

# DISTRICT OF COLUMBIA CIVIC HEALTH INDEX



  
**Serve DC**  
THE MAYOR'S OFFICE ON VOLUNTEERISM

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



## ABOUT THE PARTNERS

### NATIONAL CONFERENCE ON CITIZENSHIP

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

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Serve DC — The Mayor's Office on Volunteerism promotes service and volunteerism as sustainable solutions to meeting community needs. Serve DC seeks to fulfill its mission by transforming communities through service. We transform communities by leveraging national service grant funds, programs, and resources to promote and support AmeriCorps, AmeriCorps VISTA, Senior Corps, and other Corporation for National & Community Service programs and initiatives; facilitating meaningful volunteer opportunities for anyone who lives, works, or visits the District of Columbia; and by training residents to support our Emergency Response System in the event of a disaster or emergency.



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## INTRODUCTION

Washington, DC is the home to all three branches of the United States government. The District of Columbia is a symbol of political, economic, and civic freedom to millions of people across the world.

To more than 640,000 individuals of all ages, races, genders, ethnicities, sexual orientations, and economic backgrounds it is also home. The District is comprised of a dynamic and diverse demographic of people that create a unique community. This community illustrates how far this nation has come and how far it still needs to go in order to live up to our Founders' vision of democracy and justice for all.

As with any city or community, the District's civic health - a measure of the well-being of a community, state, or nation - is vital. A city, state, or nation with strong civic health is more socially and economically resilient, has more effective governance, and provides a better quality of life for its residents. A weak level of civic health can lead to barriers in addressing public problems and meeting community needs.

Researchers have pointed to a number of useful ways to measure civic health. For the purposes of this report, we focus on five broad elements:

- **Service and Volunteering:** To what extent are citizens stepping forward, engaging in service to and with fellow community members?
- **Group Membership and Leadership:** To what extent are citizens joining organizations and other groups that meet on a regular basis? How many are stepping forward as leaders of these groups?
- **Connecting to Information:** To what extent are citizens getting informed by connecting to news from print, broadcast, and online sources, as well as by talking with neighbors and friends about political issues?
- **Social Connectedness:** To what extent are citizens inclined to interact with neighbors, working together informally to fix things in the community—or even just to know one another?
- **Political Action:** To what extent are citizens voting and taking other political actions beyond election day, such as talking or meeting with office holders, writing letters to the editor for publication in newspapers, or attending rallies or meetings?

Taken together, these elements give a sense of the District's civic health. This report, commissioned by Serve DC and the National Conference on Citizenship, is an effort to understand the civic health of the District. It aims to elevate discussion and dialogue about community engagement rates, civic strengths and challenges, and what can be done to increase opportunities for all residents to be involved in bettering their community. The District is one of 25 states and 9 cities nationwide engaged in such efforts to use data to drive dialogue and action in service of a stronger community.

*Note: Data in this report pull from multiple collection years. In every instance the report uses the most recent data available to highlight the District's civic health. Further information is available in the endnotes section.*

## Executive Summary of Key Findings

1. Volunteering is strong (32.2%) and above the national average, but highly segmented based on education and income.
2. Charitable giving was 53.2%, placing the District in the bottom half of states for this indicator.
3. Though District residents do not have full congressional representation, they had the highest voter turnout rate (75.9%) in the 2012 presidential election and are highly engaged in local elections (4th of 51), regardless of their backgrounds.
4. District residents are highly engaged in political activities compared to the rest of the nation. Washingtonians rank 1st in discussion of political issues, 4th in boycotting products due to social causes, and 4th in contact with officials.
5. There are large demographic divides in non-political means of engagement, such as discussion of political topics or expression of opinions using online forums.
6. Washingtonians are among the least neighborly citizens in the country. Ranking at the bottom for trust in neighbors and 49th out of 51 for exchanging favors with neighbors. However, Washingtonians with fewer means and less education seemingly build relationships with neighbors as much as, or sometimes more than those with more means.
7. District residents have less confidence in major public institutions including corporations and public schools than other states. However, Washingtonians' confidence in the media is the highest in the country.

See Table 1 for percentage point estimates of each civic health indicator, along with a moving average of the past three assessments (when data are available).



**Table 1: Percent estimates, rankings, and moving average for the civic health indicators**

		Latest Estimates 2011-2012	Latest Ranking* 2011-2012	Moving Avg. 2010-2012 pooled <sup>2</sup>
<b>VOLUNTEERING, GIVING, &amp; GROUP MEMBERSHIP</b>	Volunteer	32.2%	15th	29.1%
	Give \$25 or more to charity	53.2%	28th	49.5%
	Attend at least one public meeting	17.5%	5th	15.7%
	Hold a leadership role in an organization	15.9%	7th	13.9%
	Group association <sup>3</sup>	41.3%	24th	40.9%
<b>VOTING, REGISTRATION, &amp; POLITICAL INVOLVEMENT</b>	Voter turnout (2012)	75.9%	1st	N/A
	Voter registration (2012)	83.4%	2nd	N/A
	Vote in local elections most or all of the time <sup>1</sup>	70.0%	4th	N/A
	Talk about politics with friends and family frequently <sup>1,4</sup>	46.1%	1st	46.8%
	Express opinions on Internet frequently	13.2%	2nd	N/A
	Contact or visit a public official <sup>1</sup>	21.0%	4th	N/A
	Buy or boycott product(s) <sup>1</sup>	20.3%	4th	N/A
<b>INTERACTIONS WITH NEIGHBORS, FRIENDS OR FAMILY</b>	Eat dinner with a member of household frequently <sup>1,4</sup>	78.2%	51st	80.2%
	See or hear from family and friends frequently <sup>1,4</sup>	82.3%	14th	N/A
	Work with neighbors to fix or improve something in the community	16.3%	5th	14.9%
	Exchange (giving or receiving) favors with neighbors frequently <sup>1,4</sup>	11.1%	49th	11.3%
	Trust all or most neighbors <sup>1</sup>	35.2%	51st	N/A
<b>CONFIDENCE IN INSTITUTIONS</b>	Express confidence in media (some or a great deal of confidence) <sup>1</sup>	72.4%	1st	N/A
	Express confidence in schools (some or a great deal of confidence) <sup>1</sup>	86.2%	43rd	N/A
	Express confidence in corporations (some or a great deal of confidence) <sup>1</sup>	55.0%	48th	N/A

\*District rankings are classified with states. For all of the indicators from the Civic Engagement Supplement (such as talking about politics and doing favors for neighbors), data are only available up to 2011, as those questions were not asked in 2012. Please see end notes for full description of superscript annotations.

# VOLUNTEERING & GIVING

The District ranked 15th in volunteering in 2012, with residents volunteering at a strong rate of 32.2%. An estimated 169,000 residents in total volunteered their time during that year, compared to the national volunteering rate of 26.5%. In 2011, the volunteering rate in the District was 27.2% and the national volunteering rate was 26.8%.

District residents were also more likely to work with neighbors on a community issue than the national average. However, we found that the District's service sector might be somewhat segmented, meaning that different populations are volunteering in specific niches with less crossover of groups. Here are some notable findings:

Religious organizations are not currently a common place for volunteering and service in the District, compared to the nation as a whole. Nationwide, 33.4% of volunteers spend their time serving through religious organizations, but in the District, just 18.2% do so.

However, African Americans are more likely to volunteer through religious organizations; 28.6% volunteer through churches, mosques, and synagogues compared to 14.0% of White non-Hispanic residents.

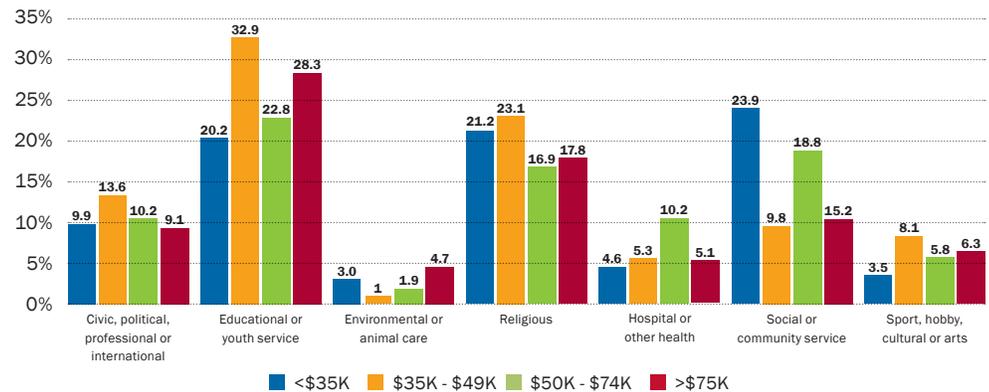
Furthermore, 40.3% of the Silent generation (1925-1942) volunteers serve through religious organizations, compared to the 18.6% of the overall District population.

The types of activities volunteers engage in are segmented somewhat by education and income. For example, low-income residents tended to provide general office help as a volunteer while high-income residents described their activities as "professional services." Providing professional services was also common among older volunteers (Boomers and Silent generations, compared to Millennials).



Volunteers from different social classes seem to be doing service via different venues and different activities.

## Types of organizations where volunteers served by household income

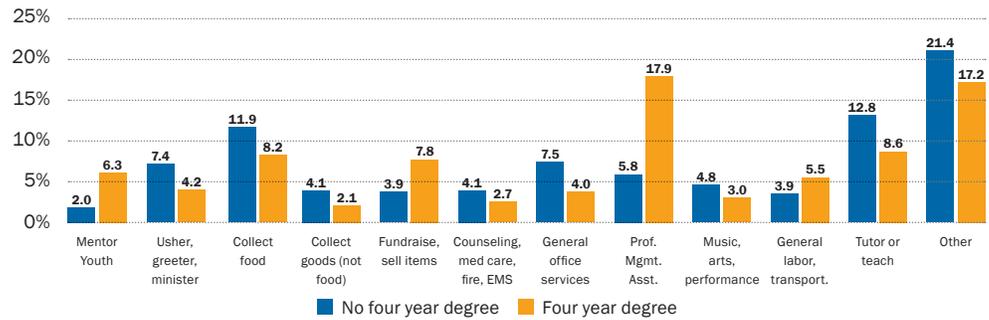


In charitable giving, the District ranked 28th, with 53.2% of residents giving \$25 or more in charitable donations in 2012. Nationally, 51.8% of Americans gave \$25 or more in charitable donations. Last year, 46.7% of District residents gave at this level.



Why do you volunteer? Do you see your volunteerism as a way to make connections and contributions to your community? What is the impact? What are the best ways to encourage more people to volunteer? What are ways that residents of different backgrounds can come together and learn together through service?

### Types of volunteering by educational attainment



*“What this illustrates is just how generous our community is. We have so much to be proud of. We give, above the national averages, of both our time and treasure. While these numbers are very positive, I'd like to see the District of Columbia lead the pack in both areas – giving and volunteering – in the coming years.”*

*-- Terri Lee Freeman*

*President, Community Foundation of the National Capital Region*

## VOTING & REGISTRATION

Although the District does not have a voting representative in Congress, it led the nation in voter participation. In the 2012 presidential election, 75.9% of the District’s eligible residents (i.e., U.S. citizens aged 18 and over) reported voting, and 83.4% said they were registered to vote. The District ranked 1st in voter turnout and 2nd in voter registration. The national rates were 61.8% and 71.2%, respectively. Nationwide, voter turnout declined slightly compared to 2008, when 63.6% voted and 71.0% were registered. In the District, however, voter registration increased by 5.1 percentage points and turnout increased by 1.8 points, meaning that electoral participation in the District differed from the national trend.

### Voting & registration at a glance\*

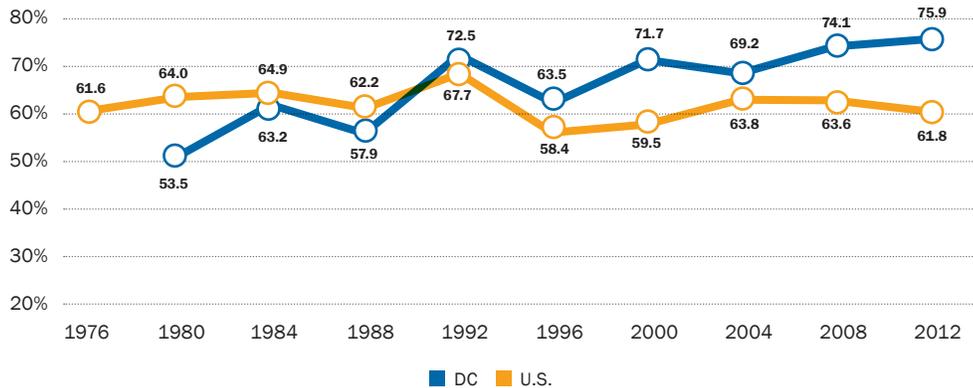
	Ranking	DC	US
Voter turnout (2012)	1st	75.9%	61.8%
Voter registration (2012)	2nd	83.4%	71.2%
Vote in local elections most or all of the time <sup>1</sup>	4th	70.0%	57.8%

\*For all of the indicators from the Civic Engagement Supplement (such as talking about politics and doing favors for neighbors), data are only available up to 2011, as those questions were not asked in 2012. Please see end notes for full description of superscript annotations.

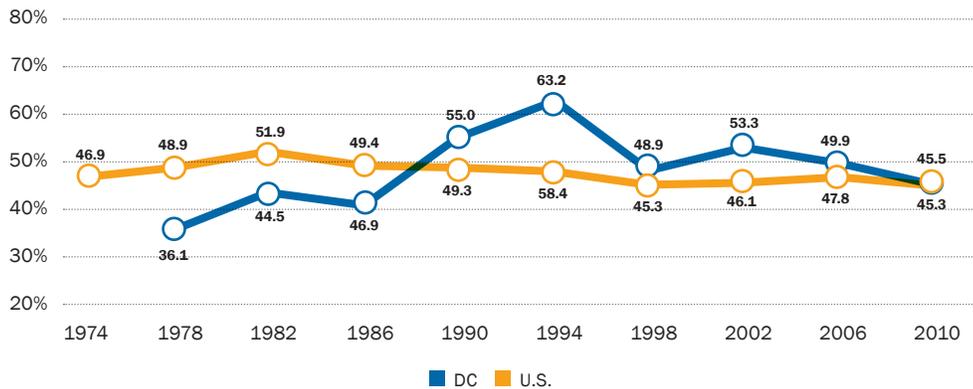
In 2010, Washingtonians’ electoral participation was on par with the nation as a whole. The District ranked 32nd in voter turnout, with a rate of 45.3% for citizens aged 18 and over. That year, the national turnout rate was 45.5% for all citizens aged 18 and older. In 2010, the District ranked 20th among all states in the rate of citizens who are registered to vote, at 66.9%. The national voter registration rate for all eligible citizens in 2010 was 65.1%.

The District ranked 4th in the local voting rate, with 70.0% of District residents saying that they sometimes or always voted in local elections, such as for mayor or school board, compared with 57.8% of residents nationally.

### Voter turnout 1972-2012 (presidential)



### Voter turnout 1974-2010 (midterm)



Although the District does not have a voting representative in Congress, it led the nation in voter participation.



What does the willingness to vote show about the civic spirit of District residents? If they are willing to show up at the polls, but not to volunteer or engage in other ways, what are the implications for the efficacy of community impact? How can this gap be bridged?



*“To have an American jurisdiction in which 640,000 citizens enthusiastically voted and were ranked number one in the nation for voter turnout in the 2012 Presidential election, and realize they do not have an equal voice and vote in Congress is a great civil injustice. In the District of Columbia, we raise families, pay taxes, fight and die in wars, yet we are denied voting representation in Congress. Time and again, citizens of the District of Columbia have shown great commitment to democracy and our nation by showing up to the polls, in numbers that rival national voter participation. As active citizens, we must continue to harness the voice of DC citizens to advocate for our right to vote and demand full voting representation in Congress for the District of Columbia.”*

-- Kimberly Perry  
Executive Director, DC Vote

## POLITICAL INVOLVEMENT

As one might expect, District residents are highly engaged in political activities, ranging from discussion of political issues, boycotting products due to social causes, local voting, and contact with officials.

Photography credit: Daemmrich Photography



### 4th

The District ranked 4th in each of the following categories: voting in local elections, contacting or visiting a public official, and buying or boycotting products.

#### Political involvement at a glance\*

	Ranking	DC	US
Talk about politics w/ friends & family (freq) <sup>1,4</sup>	1st	46.1%	29.3%
Express opinions on Internet (freq)	2nd	13.2%	8.0%
Contact of visit a public official <sup>1</sup>	4th	21.0%	12.3%
Buy or boycott product(s) <sup>1</sup>	4th	20.3%	12.1%

\*For all of the indicators from the Civic Engagement Supplement (such as talking about politics and doing favors for neighbors), data are only available up to 2011, as those questions were not asked in 2012. Please see end notes for full description of superscript annotations.

In 2011, the District ranked 4th in the nation, with 21.0% of its residents reporting having contacted or visited a public official at any level of government. Nationally, only 12.3% reported doing so. In 2010, the national rate for this indicator was 9.9%, while in the District it was 18.0%.

The District ranked 4th in the rate of people who bought or boycotted a product or service in 2011 because of a socially or politically conscious view or stance: 20.3% of individuals engaged in this behavior, compared to 12.1% nationally. In 2010, 10.0% of people nationwide reported making such choices, compared to 16.7% in the District.

One way residents engage in politics is through dialogue. The District ranked 1st in the rate of people who talk about politics with friends and family at least a few times a week: 46.1%. The national rate for this indicator was 29.3%. In 2010 that rate was 26.0%, while in the District the 2010 estimate was 42.1%.

There are large demographic divides in other means of engagement, such as discussion of political topics or expression of opinions using online forums.

Four-year degree holders are more than twice as likely to use the Internet to express their opinions as those with a high school education or less (16.6% vs. 7.2%). They are also almost four times as likely to contact a public official about issues in the community (29.7% vs. 8.1%).

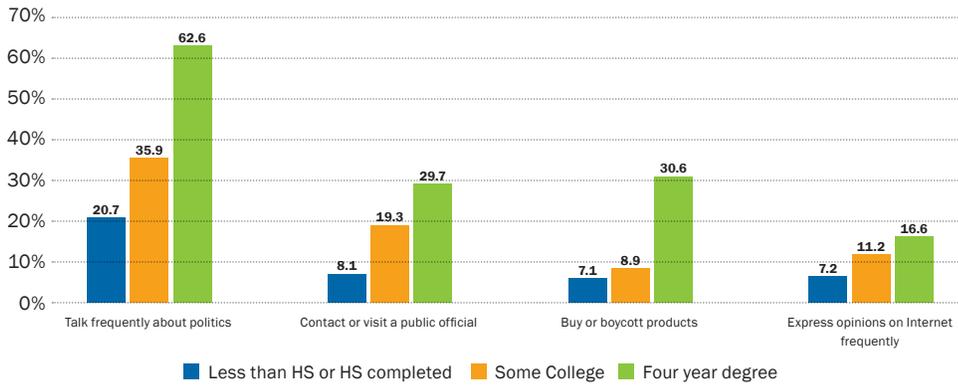
Regular discussion of political issues among District residents with a high school education or less is relatively uncommon (20.7%, “frequently”). However, it is three times as common among four-year degree holders (62.6%).



*“It is no great surprise to me that District residents engage in politics through dialogue and action at rates higher than many of other places around the country. Washingtonians understand that politics is really about people – creating better education, and economic and quality of life opportunities for all people. We care about each other and making it a great place to live for everyone.”*

*-- Patrick Mara  
Ward 1 Representative,  
District of Columbia State Board of Education*

## Political involvement by educational attainment



*"It is clear that Washingtonians are one of the main reasons the city continues to be a vibrant place to live, engaged in making this a better place to live, both for themselves and for others. The historic rehabilitation of Old Naval Hospital on Capitol Hill into Hill Center, a vibrant home for arts, culture, and education, is a prime example of how a concerned group of neighbors banded together to impact positive change in their neighborhood."*

*-- Diana B. Ingraham*

*Executive Director, Hill Center at the Old Naval Hospital*



What does it say about our community if people will talk about politics with family and friends at a high rate, but don't eat dinner with their families as regularly? What can the District teach other areas about the perceived ethic that exists here that "politics are about people?"



## INTERACTIONS WITH NEIGHBORS

District residents ranked very high in neighborhood engagement through meetings or projects, but ranked much lower in other indicators like informal connections, trust in their neighbors, and time spent with their family at the dinner table.

### Interactions with neighbors, friends, or family at a glance\*

	Ranking	DC	US
Work with neighbors to fix or improve something in the community	5th	16.3%	8.4%
Attended a public meeting	5th	17.5%	9.0%
Exchange (giving or receiving) favors with neighbors frequently <sup>1,4</sup>	49th	11.1%	14.1%
Trust all or most neighbors <sup>1</sup>	51st	35.2%	56.7%

\*For all of the indicators from the Civic Engagement Supplement (such as talking about politics and doing favors for neighbors), data are only available up to 2011, as those questions were not asked in 2012. Please see end notes for full description of superscript annotations.

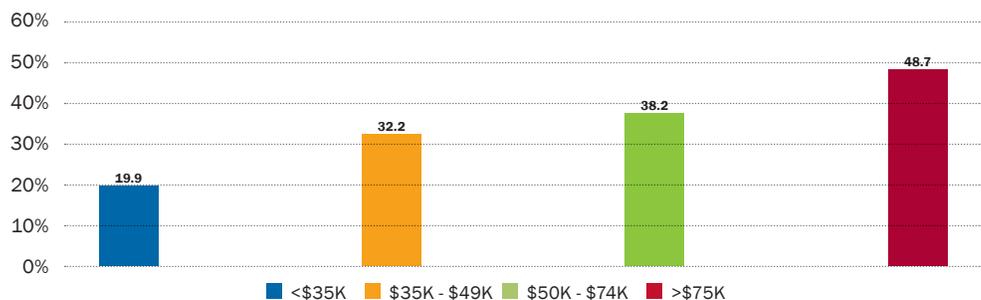
In 2012, 16.3% of District residents worked with neighbors to improve or fix something in their community. The District ranked 5th on this indicator; nationally, only 8.4% of U.S. residents worked with their neighbors. In 2011, the District ranked 7th, with 14.8% of residents involved with their neighbors in this way.

Meanwhile, 17.5% of District residents attended at least one public meeting where community issues were discussed and ranked 5th on this indicator in 2012. Nationally, 9.0% attended such meetings. In 2011, the District ranked 8th, as 15.2% attended public meetings.

On the other hand, in 2011, the District ranked 49th in the rate of people who exchanged favors with their neighbors a few times a week or more (i.e., “frequently”), with 11.1%. Nationwide, 14.1% of Americans say they frequently exchange favors with their neighbors. In 2010, the District of Columbia estimate for this indicator was 13.5%, while nationally the rate was 15.2%.

The District ranked 51st (last) in the percentage of people who reported trusting all or most of their neighbors in 2011, with 35.2%. Nationwide, 56.7% of Americans said they trusted their neighbors. This was the first year that this question was included in the survey.

### Trust all or most neighbors by income



How often do you interact with your neighbors? How can we remove barriers and interact with your neighbors more frequently? What factors contribute to this lack of trust and how can it be overcome? What does this lack of trust mean for the District’s ability to engage with their neighbors? What are the best ways to build trust?

# COMMUNICATIONS WITH FRIENDS OR FAMILY

In 2011, 82.3% of District residents said they saw or heard from friends and family at least a few times a week, which ranked the District 14th on this indicator. At the national level, 79.0% of Americans said they saw or heard from family or friends a few times a week or more. This was the first year that the question was included in the survey.

## Communications with friends or family at a glance\*

	Ranking	DC	US
See or hear from family and friends frequently <sup>1,4</sup>	14th	82.3%	79.0%
Eat dinner with a member of household frequently <sup>1,4</sup>	51st	78.2%	89.5%

\*For all of the indicators from the Civic Engagement Supplement (such as talking about politics and doing favors for neighbors), data are only available up to 2011, as those questions were not asked in 2012. Please see end notes for full description of superscript annotations.

When it comes to social capital indicators, Washingtonians with less means and education seem to have ways to build relationships with neighbors as much as, or sometimes more than those with more means.

For example, 52.4% of District residents with a high school education or less talked frequently with their neighbors, compared to 46.5% of four-year degree holders.

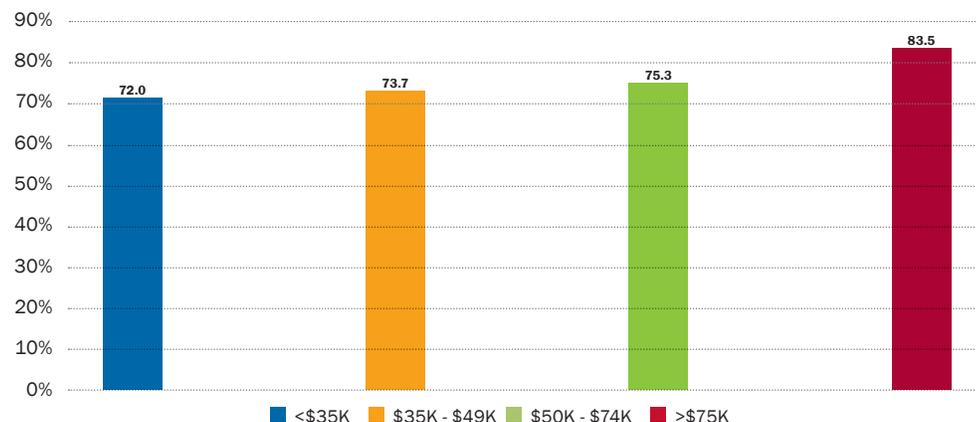
Given the data trends in volunteering, the District's civic infrastructure may be offering ways to build horizontal social capital (i.e., bonding capital), but not as much vertical social capital (i.e., loose networks that cross demographic and geographical boundaries, also termed bridging capital).

However, the District ranked 51st (last) in the rate of people who reported eating dinner with their family a few times a week or more, with a rate of 78.2% in 2011. The national estimate for this indicator was 89.5%. In 2010, the national rate for this indicator was 88.1%, and in the District, it was 79.4%.



What factors do you think contribute to these statistics? Do these statistics imply something negative or positive about our community, particularly given the lack of trust of neighbors highlighted earlier? Do Washingtonians stay connected in other ways?

## Eat dinner with family and friends by household income



# 52.4%

of District residents with a high school education or less talked frequently with their neighbors, compared to 46.5% of 4-year degree holders.

## GROUP MEMBERSHIP

In 2011, 41.3% of the residents in the District said that they belonged to at least one type of organization, and 15.9% said they had a leadership role in an organization as an officer or committee member. Nationally, 39.2% participated in one or more types of groups and 10.6% took leadership roles in the community. The District ranked 24th in group membership and 7th in leadership rate.

### Group membership at a glance\*

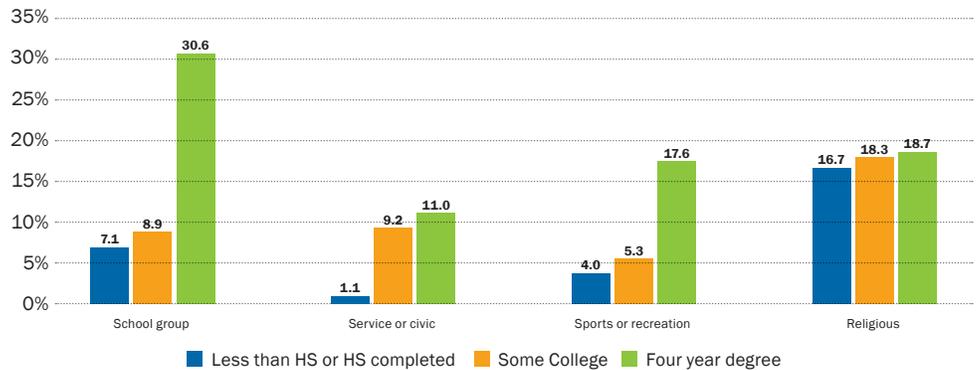
	Ranking	DC	US
Hold a leadership role in a community organization	7th	15.9%	10.6%
Group membership <sup>3</sup>	24th	41.3%	39.2%

\*For all of the indicators from the Civic Engagement Supplement (such as talking about politics and doing favors for neighbors), data are only available up to 2011, as those questions were not asked in 2012. Please see end notes for full description of superscript annotations.

There is a large gap in community group participation and leadership. For example, 1.1% of District residents with high school education or less participate in a service or civic organization, compared to 11% of four-year degree holders. Just 5% of residents with a high school education or less took a leadership role, while 22.7% of four-year degree holders did so.

Given that District residents have far more formal education than national average, this means that people with less formal education may be largely invisible in community leadership roles.

### Group membership by educational attainment



*“Engaged residents make a tremendous impact on the quality of life in the District. Our city is a better and more just place because of the efforts of individuals and organizations that are committed to civic engagement.”*

*-- Mayor Vincent C. Gray  
District of Columbia*



What organizations or civic associations do you belong to? How can community organizations position themselves to continue making positive impacts on the District for years to come? What can institutions do to attract more citizens to become engaged members?

Given that District residents have far more formal education than national average, the data points out that people with less formal education may be largely invisible in community leadership roles.

# CONFIDENCE IN PUBLIC INSTITUTIONS

In 2011, new measures were introduced to assess residents' confidence in public institutions. The District ranked 48th in residents' confidence in corporations, with 55.0% of people reporting that they were very or somewhat confident. The national rate was 62.0%.

## Confidence in institutions at a glance\*

	Ranking	DC	US
Express confidence in media (some or a great deal of confidence) <sup>1</sup>	1st	72.4%	62.0%
Express confidence in schools (some or a great deal of confidence) <sup>1</sup>	43rd	86.2%	88.0%
Express confidence in corporations (some or a great deal of confidence) <sup>1</sup>	48th	55.0%	62.0%

\*For all of the indicators from the Civic Engagement Supplement (such as talking about politics and doing favors for neighbors), data are only available up to 2011, as those questions were not asked in 2012. Please see end notes for full description of superscript annotations.

The District ranked 43rd in confidence in the public school system: 86.2% of people reported that they were very or somewhat confident in the public school system, compared to 88.0% of U.S. residents as a whole. Though the District's national ranking is low on this indicator, readers should note that the difference between the local and national percentages is very small, meaning that most states' residents, when averaged, showed a similar level of confidence in public schools across the country. On the other hand, the District ranked 1st in confidence in the media, as 72.4% of people reported that they were very or somewhat confident, compared to 62.0% nationwide.<sup>5</sup>



*“DC Public Schools (DCPS) is on the rise. We are excited about the progress we have made and confident it will continue. The more our community learns about DCPS, the more they see all the ways in which our students are growing and thriving.”*

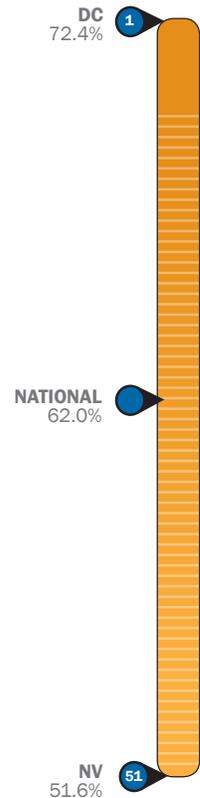
– Kaya Henderson  
Chancellor, DC Public Schools

## CONCLUSION

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

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

## CONFIDENCE IN THE MEDIA





## DISTRICT OF COLUMBIA CIVIC HEALTH INDEX 2013

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

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

### TECHNICAL NOTES

Unless otherwise noted, findings presented in this Report are based on CIRCLE's analysis of the Census Current Population Survey (CPS) data. Any and all errors are our own. Volunteering estimates are from CPS September Volunteering Supplement, 2002-2012, voting and registration data come from the CPS November Voting/Registration Supplement, 1972-2012, and all other civic engagement indicators, such as discussion of political information and connection to neighbors, come from the 2011 CPS Civic Engagement Supplement.

Using a probability selected sample of about 60,000 occupied households, the CPS collects monthly data on employment and demographic characteristics of the nation. Depending on the CPS supplement, the single-year DC CPS sample size used for

this Report ranges from 1,133 (civic engagement supplement) to 1,242 (volunteer supplement), 1,385 (voting supplement) residents from across the district. This sample is then weighted to representative population demographics for the district. Estimates for the volunteering indicators (e.g., volunteering, working with neighbors, making donations) are based on U.S. residents ages 16 and older. Estimates for civic engagement and social connection indicators (e.g., favors with neighbors, discuss politics) are based on U.S. residents ages 18 and older. Voting and registration statistics are based on U.S. citizens who are 18 and older (eligible voters). When we examined the relationship between educational attainment and engagement, estimates are based on adults ages 25 and older, based on the assumption younger people may be completing their education.



Because we draw from multiple sources of data with varying sample sizes, we are not able to compute one margin of error for the District across all indicators. Any analysis that breaks down the sample into smaller groups (e.g., gender, education) will have smaller samples and therefore the margin of error will increase. Data for some indicators are pooled from multiple years (2009-2011 or 2010-2012) for a more reliable estimate when sample sizes for certain cross tabulations may have been small. Furthermore, national rankings, while useful in benchmarking, may be small in range, with one to two percentage points separating the state/district ranked first from the state/district ranked last. Although Washington D.C. is not a state, the Census treats the district as one of the states. Therefore, we calculated ranking for DC that compares the districts alongside all the states.

It is also important to emphasize that our margin of error estimates are approximate, as CPS sampling is highly complex and accurate estimation of error rates involves many parameters that are not publicly available.

## A WORD ABOUT RECOMMENDATIONS

NCoC encourages our partners to consider how civic health data can inform dialogue and action in their communities, and to take an evidence-based approach to helping our communities and country thrive. While we encourage our partners to consider and offer specific recommendations and calls to action in our reports, we are not involved in shaping these recommendations. The opinions and recommendations expressed by our partners do not necessarily reflect those of NCoC.

## A FINAL WORD

This *Report* should be a conversation-starter. The data and ideas presented here raise as many questions as they answer. We encourage government entities, community groups, business people, leaders of all kinds, and individual citizens to treat this *Report* as a first step toward building more robust civic health in the District of Columbia.

## ENDNOTES

- <sup>1</sup> For all of the indicators from the Civic Engagement Supplement (such as talking about politics and doing favors for neighbors), data are only available up to 2011, as those questions were not asked in 2012.
- <sup>2</sup> “Pooled” estimates are estimated rates of engagement over the three most recent years. It is calculated from a combined dataset from 2010, 2011, and 2012, when available. If the 2012 data are not available, we use 2009, 2010, and 2011 pooled data. We do not calculate pooled estimates for voting because voting rates from Midterm and Presidential years are often too different to combine.
- <sup>3</sup> The percentage point estimate refers to the portion of people who said they belong to any of the groups presented (religious, school, neighborhood, civic, or sports/recreation).
- <sup>4</sup> Frequently is defined as a few times a week or more.

# CIVIC HEALTH INDEX

## State and Local Partnerships

NCoC began America's Civic Health Index in 2006 to measure the level of civic engagement and health of our democracy. In 2009, NCoC was incorporated into the Edward M. Kennedy Serve America Act and directed to expand this civic health assessment in partnership with the Corporation for National and Community Service and the U.S. Census Bureau.

NCoC now works with partners in more than 30 communities nationwide to use civic data to lead and inspire a public dialogue about the future of citizenship in America and to drive sustainable civic strategies.

### STATES

#### Alabama

University of Alabama  
David Mathews Center  
Auburn University

#### Arizona

Center for the Future of Arizona

#### California

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

#### Colorado

Metropolitan State University of Denver

#### Connecticut

Everyday Democracy  
Secretary of the State of Connecticut

#### District of Columbia

ServeDC

#### Florida

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

#### Georgia

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

#### Illinois

Citizen Advocacy Center  
McCormick Foundation

#### Indiana

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

#### Kentucky

Commonwealth of Kentucky,  
Secretary of State's Office  
Institute for Citizenship  
& Social Responsibility,  
Western Kentucky University  
Kentucky Advocates for Civic Education  
McConnell Center, University of Louisville

#### Maryland

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

#### Massachusetts

Harvard Institute of Politics

#### Michigan

Michigan Nonprofit Association  
Michigan Campus Compact  
Michigan Community Service Commission  
Volunteer Centers of Michigan  
Council of Michigan Foundations  
The LEAGUE Michigan

#### Minnesota

Center for Democracy and Citizenship

#### Missouri

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

#### Nebraska

Nebraskans for Civic Reform

#### New Hampshire

Carsey Institute

#### New York

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

#### North Carolina

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

#### Ohio

Miami University Hamilton Center for  
Civic Engagement

#### Oklahoma

University of Central Oklahoma  
Oklahoma Campus Compact

#### Pennsylvania

Center for Democratic Deliberation  
National Constitution Center

#### South Carolina

University of South Carolina Upstate

#### Texas

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

#### Virginia

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

### ISSUE SPECIFIC

#### Latinos Civic Health Index

Carnegie Corporation

#### Millennials Civic Health Index

Mobilize.org  
Harvard Institute of Politics  
CIRCLE

#### Economic Health

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

## CITIES

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### Chicago

McCormick Foundation

### Kansas City & Saint Louis

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

### Miami

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

### Seattle

Seattle City Club  
Boeing Company  
Seattle Foundation

### Twin Cities

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

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*Connecting People. Strengthening Our Country.*



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**NATIONAL &  
COMMUNITY  
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