COLORADO CIVIC HEALTH INDEX













Campus Compact of the Mountain West





National Conference on Citizenship Connecting People. Strengthening Our Country.



ABOUT THE PARTNERS

NATIONAL CONFERENCE ON CITIZENSHIP

The National Conference on Citizenship (NCoC) is a congressionally chartered organization dedicated to strengthening civic life in America. We pursue our mission through a cutting-edge civic health initiative, an innovative national service project, and crosssector conferences. At the core of our efforts is the belief that every person has the ability to help their community and country thrive.

METROPOLITAN STATE UNIVERSITY OF DENVER

Metropolitan State University of Denver works to create lasting impact in its urban community. It provides an exceptional education of great value, preparing its 23,000 students to succeed and serve. MSU Denver is the leader in educating undergraduate Coloradans and enrolls the highest number of students of color among the state's four-year universities. The University offers 55 majors as well as master's degrees in accounting, teaching and social work. It boasts more than 77,000 alumni, most of whom remain in Colorado after graduation.

DENVER METRO CHAMBER LEADERSHIP FOUNDATION

An affiliate organization of the Denver Metro Chamber of Commerce, the Denver Metro Chamber Leadership Foundation provides content, context and access to inspire leaders to engage in issues critical to the region's success. The Leadership Foundation encourages community and civic trusteeship through a continuum of leadership programs including Leadership Denver, Access Denver, the Leadership Exchange, Impact Denver, Colorado Experience, Civic Refresh, the Leadership Alumni Network and the Colorado Leadership Alliance.

CAMPUS COMPACT OF THE MOUNTAIN WEST

Campus Compact of the Mountain West (CCMW) is a membership organization of colleges and universities devoted to civic learning and higher education engagement in Colorado and Wyoming. CCMW connects campuses with communities by integrating community-engaged practices into academic and co-curricular programs and by extending civic engagement across institutions of higher education. Campus Compact of the Mountain West is part of a national coalition of more than 1,100 colleges and universities that are passionately committed to elevating engaged teaching, research, service, and learning for students' academic experiences and for the community.

THE CIVIC CANOPY

The Civic Canopy is a network of partners dedicated to creating healthier neighborhoods, stronger communities, and a more just society. By designing innovative tools and facilitating collaborative processes, the Canopy creates the conditions for meaningful change in society. Canopy projects range from grass roots community organizing, to organizational capacity building, to providing backbone support for collective impact initiatives, to facilitating policy changes at the system level. In every project, on every issue, the Civic Canopy helps the many work as one for the good of all.

HISTORY COLORADO

History Colorado serves our state by helping people connect to their heritage through exhibits, educational programs, and the "stuff" of Colorado history. History Colorado's collections include more than 15 million documents, photographs and artifacts illustrating our state's more than 10,000 year history. Our regional museums and historic sites serve communities across Colorado, and the State Historical Fund invests hundreds of thousands of dollars annually in historic preservation projects that serve communities in every Colorado county.

INSTITUTE ON THE COMMON GOOD

The Institute on the Common Good at Regis University was founded in 1998 as an outreach arm of the university. Our mission is to promote the common good and to help communities resolve complex social issues through the use of our primary tools of community dialogue, community organizing, public deliberation, and faith discernment.



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ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS:

The authors wish to acknowledge the support they received from their respective institutions: Campus Compact of the Mountain West, the Denver Metro Chamber Leadership Foundation, and Metropolitan State University of Denver. Particularly, the authors recognize the leadership of Dr. Mark Potter of MSU Denver, who provided unyielding perseverance in the creation of this Index. In addition, Civic Canopy, History Colorado, and the Institute on the Common Good at Regis University provided key input into the framing of the report as well as planning and support for statewide outreach. Several individuals representing an array of civic perspectives took the time to read and respond to drafts of the report. We are grateful for their time and also acknowledge that any shortcomings in this report are solely the responsibility of the authors. The expertise and the genuine sense of partnership among NCoC and CIRCLE staffs were invaluable in guiding the Colorado partners through both the writing of the report and the plans for continuous engagement of Coloradans around the report's findings.

PREFACE

Colorado is a great place to live, work, raise a family, and do business. The state's assets include not only its natural wonders, but also its diversified economy, its arts and cultural sector, and, most importantly, its residents. The people of Colorado are diverse—and getting more so every year—and highly educated. Now, with this civic health report, we see that Coloradans' civic participation is another asset for the state.

All of the state's assets, though, are in need of cultivation, and as this report highlights, Coloradans' civic participation is no different. We can be proud of some strong statewide measures, for example with regard to volunteering, charitable giving, voter turnout, and working with neighbors to solve problems in the community. But, we also know that as we dig deeper into the findings, these statewide averages mask some real challenges in our state.

Colorado's educational achievement gap has received increased and well-deserved attention lately, through reports like 2013's Losing Ground. Now, new Pew Center research points to the growing gap in economic outcomes experienced, on the one hand, by young people who graduate from college and, on the other hand, those who have less education.¹ Income, education, and civic health are all bound together, and there are trends in Colorado that are moving in the wrong direction.

I have been fortunate to serve the state of Colorado by leading the University that educates more of the state's residents at the undergraduate level than any other institution of higher education. While colleges and universities clearly have a role to play in addressing the challenges identified in this report, all Coloradans are called upon as leaders in their communities to ensure that no one is left out of the benefits of a healthy civic life. I am confident that, together, we Coloradans can take action to see that all residents, and all communities, are included in the civic health of the state.

Yours in service,

President Stephen M. Jordan, PhD

Metropolitan State University of Denver



Photography credit: Metropolitan State University of Denver

INTRODUCTION

What is Civic Health?

Civic health is determined by how actively citizens engage in their communities. Multiple measures contribute to the understanding of the civic health of a community. Casting a ballot, volunteering, staying informed on community issues, and lending your time and resources to solve community issues are often considered indicators of civic health. When viewed collectively, these measures capture the number and strength of meaningful, lasting connections beyond one's immediate networks of family, friends, and co-workers. These connections can be with individuals, groups and organizations, governments and agencies, or movements and causes. Such connections are facilitated by culture, attitudes, policies, and infrastructure. Strong community connections create the foundation for an individual's civic contributions, both formal and informal. For this reason, the 2013 Colorado Civic Health Index highlights both traditional measures of civic engagement as well as other determinants such as networks, trust, and community attachment.

Civic Health = Vital Communities

Strong civic health leads to resilient communities, better governance in the form of inclusive democracy, improved community outcomes such as health and education, and a greater ability to weather economic crises. Colorado's civic health is strong by most measures. However, not all Coloradans are experiencing these benefits, and unequal access to civic participation is impacting residents and communities across the state. As this report illustrates, all of our communities will gain from a statewide commitment to expanding inclusive opportunities for civic participation and attachment.

CALLS TO ACTION

The steps we take to achieve our goal of inclusive civic participation are equally as important as the goal itself. We are not issuing a single call to action, but rather offering pathways to engagement for a diverse statewide community. Because all Coloradans have a role in advancing the calls for action this report identifies, the report culminates with a guide that suggests some of those pathways for different stakeholders within our state.

Vote: Increase voter registration and voting rates in both local and national elections, primarily within groups that show lower rates of civic participation.

Connect: Provide electronic and face-to-face means through which community members can connect with other Coloradans around civic issues.

Include: Practice inclusion when working together to address community issues. Inclusion strengthens civic participation and builds trust.

Volunteer: Strengthen the commitment and access to volunteerism among individuals and groups who currently do not volunteer.

Engage: Engage all stakeholders in public life, with an intentional focus on Colorado's newcomers as well as on the fast-growing age group of residents 65 and older.

Civic & Community Engagement Networks & Information Volunteerism & Leadership Trust Attachment

Civic Health

Economic Resiliency Public Health & Wellness Educational Attainment Inclusive Democracy

CIVIC HEALTH AT-A-GLANCE



VOLUNTEERING

"In [a] strong democracy, politics is something done by, not to, citizens. Activity is its chief virtue, and involvement, commitment, obligation, and service—common deliberation, common decision, and common work—are its hallmarks."

Benjamin Barber, Strong Democracy (1984)

		Latest Estimates*	Latest National Ranking*	Moving Avg. 2010-2012 pooled ²
di ≙ .	Volunteer	33.1%	12th	32.8%
VOLUNTEERING IIVING, & GROUI MEMBERSHIP	Give \$25 or more to charity	58.5%	8th	59.0%
VOLUNI GIVING, MEMB	Hold a leadership role in an organization ¹	12.5%	22nd	11.6%
	Hold membership in a group ^{1,3}	46.4%	9th	45%
VOTING, REGISTRATION, & POLITICAL INVOLVEMENT	Voter turnout (2012)	70.4%	6th	N/A
	Voter registration (2012)	74.4%	16th	N/A
	Vote in local elections sometimes or all of the time ¹	65.1%	16th	N/A
	Attend at least one public meeting	12.3%	15th	12.3%
	Contact or visit a public official ¹	16.2%	17th	N/A
INTERACTIONS WITH NEIGHBORS, FRIENDS OR FAMILY	Work with neighbors to fix or improve something in the community	11.9%	9th	10.8%
	Talk about politics with friends and family frequently ^{1,4}	35.2%	8th	33.4%
	Exchange (giving or receiving) favors with neighbors frequently ^{1,4}	11.5%	46th	13.4%
	Trust all or most neighbors ¹	63.9%	17th	N/A

* 2012, Unless noted otherwise.

INTERACTIONS WITH

[1] For all of the indicators from the Civic Engagement Supplement (such as talking about politics and doing favors for neighbors), data are only available up to 2011, as those questions were not asked in 2012.

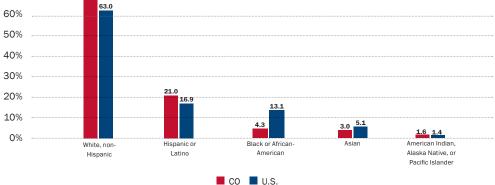
[2] "Pooled" estimates are estimated rates of engagement over the three most recent years. It is calculated from a combined dataset from 2010, 2011, and 2012 when available. If the 2012 data are not available, we use 2009, 2010, and 2011 pooled data. We do not calculate pooled estimates for voting because voting rates from Midterm and Presidential years are often too different to combine.

[3] The percentage point estimate refers to the portion of people who said they belong to any of the groups presented (religious, school, neighborhood, civic or sports/recreation).

[4] Frequently is defined as a few times a week or more.

COLORADO AND ITS RESIDENTS

Many civic health indicators vary by age, ethnicity, income, and education level. The following population snapshot is provided to offer additional context for understanding our state's civic health performance. 2



37.5% 2012 Colorado population over 25 with a bachelor's degree or higher **29.1%** 2012 U.S. population over 25 with a bachelor's

degree or higher

Age and Gender, CO and U.S. (2012)

	СО	US
Persons under 5 years	6.5%	6.4%
Persons Under 18 years	23.7%	23.5%
Persons 65 years and over	11.8%	13.7%
Female Persons	49.8%	50.8%

FINDINGS

Civic and Community Engagement

An essential pillar of democracy is civic participation, which can happen both through formal and informal mechanisms. Voting, registering to vote, and contacting public officials-all of which are ways in which individuals can participate formally in the civic life of their communities-are predictors of communities' resiliency in times of economic downturn.³ Active and organized citizens can demand and promote good governance and serve as partners to government in addressing public problems. Additionally, states with more civic engagement have much higher performing public schools regardless of the states' demographics, spending, and class sizes. Informal civic participation is likewise important in creating a society that values community dialogue about politics as a legitimate and powerful form of engagement.⁴

How individuals and groups choose to or are allowed to engage with local government and in decision making illustrates how accessible that government is to the community. Formal civic participation (voting, registering to vote, and contacting public officials) has a direct impact on how responsive local government is to the people of Colorado. Looking at indicators of formal civic participation, Colorado does better than average for voting (6th in the nation), registering to vote (16th in the nation), and voting in local elections (16th in the nation).

When the focus shifts to informal civic participation, Coloradans move to the front of the pack. Examples include talking about politics with friends or family (8th in the nation), buying or boycotting a product for social or political reasons (5th in the nation), and group membership in a civic or community organization (9th in the nation). This suggests that community-based and social avenues for civic engagement have a strong appeal to Coloradans.

On a deeper level, we find there are significant differences in the rates of formal civic participation between individuals living in rural versus urban communities, across racial/ethnic and income differences, and across different levels of educational attainment. In Colorado, only 10 of 64 counties are designated as urban, and even within those counties the population density tends to be clustered around specific cities and not distributed throughout the geographic area. The 16% of the state population designated as urban lags their rural counterparts in measures of formal civic engagement; rural residents have a voter registration and turnout rate 10 to 11 percentage points higher. On the other hand, urban residents appear to utilize social networks and informal organizing to participate civically. The portion of urban residents who report expressing opinions via the Internet a few times a week or more is twice the portion of rural residents. While not as big a gap, 4% more urban than rural individuals discuss politics a few times a week or more.

Similarly, differences appear across income and racial/ethnic differences in rates of formal and informal civic engagement. Non-Hispanic Whites (hereafter "Whites") vote at higher rates than Latinos in both national and local elections, more frequently contact their local officials, and more frequently discuss politics. Colorado residents in households earning more than \$75,000 are also more likely to engage in each of these activities than residents in lower income brackets.







by active civic groups (Boys and Girls Clubs, Girl Scouts and Boy Scouts, museums and other cultural organizations, etc.)."

> Dr. Jane Fraser, Colorado State University-Pueblo

Photography credit: Metro Volunteers

Political Involvement at-a-Glance*

		White, non- Hispanic	Latinos	Black, non- Hispanic
BY RACE	Vote in local elections (often/always)	45.2%	17.7%	**
	Contact or visit a public official	17.9%	6.0%	**
	Discuss Politics Frequently	38.7%	22.5%	**
< \$35k \$35k - 49k \$50k - 74k \$75k+				

BY INCOME	Vote in local elections (often/always)	30.9%	37.3%	40.3%	45.5%
	Contact or visit a public official	13.0%	8.8%	15.6%	20.9%
	Discuss politics frequently	30.5%	26.9%	32.4%	43.8%

*2011, unless otherwise stated

**Data sample was too small to analyze

Educational attainment also appears to affect Coloradans' likelihood to engage in civic life. Voter turnout among Coloradans who have earned a bachelor's degree or higher was 82.1% in 2012, versus 72.1% for Coloradans with some college education and 60.6% for Coloradans with a high school diploma. Coloradans with a bachelor's degree or higher were more than twice as likely to discuss politics at least a few times a week than were Coloradans who had not completed high school.

Access to opportunities among all groups in Colorado to formal and informal civic participation is critical to good governance, education, health, and the economic resiliency of our communities. These differences in both formal and informal engagement across different groups in Colorado are a cause of concern, and they elicit our first calls to action.

Call to Action #1: Increase voter registration and voting rate in both local and national elections, primarily within groups that show lower rates of civic participation.

Call to Action #2: Provide electronic and face-to-face means through which community members can connect with other Coloradans around civic issues.

Networks and Information

Networks form the foundation of community. They provide the informal channels of civic participation, and they strengthen the resiliency of both individuals and whole communities by increasing access to support, information, and resources. Information itself is a valuable commodity for both the economic opportunity and the effective advocacy that it enables. In times of personal or family economic hardship, networks and information can provide economic lifelines by opening doors to work or to entrepreneurial opportunities.

Networks emerge from many different types of connections. They can develop through one's personal connections with family and friends, volunteering or being part of a cause, involvement in schools, churches, or clubs, or interaction and involvement with neighbors.

Photography credit: Daemmrich Photography

6th Colorado ranked 6th in the nation in voter turnout In Colorado, there are indicators that show, in aggregate, strong network ties. Volunteering, which is studied in more depth in the following section, brings about one-third of Coloradans into contact with organizations and individuals who have the potential to become part of networks. Coloradans attend public meetings at a rate higher than the national average. In 2012, 12% of Colorado residents attended at least one public meeting where community issues were discussed, and likewise 12% worked with neighbors to improve or fix something in their neighborhood, compared to national rates of 9% and 8.4% respectively.

Other indicators, though, show some potential areas of weakness in the networks that bind Coloradans together. Colorado residents rank only slightly above the national average for seeing and hearing from friends and family at least a few times a week (81.4% of residents in 2011, compared to a national average of 79% reporting such interactions). Colorado residents talk less to their neighbors than the national average. In 2011, 40% of Colorado residents reported talking frequently with their neighbors, versus 43.7% nationally.

Coloradans access networks and information in varied ways, and those differences are noticeable when considered across location of residence, income levels, ethnic/racial backgrounds, and educational attainment levels. For example, the percentage of suburban Coloradans who report talking frequently with neighbors (33.8%) is less than the percentage of both urban Coloradans (43.6%) and rural Coloradans (42.9%). In Denver, among the African American population, only 2.8% reported having attended a public meeting between 2010 and 2012, versus 11.5% of all Denver residents. Statewide, many fewer Latinos than Whites reported working with their neighbors to solve problems (4.2% versus 14.5%), and similarly the percentage of Latinos who reported having attended a public meeting in 2012 (4.2%) is much lower than the percentage for Whites (14.5%). On the other hand, both Latinos and Whites report seeing or hearing from family or friends at rates that converge with the statewide average. Coloradans with bachelor's degrees are far more likely to attend a public meeting and to work with neighbors to solve problems than are high school graduates, but there is closer convergence across levels of education in seeing or hearing from family or friends and talking with neighbors. In fact, a higher percentage of Coloradans without a high school diploma reported talking frequently with neighbors (50.4%) than did Coloradans with bachelor's degrees (42.6%).

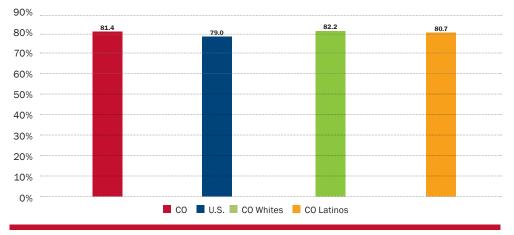
Photography credit: Courtesy of Metro Volunteers



20th

Colorado ranked 20th in the nation for frequently seeing or hearing from family or friends

Frequently See or Hear from Family or Friends (2011)



Care should be taken to recognize differences in how networks are formed prior to drawing firm conclusions about the relative strength of networks. Nonetheless, the disparities across racial/ ethnic lines and levels of educational attainment in attendance at public meetings and in working with neighbors to solve problems elicit this report's third call to action:

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Call to Action #3: Practice inclusion when working together to address community issues. Inclusion strengthens civic participation and builds trust.

Nonprofits and Civic Health

Nonprofit organizations provide many of the same benefits for communities as strong networks. Nonprofits bring resources and support to communities, they can be an important economic driver, and they can enhance a community's resiliency. Civic Health and Unemployment II reports that a county with "one extra nonprofit per 1,000 people in 2005 [had] half a percentage point less unemployment by 2009."⁵ That report goes on to suggest that nonprofits correlate with feelings of affection and optimism for one's community, which in turn may trigger economic decisions to spend, invest, collaborate, and address problems locally.

In 2008, the per capita density of nonprofits registered in Colorado was 56.7 per 10,000 persons, giving Colorado a rank of 21st in the nation, tied with Massachusetts.⁶ Also in 2008, one out of eighteen members of the paid workforce in Colorado worked in a nonprofit organization, and the nonprofit sector accounted for more than 5% of the state's gross product, which represents a greater share than the transportation, utilities, and agriculture industries combined.⁷

Yet, at the same time, the share of the workforce in nonprofits is lower than the national average (7.2%). Even though nonprofits furnish economic activity in all regions of Colorado, the impacts are disproportionate in the Denver metropolitan region, which captures 66% of net inflows into the economy through the state's nonprofits.



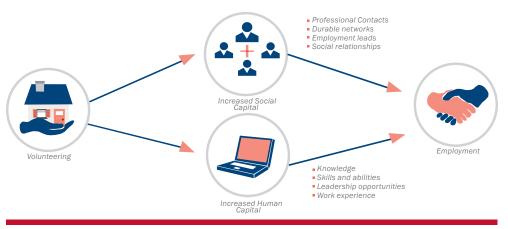
Evan Weissman, founder of Warm Cookies of the Revolution, speaks of strengthening networks and attachment through cookies and conversation: "Warm Cookies of the Revolution couldn't exist if it weren't for the networks that our base of supporters has built up over the years. Our model couldn't, and shouldn't, work like a corporation. We depend on community members being actively engaged and wanting to learn and act for their interests in the community. Our approach is not novel. We believe that people who work hard and are raising kids spend their precious extra time and money on what is necessary and then on what is fun, and so if we want to keep these folks active in civic life we have to make it necessary and fun. This takes strong networks, a participatory spirit, and the willingness to ask the questions 'What do we want?' and 'How do we get there?'...and it must be fun!"



Photography credit: Warm Cookies of the Revolution

Volunteerism and Leadership

Research indicates that volunteering builds human capital in our citizens, enhances social cohesion between residents, and strengthens attachment—all factors that contribute to economic resiliency and stronger overall communities.⁸ Volunteering as a Pathway to Employment, a study by the Corporation for National Community Service, finds that civic volunteers enjoy a 27% higher probability of employment.⁹ In fact, the report found that every individual, regardless of a person's gender, age, ethnicity, geographical area, or the conditions of the job market, can improve his or her employability through volunteerism.





Source: Volunteering as a Pathway to Employment (2013), Corporation for National and Community Service

Volunteerism also, of course, provides measurable direct benefit to our state. Colorado's volunteers are tutoring children, repairing wilderness trails, gathering much-needed donations, lending their professional skills to nonprofits, advocating for policy changes, and serving on boards and commissions. The latest calculation of value for a volunteer hour in Colorado is \$25.10.¹⁰ In 2012, 1.32 million Colorado volunteers contributed 160.3 million hours of service, a value of \$3.6 billion.¹¹

Many companies also recognize the benefits of encouraging their employees to contribute their time, talents, and energy to community issues. Research shows that companies that facilitate volunteer programs enjoy higher employee retention, employee satisfaction and productivity as well as improved brand recognition and trust in the community. Deloitte's 2013 Volunteer IMPACT survey shows that 88% of human resource executives believe corporate citizenship programs that promote volunteerism improve their organization's reputation in the community.¹²

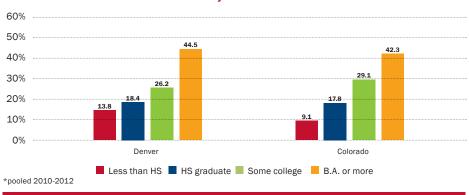
Colorado ranks high in the nation for volunteering. 33.1% of Coloradans volunteered in 2012, ranking 12th in the U.S., well above the national average of 26.5%. Colorado is ranked 6th for the number of veterans (33.8%), 9th for parents (43.3%) and 19th in college students who volunteer (30.8%). ¹³ In the last ten years, Colorado's volunteer rates were highest in 2005 (33.5%) and lowest in 2002 (29.7%). However, they have remained consistently higher than the national average over the last decade.

It is not surprising that Colorado's volunteerism ranks relatively high. Coloradans are known for leading active lifestyles, and that translates to our volunteer commitments as well. Educational attainment is also a predictor of volunteerism. Colorado has one of the nation's most educated workforces, ranking second among the 50 states for percentage of residents with a bachelor's degree or higher, at 37.5%, and the higher their educational attainment, the more Coloradans report volunteering.¹⁴



"21st-century challenges require 21st-century solutions. The current economic climate has created an imbalance between the demand for community services and available financial resources. In this context, nonprofit executives must strategically consider how to engage their human capital—volunteers to provide diverse perspectives, skills, and time."

Kristy Judd, Executive Director, Metro Volunteers



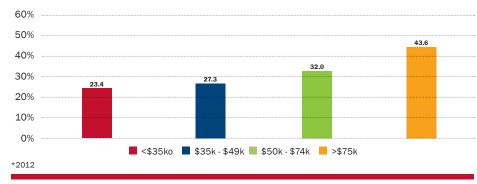
Volunteer Rates in Colorado and Denver by Educational Attainment*

Volunteer rates in the state also vary by age, location, race, and economic status. Individuals 34 years or older are more apt to volunteer than younger residents. Coloradans living in rural communities are also more active in volunteering, by a difference of 8 percentage points over urban residents. 37.3% of Whites and 20.9% of Latinos formally volunteer. Of all factors, income and education are the largest determinants of volunteering across racial and ethnic groups. Even so, when controlling for these variables, Whites are more active in formal volunteer roles.¹⁵ Demographic disparities in Colorado are complex and everwidening, as I-News Network's Losing Ground report highlighted in 2013.¹⁶ It is possible there are cultural, community, family structure, health and time barriers which also account for the differences in volunteering among groups. For this reason, this study also explores community-based activities such as attending meetings or working on issues with neighbors as less organized, but still important, forms of volunteering.

Given that Denver has a higher concentration of individuals earning less than \$35,000 and less than a high school diploma, it is not surprising that volunteer rates are also lower in the city. Those rates only lag by a few percentage points however (30.1% versus 32.8% per the pooled data from 2010-2012). According to the Corporation for National Community Service, Denver ranks 13th out of large U.S. cities on volunteer rates.¹⁷ The impact of volunteerism on the state is shaped by where Coloradans choose to volunteer. Per the Corporation for National Community Service, the sector that draws the most volunteer time is the educational sector (31% of Coloradans' volunteer time), followed by religious organizations (26.9%), social services (17%), and the health sector (8.9%).¹⁸



Photography credit: Courtesy of Metro Volunteers



Volunteer Rates by Level of Household Income*

While Colorado can and should be proud of our volunteerism rates, there is room for increased engagement. If those Coloradans who do not currently formally volunteer in any capacity, 3,524,537, contributed 1 hour a year, they would create an economic impact of \$88,465,878, based on the value of volunteer time per hour. Inspiring increased volunteerism improves not only the state's leverage of resident time and talent for strengthening our communities but also provides valuable benefits, employability, and social networks, to those able and willing to participate.

Addressing these volunteer gaps across educational levels, location, income levels, and age is this report's fourth call to action.

Call to Action #4: Strengthen the commitment and access to volunteerism among individuals and groups who currently do not volunteer.



46th

Colorado ranked 46th in the nation for exchanging favors with neighbors



Participation in volunteer experiences by college and university students provides meaningful service to community-based organizations. It also impacts the future career choices for students who dedicate themselves to careers in the common good, continuing to meet critical community needs long after their volunteer experiences end.

For one Colorado Mesa University student who responded anonymously to a survey, "My volunteer experience through the Compact Service Corps AmeriCorps Program focused my career path. I have personally recognized my drive and devotion to working in low-income schools with children who need motivation, increased learning, and love. Teaching these students has been the most rewarding thing I have ever done."

Trust

Trust acts as the catalyst that brings neighbors and communities together to work toward solving problems. The report "Civic Health and the Economy" suggests that "trust is a powerful predictor of economic success because people who trust are more likely to enter contracts and business partnerships, and because confidence in others is a precondition for investing, hiring, and business innovation."19 Trust is also related to a willingness to ask for help and may be a precondition for support for public investment in the community.

Whereas statewide, many of the measures of trust hover around the national averages, there are some worrying indications that sizable pockets exist where trust is well below state and national norms.

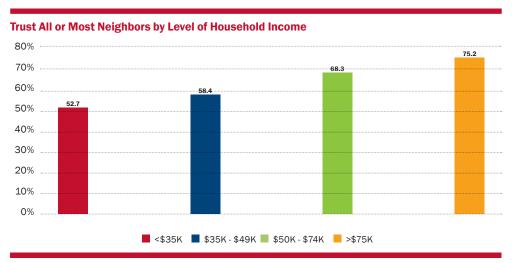
Statewide, trust in neighbors is, on average, slightly higher than the levels reported by U.S. residents nationwide. In 2011, 63.9% of Coloradans reported trusting all or most of the people in their neighborhoods. The national average for that same level of trust was 56.7%. Only 5.7% of Coloradans reported trusting none of the people in their neighborhoods versus 8.7% nationwide.

Yet, when asked if they do or receive favors for neighbors, Coloradans report fewer such behaviors than reported nationwide. 11.5% of Coloradans in 2011 responded that they exchange such favors "frequently," compared to 14% nationwide. Those who chose "infrequently" in response to the same question comprised a greater percentage among Colorado residents than nationwide: 57.6% versus 51%. When findings are pooled across multiple years, from 2009 to 2011, they tell much the same story. 13.4% of Coloradans versus 14.9% nationwide reported that they granted or received favors from neighbors frequently, and over half of Coloradans (52.6%) reported exchanging favors with neighbors infrequently, compared to 44.1% nationwide. Coloradans are

thus less likely than Americans, on average, to be closely connected to their neighbors in ways in which there is tangible, mutual benefit.

Coloradans share roughly the same levels of trust as Americans nationwide in key institutions and organizations. 7.7% and 55% of Colorado residents reported, respectively, a great deal or some confidence in corporations in 2011, compared to national rates of 6.2% and 55.7%. Confidence in the Media in 2011 was 3.3% (a great deal of confidence) and 54.6% (some confidence) versus 5% and 57% nationally. With respect to public schools, Coloradans gave votes of confidence just slightly above the national average at 31.5% (a great deal of confidence) and 58.9% (some confidence) compared to 30% and 58% nationally.

Statewide, trust is higher in rural areas than urban and suburban areas. In 2011, 73% of residents reported trusting all or most people in one's neighborhood compared to 62.5% of suburban and 53.6% of urban residents. In Denver, 55.5% of residents reported trusting all or most neighbors in 2011.



Trust in one's neighbors also increases as income levels rise, as the graph below illustrates.



63.9% of Coloradans trust all or most of their neighbors in 2011

Racial and ethnic disparities in trust are even greater, and these are a major cause of concern. In 2011, nearly 70% of Whites reported trusting either all their neighbors (21.5%) or most of their neighbors (48.4%), whereas only 42.3% of Latinos did (9.8% trusting all their neighbors and 32.5% trusting some).

This disparity in trust is large, and the reasons for it have to be sought in the historical and cultural experiences of Colorado's residents. Robert Putnam has found that communities made up of diverse populations tend to "withdraw from collective life, to distrust their neighbors, regardless of the color of their skin, to withdraw even from close friends..."20 In addition, experiences of exclusion can breed mistrust. There is important research to be done to help us understand this history of inclusion and exclusion in our state, but our call to action is about proactively addressing the disparities in social trust, and it is a restatement of Call to Action #3:

Call to Action #3: Practice inclusion when working together to address community issues. Inclusion strengthens civic participation and builds trust.

Trust Across Colorado Regions

Colorado is a large state in geographical terms, ranking eighth in size by square miles, but only 22nd in size by population. The state is topographically divided in two by the Rocky Mountains, with the largest urban centers all located on the Front Range of the eastern edge of the Rockies. From their own economic, historical, and cultural vantage points the plains to the East, the farming and mountain communities in southern Colorado, and the vast western slope of the Rockies all feel removed from the urban center of Denver and the Front Range.

This feeling of removal has turned into mistrust, as the November 2013 election results showed. In that election, residents in five counties on the state's eastern plains voted to secede and form their own state. Up to and following the election, state leaders openly referenced the urban/ rural divide in the state, and in the aftermath of the vote, Governor Hickenlooper admitted that the secession question "really led to debates and discussions that are going to make each of [the] counties stronger and, I think, ultimately make the state stronger."²¹

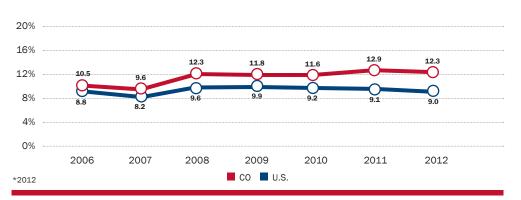
Colorado is not immune from natural disasters, as the floods of September 2013 brought home, and long term, trust across the "rural/urban divide" will be essential for genuine state-wide responses to future disasters, economic crises, and emerging challenges such as water stewardship and energy extraction and production.

Attachment

Community attachment is a bond, built through social connections and shared experiences, that creates loyalty and resilience. Our personal relationship to the communities in which we live, our neighborhoods, our towns, and even the state we call home, can make our investments of time, energy, and personal contributions more likely. These investments, in turn, further deepen our community attachment. Residents who are attached to their communities are more likely to express this sense of ownership by volunteering more, making higher charitable contributions, spending locally, and participating actively in solving challenges in their communities.²²

Research also suggests this type of community attachment translates into other tangible impacts such as a higher local Gross Domestic Product (GDP).²³ In short, when residents invest in their communities civically, they are also investing in their communities' economic health. From 2006-2009, the Soul of the Community study, conducted by the Knight Foundation and Gallup, gathered data from 43,000 individuals in 26 cities, including Boulder, Colorado. For the three years the study was conducted, researchers found a positive correlation between community attachment and local GDP growth. The drivers of attachment that the study identified include

Attendance at Community Meetings*



civic involvement, social capital, education, perception of the local economy, leadership, safety, emotional well-being, and basic services.

Some measures of attachment include attendance at public meetings and voting in local elections, and Colorado ranks above the national average in both of these measures. As mentioned already, 39.1% of Coloradans in 2012 reported voting often in local elections, versus the national average of 33.2%. The previous chart indicates that since 2006, Coloradans have consistently reported attending public meetings at higher rates than the national average.

Charitable giving is another indicator of attachment. Charitable giving is personal and emotional, and is strongly influenced by the individual's connection to a cause. In fact, according to the Colorado Nonprofit Association's 2011 survey, donors report that volunteering time with an organization is an important factor in deciding to give.²⁴ In 2012, Colorado ranked 8th in the nation for the percentage of residents (58.5%) who gave at least \$25 to charity.

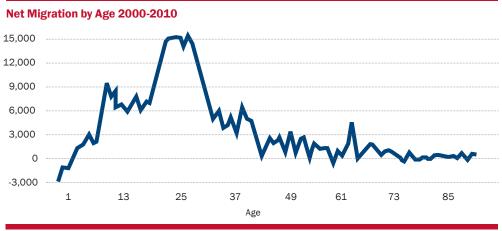
Whereas Colorado surpasses the national averages in many measures of attachment, there are still opportunities to improve. Giving, for example, was less common in 2012 among Coloradans at lower income levels than it was for Coloradans with higher incomes. Similarly, Coloradans who had attained higher levels of education were more likely to have given to a charity. By other measures too, Colorado has room to cultivate generosity in our state. According to the Chronicle of Philanthropy's assessment of giving by proportion of income, Colorado ranked 31st in the U.S.²⁶

Corporate Citizenship in Colorado

An important factor when considering the civic health of our state is the level of corporate giving in Colorado. Corporate citizenship, the idea that companies should invest in the well-being of the communities in which they do business, has grown over the years from being viewed as not only the 'right thing to do,' but important for a company's bottom line.

Colorado is home to many generous corporate citizens who are contributing vital resources to improving our communities. Colorado's top five corporate philanthropists, in terms of monetary donations, are Xcel Energy, Walmart, FirstBank, Encana Oil & Gas, and Wells Fargo.²⁵

A dynamic that may be at play in Colorado is the role of tenure (length of residence) and age when exploring community attachment. Nationwide, citizens who have lived in a community for less than three years, and those aged 18-34, typically demonstrate the lowest levels of attachment. Residents aged 65 and older express the highest levels of attachment.²⁷



Colorado's Western Union Recognized Nationally by

The Civic 50:

"As an organization, we have a deep commitment to Western Union's customers and the communities in which they live. Our volunteer efforts help to build a shared sense of purpose among Western Union employees, and provide important perspective on the issues Western Union customers face each and every day, in all corners of the world."

Patrick Gaston, President, Western Union Foundation

Source: State Demography Office

Tenure and age are indeed significant factors for Colorado. As the previous graph illustrates, the largest share of net in-migration (population moving in minus those moving out) represented residents aged 23-35. Colorado has a historical pattern of attracting this age group, which has impacted Colorado's age distribution for decades.²⁸

Colorado's challenge, and the fifth call to action in this report, is to engage multiple demographic groups simultaneously. Quickly engaging newcomers, particularly those under 35, in community activities that build attachment could improve charitable giving, volunteerism, and leadership engagement in the state. At the same time, Colorado's current share of its population over 65, just 11%, is the 4th smallest in the nation, yet between 2010 and 2020, this share of the population is expected to increase by 61%, growing from 549,629 to 891,970. So, establishing meaningful civic engagement pathways for those 65 and older is an extraordinary opportunity on the horizon for our state.



Call to Action #5: Engage all stakeholders in public life, with an intentional focus on Colorado's newcomers as well as on the fast-growing age group of residents 65 and older.

RESOURCES FOR ACTION

The time for inclusive civic participation is now, and all Coloradans have a role to play in advancing the calls to action that are identified in this report. The resources that are included in this section are tied to each of the calls for action, and they are followed by sets of action questions that, in some combination, apply to every Coloradan who seeks to do his or her part in improving Colorado's civic health.



Call to Action #1: Vote. Increase voter registration and voting rates in both local and national elections, primarily within groups that show lower rates of civic participation.



Call to Action #2: Connect. Provide electronic and face-to-face means through which community members can connect with other Coloradans around civic issues.

Selected Resources:

- U.S. Vote Foundation: www.usvotefoundation.org. Absentee ballot request and voter registration services.
- **EveryVote.org.** Open source, nonprofit project in development trying to make in-depth civic engagement easy and fun.
- National Voter Registration Day: www.nationalvoterregistrationday.org. A single day of coordinated field, technology and media efforts will create pervasive awareness of voter registration opportunities.
- Colorado Participation Project: www.coparticipationproject.org. A nonpartisan
 program that provides voter information and civic participation resources to nonprofits
 who serve politically marginalized communities.
- The Center for Education in Law and Democracy: www.lawanddemocracy.org. A Colorado nonprofit, non-partisan educational organization that promotes and supports the development of responsible citizens committed to democratic principles and active participation in representative government.



Call to Action #3: Include. Practice inclusion when working together to address community issues. Inclusion strengthens civic participation and builds trust.

Selected Resources:

- Community Problem-Solving: www.community-problem-solving.net. A collection of tools and strategies for "getting things done democratically and effectively."
- Institute on the Common Good: www.icgregis.org. Providing a safe and effective space for community dialogue, communal discernment, and public deliberation.
- Civic Canopy: www.civiccanopy.org. Helping the many work as one for the good of all, the Civic Canopy creates innovative tools and facilitates collaborative process to create the conditions for meaningful change.
- The Denver Foundation's Inclusiveness Project: www.nonprofitinclusiveness.org. Engages with Metro Denver nonprofits, including philanthropy, to become more inclusive.
- Colorado Nonprofit Association: www.coloradononprofits.org. Supports Colorado's nonprofit sector through advocacy, public policy, and civic engagement.
- Center for Public Deliberation: www.cpd.colostate.edu. Dedicated to enhancing local democracy through improved public communication and community problem solving.
- History Colorado: www.historycolorado.org. As Colorado's State Historical Society, History Colorado provides education programs and resources to support the work of local communities to enrich their historical-related community-based programs.
- Colorado Latino Leadership, Advocacy & Research Organization: www.larasa.org.
 Colorado's premier leadership development, public policy, and research center dedicated to strengthening Colorado's Latino community.



Call to Action #4: Volunteer. Strengthen the commitment and access to volunteerism among individuals and groups who currently do not volunteer.

Selected Resources:

- Metro Volunteers: www.metrovolunteers.org. Promotes volunteerism in Denver and beyond through volunteer recruiting, training, connecting, and advocating. Member of the Hands On Network (www.handsonnetwork.org).
- Campus Compact of the Mountain West: www.ccmountainwest.org. A membership organization of colleges and universities devoted to promoting civic learning and elevating higher education engagement in Colorado and Wyoming.
- Colorado Volunteer Center Network: www.cvcnetwork.org. Strengthens, promotes, and connects volunteer centers to meet critical needs of Colorado communities, and creates opportunities to inspire and engage citizens through volunteerism.
- Denver Metro Chamber Leadership Foundation: www.denverleadership.org. Helps emerging and established leaders expand their leadership skills and enhance their knowledge of local and state issues, as well as leverage their individual passion to make positive changes in our community while fostering stability and success within Denver's nonprofit community by motivating leaders to become involved as volunteers, board members and donors.



- A Billion + Change: www.abillionpluschange.org. A national campaign transforming business culture so that all companies in America will unleash the talent and expertise of their people in pro bono service to address our communities' greatest challenges.
- Points of Light Corporate Institute: www.pointsoflight.org/corporate-institute. A resource for community-minded companies looking to build and expand effective employee volunteer programs.

Call to Action #5: Engage. Engage all stakeholders in public life, with an intentional focus on Colorado's newcomers as well as on the fast-growing age group of residents 65 and older.

Selected Resources:

- Warm Cookies of the Revolution: www.warmcookiesoftherevolution.org. A "civic health club," or gathering place, for human connection as well as fun and engaging programming for social change.
- Colorado Leadership Alliance: www.denverleadership.org/Page/CLA. Unites the undergraduate leadership training programs from colleges and universities across the state. These university programs train the best and brightest students in our state to become the capable leaders of Colorado's future.
- Boomers Leading Change: www.rcfdenver.org/content/boomers-leading-change. Based on the promise of the "experience dividend" that baby boomers will contribute to their communities, their nation and their world by remaining engaged, or by re-engaging in socially useful and personally meaningful activities during retirement – or instead of retirement.

QUESTIONS FOR ACTION

For community members:

- What comes to mind when you think about the civic health of your community and how do you participate in efforts to improve civic health?
- How do you ensure that your voice and voices from within your community are heard by government officials and other decision makers? What are the ways in which you engage civically as an active member of your community?
- What civic leadership roles are available to you and what are the benefits and/or barriers to taking on those roles?
- If you see a need in your community, what is your response?
- How do you engage with friends, family, and neighbors to ensure that your community is civically healthy?

For civic organizations and community-based groups:

- What opportunities does your organization provide to engage underrepresented members of the community in civic leadership roles?
- How does collaboration between your organization and other civic and community-based organizations strengthen the civic health of the state or community?
- In what ways does your organization allow for both formal and informal civic participation by Coloradans, whether through board participation, one-time volunteer projects, etc.?
- What resources exist to compile and disseminate a directory of promising practices for statewide civic engagement?



Photography credit: Courtesy of Metro Volunteers

For public officials:

- How do you and your staff work with community groups and individuals to allow for informal civic engagement to meaningfully impact local and statewide decision making?
- What forms of communication are most effective and inclusive to ensure that all Coloradans have equal access to information regarding policymaking?
- In what ways are you working to foster greater voter participation by traditionally underrepresented groups?
- Through what mechanisms can greater numbers of women, rural residents, and minority candidates be encouraged to run for public office?
- How can public officials, education leadership, community-based organizations, and individuals work together to support a civic challenge focused on an area of need within the state?

For higher education:

- In what ways can colleges and universities strengthen access to and success within higher education for first generation, low income, rural, and native Colorado students?
- What types of learning support increased and ongoing civic engagement for students, and how are those practices endorsed by institutions of higher education?
- What research, scholarship, and other higher education resources are focused on civic engagement and measuring local and statewide civic trends?
- What unique roles do colleges and universities play in Colorado's civic health? For example, are community colleges more adept at or better positioned for specific types of civic development among students?

For K-12:

- Given the growing income disparity between those with a high school diploma and those with some level of college, how can we create a stronger P-20 pipeline for student access and success?
- In what ways is civic learning integrated into the K-12 curriculum, and in what ways can civics be strengthened throughout course content?
- Are community service and volunteerism critical components of the K-12 experience, and if so, what do they add to student access and success?
- How does K-12 partner with civic and community-based organizations to leverage community resources in support of civic learning for students?

For private businesses:

- How does your business support the civic health of Colorado?
- Are there ways in which your employees are able to engage with their local community, whether through sponsored volunteerism, matching donations, the use of space or other business resources, etc.?
- How do you encourage or incentivize employee engagement in the community?

For media:

- How can media outlets participate in sharing the powerful and positive stories of civic engagement and health in Colorado?
- Are there platforms that support diverse ways of communicating about civic health with the many communities within the state? Specifically, how can we use media most effectively to appeal to a diverse citizenry?
- In what ways can media assist in humanizing and personalizing civic participation?



CONCLUSION

The inaugural *Colorado Civic Health Index* reveals much about the way our community conducts its civic business as a whole. Though there are some arenas in which our community is performing well, there are many areas in which we can seek to improve. Understanding this critical information, as well as the importance of civic activities and engagement, is the first step to improvement. We hope the information provided here will serve as a tool for informed dialogue, strategy, and action.

Firmly believing that engaged communities are strong communities, the partners of this report are eager to assist Colorado residents in improving our community's civic health. By utilizing each of our own unique skills, resources, experience, and knowledge as individuals and organizations, we can all work together for the civic health and overall success of our great community.

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.

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 Colorado.

COLORADO CIVIC HEALTH INDEX 2013

This report presents findings for Colorado's 2013 Civic Health Index. We calculated local civic health statistics and national rankings using the Census Current Population Survey (CPS), part of the monthly labor statistics survey that collects data from approximately 150,000 individuals in the United States. The civic health data for this report came from the September 2012 Volunteers Supplement, November 2012 Voting and Registration Supplement, and November 2011 Civic Engagement Supplement. These represent the latest available data, since the Civic Engagement Supplement was not administered in 2012.

We present percentage point estimates of important civic health indicators and a national ranking. While each one represents a significant aspect of civic health in Colorado, no single indicator should be treated as the sole representation of the state's civic health. It provides single-year estimates for most indicators, along with the past-year estimate (i.e., from 2011) for a short-term comparison. As estimates can vary quite a bit from year to year, we also provide estimates based on the pooled data (2010-2012) to give a sense of the longer-term trends in Colorado. The data in this report are confined to the geographic boundaries of Colorado.



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, 2002-2012, 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. Depending on the CPS supplement, the single-year Colorado CPS sample size used for this Report ranges from 1,133 (civic engagement supplement) to 1,242 (volunteer supplement), 1,385 (voting supplement) residents from across Colorado. This sample is then weighted to representative population demographics for the district. 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., favors with neighbors, discuss 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). When we examined the relationship between educational attainment and engagement, estimates are based on adults ages 25 and older, based on the assumption younger people may 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 Colorado 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 or 2010-2012) for a more reliable estimate when sample sizes for certain cross tabulations may have been small. Furthermore, national rankings, while useful in benchmarking, may be small in range, with one to two percentage points separating the state/district ranked first from the state/district 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.

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NOTES

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

Colorado

Metropolitan State University of Denver The Civic Canopy Denver Metro Chamber Leadership Campus Compact of Mountain West History Colorado Institute on Common Good

Connecticut

Everyday Democracy Secretary of the State of Connecticut

District of Columbia ServeDC

Servedo

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

ISSUE SPECIFIC

Latinos Civic Health Index Carnegie Corporation

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 Univeristy 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

Millennials Civic Health Index Mobilize.org

Harvard Institute of Politics CIRCLE Economic Health Knight Foundation Corporation for National & Community Service (CNCS) CIRCLE

CITIES

Chicago

McCormick Foundation

Kansas City & Saint Louis

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

Miami Foundation

Seattle Seattle City Club Boeing Company Seattle Foundation

Miami

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Twin Cities

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Robert Putnam

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