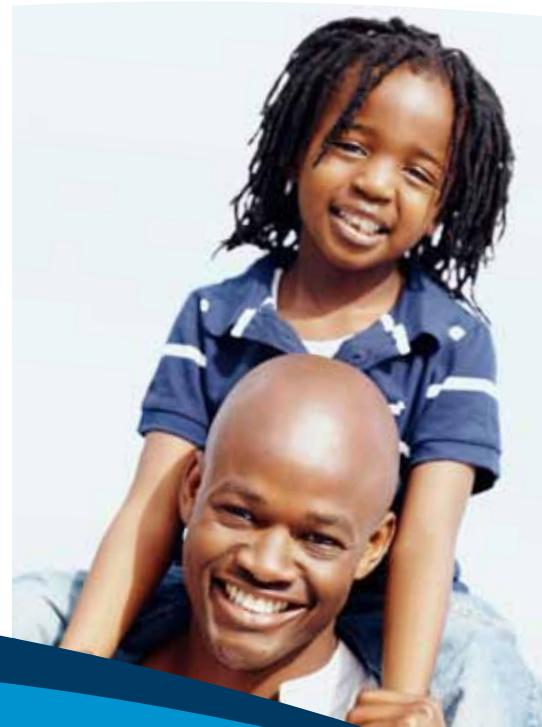


2011 NEW YORK CIVIC HEALTH INDEX



STRIDING FORWARD



Franciscan Center for Service and Advocacy
Office of Academic Community Engagement





ABOUT THE PARTNERS

NATIONAL CONFERENCE ON CITIZENSHIP

At the National Conference on Citizenship (NCoC), we believe everyone has the power to make a difference in how their community and country thrive.

We are a dynamic, non-partisan nonprofit working at the forefront of our nation's civic life. We continuously explore what shapes today's citizenry, define the evolving role of the individual in our democracy, and uncover ways to motivate greater participation. Through our events, research and reports, NCoC expands our nation's contemporary understanding of what it means to be a citizen. We seek new ideas and approaches for creating greater civic health and vitality throughout the United States.

THE NEW YORK STATE COMMISSION ON NATIONAL AND COMMUNITY SERVICE - NEW YORKERS VOLUNTEER

The New York State Commission on National and Community Service was established by Governor Mario Cuomo thorough Executive Order in 1994 and is supported administratively by the State Office of National and Community Service. With direction from the Office of the Governor, the Commission functions to build and reinforce a culture of service, citizenship and responsibility, and to institute accountability and efficiency in the administration of national service and community volunteer programs operating in the state. The New York State Commission works collaboratively with the Corporation for National & Community Service and New York State Education Department to administer 240 national service programs that engage more than 80,000 volunteers annually in the State of New York. The resources provided by the State Commission and its partners address the needs identified in the State's service and civic engagement agenda in the core areas of education, environmental stewardship, healthy futures, disaster services, veterans

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THE SIENA COLLEGE RESEARCH INSTITUTE

The Siena College Research Institute (SRI) is a full-service public opinion research institute located on the Siena College campus in Loudonville, New York. Established in 1980, SRI is committed to providing quality information to the public regarding political, economic, social, business, and voter issues. SRI conducts expert and public opinion polls on regional, state, and national levels utilizing an on-site call center, web and mail surveys, and analysis of existing data. SRI has a particular commitment to research dedicated to New York State and the many facets of its civic health. In addition to the monthly Siena New York poll that investigates the opinions of registered voters on political issues, SRI also produces the New York State Consumer Confidence Index and consumer confidence reports for various regional areas in the state.

A key component of SRI's work is to produce public service research with the intent of informing community leaders, policymakers, and community members on the issues and needs of New York communities. SRI has researched life satisfaction, social capital of New York residents, and public perception of community social needs of New Yorkers, and specifically in the Capital District Region, and has done research on behalf of regional social service nonprofit entities. SRI has also surveyed issues of health, leisure, homeownership, and the concrete effects of the recent economic downturn on the lives of New Yorkers. Thus, with expertise and experience, SRI examines the fabric of life in New York.

THE OFFICE OF ACADEMIC COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT

The Office of Academic Community Engagement (ACE) at Siena College is dedicated to creating sustainable partnerships between higher education institutions and the greater community that seek to contribute to civic health. Through ACE programs (AmeriCorps* VISTA Fellows, Bonner Service Leaders, Academic Service Learning and Community Based Research) we strive to engage students, faculty, and staff to impact the root causes of social problems. ACE mobilizes more than \$2 million of resources for community development and civic health initiatives in the Capital District annually. Through ACE's national partnerships with the Corporation for National and Community Service, the Bonner Foundation, the Association of American Colleges and Universities, and Campus Compact, ACE is an active consultant, convener, contributor, and creator of best practices for university-community partnerships.

SIENA COLLEGE

Siena College is a learning community advancing the ideals of a liberal arts education, rooted in its identity as a Franciscan and Catholic institution.

Authors:

Dr. Mathew Johnson, Director of ACE, Associate Professor, Sociology and Environmental Studies

Dr. Don Levy, Director of Siena College Research Institute

*Courtney Cozzy, Siena College AmeriCorps*VISTA Fellow*

Mike Cauvel, Siena College Research Institute Intern



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INTRODUCTION

New York is a large and multi-dimensional state. The state boasts a population of more than 19 million people and more than 8 million household units across rural, suburban and metropolitan areas. New York is home to one of the largest, busiest, and most diverse metropolitan areas in the world (New York City), the largest natural conservation park in the country (Adirondack Park), and an international border with Canada. From New England to the East, to Ohio and the Great Lakes to the West, to the Mid-Atlantic to the South, New York sits at the crossroads of several important regions of the country.

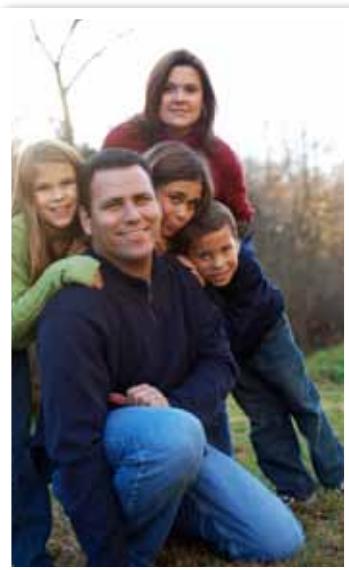
In addition to its unique geographic characteristics, New York is home to a vibrant and diverse population. About one in five New Yorkers are foreign-born, 15.9% are Black or African American, 17.6% are Hispanic of any race, and 28.5% over the age of five speak a language other than English at home.

Of New York residents 25 and over, 84.2% have graduated from high school and 31.8% have obtained a four-year college degree.¹ An estimated 61.4% of New Yorkers aged 16 and older are in the labor force.*

Many state residents experience poverty. According to a 2006-2008 estimate, 10.5% of New York families and 14.2% of all individuals live below the poverty line.² New Yorkers, like all Americans, have continued to face a difficult economy that has failed to recover from the recession of late 2007. Since the publication of the 2010 *New York Civic Health Index* in December 2010, New Yorkers have continued to live, work, plan and hope in an economic climate that they see as stagnant.

Since January of 1999, the Siena College Research Institute (SRI) has measured and reported the Consumer Confidence Index (CCI), tracking consumers' willingness to spend in New York. In late 2007, that score moved from the point where optimism far exceeded pessimism to one which reflected more New Yorkers experiencing financial decline rather than success and expecting continued economic hardships in the market place. While 2011 began with a ray of hope - that is, the CCI overall score hit the point in January at which optimism equaled pessimism - as the year progressed, New Yorkers' confidence fell by October 2011 to its lowest point in two and a half years.³

Economic conditions weigh heavily on many New Yorkers. Throughout 2011, at least 60% of state residents have said the price of gasoline poses at least a somewhat serious financial hardship for their household, up from 58% in December 2010; and by October 2011, 73% indicated the cost of groceries was a hardship, up from 64% at the end of 2010.⁴ Sentiment among New Yorkers towards the real estate market hit a two-year low in the third quarter of 2011 when 49% of residents said the condition of the market had, in their eyes, worsened over the last 12 months, and only 31% anticipated improvement in the year to come.⁵



*Bureau of Labor Statistics, <http://bls.gov/lau/lalfprderr.pdf>

With a state unemployment figure of 7.7% and a New York City rate of 8.7% in August 2011⁶, it is not surprising that 18% of residents say they, or a household member, have lost a job or been laid off in the last six months and 25% have seen their work hours cut back.⁷ In addition, 26% of New Yorkers know someone who has lost their home in foreclosure over the last 12 months.⁸

Today, for the first time in three years, 50% of New Yorkers think that “our country’s best economic days are behind us.”⁹ Consequently, large majorities of residents are reducing expenses more than ever before by eliminating impulse purchases, cutting back on entertainment, couponing, substituting lower quality goods and delaying major purchases.¹⁰ In 2011, only one in five New Yorkers admit to having an income greater than their expenses. And as they look forward to their retirement years, two-thirds say social security could be bankrupt in 20 years unless something is done.¹¹

Not only are New Yorkers legitimately worried about their own financial circumstances, but they continue to be concerned about the economic condition of the state. Throughout the year, nearly 90% said the state’s fiscal condition was either fair or poor.* However, the percentage of New Yorkers indicating the state’s fiscal condition as poor did lessen while those grading it as fair increased.

Although that may seem just one small positive indicator, we do note a growing faith and confidence among the people of New York in their government. Andrew Cuomo was elected Governor as 2010 ended and took office in January 2011. While the previous governor, David Paterson, left office suffering a negative approval rating (32% favorable, 60% unfavorable), Andrew Cuomo has been viewed favorably by approximately 70% of New Yorkers for the year.¹²

In fact, during 2010 more than 60% of New Yorkers thought the state was headed in the wrong direction at times, while only as few as 18% thought it was on the right track. However, throughout 2011, under Governor Cuomo’s direction, approximately equal percentages of residents when surveyed say the state is on the right track as those that say the state is moving in the wrong direction.

In short, it has been a difficult and, at times, frightening year for the people of New York. The economy is struggling and for many New Yorkers those struggles are not simply played out in newspapers and on television, but are issues and concerns they confront daily. Although New Yorkers do not see relief in the immediate future, the new governor has provided new confidence. His legislative successes in 2011 – an on-time budget, a property tax cap, fiscal restraints – have perhaps contributed to the people of New York feeling their state is beginning to move in a better direction.

While New York and New Yorkers struggle with a problematic economy, the state and its people remain resilient and committed to addressing the social needs of their neighbors. In fact, 87% of New Yorkers say it is somewhat or very important to contribute to addressing the needs of people in their community.¹³ This report demonstrates that in spite of obdurate economic pressures, the civic health of New Yorkers – their social connectedness, trust in institutions, expression of civic duty and responsibilities, and their commitment to being informed about their community – remains stable.

SRI is pleased to partner with the National Conference on Citizenship (NCoC) to produce this 2011 New York Civic Health Index. In 2006, NCoC established an important tradition of measuring national civic health according to several indicators, including participation in social and civic life, through America’s Civic Health Index. NCoC now works in more than 25 states and cities across the country to produce local Civic Health Index reports in partnership with local organizations and institutions. New York created the first statewide Civic Health Index in 2010.

The New York Civic Health Index includes an analysis of the 2010 Current Population Survey (CPS), September Volunteering Supplement and November Voting and Civic Engagement Supplement data. This report is based on initial findings of the CPS data provided by the Center for Information & Research on Civic Learning and Engagement (CIRCLE) and data analysis of multiple New York State public opinion research projects of SRI.

The Office of Academic Community Engagement (ACE) and SRI are excited to partner for the 2011 New York Civic Health Index with the State Commission on National and Community Service, NCoC and CIRCLE to examine the state of civic health in the Empire State.



*Siena New York Polls, October 2011, Siena Research Institute. http://www.siena.edu/uploadedfiles/home/parents_and_community/community_page/sri/sny_poll/SNY101711%20Crosstabs.pdf

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Against the backdrop of a unique set of social and political changes in New York over the past year, and within the context of the grinding continuation of economic hardship, New York's civic health has remained constant. Given the challenges and social, political, and economic changes of recent years, it is remarkable that New York communities have continued to maintain their level of civic health in many forms.

New York CPIS (Community Participation and Involvement Survey) civic health indicators show that New Yorkers remain socially connected, trusting of each other, and to a lesser degree, local institutions, and stay informed about local and regional issues. However, despite an apparent value commitment to those who are less fortunate, New Yorkers demonstrate social responsibility and engage in civic duties—with the exception of voting behavior—at a lesser rate.

A closer look at CPIS and other SRI data shows that New Yorkers spend social time with friends and acquaintances and see people they know in day-to-day interactions. In other words, New Yorkers are meaningfully connected with members of their community. At the same time, while New Yorkers are cautious about people they meet, they trust their neighbors, other community members and local institutions. Significant numbers of New Yorkers volunteer to address community needs, donate to local organizations, help neighbors or community members with projects, and serve in leadership capacities for local organizations. Still, only 50% perform these much-needed community activities. New Yorkers are informed about and discuss local community issues with family and friends. However, they are not inclined to attend community events; religious services; clubs; community, public, or political meetings; or, a political rally. Data also indicate that New Yorkers register and vote at rates below the national average.



STRID Revisited

First utilized in the 2010 *New York Civic Health Index*, the STRID index is a conceptual framework for understanding civic health as a composite of social qualities embedded in communities. Figure 1 on page 7 illustrates the index's five interrelated yet distinct aspects of a healthy community—trust, addressing social needs, remaining informed, taking action, and socially connecting to one another. The STRID Index allows for the understanding of civic health data through a conceptual framework that is useful for policy makers and community members. In short, in an ideal healthy community people would:

- (S) Be very socially connected in a variety of ways to other members of the community,
- (T) Trust other members of the community and social institutions,
- (R) Actively participate in shared responsibility for addressing pressing social issues such as poverty, hunger, homelessness, etc.,
- (I) Be informed about the issues, events and news in their community and region, and
- (D) Perform civic duties such as voting, attending community meetings and events.

Each of the five components of the STRID Index is measured independently. Though each one represents an important specific part of the social life of healthy communities, all five are inter-related as multipliers of each other. For example, in communities that are very socially active, one would expect there to be more trust among community members. Likewise, in communities in which people do not remain informed, one would expect participation in civic responsibilities to decrease. This interrelationship is particularly important for policymakers to understand as they seek to incentivize higher rates of public participation to build civic health. Working to increase

The STRID Framework (Fig. 1)



the level of trust that community members have in one another, in major social institutions and in the government can be approached, for example, through any of the other four indicators. Increasing the availability of information, increasing social connections, and increasing the level of participation in community activities can all yield higher levels of trust overall.

Table 1 below illustrates the year-over-year consistency in STRID Index scores. While it may appear that New Yorkers have had a slight increase in social activities and a slight downward trend in trust, these year-over-year differences are attributable to changes in the methodology for measuring the (S) and (T) scores.

STRID scores are determined using 26 individual indicators grouped in the categories of Social, Trust, Responsibility, Information and Duty. Attributing a value to each respondent's answer to each question, the STRID score is a percent of the possible in which a 100 would indicate that ALL respondents engage in the activity, for example, volunteering or having friends to their home, at the optimum level of frequency. Conversely, a zero would indicate that no respondents engage in the activity at any level of frequency. STRID scores are useful for demonstrating the comparative level of involvement of New Yorkers in the five aspects of civic health, identifying where potential enhancement can occur, and measuring change in those areas of civic health year-to-year.

Table 1: NY STRID Index Scores by Region and Area

Region/Location	Social		Trust		Responsibility		Information		Duty	
	2010	2011	2010	2011	2010	2011	2010	2011	2010	2011
New York State	60	67	68	65	49	48	60	58	31	32
New York City	53	65	62	60	44	45	57	55	29	31
NYC Suburbs	64	68	71	69	53	51	59	59	31	33
Upstate	66	68	73	69	54	51	64	59	33	32
Urban	57	66	62	62	46	46	58	57	30	31
Suburban	62	68	70	68	52	52	61	60	32	34
Rural	62	67	74	66	53	49	63	57	31	30

Finally, through SRI's partnership with the State Commission on National and Community Service, the 2011 *New York Civic Health Index* has a special focus on volunteering in New York. Through the use of SRI data collected in collaboration with the New York Commission, this year's report comments in detail on the volunteering habits of New Yorkers. It should be noted that the volunteer rate for New York obtained from CPS data differs drastically from the data from SRI's Community Participation and Involvement Survey. The CPS found only 21.4% of New Yorkers volunteered in 2010, ranking New York 47th out of all states and the District of Columbia. On the other hand, 66% of respondents to the Community Participation and Involvement Survey said they volunteered at least once over the past 12 months. The 2011 *Civic Health Index* thus includes further discussion and investigation of this data.

Policy makers and other stakeholders in New York should again celebrate the relatively high levels of social connectedness and trust and continue to support the mechanisms that keep New Yorkers informed. They should also tap into the strong feelings of responsibility for the common good found among New Yorkers to mobilize higher levels of active engagement to address community needs. Finally, policy makers and other stakeholders should work to develop New Yorkers' sense of civic duty beyond merely registering to vote and voting to include participation in community meetings and other aspects of participatory democracy.

New York and National Civic Health Indicators for 2010 and 2011*



Social Indicators	NY 2010	National 2010	NY 2011	National 2011
Communicate with family & friends via Internet (at least once a month)	69.0%	67.6%	66.4%	68.6%
Eat dinner with household members (at least a few times a week)	88.5%	89.1%	85.8%	88.1%
Talk with neighbors (at least a few times a week)	47.4%	45.8%	42.0%	42.3%
Trust Indicators (includes 2011 NY CPIS data and 2009 Civic Health Survey data)				
People are generally helpful	67.0%**			
People are generally honest	58.0%*			
Government in Washington generally does what is right	26.0%**			
Generally speaking people can be trusted		43.0%*		
Trust in community members		84.0%*		
Trust in local government		57.0%*		
Trust in people who work at the stores where you shop		81.0%*		
Responsibility Indicators				
Volunteer for or through an organization	19.3%	26.8%	21.4%	26.3%
Exchange favors with neighbors at least a few times a week	14.8%	16.2%	13.6%	15.2%
Work with neighbors to solve a community problem	6.9%	8.8%	6.3%	8.1%
Serve as an officer or committee member	7.0%	10.1%	6.2%	9.1%
Boycott or buy a product or service	8.1%	10.7%	9.4%	10.0%
Donated to charity (at least \$25)	42.3%	52.0%	42.4%	50.0%
Information Indicators				
Talk with family and friends about politics a few times a week	38.8%	39.3%	28.3%	26.0%
Get news from newspaper daily	50.2%	44.9%		
Get news from sources other than a newspaper at least a few times a week	35.7%	38.0%		

Duty Indicators	NY 2010	National 2010	NY 2011	National 2011
Belong to a Group or Organization	31.2%	35.1%	27.5%	33.3%
Voter registration for the November 2008/2010 election	65.8%	71.0%	63.8%	65.1%
Voter turnout for the November 2008/2010 election	58.8%	63.6%	43.6%	45.5%
Attend a meeting where political issues are discussed	7.7%	10.3%		
Attend a march, rally, protest, or demonstration	2.8%	3.1%		
Contact or visit public official	9.6%	10.4%	8.5%	9.9%
Show support for a party or candidate	10.7%	14.8%		
Attend public meetings about community affairs	9.9%	9.0%	8.8%	9.2%

Source: All data is from the 2009 and 2010 CPS unless otherwise specified. Missing data reflects changes in the CPS. Indicators for voter registration and turnout for 2010 is from the 2008 elections and indicators for voter registration and turnout for 2011 is from the 2010 elections. Data with an asterisk are from the 2010 and 2011 CPIS. Data marked by double asterisk is from the 2009 Civic Health Survey.

CIVIC LIFE: SOCIAL

STRID Social Indicators

	2010	2011
NY State	60	67
NYC	53	65
NYC Subs	64	68
Upstate	66	68
Urban	57	66
Suburban	62	68
Rural	62	67

Source: Community Participation and Involvement Survey, 2011

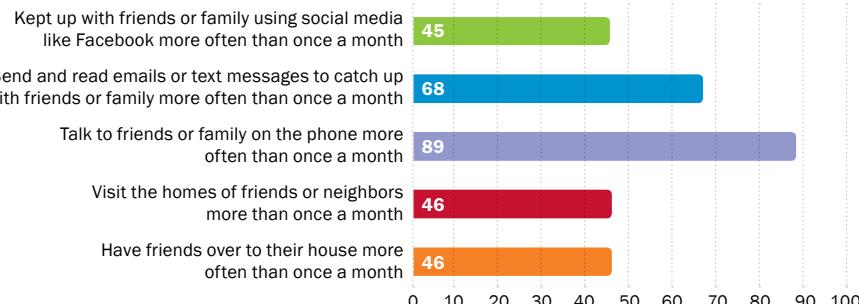
The degree to which individuals engage in the social life of the community—visiting or being visited by friends or neighbors, spending casual social time with members of their community, knowing the names of people who live nearby, participating in technological social connections like Facebook and email—contribute to civic health.

Family and Friends: The New York Civic Health Index includes data which track the social connectedness of New York residents. Most New Yorkers are social and attempt to stay connected with family and friends. However, according to CPS data, New York ranked 47th nationally for the number of residents who “eat dinner with a family or household member a few times a week” (85.8%).¹⁴

But, by no means are New Yorkers isolated. In fact, nearly half of state residents (46%) have friends over to their house more often than once a month, and similarly, 46% visit the homes of friends or neighbors within their community more than once a month. Only one in ten state residents never has friends over or visits friends’ homes.¹⁵

On an even more frequent basis, New Yorkers talk to their friends and family via telephone, email or through social media like Facebook. The increase this year in the Social component of STRID is due to the inclusion of measuring social ties generated through the use of technology. Specifically, 89% of New Yorkers talk to friends or family on the phone more often than once a month, 68% send and read emails or text messages to catch up with friends or family more often than once a month, and 45% kept up with friends or family using social media like Facebook.

Social Indicators



Source: Community Participation and Involvement Survey, July 2011

SRI Spotlight

Nearly half of New Yorkers have friends over to their home more often than once a month.



The use of electronic communication, however, appears to correlate with total family income. As compared with other income brackets, New Yorkers with total family income of less than \$35,000 were the least likely to use electronic communication.¹⁶

Neighbors and Community: While New Yorkers clearly are socially connected to friends and family through technology, they are less connected informally to their neighbors and community. Only 29% regularly spend casual social time with acquaintances at a local business, community center or recreational area. A similar percentage never engages in that form of informal social interaction. Although sports may not be for everyone, they provide one avenue for individuals to come together. Only about one in seven New Yorkers regularly participate in some organized sporting event or attend local sporting events as a spectator.

As New Yorkers move through their day, about half say they do know the names of most neighbors and run into people they know while on errands or taking care of local business. This is important, as we would argue that the experience of being a member of a community is an important aspect of civic health.

However, on the opposite side of this equation are the 51% of New Yorkers (58% in New York City and other urban areas) who do not know their neighbors' names and the 47% (56% in the city and 53% in other urban areas) who seldom run into acquaintances.

This report is not meant to judge the social connectedness of New Yorkers. But rather, it suggests that growth in more extensive and informal networks is possible, while residents do enjoy the company of others and regularly communicate with friends and family. The STRID conceptualization of civic health demonstrates that growth in social connections also have potential to benefit overall civic health in areas including trust, duty, responsibility and information.



SRI Spotlight

New Yorkers are most likely to trust the police, the people in their community, and those that work where they shop.

CIVIC LIFE: TRUST

STRID Trust Indicators

	2010	2011
NY State	68	65
NYC	62	60
NYC Subs	71	69
Upstate	73	69
Urban	62	62
Suburban	70	68
Rural	74	66

Source: Community Participation and Involvement Survey, 2011

When citizens trust the people and institutions in their community, they tend to engage in other activities that contribute to civic health. Trust is a critical foundation upon which to build and improve civic engagement and participation.

The Trust score within the STRID framework remains high in 2011, declining slightly by three points from 68 to 65. Still, similar to the Social indicator, Trust continues to be high as well as an asset among New Yorkers. This is true despite economic pressures and recent political turmoil.

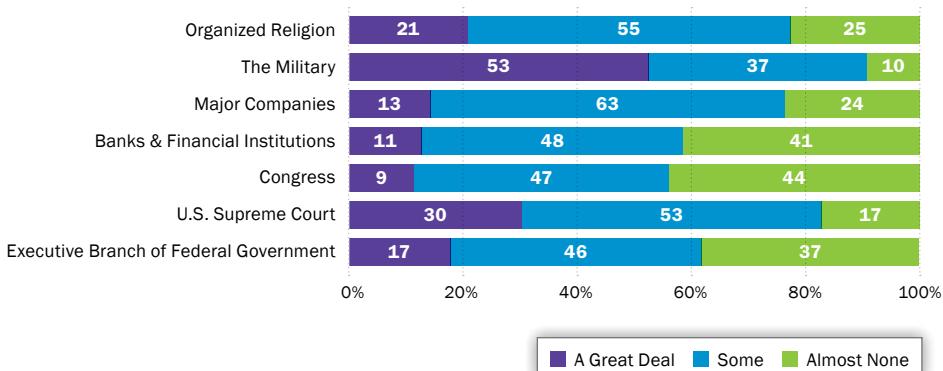
Overall, only 43% of New Yorkers (44% last year) agree that "people can be trusted," while a majority, 54% (52% last year), insists that "you can't be too careful."

While this forced choice may simply elicit what can pass for common sense, the STRID analysis sees this collective sense of concern or guardedness as a drag on civic health. This lack of trust is also of concern when considered across demographic lines. Older New Yorkers, those with a college degree and those earning more than \$100,000 tend to be more trusting, while New York City residents, younger residents and those without a college degree are least trusting.

New Yorkers are most inclined to trust the police in their community (54% a lot, 29% some), the people in their community (49% a lot, 35% some) and those who work in the stores where they shop (36% a lot, 45% some). New Yorkers are least likely to trust local government. Only 14% of residents trust their local government a lot, 43% trust it some, and 40% tend not to trust their local government.

According to the 2010 General Social Survey, 90% of Americans had "a great deal" or "only some confidence" in the military while 44% had "hardly any confidence" in Congress. The next highest institution with the greatest confidence level is the U.S. Supreme Court where more than 80% of respondents answered they had a great deal or some confidence, followed by major companies with 79%.

Levels of Confidence



Source: General Social Survey, 2010

According to analysis of recent and historical Gallup survey data, trust in many institutions among Americans is below the historical average.¹⁷ While trust levels in a few institutions, such as the military and small business, exceed the historical average, trust in most institutions are well below historical averages. Congress is the least trusted institution, with only 12% reporting a great deal of trust.¹⁸ Trust levels in banks in 2011, at 23%, are 19 points below the historical average of 42%.¹⁹ Trust in the presidency is only at 35%, 10 points below the historical average.²⁰ Trust in the church, the Supreme Court, public schools, big business, organized labor, television news, newspapers, and the police are also below historical averages.²¹

In New York, meaningful percentages of residents lack trust in major institutions and political entities despite continuing trust in the current governor as well as local institutions. We already have noted that trust in the current governor, Andrew Cuomo, as measured by the voters' favorability rating, is high at about 70%. Still, the governor's partners in state government, the state senate and assembly have most recently been seen favorably by only about one quarter of New Yorkers. Most New Yorkers (61%) believe one of the two major political parties 'speak for them', and nearly one in four believe that either the Tea Party or the Occupy Wall Street movements speak for them.*

The civic health of New York, therefore, can only benefit from enhanced trust in not only local institutions but also the political leaders and institutions of our nation and state.



CIVIC LIFE: RESPONSIBILITY

STRID Responsibility Indicators

	2010	2011
NY State	49	48
NYC	44	45
NYC Subs	53	51
Upstate	54	51
Urban	46	46
Suburban	52	52
Rural	53	49

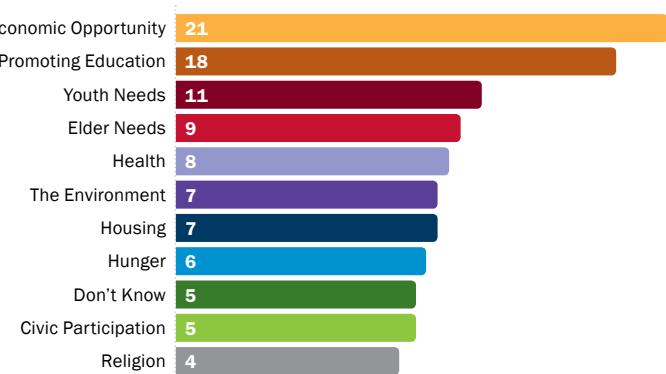
Source: Community Participation and Involvement Survey, 2011

When citizens actively make contributions of time, money, and/or goods to meet the needs of those in their community, they contribute to the civic health of the community and the State.

Like the other four STRID components, the Responsibility Score at 48 has remained largely unchanged since last year, down only one point, and fourth behind Social, Trust and Information. While that lends validity to the measurement, it also is not surprising that a dynamic as important, widespread and multi-dimensional as civic responsibility is not easily or quickly changed. Still, in light of the economic pressures faced by all New Yorkers, it is noteworthy that Responsibility has not declined.

*Siena New York Poll, October 2011, Siena Research Institute. http://www.siena.edu/uploadedfiles/home/parents_and_community/community_page/sri/sny_poll/SNY101811%20Crosstabs.pdf

Single Area of Greatest Need Identified by New Yorkers



Source: Community Participation and Involvement Survey, 2011

Volunteering is an important aspect of Responsibility and, as such, we will give extended treatment to volunteer motivations, actions, obstacles and opportunities in this report. Also, to enhance volunteering and in turn Responsibility in New York, the State Commission on National and Community Service and its Regional Volunteer Centers have launched an exhaustive study of the manner in which nonprofits recruit, train, utilize and review volunteers.

Assessing Need and Volunteer Attitudes: Many New Yorkers are aware of persistent needs in their communities. When asked what they identified to be the single greatest need, 20% responded with economic opportunity, followed closely by promoting education at 18%.*

According to CPIS data, New Yorkers continue to be generous in their donations to charities that seek to address many of these perceived needs. Eighty-nine percent of state residents donated items like food, blood or clothing to the needy in their community. In fact, 25% made donations more often than once a month. Over the last 12 months, 69% of New Yorkers have contributed money or other property to a local charity and 51% have donated to a national or international charity.**

Neighborhood Involvement: Some New Yorkers choose to address community needs by working with neighbors to solve problems. The CPIS 2011 reports that 76% of New Yorkers responded they have helped a neighbor or community member with some project or need. Analysis of the Census Current Population Survey suggests New York State ranks 39th in the country for doing a favor for a neighbor at least a few times a week (13.6%). New Yorkers who are unemployed perform favors a few times a week or more often at a slightly higher rate of 14.7%, while those who are employed do so at a rate of 12.2%.

The CPIS investigated whether New Yorkers assisted neighbors or community members with some project or need. Only 24% reported not doing so in the past year, while 22% have assisted with such needs more than once a month. While many New Yorkers may not formally volunteer, clearly a quarter often serve and three quarters assist a neighbor or community member with some project or need at least once in the past year.

Americans distinguish themselves in their communities through leadership. According to analysis of the Census Current Population Survey, 9.1% of people nationally reported serving as an officer or committee member in an organization. New York lags behind in this indicator, with 6.2% reporting such leadership.

Leaders are important assets in their communities. They are more engaged nationally in other forms of civic engagement than non-leaders. For example, of those who are an officer or committee member for a group or organization, 81% have reported voting in the 2010 election, 62% have contacted or visited a public official, and nearly 70% have bought or boycotted a good or service.²²

*Community Participation and Involvement Survey, July 2011, Siena Research Institute.

**Community Participation and Involvement Survey, July 2011, Siena Research Institute.

In the Community Participation and Involvement Survey 2011, 13% of New Yorkers reported being group leaders. Of those involved with groups, 37% reported serving as an officer or committee member of a local club or organization in the last year. New Yorkers aged 18-34 involved in groups reported filling such positions at the lowest rate (21%) compared with other age groups, including New Yorkers 55 and older (45%).

While many New Yorkers contribute time and resources to address the needs they see in their community, the legitimate requirements of many are great. Given the pressures so many New Yorkers face to simply keep their own households above economic water, it is commendable that New Yorkers are as ‘responsible’ as they are. But it is also necessary that New York seek to bolster its efforts to address the growing needs of its population.

A Focus on Volunteers

This report relies upon two sources which provide conflicting data on the rate at which New Yorkers volunteer. In the 2010 Current Population Survey (CPS), 21.4% of New Yorkers 16 and older reported volunteering through or for an organization in the past 12 months. New York ranks 47th in the country on formal volunteering participation, moving up from 51st. Although this shows improvement, New York still lags behind most other states.

On the other hand, SRI’s Community Participation and Involvement Survey 2011 data differs drastically. Sixty-six percent of respondents to the Community Participation and Involvement Survey 2011 said they volunteered at least once over the past twelve months. While this figure is more reassuring than the national data, it remains true that in the national sample, New York ranks at or near the bottom among the states. Additionally, in the SRI data, only 19%, similar to the volunteering rate from the CPS, indicate that they volunteer for some community organization, charity or cause more often than once a month.

For the second year in a row, SRI’s measurement of volunteering among New Yorkers is considerably higher than that determined by the CPS. Two explanations are possible. First of all, the response rate to the CPS as it is conducted by the Census is greater than that of SRI’s telephone survey. It is possible that those who respond to the SRI phone survey tend to volunteer at rates greater than the general population, which is more representatively questioned and accounted for by the CPS. The second possible explanation is that the CPS volunteering questions are asked immediately following a series of workforce participation questions and respondents may not at that point in the survey readily remember their volunteering activities. The SRI questions, however, are asked as part of a systematic investigation of community participation. Still, two facts remain. First of all New York continues to rank according to CPS at or near the bottom of all states in the country on the rate of volunteering. And secondly, whether the actual rate is about 21% as measured by the CPS or the active rate of volunteering is 19% (the percentage of New Yorkers volunteering more often than once a month in SRI’s CPIS), only about one in five state residents appear to actively and regularly volunteer for or through an organization.

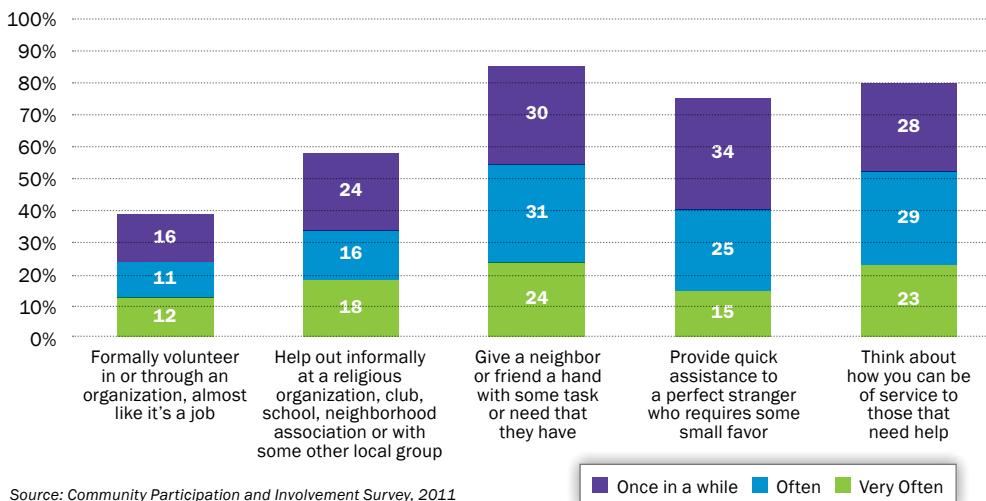
The 2011 CPIS expands on the volunteer rate of New Yorkers by questioning their level of depth in civic engagement. When New Yorkers were asked how often they give a neighbor or friend a hand with some task or need, 24% responded very often and 31% often. However, the numbers decrease greatly when asked if they formally volunteer for or through an organization, almost like it’s a job, with only 23% responding that they do this very often or often. Those who volunteered were asked follow-up questions regarding areas in which they volunteered. Health and fitness, youth services, and hunger and nutrition were the highest areas. Economic opportunity and access ranked the lowest at 12%.

According to VolunteeringinAmerica.gov, an average of more than 3 million residents volunteered annually in New York between 2008 and 2010.²³ New Yorkers volunteer for a variety of organizations. In the 2010 Current Population Survey, most New Yorkers reported volunteering for educational or youth organizations (11.2%), religious organizations (14.3%), service or civic organizations (5.1%), and sports and recreation (8.0%). In SRI’s 2010 Annual Statewide Poll of Holiday Spending Plans, 33% of New Yorkers intended to volunteer for organizations that assist



Photo provided by the Office of Academic Community Engagement, Siena College.

Volunteer Areas and Depth



SRI Spotlight

The Assessment of Service and Civic Engagement (ASCE) survey found that only 48% of college students report volunteering and 57% report being satisfied with their personal level of service.

Photo provided by the Office of Academic Community Engagement, Siena College.

people during the holiday season.²⁴ More than 75% planned on making donations of money, food or gifts to charitable organizations that focus on the needy during the holiday season.²⁵

Despite the awareness of need, New Yorkers face many barriers to volunteering. The top four barriers include having to work, being too busy with family responsibilities, only having small blocks of free time, and being too busy with other things. One might conclude that increased civic engagement may be possible if more one-shot opportunities were made available. A one-shot volunteer opportunity refers to providing labor, support or assistance at one event or at a series of single isolated events. One-shot volunteers would have little or no responsibility or long-term commitment. Although this may not be the most ideal form of volunteering, it is still a starting point and can potentially lead to people serving more frequently and having a deeper commitment over time.

Reasons for Not Volunteering



New Yorkers appear to have good intentions for volunteering. When asked what the most important reasons for volunteering are, 44% responded it is the right thing to do and 33% responded they believed they could make a difference.

Of those who volunteer, 30% say they very often or often formally volunteer in or through an organization, almost like it's a job.

Source: Community Participation and Involvement Survey, 2011

At this point in history, New York needs not only effective leadership and renewed economic opportunity, but also the efforts of its nonprofit community and the volunteers that fuel those efforts, in order to prosper. New Yorkers agree that need is all around us and they would like to be of service. It is critical that elected officials and nonprofit leaders effectively marshal the efforts of citizens to do as much as possible to address the needs. The State Commission on National and Community Service is an important leader in understanding and shaping how organizations recruit, train and utilize volunteers to maximize their contribution. In this time of scarce resources and growing need, careful planning, effective communication and thoughtful engagement will enhance collective Responsibility and therefore Civic Health.

CIVIC LIFE: INFORMATION

STRID Information Indicators				Access to news and other information about community events, meetings, and issues leads to informed citizens. Informed citizens tend to be engaged citizens.
	2010	2011		
NY State	60	58		
NYC	57	55		
NYC Subs	59	59		
Upstate	64	59		
Urban	58	57		
Suburban	61	60		
Rural	63	57		

Source: Community Participation and Involvement Survey, 2011

Many New Yorkers make efforts to stay informed on political issues and current events. The STRID score for Information is virtually unchanged this year compared to last. Sixty-six percent of state residents keep up with local news by reading that section of the newspaper on a regular basis. Importantly and in clear relationship to the Social component of STRID, 63% of New Yorkers say it is at least somewhat (37%) or completely (26%) true that they often talk to other members of their community about important local issues.

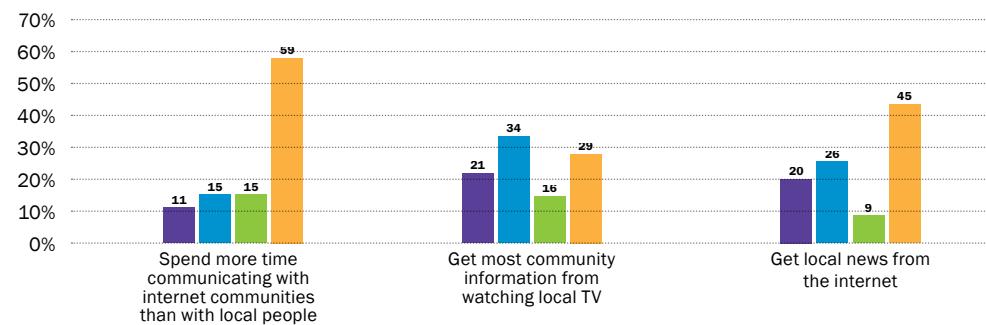
In 2011, Pew Research Center for the People asked Americans nationally how often they read their local daily newspaper. More than 70% said they read the newspaper regularly or somewhat.²⁶ When polled about how Americans get their national and international news, 66% responded television, 43% Internet, 31% newspaper, 19% radio, and 3% magazines.²⁷ Twenty-seven percent get their news or news headlines from Facebook, Twitter or other social networking sites regularly or sometimes.²⁸ The top three reasons why people use these sites as a news source are that social networking keeps them informed, it is immediate and up to date, and provides a variety of viewpoints and interesting perspectives.²⁹

In New York, 55% of residents say it is somewhat (34%) or completely (21%) true that most of the information they have about their community comes from watching local television. Still, nearly half of New Yorkers now say they get local news from the Internet or on their smart phone. Use of the Internet as a source of local news is far more prevalent among younger New Yorkers than older New Yorkers.

Use of the Internet and smart phones is likely to grow as a source of information in New York given purveyors of local information, including community newspapers and local economic development groups, are increasingly looking to develop and promote smart phone applications.

As we have seen in our investigation of aspects of Responsibility and Duty, responses such as, "I don't know where to vote, who is running, what the issues are or where I can be of help to address social problems," demonstrate that access to usable information is central to not only the growth of the information component of STRID but also to Responsibility and Duty.

Information Sources



SRI Spotlight

Sixty-six percent of New Yorkers keep up with local news by regularly reading the local section of the newspaper.



CIVIC LIFE: DUTY

STRID Duty Indicators

	2010	2011
NY State	31	32
NYC	29	31
NYC Subs	31	33
Upstate	33	32
Urban	30	31
Suburban	32	34
Rural	31	30

Source: Community Participation and Involvement Survey, 2011

Participation in community and political meetings, community events, and voting are civic duties.

Despite the important social and other benefits participation in groups provides, attendance in formal organizations is generally not high.³⁰ Group participation nationally, as measured by attendance at a group or organization meeting, was slightly more than 27%. In New York, 27.5% of residents reported some group activity compared with 33.3% nationally.³¹ The state ranked 47th on this Civic Health indicator.³²

Of the five STRID components, the Duty score of 32 as a percent of the possible is the lowest. Virtually unchanged from last year, the score demonstrates

that New Yorkers tend not to attend civic meetings and not to join the organizations that provide the civic glue of society. As with all STRID components an increasing score in Duty which would result from New Yorkers attending, joining, and participating in civic groups and organization would enhance overall civic health.

Fifty-five percent of residents say they have not attended a single public meeting in which there was a discussion of town or school affairs in the last year. Eleven percent attended a meeting once and about a third more often than that. Even fewer, 70%, did not attend a single political meeting or rally over the past 12 months.

While many simply may not choose to attend such meetings and feel they are able to stay informed and participate in local affairs in their own way, it remains striking that 45% of state residents say they have not attended any club, organization or community meeting of any kind over the last year. Still, one in four say they have attended some club or organization meeting at least once a month over the past year.

Again, using the STRID framework, it is likely that simply attending club or organization meetings results in the growth of civic health as Social, Trust, Information and Responsibility components may also be enhanced from attendance at local clubs and organizations.

Attendance is greater at informal events, such as community events including carnivals or cultural events, to which only 19% say they never attend, while 41% attend religious services on at least a monthly basis.

SRI's data is validated by the CPS. The CPS asked whether New Yorkers had attended a public meeting; 8.8% reported having attended at least one in the last year ranking New York State 33rd in the nation. In addition, New York ranks 47th for group involvement with 28% responding yes to group involvement. The most popular groups to be involved in are church and religious groups (14%) and school groups (11%).

Voting: In 2010, the voter registration rate among eligible citizens in New York was 63.8%.³³ With the national registration rate at 65.1%, New York ranked 36th in the country. Voter turnout in New York for the November 2010 election was 43.6%, ranking the state at 37th in the country. Nationally, the voter turnout was 45.5%.



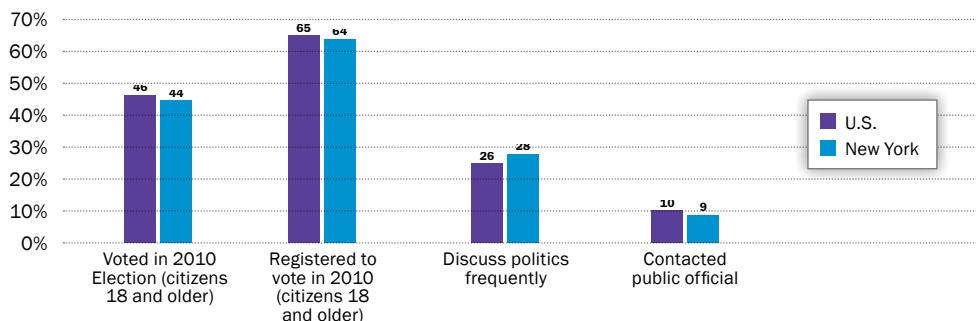
SRI Spotlight

Fifty-five percent of state residents have not attended a public meeting in the last year.

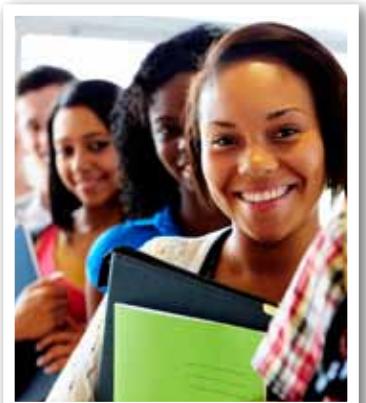


Photo provided by the Office of Academic Community Engagement, Siena College.

Voting and Politics



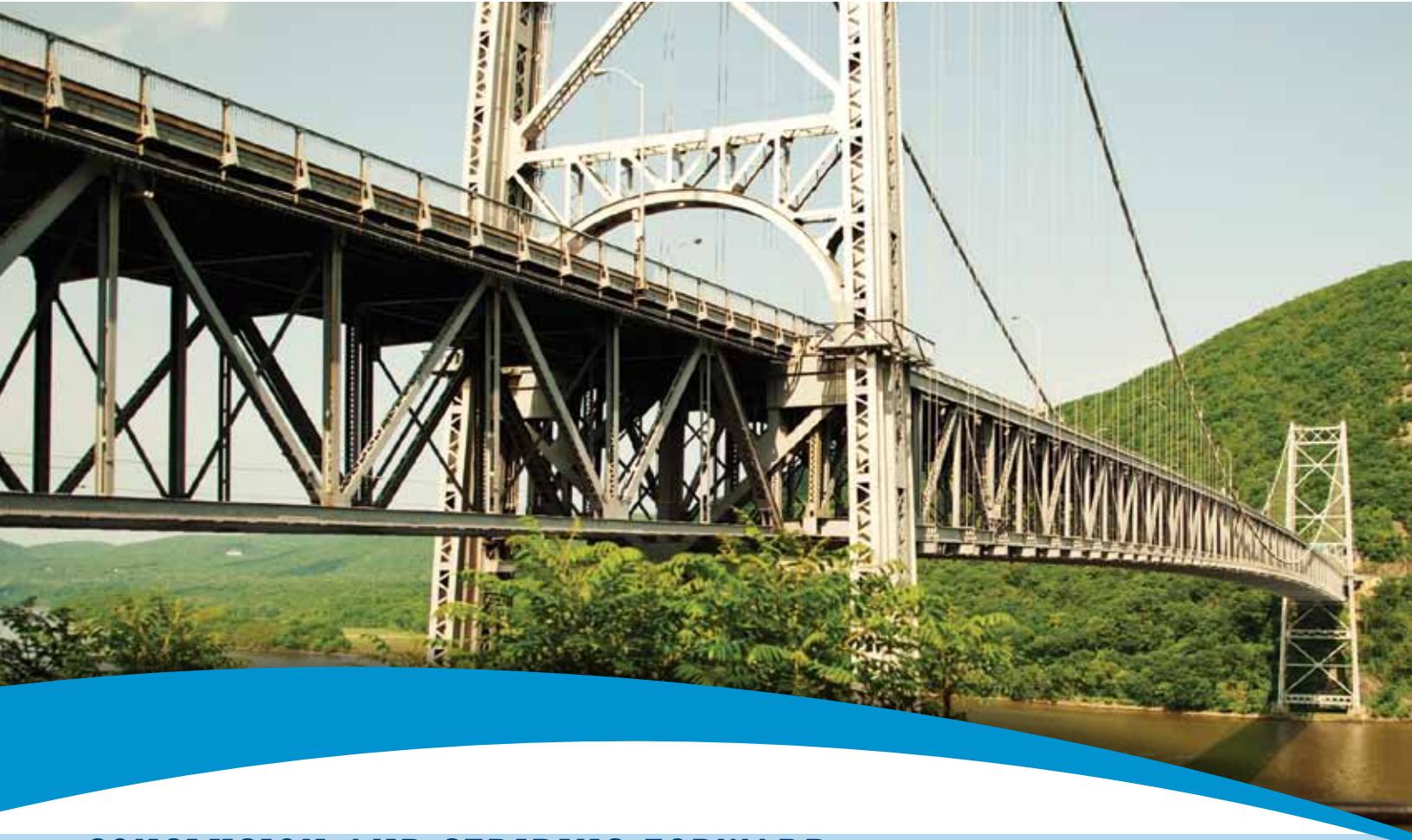
Source: Census Current Population Survey, 2010



New Yorkers with higher family income and higher educational attainment were more likely to vote. Only 33.7% of New Yorkers with less than a high school education voted, which is more than 20 percentage points less than college graduates.³⁴ Young New Yorkers aged 18-29 were about half as likely (28.2%) to vote than those aged 30 or older (49.4%).

Compared to other western industrialized nations, low voter turnout has plagued the United States for many years. Although the solution is not easily found, the relationship to Trust (in government) is certainly clear. It remains somewhat puzzling that nearly 90% of New Yorkers indicate that the state is in either fair or poor fiscal health, but in statewide elections fewer than 50% of registered voters turn out to the polls.

Many reasons may explain comparatively low voter turnout in either the United States or in New York. However, if voters do not trust their government to either understand their needs or to be actively involved in responding to those needs, it follows that some citizens will not see voting as worthwhile. Conversely, as trust in government increases, it follows that voters will turn out in greater numbers as they will see a connection between their participation and the response of their elected officials.



CONCLUSION AND STRIDING FORWARD

The state of civic health in New York has in 2011 remained stable. New Yorkers:

- Continue to be meaningfully socially connected, especially to friends and family through in-person interactions and through the increasing use of technology.
 - Tend to trust local institutions such as the police, local business people and neighbors, although local government of all institutions receives the lowest grades. Despite demanding economic pressures and current concerns about some elements of state and national government, as well as some of the corporate structure, New Yorkers currently approve of and have high hopes for their current governor.
 - Remain informed about local events through the use of newspapers, television and informal ties. The growth of technological innovations is beginning to point to new and targeted portals of local information.
 - See the need to express the responsibilities of citizenship including charitable giving, involvement in organizations and volunteer activities. But demands on their time, lack of organization and insufficient structure contribute to New Yorkers actually expressing responsibility at a rate that puts the state near the bottom of national rankings.
 - Fail to demonstrate the duties of citizenship including voting, public involvement and participation in clubs and organizations at an increasing rate.
- According to its citizens, New York's economy is weak, and that weakness is posing financial hardships for many of its citizens, curtailing consumer behavior as well as civic health.
 - After a period of political dissatisfaction focused to a great extent on an unpopular governor, New York now has a governor, Andrew Cuomo, who has generated approval, trust and confidence.
 - While the rate at which New Yorkers volunteer for and through organizations is one of the lowest among the 50 states and the District of Columbia, the rate has increased in CPS data and SRI data demonstrates significant numbers of New Yorkers do volunteer.
 - The analysis throughout this report demonstrates that a comprehensive plan to simultaneously increase the Social, Trust, Responsibility, Information and Duty components of life in New York will elevate civic health in the Empire State.

Striding Forward

- The efforts of the State Commission on National and Community Service – measuring the rate of volunteer activity and obstacles to engaging in volunteerism, and more importantly, convening a council of regional volunteer leaders and supplying them with information on how to recruit, train, manage and inspire volunteers – can lead to increased meaningful volunteer activity and fruitful results. This kind of effort should be supported and expanded.
 - We recommend using this report and the STRID framework to establish goals on the local, regional, statewide and organizational levels to advance each component of the STRID and overall civic health.
 - We encourage governmental entities, nonprofit groups, business people and citizens to use this report and to accept the current state of civic health in New York as a challenge. In other words, we look to New Yorkers to use the STRID framework and its components as tools to build connections, overcome obstacles to civic involvement and collectively to strive to stride forward.
 - We encourage private and public entities to provide funding and support to make a wider audience aware of this report, in order to continue advancing dialogue about the STRID framework and its implications and impacts.
 - The additive impact of any aspect of STRID demonstrates the value of all institutions – social service, governmental, educational and private – implementing initiatives as part of a collective effort to enhance civic health in New York.
 - We call for a public awareness campaign that promises that New York institutions and residents will work to increase the rate of volunteering and the impact that those volunteers have on pressing community needs.
-

Many New Yorkers contribute to the civic health of their communities and of the state as a whole. During this enduring period of economic difficulty, it is reassuring that the measured civic health of the state has not declined and that, in some areas such as the rate of volunteering, we see slight increases. We are encouraged by the efforts of many citizens and organizations that work to enhance civic health through their participation, contributions and informal deeds. We look forward to New York, as a whole, accepting the challenge to enhance civic health and recognizing that our collective civic health, shaped by the informal and formal components of citizenship, is as important as economic improvement. New York has many assets to build upon, and we look forward to chronicling the growth in civic health in the Empire State over the coming years.





TECHNICAL NOTES

The New York Civic Health Index is based on The Center of Information & Research on Civic Learning and Engagement (CIRCLE)'s analysis of the 2010 Census *Current Population Survey (CPS)* data and the Siena Research Institute's *Community Participation and Involvement Survey (CPIS)* data. Volunteering estimates are from the CPS September 2010 Volunteering Supplement. Voting and registration data come from CPS November 2010 Voting/Registration Supplement, and all other civic engagement indicators, such as connection to others and group involvement, come from the CPS November 2010 Civic Engagement Supplement. All other indicators are the result of the CPIS, which was conducted July 2011 and polled 1,220 New Yorkers.

The CPS supplements have a large sample — of over 100,000 — and can therefore be used to estimate voting and civic engagement trends among various groups. Any analysis that breaks down the sample into smaller groups (e.g., state, gender, education) will have smaller samples and therefore the margin of error will increase. CPS

sampling is highly complex and accurate estimation of error rates involves many parameters that are not publicly available. State rankings do not take margin of error into consideration, and for many indicators, a clustering effect could cause state's margin of errors to overlap. For the CPIS, the margins of error for major indicators varied from +/- .8% to 1.7%, depending on the sample size and other parameters associated with a specific indicator.

In addition to the CPIS, the Siena Research Institute writes and conducts surveys on numerous topics. This report includes data from a few of these projects including the Siena New York Poll, which measures political trends of New Yorkers, the *Impact of the Economy on New Yorkers Survey*, the *Special National eRollover/Siena Gen X Retirement Planning Study*, and the *Annual Statewide Poll of Holiday Spending Plans*. All SRI data is available at www.sri.edu/sri.



ENDNOTES:

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- ⁵ New York State Consumer Real Estate Sentiment, October 2011, Siena Research Institute, <http://www.siena.edu/pages/6171.asp?item=314339>
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- ⁷ Impact of the Economy on New Yorkers Survey, September 2011, Siena Research Institute, http://www.siena.edu/uploadedfiles/home/Parents_and_Community/Community_Page/SRI/Independent_Research/Econ0811%20Crosstabs.pdf
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- ¹³ Community Participation and Involvement Survey, July 2011, Siena Research Institute.
- ¹⁴ Current Population Survey, 2010, Bureau of the Census, <http://www.census.gov/cps/>
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- ¹⁷ Gallup, 2011, <http://www.gallup.com/poll/148163/americans-confident-military-least-congress.aspx>
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CIVIC HEALTH INDEX

State and Local Partnerships

America's Civic Health Index has been produced nationally since 2006 to measure the level of civic engagement and health of our democracy. As the Civic Health Index is increasingly a part of the dialogue around which policymakers, communities, and the media talk about civic life, the index is increasing in its scope and specificity.

Together with its local partners, NCoC continues to lead and inspire a public dialogue about the future of citizenship in America. NCoC has worked in partnerships in communities across the country.

STATES

Alabama

University of Alabama*
David Mathews Center*
Auburn University*

Arizona

Center for the Future of Arizona

California

California Forward
Center for Civic Education
Center for Individual and Institutional Renewal*
Davenport Institute

Connecticut

Everyday Democracy*
Secretary of the State of Connecticut*

Florida

Florida Joint Center for Citizenship
Bob Graham Center for Public Service
Lou Frey Institute of Politics and Government
John S. and James L. Knight Foundation

Illinois

Citizen Advocacy Center
McCormick Foundation

Indiana

Center on Congress at Indiana University*
Hoosier State Press Association Foundation*
Indiana Bar Foundation*
Indiana Supreme Court*
Indiana University Northwest*

Kentucky

Western Kentucky University*

Maryland

Mannakee Circle Group
Center for Civic Education
Common Cause-Maryland
Maryland Civic Literacy Commission

CITIES

Chicago

McCormick Foundation

Miami

Florida Joint Center for Citizenship
John S. and James L. Knight Foundation
Miami Foundation*

Seattle

Seattle City Club
Boeing Company
Seattle Foundation

Twin Cities

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

Massachusetts

Harvard Institute on Politics*

Minnesota

Center for Democracy and Citizenship

Missouri

Missouri State University

New Hampshire

Carsey Institute

New York

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

North Carolina

North Carolina Civic Education Consortium
Center for Civic Education
NC Center for Voter Education
Democracy NC
NC Campus Compact
Western Carolina University Department of Public Policy

Ohio

Miami University Hamilton

Oklahoma

University of Central Oklahoma
Oklahoma Campus Compact

Pennsylvania

National Constitution Center

Texas

University of Texas at San Antonio

Virginia

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

CIVIC HEALTH INDICATORS WORKING GROUP

Justin Bibb

Special Assistant for Education and Economic Development for the County Executive, Cuyahoga County, Ohio

Harry Boyte

Director, Center for Democracy and Citizenship

John Bridgeland

CEO, Civic Enterprises
Chairman, Board of Advisors, National Conference on Citizenship
Former Assistant to the President of the United States & Director, Domestic Policy Council & USA Freedom Corps

Nelda Brown

Executive Director, National Service-Learning Partnership at the Academy for Educational Development

Kristen Cambell

Chief Program Officer, National Conference on Citizenship

Doug Dobson

Executive Director, Florida Joint Center for Citizenship

David Eisner

President and CEO, National Constitution Center

Maya Enista Smith

CEO, Mobilize.org

William Galston

Senior Fellow, Brookings Institution
Former Deputy Assistant to the President of the United States for Domestic Policy

Stephen Goldsmith

Former Deputy Mayor of New York City
Daniel Paul Professor of Government, Kennedy School of Government at Harvard University
Director, Innovations in American Government
Former Mayor of Indianapolis

Robert Grimm, Jr.

Professor of the Practice of Philanthropy and Nonprofit Management, University of Maryland

Lloyd Johnston

Research Professor and Distinguished Research Scientist at the University of Michigan's Institute for Social Research
Principal Investigator of the Monitoring the Future Study

Kei Kawashima-Ginsberg

Lead Researcher, Center for Information and Research on Civic Learning and Engagement (CIRCLE) at the Jonathan M. Tisch College of Citizenship and Public Service at Tufts University

Peter Levine

Director, Center for Information and Research on Civic Learning and Engagement (CIRCLE) at the Jonathan M. Tisch College of Citizenship and Public Service at Tufts University

Mark Hugo Lopez

Associate Director of the Pew Hispanic Center
Research Professor, University of Maryland's School of Public Affairs

Sean Parker

Co-Founder and Chairman of Causes on Facebook/MySpace
Founding President of Facebook

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, Saguaro Seminar
Author of *Bowling Alone: The Collapse and Revival of American Community*

Thomas Sander

Executive Director, the Saguaro Seminar, Harvard University

David B. Smith

Executive Director, National Conference on Citizenship
Founder, Mobilize.org

Heather Smith

Executive Director, Rock the Vote

Max Stier

Executive Director, Partnership for Public Service

Michael Weiser

Chairman, National Conference on Citizenship

Jonathan Zaff

Vice President for Research, America's Promise Alliance



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