



OHIO CIVIC HEALTH INDEX

2010



Mobilizing Ohio's Civic Potential



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TABLE OF CONTENTS

I	ABOUT THIS REPORT
3	EXECUTIVE SUMMARY
4	CIVIC HEALTH IN OHIO
5	METHODOLOGY
5	CIVIC ENGAGEMENT AND SOCIAL CAPITAL
6	CIVIC ENGAGEMENT AND STATE POLICY
7	CIVIC ENGAGEMENT IS ABOUT PARTICIPATING
10	OHIOANS HAVE STRONG ASSETS IN THEIR COMMUNITY LEADERS
11	VOLUNTEERS ESTABLISH ESSENTIAL NETWORKS IN OHIO'S COMMUNITIES
12	EDUCATIONAL ATTAINMENT IS STRONGLY CORRELATED TO ALL TYPES OF POLITICAL AND CIVIC ENGAGEMENT
13	POLICY RECOMMENDATIONS
14	ENDNOTES
15	ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

OHIO CIVIC HEALTH INDEX REPORT: Mobilizing Ohio's Civic Potential

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ABOUT THIS REPORT

This *Report* is a collaboration between the National Conference on Citizenship (NCoC) and the Center for Civic Engagement at Miami University Hamilton. It examines the overall civic health of Ohio's communities. Using indicators such as time spent volunteering, participation in neighborhoods and communities, and social connections, the 2010 *Ohio Civic Health Index Report* measures Ohioans' commitments to civic engagement, political knowledge, and community service.

The Center for Civic Engagement at Miami University Hamilton provided primary leadership for this project. The mission of the Center is to build the will and capacity to solve public problems

through education, research, and advocacy. As a regional campus, we remain committed to our mission of actively working in our communities to meet Ohioans' educational needs and to work collaboratively on community problems.

NCoC, in partnership with the Civic Health Index Indicators Working Group, has published *America's Civic Health Index* annually since 2006. These reports have informed Americans about the leading indicators of our nation's civic health and have motivated citizens, leaders, and policymakers to strengthen the foundations of civic engagement. *America's Civic Health Index* has become the leading gauge of how well Americans are connecting to one another and to their communities by measuring rates of volunteering, voting, membership in civic and religious organizations, trust in other Americans and key institutions, and other civic behavior and attitudes. The Edward M. Kennedy Serve America Act, signed by President Obama in April 2009, directed NCoC to work in partnership with the Corporation for National and Community Service (CNCS) on a Civic Health Assessment. The first co-produced assessment between NCoC and CNCS was released in September 2010.

Starting in 2008, the Harry T. Wilks Leadership Institute and Miami University published the *Ohio Civic Health Index* as an in-depth measure of state-specific data. Starting in 2009, Miami University Hamilton's Center for Civic Engagement began publishing the Ohio report. Last year's report, *Civic Engagement in Hard Economic Times*, reported a downturn in service with rising unemployment and foreclosure rates across Ohio. Although overall giving and civic behaviors were down in 2009, the report reflected Ohioans' willingness to support individuals within their own households and support networks in times of need.

For the sake of this *Report*, we define *civic engagement* as a broad concept that includes several of the most frequently measured and discussed forms of civic participation. We use a balanced and broad definition that includes forms of participation that both affect the government (voting, some forms of political voice) and involve direct service and philanthropy. Some of these indicators could also be characterized as components of social capital; thus, civic engagement and social capital are not meant to be fully independent concepts. We have examined five forms of civic engagement for the purposes of this *Report*:



TABLE 1: FORMS OF CIVIC ENGAGEMENT (FOR RESIDENTS 18 AND OLDER)

	National	Ohio
Voting	63.6%	65.5%
Volunteering	26.7%	29.4%
Working with neighbors to fix a problem in the community	10.3%	9.4%
One or more acts to express political voice	26.3%	29.5%
Contribution worth \$25 or more	52.0%	51.1%

Table 2 below summarizes the percentage point estimates for the main civic indicators, along with a moving average of the past two to three assessments (when data are available).

TABLE 2: SUMMARY OF MAJOR CIVIC INDICATOR FINDINGS

	LATEST 2008/2009 ESTIMATES FOR OHIO	LATEST RANKING	MOVING AVERAGE	LATEST 2008/2009 ESTIMATES NATIONALLY
Volunteering	29.4%	22nd	29.6% ^a	26.8%
Working with neighbors	9.4%	23rd	8.7% ^a	10.3%
Voting (2004-2008 presidential)	65.5%	25th	64.8% ^b	63.6%
Registration (2004-2008 presidential)	73.0%	22nd	72.7% ^b	71.0%
Exchange favor with neighbors	16.8%	23rd	N/A	16.0%
Eat dinner with a member of household almost everyday	90.8%	16th	N/A	89.1%
Engaged in one or more non-electoral political acts	29.5%	19th	N/A	26.3%
Group membership	39.4%	16th	N/A	35.1%
Talk about politics with friends and family	40.6%	25th	N/A	39.3%

a: Moving average for 2007, 2008, and 2009.

b: Average for the 2004 and 2008 Presidential Elections.

Figures are for citizens 18 and older.

Data collected on these new indicators was collected for the 1st time in 2009 and will be continuously tracked by NCoC and the Corporation for National & Community Service every year through the Civic Health Assessment.

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

This *Report* represents our **third comprehensive** assessment of Ohio's civic health. As the recession continues, Ohioans have modified their civic behaviors (as we reported last year), and their community life and sense of belonging have been affected by unemployment and the foreclosure crisis, both of which have an impact on people's abilities to remain rooted in and committed to their communities. Mobilizing Ohio's strongest asset—its people—is the best solution to providing statewide economic longevity, neighborhood stabilization, and personal well being. Individuals throughout Ohio stand poised and prepared to give and participate in a variety of ways, if our infrastructures can create the opportunities and avenues for such engagement. This *Report* provides both analysis of ways Ohioans currently civically engage and recommendations on how to more effectively mobilize residents to realize Ohio's civic potential.

KEY FINDING ONE:

CIVIC ENGAGEMENT IS ABOUT PARTICIPATING

Nearly **40% of Ohioans participate in groups**. Group affiliations build community and foster communication; however, some Ohioans participate more than others. Men, the unemployed, and low-income residents are less likely to participate and less likely to gain the benefits of formal group affiliation. Political participation is another important dimension of civic engagement. **In Ohio, we find that 65.5 % of voters** turned out for the last two Presidential elections. **Similarly, 40.6% of Ohioans discuss politics with family and friends more than once a month.**

KEY FINDING TWO:

OHIOANS HAVE STRONG ASSETS IN THEIR COMMUNITY LEADERS

Of the 13 states participating in the NCoC Study, Ohio ranks first in the nation for its leadership rate. **11.3% of Ohioans serve as officers or committee members in a group or association.**² We celebrate Ohioans' willingness to lead community organizations, and we urge Ohioans to make a concerted effort to include members from a wide variety of groups—low-income residents, people of color, members of the Millennial generation—in leadership roles.



<http://500volunteers.com>

KEY FINDING THREE:

VOLUNTEERS ESTABLISH ESSENTIAL NETWORKS IN OHIO'S COMMUNITIES

Ohio ranks **22nd for its rate of volunteerism at 29.4%**. Volunteering remains a lynchpin of civic engagement, and volunteers both create and participate in networks that create the social capital necessary to solve community problems. As state revenues and other funding streams continue to decline, Ohioans must come together to serve our schools, our service agencies, our local governments, and other associations.

KEY FINDING FOUR:

EDUCATIONAL ATTAINMENT IS STRONGLY CORRELATED TO ALL TYPES OF POLITICAL AND CIVIC ENGAGEMENT

Higher levels of education have a positive correlation to voting, volunteering, participating in groups, fixing problems in the community with neighbors, and leading organizations. It appears that individuals who attend college gain the interest in and the ability to get involved civically and politically. However, Ohio has fewer college graduates than most other states: **Ohio ranks 44th in the nation in the number of people over 25 with a college degree.**

CIVIC HEALTH IN OHIO

The media often paints Ohio as the very middle of America—a Midwestern state that represents what real Americans think, feel, act and do. During election cycles, Ohio receives a great deal of attention because of our large population (Ohio has 11,542,645³ people), our rural and urban centers, and the large number of Electoral College votes we retain. Ohio also has appeared in the media for the striking impact the recent recession has had on the state and the high unemployment and foreclosure rates sweeping across many counties. In 2008, the median household income of Ohioans was \$48,011 compared to the national average of \$52,029. Ohio is not particularly diverse as a state but does have a growing population of Latino/a residents. The statewide demographics look like this:

RACE AND ETHNICITY IN OHIO (2009)

Caucasian	84.7%
Black	12.1%
Native American/Native Alaskan	0.3%
Asian	1.6%
Hispanic or Latino origin	2.8%



Eighty-one percent of the state's adults aged 25 or older with at least a bachelor's degree live in Ohio's largest metro areas.⁴ Ohio's population is also growing more slowly than the rest of the country's population. In 2009, the U.S. Census lists population growth in Ohio between 2000 and 2009 as 1.7% compared to a national rate of 9.1%. We have proportionately fewer citizens available to work on the problems facing us in the 21st century.

As Ohio faces these demographic and economic challenges, we must respond by making significant changes to enhance civic and political life to ensure individuals have the opportunity and capacity to create change in their communities. To facilitate more effective policies at the community and state levels, this *Report* highlights the importance of civic and social engagement and recent Ohio legislation related to these activities; provides greater analysis of the *2010 Ohio Civic Health Index Report* findings, which detail how Ohioans can more effectively solve problems together; and, finally, closes with policy recommendations for improving the civic health of Ohio.

Methodology

The data in this *Report* are based on information compiled by the Center for Information and Research on Civic Learning and Engagement (CIRCLE) from the Census Bureau's Current Population Survey (CPS). Volunteering estimates are from the CPS *September Volunteering Supplement* from 2007, 2008, and 2009, and the *Volunteering in America* website at www.volunteeringinamerica.gov. Voting and registration data come from the CPS *November Voting/Registration Supplement* from 2004 and 2008. All other civic engagement indicators, such as access to information and connection to others, come from the 2008 and 2009 CPS *Civic Engagement Supplement*. For most indicators, the 2008 and 2009 data were combined whenever possible, to achieve the largest possible sample size and to minimize error.¹

CIVIC ENGAGEMENT AND SOCIAL CAPITAL

“Americans of all ages, all conditions, all minds constantly unite. Not only do they have commercial and industrial associations in which all take part, but they also have a thousand other kinds: religious, moral, grave, futile, very general and very particular, immense and very small; Americans use associations to give fêtes, to found seminaries, to build inns, to raise churches, to distribute books, to send missionaries to the antipodes; in this manner they create hospitals, prisons, schools. Finally, if it is a question of bringing to light a truth or developing a sentiment with the support of a great example, they associate.”

— Alexis de Tocqueville, *Democracy in America*

The term *civic engagement* can be used to describe diverse activities and generally includes *activities that build on the collective resources, skills, expertise, and knowledge of citizens to improve the quality of life in communities.*⁵ Civic engagement is traditionally difficult to define with its multiple facets. Civic engagement is, in essence, the common thread of participating in and building one's community. For example, civic engagement includes political and non-political behaviors, both group-oriented (activities like participating in community groups) and individual (activities like registering to vote and voting). Many of the common forms of civic engagement are outlined in this *Report*.

Social connectedness is a significant factor in the civic health of a community. We use Robert Putnam's concept of *social capital* to understand social connectedness and its relationship to the behaviors that mark civic engagement. Social networks have value, and “social capital refers to connections among individuals—social networks and the norms of reciprocity and trustworthiness that arise from them.” Examining the relationship between connectedness and civic health allows us to understand better “the ways in which our lives are made more productive by social ties.”⁶ Social capital and connectedness may have additional implications important to mention in regard to this *Report*. Luke Keele (2007) broadens the connections between social capital and civic life to include the perceptions individuals have about trust in government. Keele argues, “When citizens disengage from civic life and its lessons of social reciprocity, they are unable to trust the institutions that govern political life.”⁷ This notion impacts their interests and ability to engage not only within Ohio's communities but within the political systems and institutions that guide daily life as well.



Ohio Statehouse

Putnam describes two kinds of social capital: bridging capital and bonding capital. Bridging capital works best for creating “linkage to external assets and for information diffusion,” allowing people to come together across group boundaries. Bonding capital works best for “undergirding specific reciprocity and mobilizing solidarity,” fostering cohesion within group boundaries. Both bridging and bonding capital represent two ways that Americans find a sense of belonging. This sense of belonging has a clear relationship to civic engagement. Living for a longer period of time in a community, for example, correlates positively with volunteering. The Corporation for National and Community Service has measured the relationship between homeownership and volunteering because owning a home tends to signify a personal and financial interest and commitment to the success and civic health of the community.⁹ Home ownership rates have declined in Ohio, from a ten-year high in 2005 at 73.3% to 70.5% in 2008. The recession and the foreclosure crisis could potentially have a profound effect on Ohioans' sense of rootedness and belonging and, thus, on their community and civic participation.

Because social capital, like civic engagement, has both individual and collective dimensions, the 2010 *Ohio Civic Health Index Report* identifies the behaviors of civic engagement that both depend on and create social capital. In understanding our civic health, we can build on our strengths and identify any weaknesses that stand as barriers to working for a better Ohio.

CIVIC ENGAGEMENT AND STATE POLICY

Ohio's elected and appointed leaders are making changes that directly impact civic engagement and the ability of citizens to engage effectively in communities. Three recent changes are particularly noteworthy and will affect the broad citizenry in different ways. These changes include legislation and policies creating more transparent voting procedures, coordinating statewide service efforts, and incorporating service-learning and family engagement throughout Ohio's K–12 education system.

First, Ohio has sought to assess and improve its voting system in the hopes of increasing the transparency and effectiveness of state elections. The state initiated a \$1.9 million research project called Project EVEREST to analyze the integrity of Ohio's election system. After two teams of corporate and academic scientists released evaluative reports in 2007, a bipartisan team of election board officials began working with Ohio's Secretary of State to mitigate problems in the voting process.¹⁰ The Secretary of State also organized forums and discussions about the voting system on college campuses across the state during 2008.¹¹ In the fall of 2008, the Ohio State Legislature enacted HB 350, which included many election modifications, ranging from requiring state voting machines to meet updated federal standards to permitting the Ohio Secretary of State to issue permanent or temporary directives affecting election procedures.¹²

Second, the State of Ohio has created a council to coordinate and foster volunteerism. The Ohio Community Service Council serves as the hub for statewide service efforts. The Community Service Council administers federal grants from the Corporation for National and Community Service (CNCS) to support programs such as Senior Corps, AmeriCorps and Learn and Serve America. On June 24, 2010, CNCS awarded Ohio \$7 million for AmeriCorps programs addressing education, the environment, and many other issues within the state.¹³ In addition to administering grants, the Ohio Community Service Council also organizes a series of national service days and provides updated resources on volunteering opportunities and relevant legislation to Ohio residents.

Finally, the Ohio legislature recently passed new legislation that will affect civic education and service-learning opportunities in the state's public schools. Last year, legislators passed House Bill 1 (HB 1), a large educational reform bill that will affect many areas of K–12 education. Although Ohio plans to adopt the Common Core Standards, a curriculum used by 25 states nationwide, all Ohio students will continue to take the Ohio Graduation Test, which



Photo by Ashley Hampton

includes a section on Economics, Government, and Citizenship Rights and Responsibilities.¹⁴ The new legislation also has an impact on community service. School districts are now permitted to include service in their educational programs, and the State Superintendent plans to “develop guidelines for a scoring rubric for school officials to use to evaluate community service projects.”¹⁵ Under these new rules, students may receive official recognition or certification for service-learning work.

Ohio also has taken steps to integrate the civic engagement of parents into public schools across the state. HB 1 also requires school districts to create and support Family and Civic Engagement teams.¹⁶ These Family and Civic Engagement teams aim to engage stakeholders, particularly parents of K–12 students, in local ongoing efforts to improve schools. All school districts will have Family and Civic Engagement programs in place heading into the 2010–2011 school year working to strengthen connections among schools, parents, and local communities.

Together these three initiatives relate to each finding of this *Report*. Translating voting procedures into individual voting efficacy is an important aspect of voter education and civic leadership. Using volunteers to meet community needs clearly relates to the creation of a central service hub in the state through the Ohio Community Service Council. Passing HB 1 enhances civic education in K–12. While these are useful steps, more still needs to be done: we need to address Service-Learning in higher education; we need to improve civic education at all levels to ensure an informed public; and we need to enhance opportunities for everyone to participate in the life of their communities. There are still opportunities for Ohioans to work on these problems together.

CIVIC ENGAGEMENT IS ABOUT PARTICIPATION

Ohioans have very strong relationships and build strong communities through group membership. These communities provide support for neighbors, encourage civic associations, rebuild community centers, and provide the foundation for individuals during challenging economic times. **Nearly 40% of Ohioans are involved with one or more groups, and 25.6% have attended a group meeting in the last year.** Ohio ranks 16th in the rate of people eighteen and older who belong to religious, neighborhood, school, or sports groups in their communities. Group membership creates strong social bonds throughout the community, and group membership and affiliation have long been an important tradition of the American life and value system. Social networks are the foundation of communities, businesses, and friendships. Measuring the impact of social networks is difficult, particularly as they rely on electronic networks and face-to-face contacts in increasingly complex ways.



The disparity between those who participate in groups and those who do not reveals a deep divide in Ohio communities: Nationally, greater participation in the civil society is highly predictive of civic behaviors. This makes sense, as formal membership, and especially taking a leadership role generally provides people with ample opportunities to serve the community and work with others. Ohio follows this clear trend: About four out of five leaders volunteer while a little more than one in ten non-participants do so. Having a group affiliation alone is also related to higher volunteering rates in Ohio. Leaders are more likely to work with neighbors to improve the community than others. This shows a deep divide in community involvement between those who have a group affiliation and those who do not.

GENDER AND PARTICIPATION

	WOMEN	MEN
Involved with groups	40.3%	38.5%
Participate in non-electoral political activity	31.3%	27.8%
Talk politics with family/friends	80.5%	74.6%

EMPLOYMENT AND PARTICIPATION

	UNEMPLOYED	EMPLOYED
Groups	29.4%	41.6%
Officer	3.4%	12.6%
Attended a meeting	12.4%	28.1%
Dinner with household member at least a few times a month	97.4%	98.9%
Participated in one or more non-electoral political activities	21.1%	30.4%
Talks politics w/ family/friends at least a few times per month	87.4%	79.6%
Talk with neighbors at least a few times a month	87.8%	83.6%
Do favors for neighbors at least a few times a month	59.1%	59.6%

CIVIC ENGAGEMENT IS ABOUT PARTICIPATION(CONTINUED)

Higher income means higher engagement. Group membership and social connectedness correlate positively with family income -- in joining groups, attending meetings, taking part in non-electoral activities, and talking politics. The only place where this is not true is at the dinner table: some people in higher income brackets are slightly less likely to eat together than those with lower family incomes.

Group membership is only one important aspect of civic engagement. Social connections and willingness to work with neighbors are also important indicators of thriving communities and overall wellbeing. Civic engagement begins at the dinner table.

Ohioans are strong in regard to social connectedness. These indicators measure the informal interactions that can make a community feel like a nice place to live or seem like a safe environment for a family. These actions often lead to more formal types of civic participation. Last year, we reported that despite difficult economic times, Ohioans continued helping friends, neighbors, and family, using informal social connections to meet their needs. These social connections also lay the foundation for civic engagement as we pull out of the recession and come together in new and old networks, in new and old organizations, to solve new and old problems.

SOCIAL CONNECTION

Talk with family/friends via internet more than once a month	63.5%
Talk w/neighbors at least more than once a month	82.8%
Do favors for neighbors at least once a month	59.4%
Eat dinner with household members more than a few times a month	96.4%

Social connectedness happens informally throughout communities and ties people together at the most basic levels, but Ohioans are also important political players at the local, state, and national levels in more formal ways. Political engagement serves as an avenue to understanding what people believe about their world, how they believe life ought to be, and what kind of expectations they have for the future. Political behaviors and engagement are particularly important to civic life and to communities everywhere.

Many Ohioans talk about politics, but some lack basic political knowledge. Political discussion and participation are civic engagement activities that relate to people's ability to make decisions in the public sphere and gather knowledge for elections. While 77.5% of Ohioans talk about politics with family or friends more than once a month, only 59.1% could correctly identify that the Supreme Court rules whether a law is constitutional or not. Political information not only allows us to navigate an increasingly challenging political landscape, but it is also an essential component of the American democracy. M. X. Delli Carpini and S. Keeter (1989) find that "the assumption that political knowledge, political power, and socioeconomic power are inextricably linked in the real world is fundamental ... Knowledge is both an important political resource in its own right and a facilitator of other forms of political and thus, socioeconomic power."¹⁷ Citizens must recognize the links between political

knowledge and socio-economic capital. Lacking essential political and civic knowledge means Ohioans may not be able to address concerns adequately or vote in ways that match their interests.

Voting is the most common form of political participation, and Ohio ranks 25th in the nation with 64.8% of the population voting in the 2004 and 2008 Presidential Elections. Voting is an important political behavior because it allows individuals to directly and formally participate in the electoral system and because it has relatively low costs associated with the behavior. These low costs include taking relatively little time and effort to participate and essentially no financial contribution. While voting behavior is important, it is not the only way for citizens to be politically engaged, nor is it always the most effective. More than a quarter (29.5%) of Ohioans were active in 2008 in one or more non-electoral political activities, such as participating in party events, raising money, and advocating for policy change.

Ohio's civic participation has several implications. First, women appear to make the connections of civic life at the local level. Although they hold political office less frequently than men and are considered less frequently by party officials to run for office, women are central to Ohio's organizations and groups.¹⁸ Second, unemployment affects neighborhoods and communities beyond foreclosures and financial strains. As individuals leave the workforce,

they also leave civic organizations, clubs, and groups. However, those unemployed individuals are more likely to talk to neighbors than employed counterparts and talk with neighbors more frequently about politics. Forming civic groups around those informal behaviors and socially connected aspects of daily life is one way to reengage individuals who feel disconnected due to loss of employment. Finally, we find a strong relationship between family income and all civic and political engagement behaviors although most of the causal relationships are difficult to identify. It is likely that families with higher incomes also have higher education levels. (Higher levels of education are also related to higher levels of civic and political participation.) The relationship is also likely cyclical. As individuals better understand civic and social relationships, they are more capable of taking advantage of economic opportunities. They can lobby for tax incentives that benefit their particular situation, or speak to local city council members about zoning restrictions that may be changed in their favor. They learn that systems do change for those who learn how to navigate the complex structures that make up bureaucracies. These particular citizens have the political knowledge and resources to act in constructive ways. All Ohioans can and should have the same opportunities and access to political and civic knowledge and to relationship-building skills.

Civic participation encourages citizens to make change on a local and statewide level. They learn about their communities, their neighbors, and politics. They engage with each other, and they engage as families at the dinner table. What is most important about these findings is that Ohioans are engaging in very different ways based on their economic and social situations. Collectively, there is much to be done to remedy the discrepancies of access to political and civic knowledge as well as group leadership. Job creation, group leadership and membership, and economic development are intimately intertwined with the civic health of Ohio's communities and the future success of its citizens.



Photo by Ashley Hampton

OHIOANS HAVE STRONG ASSETS IN THEIR COMMUNITY LEADERS

Much of the potential for Ohioans to come together to solve public problems lies in the willingness of its citizens not only to participate in groups but also to serve as leaders. We define *leaders* as people who meet these criteria:

- Belonging to at least one group or organization
- Attending a meeting of any group or organization
- Serving as an officer or on a committee of any group or organization

Ohio ranks first in the nation among states in the NCoC study for its leadership rate: 11.3% of Ohioans serve as leaders while, nationally, 8.5% of Americans are leaders.¹⁹

Leaders are highly engaged in all categories of civic engagement, and we see a great participation gap dividing joiners and those who do not participate. Civic leaders come together to work with others to solve public problems. Nationally, leaders volunteer at very high rates, lending their time and talents at a rate of 75% compared to 42% of those who participate in groups and compared to only 15% of those who do not participate in any group at all. This high rate of volunteering demonstrates the positive relationship between being involved in the community and taking an active role in making it better. In fact, leaders are more likely to do favors for neighbors—27.7% of leaders do so at least a few times a week whereas 4.2% of non-participants do so.

The profile of community leaders in Ohio reflects national trends, typically looking something like this:

The data shows a significant racial and ethnic gap in civic leadership in Ohio. Statistically, virtually all leaders in Ohio report their race as white.²⁰ We suggest that this gap in leadership must be addressed through a variety of approaches aimed at increasing participation from all groups in all communities in the state of Ohio in order to respond to decreasing revenues in local and state governments, increasing demographic and economic changes and pressures across the state, and dropping rates of education that leave Ohioans under-prepared for the shifting economy.

We find more leaders in rural areas where 12.3% are leaders in contrast to only 9.6% of urban residents. Higher rates of transience may in part explain this gap in leadership as urban residents are more likely to have changed addresses in the previous five years than their rural counterparts. We need mechanisms in place that encourage participation and leadership regardless of address, welcoming new community members into informal and formal networks in urban, suburban, and rural areas.

Ohio's leaders come from the ranks of those who are currently employed, and we risk missing out on a pool of potential leaders who should be included among our civic leadership. Leaders are almost twice as likely to be employed: 11.0% of employed people are leaders but only 4.4% of unemployed people serve in this capacity. Ohio needs to draw its unemployed residents into community work through volunteering, group membership, and group leadership. This group represents an untapped resource in Ohio.

The *Ohio Civic Health Index* finds a gap in the educational attainment of leaders in Ohio. Leaders typically have some college experience. Among those 25 and older with no college experience, only 4.7% are leaders, in contrast to the same age group with some college experience, who serve as leaders at a rate of 16.7%. College experience makes citizens three times as likely to be leaders as those without college experience. Because of the clear relationship between college experience and leadership, Ohio must improve educational access to its residents and thus expand its pool of potential leaders. We discuss the significance of educational attainment at length below.

Leaders tend to be older. The data shows Ohio leaders coming from the Silent Generation at a rate of 12.5%, from the Boomer Generation at 10.9%, from Generation X at 11.6%, and from Millennials at 4.8%.²¹ Ohio's young people represent a significant resource that needs to be developed through networks (social capital) that include young people and encourage their participation and leadership.

Women are slightly more likely to be leaders than men: 10.9% of women are leaders compared to 9.5% of men. This kind of leadership plays an important role in community problem-solving because it may serve as a corrective to the under-representation of women in formal elected positions in the upper levels of political office, another kind of leadership.

Overall, leadership rates in Ohio bode well for the civic health of our state. Because leaders are more likely to work with others to solve Ohio's problems, we call on Ohioans to strengthen this asset, extending it to include more leaders by increasing the diversity of leadership across the state — we must attract more Ohioans to leadership positions from among those who are **unemployed**, among residents who **live in cities**, among **people of color**, among **younger generations**, and among those **without college experience**. We want to build on our strength and develop momentum for greater leadership among all Ohio residents as we come together to solve Ohio's problems—in joining group associations, in communicating with friends, and in eating dinner together with our families.

VOLUNTEERS ESTABLISH ESSENTIAL NETWORKS IN THEIR COMMUNITIES

In 2009, Ohio ranked 22nd among states for its rate of volunteering with 29.4% of state residents volunteering, slightly up from last year's rate of 29.1%, but still below the pre-recession rate of 30.6% in 2005. Last year, we reported that, as often happens during economic downturns, many Ohioans turned inward and decreased the number of hours they volunteered in formal settings. Volunteering rates fell one full percentage point — a large decrease — between 2007 and 2008 during the worst months of the recession. This year's increase of a third of a percentage point suggests progress in working for the common good together.

In Ohio, we find some demographic distinctions among those who are giving their time in service to others. Women are more likely to volunteer than men, giving their time at a rate of 31.8% compared to men's rate of 26.8%. We also find members of the Millennial Generation (born after 1981) volunteered at a lower rate than members of all other generations, reflecting trends in civic engagement that Robert Putnam identified as part of the lifespan: civic engagement activities peak in the years of middle age.²² Ohioans volunteered according to similar generational trends:

Millennial Generation (born 1981 or after)	23.7%
Generation X (born 1965 – 1980)	33.3%
Baby Boomers (born 1946 – 1964)	33.6%
Silent Generation (born 1930 – 1945)	27.2%

The national data on volunteering provides a useful frame for understanding volunteering rates in Ohio and for considering ways to increase the number of Ohioans who volunteer. According to Volunteering in America, a study conducted by the Corporation for National and Community Service (CNCS), the national volunteering rate increased from 2008 to 2009, from 26.4% to 26.8%, the largest single increase since 2003. The study finds that this growth was driven by the upsurge in volunteer rates among women (especially women aged 45–54), among married people (especially married women), among those who identified themselves as African Americans/Black (especially women) and among those who were employed (especially those working full-time). The highest rate of volunteering remained among people with children under 18 living in the home.²³

Communities with greater numbers of nonprofit organizations (per capita) have higher rates of volunteering, too. We can account for this relationship by pointing to the infrastructure required to manage volunteers, which is part of an organization's capacity to meet its mission. The larger number of nonprofit organizations may also explain the most common reason people give for volunteering with a particular organization: because someone asked them to.

Nonprofits provide opportunities, reasons, and networks to support and promote volunteering.²⁴

We also find a strong correlation between volunteering rates and educational attainment. Education, in fact, is one of the most important predictors of a community's volunteer rate. As the education level of a community increases, the likelihood of volunteering also increases. Americans (age 25 and above) with a bachelor's degree or more had the highest volunteer rate at 42.8% in 2009, compared to 18.8% percent for those with only a high school diploma or GED and 8.6% percent for those without a high school diploma or GED. If a strong volunteering rate reflects the civic health of a community or a state, and if educational attainment correlates positively with volunteering, then Ohio potentially faces a future of failing civic health because of its low rates of educational attainment, which we describe below.

The national data also reveal that difficult economic times have a profound impact on the volunteering rates—and thus the civic health—of our communities. First, in states with higher unemployment rates, the volunteer rate is lower. We find that employed Ohioans volunteer at a higher rate than the Ohio state average: 32.9% of employed Ohioans volunteer. Second, cities with higher foreclosure rates also had a lower rate of volunteerism. It may be that community ties become loosened by the trauma and displacement of foreclosure, and the social capital of a community's residents similarly dissipates. Third, as home ownership rates decrease, so do volunteering rates. Research on social capital suggests that citizen engagement can be difficult to build in communities where residents do not have a long-term commitment to the community. Finally, people living in poverty are less likely to volunteer. According to the U.S. Census Bureau, Ohio ranks 21st in the nation for the number of people living in poverty, with a three-year composite poverty rate of 13.3% (2007-2009). What we don't know is whether higher poverty rates reduce the propensity to volunteer or whether volunteering activities actually reduce poverty.²⁵

We can celebrate the fact that despite the continuation of the recession Ohioans have not decreased their volunteering again this year as they did at its beginning. On the other hand, we can also point to the fact that Ohio's volunteer rate—like the national rate—has not returned to the levels we saw after the attacks of September 11, 2001. From this perspective, we believe that we still have not achieved a statewide culture of volunteering that would bring together Ohioans from every community and within every community to identify and then resolve the problems facing Ohio in the recession, in the post-industrial economy, and in the knowledge economy of the 21st century.

EDUCATIONAL ATTAINMENT IS STRONGLY CORRELATED TO ALL TYPES OF POLITICAL AND CIVIC ENGAGEMENT

People with higher levels of education are more likely to volunteer their time, vote, donate money, participate in a protest or a rally, lead civic associations and groups, join an organization, attend a meeting where political issues are discussed, contact or visit a public official, show support to a political party or candidate, and communicate with friends and family through email or the Internet.

An educated community is more likely to work for the common good. For example, in Ohio, working with neighbors to fix something in the community is correlated to educational attainment:

EDUCATION LEVEL AND FIXING SOMETHING WITH NEIGHBORS *

High school diploma (or GED)	5.9%
Some college (no BA/BS)	9.2%
Bachelor's degree	19.3%

*ages 25+

Leaders of civic associations and community groups also come more frequently from the ranks of college graduates. Among Americans over 24 with no college experience, only 3.5% are leaders, compared to 13.5% of Americans with at least some college experience.

Educated Ohioans are also more likely to vote than their less educated counterparts. The 2008 election clearly demonstrates this relationship:

EDUCATION LEVEL AND VOTING AMONG CITIZENS AGE 18+ % within Educational attainment (BLS)

EDUCATIONAL ATTAINMENT (BLS)	VOTED IN 2008	
	No	Yes
Less than high school diploma	77%	23%
High school grads, no college	67%	33%
Some college, no BA/BS	60%	40%
College graduates	56%	44%
Total	64%	36%

Ohio's volunteering rates reflect a similar correlation between education and volunteering:

EDUCATION LEVEL AND VOLUNTEERING*

FOR RESIDENTS AGE 25+

High school diploma (or GED)	20.4%
Some college, no BA/BS	34.2%
Bachelor's degree	51.5%

*ages 25+

The problem is Ohio's educational attainment rate: We have fewer college graduates than most other states, ranking 44th in the nation, as we pointed out. The only states with fewer college graduates are, in descending order, Nevada, Missouri, West Virginia, Kentucky, Alabama, Mississippi, and Arkansas.

Because Ohio's collective problems are not declining, fewer college graduates in Ohio may result in declines in participation and in a citizenry less likely to solve our problems. The Ohio Office of Budget and Management projects a \$3 billion shortfall for the state in the 2012 fiscal year. Residents of Ohio communities will face tough decisions about cutting services, increasing taxes, or even ending benefit payments. Education helps individuals solve problems together, reach consensus, and creatively address these and many other issues facing Ohio today. Ohio's capital rests within each citizen, and investments made to enhance each individual's capacity will benefit the state for years to come.

POLICY RECOMMENDATIONS

Ohio is poised to inspire a new generation of civically engaged residents and leaders through educational reform, the implementation of new service programs, and the development of accessible and relevant degree programs.

RECOMMENDATION ONE: The Ohio Department of Education and the Ohio Board of Regents should create statewide Service-Learning standards in the K–12 and higher education systems.

Not only do we need to improve Ohio's rate of educational attainment, we need to do a better job of preparing students in primary, secondary, and postsecondary institutions to participate in the life and work of their communities. Through Ohio House Bill 1 (HB 1), the State of Ohio is taking steps toward integrating Service-Learning into the K–12 curriculum. HB 1 mandates the creation of Family Civic Engagement Councils as a way of connecting families and communities in the work of the educating our children.

Some districts have responded to the mandates of HB 1 with enthusiasm and profound commitment. Preparing students to participate in the life of their communities requires institutions to help students translate classroom learning to community practice, fully integrating the experience into the curriculum. Service-Learning experiences provide opportunities for students to learn those skills and connections while still in the supportive school setting. Students must understand community contexts and have ample opportunity for reflection when engaging in civic activities outside the classroom. Instructors throughout the educational system must be taught the tenets of Service-Learning, the best practices for Service-Learning courses and experiences, and the pedagogical and assessment techniques to measure their effectiveness. Service-Learning represents one of the most important means we have of engaging people across communities, particularly those groups that are sometimes split by generation, race or ethnicity, socio-economic class, or geography.

But Ohio's educational infrastructure is not yet ready to take full advantage of Service-Learning programs and opportunities in public schools and in higher education. The Department of Education should create statewide standards for Service-Learning experiences in the K – 12 system, and they should also oversee teacher training and the implementation of these programs. We additionally urge the Ohio Board of Regents to take an active interest in the



assessment of Service-Learning programs in state institutions of higher education to ensure the mutuality and reciprocity that mark quality engagement with community partners.

RECOMMENDATION TWO: The State of Ohio should create programs that foster volunteerism by establishing a cabinet-level position for service initiatives, requiring municipalities to create community service plans, and expanding non-profit organizational capacity for citizen engagement.

Service can be a mechanism for mobilizing Ohioans to realize our civic potential. As giving decreases because of the recession, and as government and private funding for social and educational programs similarly decline, we have to find new ways of solving community problems. Many Ohioans already work together through informal means, such as helping out their neighbors or volunteering their time, but we need to draw more people into the life of their communities.

First, the Governor of Ohio should create a cabinet-level position for Service and Volunteering to develop, implement, and oversee initiatives through the state that would use service and a strategy to meet Ohio's needs. Governor Arnold Schwarzenegger created the nation's first Secretary for Service and Volunteering in 2008 for the State of California, and Governor David Patterson of New York created a similar position the following year.

Second, the Ohio House of Representatives and the Ohio Senate should mandate a program for municipalities to create a community-wide service plan that both identifies areas in which volunteerism and service could meet their community needs and fosters greater participation from across diverse groups within the area.

Third, the Ohio House of Representatives and the Ohio Senate should mandate a statewide program that supports service agencies and nonprofits throughout the state in the development of their volunteer programs to ensure increased capacity in volunteer management. These programs could both be implemented at minimal cost to the state and its taxpayers.

RECOMMENDATION THREE: Increase the educational attainment of Ohioans through accessible, affordable, and meaningful degree programs and educational experiences that meet the needs of non-traditional and traditional-age students.

This *Report* clearly shows that Ohioans with greater educational attainment participate at higher levels and that the number of adults over 25 with bachelor's degrees is alarmingly low. Degree attainment must be a strategic priority for state legislators, leaders, and residents concerned about the future civic and economic conditions of the Buckeye state. Certificate and associate-degree programs increase participation levels but not to the extent and value of baccalaureate degrees.

Ohio has exceptional institutions of higher education and the infrastructure to support increasing student populations. However, Ohio's colleges and universities must respond to the demographic decline in the number of traditional-age students and to the increasing

demand for innovative baccalaureate degrees for returning non-traditional students. Investing in more online degree offerings would improve access for busy workers and parents and provide high-quality programs to individuals in Ohio's rural counties.

Additionally, Ohio must support civic and political education programs beyond the high school level. When only 59.1% of Ohioans can correctly identify the proper roles of each branch of the American government, it is clear that individuals in Ohio's communities do not have all the information they need to make effective decisions about complex policy and tax issues. Advocating for additional instruction in Civics ensures Ohioans are adequately prepared to navigate bureaucratic systems throughout their communities.

Increasing the degree attainment of Ohioans has an additional benefit—economic development. Companies and businesses are looking for communities with a citizenry that has the skill sets and education levels necessary to complete challenging and complicated tasks. Many Ohioans already have the on-the-job skills that high-tech firms demand, but they often lack the education to match those skills or the opportunities to develop new ones. Increasing education levels will attract jobs as well as contribute long-term investments to the state economy.

ENDNOTES

- ¹ Because we draw from multiple sources of data with varying sample sizes, we are not able to compute one margin of error for the state across all indicators. Furthermore, we cannot provide p-values or other tests of significance for a variety of reasons, including the fact that the CPS datasets are based on population statistics that have been weighted, which inflates the sample size, and most p-value estimates are highly correlated to the sample size.
- ² A comparative analysis of participating NCoC CHI Partners which include: Arizona, California, Florida, Illinois, Maryland, Missouri, New York, North Carolina, Oklahoma, Pennsylvania, Texas, and Virginia.
- ³ US Census Bureau, 2009 Population estimate.
- ⁴ Greater Ohio Policy Center and The Brookings Metropolitan Policy Program. *Restoring Prosperity: Transforming Ohio's Communities for the Next Economy*, February, 2010.
- ⁵ This is a slightly abridged version of the definition used by the IUPUI Task Force on Civic Engagement, available at <http://schoe.coe.uga.edu/benchmarking/bei.html>
- ⁶ Putnam, Robert D. (2000). *Bowling Alone: The Collapse and Revival of American Community*. New York: Simon and Schuster.
- ⁷ Keele, L. (2007). Social Capital and the Dynamics of Trust in Government. *American Journal of Political Science*. 51 (2): p. 241.
- ⁸ Putnam, Robert D. (2000). *Bowling Alone: The Collapse and Revival of American Community*. New York: Simon and Schuster.
- ⁹ Corporation for National and Community Service. (2010). *Volunteering in America*. Available online: <http://www.volunteeringinamerica.gov/assets/resources/IssueBriefFINALJune15.pdf>
- ¹⁰ Ohio Secretary of State. Elections & Ballot Issues. <http://www.sos.state.oh.us/elections/voterinformation/equipment/VotingSystemReviewFindings/EVERESTtestingReports.aspx>
- ¹¹ EVEREST Voting Study. Available online: <http://siis.cse.psu.edu/everest.html>
- ¹² Ohio State Legislature. HB 350.(2008). Available online: http://www.legislature.state.oh.us/analysis.cfm?ID=127_HB_350&hf=analyses127/08-hb350-127.htm

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¹³ ServeOhio.org. *Service As A Solution: Ohio Community Service Council Announces \$7 Million in AmeriCorps Funding*. Available online: www.serveohio.org

¹⁴ Ohio's Education Reform plan. <http://www.ode.state.oh.us/GD/Templates/Pages/ODE/ODEDetail.aspx?page=523>

¹⁵ Ohio's Education Reform plan. <http://www.ode.state.oh.us/GD/Templates/Pages/ODE/ODEDetail.aspx?page=523>

¹⁶ Ohio Department of Education.
<http://education.ohio.gov/GD/Templates/Pages/ODE/ODEDetail.aspx?page=3&TopicRelationID=428&ContentID=80455>

¹⁷ Delli Carpini, M. X., & Keeter, S. (1989). *What Americans Know about Politics and Why It Matters*. New Haven, CT: Yale University Press.

¹⁸ Lawless, Jennifer L., and Richard L. Fox. 2010. *It Still Takes a Candidate: Why Women Don't Run for Office*. New York: Cambridge University Press. Chapters 3 and 5.

¹⁹ Ohio ranks first of all states in NCOC's 2010 study. Please see www.NCOC.net for detailed state rankings of participants.

²⁰ White and not Hispanic, which was measured in a separate question.

²¹ We used the generational categories that CIRCLE uses:

Millennial Generation (born 1981 or after)

Generation X (born 1965 – 1980)

Baby Boomers (born 1946 – 1964)

Silent Generation (born 1930 – 1945)

²² Robert D. Putnam (2000). *Bowling Alone: The Collapse and Revival of American Community*. New York: Simon and Schuster.

²³ *Volunteering in America*. Available online: <http://www.volunteeringinamerica.gov/assets/resources/IssueBriefFINALJune15.pdf>

²⁴ *Volunteering in America*. <http://www.volunteeringinamerica.gov/assets/resources/IssueBriefFINALJune15.pdf>

²⁵ *Volunteering in America*. <http://www.volunteeringinamerica.gov/assets/resources/IssueBriefFINALJune15.pdf>



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Founded in 1946 and federally chartered by the U.S. Congress in 1953, the National Conference on Citizenship (NCoC) is a leader in advancing our nation's civic life. We track, measure and promote civic participation and engagement in partnership with other organizations on a bipartisan, collaborative basis. We focus on ways to enhance history and civics education, encourage national and community service, and promote greater participation in the political process.

Many distinguished Americans have been involved with the growth and development of NCoC over the years including Presidents Harry S. Truman and Dwight D. Eisenhower and Chief Justices Earl Warren and Warren Burger. The roster of board members, advisors and guest speakers at NCoC events represent a diverse spectrum of leaders from across government, industry, academia, community and nonprofit organizations and the media, including Senators Robert Byrd and Lamar Alexander, Justices Sandra Day O'Connor, Stephen Breyer, Anthony Kennedy, Ruth Bader Ginsburg, and Antonin Scalia, philanthropists Ray Chambers and Eugene Lang, authors David McCullough and Walter Isaacson, scholars Robert Putnam and Stephen Goldsmith, TIME Magazine's Richard Stengel, MTV's Ian Rowe, ABC's Cokie Roberts, actor Stephen Lang, AOL's Jean Case, Facebook's Sean Parker, former Clinton Administration advisor William Galston and former Bush Administration advisor John Bridgeland.

NCoC's accomplishments are many, ranging from fueling the civic energy of the Greatest Generation freshly home from WWII to helping lead the celebration of our nation's Bicentennial in 1976. NCoC helped establish the observance of Constitution Day, each September 17, and our charter mandates we hold our annual conference close to this date with a focus on building a more active and engaged citizenry.

Since 2006, NCoC has produced *America's Civic Health Index*, the nation's leading measure of citizen actions and attitudes. In April 2009, NCoC was included in the Edward M. Kennedy Serve America Act. To help our communities harness the power of their citizens, the Corporation for National and Community Service and the U.S. Census Bureau were directed to work with NCoC to expand the reach and impact of these metrics through an annual Civic Health Assessment.

To advance our mission, better understand the broad dimensions of modern citizenship, and to encourage greater civic participation, NCoC has developed and sustained a network of over 250 like-minded institutions that seek a more collaborative approach to strengthening our system of self-government.

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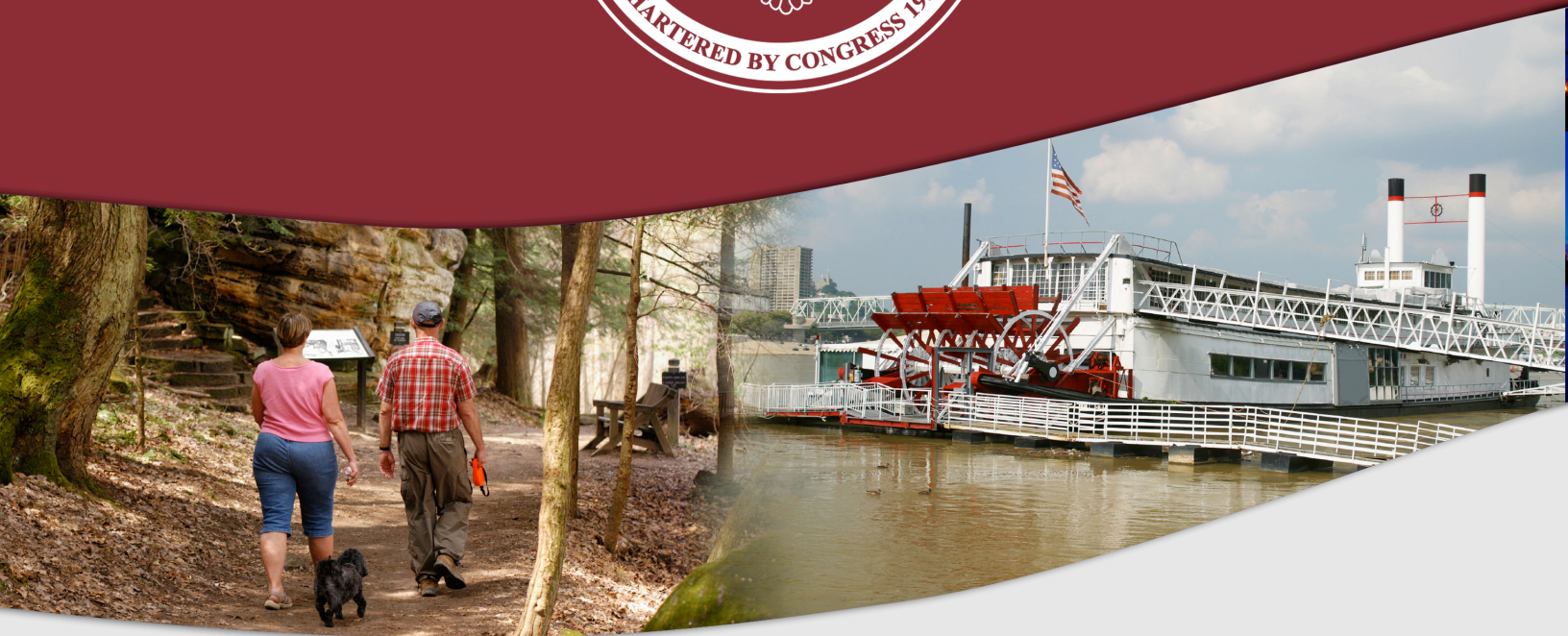
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