gov>

# CIVIC INDICATORS WORKING GROUP

**JOHN BRIDGELAND**, CEO, Civic Enterprises; Chairman, Board of Advisors, National Conference on Citizenship; and former Assistant to the President of the United States & Director, Domestic Policy Council & USA Freedom Corps

**NELDA BROWN**, Executive Director, National Service-Learning Partnership at the Academy for Educational Development

**KRISTEN CAMBELL**, Director of Programs and New Media, National Conference on Citizenship

**DAVID EISNER**, President and CEO, National Constitution Center

**MAYA ENISTA**, CEO, Mobilize.org

**WILLIAM GALSTON**, Senior Fellow, Brookings Institution; former Deputy Assistant to the President of the United States for Domestic Policy

**STEPHEN GOLDSMITH**, Deputy Mayor of New York City, Daniel Paul Professor of Government, Kennedy School of Government at Harvard University; Director, Innovations in American Government; and former Mayor of Indianapolis

**ROBERT GRIMM, JR.**, Professor of the Practice of Philanthropy and Nonprofit Management, University of Maryland

**LLOYD JOHNSTON**, Research Professor and Distinguished Research Scientist at the University of Michigan's Institute for Social Research; and Principal Investigator of the Monitoring the Future Study

**KEI KAWASHIMA-GINSBERG**, Lead Researcher, Center for Information and Research on Civic Learning and Engagement (CIRCLE) at the Jonathan M. Tisch College of Citizenship and Public Service at Tufts University

**PETER LEVINE**, Director, Center for Information and Research on Civic Learning and Engagement (CIRCLE) at the Jonathan M. Tisch College of Citizenship and Public Service at Tufts University

**MARK HUGO LOPEZ**, Associate Director of the Pew Hispanic Center; Research Professor, University of Maryland's School of Public Affairs

**SEAN PARKER**, Co-Founder and Chairman of Causes on Facebook/MySpace; Founding President of Facebook

**KENNETH PREWITT**, Director of the United States Census Bureau; Carnegie Professor of Public Affairs and the Vice-President for Global Centers at Columbia University,

**ROBERT PUTNAM**, Peter and Isabel Malkin Professor of Public Policy, Kennedy School of Government at Harvard University; Founder, Saguaro Seminar; author of Bowling Alone: The Collapse and Revival of American Community

**THOMAS SANDER**, Executive Director, the Saguaro Seminar, Harvard University

**DAVID B. SMITH**, Executive Director, National Conference on Citizenship; Founder, Mobilize.org

**HEATHER SMITH**, Executive Director, Rock the Vote

**MAX STIER**, Executive Director, Partnership for Public Service

**MICHAEL WEISER**, Chairman, National Conference on Citizenship

**JONATHAN ZAFF**, Vice President for Research, America's Promise Alliance

## CIVIC HEALTH PARTNERS

### STATES:

**ARIZONA** - Center for the Future of Arizona

**CALIFORNIA** - California Forward, Common Sense California, Center for Civic Education

**FLORIDA** - Florida Joint Center for Citizenship

**ILLINOIS** - Citizen Advocacy Center, McCormick Foundation

**MARYLAND** - Mannakee Circle Group, Center for Civic Education, Common Cause Maryland, Maryland Civic Literacy Commission, University of Maryland

**MISSOURI** - Missouri State University

**NEW YORK** - Siena Research Institute

**NORTH CAROLINA** - North Carolina Civic Education Consortium, Center for Civic Education, NC Center for Voter Education, Democracy NC, NC Campus Compact, Western Carolina University Department of Public Policy

**OHIO** - Miami University Hamilton

**OKLAHOMA** - University of Central Oklahoma, Oklahoma Campus Compact

**PENNSYLVANIA** - National Constitution Center

**TEXAS** - University of Texas at San Antonio

**VIRGINIA** - Center for the Constitution at James Madison's Montpelier, Colonial Williamsburg Foundation

### CITIES:

**CHICAGO** - McCormick Foundation

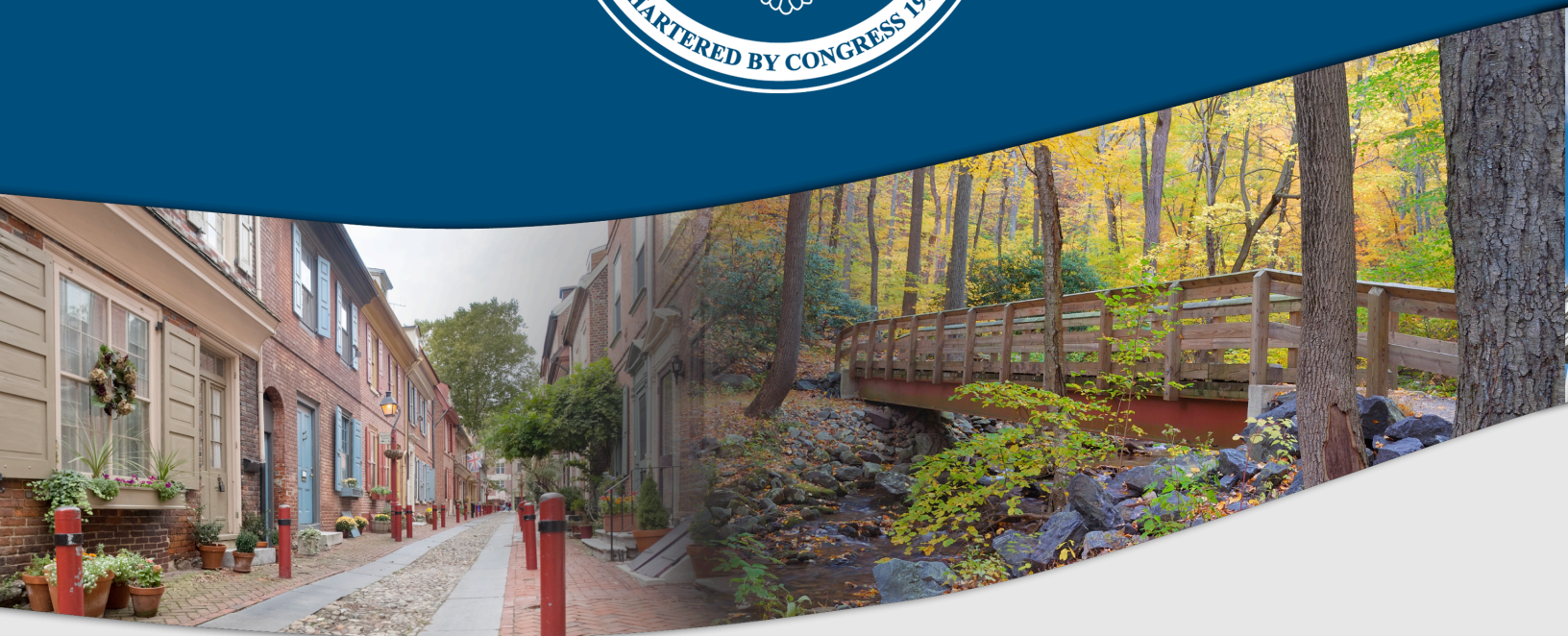
**MIAMI** - Florida Joint Center for Citizenship and the John S. and James L. Knight Foundation

**MINNEAPOLIS / ST. PAUL** - Center for Democracy and Citizenship, Augsburg College and the John S. and James L. Knight Foundation

**SEATTLE** - Seattle City Club, Boeing Company, Seattle Foundation



[www.NCoC.net](http://www.NCoC.net)



**NATIONAL CONSTITUTION CENTER**



[www.constitutioncenter.org](http://www.constitutioncenter.org)