

2011 OHIO CIVIC HEALTH INDEX



EXECUTIVE SUMMARY



MIAMI
UNIVERSITY
HAMILTON



CENTER FOR CIVIC ENGAGEMENT
Miami University Hamilton



National Conference on Citizenship
Chartered by Congress



ABOUT THE PARTNERS

NATIONAL CONFERENCE ON CITIZENSHIP

At the National Conference on Citizenship (NCoC), we believe everyone has the power to make a difference in how their community and country thrive.

We are a dynamic, nonpartisan nonprofit working at the forefront of our nation's civic life. We continuously explore what shapes today's citizenry, define the evolving role of the individual in our democracy, and uncover ways to motivate greater participation. Through our events, research, and reports, NCoC expands our nation's contemporary understanding of what it means to be a citizen. We seek new ideas and approaches for creating greater civic health and vitality throughout the United States.

MIAMI UNIVERSITY HAMILTON CENTER FOR CIVIC ENGAGEMENT

Our Center for Civic Engagement at Miami Hamilton is grounded in public life. Through education, research, service, and advocacy, we strive to build the will and capacity to solve public problems. Our Center is proud to offer comprehensive support to students, faculty, and local citizens in the areas of volunteerism, service-learning, and public dialogue and deliberation. The MUH Center for Civic Engagement houses multiple spaces for public dialogue, namely our Democracy Wall on campus, and our Miami Hamilton Downtown Center, which offers educational, arts, and civic programming in the urban core of our city. For our public work within the community, Miami Hamilton was awarded the 2010 Carnegie Community Engagement Classification. For more information on our community work, please visit our MUH Center for Civic Engagement website at www.regionals.muohio.edu/cce.

ABOUT THIS REPORT

Since 2008, the Ohio Civic Health Index has found a home within Miami University. First produced in 2008 out of the Harry T. Wilks Leadership Institute, the Ohio Civic Health Index moved to the MUH Center for Civic Engagement in 2009, and we are proud to continue to provide the leadership, production, and dissemination of the statewide picture of civic health in Ohio.



The defining feature of American democracy is citizen participation in the political and social lives of communities, states, and the nation. The 2011 Ohio Civic Health Index examines five dimensions of civic health: volunteerism, voting, political action, participation in groups, and social connectedness. This report was published in partnership with NCoC (the National Conference on Citizenship), an organization chartered by Congress that began publishing *America's Civic Health Index* in 2006. In 2009, NCoC was incorporated into the Edward M. Kennedy Serve America Act and directed to expand the civic health assessment in partnership with the Corporation for National and Community Service and the U.S. Census Bureau. The data used in the Ohio Civic Health Index is collected through the Census Current Population Survey (CPS). Unless specifically noted otherwise, each indicator cited here reflects a pooled average of participation from 2008-2010. While each individual indicator is important, they must also be considered in the aggregate because no single indicator definitively reflects the civic health of the State of Ohio.

The 2011 Ohio Civic Health Index, authored by Sarah E. Woiteshek and Daniel E. Hall, was sponsored by Miami University Hamilton Center for Civic Engagement and was produced in partnership with the National Conference on Citizenship. Questions or comments should be directed to Sarah at woitesse@muohio.edu or Daniel at hallde@muohio.edu.

Skyline photo courtesy of Brandon Saurber, City of Hamilton

KEY FINDINGS

A cursory examination of the 2011 Civic Health Index data paints a picture of a state that falls at or near the national average on all forms of engagement. While the results for any one indicator are not dramatic, they are evidence of a solid and broad civic foundation for citizens of Ohio. A closer look reveals Ohioans have demonstrated engagement across indicators of Volunteerism, Voting, Political Action, Group Participation, and Social Connectedness — providing a national bellwether for civic behavior.

Ohioans are close to their families and neighbors.

Ohio ranks 13th among the states for the percentage of residents who exchange favors frequently with neighbors. Similarly, Ohio is slightly above the national average for families eating dinner together frequently and right on par with the national average for neighbors talking frequently. Ohioans are less likely, however, to interact through the Internet than the national average.

Ohioans participate in community groups.

Ohioans are more involved in church, athletic, school, and other civic groups than the nation as a whole. Ohio performed above the national average in terms of individuals participating in service or civic associations—with 8.4% of Ohioans doing so, and 6.8% of Americans nationally. Furthermore, participation in sports and recreation in Ohio (11.9%), as well as church or other religious institutions in Ohio (19.1%), was higher than the national averages. Ohioans also reported higher rates than the nation for serving in a leadership role in these groups.

Ohioans give back.

Ohio's volunteerism rate is slightly higher than the national average, placing Ohio 21st among the 50 states when considering pooled 2008-2010 averages. In 2010, 28.5% of Ohioans volunteered—a small decline from previous years, but still slightly above the national average.

Voting in Ohio mirrors that of the nation.

The percentage of registered voters and the number of people who voted in Ohio were also above national rates. In 2010, 64.8% of Ohioans registered to vote, relative to 59.8% of Americans nationally. In 2010, Ohio saw 44.2% voter turnout relative to 41.8% nationally. This placed Ohio 27th in the nation in voter turnout in 2010.

Political participation in Ohio is more independent than collective.

When looking at pooled 2008-2010 averages, Ohioans were generally as likely to attend a public meeting and discuss politics frequently as the nation, but contacted their public officials and boycotted products and/or made purchases as a form of political expression more than the national average. Interestingly however, in 2010 alone, Ohioans became much less likely to discuss politics frequently at 22.6%—even when considering the national trend of general decline on this measure. The national average for discussing politics frequently in 2010 was 8.8 percentage points less than the pooled average for 2008-2010, whereas the 2010 rate in Ohio was 12.1 percentage points less than the pooled 2008-2010 average.



28.5%

of Ohioans volunteered
in 2010

Photo courtesy of Miami University Hamilton Center
for Civic Engagement.



SUMMARY OF FINDINGS: A CALL TO ACTION

Staying true to tradition, Ohio remains the bellwether of the nation for political and civic participation. The overall civic engagement of Ohioans is encouraging. Our state findings reveal the strengths of our citizens in our ability to connect with each other through conversation, meals, and aid to our neighbors in times of need. On these indicators, Ohio shows promise and performs at or slightly above the national average.

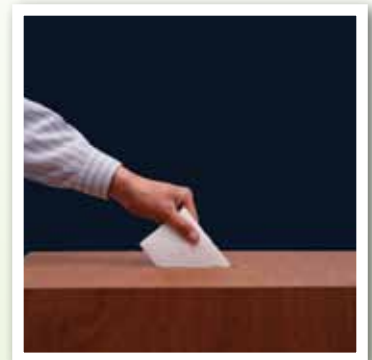
These findings reflect our Midwestern ideals—family and group connectedness are important to Ohioans. A majority of Ohioans eat dinner with family and utilize the Internet to communicate with family and friends, and nearly half talk frequently with their neighbors. Further, Ohioans are participating steadily in groups either through sports, religion, and/or civic work and also give of their time and talents through volunteering in their communities. As a mark of our leadership capabilities, Ohioans are more likely to hold a leadership position within these groups than their national counterparts.

While Ohioans tend to be connected to each other in groups through volunteering, organizations, and leadership positions, there is room for improvement in political engagement. The 2010 decline in frequency of discussing politics is one troubling trend worth noting. However, on a promising note, higher numbers of Ohioans report that they contact their public officials than the national average. Further, Ohioans chose to advocate for personal causes through purchasing power, either by boycotting or purchasing a product or service based on values. Ohioans hold opinions, ideals, and beliefs that are communicated to public officials and businesses through these acts.

Given these findings across the civic health indicators, it is noteworthy that Ohio, once again, reflects the civic behaviors of the nation. In a “battleground” state, our citizens provide a consistent look into the attitudes, thoughts, and actions of our neighbors across America. However, our beloved bellwether state leaves much room for improvement. It is clear that our work to strengthen civic action and civic discourse is just beginning. Community and family connectedness are strong civic forces in Ohio. Yet can we mobilize our participation in groups to create a stronger and healthier engagement in political discourse and political participation? These findings serve as a call to action for all Ohioans, to build from our active engagement in community life to strengthen all forms of civic participation.

64.8%

of Ohioans registered to vote in 2010.



Skyline photo courtesy of Brown Studios Photography, Hamilton, OH

CIVIC HEALTH INDEX

State and Local Partnerships

America's Civic Health Index has been produced nationally since 2006 to measure the level of civic engagement and health of our democracy. As the *Civic Health Index* is increasingly a part of the dialogue around which policymakers, communities, and the media talk about civic life, the index is increasing in its scope and specificity.

Together with its local partners, NCoC continues to lead and inspire a public dialogue about the future of citizenship in America. NCoC has worked in partnerships in communities across the country.

STATES

Alabama

University of Alabama*
David Mathews Center*
Auburn University*

Arizona

Center for the Future of Arizona

California

California Forward
Center for Civic Education
Center for Individual and
Institutional Renewal*
Davenport Institute

Connecticut

Everyday Democracy*
Secretary of the State of Connecticut*

Florida

Florida Joint Center for Citizenship
Bob Graham Center for Public Service
Lou Frey Institute of Politics
and Government
John S. and James L. Knight Foundation

Illinois

Citizen Advocacy Center
McCormick Foundation

Indiana

Center on Congress at Indiana University*
Hoosier State Press Association
Foundation*
Indiana Bar Foundation*
Indiana Supreme Court*
Indiana University Northwest*

Kentucky

Commonwealth of Kentucky,
Secretary of State's Office*
Institute for Citizenship & Social Responsibility,
Western Kentucky University*
Kentucky Advocates for Civic Education*
McConnell Center, University of Louisville*

Maryland

Mannakee Circle Group
Center for Civic Education
Common Cause-Maryland
Maryland Civic Literacy Commission

Massachusetts

Harvard Institute of Politics*

Minnesota

Center for Democracy and Citizenship

Missouri

Missouri State University

New Hampshire

Carsey Institute

New York

Siena College Research Institute
New York State Commission on
National and Community Service*

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 Center for
Civic Engagement

Oklahoma

University of Central Oklahoma
Oklahoma Campus Compact

Pennsylvania

Center for Democratic Deliberation*
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
John S. and James L. Knight Foundation
Miami Foundation*

Seattle

Seattle City Club
Boeing Company
Seattle Foundation

Twin Cities

Center for Democracy and Citizenship
Citizens League*
John S. and James L. Knight Foundation

Justin Bibb

Special Assistant for Education and Economic Development for the County Executive, Cuyahoga County, Ohio

Harry Boyte

Director, Center for Democracy and Citizenship

John Bridgeland

CEO, Civic Enterprises
Chairman, Board of Advisors, National Conference on Citizenship
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

Chief Program Officer, National Conference on Citizenship

Doug Dobson

Executive Director, Florida Joint Center for Citizenship

David Eisner

President and CEO, National Constitution Center

Maya Enista Smith

CEO, Mobilize.org

William Galston

Senior Fellow, Brookings Institution
Former Deputy Assistant to the President of the United States for Domestic Policy

Stephen Goldsmith

Former Deputy Mayor of New York City
Daniel Paul Professor of Government, Kennedy School of Government at Harvard University
Director, Innovations in American Government
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
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

Former 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, Saguro Seminar
Author of *Bowling Alone: The Collapse and Revival of American Community*

Thomas Sander

Executive Director, the Saguro 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



National Conference on Citizenship
Chartered by Congress



**MIAMI
UNIVERSITY
HAMILTON**