

CIVIC HEALTH INITIATIVE:

Full Summary of Partnership Opportunity



National Conference on Citizenship
Connecting People. Strengthening Our Country.

PROGRAM OVERVIEW

The National Conference on Citizenship (NCoC) is a congressionally chartered organization dedicated to strengthening civic life in America. At the core of our joint efforts is the belief that every person has the ability to help their community and country thrive.

NCoC's Civic Health Index (CHI) is at the center of our work. We think of "civic health" as the way that communities are organized to define and address public problems. Communities with strong civic health have higher employment rates, stronger schools, better physical health, and more responsive governments.

Civic health is important to individuals and organizations who are working everyday on their communities' most pressing challenges. We are working to engage individuals, agencies, and institutions who are working to support positively engaged, resilient communities. With a focus on equity, diversity, and inclusion, we are engaging those representing community and economic development, youth development, workforce development, education, public safety, public health, mental health, substance abuse, and other issue areas of concern. Together, we hope to explore how to strengthen civic health to aid in addressing these challenges.

Leveraging civic data, we have partnered with dozens of states, cities, and issue groups to draft reports and action plans to strengthen civic life. NCoC works with lead CHI partners to develop a broad network of stakeholders to support a civic health initiative within their state or city. NCoC and partners analyze a variety of measures on civic health. This analysis is packaged into a Civic Health Index Report – a narrative of the key findings and the issues that are most important to the CHI partners.

NCoC supports partners to develop strategies and recommendations, disseminate the reports widely, to continue dialogue and action around civic life. CHI Partners gain access to a growing network of leading researchers, thought-leaders, practitioners, and institutions on civic life across the country. NCoC convenes our partners regularly to share best practices, resources and models through webinars, conference calls, in-person convening, and online resources. Our CHI partnerships now span across more than 40 states and cities within the US, and over 70 partner institutions.

IMPACT OF CIVIC HEALTH INITIATIVES

CHI partnerships have changed the way governments go about their work, reintroduced civics to our classrooms, redirected investments, influenced national and local conversations, and bolstered a network of civic leaders across the country. Based on a 2015 survey of partners across the country, we know that partners are engaged in the following activities as a result of CHI:

Creating a policy and infrastructure change:

- 44% are generating investments in civic engagement
- 25% are influencing specific policy outcomes

Engaging high-profile leaders and champions:

- 81% are facilitating dialogue in their community

Creating community dialogue and increasing engagement:

- 63% are increasing engagement in their community

Creating cross-sector partnerships:

- 59% are mobilizing community members and/or organizations to take an action as a result of CHI

Strengthening civic leaders and institutions:

- 94% are raising awareness about civic health
- 44% are shifting or informing organizational strategy

By using data-driven approaches to strengthen civic health, NCoC's partnerships have contributed to the following successes in community problem-solving:

- **Public Health:** Initiatives and grantmaking programs that recognize the link between public health and civic health and incorporate civic health into measures of community well-being and foundation investments.
- **Economy:** Stronger evidence and greater emphasis on links between civic health and economic resilience which have led to new community programs, business advisory councils, and investments in community civic infrastructure.
- **Education:** Data demonstrating the need for stronger civic education which has supported civic education reform efforts in Florida, Illinois, Colorado, and Connecticut and led to a strategic shift in focus on civic health among higher education institutions.
- **Public Safety:** Partnerships with local police departments to encourage safer, more neighborly communities and citizen engagement in important decisions like the selection of the new police chief.

NCoC supports CHI partners to develop research, strategies, and initiatives to increase civic participation in their communities. CHI Partners gain access to a growing network of leading researchers, thought-leaders, practitioners, and institutions on civic life across the country. NCoC convenes our partners regularly to share best practices, resources and models through webinars, conference calls, in-person convening, and online toolkits.

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Here's what our partners have to say:

"CHI has been transformational for us as an organization because our mission was realigned to focus on civic health and it gave coherence to the programming we were already doing and it introduced many new programs to our portfolio... And we've developed new partnerships both governmental and private to improve civic health. I would say that there is no question that it's been profound for us as an organization and Greater Seattle."

– Diane Douglas, CEO, Seattle CityClub

"NCoC is the backbone of a civic renewal effort happening across the country. Through CHI, NCoC provides the data, models, and connections that empower civic leaders to take action to improve their communities' civic health. Without NCoC's leadership, this progress would not exist."

– Peter Levine, Tufts University

"A Civic Health Index is a social capital lens onto America's soul. Such lenses, as Lew Feldstein has remarked, 'enable us to see porches as crime-fighting tools, treat picnics as public health efforts, and see choral groups as occasions of democracy.' While we think we can see, without such an index, we are blind to the civic patterns happening right before our eyes."

– Robert D. Putnam, Harvard University

"We have used the civic data for three years now to set major goals for improving civic engagement and community involvement throughout Arizona. Other Arizona organizations are also using the data to set their own strategic goals. For example, the O'Connor House, an organization established and led by Justice O'Connor, is using CHI indicators as their baseline and has set an ambitious goal adopted by more than 100 organizations – make Arizona a top 10 state on every indicator measured by CHI. Their efforts, and ours, are dependent on having consistent, reliable data."

– Lattie Coor, Chairman & CEO, Center for the Future of Arizona

CIVIC HEALTH BACKGROUND AND DATA AVAILABILITY

NCoC began America's Civic Health Index in 2006, alongside leading experts and advisors, with the realization that there was very little information available about the civic vitality of our communities. To measure how our businesses were doing, we could look to Wall Street, our GDP, and other metrics. To see how our schools were performing, there were assessment tests and educational standards and measurements. But there was no measure of how our communities were doing—no one was tracking our civic stock. This was a significant problem, as a lack of information meant a lack of ability to fully measure, understand and shape how our communities and our democracy are functioning.

The National Conference on Citizenship (NCoC) began convening a civic indicators working group comprised of some of the leading thinkers in this area, including Robert Putnam, Presidential Advisors Bill Galston and John Bridgeland, Peter Levine of CIRCLE, and others to explore what a civic index might look like. A set of indicators was developed to include measurements on family ties, social connectedness, volunteerism, community involvement, political participation, social trust and confidence in institutions. In 2006, the results of this survey were published in the first America's Civic Health Index.

In 2009, NCoC was incorporated into the Edward M. Kennedy Serve America Act, and directed to expand the civic health assessment in partnership with the Corporation for National and Community Service (CNCS) and the U.S. Census Bureau. This partnership built upon volunteerism data that CNCS had been collecting since 2002 to generate the largest and most definitive civic data set in the country. Today, the Civic Health Index draws upon data from the Census' Current Population Survey's Voting, Volunteering, and Civic Engagement supplements. This partnership between NCoC and CNCS, now called Volunteering and Civic Life in America, ensures that the national findings on civic health are made available each year through an interactive website: <http://civic.serve.gov>. Additional details on the Current Population Survey and Civic Health Indicators are available for download at www.NCoC.net/JoinUs.

While our civic health research has been conducted annually ever since 2006 on a national level, we quickly realized that we are not the experts on the ground. In order for the data to have the most impact, it really needs to be localized. Our goal is to facilitate civic movements by bringing together key stakeholders in the community to identify and address the issues they care about. In 2008, we began working in collaboration with partners in 3 states to produce local Civic Health Index reports.

These partnerships have grown exponentially over the past few years, and we now work in over 40 communities nationwide.



President Barack Obama signs the Edward M. Kennedy Serve America Act on April 21, 2009
Source: Corporation for National & Community Service

PARTNERSHIP MODEL: *Roles, Timeline, and Budget*

Responsibilities Overview

We don't purport to know all the answers, nor do we assert that we are the best tellers of these local stories. That's why we partner with organizations throughout the country who can tell the local story about the data, give context to the findings, and suggest recommendations on what can be done to strengthen civic life. We rely on our local partners and community leaders to make the data come alive.

In our typical partnership model, NCoC takes the lead on the following:

- **Strategy:** Supporting partners through the project development process by supporting fundraising, identifying local stakeholders, developing strategy, helping determine goals, and creating timelines and expectations to meet those objectives.
- **Research:** Managing the national research partnerships with CNCS, US Census, and our Civic Indicators Working Group to establish survey questions, advocate for the data collection and manage preliminary analysis.
- **Data:** Providing our local partners with preliminary findings and ongoing consulting on data analysis, research questions, and narrative.
- **Design:** Leading the report production process from copy editing through layout, design, printing, and shipping.
- **Communications:** Supporting our partners through their communications and dissemination efforts by drafting press releases, outreach to the media, advising on and attending launch events, and consulting on follow up efforts.
- **Sharing Models and Resources:** Convening our partners regularly to share best practices, resources, and models through webinars, conference calls, in-person convening, and online toolkits.

NCoC's partners take the lead on the following:

- **Fundraising:** Leading the process to identify funders and secure the resources to bring the CHI to each new community.
- **Authorship:** Creating a narrative that gives life to data and findings, providing critical context for the research, developing graph content, and preparing recommendations for next steps.
- **Dialogue & Action:** Leading a communications and dissemination strategy with NCoC. Our partners ensure that our reports reach key decision makers and stakeholders and inform policy, practice, and investments.

Our reports are joint products of NCoC and our partners, and we to come to full editorial agreement before the publication of the report.

Timeline

NCoC and our partners work on a rolling basis to create new Civic Health Index reports and initiatives. This data is then considered under embargo until the official national Civic Health Assessment, produced by CNCS and NCoC, is released to the public.

We can begin work on previous years' data analysis prior to this data delivery, and we can begin analysis on the newest data as soon as it is delivered and prepped. NCoC works closely with our partners to develop project timelines that meet their needs and objectives. Some partners produce reports on ambitious timelines and complete production within 12 weeks. Many partners take closer to 8-12 months. This varies process widely depending on partner capacity, staff time, resource allocation, and objectives. In general, the production process includes the following steps:

- Goal setting, partnership development, and timeline development
- Initial data analysis and consultation with NCoC
- Follow-up data queries and initial drafting
- Editing and feedback in consultation with NCoC
- Finalization of draft
- Copy editing, design, and layout
- Final approval by all partners
- Communications strategy and materials development
- Launch event and dissemination strategy development

NCoC and our partners work closely together to determine a timeline and release date that will meet the objectives for the report.

Budget

The costs to NCoC for the typical CHI, with responsibilities as outlined above, are \$35,000. This budget includes the following:

- Research management and data analysis
- Planning and project management
- Strategic partnership development
- Graphic design and editing
- Access to partner community trainings and resources (via webinars, convenings and online toolkits)
- Communications strategy and media outreach
- Printing of 250 copies for partners
- Travel to attend launch events

Costs to partners vary depending on objectives for the report, staff capacity and resource allocation. NCoC can work with partners to determine a budget that reflects their needs.

Fundraising

NCoC follows our partners' lead to identify funding and secure resources to bring the CHI to each new community. Partners may either appropriate funds from internal budgets or commit to raising them from other sources.

In many states, a single institution funds the project, authors the report, and leads the dissemination efforts. Some states form coalition-based approaches to divide the budget and partnership roles among the participating institutions. And in other states, partners write proposals and engage external funders with support from NCoC.

NCoC is flexible and receptive to alternative approaches, as long as one institution assumes responsibility of project management and assumes a liaison role with NCoC staff.

Report Length

While length, structure, and style will vary on a state-by-state basis due to findings, objectives, and recommendations, Partners should anticipate a Civic Health Index report to be anywhere from 24 to 32 pages.

NCoC also offers partners the opportunity to collaborate on shorter issue briefs and infographics at reduced costs.

Report Launch and Follow Up Effort

Partners take the lead on developing a communication and action strategy for each report, with support from NCoC. This process begins with launch events which may include press conferences, legislative briefings, and roundtable discussions to announce the findings.

NCoC hosts each state report on NCoC.net, promotes each report to our nation-wide network of civic engagement professionals, elected leaders, and reporters. We also assist in cataloging media mentions and related commentary articles. NCoC attends and supports launch events through offering remarks, press interviews, or quotes for the media.

CHI partnerships and initiatives are most successful when the report is shared consistently and broadly. Partners ensure ongoing use of the data to inform policy, practice and investment. CHI partners have used the reports to develop strategic initiatives, craft civic legislation, change grant making processes, and host statewide forums.

NCoC consults regularly on outreach and engagement efforts, and provides access to a community of partners across the country to support in these efforts through webinars, convenings and online resources.

NEXT STEPS

NCoC invites interested partners to contact CivicRenewal@NCoC.net for more information.



DC Civic Health Index Panel & Release Event

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 US 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 for Civic Life
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
DataHaven
Connecticut Humanities
Connecticut Campus Compact
The Fund for Greater Hartford
William Caspar Graustein Memorial Fund
Wesleyan University

District of Columbia

ServeDC

Florida

Florida Joint Center for Citizenship
Bob Graham Center for Public Service
Lou Frey Institute of Politics
and Government

Georgia

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

Illinois

McCormick Foundation

Indiana

Indiana University Center on Representative
Government
Indiana Bar Foundation
Indiana Supreme Court
Indiana University Northwest
IU Center for Civic Literacy

Kansas

Kansas Health Foundation

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
Center for Study of Citizenship at Wayne
State University

Minnesota

Center for Democracy and Citizenship

Missouri

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

Nebraska

Nebraskans for Civic Reform

New Hampshire

Carsey Institute
Campus Compact of New Hampshire
University System of New Hampshire
New Hampshire College & University
Council

New York

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

North Carolina

Institute for Emerging Issues

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

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

Virginia

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

ISSUE SPECIFIC

Latinos Civic Health Index

Carnegie Corporation

Veterans Civic Health Index

Got Your 6

Millennials Civic Health Index

Mobilize.org
Harvard Institute of Politics
CIRCLE

Economic Health

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

CITIES

Atlanta

Community Foundation of Greater Atlanta

Chicago

McCormick Foundation

Kansas City & Saint Louis

Missouri State University

Park University

Saint Louis University

University of Missouri Kansas City

University of Missouri Saint Louis

Washington University

Miami

Florida Joint Center for Citizenship

John S. and James L. Knight Foundation

Miami Foundation

Pittsburgh

University of Pittsburgh

Carnegie Mellon University

Seattle

Seattle City Club

Boeing Company

Seattle Foundation

Twin Cities

Center for Democracy and Citizenship

Citizens League

John S. and James L. Knight Foundation



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