Greater Seattle: King, Pierce and Snohomish Counties Civic Health Index







THE PAUL G. ALLEN FAMILY FOUNDATION

BILL & MELINDA GATES foundation











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, 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.

SEATTLE CITYCLUB

WHO WE ARE

Seattle CityClub provides a space to talk about the issues that impact our lives. Dialogue that is passionately nonpartisan. Connections to leaders and government. The tools and the inspiration to make a difference. Our mission is to inform, connect and engage the public to strengthen the civic health of our region.

WHAT WE DO

We engage 47,000 Washingtonians with each other and their communities through public forums, statewide initiatives, online tools and publications that bridge politics, professions and generations.

WHY IT MATTERS

This is our community. We believe that people want and need to have a say in the issues that impact their lives. We know that a healthy democracy and a strong community depend on active, informed and interested citizens.

This report was produced in 2013 and released in 2014.



Acknowledgements

Publishing this Civic Health Index is at the very heart of Seattle CityClub's mission: informing, connecting and engaging the public to strengthen the civic health of our region.

Generous funding and key leadership from the Paul G. Allen Family Foundation, Bill & Melinda Gates Foundation, The Seattle Foundation and The Boeing Company have supported our work—both the report's publication and a subsequent initiative to disseminate it and build partnerships that address its recommendations. The report's findings will also inform Seattle CityClub's programs and strategic initiatives over the next three years.

Members of the Civic Health Index Steering Committee provided essential input, advice and editing that shaped this report. Their wisdom and enthusiasm have been inspirational and deeply appreciated. In fact, one of the early outcomes of the work has been the opportunity for this cross-sector team of community leaders to get to know one another and build the potential for new partnerships. We are thankful, too, for the guidance of the National Conference on Citizenship, particularly Director of Community Strategies, Kristi Tate, and Felicia M. Sullivan, Senior Researcher at The Center for Information and Research on Civic Learning and Engagement (CIRCLE) at Tufts University. Seattle CityClub interns Ariel Rosenstock and Jillian Edge were important contributors to the research.

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Use your smart phone to download and learn about the Greater Seattle Civic Health Index

Introduction

"Civic engagement and volunteering is the new hybrid health club for the 21st century—it's free to join and miraculously improves both your health and the community's through the work performed and the social ties built."

—Harvard Kennedy School, Saguaro Institute¹



Greater Seattle's civic health is excellent. Our metropolitan region has vibrant civic institutions, active voters, innovative social entrepreneurs and a strong culture of volunteerism and philanthropy.

Photo: Seattle CityClub

Civic health—a community's capacity to work together to resolve collective problems—is essential for its vitality and prosperity. Strong civic health positively affects local GDP, economic resilience, upward income mobility, public health and even student achievement.²

Greater Seattle's civic health is excellent. Our metropolitan region has vibrant civic institutions, active voters, innovative social entrepreneurs and a strong culture of volunteerism and philanthropy. But like physical health, civic health requires vigorous and consistent exercise. This Civic Health Index report was produced in partnership with the National Conference on Citizenship (NCoC), with analysis provided by CIRCLE (The Center for Information and Research on Civic Learning and Engagement) at Tufts University. The data included, unless noted otherwise, comes from the US Census Current Population Survey Supplements on Voting, Volunteering and Civic Engagement. This report describes the civic health of King, Pierce and Snohomish Counties using the theme AGENCY.

Exercising civic agency requires believing you can make a difference and having the know-how and resources to do it. It's composed of community knowledge, connection, trust and action. Each of these key ingredients is highlighted as a section of our report. Through stories, data, analysis and recommendations, we describe how civic agency is working in our community now. We also show how it can be amplified through the removal of barriers and enhancement of strengths and opportunities.

We share this report to document the diversity and strength of civic agency in greater Seattle and promote ways to improve it.

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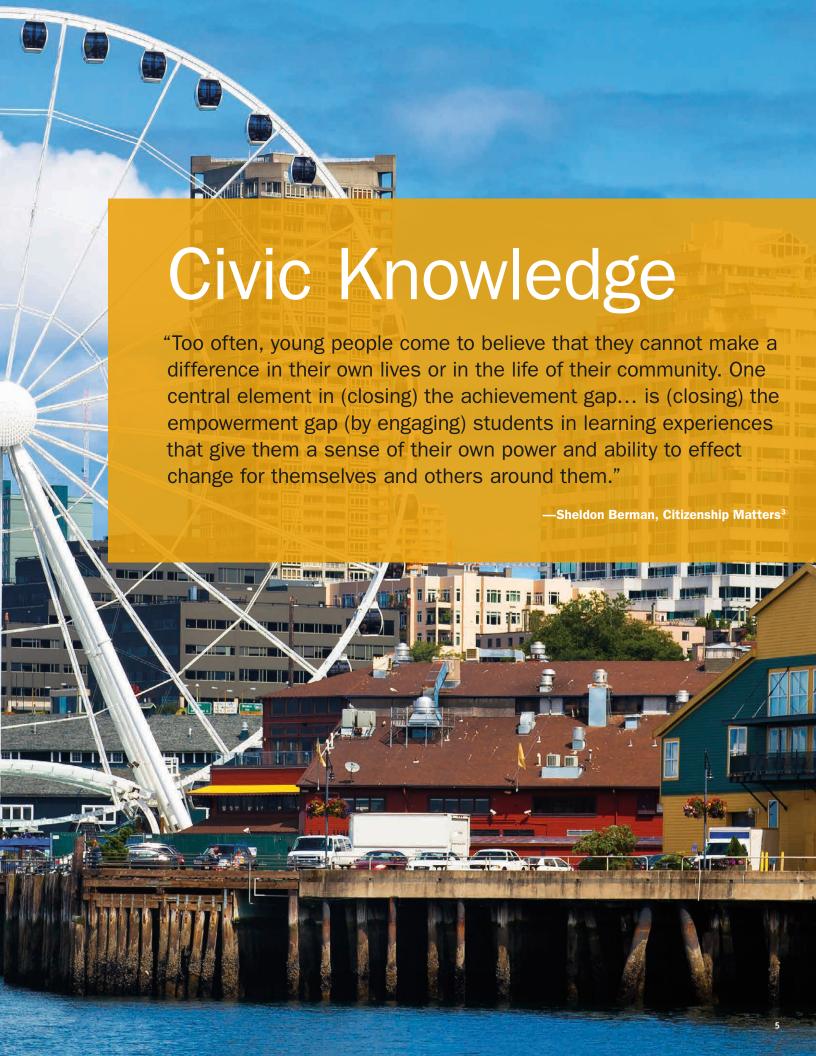
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Greater Seattle's 2010 Civic Health Index report stressed the importance of education for strengthening the social fabric of our region. Educational attainment is the single most important predictor of strong civic agency.

Recommendations

Make education our most important civic health investment.

As a strategy to close the achievement gap, close the empowerment gap. Focus on the teaching of "action civics," which places a high priority on the practice of citizenship as well as the knowledge of governing structures. Provide role models and meaningful opportunities for youth to learn from and contribute to their communities.

Link English language learning with civic literacy.



Educational attainment is the single most important predictor of strong civic agency.

Photo: University of Washington, Bothell

Greater Seattle Civic Health At a Glance: Educational Attainment

		No College Experience	At Least Some College	Seattle MSA	WA
. =	Volunteering	19.6%	40.0%	33.9%	33.9%
FE	Donation	44.6%	72.7%	59.9%	60.6%
MEN	Worked with neighbors	8.2%	16.7%	13.2%	12.6%
NGA	Public meetings	**	15.7%	11.9%	12.9%
ш	Office or member of committee	**	15.1%	11.3%	11.6%
	Group association	34.3%	49.9%	44.2%	43.1%
Z	School, neighborhood, or community organization	11.9%	25.7%	21.5%	19.4%
PU	Service or civic association	**	9.4%	7.9%	8.0%
GRC	Sports or recreational association	**	14.4%	11.2%	12.1%
AS	Church, synagogue, mosque, or religious institution	16.4%	20.2%	18.1%	17.9%
	Any other type of organization	**	10.7%	8.1%	7.3%
	Talk with neighbors (frequently)	38.3%	38.9%	37.0%	40.8%
SS	See or hear from friends (frequently)	70.6%	82.7%	80.5%	81.6%
DNE DNE	Give/receive favors from neighbors (frequently)	14.8%	13.3%	13.6%	15.0%
CTE	Dinner with household (frequently)	89.9%	92.1%	89.9%	90.9%
NNE	Trust people in neighborhood (all)	**	**	13.8%	16.7%
CO	Trust people in neighborhood (most)	**	47.8%	43.9%	42.8%
	Trust people in neighborhood (all or most)	**	63.9%	57.7%	59.5%
≥س	Confidence in public schools (a great deal)	**	27.3%	29.4%	30.3%
IOE ION	Confidence in public schools (some)	**	63.7%	60.7%	59.2%
	Confidence in public schools (a great deal/some)	89.9%	91.1%	90.1%	89.5%
NST	Confidence in media (a great deal/some)	63.0%	62.7%	62.7%	58.1%
5=	Confidence in corporations (a great deal/some)	**	68.7%	65.6%	61.7%
	Contact or visit public official	**	21.6%	17.1%	16.4%
	Bought or boycotted product	**	21.4%	17.5%	17.5%
Ē	Discuss politics with family friends (frequently)	21.6%	36.6%	31.9%	33.9%
GEN	Express opinions on internet (frequently)	**	**	8.0%	7.3%
NGA	Vote local election (always or sometimes)	52.7%	76.5%	65.4%	65.1%
AL E	Vote local elections (always)	35.0%	48.8%	41.8%	43.5%
TIC/	Vote local elections (sometimes)	**	27.8%	23.6%	21.6%
POLITICAL ENGAGEMEN	Registration 2010	58.7%	84.0%	73.0%	72.6%
	Voter turnout 2010	43.5%	71.0%	58.7%	58.1%
	Voter turnout 2012	53.4%	74.3%	68.0%	65.6%

Educational attainment is calculated for individuals 25 years plus. MSA stands for Metropolitan Statistical Area. The Seattle Metropolitan Statistical Area includes Seattle-Tacoma-Bellevue-Everett.

Our community's superior civic health is directly attributable to our status as one of America's most highly educated and literate communities. Yet beneath that rosy headline lies a more complicated story. While our region ranks high in the number of residents who have college degrees, it ranks relatively low among states in granting bachelor's degrees. Our educational attainment is high overall because many Puget Sound employers import highly educated labor from outside the region and the U.S.4

^{**}Data sample was too small to analyze

In 2010-11, Washington ranked 34th among states in the percentage of students graduating high school, and there are great disparities in that achievement based on social class, race and income.⁵ This threat to our civic strength is made even more serious by demographic trends showing that regional income disparities are widening while racial and ethnic diversity is increasing—faster here than in the nation at-large. Simultaneously, Washington State has dramatically decreased its per capita investment in higher education and fallen short on its constitutionally mandated responsibility to fund basic K-12 education adequately.⁶

What is true for general education is also true for citizenship training. National research shows that classroom time and resources devoted to civic education are decreasing, and students from the most disadvantaged families and schools have the least access to civic learning and skill-building. This deficit raises the specter of a growing underclass of disenfranchised youth, less likely to get good jobs and less likely to be able to advocate for themselves through their vote and political voice. Given the strength of recent and projected immigration regionally, there is also a risk that language barriers will create barriers for engaged citizenship.

In the face of this urgent challenge, there is recent good news: In June 2013, the Washington legislature made a \$1 billion down payment to boost basic education funding in the next biennium and prevent higher education tuition increases. Beginning with the graduating class of 2016, high school students will be required to take at least one semester of civics education. This investment capitalizes on evidence that teaching civic skills lowers dropout rates and increases academic achievement, especially for at-risk youth. Three promising initiatives in King and Pierce counties – the Roadmap Project, Eastside Pathways, and Foundation for Tacoma Students – are building partnerships to close achievement gaps for low-income students and children of color and increase all students' academic success. In 2011, over half of King County school districts required community service for graduation—a substantial increase since 2000.9

Maintaining greater Seattle's civic strength requires eliminating disparities of educational opportunity and building citizenship knowledge, skills and values for all our citizens, homegrown and incoming.

Percentage of King County School Districts That Require Service for Graduation, 2000 to 2011

Require Service for Graduation

2005

2008

2011

Source: www.communitiescount.org/index.php?page=community-service

2002

20% 10% 0%

2000

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Photo: Puget Sound Sage

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These civic agents are working to remediate disparities of educational access and excellence, boost achievement, and teach civic skills.

SEATTLE CITYCLUB www.seattlecityclub.org

Revitalizing civics education in Washington is a new strategic priority for Seattle CityClub. "We saw education reform focused on critical skill-building in math and reading, but without sufficient attention to preparing students for active citizenship. Our mission drove us to address this gap," affirms Board President Karin Huelsbeck. "Our new youth civic education initiative recognizes exemplary programs in middle schools, high schools and community organizations throughout the state and builds new networks of practitioners and resources."

THE SERVICE BOARD www.theserviceboard.org

Blending service learning, social justice, youth empowerment and even snowboarding, the Service Board gives regional teens a safe place to connect, grow and overcome challenges in their lives through self efficacy and determination. Adult and peer mentors provide over 200 hours of guidance annually to 50 teens in the two-year program. Ten second-year peer leaders function as an advisory board. "We look at how our community is functioning, how our actions impact others, and how we can change them," says Service Board Executive Director Ashley Miller. "Being vulnerable with one another is crucial to building trust. This year, teens had the opportunity to create their own service projects, which ranged from a workshop on rape to a flash mob to raise awareness around issues of bullying and homelessness. We are about finding gratitude in places where you don't normally find it, the belief that you can do anything and finding that moment when you realize you are part of something greater beyond yourself."

UNIVERSITY OF WASHINGTON, BOTHELL (UWB)

www.bothell.washington.edu

Paul Markham, Director of Community-Based Learning and Research, describes how UWB students are developing the ability to see themselves as problem solvers at the same time as they are providing important service to the region. "With a focus on civic agency, faculty and students engage in research not only to discover new forms of knowledge, but to build capacity for sustainable, community-driven development in collaboration with schools, governments, businesses, nonprofits and residents. UWB is building on its rich background of public service by stressing the application of academic knowledge to address the many shared problems we face."



Recommendations

Include ways to build community pride and belonging in plans to improve public health. For example, outreach efforts to extend health coverage under the Affordable Care Act can be harnessed to build civic knowledge and connections.

Leverage the power of networks and hubs to foster connectivity — physically through public transit, parks and high speed internet; socially through neighborhood associations, alumni groups and Facebook friends; and in time through block parties, arts festivals, civic holidays and sports events.



In 2012, our community ranked fifth among fifty similarly-sized communities in residents' "public work" contributions.

Photo: The Service Board

Over the last decade, greater Seattle has grown almost twice as fast as the nation as a whole, adding more than 415,000 residents. Our minority population accounts for 92% of that growth, increasing nearly 50% since 2000. The region is also increasingly mobile, due partly to strong immigration from outside Washington and the U.S. However, it is our poorest residents who are the most mobile, moving within the region from cities to suburbs to find higher wage jobs and more affordable housing.¹¹ This transience is a challenge to social cohesion, making neighborliness difficult and straining government and private social services organized primarily within fixed political jurisdictions.12

Diversity and mobility can also be vital community strengths, however. The Knight Foundation reports three attributes that matter most in residents' attachment to their communities: social offerings—places to meet and the feeling that people care about each other; openness and a sense of welcome for newcomers; and aesthetics.13

No one would challenge greater Seattle's claim to meet the criterion for aesthetic attraction. Magnificent natural beauty and easy wilderness access are key reasons many people move and stay here. We can also claim rich social offerings: excellent parks and cultural resources, a vibrant arts community and a strong network of civic institutions. Another key attribute is that greater Seattle citizens participate in diverse community associations and work with their neighbors to solve problems. In 2012, our community ranked fifth among fifty similarly-sized communities in residents' "public work" contributions, defined as the combined action of citizens who attend public meetings and work with their neighbors on local issues.¹⁴ We are first in the number of citizens who participate in school, neighborhood, or community associations. In addition, Washington State (11.6%) and greater Seattle (11.3%) can boast more citizens stepping forward as organizational leaders than the U.S. average (9.9%).¹⁵

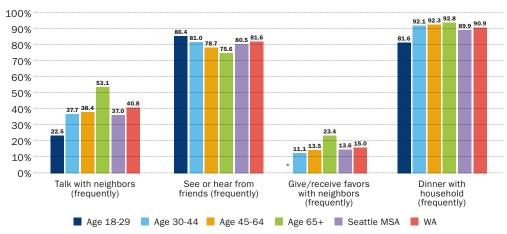
Greater Seattle Group Membership and Social Cohesion at a Glance

Group Association	Rank among top 51 MSAs	Seattle MSA	WA	US
Group association	15th	44.2%	43.1%	35.5%
School, neighborhood, or community association	1st	21.5%	19.4%	15.0%
Service or civic association	13th	7.9%	8.0%	7.1%
Worked with neighbors to solve problems	4th	13.2%	12.6%	8.6%
Church, synagogue, mosque, or religious institution	37th	18.1%	17.9%	18.7%
Sports or recreational association	25th	11.2%	12.1%	10.3%
Public meetings	14th	11.9%	12.9%	9.4%
Office or member of committee	8th	11.3%	11.6%	9.9%
Any other type of organization	2nd	8.1%	7.3%	5.5%

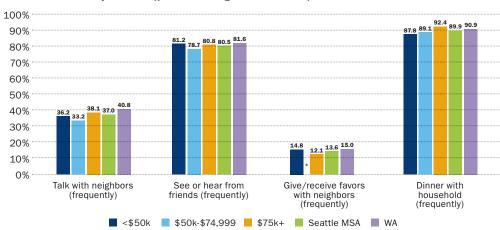
Social Cohesion	Rank among top 51 MSAs	Seattle MSA	WA	us
Talk with neighbors (frequently)	48th	37.0%	40.8%	43.5%
See or hear from friends (frequently)	17th	80.5%	81.6%	79.0%
Give/receive favors with neighbors (frequently)	37th	13.6%	15.0%	14.9%
Dinner with household (frequently)	13th	89.9%	90.9%	88.5%

In contrast to the powerful agency revealed in greater Seattle's formal civic institutions and record of public work, however, we have work to do to foster a sense of openness and welcome. Neighborliness is not our community's strength. We rank 48th of 51 comparable communities in the frequency of neighbors talking with neighbors and 37th in neighbors exchanging favors with one another frequently. How can we strengthen greater Seattle's vibrant civic infrastructure so that everyone is included and the community reaps the benefits of their civic agency?

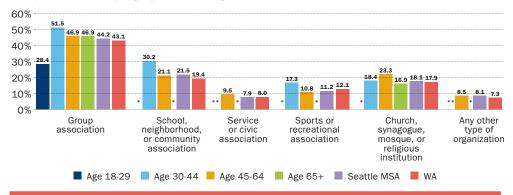




Social Cohesion by Income (pooled averages 2009-2011)



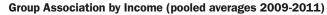
Group Association by Age (pooled averages 2009-2011)

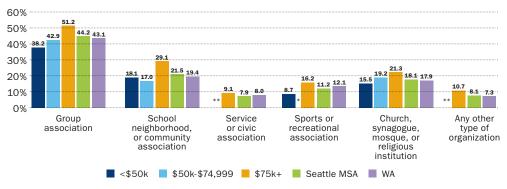


How can we strengthen greater Seattle's vibrant civic infrastructure so that everyone is included and the community reaps the benefits of their civic agency?



Photo: Open Doors for Multicultural Families





One promising strategy is to use technology to connect our community, especially since some of our least connected groups are notable for their relatively high use of social media. For example, urbanites, young adults, African Americans and Latinos are strong Twitter users. In Seattle, home internet access increased from 57% to 85% in just over a decade with a similar increase in residents' comfort doing web searches. 88% of Seattleites now have a home computer. 89% have a cell phone. The chart below shows increased use of the internet to participate in community life and access community services, although there are continuing differences by ethnicity and education in some activities. Capitalizing on this opportunity requires ongoing investment to provide technology literacy training and publicly accessible high-speed internet service for all residents. In



Maintaining strong civic health requires committed regional leadership, coordinated programs, and concerted outreach.

Photo: Puget Sound Sage

Use of the Internet by Seattle Residents

	Phone Survey (all)		Phone Survey (users only)			Online Survey	
	2004	2009	2013	2004	2009	2013	2004
Health or medical information	59%	71%	75%	69%	80%	84%	87%
Job or job training	46%	48%	57%	54%	55%	64%	65%
Purchase products or services	70%	76%	81%	82%	86%	91%	97%
Attend online class, meeting or webinar		31%	46%		35%	51%	61%
Legal or consumer rights information	45%	50%	55%	52%	56%	62%	55%
Find local school information		46%	49%		52%	55%	42%
Make donation to charity online		46%	54%		52%	61%	59%
Look for answers to computer problems			69%			77%	85%
Work from home			53%			60%	69%
Visited SPL			59%			66%	59%
Visited SP5			49%			54%	21%

Source: City of Seattle 2013 Technology Access & Adoption Report

Maintaining strong civic health requires committed regional leadership, coordinated programs and concerted outreach. All residents, especially youth and newcomers, must be actively recruited to be part of—not isolated from—greater Seattle's civic institutions, resources and networks. Our immigrant and refugee new residents need basic education on civic structures. This includes what kinds of engagement are allowed and possible in concert with translation/interpretation services designed for varied literacy levels and English language training.

These civic agents are working to connect greater Seattle by building bridges between diverse communities, enfranchising citizens and making the most of our regional transit investments.

BLACK PRISONERS' CAUCUS

www.blackprisonerscaucus.org

BPC was created in 1972 by a group of incarcerated Black men at the Washington State Reformatory (WSR) in Monroe, Washington. At the time, the group had been organizing Black culture workshops, which then evolved into the BPC. Today, the BPC organizes inside two prisons, WSR and Clallam Bay Corrections Center (CBCC). The BPC's Circle of Life allows the men to address their spirituality, education, emotional support, healing and lifelong goal setting. Individual accountability helps the BPC facilitate Undoing Racism trainings with the People's Institute NW, college courses through TEACH (Taking Education and Creating History), and job training and placement through Career Bridge. Kimonti Carter, President of the CBCC chapter of the BPC states: "The Black Prisoners' Caucus provides men with the tools and a platform to confront social issues which perpetuate discrimination, inequity and oppression among prisoners and poor communities of color. Our life experiences, coupled with our relationships with community leaders, volunteers and elected officials, give us a unique perspective when it comes to community organizing. The key to making a difference is building relationships."

OPEN DOORS FOR MULTICULTURAL FAMILIES

www.multiculturalfamilies.org

This King County-based agency opened its doors four years ago with a simple mission: Connect parents of children with developmental or intellectual disabilities to one another, with a focus on low-income refugee and immigrant families. "We have a lot of families experiencing the same situations—lack of access and opportunity in our mainstream society," says Ginger Kwan, Executive Director, whose own son has autism. "We provide language and cultural support, access to resources, information and services, including special health care." Open Doors served over 400 families in 2012. A recent kayaking and cycling event drew 150 people. "Families give their hearts," Kwan says, "and we are growing because we are valued by our community."

PUGET SOUND SAGE

www.psrc.org/growth/growing-transit-communities

Through coalition building, community organizing, leadership development and research, Puget Sound Sage advocates for community benefits, jobs, affordable housing, and a healthy environment. Its initiative, Growing Transit Communities, is trying to make the most of a voter approved \$15 billion investment in regional rapid transit. In order to promote broader mobility and connectivity, Growing Transit Communities ensures that housing, jobs, and services are located in areas associated with transit hubs. Its decision making process requires local community participation and leadership to reflect a diversity of voices and build cultural competence and responsiveness among all stakeholders.

SPRINGWIRE www.cvm.org

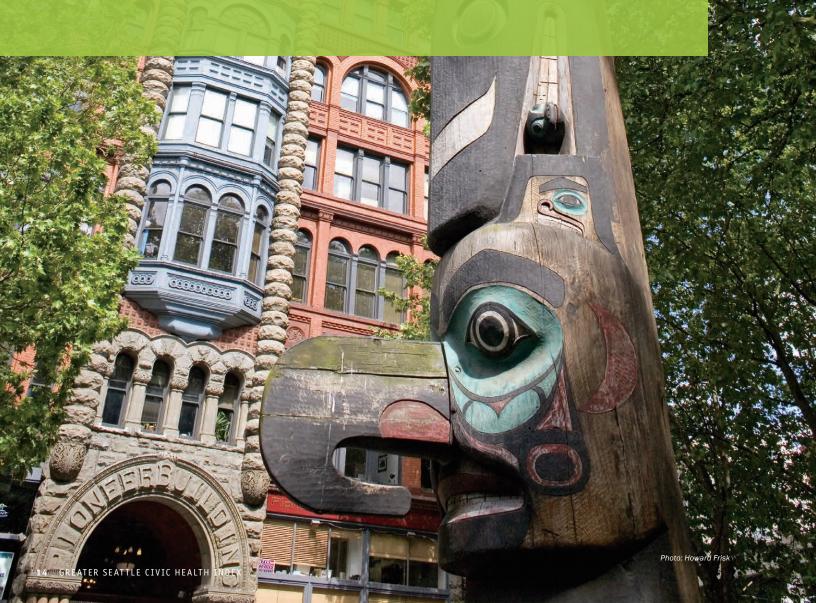
Without a means to communicate with various disjointed jobs, housing, and social services agencies, individuals in need struggle to access help and providers struggle to reach them. Using innovative technologies, Springwire connects people isolated by poverty to support, services, and opportunities. Founded as Community Voice Mail in Seattle in 1991, Springwire provides voice mailboxes for homeless people so that their phone numbers stay constant even as they are mobile. The organization's latest program, Digital Documents, offers a free, online home for those in need to securely scan, manage and store copies of important documents and photos. New Initiatives Director Steve Albertson states: "I believe that technology only fulfills its highest purpose when it is used by everyone in society who can benefit from it."



"If you had to choose between 10% more cops on the beat or 10% more citizens knowing their neighbors' first names, the latter is a better crime prevention strategy."

"If you had to choose between 10% more teachers or 10% more parents being involved in their kids' education, the latter is a better route to educational achievement."

—Saguaro Institute¹⁸



Greater Seattle Trust of Neighbors and Confidence in Institutions at a Glance

Confidence in Institutions	Rank among top 51 MSAs	Seattle MSA	WA	us
Trust people in neighborhood (all or most)	20th	57.7%	59.5%	56.7%
Confidence in public schools (a great deal/some)	12th	90.1%	89.5%	88.0%
Confidence in media (a great deal/some)	23rd	62.7%	58.1%	62.0%
Confidence in corporations (a great deal/some)	16th	65.6%	61.7%	61.9%

Public trust is the spirit that we're all in this together. It inspires confidence that our civic investments matter and prompts collaboration to resolve challenges. The Civic Health Index data show that greater Seattle ranks in the middle of similarly-sized metropolitan areas in residents' trust of media, public schools, corporations and neighbors. How can we build on this foundation to increase civic agency?

Residents are more likely to feel good about their community if they believe their local government is open and forthcoming. Their perceptions not only affect how they assess local government's overall performance, but also how they feel about civic and journalistic institutions from the fire department to libraries to local newspapers and TV stations. "In addition, government transparency is associated with residents' personal feeling of empowerment. Those who think their government shares information well are more likely to say that average citizens can have an impact on government."

Communication is critical to building trust, and so is optimizing how we communicate. The City of Seattle recently polled residents about how they want to receive urgent messages and found these differences: African Americans and Asian Pacific Islanders, older residents, and those with high school educations prefer telephone communications. Those under 35 prefer text messaging. Email is a desired format for urgent and regular communications with government, though less so for residents with low income and low education. In focus groups conducted for the study, limited English speakers emphasized the importance of ethnic newspapers and communications through trusted community and cultural organizations, in conjunction with radio and email.²⁰

Discrimination and incivility undermine public trust. In 2011, more than one in four King County adults reported experiencing discrimination during the past year. The most commonly reported motivations for discrimination are, in order: age, race or color, gender, and social class. 21 Given the rapid pace of demographic change in greater Seattle, engendering trust will require all of us to combat the alienation that comes from a sense of insiders vs outsiders. Addressing this challenge is also key to improving the informal bonds of neighborliness that build a sense of belonging to community and civic agency. As researchers from The Generations Initiative recommend, "To make sure that everyone sees their interwoven destinies, we need to strengthen bridging institutions that build contact and empathy among peoples and generations who are different."22

Recommendations

Communicate civic information across all available channels using a variety of languages, times, locations and modes to maximize accessibility and openness. Provide support to ensure inclusive digital participation.

Practice meaningful community engagement by bringing residents and leaders together for productive dialogue and decision making. Include historically marginalized people with support for their civic leadership development. Build cultural competence and responsiveness among all stakeholders.

Public trust is the spirit that we're all in this together. It inspires confidence that our civic investments matter and prompts collaboration to resolve challenges.



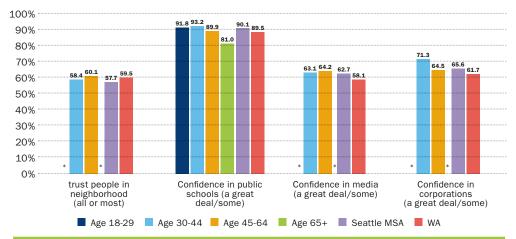
Photo: One America



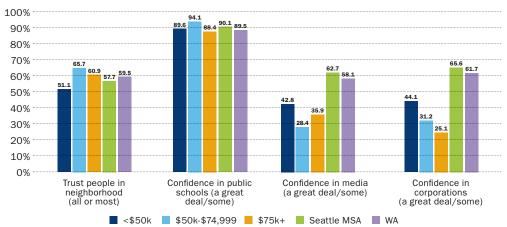
To make sure that everyone sees their interwoven destinies, we need to strengthen bridging institutions that build contact and empathy among peoples and generations who are different.

Photo: King County Sheriff's Office

Confidence and Trust by Age (pooled averages 2009-2011)



Confidence and Trust by Income (pooled averages 2009-2011)



These civic agents are working to build trust and empowerment among greater Seattle's diverse residents.

ASIAN PACIFIC ISLANDER AMERICANS FOR CIVIC EMPOWERMENT (APACE)

www.apace-wa.org

"Our work is about community building and strengthening civic health. Without a voice we cannot effect change," explains APACE board member Nanette Fok. "The reality is that our community is very diverse and significant poverty and challenges sit alongside successes that have been achieved." APACE works directly with immigrant and refugee groups. Constituents speak over 60 languages. "This can be a slow process—setting up a phone bank isn't just about the logistics of getting volunteers and the phone system in place. We also need to make sure that we have folks who can speak the languages of the voters they are calling. Registering a person to vote can take twenty minutes because we are talking to people for whom it might have been dangerous in their home countries to engage civically. We take the time to explain the electoral process, to help people understand why it is important to vote and participate in civic processes, to build trust," Fok says.

CITY OF TACOMA

www.cityoftacoma.org/cms/one.aspx?objectId=11899

As they prepared a new budget, Tacoma's City Council and City Manager noticed how often participating department heads showed concern about impacts of potential service cuts on community youth. The leadership concluded that youth should be at the table when policy and decisions are made that profoundly affect them. In June 2013, they passed a new ordinance mandating a youth seat on seven city commissions, including those governing sustainability, arts, human services and human rights. Youths serve the same terms as adults and have full voting privileges. "We want to enrich and empower the lives of our youth," explains Nadia Chandler Hardy, one of the architects of the program and Assistant to the City Manager of Tacoma. "We want to say to them: Your opinion counts; it matters to us and to your community." The City has also added paid and unpaid internship and job training programs for youth.

KING COUNTY SHERIFF'S OFFICE

www.kingcounty.gov/safety/sheriff.aspx

"We cannot have people that are afraid to call the police and report a crime because they think they are going to be deported." King County's Sheriff, John Urquhart, supports policy and procedures to ensure that crime victims are not questioned about their immigration status. His leadership builds trust in the police and the public safety system for immigrants threatened by domestic violence, predatory practices and other crimes.

ONE AMERICA www.weareoneamerica.org

When the 2010 census indicated that Washington would gain a new Congressional seat, One America went to work to ensure that the new district would mirror the diversity of the community. One America helped mobilize over 600 South King County citizens to attend hearings and testify before the state redistricting commission. That advocacy led to the creation of Washington's first majority people of color Congressional district and four majority people of color state legislative districts. "For democracy to work, people must feel invested in their community and government, and they must feel that candidates and government will be responsive to them. We played a key role in the redistricting campaign as part of a dynamic coalition of organizations and grassroots leaders across Washington Sate. We fought for these new districts precisely to build that sense of agency, in this case by increasing the likelihood that candidates will be responsive to residents of these districts. The redistricting campaign was a natural extension of our continuing work—organizing in immigrant and refugee communities, helping immigrants to naturalize, and registering them to vote—so that they may fully live the rights and responsibilities of their adopted communities and nation," explains Rich Stolz, One America's Executive Director.



Civic Action

"When you look at what's happening in the country at large you see that there are significant challenges facing the nation and metropolitan areas. We need more jobs post-recession. We need better jobs, because we have millions more people in and near poverty. It is metropolitan areas—these collections and networks of cities, suburbs, small towns and the political, civic and business leaders in them—who are best at coming up with solutions. So, the mayors, university leaders, civic leaders and all those people who create metropolitan area networks are saying, 'It's on us. We have to step up.'"

—Jennifer Bradley, The Metropolitan Revolution:

How Cities and Metros Are Fixing Our Broken

Politics and Fragile Economy²³



When it comes to civic action, greater Seattle's agency is very strong. In almost every metric—philanthropy, working with neighbors to solve problems, contacting public officials, exercising consumer power—Seattle ranks exceedingly high among its peer metropolitan areas. In voting and volunteering, we are leaders.

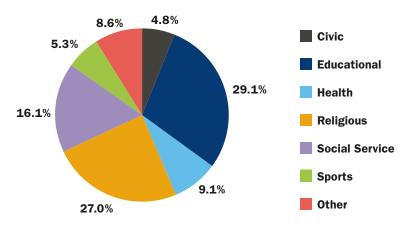
Greater Seattle Civic Action at a Glance

	Rank among top 51 MSAs	Seattle MSA	WA	us
Volunteering	3rd	33.9%	33.9%	26.6%
Donation	16th	59.9%	60.6%	51.1%
Worked with neighbors	4th	13.2%	12.6%	8.6%
Contact or visit public official	6th	17.1%	16.4%	11.3%
Bought or boycotted product	2nd	17.5%	17.5%	10.6%
Express opinions on internet (frequently)	23rd	8.0%	7.3%	8.0%
Vote local election (always or sometimes)	10th	65.4%	65.1%	57.8%
Vote local elections (always)	6th	41.8%	43.5%	33.2%
Registration (2010)**	6th	73.0%	72.6%	65.1%
Voter turnout (2010)**	2nd	58.7%	58.1%	45.5%
Voter turnout (2012)**	9th	68.0%	65.6%	61.8%

^{*}Unless otherwise noted all percentages are pooled averages for 2009-2011

According to the Corporation for National & Community Service, in 2011, Washingtonians contributed 223.8 million service hours representing a value of \$4.6 billion. The greater Seattle region ranked 3rd among 51 peer communities and was first in three categories of volunteering: young adults, Generation X volunteers, and parents.²⁴ Educational institutions, followed by religious institutions and social service organizations are the most popular sites for volunteerism.

Greater Seattle: Where People Volunteer



*Numbers in chart do not add up to 100 because of rounding.

We can be proud that while many states suffer voter suppression, our state works innovatively to enfranchise voters. In 2011, Washington adopted vote-by-mail elections for all counties, and is using new technologies for military and service workers overseas to cast their ballots electronically. The legislature and Secretary of State are piloting voter registration using social media and motor vehicle licensing and exploring mechanisms that allow 16- and 17-year olds to pre-register to vote. Nonprofit organizations are registering new citizens, young voters and lapsed voters to ensure that Washington's voting public reflects our changing demography.²⁵

Recommendations

Make political participation and calls to service universal and various so that everyone is touched, and everyone can find meaningful ways to contribute.

Find ways to recognize and celebrate the informal acts of courtesy and friendship that embody neighborliness. These "random acts of kindness" are really not random and can be nurtured to build social capital and civic agency.

When it comes to civic action, greater Seattle's agency is very strong. In almost every metric—philanthropy, working with neighbors to solve problems, contacting public officials, exercising consumer power—Seattle ranks exceedingly high among its peer metropolitan areas. In voting and volunteering, we are leaders.



^{**} Individuals 18 years who are eligible to vote (e.g. citizens)

The same momentum—innovative and democratic—is reflected in regional philanthropy. Collective giving, pioneered by organizations like Washington Women's Foundation, Social Venture Partners and the Pride Foundation, is evolving. Rising generation philanthropists are working with fellow donors across the wealth spectrum. They are coupling giving with advocacy and technical assistance. They are developing business and technology start-ups to address local and global social needs. Between 1999 and 2009, the number of public charities in Washington grew 27% to over 36,000.

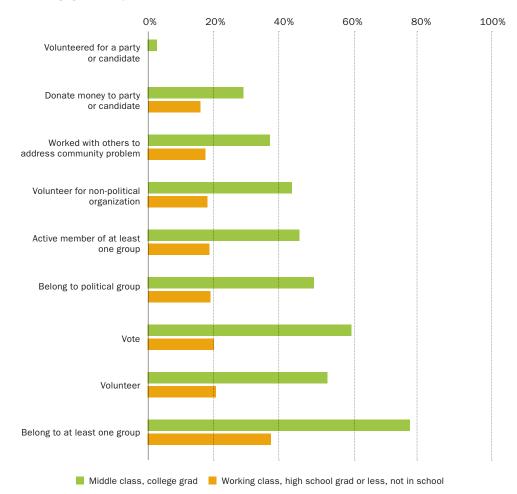
While this record of civic action is impressive, we can do better. Those who are college-educated and say they are middle class are up to five times more likely to take civic action compared to those who say they are working class and have no college experience.²⁵ Research shows that one reason why these citizens contribute more is that they are asked more. One of the most profound ways to expand our civic action prowess—and our overall civic health—is also the simplest: Ask everyone to participate and recognize their contributions.²⁶



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Photo: API Chaya

Civic Engagement by Education and Class



Source: National Survey of Civic Engagement, CIRCLE, 2002

These civic agents inspire community action.

MICROSOFT

www.microsoft.com/about/corporatecitizenship/en-us

In 1983, Microsoft launched its first employee giving campaign with an appeal that raised \$17,000 for United Way of King County. Thirty years later in 2012, Microsoft employees gave \$105 million to a myriad of over 19,000 unique organizations, positively impacting local and global causes alike. Employees' total giving since the program's beginning, along with corporate matching funds, is over \$1 billion. Kevin Espirito, Senior Manager of Microsoft Employee Engagement Programs, describes this success: "Every October, we encourage employees to focus on their passions and tie them to the community." Foodies at Microsoft created an award-winning cookbook and sold it to benefit Farestart, an innovative nonprofit organization that provides food service training and holistic support to people moving out of homelessness and poverty. Dog lovers self-organized to create and market a calendar whose profits help train dogs to support disabled owners. Microsoft's cat lovers and horse lovers followed suit. The company's giving campaign happens each October as employees share their passions with each other and invite the nonprofits they support to introduce their work to fellow employees.

SOCIAL JUSTICE FUND

www.socialjusticefund.org

As a community-based foundation with a strong emphasis on democratic practice, Social Justice Fund NW is committed to having its membership truly reflect the community's diversity. In 2011, it launched a new model of donor organizing that has engaged thousands of people in giving to community-led organizations. The model is based on "Giving Projects" that bring together people from all class and race identities into groups of about twenty to build community, knowledge, and skills around fundraising and giving. Zeke Spier, Executive Director of Social Justice Fund, says "We believe that everyone can be a philanthropist whether they can give \$50 or \$50 million, and that we all need to challenge each other to do more."

VETCORPS

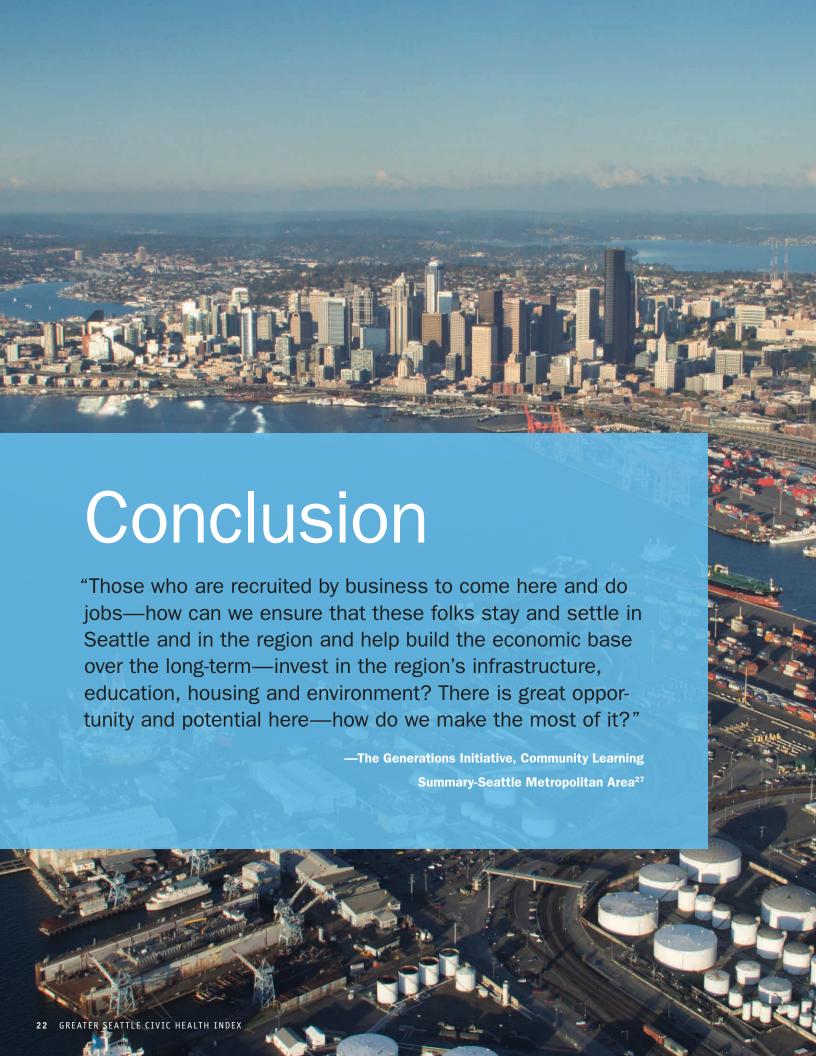
www.dva.wa.gov/vetcorps.html

Debbie Schuffenhauer, Executive Director of Washington Commission for National & Community Service, describes the mission and success of VetCorps: "In Washington State, we started the first VetCorps program in the country. Veterans have a deep desire to serve. AmeriCorps offers them an opportunity to continue serving on a different battlefield, helping meet challenges in our communities." VetCorps provides support, resources, and information for veterans transitioning to civilian life. This work includes helping veterans achieve their higher education goals, navigate the G.I. bill, and receive benefit support.

WIMMER SOLUTIONS

www.wimmersolutions.com

This Seattle business believes that everyone has a gift to give and a talent to lend. It uses its influence to "wake people up" to the power of giving. Wimmer offers employees a 100% charitable gift match program, skills-based volunteer opportunities, nonprofit skills training and more. Additionally, the company supports the Washington State Jefferson Awards which honors the state's "unsung heroes" who go above and beyond the call of civic duty. In 2013, Wimmer offered all five Jefferson award winners forty hours of business consulting services including technology expertise, project management skills, and business intelligence.



For too long, civic health has been considered a by-product of prosperity, a "nice to have" addendum to the good life. The data and analysis in this report show the limitations of that attitude. Civic health does increase in a well-educated and prosperous community. But, it also stimulates that vitality. Civic agency and prosperity reinforce one another.

IMAGINE: Along with natural wonder, innovative business and vibrant culture, greater Seattle is known for civic agency. Businesses and universities promote it to attract talented workers, faculty, and students. Nonprofits, social entrepreneurs and foundations capitalize on it to increase social investment. Government uses it to inspire citizen engagement, and citizens build it to ensure leader accountability.

This is already happening in our region, but we can achieve much more by turning up the volume. By understanding the nature and power of civic agency, by celebrating and amplifying it, we can create a self-fulfilling prophecy to grow greater Seattle's prosperity.

To do this requires remediating our deficits: Attend to the disparities of opportunity and training that hold back many of our youth and least advantaged residents. Improve civic connectivity and trust—the least developed components of our civic DNA. Recognize and respond to greater Seattle's shifting demography.

We can also better leverage our strengths: Exploit our increasing diversity as an asset. Incentivize our strong civic, cultural and educational institutions to integrate their efforts for collective impact. This report underscores the interrelationship of factors that contribute to civic health. We can work smarter together across sectors – social service agencies registering voters, schools reinforcing public health initiatives, economic development agencies promoting educational attainment. Because advancing any of these elements positively affects the others, linking and leveraging them is a vitamin boost.

How do we make the most of greater Seattle's potential? Invest in our civic infrastructure and the civic agency of our residents. Their civic knowledge, connection, trust and actions are a renewable energy source that will sustain and increase our prosperity.

Recommendations

Improve civic health as a way to strengthen economic, social and educational outcomes.

Use greater Seattle's excellent civic strength as a recruitment tool to continue bringing the best and brightest individuals, businesses and investments to our region.

Ensure that every resident has the opportunity to contribute to and benefit from our civic agency.

Spread stories of civic agency – your own and others – to strengthen greater Seattle's civic health.

How do we make the most of greater Seattle's potential? Invest in our civic infrastructure and the civic agency of our residents.



Photo: White Center Community Development Association

These civic agents are integrating social services, economic development and civic health to build community resilience and prosperity.

NORTHWEST LEADERSHIP FOUNDATION

www.northwestleadership.org

When the Carol Milgard Breast Center learned that Pierce County had an unusually high degree of breast cancer, especially among African American women, it approached the Northwest Leadership Foundation for help. The Foundation's mission is to strengthen and develop leaders and engage in community based strategies on behalf of the poor and disenfranchised. A partnership and task force were formed to reduce disparities for African American women by helping them change their behaviors when it comes to getting health screening, reducing any barriers to accessing quality health and embedding this as deep into the community as possible. The project partners claim: "We want African Americans to take charge of their own health and move the needle on the data we've seen. One of the critical indicators for us is that community activists are working directly with health care professionals, and they both have ownership of addressing health care disparities. When those two groups see themselves walking hand-in-hand to address this issue, I think we will have achieved something really great."

SNOHOMISH COUNTY HEALTH LEADERSHIP COALITION

In October 2012, a group of community leaders—representing business, economic development, healthcare, education, human services, nonprofits, public health and the faith community—gathered in an Everett restaurant to explore if, and how, they might collaborate to improve health and prosperity in Snohomish County. They created two pilot initiatives targeting community seniors and youth. Coalition Director Scott Forslund explains, "The issue is not a lack of knowledge or data; we're swimming in data. These leaders recognize the need to bring diverse voices together, to engage in novel ways, and to expand that circle of engagement. These first two 'proof-of-principle' initiatives are innovative. They also create opportunities for the community to build deeper connectivity and trust, and the runway to identify more profound and challenging community health and economic priorities."

WHITE CENTER COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT ASSOCIATION

www.wccda.org

This organization believes community building is about connecting people and place. In 2002, over fifty local community leaders joined together to form a community development association that supports small businesses and affordable housing. Through the Making Connections initiative, they expanded that scope to include neighborhood revitalization and family support. Realizing that all these elements are critical to building a strong community, WCCDA now leads partnerships and co-investments that include White Center residents, local businesses, government agencies and organizations.

WIN/WIN NETWORK www.winwinnetwork.org

As part of a national pilot program linking civic engagement with social service support, WIN/WIN Network trained and provided on-the-ground capacity for social workers to offer voter registration and civic engagement. Despite never having organized the direct service community before, Washington State contributed the second highest number of voter registrations in the pilot. This innovative program is only one example of WIN/WIN's voter registration success. In 2012, along with 14 partner organizations, WIN/WIN registered nearly 60,000 new voters: 40% people of color, 29% youth. Two-thirds of these new voters participated in the November 2012 election.

Recommendations

Civic Knowledge

Make education our most important civic health investment.

As a strategy to close the achievement gap, close the empowerment gap. Focus on the teaching of "action civics," which places a high priority on the practice of citizenship as well as the knowledge of governing structures. Provide role models and meaningful opportunities for youth to learn from and contribute to their communities.

Link English language learning with civic literacy.

Civic Connection

Include ways to build community pride and belonging in plans to improve public health. For example, outreach efforts to extend health coverage under the Affordable Care Act can be harnessed to build civic knowledge and connections.

Leverage the power of networks and hubs to foster connectivity—physically through public transit, parks and high-speed internet; socially through neighborhood associations, alumni groups and Facebook friends; and in time through block parties, arts festivals, civic holidays and sports events.

Civic Trust

Communicate civic information across all available channels using a variety of languages, times, locations and modes to maximize accessibility and openness. Provide support to ensure inclusive digital participation.

Practice meaningful community engagement by bringing residents and leaders together for productive dialogue and decision making. Include historically marginalized people with support for their civic leadership development. Build cultural competence and responsiveness among all stakeholders.

Civic Action

Make political participation and calls to service universal and various so that everyone is touched, and everyone can find meaningful ways to contribute.

Find ways to recognize and celebrate the informal acts of courtesy and friendship that embody neighborliness. These "random acts of kindness" are really not random and can be nurtured to build social capital and civic agency.

Conclusion

Improve civic health as a way to strengthen economic, social and educational outcomes.

Use greater Seattle's excellent civic strength as a recruitment tool to continue bringing the best and brightest individuals, businesses and investments to our region.

Ensure that every resident has the opportunity to contribute to and benefit from our civic agency.

Spread stories of civic agency—your own and others—to strengthen greater Seattle's civic health.



Technical Notes

Unless otherwise noted, the 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, 1972-2012, 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. The Seattle CPS sample size used in this report ranged from 1,322 residents (volunteer supplement) to 1,366 residents (voting supplement) and included the entire Metropolitan Statistical Area (MSA) of Seattle-Tacoma-Bellevue. Washington state indicators are also used in the report and are based on CPS sample size ranging from 2,558 residents (volunteer supplement) to 2,641 residents (voting supplement). Samples then

weighted to representative population demographics. 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 favors with neighbors, 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 examine the relationship between educational attainment and engagement, estimates are based only on adults ages 25 and older, the assumption being 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 MSA or 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 this is particularly true for indicators looking at the MSA level. 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 MSA or state ranked first from the MSA or 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

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Civic Health Index

State and Local Partnerships

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

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

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

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

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Center for Democratic Deliberation National Constitution Center

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