

# 2016 OHIO CIVIC HEALTH INDEX™





## ABOUT THE PARTNERS

The 2016 *Ohio Civic Health Index Report* (OCHI) is the product of an ongoing partnership between the National Conference on Citizenship (NCoC) – a Washington, D.C.-based organization chartered by Congress in 1953 – and Miami University, a public institution located in southwestern Ohio. As its title suggests, the Report, now in its sixth iteration, provides Ohioans with a periodic assessment of the degree to which Buckeye State residents forge bonds with their fellow citizens, interact with their local communities, and participate meaningfully in political and civic affairs. By examining various statewide indicators of civic engagement – including rates of volunteerism, charitable giving, group participation, voting behavior, non-voting political action, and informal social connectedness – the 2016 *Ohio Civic Health Index Report* presents educators, policymakers, and community leaders with a multi-faceted look at the strength of our communities and the overall vitality of our democracy. When appropriate, the Report provides benchmarks for comparison with the recent past in Ohio and with similar findings from other states.

Except where otherwise indicated below, the data reported in the 2016 *Ohio Civic Health Index Report* was collected through the Current Population Survey, a joint effort of the U.S. Census Bureau and the U.S. Department of Labor's Bureau of Labor Statistics.<sup>1</sup> This Ohio-focused report is also part of a broader national effort to assess Americans' civic commitments over time. In 2006, NCoC began *America's Civic Health Index* – the leading national barometer of Americans' levels of volunteering, voting, involvement in organizations, and trust in government and other community institutions. In April 2009, President Barack Obama signed the Edward M. Kennedy Serve America Act into law, which directed NCoC to work in partnership with the Corporation for National and Community Service (CNCS) on an annual civic health assessment for the nation as a whole. Consequently, NCoC and CNCS have jointly produced a comprehensive report entitled *Volunteering and Civic Life in America* – available at [volunteeringinamerica.gov](http://volunteeringinamerica.gov) – every year since 2010.

## 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 nationwide network of partners involved in a cutting-edge civic health initiative and our cross-sector conferences. At the core of our joint efforts is the belief that every person has the ability to help their community and country thrive.

### CENTER FOR CIVIC ENGAGEMENT AT MIAMI UNIVERSITY HAMILTON

Since 2009, the Center for Civic Engagement at Miami University's Hamilton campus has led the University's efforts in planning, preparing, and disseminating the periodic *Ohio Civic Health Index Report*. The Center for Civic Engagement views its participation in this project as a key part of its mission to engage actively in Ohio's communities, meet Ohioans' educational needs, and work collaboratively with others to identify and address community problems. Beyond its involvement with the OCHI, the Center sponsors a wide range of civic education and engagement initiatives throughout the year. It also operates the University's Downtown Center in Hamilton – an innovative 'third space' that offers a comprehensive mix of public educational, arts, civic, and cultural programs in the city's urban core. For its sustained engagement with southwestern Ohio communities, Miami University Hamilton received the coveted Community Engagement Classification from the Carnegie Foundation for the Advancement of Teaching in 2010. Miami Hamilton was also selected by the U.S. Department of State as a host institution for its Study of the U.S. Institute on Civic Engagement in 2013, 2014, and 2015. For more information about the Center for Civic Engagement and its initiatives, visit [miamioh.edu/regionals/student-life/center-civic-engagement/index.html](http://miamioh.edu/regionals/student-life/center-civic-engagement/index.html).



## TABLE OF CONTENTS

<b>Ohio in 2016: A State of Economic Rebound</b> .....	<b>4</b>
<b>Key Findings of Ohio Civic Health</b> .....	<b>6</b>
<b>Renewing Ohioans Commitment to Their Communities</b> .....	<b>12</b>
<b>Case Studies</b> .....	<b>13</b>
<b>Volunteerism &amp; Participation In Community-Based Organizations</b> .....	<b>14</b>
<b>Charitable Giving</b> .....	<b>20</b>
<b>Electoral Participation</b> .....	<b>20</b>
<b>Community-Engaged Learning</b> .....	<b>21</b>
<b>Cross-Campus Civic Engagement Programming</b> .....	<b>22</b>
<b>Endnotes</b> .....	<b>23</b>
<b>A Word About Recommendations</b> .....	<b>24</b>
<b>Technical Note</b> .....	<b>25</b>

### ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

This report would not be possible without the support from the following:

Dr. G. Michael Pratt, *Dean Emeritus, College of Liberal Arts and Applied Sciences, Miami University*

Dr. Cathy Bishop-Clark, *Interim Associate Provost and Dean, College of Liberal Arts and Applied Sciences, Professor, Department of Computer and Information Technology*

Dr. Moira Casey, *Regional Associate Dean for Academic Affairs, College of Liberal Arts and Applied Sciences, Miami University Regionals*

Dr. Daniel Hall, *Chair and Professor, Department of Justice and Community Studies, Miami University Regionals*

Dr. Whitney Womack Smith, *Faculty Director and Associate Professor of English, Miami University Regionals*

Sarah Woiteshek Pietzuch, *Director, Center for Civic Engagement, Miami University Regionals*

### AUTHORS:

John P. Forren, Ph.D., *Department of Justice & Community Studies, Miami University Hamilton*

Theresa Ervin Conover, Ph.D., *Department of Justice & Community Studies, Miami University Hamilton*

### CONTRIBUTORS:

Jeff Coates, *Research and Evaluation Director, National Conference on Citizenship*

Kristi Tate, *Partnership Development Director, National Conference on Citizenship*

Rachael Weiker, *Associate Director, Civic Health Initiatives, National Conference on Citizenship*

## OHIO IN 2016: A State on the Economic Rebound

---

As did previous iterations of the *Ohio Civic Health Index Report*, the 2016 Report examines civic engagement within a state undergoing significant economic and social change. In recent years, Ohio has made considerable strides toward recovery from the ‘Great Recession’ of 2007-08; still, the Buckeye State continues to confront a range of social and economic challenges.

### Ohio: A Demographic Snapshot

---

Today, roughly 11.6 million people call the Buckeye State home.<sup>2</sup> As previous Reports have noted, the state’s population has grown quite slowly in recent years as compared to other parts of the nation. What’s more, Ohio’s population today remains somewhat less diverse along racial and ethnic lines than the United States overall.<sup>3</sup> Yet along several other dimensions, the Buckeye State – befitting its ‘bellwether’ status both in national politics and in product marketing<sup>4</sup> – largely mirrors the demographic profile of the nation overall.

In terms of age, for instance, Ohio overall skews only slightly older than the rest of the nation: In 2014, the median age for Ohioans was 39.4 years – roughly 1.7 years higher than the U.S. average.<sup>5</sup> Roughly 16% of the state’s population was aged 65 or older.<sup>6</sup> In terms of poverty rates, Ohio again adheres closely to national norms: In 2014, 15.8% of its residents overall – including 23% of its children and 8% of its seniors – lived below the federally defined poverty line. The corresponding national averages for poverty were 15.5% overall, 22% for children, and 9% for seniors.<sup>7</sup>

Average household size in Ohio – 2.5 persons – is only slightly smaller than the national average. Likewise, rates of home ownership in the Buckeye State are only two percentage points higher than that found throughout the nation (65% in Ohio; 63% overall in the U.S.). For decades, Ohio has been seen nationally as a microcosm of national trends and norms. Today, along several fronts, it remains quite representative of the country at large.

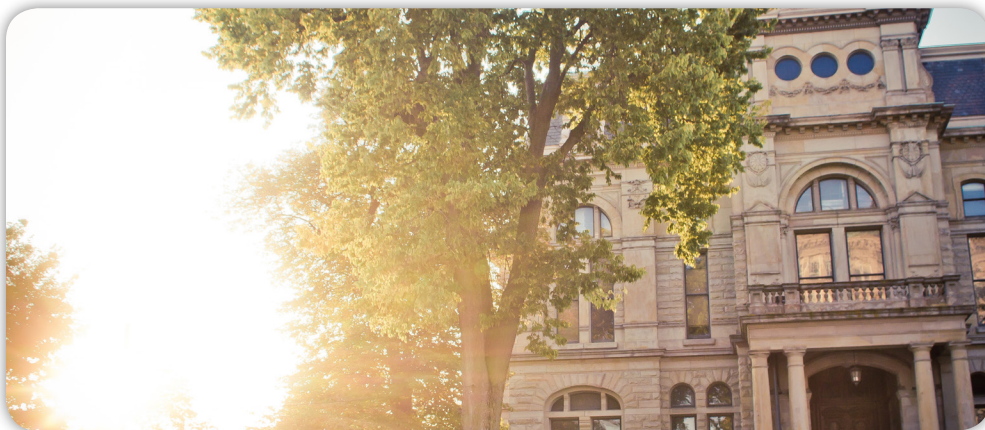
In at least two important respects, however, Ohio lags significantly behind national averages. For one, despite efforts by Governor John Kasich and other state leaders to highlight the need for workforce development within the state, Ohio still trails the nation by several points (26.6% for Ohio; 30.1% for the U.S. overall) in the percentage of its residents who have earned at least a four-year college degree.<sup>8</sup> Second, Ohio’s median household income stood at \$49,308 in 2014 – only about 90% of the national average household income of \$53,657 for that year.<sup>9</sup> These twin disturbing trends have not gone unnoticed by state policymakers; indeed, amidst concerns about the soaring costs of higher education and the impact that ‘brain drain’ may have on both the state’s economy and its ability to cope with an aging population, Ohio’s leaders have recently committed to sizeable increases in state funding for the state’s community colleges and its system of public colleges and universities.<sup>10</sup> Perhaps this boost in state support for higher education will help to close the gap in educational levels and median income in the years to come.

## Ohio's Economy

Earlier editions of the *Ohio Civic Health Index Report* have detailed the ways in which economic and social disruptions in the Buckeye State have affected the ability of Ohioans to engage meaningfully in civic and political affairs. And for much of the past decade, Ohioans have hardly been alone among Americans in coping with the turmoil caused by de-industrialization, outsourcing, long-term shifts in the state's agricultural and commercial sectors, and the lingering effects of the 'Great Recession' of 2007-08.

Yet while much of the nation is now showing clear signs of an economic rebound, Ohio's economic indicators still remain very much a mixed bag. For one, while the unemployment rate in Ohio has dropped significantly from its double-digit highs in 2009-10 – in July 2016, it stood at 4.8% – overall job growth in Ohio still lags much of the nation.<sup>11</sup> On another front, wage growth has been quite positive in some parts of the state – most notably in Columbus, which last year posted the nation's highest percentage increase in wages among large metropolitan areas.<sup>12</sup> Yet statewide, income growth in Ohio continues to be quite anemic – despite a January 2015 increase of 15 cents in the state's minimum hourly wage. According to the U.S. Department of Commerce, Ohio ranked 32nd in the nation in average income growth between the fourth quarter of 2015 and the first quarter of 2016.<sup>13</sup>

On yet another front, recent trends in bankruptcy filings provide good news for Ohio: By 2014, the number of non-business bankruptcy filings – which had skyrocketed in Ohio following the economic crisis of 2007-08 – had returned to levels comparable to those found prior to the Great Recession.<sup>14</sup> Even more positive news can be found in the state's housing foreclosure statistics as well: In 2014, the total number of foreclosure filings (43,727) represented a decline of over 50% from the 2009 Buckeye State high (89,061); by mid-2016, annual filings had dropped even further, to an annual statewide rate of roughly 23,000. Yet here as well, the positive news is tempered by recognition of other facts; specifically, annual foreclosure filings in Ohio still stand far above the levels typically seen only a couple of decades ago in the state.<sup>15</sup> What's more, some regions of the state – including areas near Dayton, Toledo, Akron, and Cleveland, where the Great Recession hit particularly hard – continue to suffer from significant stresses and strains in the residential housing market.<sup>16</sup>



Butler County Courthouse (Photo Courtesy of Samuel Chase Photography, Hamilton, Ohio)

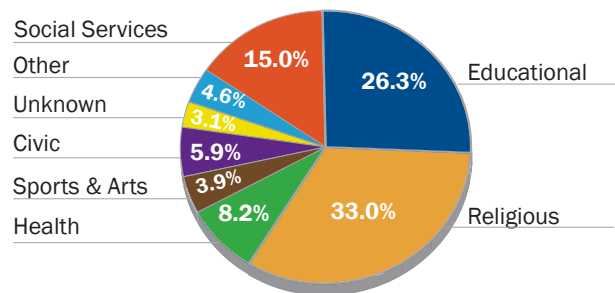
## KEY FINDINGS OF OHIO'S CIVIC HEALTH

Amidst these social and economic conditions, the 2016 Civic Health Index Report represents the sixth periodic assessment of Ohio's civic health carried out by NCoC and Miami University since 2008. In this section, we examine data on six distinct dimensions of civic health – volunteerism, charitable giving, group participation, voting behavior, non-voting political action, and informal social connectedness – to determine the extent to which Ohioans engage with civic affairs, with their communities, and with one another. An examination of the relevant data, in light of previous findings from the Buckeye State and from other states, suggests the following key conclusions:

### 1) Ohio's levels of volunteerism remain quite low.

Volunteerism has proven to be a useful indicator of a community's overall vitality and sense of civic connectedness. Indeed, as a 2011 Points of Light Institute report noted, high rates of volunteer service in a community often correlate with other social 'positives' such as heightened feelings of social trust, higher levels of public safety, increased rates of political participation, and greater levels of cooperation across cultural and economic lines.<sup>17</sup> And to be sure, a sizeable number of Buckeye State residents – an estimated 2.5 million in 2014 alone<sup>18</sup> – have made it a regular part of their lives to perform personal service to others without pay. Indeed, the most recent data from the Current Population Survey suggest Ohioans logged an estimated 267.1 million volunteer hours in 2014 – adding almost \$6.2 billion in economic value to the state.<sup>19</sup> Not surprisingly, as Chart 1 indicates, much of this volunteer work took place within local institutions – religious congregations, children's sports leagues, and local schools – that were linked closely with the volunteers' own families and friends.

**Chart 1. Type of Volunteering in Ohio**



Source: <https://www.volunteeringinamerica.gov/OH>

Still, many Ohioans' volunteer efforts – in cultural and artistic groups, charitable organizations, social service providers, and other community organizations arrayed throughout the state – also ranged far beyond volunteers' own personal networks to serve and strengthen Ohio's communities more generally.

In short, there is much to celebrate in Ohio's rich tradition of volunteerism. At the same time, the most recent survey data gathered for this Report suggest at least three causes for significant concern in this arena as well. More specifically:

- **In any given year, roughly seven out of ten Ohioans do not engage in any organized volunteer work at all.** While millions of volunteer hours are logged by Ohio volunteers each year, it turns out this work is highly concentrated within quite a small portion of Ohio's population. In 2014, only 27.5% of all Ohioans reported any involvement with formal volunteer work during the year. The story in earlier years was much the same: In 2013 and 2012, the Buckeye State's participation rates were just 25.0% (34th in the nation) and 27.2% (28th in the nation), respectively. Looking further back, only four times over the past decade (in 2004, 2005, 2006, and 2007) has Ohio's volunteerism rate exceeded 30%. A clear majority of Ohioans, it is clear, simply do not give back to their communities in this particular way.

- Those Ohioans who do volunteer now spend considerably less time on that task than they used to.** Over the past decade, in fact, Ohio has experienced a long-term decline in total hours devoted to volunteer service that is quite striking. For the years 2003-06, residents of the Buckeye State logged an average of 305 million hours of volunteer service each year.<sup>20</sup> By the 2007-10 period, the yearly average had dropped to 280 million total hours per year – a reduction of 8.2% from the previous four-year period.<sup>21</sup> Between 2011 and 2014, the downward trend only continued: For that four-year span, the statewide yearly average fell to 270.5 million hours per year – an additional decline of 3.1% from the 2003-06 norm.<sup>22</sup> In 2014, the latest year for which data are available, Ohioans volunteered a total of 267.1 million hours – a remarkable 20% drop in aggregate hours from the Buckeye State’s post-9/11 single-year high of 333.8 million hours in 2006.
- Perhaps most alarmingly, participation in volunteerism is now the lowest among Ohio’s youngest adults.** At least in the 2013 CPS data on volunteerism and age, a clear difference can be found between the self-reported volunteer service rates of Ohio’s Millennials – those in their late teens, twenties, or early thirties – and those of virtually everyone else in the state. Table 1 summarizes the relevant 2013 data:

In 2014, the latest year for which data are available, Ohioans volunteered a total of **267.1 million hours** – a remarkable 20% drop in aggregate hours from the Buckeye State’s post-9/11 single-year high of 333.8 million hours in 2006.

**Table 1. Volunteering by Demographic Cohort in Ohio**

Demographic Cohort	Age Category	Volunteering Rate
Silent Generation	Born 1931-1945 (aged 68-82)	<b>29.8%</b>
Baby Boomers	Born 1946-1964 (aged 49-67)	<b>26.7%</b>
Generation X	Born 1965-1980 (aged 33-48)	<b>28.3%</b>
Millennials	Born 1981-1995 (aged 18-32)	<b>18.7%</b>

During 2013, the data show that fewer than one-in-five Ohioans aged 18-32 engaged in any volunteering within their communities. All other age cohorts, by contrast, exceeded rates of 25%. Why is this difference in volunteering rates between younger and older Ohioans so alarming? Because research on civic engagement tells us that early involvement in community-based action is often critical in shaping an individual’s lifelong patterns of involvement in civic and community affairs. Simply put, if many of Ohio’s young people today are failing to develop the ‘habit’ of giving back to their communities at an early age, the implications of that personal disengagement from others may be felt in the Buckeye State’s communities for decades to come.

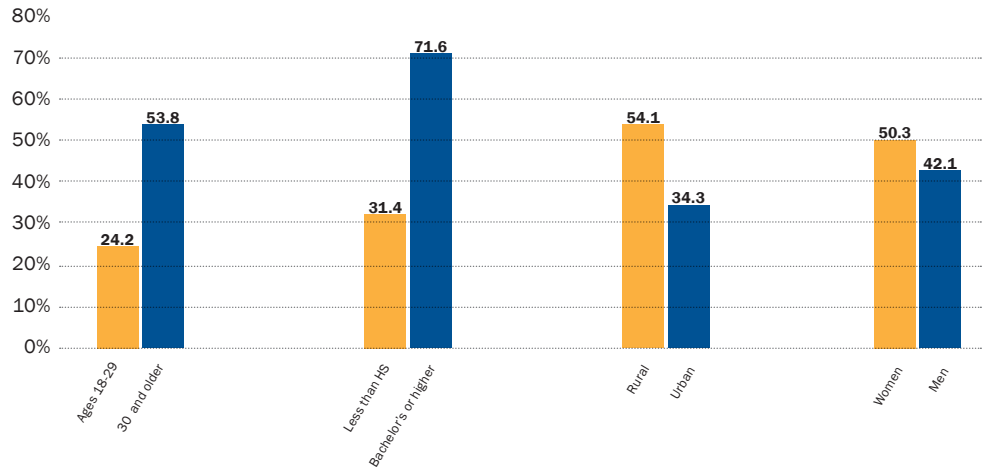
## 2) Ohioans lag behind much of the nation in charitable giving.

Of course, direct volunteerism is hardly the only way in which citizens can contribute to the civic health of their communities. Another meaningful way is by donating cash or other valuable goods to support the work of charitable causes. Yet much like with the patterns of volunteerism discussed above, recent CPS data reveal that many Ohioans are persistently disengaged from regular charitable giving as well. Looking at the 2010 - 12 period, when the Buckeye State was still emerging from the Great Recession, the last *Ohio Civic Health Index Report* found that fewer than half of all Ohioans (47.9%), on average, supported charitable causes by donating at least \$25 per year. Consequently, that Report found that Ohio ranked 46th in the nation in 2011 in its overall rate of charitable giving. In 2012, Ohio finished 43rd among the 50 states and the District of Columbia on this civic health measure.

The most recent data on Ohio's charitable giving reveal ample cause for continued concern. In 2013, Ohioans' overall rate of giving reached only 46.3% – again placing the state 43rd in the nation on this measure.<sup>23</sup> The story in 2014 was somewhat better. In that year, Ohio's giving rate rose to 50.6%, exceeding the national average for the first time since the 2007-08 recession; yet even then, half of the state's population again stayed on the sidelines of this arena.

A closer look at the data, moreover, reveals that charitable giving, much like volunteerism, tends to be highly concentrated in certain segments of the population. As Chart 2 illustrates, Ohioans aged 30 and above gave at over twice the rate of their 18-29-year-old counterparts in the state between 2011-13.<sup>24</sup> During the same period, Ohioans holding college degrees were more than twice as likely to give as were those with less than a high school diploma.<sup>25</sup> Those living in rural communities similarly outpaced their urban counterparts, by a 54.1%-to-34.3% margin. And interestingly, the data from 2013 suggest the emergence of a Buckeye State 'gender gap' in giving, with women showing a considerably higher propensity – 50.3% vs. 42.1% – to contribute to charity during the period under study.<sup>26</sup>

**Chart 2. Charitable Giving in Ohio**



Only  
**34.6%**  
of Ohioans reported belonging to any type of local community organization, such as a church, a school PTA, a recreational sports league, a neighborhood association, or a local service group.

Of course, this correlation of charitable giving with age and education may be understood at least in part as a function of disposable income; simply put, older and more highly educated Ohioans, as a group, may simply have greater assets at hand that can be devoted to giving. Yet viewed alongside our earlier findings on volunteerism, the relatively low levels of youth participation in charitable giving give ample cause for long-term concern.”

### 3) Almost two-thirds of Ohioans play no direct role in community-based organizations.

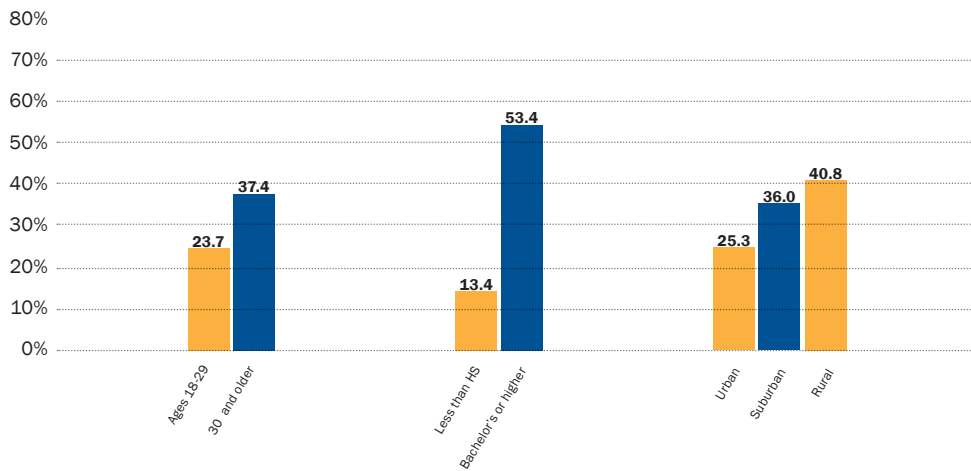
In its earliest iterations several years ago, the *Ohio Civic Health Index Report* found Ohioans generally did well by national standards when it came to engagement with religious, fraternal, school-based, charitable, and other community-based organizations.<sup>27</sup> Indeed, as late as 2011, Ohio stood near the national average in its group participation rate. Just five years ago, the Buckeye State ranked in the top half of all states in the percentage of its residents who took active leadership roles within community-based groups.<sup>28</sup>

The latest available data – from 2013 – on Ohioans' engagement with community groups tell a less encouraging story. That year, only 34.6% – just more than one in three – of Ohioans reported belonging to any type of local community organization, such as a church, a school PTA, a recreational sports league, a neighborhood association, or a local service group. Just one in ten held any formal leadership role – such as membership on a committee or an executive board – in such a community-based group.<sup>29</sup> Consequently, by 2013, Ohio had dropped to 39th in the nation in its citizens' group membership rates. The state ranked just 33rd in its residents' exercise of group leadership roles.



As Chart 3 shows, demographics are a key part of the story here as well. Similar to volunteering and charitable giving, Ohio's youngest adults in 2013 showed the least propensity to join community groups; indeed, fewer than one in four Ohioans (23.7%) aged 18-29 belonged to a community group, while 37.4% of their counterparts aged 30 and above did. Similarly, levels of formal education correlated strongly with participation: Over half (53.4%) of all Ohioans with at least a bachelor's degree belonged to at least one community group; by contrast, only 28.5% of high school graduates – and just 13.4% of those with less education than that – did. Beyond that, family income proved to be a reliable predictor of group participation: Ohio adults with household incomes above \$75,000 in 2013 joined groups at double the rate of those living in households making less than \$35,000. Geographical differences emerged in the data as well: In 2013, urban residents in Ohio had only a 25.3% group membership rate; by contrast, suburban and rural Buckeyes had rates of 36.0% and 40.8%, respectively.

**Chart 3. Group Participation in Ohio**



#### 4) Most eligible Ohioans are registered to vote – but many fail to show up on Election Day.

Participation rates in elections, of course, serve as important barometers of citizen engagement in democratic communities. And at least with respect to voter registration – which, of course, is a prerequisite to actual voting in the Buckeye State and elsewhere – Ohioans have generally acquitted themselves quite nicely as compared to national norms in recent years.<sup>30</sup> In 2011, for instance, official state election figures show over 7.7 million Ohioans were registered to vote in the November general election – a total that equaled roughly 87.1% of the state's voting-age population.<sup>31</sup> For the following year's presidential election – which featured focused 'swing state' registration efforts by both major presidential campaigns as well as numerous outside interest groups – Ohio's 2012 registration rate for voting-age residents surged to 90%.<sup>32</sup> After that high-profile election, the state's registration rate, not surprisingly, retreated to a degree; yet quite notably, it fell only slightly over the next two years – to 86.6%, near its pre-2012 level.<sup>33</sup> And encouragingly, the most recent registration figures, from the state's November 2015 general election, show well over 80% of voting-age Ohioans likely remain registered to vote today.<sup>34</sup>

In short, Ohio's voter registration levels – a long-standing focus of grassroots civic activists in the state – are now rightly viewed as a cause for celebration today. Yet, when it comes to *actual voting* in Ohio, the state's recent track record gives much less reason to cheer. Indeed, official voting records show that in Ohio – except in presidential elections, when participation typically surges nationally – voter turnout rates now regularly languish below the 50% mark *even among those already registered to vote*.<sup>35</sup> In November 2011, for instance, over 7.7 million Ohioans were registered to vote – but only 3.63 million (47.1% of registered voters) actually did.<sup>36</sup> In November 2013, only 27% of registered voters cast ballots in the statewide elections. In November 2014, Ohio's turnout rate rebounded somewhat, but only to 40.7% – meaning roughly 60% of the state's registered voters (and roughly 65% of the state's voting-age population overall) sat out an election that chose, among others, the state's governor, its secretary of state, its attorney general, two of its Supreme Court justices, all 99 members of its state House of Representatives, half of its state Senate, and its entire U.S. House delegation.<sup>37</sup> More recently, in the November 2015 general election, which featured three high-profile constitutional amendments related to marijuana legalization and legislative redistricting on the statewide ballot, only 3.26 million Ohioans, representing just 36.3% of the state's voting-age population, chose to participate.<sup>38</sup> According to the Ohio Secretary of State, only 3.3 million Ohioans opted to cast ballots in the March 2016 presidential primaries.

So who makes up the subset of Ohio's adult population that actually votes? According to the most recent CPS data, it is disproportionately the more highly educated, wealthier and older among the Buckeye State's voting-age residents. In 2012, for instance, Ohio's self-reported turnout rate among those holding bachelor's degrees or higher exceeded that of those with less than a high school diploma by more than 30 percentage points. Voting-age Ohioans from families making more than \$75,000 turned out roughly at a rate 16.7 percentage points higher than those making less than \$35,000. And perhaps most notable in light of our earlier findings of youth disengagement in other arenas, Ohioans aged 30 and above turned out in 2012 at a rate 16 percentage points higher than that found among their fellow Buckeyes aged 18-29. With respect to showing up on Election Day, too, it seems the state's youngest adults are especially disconnected from civic and political affairs.

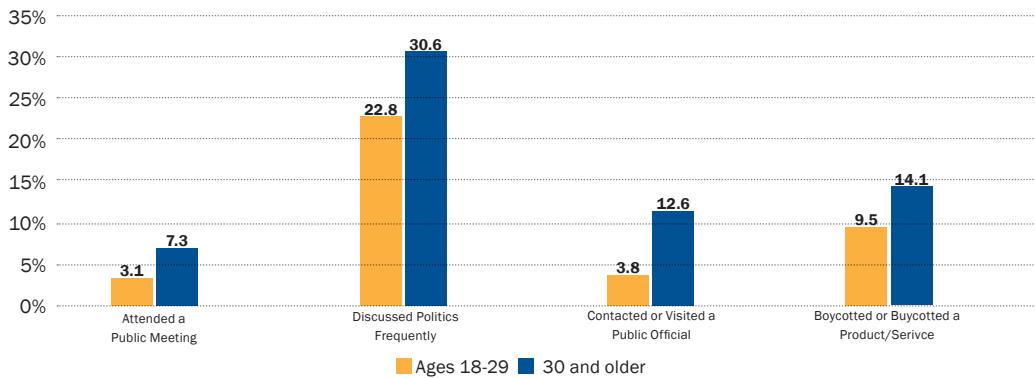
## 5) Many Ohioans stay away from politics in their everyday lives.

Meaningful political action may take lots of forms beyond the simple act of voting. To what extent do Ohioans engage actively in politics and civic affairs outside of the voting booth? To explore this question, the CPS's November 2013 Civic Engagement Supplement asked respondents in Ohio to indicate their levels of involvement in five different modes of non-electoral political action. The survey found:

- **only 1 in 16 (6.3%) of Ohioans attended a public meeting of a government agency or body during the year, ranking the state 45th in the nation on this indicator;**
- **only 3 in 10 (29.1%) talked frequently (i.e., a few times a week) with friends and family about politics, ranking the state 22nd in the nation;**
- **only 1 in 10 (10.9%) Ohioans contacted or visited a public official directly during the year, ranking the state 33rd on this measure;**
- **only 1 in 7 (13.2%) boycotted or bought a product during the year as a statement of political views, ranking the state 25th in this measure; and**
- **only 1 in 10 (9.5%) used the Internet at least once during the year to share an opinion on a public issue – a participation rate that, while small, did exceed the 2013 national average by a small margin.**

In short, the data suggest that many Ohioans do little in their day-to-day lives to express their political views or engage with government at any level. As Chart 4 below illustrates, a striking difference can be found between the behaviors of the state's young adults and their older compatriots. In 2013, Ohioans aged 30 and above attended public meetings more than twice as often as those aged 18-29.<sup>39</sup> They were roughly one-third more likely to talk frequently with friends and family about politics.<sup>40</sup> They interacted directly with public officials at a rate three times higher than their younger compatriots.<sup>41</sup> Older Ohioans expressed their political views in their purchasing decisions at a rate of 14.1% compared to those aged 18-29 at 9.5%.<sup>42</sup>

**Chart 4. Political Engagement in Ohio**



## 6) Ohioans are likely to maintain close ties with friends and family.

Looking beyond politics, the CPS survey also gathers data on Ohioans' informal social ties, their sense of connectedness to others in their communities and their general levels of trust in public institutions. On this score, the most recent data on Ohioans' attitudes and behaviors yield at least one very positive conclusion: When it comes to their friends and family, Ohioans are especially likely to maintain close and ongoing ties. Specifically, 89.3% of Ohioans indicated in 2013 that they ate dinner with a member of his/her household at least once a week – a finding that placed the state above the national average on that measure. Even more encouraging, 84.1% said they saw or heard from family and friends at least once a week – a rate of friends/family interaction that bested all but two other states in the nation and the District of Columbia that year. Ohioans, it seems, value their relationships with their families and friends quite highly and they act accordingly in their day-to-day lives.

Less encouragingly, the data also suggest that, once Ohioans look beyond their close circle of family and friends, they often lack strong ties to their neighbors and to broader community-based networks. More specifically, the 2013 CPS survey found:

- **only 4 in 10 (40.6%) Ohioans talk frequently with their neighbors, placing the state slightly below the national average of 41.4%;**
- **only 1 in 8 (13.1%) exchange favors with their neighbors at least once per week, ranking the state 21st in the nation;**
- **only 1 in 15 (6.5%) Ohioans work with their neighbors to fix or improve something in their communities, ranking the state 41st in the nation; and**
- **fewer than 6 in 10 (57.8%) have trust in all or most of the people in their local neighborhoods.**

Ohioans generally hold a skeptical view of various public institutions as well. In 2013, only 64.3% of survey respondents claimed to have at least “a great deal or some” confidence in corporations, ranking the state 34th in the nation on that indicator. Only about half (52.8%) of Ohioans professed “a great deal or some” confidence in the media, again ranking the state in the bottom third (37th) of the nation. On a more optimistic note, 82.8% of Ohioans in 2013 expressed “some or a great deal of” confidence in the public schools – which, of course, serve in many of Ohio's communities as both a focal point of shared community identity and a primary location of social and cultural interaction. Yet, even this seemingly high rate of Ohioans' confidence in the state's public schools loses a bit of its luster once it is placed in historical and comparative context. For one thing, Ohioans in the 2013 CPS survey were actually a bit less supportive of their public schools than was the nation overall; indeed, Ohio ranked 44th among the states and the District of Columbia in 2013 on this indicator.<sup>43</sup> What's more, the last OCHI found an overall confidence rate for Ohio's public schools of 86.9%, suggesting, if anything, that Ohioans' trust in their public schools may have recently declined, at least slightly.<sup>44</sup>

## RENEWING OHIOANS' COMMITMENT TO THEIR COMMUNITIES: *A Call to Action*

What do the various measures of civic engagement reported above tell us about the overall state of civic health in the Buckeye State today? For one thing, they confirm that, for a considerable number of Ohioans, community-based activity constitutes a regular and vital part of their daily lives. For instance, lots of Ohioans participate actively in religious congregations, recreational sports leagues, school PTAs, charity groups, and a wide range of other volunteer associations found throughout the Buckeye State. What's more, many Buckeye State residents contribute in important ways to their communities by donating to charitable causes, helping their neighbors, voting in elections, interacting with public officials, and engaging in discussions of civic and political affairs. Simply put, the news contained in this iteration of the OCHI is by no means discouraging in every respect.

Still, the analysis above undoubtedly gives us ample reason to worry about the future of Ohio's body politic. Indeed, the overall picture painted in the preceding pages of this Report is quite bleak. A great many Ohioans, it shows, are largely disconnected from one another, estranged from their government and elected leadership, disengaged from community-based organizations and inactive in politics and local affairs. Given the deep connections researchers have already found between high levels of civic engagement on the one hand and various positive social outcomes – *e.g., lower crime rates, better collective problem-solving* – on the other, the finding here of especially low levels of engagement among Ohio's youth should sound a loud alarm. This not only indicates challenges with the vibrancy and quality of our democracy today but also with the responsiveness of government and the quality of life in Ohio's communities for years to come.

What can be done? As previous editions of the OCHI have suggested, there is unfortunately no single 'magic bullet' that can be employed to solve Ohio's persistent civic engagement woes. Nonetheless, as the past quarter-century of research on civic engagement tells us, even isolated and small-scale civic initiatives within a community can have a significant and lasting impact on the local environment and its citizens. More broadly, we now know that the civically-minded actions of leaders and innovators in various sectors of society – including in government, education business and the media – can collectively make a positive difference in the overall 'civic health' of a community and its citizens over time. Indeed, to that end, state and local officials in Ohio should consider how they might act to increase access to public decision-making and engage Ohioans at large in the everyday business of governance.

One successful example of public engagement by government can be found in the Supreme Court of Ohio's Off-Site Court Program (<http://www.supremecourt.ohio.gov/VisitorInfo/offsiteCourt>), which takes the state's highest court outside of Columbus twice a year for oral arguments open to local high school students and teachers. Over the past three decades, this outreach program has given over 38,000 Ohioans a first-hand look at how the state's judicial system operates. Other government agencies could easily emulate this model as a means of increasing public understanding and involvement. Likewise, leaders of the state's K-12 educational system should redouble their efforts to enhance civics education in the schools and provide meaningful student opportunities for community engagement, service learning, political activism and volunteerism. (On this front, the specific emphasis now found in Ohio's K-12 Learning Standards on the development of students' civic knowledge and participation is clearly a major step in the right direction. See <http://education.ohio.gov/Topics/Ohios-Learning-Standards/Social-Studies>). Ohio's business leaders, in turn, can play a significant and positive civic role by (among other things) sponsoring community-based programs, partnering with civic organizations, mentoring young community leaders and engaging in good corporate citizenship. Leaders in journalism and mass media, meanwhile, can provide a vital public service by drawing additional public attention to politics, policy, governance and the need for collective action to address community problems.

Ohio's colleges and universities must also fully embrace their distinctive public role as incubators of civic engagement and teachers of democratic citizenship. In the next section of this *Report*, we highlight a range of innovative ways in which Ohio's higher education community is already pursuing this essential element of its civic mission.



## CASE STUDIES:

*The concluding section of this Report provides just a few representative examples of how Ohio's higher education community is already promoting civic health in the Buckeye State. The descriptions below – which highlight a variety of initiatives aimed at boosting volunteerism, charitable giving, political engagement, community-engaged learning and campus-community collaboration – are offered here in the hopes that others will emulate these models or develop new ones of their own. For each program example, we provide a brief summary based upon narratives provided by the sponsoring institutions themselves. Contact information is also provided; readers are encouraged to contact program sponsors directly for more information on specific programs and initiatives.*

## VOLUNTEERISM & PARTICIPATION IN COMMUNITY-BASED ORGANIZATIONS

### Denison University - Food Recovery Network

In an effort to reduce edible food from being wasted on college campuses and to help alleviate hunger issues in nearby communities, Denison University joined the national Food Recovery Network in 2013. The program recovers perfectly edible food that would have otherwise been thrown away and donates it to organizations in the surrounding community. Student volunteers pick up leftover, unserved food from dining halls and bring it to an easily accessible, on-campus location. From there, the food is either picked up by members of community organizations or brought to and served at organizations by student volunteer groups. The program helps people and the environment, takes minimal time, and forms connections between campus and the surrounding community. Since 2013, Denison has saved and donated over 28,000 pounds of food. The program promotes active citizenship, community participation, and teamwork as well as awareness of food waste, hunger, and environmental issues.

**Contact: Susie Kalinoski, Denison University, email: [kaliniskis@denison.edu](mailto:kaliniskis@denison.edu)**



### University of Akron - National Volunteer Week

National Volunteer Week is celebrated at The University of Akron through a variety of events focused on appreciation, volunteer engagement, and connectivity to the local Akron community. Held each year in April, the week's schedule focuses on particular social justice issues chosen by participating students and cooperating community non-profits. In 2016, the office hosted 14 events including a volunteer appreciation lunch to five on-campus service projects, a volunteer fair, a hair donation event, three community projects and a donation drive.

- On-campus service projects included repairing and adapting assistive devices for children with disabilities with the nonprofit Replay for Kids, assembling care kits for children staying at Akron Children's Hospital, making animal toys for a local shelter One of A Kind Pets, creating coloring books for families staying at the local Ronald McDonald House, assembling fleece-tie blankets for ACCESS, Inc., a local homeless shelter, and creating eight-point stars for contribution to the 1 Million Stars to End Violence Project ([www.uakron.edu/nvw](http://www.uakron.edu/nvw)).
- Community projects included landscaping and outdoor clean-up work with a local church, making sandwiches for the homeless with a local outreach shelter, and helping with various needs at local animal shelters.

- The premiere program of the week is the 3rd annual Cuts for a Cause, a hair donation event held on campus. With the help of a local salon, students are encouraged to get a “quick cut” for a \$5 minimum donation or donate their eight-inch ponytail.
- Throughout the week the campus was invited to support the donation drive, benefiting victims of sexual assault. As April is national Sexual Assault Awareness Month, the donation drive is a great partnership with on-campus resources and helps to bring awareness to this important topic.

## University of Akron - Hunger and Homelessness Awareness Week

A weeklong event held each November, Hunger and Homelessness Awareness Week brings greater attention to the difficulties the homeless and hungry face on a daily basis and helps to promote the national endeavor to end hunger and homelessness. Students were actively engaged in events to understand and experience the struggles many people face each day. The week’s highlights included packing meals, a casino night, a food challenge, a canned food drive, a movie in the campus theatre, four on-campus (drop-in) service events that benefit homeless shelters, a weekday service event at a local shelter, and a Super Service Saturday at the foodbank. More than 430 students took part in the week of activities. Program website: [www.uakron.edu/hunger](http://www.uakron.edu/hunger).



## University of Akron - Programs for the Kids: Leggett Community Learning Center

The serveAkron office cosponsored two events between the University and a local elementary school near the college campus. The first event was “Trunk or Treat,” a Halloween-themed experience, which allowed children in the community the opportunity to trick-or-treat in a safe environment. The second event was the “Egg Hunt,” which also allowed the children the opportunity to experience a spring tradition in a safe environment.

**Contact: Alison E. Doehring, M.S.Ed., Assistant Director, The University of Akron, Department of Student Life, email: [aer15@uakron.edu](mailto:aer15@uakron.edu), website: [www.uakron.edu/studentlife/serve/](http://www.uakron.edu/studentlife/serve/)**



## Wright State University - Athletics Department

The Wright State University (WSU) Athletics Department believes that focusing on the personal development of student-athletes is important, and engagement in meaningful community service is one of the best ways to develop the whole person. Community service is completed by every varsity team and managed either by the head coach or the Special Assistant to the Athletics Director. The WSU varsity sports teams participated in a variety of different service projects during the 2014-15 school year, which included 309 student-athletes and coaches who provided 3,868 hours of community service

### Dayton Food Bank

Student-athletes filled 500 Good-to-Go Backpacks with food to be given to schools and agencies, who in turn, give them to children they see have a hunger need.



### Harrison's Heroes 5K/10K

The Wright State basketball program assisted with the Harrison's Heroes 5K/10K races on May 30 in Beavercreek. The races are held in honor of Harrison James Mummert, who passed away May 29, 2012 from Trisomy 18. Proceeds from the races benefit the NICU at Dayton Children's. The teams helped to pass out water to the participants.





## I Love WSU Environmental Service Project

Student-athletes showed their love for WSU by weeding, picking up trash and litter, and mulching throughout the day for Earth Day.



## WSU Holiday Gift Program

The Student-Athlete Advisory Committee (SAAC) took part in the WSU Holiday Gift Program, which helps area children have a happier holiday season. The officers asked the two members who represent each sports team to bring ONE new, unwrapped gift or toy for children 17 years old or younger. The gift they brought was given on behalf of their sports team. The gifts were then taken to the Athletics Office and placed in the donation barrel. The entire barrel was filled!



## Horizon League Science Academy

Wright State student-athletes went out to the Horizon Science Academy Dayton Elementary and read to their students, talked about why reading is important, and showed that everyone needs to read and have an education – even athletes and stars.



## Alex's Lemonade Stand

The Student-Athlete Advisory Committee took on Alex's Lemonade Stand for their philanthropy organization for the 2015-16 school year. Alex's Lemonade Stand Foundation raises money for and awareness of childhood cancer.

**Contact: Maigan Larsen, Special Assistant to the Athletics Director, Wright State University Athletics. Email: [maigan.larsen@wright.edu](mailto:maigan.larsen@wright.edu), Athletics Department website: [www.wsuraiders.com](http://www.wsuraiders.com)**



## Defiance College - Backpack Buddy Program

In order to promote service-learning and civic engagement among their students, Defiance College developed a student-run non-profit organization, called Project 701, where students are able to work in collaboration with community partners to create a positive impact. Over 200 Defiance College students participate in Project 701, making up the volunteer force for ten diverse projects, including a free health clinic, tutoring center, and computer repair program. One of Project 701's most notable projects is The Backpack Buddy Program. The program, a collaborative effort between Project 701 and the United Way of Defiance County, works to ensure elementary school children in the community who are on the Free and Reduced Lunch Program have enough food to eat over weekends and holiday breaks. The program currently feeds between 450 and 500 children each week with the help of various organizations and teams both on and off campus.

**Contact: Jordan Heiliger, Coordinator of the Service Leadership Program, Defiance College, Email: [jheiliger@defiance.edu](mailto:jheiliger@defiance.edu)**

## Mount St. Joseph University - Impact Cincinnati and Martin Luther King Jr. Days of Service

---

At the Mount, students have an opportunity to complete 30 hours of meaningful service related to a course for one free academic credit. Since the program's inception, students have completed approximately 2,272 individual service-learning experiences of 30 hours or more, totalling 68,160 hours served, or \$1,238,700 worth of in-kind service.

The University also hosts two large university-wide service events per year: the Impact Cincinnati Day of Service and the Martin Luther King Jr. Day of Service. The Impact Cincinnati Day of Service is a student-led service event that provides an opportunity for all students, faculty, and staff to serve together at ten different sites at the beginning of the academic year. The Martin Luther King Jr. Day of Service is a partnership between the University and Habitat for Humanity of Greater Cincinnati, which has the mission of making MLK Day a "day on, and not a day off." During this annual event, students live out the legacy of Dr. King by building sheds for habitat partner families and learning about housing inequality.

**Contact: Keith Lanser, Coordinator for Service Learning, Mount St. Joseph University, Service Learning Office, Email: [keith.lanser@msj.edu](mailto:keith.lanser@msj.edu)**



## Ohio Campus Compact - Connect2Complete

---

Ohio Campus Compact's Connect2Complete (C2C) program pairs peer-to-peer advocacy and civic engagement in order to improve the success and retention rates of low socio-economic and underrepresented college students. Ohio's colleges and universities utilize many forms of programmatic intervention to improve retention rates, but C2C offers a unique college completion structure due to the addition of the civic engagement component. Students who participate in civic engagement learning activities are shown to have higher retention rates and are more likely to complete their degrees.

C2C campuses implement a multitude of civic engagement structures in order to reach low socio-economic students and boost their sense of connection both on and off campus. Some C2C campuses use a class-based model – inserting civic engagement into developmental education courses or creating service-learning courses. Other campuses set up a community engagement structure outside of the classroom, including scheduled service events, alternative break formats, and campus transformations in the form of operating on-campus food pantries. C2C's community engagement focus empowers students and shifts campus culture, all with the aim of increasing college completion.

**Contact: Brenna Limbrick, Ohio Campus Compact, Email: [blimbrick@ohiocampuscompact.org](mailto:blimbrick@ohiocampuscompact.org)**

## CHARITABLE GIVING

### Ohio Campus Compact - Pay it Forward

The Pay it Forward initiative is developing a new generation of philanthropists through an innovative course-based service-learning program that engages Ohio college students in hands-on philanthropy, grant-making, and volunteer service while providing community nonprofits with much-needed assistance during difficult economic times. Participating faculty infuse the study of philanthropy as a core component of the coursework, and each course receives real dollars to award nonprofit agencies. Students provide at least 15 hours of volunteer service to local nonprofit agencies by identifying community needs, establishing funding criteria, and engaging in group decision-making as part of the course. Pay it Forward simultaneously improves student learning, faculty scholarship, college engagement, nonprofit capacity, and community needs.

Since January 2010, Pay it Forward has engaged nearly 4,200 college students in 197 courses across 37 campuses, dedicated more than 69,000 total volunteer hours, and invested \$655,500 in more than 430 community-based nonprofit organizations in Ohio.

**Contact: Brenna Limbrick, Ohio Campus Compact, Email: [blimbrick@ohiocampuscompact.org](mailto:blimbrick@ohiocampuscompact.org)**



### Mount St. Joseph University – Student Philanthropy Program

The Mount's student philanthropy program prepares student philanthropists to be able to make decisions about awarding funding to nonprofit organizations. Faculty develop the philanthropy requirements of the student philanthropy course and set parameters for students to research nonprofits and solicit proposals for grants of \$1,000. The students then collaboratively decide on a nonprofit to invest in after researching the nonprofits and examining the proposals.

**Contact: Keith Lanser, Coordinator for Service Learning, Mount St. Joseph University, Service Learning Office, Email: [keith.lanser@msj.edu](mailto:keith.lanser@msj.edu)**

## ELECTORAL PARTICIPATION

### Mount St. Joseph University - Campus Election Engagement Project

Mount St. Joseph University recently began a new partnership with the Campus Election Engagement Project on a new election engagement program, which has the goals of registering students to vote, educating students on voting issues, and getting out the vote.

**Contact: Keith Lanser, Coordinator for Service Learning, Career & Experiential Education Center, Mount St. Joseph University, Email: [keith.lanser@msj.edu](mailto:keith.lanser@msj.edu)**

## COMMUNITY-ENGAGED LEARNING

### Kenyon College - Latinos in Rural America (LiRA)

---

Latinos in Rural America was a public humanities project headed by faculty associate director and Spanish professor, Dr. Clara Román-Odio, and her students. This project sought to broaden knowledge, engagement with, and understanding of the Latino/a experience in rural Ohio. Rooted in an oral history approach, it offered an intimate window into the lives, journeys, and aspirations of Latinos representing diverse areas of activity, social and economic conditions, and stages of life within the broad social fabric of Knox County, Ohio. The project culminated in a public bilingual exhibit that travelled locally and throughout Ohio, December 2015 - April 2016. The exhibit was organized into three distinct but complementary elements: a series of ten bilingual panels that provided snapshots into the lives of Latino families in Knox County; a video that provided the audience an opportunity to experience Latinos talking about their lives; and a reflection piece in which the audience was asked to provide feedback on their experiences after having seen the exhibit.

Two additional community-engaged learning (CEL) projects were developed by students in Dr. Román-Odio's Spanish course. The first was a pamphlet to serve as a primer on cross-cultural interactions, and the second was a program at the Salvation Army of Mount Vernon, Ohio, to help local Latino/a youths prepare for college. The flier about Latino/a culture, values, and communication norms was distributed at the Knox County Health Department, in local schools, and at area social service organizations in an effort to improve intercultural development. The Bilingual College Preparation program sought to empower Latino students to achieve at the highest level in preparation to entering college. Using bilingual pedagogies inspired by the Kenyon Intensive Language Model, Kenyon students worked weekly with sixth through twelfth graders to improve their critical reading, math, vocabulary, science, and test-taking skills in preparation for the SAT and ACT. The collaborative efforts of Kenyon administrators, faculty, and students empowered first-generation students and their families to successfully navigate the complicated college admissions process. Not only a meaningful asset for the local community, this CEL project provided students with professional experiences necessary for future careers in bilingual education, not-for-profit collaboration, and minority-rights activism.

**Contact: Dr. Clara Román-Odio, Kenyon College, Email: [romanodioc@kenyon.edu](mailto:romanodioc@kenyon.edu), LiRA website: [www.kenyon.edu/academics/departments-programs/latinoa-studies/lira](http://www.kenyon.edu/academics/departments-programs/latinoa-studies/lira)**

### Case Western University - Civic Engagement Scholars Program

---

The Civic Engagement Scholars Program is designed to promote active citizenship through significant and meaningful service and learning experiences. Undergraduate and graduate students are invited to participate in the program at the beginning of the fall semester by committing to complete at least 50 community service hours during the academic year, with at least 25 hours at one nonprofit or school in the Cleveland community. Additionally, all Scholars attend a program orientation in the fall semester and the Social Justice Teach In in the spring semester to strengthen their understanding of civic engagement and social justice topics. Scholars also attend three community-focused programs of their choice from a menu of on-campus and off-campus options and write a final reflection about their Scholars experience at the end of the year. Program website: <http://students.case.edu/community/groups/scholars/>.

**Contact: Angela Lowery, Associate Director, Center for Civic Engagement & Learning, Case Western University, Email: [als138@case.edu](mailto:als138@case.edu), Center website: [http://students.case.edu/civicingement](http://students.case.edu/civicingagement)**

## Wright State University - Monitoring Environmental Quality in Glen Helen Nature Preserve

Students in Dr. Audrey McGowin's Environmental Chemistry service-learning course benefit from a teaching and learning pedagogy that engages faculty, students, and community members in a partnership to: achieve academic learning objectives, meet community needs, promote civic responsibility, develop the Citizen Scientist, and reflect on the learning experience. Students perform water-quality monitoring tests in and around Glen Helen Nature Preserve in Yellow Springs, Ohio, and report the results at a public presentation at the end of the semester. Fifty-three chemistry and environmental science students have taken the course. The students have documented increasing trends in nitrate contamination and E. coli. They also documented and reported an ongoing issue, the violation of a NPDES wastewater permit.

**Contact: Dr. Audrey McGowin, Department of Chemistry, Wright State University, Email: [audrey.mcgowin@wright.edu](mailto:audrey.mcgowin@wright.edu)**

## CROSS-CAMPUS CIVIC ENGAGEMENT PROGRAMMING

### Miami University – Citizenship and Democracy Week

In September 2015, Miami University held its first “Citizenship and Democracy Week,” a themed week of extensive programming aimed at engaging the University and its surrounding communities in discussion and deliberation about the rights and responsibilities of American citizenship. As the event ultimately came to fruition, Miami’s inaugural Citizenship and Democracy Week included 24 separate civic events, held over a five-day period (September 14-18, 2015) on Miami’s Oxford, Hamilton and Middletown campuses as well as at Hamilton High School and Miami’s Hamilton Downtown Center. Altogether, roughly 1700 Miami students, faculty, staff and community members participated in some way in the festivities.

The week’s two anchor events were a keynote lecture by activist and civic engagement scholar Paul Loeb and a formal U.S. District Court naturalization ceremony (featuring the Mayor of Hamilton, the Butler County Pipe and Drum Corps Color Guard and the Miami University Collegiate Chorale) held outside on the Hamilton campus’ main quad. Additional events included panel discussions on all three Miami campuses, voter registration drives, on-campus official meetings by an Ohio appeals court and the Hamilton City Board of Education, a faculty-led “Write for Rights” program, a faculty-led free speech discussion, an outdoor reading of the Constitution by students, two showings of a citizenship-themed documentary film, interactive workshops with local high school students and Miami faculty and staff and a faculty-led “Social Justice Theater” event. The week was integrated in the curriculum as well: for regional campus students, Miami’s Department of Justice & Community Studies offered a one-credit-hour special topics course that connected the week’s various programs to readings and reflections on democratic theory, civic engagement, theories of community and civic health.

In light of the success of the initial 2015 effort, Miami University plans to make Citizenship and Democracy Week an annual event. The 2016 iteration will be held in September 2016.

**Contact: Dr. John P. Forren, Department of Justice and Community Studies, Miami University Hamilton, Email: [forrenjp@miamioh.edu](mailto:forrenjp@miamioh.edu)**



## ENDNOTES

- 1 The Current Population Survey (CPS) is a part of a broader survey effort that gathers data from approximately 60,000 U.S. households every month. The civic health data featured in this Report is derived from the 2013 September Volunteering Supplement, the 2012 November Voting and Registration Supplement, and the 2013 Civic Engagement Supplement.
- 2 2015 Ohio County Population Estimates, Ohio Development Services Agency. See <https://development.ohio.gov/files/research/P5007.pdf>.
- 3 According to U.S. Census Bureau statistics, 80.1% of Ohio's population in 2014 was classified as white, 12.3% as African American, 3.5% as Hispanic or Latina/o, and 2.0% as Asian. The corresponding national percentages in 2014 were: 77.4% white, 13.2% African American, 17.4% Hispanic or Latina/o, and 5.4% Asian. See <https://www.census.gov/quickfacts/table/PST045215/00>; <https://development.ohio.gov/files/research/P5020.pdf>.
- 4 "Columbus, Ohio: Test Market of the U.S.A." CBS Sunday Morning. CBS News. June 24, 2012. <http://www.cbsnews.com/news/columbus-ohio-test-market-of-the-usa>
- 5 Census Reporter: Ohio, <http://censusreporter.org/profiles/04000US39-ohio/>
- 6 Census Reporter: Ohio, <http://censusreporter.org/profiles/04000US39-ohio/>
- 7 The 2014 child poverty rate was 23%; the national average was 22%. See <http://censusreporter.org/profiles/04000US39-ohio/>
- 8 <http://censusreporter.org/profiles/04000US39-ohio/>
- 9 <http://censusreporter.org/profiles/04000US39-ohio/>
- 10 "Ohio bucks trend, invests in higher ed." *Cincinnati Enquirer*. June 14, 2015. retrieved February 1, 2016. <http://www.cincinnati.com/story/opinion/contributors/2015/06/14/ohio-bucks-trend-invests-higher-ed/71218772/>.
- 11 Indeed, Ohio's job growth in 2014 – the last year for which reliable data are available – was about half of that found in the nation overall (1.2% vs. 2.1%). See "Ohio 2014 job growth was below par." *Policy Matters Ohio*. January 23, 2015, <http://www.policymattersohio.org/jobwatch-jan2015>. For Bureau of Labor Statistics data on unemployment rates, see <http://www.bls.gov/eag/eag.oh.htm>.
- 12 Zillman, Claire. "How this city managed to record the nation's highest wage growth." *Fortune*. September 2, 2015. <http://fortune.com/2015/09/02/columbus-ohio-wage-growth/>
- 13 "Minimum wage in Ohio increases 15 cents an hour." *Sandusky Register*. January 15, 2015. <http://www.sanduskyregister.com/Story/2015/01/04/Minimum-wage-in-Ohio-increases-15-cents-an-hour.html>
- 14 U.S. Bankruptcy Court filing statistics available at <http://www.uscourts.gov/statistics-reports>.
- 15 In 1995, for instance, there were roughly 16,000 foreclosure cases filed in Ohio. See new foreclosure case filings, 1995-2014. Table 5. *Policy Matters Ohio*. <http://www.policymattersohio.org/wp-content/uploads/2015/05/Foreclosure-Table-5-and-6-for-2015-Report.pdf>
- 16 See Ohio foreclosure rates, reported by county, at <http://www.realtytrac.com/statsandtrends/foreclosurestrends/oh>.
- 17 Huiting Wu. "Social Impact of Volunteerism." Points of Light Institute. 2011. [http://www.pointsoflight.org/sites/default/files/site-content/files/social\\_impact\\_of\\_volunteerism.pdf.pdf](http://www.pointsoflight.org/sites/default/files/site-content/files/social_impact_of_volunteerism.pdf.pdf).
- 18 "Volunteering and Civic Engagement in Ohio." *Corporation for National & Community Service*. <https://www.volunteeringinamerica.gov/OH>
- 19 This 2014 estimate is based upon pooled survey data from 2012-2014. See <https://www.volunteeringinamerica.gov/OH>.
- 20 Estimated Ohio volunteer hour totals for this date range were: for 2006, 333,804,154 hours; for 2005, 292,039,671 hours; for 2004, 272,682,736 hours; and for 2003, 321,541,885 hours. See <https://www.volunteeringinamerica.gov/OH>.
- 21 Estimated Ohio volunteer hour totals for this date range were: for 2010, 268,678,204 hours; for 2009, 257,745,112 hours; for 2008, 271,152,577 hours; and for 2007, 322,506,780 hours. See <https://www.volunteeringinamerica.gov/OH>.
- 22 Ohio's estimated volunteer hours total for 2014 was 267,084,874 hours. For 2013, the estimate was 283,159,737 hours. For 2012 and 2011, the estimates were 276,634,651 hours and 255,304,255 hours, respectively. See <https://www.volunteeringinamerica.gov/OH>.
- 23 In 2013, the Current Population Survey found the national charitable

giving rate was 50.1%.

- 24 Pooled CPS data from 2011-2013 showed that Ohioans aged 18-29 gave at a 24.2% rate during the period. Ohioans aged 30 and above gave at a rate of 53.8%.
- 25 In pooled data from 2011-2013, Ohioans with less than a high school diploma gave at a 31.4% rate. Those with at least a bachelor's degree gave at a 71.6% rate.
- 26 This finding of a greater participation rate among Ohio women stands at odds with recent social science research that has found generally equal rates of generosity among men and women. See, e.g., DellaVigna, Stefano, John A. List, Ulrike Malmendier and Gautam Rao. "The Importance of Being Marginal: Gender Differences in Generosity." *American Economic Review*. May 2013, Vol. 103, No. 3: 586-590.
- 27 See, e.g., Woiteshek Pietzuch, Sarah E. and Daniel E. Hall. "2011 Ohio Civic Health Index: Executive Summary." National Conference on Citizenship (2011): 4; Forren, John P. and Sarah Woiteshek Pietzuch. "2013 Ohio Civic Health Index Report." National Conference on Citizenship (2015): 8.
- 28 Overall, 38.8% of Ohioans reported some form of group participation in 2011. Ohio ranked 23rd in the nation in participation in group leadership. See Forren and Woiteshek Pietzuch, 8.
- 29 The 2013 group leadership role for Ohio was 10.1%.
- 30 For analysis of earlier election periods in Ohio, see Forren and Woiteshek Pietzuch, 8-9.
- 31 According to the Ohio Secretary of State, 7,709,478 Ohioans were registered to vote in the 2011 general election. See <http://www.sos.state.oh.us/SOS/elections/Research/electResultsMain/2011results/20111108turnout.aspx>. To calculate the corresponding percentage of voting-age Ohioans who were registered, the authors used U.S. Census Bureau estimates of the state's overall population aged 18 and over (8,851,037) as of July 1, 2011. See <http://factfinder.census.gov>.
- 32 According to official state data, 7,987,203 Ohioans were registered to vote in the 2012 general election. As of July 1, 2012, the state's voting-age population stood at roughly 8,882,517. See <http://factfinder.census.gov>.
- 33 According to official state data, 7,748,201 Ohioans were registered to vote for the 2014 general election. To calculate an estimated 2014 registration rate for voting-age Ohioans, the authors used the U.S. Census Bureau estimates of July 1, 2014 population found at <http://www.census.gov/quickfacts/table/PST045215/39,00>. Specifically, the Census Bureau estimated that 11,594,163 people lived in state as of July 1, 2014. The authors also used the most recent available Census Bureau estimate – 22.8%, as of July 1, 2014 – of the percentage of state residents under the age of 18. These figures produced an estimated voting-age Ohio population of 8,950,694 for 2014.
- 34 Ohio Secretary of State data show that 7,529,667 Ohioans were registered to vote for the November 2015 election. The U.S. Census Bureau estimated that 11,613,423 people lived in Ohio as of July 1, 2015. See <http://www.census.gov/quickfacts/table/PST045215/39,00>. Following the same methodology employed to calculate an estimated voting-age population for 2014, the authors used the most recent available Census Bureau estimate of the percentage of state residents under the age of 18 – 22.8%, as of July 1, 2014 – to calculate a 2015 voting-age population. For 2015, that figure stood at 8,965,562. Matching that population figure with the state data on actual registrations yielded a voting-age registration rate of 84.0%.
- 35 See the Ohio Secretary of State's historical database on voter turnouts at <https://www.sos.state.oh.us/sos/elections/Research/electResultsMain/HistoricalElectionComparisons/Voter%20Turnout%20in%20General%20Elections.aspx>.
- 36 According to the Ohio Secretary of State, 3,628,342 people voted in the November 2011 general election. See <https://www.sos.state.oh.us/SOS/elections/Research/electResultsMain/2011results/20111108turnout.aspx>.
- 37 Altogether, 3,149,876 Ohioans voted in the November 2014 midterm elections, representing 35.2% of the state's voting-age population. See the Ohio Secretary of State database at <https://www.sos.state.oh.us/SOS/elections/Research/electResultsMain/2014Results.aspx>.
- 38 In the November 2015 election, 3,255,537 Ohioans cast votes. See the Ohio Secretary of State database at <https://www.sos.state.oh.us/SOS/elections/Research/electResultsMain/2015Results.aspx>.
- 39 The 2013 CPS survey found that 3.1% of Ohioans aged 18-29 attended a public meeting, while 7.3% of those aged 30 and above did.
- 40 The 2013 CPS survey found that 22.8% of Ohioans aged 18-29 talked at least a few times a week about politics; by contrast, 30.6% of those aged 30 and above did.



- 41 The 2013 CPS survey found that 3.8% of Ohioans aged 18-29 contacted or visited a public official during the year; 12.6% of those aged 30 and above did.
- 42 The 2013 CPS survey found that 9.5% of Ohioans aged 18-29 boycotted or bought a product or service for political reasons; 14.1% of those aged 30 and above did.
- 43 The 2013 CPS data show that 82.8% of Ohioans expressed “some” or “a great deal” of confidence in public schools. The national average on the same indicator was 84.5%.
- 44 Forren, John P. and Sarah Woiteshek Pietzuch. “2013 Ohio Civic Health Index Report.” National Conference on Citizenship (2014): 10.

## 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.

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 Ohio.





## TECHNICAL NOTE

Unless otherwise noted, findings presented in this Report are based on NCoC'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, voting estimates from 2014 November Voting and Registration Supplement, and all other civic engagement indicators, such as discussion of political information and connection to neighbors, come from the 2013 CPS Civic Engagement Supplement.

Using a probability selected sample of about 150,000 occupied households, the CPS collects monthly data on employment and demographic characteristics of the nation. Depending on the CPS supplement, the single-year Ohio CPS sample size used for this report ranges from 672 to 1061 (civic engagement supplement) to 2,544 (volunteer supplement), and to 2,693 (voting supplement) residents from across Ohio. 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 that younger people may be completing their education.

Because multiple sources of data with varying sample sizes are used, the report is not able to compute one margin of error for Ohio 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 (2010-2013 for civic engagement data and 2012-2014 for volunteering data) 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.

It is also important 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.

# CIVIC HEALTH INDEX

## State and Local Partnerships

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

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

### STATES

#### Alabama

University of Alabama  
David Mathews Center for Civic Life  
Auburn University

#### Arizona

Center for the Future of Arizona

#### California

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

#### Colorado

Metropolitan State University of Denver  
The Civic Canopy  
Denver Metro Chamber Leadership  
Campus Compact of Mountain West  
History Colorado  
Institute on Common Good

#### Connecticut

Everyday Democracy  
Secretary of the State of Connecticut  
DataHaven  
Connecticut Humanities  
Connecticut Campus Compact  
The Fund for Greater Hartford  
William Caspar Graustein Memorial Fund  
Wesleyan University

#### District of Columbia

ServeDC

#### Florida

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

#### Georgia

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

#### Illinois

McCormick Foundation

#### Indiana

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

#### Kansas

Kansas Health Foundation

#### Kentucky

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

#### Maryland

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

#### Massachusetts

Harvard Institute of Politics

#### Michigan

Michigan Nonprofit Association  
Michigan Campus Compact  
Michigan Community Service Commission  
Volunteer Centers of Michigan  
Council of Michigan Foundations  
Center for Study of Citizenship at Wayne State University

#### Minnesota

Center for Democracy and Citizenship

#### Missouri

Missouri State University  
Park University  
Saint Louis University

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

#### Nebraska

Nebraskans for Civic Reform

#### New Hampshire

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

#### New York

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

#### North Carolina

Institute for Emerging Issues

#### Ohio

Miami University Hamilton Center for Civic Engagement

#### Oklahoma

University of Central Oklahoma  
Oklahoma Campus Compact

#### Pennsylvania

Center for Democratic Deliberation  
National Constitution Center

#### South Carolina

University of South Carolina Upstate

#### Texas

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

#### Virginia

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

### ISSUE SPECIFIC

#### Latinos Civic Health Index

Carnegie Corporation

#### Veterans Civic Health Index

Got Your 6

#### Millennials Civic Health Index

Mobilize.org  
Harvard Institute of Politics  
CIRCLE

#### Economic Health

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

## CITIES

---

### **Atlanta**

Community Foundation of Greater Atlanta

### **Chicago**

McCormick Foundation

### **Kansas City & Saint Louis**

Missouri State University

Park University

Saint Louis University

University of Missouri Kansas City

University of Missouri Saint Louis

Washington University

### **Miami**

Florida Joint Center for Citizenship

John S. and James L. Knight Foundation

Miami Foundation

### **Pittsburgh**

University of Pittsburgh

Carnegie Mellon University

### **Seattle**

Seattle City Club

Boeing Company

Seattle Foundation

### **Twin Cities**

Center for Democracy and Citizenship

Citizens League

John S. and James L. Knight Foundation

---

## CIVIC HEALTH ADVISORY GROUP

### **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 & US Freedom Corps

### **Kristen Cambell**

Executive Director, PACE

### **Jeff Coates**

Research and Evaluation Director, National Conference on Citizenship

### **Lattie Coor**

Chairman & CEO, Center for the Future of Arizona

### **Nathan Dietz**

Senior Research Associate, The Urban Institute

### **Doug Dobson**

Executive Director, Florida Joint Center for Citizenship

### **Jennifer Domagal-Goldman**

National Manager, American Democracy Project

### **Diane Douglas**

Executive Director, Seattle CityClub

### **Paula Ellis**

Former Vice President, Strategic Initiatives, John S. and James L. Knight Foundation

### **William Galston**

Senior Fellow, Brookings Institution

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

### **Hon. Bob Graham**

Former Senator of Florida

Former Governor of Florida

### **Robert Grimm, Jr.**

Director of the Center for Philanthropy and Nonprofit Leadership, University of Maryland

### **Shawn Healy**

Resident Scholar, McCormick Foundation

### **Kei Kawashima-Ginsberg**

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

### **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**

Director of Hispanic Research, Pew Research Center

### **Ted McConnell**

Executive Director, Campaign for the Civic Mission of Schools

### **Martha McCoy**

President, Everyday Democracy

### **Kenneth Prewitt**

Former Director of the United States Census Bureau

Carnegie Professor of Public Affairs and the Vice-President for Global Centers at Columbia University

### **Robert Putnam**

Peter and Isabel Malkin Professor of Public Policy, Kennedy School of Government at Harvard University

Founder, Saguaro Seminar

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

### **Stella M. Rouse**

Director, Center for American Politics and Citizenship

### **Shirley Sagawa**

Chief Service Officer, National Conference on Citizenship

Co-founder, Sagawa/Jospin, LLP.

### **Thomas Sander**

Executive Director, the Saguaro Seminar, Harvard University

### **David B. Smith**

Chief of Programs and Strategy, National Center for Service and Innovative Leadership  
Founder, Mobilize.org

### **Drew Steijles**

Assistant Vice President for Student Engagement and Leadership and Director Office of Community Engagement, College of William & Mary

### **Michael Stout**

Associate Professor of Sociology, Missouri State University

### **Kristi Tate**

Partnership Development Director, National Conference on Citizenship

### **Michael Weiser**

Chairman, National Conference on Citizenship

### **Ilijer Zherka**

Former Executive Director, National Conference on Citizenship



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



Data Made Possible By:  
*Corporation for*  
**NATIONAL &  
COMMUNITY  
SERVICE** 