



# 2023

## CIVIC HEALTH INITIATIVE

*SUMMARY OF PARTNERSHIP OPPORTUNITY*



National Conference on Citizenship

## PROGRAM OVERVIEW

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

Congress chartered NCoC in 1953 to harness the patriotic energy and civic involvement surrounding World War II. We've been dedicated to this charge ever since. In 2009, Congress named NCoC in the Edward M. Kennedy Serve America Act, once again memorializing our important role. This legislation codified and expanded our Civic Health Initiative (CHI) helping it become the nation's largest and most definitive measure of civic engagement.

NCoC's CHI is at the center of our work. 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, and to 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 toolkits.

Our CHI partnerships now span across more than 35 states and cities within the US, and over 90 partner institutions. Our goal is to integrate this pioneering initiative into ongoing partnerships in all 50 states and the District of Columbia. **We are now recruiting new State and Local Partners to join in this effort for 2023.**

## IMPACT OF CIVIC HEALTH INITIATIVES

Civic health is defined by the degree to which people trust each other, help their neighbors, serve their communities, and interact with their government. Communities with strong civic health have higher employment rates, stronger schools, better physical health, and more responsive governments.

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

- **Civic education reform (e.g. the Sandra Day O'Connor Civic Education Act in Florida)**
- **Voter participation and community involvement promotion championed by Secretaries of State nationwide**
- **Strategic shift in focus on civic health in higher education through the American Democracy Project Campus & Community Civic Health Initiative**
- **Greater investments in community civic infrastructure through partnerships with city and state governments**
- **New investments in and emphasis on civic engagement through foundations like the Atlanta Community Foundation, Miami Foundation and McCormick Foundation**
- **Development of citizen-centered engagement initiatives such as "The Arizona We Want"**

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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## WHAT OUR PARTNERS ARE SAYING

"In this rapidly changing world, understanding how to connect and engage as citizens in all aspects of our lives is essential to our democracy. The Oklahoma Civic Health Index gives us a baseline and common language to explore the opportunities for Oklahomans of all ages to become full participants in their civic health and education."

*–M. Susan Savage, Oklahoma Secretary of State (2003-2011) and Mayor of Tulsa (1992-2002)*

"Florida's participation in the Civic Health Index is helping to change the state's civic culture. Perhaps most importantly, Florida's CHI has played an important role in passing the Sandra Day O'Connor Civics Education Act which adds civics to the state's K- 12 Accountability system."

*–Doug Dobson, Executive Director, Florida Joint Center for Citizenship*

"These findings are a reminder of the importance of civic education and engagement, particularly as we face national challenges that impact the lives of every citizen. We can and must do better."

*–Edward Rendell, Former Governor of Pennsylvania*

"The Civic Health Index that NCoC does is incredibly important to America."

*–Rick Stengel, Managing Editor, TIME Magazine*

"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. I cannot emphasize too strongly the importance of maintaining this valuable resource."

*–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 & Community Service (CNCS) and the US 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: [volunteeringinamerica.gov](http://volunteeringinamerica.gov). Additional details on the Current Population Survey and Civic Health Indicators are available for download at [www.NCoC.org/CHI](http://www.NCoC.org/CHI).

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 30 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 in partnership 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 do not come to full editorial agreement before the publication of the report.

## Timeline

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NCoC and our partners work on a rolling basis to create new Civic Health Index reports and initiatives. We have partnered with AmeriCorps on the latest data from 2020 and 2021.

We work 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

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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 supports fundraising efforts, but we follow 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. In other states, NCoC takes the lead on writing proposals and engaging external funders identified by the partner.

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.org, 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 Jeff Coates at [JCoates@NCoC.org](mailto:JCoates@NCoC.org) for more information.

# 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 University of Texas at Austin  
The Annette Strauss Institute for Civic Life  
RGK Center for Philanthropy & Community Service

#### 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



**Atlanta**

Community Foundation of Greater Atlanta

**Greater Austin**

The University of Texas at Austin  
 RGK Center for Philanthropy and Community Service  
 Annette Strauss Institute for Civic Life  
 Leadership Austin  
 Austin Community Foundation  
 KLRU-TV, Austin PBS  
 KUT News

**Chicago**

McCormick Foundation

**Kansas City & Saint Louis**

Missouri State University  
 Park University  
 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

**Twin Cities**

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

**CIVIC HEALTH ADVISORY GROUP****John Bridgeland**

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 Chairman, Board of Advisors, National Conference on Citizenship  
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National Manager, American Democracy Project

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 Former Deputy Assistant to the President of the United States for Domestic Policy

**Hon. Bob Graham**

Former Senator of Florida  
 Former Governor of Florida

**Robert Grimm, Jr.**

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 Chair, Illinois Civic Mission Coalition

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**Martha McCoy**

Executive Director, Everyday Democracy

**Kenneth Prewitt**

Former Director of the United States Census Bureau  
 Carnegie Professor of Public Affairs and the Vice-President for Global Centers at Columbia University

**Robert Putnam**

Peter and Isabel Malkin Professor of Public Policy, Kennedy School of Government at Harvard University  
 Founder, Saguro Seminar  
 Author of *Bowling Alone: The Collapse and Revival of American Community*

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**National Conference on Citizenship**  
*Connecting People. Strengthening Our Country.*