

# OHIO CIVIC HEALTH INDEX





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### **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, non-partisan 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.

### **CENTER FOR CIVIC ENGAGEMENT AT MIAMI UNIVERSITY HAMILTON**

Miami University has partnered with NCoC to produce the *Ohio Civic Health Index Report* since 2008. Following publication of the initial report by the Harry T. Wilks Leadership Institute at Miami Oxford, the Center for Civic Engagement at Miami Hamilton assumed leadership of the project for the University in 2009. The Center for Civic Engagement views its participation in this project as a vital part of its mission to actively engage in Ohio's communities, meet the civic educational needs of Ohioans and work collaboratively with community partners to identify and address community problems. For its public work within the community, Miami University Hamilton was awarded the 2010 Community Engagement Classification from the Carnegie Foundation for the Advancement of Teaching.

*Left cover photo credit: Samuel Chase Photography, Hamilton, Ohio*

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## ABOUT THIS REPORT

Now in its fifth iteration, the *2013 Ohio Civic Health Index Report* is the product of an ongoing collaboration between the National Conference on Citizenship (NCoC) -- a nonprofit organization chartered by Congress in 1953 -- and the Center for Civic Engagement at Miami University Hamilton. As with previous versions, the primary purpose of the *2013 Report* is to assess current levels of citizen engagement in the Buckeye State. By examining various statewide indicators of civic and community involvement -- including Ohioans' rates of volunteerism, charitable giving, electoral participation, community interactions, and group memberships -- the *2013 Ohio Civic Health Index Report* aims to present a comprehensive snapshot of the current state of Ohio's 'civic health.' When useful for context, the discussion below provides comparative data about how Ohio ranks among the 50 states on a range of civic engagement indicators. In its final section, the *Report* offers both a set of conclusions to be drawn from the data and a review of specific policy recommendations that may be considered going forward.

Unless otherwise indicated below, the data reported in the *2013 Ohio Civic Health Index Report* were collected through the Current Population Survey, a joint effort of the U.S. Census Bureau and the U.S. Department of Labor's Bureau of Labor Statistics. While focused specifically on Ohio, this *Report* is also part of a broader national effort to assess Americans' civic commitments over time. Each year since 2006, NCoC has published America's Civic Health Index -- making it now the leading national barometer of Americans' levels of volunteering, voting, involvement in organizations, and trust in government and other community institutions. In April 2009, President Barack Obama signed into law the Edward M. Kennedy Serve America Act, which directed NCoC to work in partnership with the Corporation for National and Community Service (CNCS) on an annual civic health assessment. Consequently, NCoC and CNCS have collaborated on the publication of a national Volunteering & Civic Life in America assessment every year since 2010.



*Photography credit: Jacob Stone, City of Hamilton*

## A BRIEF LOOK AT OHIO TODAY: REBOUNDED FROM ECONOMIC CRISIS

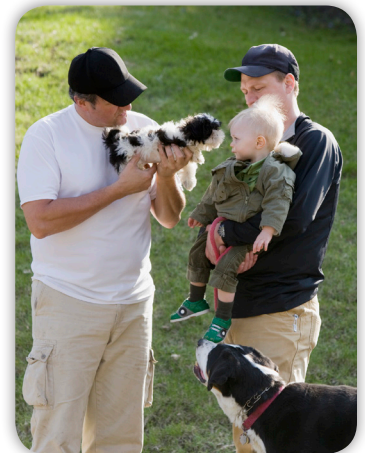
Ohio, of course, lies both culturally and geographically within the traditional ‘heartland’ of the American Midwest. Like many of its neighbors throughout the region, Ohio today is still grappling with the lingering effects of the Great Recession of 2007-09 on its families, institutions, and communities. Indeed, even before the recent U.S. financial crisis burst into view in late 2007, many residents of the Buckeye State – particularly those living and working in its manufacturing and agricultural centers – had already endured several years of widespread job losses and economic disruptions within their local communities.<sup>1</sup>

Coming on the heels of these hardships, then, the rapid economic downturn in late 2008 and 2009 dealt many Ohioans a terrible additional blow. By April 2009, unemployment in the state had climbed above the national average, to over 10% - where it stubbornly remained for well over a year.<sup>2</sup> Foreclosure rates in Ohio soared to historic highs.<sup>3</sup> Recent Ohio college graduates in the immediate post-recession period looked in vain for employment in their chosen fields. Ohio, for three years running, ranked among the highest half-dozen states in new filings for non-business bankruptcies.<sup>4</sup> Not surprisingly, Ohioans in public opinion polls expressed despair about their own and their neighbors’ economic fortunes and little optimism about their prospects for the future.<sup>5</sup>

To be sure, the Buckeye State has yet to leave these economic and social struggles completely behind. Yet several indicators suggest that an economic rebound has gotten underway in at least some parts of the state – a development that likely bodes well for the state’s civic health in the years ahead. Statewide unemployment rates, government statistics show, dropped below 8% in late 2011 and have remained there ever since.<sup>6</sup> New home foreclosure filings in 2012, while still high by historical standards, represented a 20% drop from Ohio’s 2009 highs.<sup>7</sup> Annual non-business bankruptcy filings likewise fell by 28% in Ohio between 2009 and 2012.<sup>8</sup> In recent surveys, moreover, Ohioans have expressed renewed optimism about the prospects for future economic growth – a result likely tied to the resurgence of Ohio’s automobile and steel sectors, the growing diversification of its industrial base and the development of a now-booming energy sector in the eastern part of the state.<sup>9</sup>

Ohio, in short, is now showing positive – albeit tentative – signs of sustained recovery from the effects of the 2007-09 economic crisis. Yet at the time of this writing, it still remains unclear whether such positive indicators portend a coming period of extended economic growth and prosperity in the state. Additionally, it is unclear whether such benefits will spread throughout Ohio’s increasingly diverse economy so as to ‘lift all boats’ and correspondingly strengthen Ohioans’ bonds to one another and to their communities.<sup>10</sup> The answers to those questions will likely have major implications for communities across the state and for the standards of living enjoyed by millions of Ohioans in the years to come.

Ohio is now showing positive – albeit tentative – signs of sustained recovery from the effects of the 2007-09 economic crisis.



## A Demographic Snapshot of Ohio

According to U.S. Census figures, Ohio today is the home of roughly 11.5 million people – making it the seventh most populous state in the country. Along several demographic fronts, the state’s population largely mirrors that of the nation overall. In terms of age, Ohio skews only slightly older than the rest of the nation; in 2012, 14.8% of Ohioans were 65 or older, compared to 13.7% nationally, while 23.1% of Ohioans were under 18, close to the national 23.5% rate.<sup>11</sup> Ohioans largely track national demographic trends in other respects as well, including: (a) the overall percentage of adult high school graduates in the state (87.8%, compared to 85.4% nationally); (b) the percentage of adults aged 25 or above who hold a bachelor’s degree or higher (24.5%, compared to 28.2% nationally); (c) Ohioans’ overall rates of home ownership (68.7%, compared to 66.1% nationally); (d) the average number of persons living in a household (2.46, compared to 2.60 nationally); and, (e) the percentage of Ohioans living below the federal poverty level (14.8%, compared to 14.3% nationally).<sup>12</sup> As one Washington-based political analyst put it during the 2012 presidential race, Ohio’s basic demographic profile makes it a true microcosm of America<sup>13</sup> – confirming Ohio’s long-established bellwether status not only in politics, but in economics and culture as well. As goes Ohio, it seems, so goes the nation.



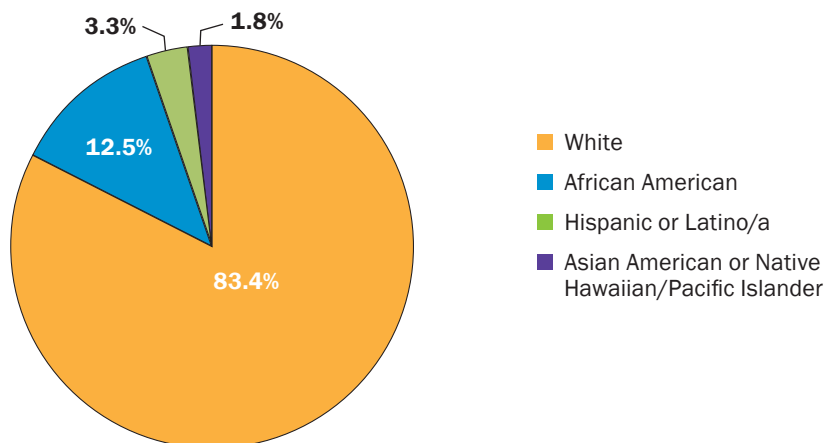
## 46th

From 2010-2012, Ohio ranked 46th in relative population growth.

At the same time, the people of the Buckeye State stand out from the nation in at least three notable respects. For one, Ohio’s population, while growing, is doing so at a much slower rate than that of the nation overall; indeed, since 2000, Ohio has consistently lagged in relative population growth, and from 2010-2012, Ohio ranked 46th in the nation in this regard.<sup>14</sup> One long-term consequence of this slow population growth, should it continue, will be an additional loss of political clout after the 2020 census, both in the Electoral College and in the U.S. House of Representatives. For another, Ohioans are suffering from relatively low rates of income growth: the state’s median household income, despite sitting at or above national averages for much of the 1980s and 1990s, now sits at \$48,246 (according to the most recent U.S. Census Bureau figures) – about 9% below the national average.<sup>15</sup> And finally, Ohio’s population, while becoming more diverse over time, still contains significantly fewer racial and ethnic minorities than does that of the nation overall. According to the U.S. Census Bureau, Ohio’s population in 2012 was 83.4% white, 12.5% African-American, 3.3% Hispanic or Latino/a, and 1.8% Asian-American or Native Hawaiian/Pacific Islander.<sup>16</sup> In an August 2013 study of state-level diversity indicators, a California consulting firm ranked Ohio 38th in the nation in its degree of racial and ethnic heterogeneity.<sup>17</sup>

Still, Ohio still stands in many respects as an exemplar of broader national trends in economics, lifestyle, education, and culture. Accordingly, indicators of civic engagement in Ohio – which historically can help in tracking a state’s economic health overall – ultimately may shine light not only on what is happening in our particular state, but also on what is occurring more broadly across the nation.

Ohio Racial & Ethnic Composition (2013)



## KEY FINDINGS ON OHIO CIVIC HEALTH

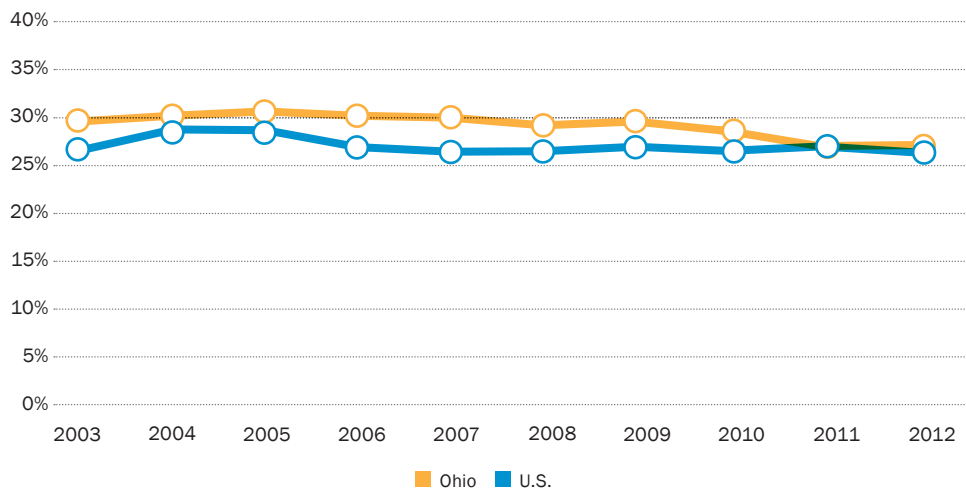
The *2013 Ohio Civic Health Index Report* represents the fifth comprehensive assessment of Ohio's civic health carried out by NCoC and Miami University. The *Report* uses data gathered primarily in 2011 and 2012 by the U.S. Census Bureau and the U.S. Department of Labor's Bureau of Labor Statistics. Looking at five distinct dimensions of civic health – volunteerism, voting behavior, non-voting political action, group participation, and social connectedness – the data gathered for this *Report* suggest both ample grounds for optimism about Ohioans' commitment to their communities and some troubling signs of citizen disconnectedness as well. While the results for any single indicator are not conclusive, the data taken together suggest identifiable areas of civic strength here in Ohio. They also reveal areas of weakness and areas of opportunity for purposeful action by community leaders in the years ahead.

Overall, the data gathered for this year's *Report* suggest the following key conclusions:

### *Ohioans Give Back in Meaningful Ways*

Despite the state's still-unsettled economic climate, the 2011-12 data suggest that significant numbers of Ohioans still place a high priority on supporting their local communities. In 2012 alone, just over one in four (27.2%) Ohioans provided some kind of volunteer service to others – a volunteerism rate that placed Ohio 28th in the nation for rendering such service during the year. Ohioans volunteered at comparable rates in 2011 as well.<sup>19</sup> Especially likely to participate in volunteer activities, it appears, are Ohio's college graduates, who reached a volunteerism rate of 45.7% in 2011 (the last year for which we have reliable data broken down by educational levels). Among high school graduates, 18.7% of Ohioans performed volunteer service in 2011. At the same time, only 6.6% of Ohioans holding less than a high school diploma engaged in this form of community engagement.

**Ohio Volunteering Rate (2003-2012)**



Somewhat less encouraging is the rate at which Ohioans give to charitable organizations. Perhaps reflecting the state's still-recovering economy, Ohio in 2012 ranked only 43rd in the nation for the percentage of its residents – 47.9% -- who gave at least \$25 to a charitable cause during the year. Over the preceding three years (2010-2012), charitable giving rates were similar both within the state (47.7%) and nationally (51.5%). Ohioans, it seems, have lagged consistently behind their counterparts in most other states in opening their wallets for community-based charities and other causes.

## 27.2%

In 2012, just over one in four (27.2%) Ohioans provided some kind of volunteer service to others.



## ***Ohioans Remain Quite Active in Community-Based Groups***

In years past, the *Ohio Civic Health Index Report* has found Ohioans to be generally more involved than the nation overall in local religious, school-based, fraternal, charitable, and other community-based organizations.<sup>19</sup> Yet in the most up-to-date data available, such higher-than-average participation rates did not generally materialize. However, this was only because national participation rates in such groups have risen, while Ohio's rates have remained largely static. Overall, 38.8% of Ohioans reported some form of group participation in 2011 – a rate quite similar to the 2008-09 levels featured in earlier *Civic Health Index Reports*, but one that now slightly lags the national average (39.2%).<sup>20</sup> Still, in an encouraging sign, Buckeyes are more likely than many of their peers around the nation to assume leadership roles within those groups. In 2011, Ohioans ranked 23rd among the fifty states, with 12.4% reporting service as a committee member or officer in at least one community-based group. In 2010, 10% of Ohioans served on committees or as officers. Many Ohio residents, it seems, place a high value on personal involvement in organizations within their local communities.



Photography credit: Jacob Stone, City of Hamilton

## ***As in Years Past, Ohioans Maintain Close Personal Ties with Their Families and Neighbors***

Ohioans clearly enjoy close relationships with their friends, family, and neighbors – a finding that bodes particularly well for the long-term civic health of the state. In 2011, 81.5% of Ohioans – slightly higher than the national average – reported communicating regularly with their families and friends over the last year. Similarly, 88.2% of all Ohioans in 2011 reported eating dinner with family members at least a few times a week. Regarding interactions with non-family members, Ohio ranked 21st among the states in the percentage of residents – 14.7% – who frequently exchanged favors with their neighbors. 61.1% of Ohioans – ranking 23rd in the country – reported trusting all or most of their neighbors in 2011.

## ***Many Ohioans Participate in Elections - But Unfortunately, Many Also Sit Out***

Voting, of course, serves as a central means by which citizens express their views and hold government officials accountable. On this front, there is indeed some recent good news to celebrate in the Buckeye State. In 2012, Ohio's self-reported voter *registration* rate for U.S. citizens 18 and older reached 71.1% overall – a level almost identical to the 2012 U.S. average and a marked improvement over Ohio's 2011's 66.1% rate in a non-presidential election year. Perhaps more important, Ohio's actual voter *turnout* rate in the 2012 general election is a hopeful sign as well; at 63.1%, Ohio's voting rate that year actually exceeded the national average (61.8%) by a slight



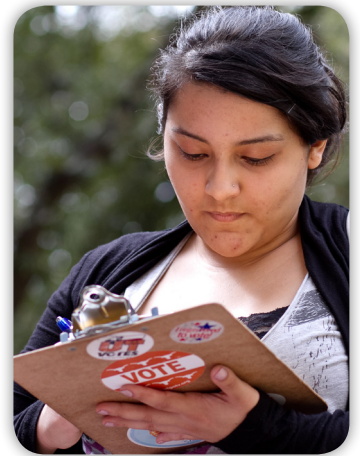
degree – probably due in part to the state’s central role in the presidential race and the attendant get-out-the-vote efforts targeted at Ohioans by the political parties, the candidates’ campaigns, and outside groups. With respect to local elections, moreover, Ohioans in 2011 – the last year for which comprehensive data are available – compared quite favorably with their U.S. counterparts: Buckeye State voters that year ranked 5th in the U.S. in voter turnout, with 69.5% of eligible Ohio residents self-reporting participation at the polls. In more recent elections, Ohioans on occasion have turned out in remarkably high numbers at the local level to decide hotly contested issues or races even in the absence of any statewide candidates or questions on the ballot.<sup>21</sup>

Despite these positive indicators, there is still considerable room for improvement in the extent to which Ohioans engage actively with elections and voting. Indeed, voter turnout rates in many Buckeye State elections – particularly off-year contests lacking coordinated party or group efforts to get out the vote – remain distressingly and persistently low.<sup>22</sup> Ohioans in recent surveys reveal only scattered interest in upcoming statewide elections or state and local candidates’ views on major issues.<sup>23</sup> Election-day stories of local precincts with fewer voters than poll workers are not unheard of in the state.<sup>24</sup> As recently as November 2013, some Ohio jurisdictions reported double-digit drops in participation rates as compared to off-year elections held in past years.<sup>25</sup> Especially in light of social science research that demonstrates the persistence of notable demographic differences between the typical voter and non-voter in U.S. elections, it is absolutely essential that voter participation be expanded so as to avoid the prospect of holding putatively ‘democratic’ elections – those in which the voices of most Ohio residents are not actually represented in the results. Quite simply, Ohio needs to do more to get its citizens to the polls.

**Many Ohioans Engage in Political Activity Outside of Elections - Although Not as Often as do People in Other States**

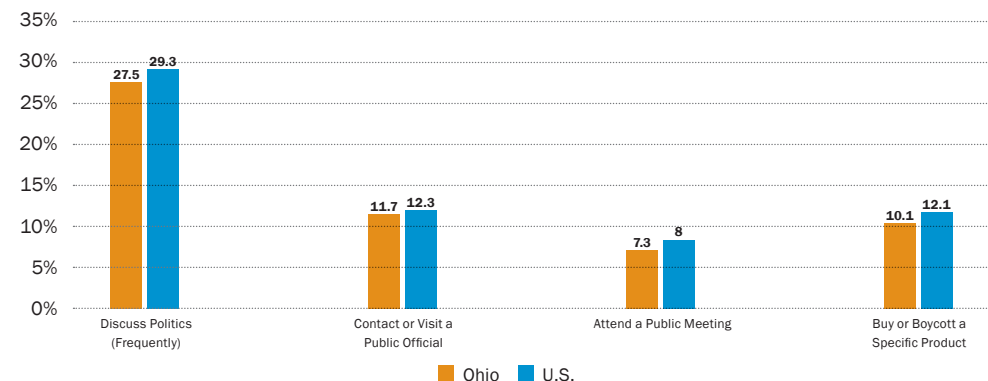
Other indicators of political engagement in the Buckeye State similarly suggest a pressing need for action. Quite notably, Ohio lags behind other states in at least three different measures of non-voting political engagement according to the most recent census data. In 2011, only 27.5% of Ohioans reported talking frequently (i.e., a few times a week) with friends and family about politics – a participation rate that ranked Ohio 39th among the states. Similarly, only 11.7% of Buckeye State residents reported ever contacting or visiting a public official during the year – ranking Ohio 36th among the states. Similarly, only 7.3% of Ohioans – 46th in the nation – attended a public meeting during the year. And finally, only 10.1% of Ohioans in 2011 – ranking 38th in the nation – reported either buying or boycotting a specific product or service as an expression of social consciousness or political beliefs.

In short, Ohioans on several fronts fall short of their peers around the country in terms of their levels of day-to-day participation in politics and civic affairs. Yet, active citizen engagement with politics and government is essential to a healthy and vibrant democratic system. Additionally, it is critical if government is to remain responsive to citizens’ needs and concerns. In this arena -- as with voting behavior itself, as detailed above – significant room for improvement in Ohio remains.



**71.1%**  
Eligible Ohioans who reported being registered to vote in 2012.

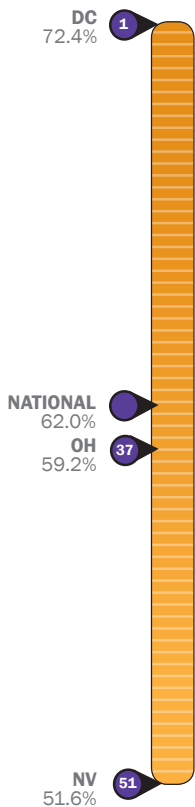
**Non-Voting Political Involvement (2011)**



## Ohioans Lag Behind the Nation in Overall Confidence in Public Institutions

In 2011, several new measures were included in the Current Population Survey to assess the public's overall level of confidence in various public institutions in America. The resulting data suggest that Americans overall tend to view at least some of their social institutions with suspicion – and Ohioans, for their part, largely share that skeptical view. Corporations and the media fared rather poorly at both the state and national levels. Ohioans ranked 33rd in the nation – at 62.2% – in expressing “some” or “a great deal” of confidence in how corporations operate in American life. The national average was remarkably similar (62.0%). Likewise, many Ohioans in 2011 looked warily at the public role of media organizations: Ohio ranked 37th in the nation in 2011 – at 59.2% – in expressing a degree of confidence in the media; the national average stood only slightly higher at 62%. On the other hand, one bright spot relates to the public's general view of public schools. Nationally, an overwhelming majority of Americans – 88% – expressed a positive view of the public school system. Ohioans generally shared that enthusiasm: overall, 86.9% of the state's residents said they were very or somewhat confident in those vital institutions of democratic and civic education.

### CONFIDENCE IN THE MEDIA



## CIVIC ENGAGEMENT IN OHIO: RECOMMENDATIONS FOR MOVING FORWARD

The data reported above represent a snapshot – and only a partial one at that – of how Ohioans engage with their government, with their social institutions, and with one another. Within that data, there is much to be celebrated. Ohioans clearly enjoy strong personal relationships and ongoing interactions with family, friends, and neighbors – a key source of social cohesion that observers as far back as Alexis de Toqueville have cited as a bedrock element of healthy and vibrant democracy.

Ohioans also give generously of their time and talents by volunteering in their communities and by joining and leading community-based groups. At least in presidential election years, many Ohioans participate in electoral politics. Notably, Ohioans have a great deal of confidence in their public schools, which stand at the center of many Ohio communities. These schools play critical roles in the teaching of democratic values and the fostering of skills and habits needed for effective citizenship.

Still, the data give plenty of cause for worry about the future of Ohio's civic health. For one thing, a sizable gap remains between the number of Ohioans who are legally eligible to vote and those who actually *do* vote – especially in off-year elections and in non-federal races. More work clearly remains to be done with respect to voter mobilization and education in the state. For another thing, charitable giving by Ohioans – at least as measured by levels of participation rather than by aggregate dollar amounts – lags significantly behind the national average. Beyond that, Ohioans' rates of participation in community groups have stagnated – while those found throughout the rest of the nation have generally been on the rise. Perhaps most troubling of all, Ohioans' day-to-day engagement with politics and public affairs – whether by talking with acquaintances about politics, getting in touch with public officials, attending government meetings or engaging in boycotts or other personal actions as a means of expressing political views – appears to be distressingly low in Ohio as compared to national norms. Indeed, on the four major indicators of non-voting political engagement examined in this study, *Ohio ranked among the bottom third of*

*U.S. states on every single one.* Ohioans, it appears, value their informal social networks and their local communities. At the same time, they appear to be alarmingly disengaged from politics and government in their everyday lives.

So what can be done to strengthen our state's level of civic health? Clearly, no single program or initiative can alone solve the problem; rather, a multi-faceted, collaborative and community-driven effort – one involving several sectors of Ohio society including government, K-12 education, institutions of higher education and the business community – likely offers the most promise of making a meaningful difference in our communities over the long run. To that end, we offer below several specific recommendations that we hope leaders within each of the aforementioned sectors will consider – at least as a starting point for conversation and collaboration going forward.

## A CALL TO ACTION

### Government

For their part, state and local government officials should consider taking affirmative steps to increase access to public meetings and citizen participation in the making of public policy. One relatively easy step in that direction may be to change *where and when* governmental meetings take place. Indeed, evidence from other states suggests that government officials can increase citizen participation simply by moving meetings out of government buildings and outside of regular business hours. Depending upon the local circumstances, government officials may also consider increasing citizen access through the use of mechanisms such as open office hours, enhanced online fora, active neighborhood councils, citizen advisory boards, and the like. Organizations such as the International Association for Public Participation provide a wealth of practical advice about how government bodies can open up their decision-making processes and increase citizen involvement.<sup>26</sup> Over time, even these relatively simple strategies can increase dialogue and strengthen the bonds connecting citizens to government and public servants to their communities.

Government officials may also consider taking the idea of citizen participation much further – by adopting decision-making processes that give ordinary citizens a direct say in the allocation of public resources and the creation of public policy. For instance, some communities around the nation now engage in 'participatory budgeting' – a process that intentionally cedes direct policy-making authority to engaged citizens in the community.<sup>27</sup> While controversial at times, a participatory budget model empowers community members themselves to make authoritative policy decisions through a sustained and open dialogue that includes public education on local issues and multiple opportunities for citizen input. In other communities, this process has produced enhanced citizen-government collaboration in service of commonly defined goals. More broadly, it has also increased civic awareness among community members, boosted levels of participation in other forms of community involvement, and enhanced feelings of political efficacy among those citizens who choose to participate.<sup>28</sup>

### K-12 Education Community

As John Dewey taught long ago, *citizens are educated, not born.* Formal K-12 education provides a common experience from which civic knowledge and civic skills are learned and effective habits of citizenship are established. Ohio's House Bill 1 defines civic responsibility as "the patriotic and ethical duties of all citizens to take an active role in society and to consider the interest and concerns of together individuals in the community."<sup>29</sup> Operationalizing this statutory definition, the Ohio Department of Education is now moving forward with a plan to increase civic skill learning and application. This will be done through a renewed focus on civic literacy as a core subject in K-12



State and local government officials should take affirmative steps to increase access to public meetings and citizen participation in policy making.

social studies education. To complement classroom learning on civic literacy, the Department of Education has also unveiled a new Community Service-Learning Program for districts across the state.

Ohio's new learning standards in K-12 social studies focus specifically on the development of the key skills – including communication, negotiation, collaboration and informational analysis – needed for effective democratic participation over a lifetime. What's more, the Common Core standards in American government for grades 9-12 require significant coverage of civic involvement, civic participation and skills, basic principles of the U.S. Constitution, the structure and function of U.S. government, and public policy making. Student learning in this model is assessed with a multitude of measures – except with respect to three learning goals:

- Civic Involvement (GOV.A.1.i): Devise and implement a plan to address a societal problem by engaging either the political process or the public policy process.
- Civic Involvement (GOV.A.2.i): Select a political party or interest group to address a civic issue, identify a type of media as a means of communication, then defend the viability of the choices made in an effort to achieve a successful result in resolving a civic issue.
- Public Policy (GOV.G.21.i): Analyze a public policy issue in terms of collaboration or conflict among the levels of government involved and the branches of government involved.

The state of Ohio is clearly moving in the right direction by highlighting civic literacy as a fundamental purpose of public education. Likewise, the recently increased attention to assessment also sends a valuable signal that civic literacy is a valued part of K-12 education. Indeed, an even stronger signal could be sent by developing assessment tools to judge for the three specific learning objectives listed above. More generally, it is our recommendation that school districts reach out to institutions of higher learning in their surrounding communities, as colleges and universities can serve as useful partners with K-12 schools in advancing their shared mission of increasing democratic participation and serving their local communities. Programs such as Public Achievement ([www.publicachievement.org](http://www.publicachievement.org)) can provide useful models as K-12 schools and colleges explore opportunities for partnership and collaboration in civic education and public engagement.

As a method of applying civic learning, Ohio recently established a new framework for local Community Service-Learning Programs that asks school districts to be intentional about the design and implementation of service-learning in K-12 education. The state's criteria for local districts include the development of a district Community Service-Learning Advisory Committee (consisting of students, faculty, and staff) to oversee the development of a Community Service-Learning Plan. Each district's plan (CSL) is then evaluated on the basis of its inclusion of meaningful service, curricular links, reflection, youth voice, partnerships, progress monitoring, duration and intensity, and diversity.<sup>30</sup> For students, these new CSLs can provide for recognition by the state with a Community Service-Learning Award of Excellence. What's more, under the provision of House Bill 1, Ohio students can receive high school credit for participating in a certified Community Service-Learning course.

Ohio's new plan for community-based service learning offers considerable promise as a means of enhancing citizens' engagement with their communities. As of the date of this writing, not one of Ohio's school districts have developed or implemented a CSL plan approved by the Department of Education. We encourage districts to adopt the policies needed to get this promising initiative off the ground in local communities.

“Citizens are educated, not born.” - John Dewey



## Higher Education Community

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The previously cited Community Service-Learning Program initiative is just one area in which Ohio's colleges and universities – many of which already employ service-learning coordinators – could usefully partner with their K-12 colleagues so as to advance common goals. Beyond that, Ohio's higher education community should actively seek out additional ways to collaborate with local schools and other community partners to build social capital, increase civic knowledge, and enhance democratic participation. Miami University's Urban Leadership Internship Program – which immerses students in summer-long service experiences in Dayton and Cincinnati (among other cities) – provides one highly successful model of how universities can forge partnerships with community organizations to enhance student learning and civic engagement.<sup>31</sup> Tutoring and mentoring programs coordinated with local school districts provide another template of how to create meaningful community engagements. More broadly, colleges and universities are well situated to support curricular and faculty development for K-12 educators, broker relationships among local community partners, facilitate dialogue on community issues, and provide subject-matter expertise on a broad range of local and state policy issues. As state institutions, Ohio's public colleges and universities already have public and community service at the core of their institutional missions. Moving forward, those institutions should look actively for new ways in which they can incorporate civic education and engagement into their comprehensive programming.

## Businesses

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Obviously, the business community has a large stake in Ohio's civic health as well – and the private for-profit sector already contributes vitally in this arena by (among other things) providing community-based internships for students, sponsoring community events and programs, spearheading public service campaigns, and supplying financial and organizational support for civic organizations and programs. Looking ahead, we hope that businesses will look to add an additional layer of corporate citizenship – perhaps by building new or stronger partnerships with local governments, universities, schools, and other community organizations.

One example of a community-based program that bridges the gap between businesses and education is Junior Achievement.<sup>32</sup> Junior Achievement provides the opportunity for business leaders to connect to K-12 educators, in partnership to educate students on workforce ready skills (leadership, financial literacy, teamwork, etc.). The Business Advisory Council (BAC) in Hamilton, Ohio, provides another instructive model.<sup>33</sup> The BAC, comprised of business leaders, school board members, district administrators, and higher education representatives, provides a forum in which business leaders can both learn about school district initiatives and also give direct advice regarding curriculum and developments in the private sector workplace. This committee meets once every other month and now enjoys a significant 'seat at the table' when it comes to decisions made by local school leaders.



## CONCLUSION

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As in years past, this *Report* finds that Ohioans want to be connected to one another and to their communities. Yet those communal ties are suffering in a variety of ways – a finding that should lead us to redouble our efforts and build new partnerships as a means of enhancing the civic health of our state. Active citizenship – a vital component of any healthy democracy – simply does not happen on its own. In our view, it is the responsibility of community-based institutions and their leaders – whether in government, K-12 schools, post-secondary education or business -- to provide the knowledge, the civic skills, and civic experiences that will help Ohioans grow as citizens.

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## A FINAL WORD

This *Report* should be a conversation-starter. The data and ideas presented here raise as many questions as they answer. We encourage government entities, community groups, business people, leaders of all kinds, and individual citizens to treat this *Report* as a first step toward building more robust civic health in Ohio.

## TECHNICAL NOTES

Unless otherwise noted, findings presented in this *Report* 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, 2002-2011, voting and registration data come from the CPS November Voting/Registration Supplement, 1972-2010, and all other civic engagement indicators, such as discussion of political information and connection to neighbors, come from the 2011 CPS Civic Engagement Supplement.

Using a probability selected sample of about 60,000 occupied households, the CPS collects monthly data on employment and demographic characteristics of the nation. Depending on the CPS supplement, the Ohio CPS sample size used for this *Report* ranges from 4,183 (civic engagement supplement) to 4,721 (volunteer supplement) residents from across the state. This sample is then weighted to representative population demographics for the state. 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, discussing politics) 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). Any time we examined the relationship between educational attainment and engagement, estimates are only based on adults ages 25 and older, based on

the assumption that younger people may still be completing their education.

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. Any analysis that breaks down the sample into smaller groups (e.g., gender, education) will have smaller samples and therefore the margin of error will increase. Data for some indicators are pooled from multiple years (2009-2011) for a more reliable estimate when sample sizes for certain cross tabulations may have been small. Due to the small sample size, findings should be interpreted with caution, and may not be generalized across the population. Furthermore, national rankings, while useful in benchmarking, may be small in range, with one to two percentage points separating the state ranked first from the state ranked last.

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.

## A WORD ABOUT RECOMMENDATIONS

NCoC encourages our partners to consider how civic health data can inform dialogue and action in their communities, and to take an evidence-based approach to helping our communities and country thrive. While we encourage our partners to consider and offer specific recommendations and calls to action in our reports, we are not involved in shaping these recommendations. The opinions and recommendations expressed by our partners do not necessarily reflect those of NCoC.

## ENDNOTES

- 1 See 2009 Ohio Civic Health Index Report: Civic Engagement in Hard Times (National Conference on Citizenship, 2009), pp. 4-5. According to data compiled by Bloomberg, Ohio jobs in manufacturing declined every year from 2000 to 2010. See <http://www.bloomberg.com/quote/NFMEOH:IND>.
- 2 See Seasonally Adjusted Local Area Unemployment Statistics for Ohio, U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics, extracted November 8, 2013. Available at [data.bls.gov](http://data.bls.gov).
- 3 See, e.g., "Home Insecurity: Foreclosures and Housing in 2012," Policy Matters Ohio report. Available at: <http://www.policymattersohio.org/home-insecurity-april2012>.
- 4 See "Annual Business and Non-Business Filings by State (2007-11), statistics compiled by the American Bankruptcy Institute. Available at: [www.abiworld.org/AM/AMTemplate.cfm?Section=Home&TEMPLATE=/CM/ContentDisplay.cfm&CONTENTID=65164](http://www.abiworld.org/AM/AMTemplate.cfm?Section=Home&TEMPLATE=/CM/ContentDisplay.cfm&CONTENTID=65164).
- 5 For instance, in exit polling from the 2010 midterm election, 90% of Ohioans stated that they were either "very worried" (54%) or "somewhat worried" (36%) about the direction of the economy in the next year. See data available at: <http://www.cbsnews.com/election2010/exit.shtml?state=OH&jurisdiction=0&race=S>
- 6 See U.S. Department of Labor, Bureau of Labor Statistics, "Labor Force Statistics from the Current Population Survey," Available at: [data.bls.gov/timeseries/LNS14000000](http://data.bls.gov/timeseries/LNS14000000). Data extracted on November 8, 2013. See also U.S. Department of Labor, Bureau of Labor Statistics, "Local Area Unemployment Statistics: Ohio." Available at: <http://data.bls.gov/timeseries/LASST39000003>. Data extracted on November 8, 2013.
- 7 See David Rothstein, "Home Insecurity 2013: Foreclosures and Housing in Ohio," Policy Matters Ohio, May 2013. Available at: <http://www.policymattersohio.org>.
- 8 Data derived from Administrative Office of the U.S. Courts, "Quarterly and Monthly Filings By Chapter and District." Available at: [www.uscourts.gov/Statistics/BankruptcyStatistics.aspx](http://www.uscourts.gov/Statistics/BankruptcyStatistics.aspx)
- 9 See, e.g., "America's Energy Boom Revives Ohio's Steel Industry," American Public Media Marketplace, October 23, 2012. Available at: <http://www.marketplace.org/topics/sustainability/americas-energy-boom-revives-ohios-steel-industry>.
- 10 Indeed, whether Ohio's recent economic rebound is showing signs of stalling has become an issue in the 2014 gubernatorial race. See, e.g., Chrissie Thompson and Dan Horn, "Gubernatorial Opponents Wage Rhetorical Argument," Cincinnati Enquirer, November 24, 2013, A4.
- 11 See <http://quickfacts.census.gov/qfd/states/39000.html>; [money.cnn.com/2011/05/26/real\\_estate/americas\\_oldest\\_states/index.html](http://money.cnn.com/2011/05/26/real_estate/americas_oldest_states/index.html).
- 12 <http://quickfacts.census.gov/qfd/states/39000.html>.
- 13 Bruce Haynes, managing partner of Purple Strategies, quoted in "Ohio, 'Microcosm of America,' Key to GOP's Super Tuesday," Pittsburgh Tribune-Review, March 4, 2012. Available at: [http://triblive.com/x/pittsburghtrib/news/s\\_784746.html#axzz2DQ4ygFfL](http://triblive.com/x/pittsburghtrib/news/s_784746.html#axzz2DQ4ygFfL).
- 14 Derived from U.S. Census data available at [www.census.gov/popest/data/maps/12maps.html](http://www.census.gov/popest/data/maps/12maps.html) <http://www.census.gov/popest/data/maps/2011/numchg-2010-2011.html>.
- 15 <http://quickfacts.census.gov/qfd/states/39000.html>.
- 16 <http://quickfacts.census.gov/qfd/states/39000.html>.
- 17 See "Methodology Statement: 2013/2018 Esri US Diversity Index," Esri White Paper, August 2013. Available at: <http://www.esri.com/library/whitepapers/pdfs/diversity-index-methodology.pdf>.
- 18 The 2011 volunteerism rate in Ohio was 26.7%, ranking the state 28th in the nation. Approximately 2.4 million Ohioans volunteered in some capacity during the year.
- 19 See Sarah E. Woiteshek and Daniel E. Hall, "2011 Ohio Civic Health Index: Executive Summary," National Conference on Citizenship (2011), p. 4.
- 20 See Kelli Johnson and Annie B. Miller, *Ohio Civic Health Index Report: Mobilizing Ohio's Civic Potential* (National Conference on Citizenship, 2010), table 2.
- 21 See, e.g., Michael D. Clark, "Past Losses, Large Turnout Gave Lakota Rare Levy Win," Cincinnati Enquirer, November 10, 2013.
- 22 See, e.g., Randy Ludlow, "Just 7 Percent of Voters Go to Polls in Central Ohio," The Columbus Dispatch, May 9, 2013. Available at: <http://www.dispatch.com/content/stories/local/2013/05/09/just-7-percent-of-voters-go-to-polls-in-central-ohio.html>.
- 23 See, e.g., Press Release, "Unknown Dem Gains On Ohio Governor, Quinnipiac University Poll Finds; More Voters Say Medicaid Expansion Is Good Idea," November 26, 2013. Available at: <http://www.quinnipiac.edu/institutes-and-centers/polling-institute/ohio/release-detail?ReleaseID=1982>.
- 24 For instance, in the November 5, 2013 election, Precinct 12 in the City of Oxford, in Butler County, reported two votes cast – a turnout rate of 0.20%. Precinct 6 and 7 reported two voters and nine voters, respectively. Data available at [www.butlercountyelections.org](http://www.butlercountyelections.org).
- 25 See, e.g., Randy Ludlow, "Most Central Ohioans Stayed Home as Others Decided Election for Them," *Columbus Dispatch*, November 7, 2013.
- 26 See the International Association for Public Participation website. Available here: <http://www.iap2.org/>.
- 27 See the Participatory Budgeting Project website. Available here: <http://www.participatory-budgeting.org/>.
- 28 The city of Salinas, California has had notable success in implementing a participatory budgeting process. For a discussion of the Salinas experience, see Pete Peterson, David B. Smith, Kristi Tate and Ashley Trim, *Golden Governance: Building Effective Public Engagement in California* (California Forward, Center for Institutional Renewal, Davenport Institute & National Conference on Citizenship, 2011).
- 29 See Ohio's Department of Education Report: Getting Started: About Community Service-Learning Programs. Available here: <http://education.ohio.gov/getattachment/Miscellaneous/Community-Service-Learning/GuidanceSchool2-28-12-low-res.pdf.aspx>.
- 30 See Ohio's Department of Education Report: Getting Started: About Community Service-Learning Programs. Available here: <http://education.ohio.gov/getattachment/Miscellaneous/Community-Service-Learning/GuidanceSchool2-28-12-low-res.pdf.aspx>.
- 31 Miami's Urban Leadership Internship Program can be found at <http://www.honors.muohio.edu/urban/>.
- 32 See Junior Achievement Website. Available here: <https://www.juniorachievement.org/web/ja-usa/home>.
- 33 See information on the purpose and membership of the Hamilton City Schools Business Advisory Council here: <http://hamiltoncityschools.com/business-advisory-council/>

## NOTES



# OHIO COMMUNITY-BASED CIVIC HEALTH SURVEY

To help us contribute to the body of knowledge about Civic Health across the state of Ohio, please fill out the following survey. Data collected is for informal comparative use and will not be published. The survey should take no longer than 5 minutes.



Help us track civic health in Ohio. Use the QR code above to answer this survey online or visit: <http://ow.ly/uHNNHU>.

- A.** How many different organizations have you volunteered (given time/service without compensation) for over the course of the last year?
- B.** How many hours per week did you volunteer?
- C.** Approximately how many hours of volunteer work did you complete in the last year?
- D.** How did you become a volunteer for the organization? Did you approach the organization yourself, did someone ask you, or did you become involved some other way?

<i>In the last year:</i>	<i>Yes</i>	<i>No</i>
Have you attended any public meetings in which there was a discussion of community affairs?		
Have you worked with other people from your neighborhood to fix a problem or improve a condition in your community or elsewhere?		
Are you registered to vote?		
Did you participate in local elections (school board, mayoral, council, etc.)?		
Have you purchased or boycotted a certain product or service because of the social or political values of the company that provides it?		

- E.** How often did you discuss politics with family or friends in the last year?
  - a. Basically every day
  - b. A few times a week
  - c. Few times a month
  - d. Once a month
  - e. Less than once a month
  - f. Not at all

**F.** Please list the county and city in which you reside:

# CIVIC HEALTH INDEX

## State and Local Partnerships

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NCoC began America's Civic Health Index in 2006 to measure the level of civic engagement and health of our democracy. In 2009, NCoC was incorporated into the Edward M. Kennedy Serve America Act and directed to expand this civic health assessment in partnership with the Corporation for National and Community Service and the U.S. Census Bureau.

NCoC now works with partners in more than 30 communities nationwide to use civic data to lead and inspire a public dialogue about the future of citizenship in America and to drive sustainable civic strategies.

## STATES

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### 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

### Colorado

Metropolitan State University of Denver

### Connecticut

Everyday Democracy  
Secretary of the State of Connecticut

### District of Columbia

ServeDC

### 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

### Georgia

GeorgiaForward  
Carl Vinson Institute of Government,  
The University of Georgia  
Georgia Family Connection Partnership

### 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

### Michigan

Michigan Nonprofit Association  
Michigan Campus Compact  
Michigan Community Service Commission  
Volunteer Centers of Michigan  
Council of Michigan Foundations  
The LEAGUE Michigan

### Minnesota

Center for Democracy and Citizenship

### Missouri

Missouri State University  
Park University  
Saint Louis University  
University of Missouri Kansas City  
University of Missouri Saint Louis  
Washington University

### Nebraska

Nebraskans for Civic Reform

### 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

### South Carolina

University of South Carolina Upstate

### Texas

University of Texas at San Antonio  
The Annette Strauss Institute for Civic Life,  
University of Texas at Austin

### Virginia

Center for the Constitution at James  
Madison's Montpelier  
Colonial Williamsburg Foundation

## ISSUE SPECIFIC

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### Latinos Civic Health Index

Carnegie Corporation

### Millennials Civic Health Index

Mobilize.org  
Harvard Institute of Politics  
CIRCLE

### Economic Health

Knight Foundation  
Corporation for National & Community  
Service (CNCS)  
CIRCLE

## CITIES

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### Chicago

McCormick Foundation

### Kansas City & Saint Louis

Missouri State University

Park University

Saint Louis University

University of Missouri Kansas City

University of Missouri Saint Louis

Washington University

### 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

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### Kenneth Prewitt

Former Director of the United States Census Bureau  
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Chairman, National Conference on Citizenship

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Director, Center for Promise

### Ilir Zherka

Executive Director, National Conference on Citizenship



**National Conference on Citizenship**  
*Chartered by Congress*



*Center for Civic Engagement*

Data Made Possible By:  
*Corporation for*  
**NATIONAL &  
COMMUNITY  
SERVICE** 