2015 NORTH CAROLINA CIVIC HEALTH INDEX

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THE INSTITUTE FOR EMERGING ISSUES

The Institute for Emerging Issues (IEI), a non-partisan public policy organization, exists to enhance North Carolina's long-term prosperity. IEI connects North Carolinians across sectors, regions, and perspectives for collaborative work on key emerging issues affecting our state's future economic competitiveness. As a unit of North Carolina State University, IEI advances the University's research, service, and outreach contributions statewide.

IEI helps North Carolinians build consensus, and then move to action. Every February, IEI's signature Emerging Issues Forum attracts leaders in business, education, and government to discuss a single issue of significant importance for North Carolina's future prosperity. For three decades, the Forum has helped catalyze the policy reforms, investments, and other proactive responses required to build an enduring capacity for progress in North Carolina.

In 2013, IEI launched the Emerging Issues Commons, an award-winning "civic engagement gallery" located in the James B. Hunt Jr. Library on NC State's Centennial Campus. IEI has explosively expanded its connection to citizens and their concerns through the Commons, which includes a digital platform that allows North Carolinians to connect to ideas, data, and each other.

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, an innovative national service project, and our cross-sector conferences. At the core of our joint efforts is the belief that every person has the ability to help their community and country thrive.

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

NCoC's CHI is at the center of our work. Leveraging civic data made possible by the Corporation for National & Community Service, we have partnered with dozens of states, cities, and issue groups to draft reports and action plans to strengthen civic life. This initiative has also been an important incubator for programs such as the Civic Data Challenge and *The Civic 50*. Each program has used data and 21st century tools to create locally led, collective impact across our country. By 2020, we plan to integrate this pioneering initiative into ongoing partnerships in all 50 states and the District of Columbia.

Left Cover Photo: Institute for Emerging Issues

Middle Cover Photo: North Carolina State Capitol, Raleigh, North Carolina

Right Cover Photo: Blue Ridge Mountains, Western North Carolina

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THE 2015 NORTH CAROLINA CIVIC HEALTH INDEX

Executive Summary

The Institute for Emerging Issues (IEI) is proud to announce the release of the ***2015 North Carolina Civic Health Index***, from which this Executive Summary is excerpted. The report, authored by IEI, is produced in partnership with the National Conference on Citizenship.

The 2015 North Carolina Civic Health Index highlights an extraordinary opportunity: to strengthen our communities, lift our statewide economy, and improve the bottom lines of businesses of all sizes by improving civic health. In sponsoring this report, IEI extends its tradition of helping North Carolinians identify consensus strategies for enhancing our future economic prosperity.

What is civic health? It is the social and economic vitality that results when citizens interact productively with their neighbors, involve themselves in community institutions, and actively engage in public issues. Communities with high levels of civic health benefit from strong social networks characterized by trust and common purpose. These networks offer essential advantages, including an enhanced innovation capacity that bolsters economic resilience and increasingly drives wealth creation. Improved civic health has proven to be a powerful potential economic differentiator.

To determine North Carolina's civic health, we analyze indicators drawn from special Census and other government surveys. We look at such things as rates of volunteering and giving, voting, working in groups and with neighbors, and having confidence in public institutions. We compare North Carolina to other states, and summarize research confirming the relationship of high levels of civic health to positive social and economic outcomes.

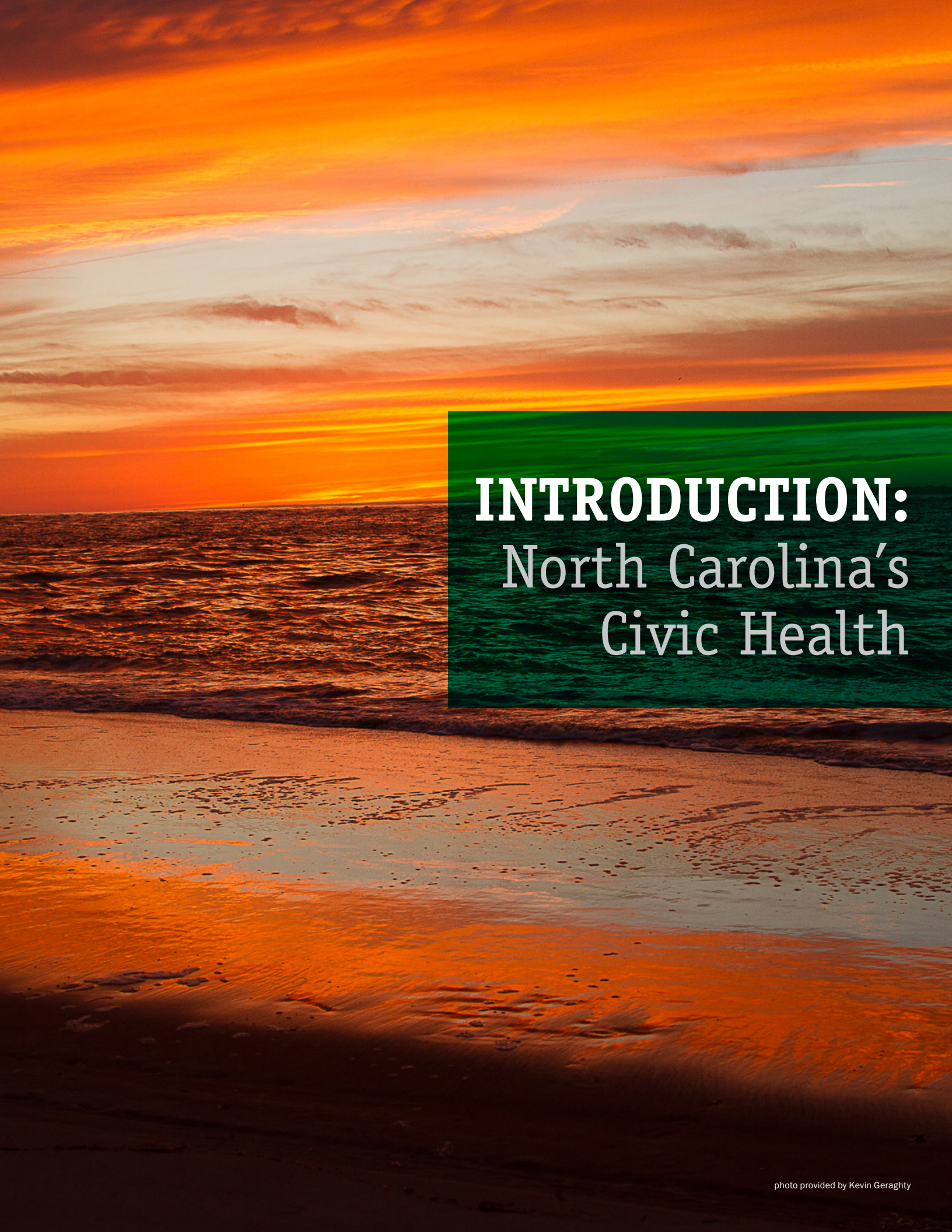
Our Key Findings

- Contrary to the beliefs of many, overall, North Carolina's current levels of civic engagement are no better than national averages. However, there are some key areas in which we depart from national averages:
  - We participate at higher levels in schools, neighborhoods, and community groups and religious institutions compared to national averages, and at lower rates in sporting and recreational groups.
  - We have **significantly lower trust in the media** than the national average.
  - We have some unique civic engagement assets, including **a high number of veterans who make up our engagement superstars**.
- Our efforts to enhance civic health must include outreach to under-engaged demographic subgroups, including young adults, non-whites, and persons with lower incomes or educational attainment.
  - Young adults' rates of participation on several indicators lag those of older adults by more than 25%.
  - **Young adults have more trust in corporations, the media, and public schools** than their older counterparts.
  - Generally, African-Americans and Latinos in the state report lower levels of engagement than whites and non-Latinos.
  - Families with incomes above $75,000 report civic engagement levels that far outpace those of families earning no more than $35,000 for most, but not all, indicators.
  - **Individuals holding at least a bachelor's degree are substantially more engaged** on most measured indicators than persons with a high school diploma.
- Rural and urban communities are more challenged to engage residents than suburban communities. In particular, rural residents report substantially less volunteering activity.

Our examination embeds North Carolina's civic health within a context of ongoing, rapid demographic transformation. In 25 years, North Carolina will be a top-seven "mega-state" by population and is expected to soon become a majority minority state. We are quickly greying, diversifying, and urbanizing. Despite North Carolina's advanced economy and leadership in many high-growth industries, median household incomes in our state are flat, the income gap is widening, and we are seeing rising poverty in our urban centers.

The 2015 North Carolina Civic Health Index invites all North Carolinians to reflect on the relationship between civic health and social and economic well being at this time of profound transformation in state demographics and the global economy. It includes numerous specific recommendations for improving civic health statewide and within under-engaged groups.

Together, we must set our sights far beyond average as we create a shared vision for our future. Higher levels of civic engagement will strengthen North Carolina communities and differentiate the state economically in an increasingly competitive world.



INTRODUCTION: North Carolina's Civic Health

photo provided by Kevin Geraghty

NORTH CAROLINA'S CIVIC HEALTH

What is it?

"Civic health" describes the vitality that a community enjoys when its citizens actively engage in public issues, involve themselves in community institutions, and interact with their neighbors. Communities with high levels of civic health feature strong social networks characterized by trust and common purpose. In a broad sense, civic health can be viewed as a measure of a community's ability to work together to seize opportunities and resolve collective problems. When civic health is high, civic engagement becomes a virtuous cycle, and members of the community are inspired to repeatedly invest their time, commitment, and resources.

To determine civic health, we analyze a series of indicators drawn from special Census and other government surveys. These indicators track levels of civic engagement such as volunteering and giving, voting, working in groups and with neighbors, and having confidence in public institutions.

Why It Matters

The various forms of engagement weave a web of connections that binds a community together. While the mechanisms through which civic engagement and social connectedness produce results are multiple and complex, better schools, committed service organizations, responsive government, lower crime, and vibrant social, faith, and cultural institutions are some of the benefits that result. Through these and other benefits, strong civic health encourages a higher quality of life.

The web of connections resulting from high levels of engagement also results in positive economic outcomes.[1] This web offers a powerful network for people to share ideas, engage in collaborative problem solving, and forge creative partnerships. These productive networking activities, which characterize places like Silicon Valley, are the hallmarks of the "innovation capacity" increasingly deemed essential for any community to thrive in the accelerating, hyper-connected global economy. Civic engagement does more than support an innovation economy, however. Communities with high levels of civic health prove more economically resilient even during inevitable economic downturns. Citizens who practice civic engagement gain skills and build relationships of trust that correlate with enhanced employment opportunities.

Finally, a highly engaged citizenry is critical to a democratic society. Networks of continual interaction make it easier to translate "I" into "we," creating more opportunities for collective problem solving. Yet, it is no secret that, over the past few decades, levels of civic engagement have trended downward, in North Carolina and the US alike.[2] Many factors are implicated, among them the pressures of work schedules, more transient lifestyles, and our preoccupation with digital devices. We miss out on many potential benefits when we decrease our civic engagement.

Kayaker in North Carolina, photo provided by Kevin Geraghty

HOW WE FARE IN NORTH CAROLINA

As this report details, North Carolina's current levels of overall civic engagement broadly match US averages and trends. We volunteer, join community groups, interact with neighbors, and donate to charities at rates very similar to those of other Americans.

North Carolina as "average" may surprise many in the state. After all, we Tar Heels pride ourselves on a remarkable penchant for rolling up our sleeves and working together on public issues. Such accounts are plentiful. For example, during World War II, North Carolina held the dubious distinction of leading all states in the percentage of young men rejected for military service because of health-related conditions, with some 55% judged unfit. North Carolinians responded with an exceptional showing of statewide civic engagement: nurses, doctors, policymakers, philanthropists, business leaders, and school children came together to launch and implement the statewide Good Health Movement.[3]

Unfortunately, we lack sufficient historical data to be certain about the narrative regarding North Carolina's exceptional levels of earlier civic engagement. It may be that we were never as far ahead of the rest of the country as we believed, or, alternatively, that recent and profound changes – demographic, social, and economic – have decreased our levels of engagement. Perhaps both interpretations are correct.

More important than justifying our narrative of the past is the task of realizing the vision of the future we hope to create. To ensure a future in which North Carolina has the capacity for social and economic innovation on which prosperity will depend, we must set our sights far beyond "average." **Enhancing levels of civic engagement represents a tremendous opportunity for North Carolina's economy.** Measured in absolute (rather than relative) terms, North Carolina's current levels of civic engagement offer great room for improvement. Higher levels of civic engagement will strengthen North Carolina communities, and differentiate the state in an increasingly competitive global economy.

Boosting overall civic engagement levels will not be easy. When we break down indicator data into demographic subgroups – we see distinct patterns: younger residents, racial and ethnic minorities, persons with lower incomes, and those with less education consistently report lower levels of civic engagement. **North Carolina must encourage increased civic participation rates among key demographic subgroups, particularly young adults, racial and ethnic minorities, persons with lower incomes, and individuals with less education.** Our state's broad demographic trends, meanwhile, show increasing racial and ethnic diversity and a widening income gap.

This report includes many specific recommendations for increasing engagement, and we note that groups will play different roles in the overall task. With the data and recommendations, we hope to spark dialogue among all North Carolinians – individual citizens; leaders from the business, education, and nonprofit sectors; community groups and institutions; public officials; and the media – about the importance of civic health to our wellbeing.

Photo provided by the Corporation for National & Community Service

North Carolina's current levels of overall civic engagement broadly match national averages and trends.

NORTH CAROLINA'S CONTINUING GROWTH, CHANGING DEMOGRAPHY

Significant economic expansion, rapid population growth, and ever-increasing diversity – these are the broad trends that have reshaped North Carolina's economy and population through recent decades, and all are expected to continue.

North Carolina, bordered on the east by the Atlantic Ocean and on the west by the Blue Ridge and Smoky Mountain ranges, is rich in natural resources. From its sunny, sandy shores to the soaring heights of Mt. Mitchell, the highest peak in the eastern United States, the state stands out as a natural jewel. We are also blessed with substantial developed advantages, including a strong and diversified economy, a well-regarded higher education system, a relatively low cost of living, and countless cultural and recreational offerings in every season.

Over the past 50 years, North Carolina's economy has transitioned away from a heavy reliance on the manufacture of tobacco products, textiles, and furniture. In recent decades, our economy has been led by growth in finance, pharmaceuticals, biotechnology, information technology, defense, agriculture, tourism, and retail services. North Carolina's gross domestic product reached $471 billion in 2013, twice the level of just 16 years prior.[4] This rapid growth reflects North Carolina's attractiveness to business leaders. In 2014, *Forbes Magazine* named North Carolina the nation's third-best state for business.[5]

North Carolina wildflowers, photo provided by NCDOT

The Data and How We Use It

The 2015 North Carolina Civic Health Index analyzes civic engagement indicator data from special surveys conducted by the US Census Bureau and the US Bureau of Labor Statistics from 2010-2013. These are the latest available sources of such information.

The data is aggregated at the state level and subdivided according to the following seven demographic characteristics:

- Geography: *Urban, Suburban, Rural*
- Age: *18–29, 30+*
- Ethnicity: *Latino, Non-Latino*
- Race: *Black, White*
- Family Income: *<$35K, $35K-$49,999, $50K-$74,999, >$75K*
- Educational Attainment: *<High School, High School Diploma, Some College, Bachelor Degree or Higher*
- Veteran Status: *Veteran, Non-Veteran*

For a more detailed description of the data sources and analysis, please see the Technical Note.

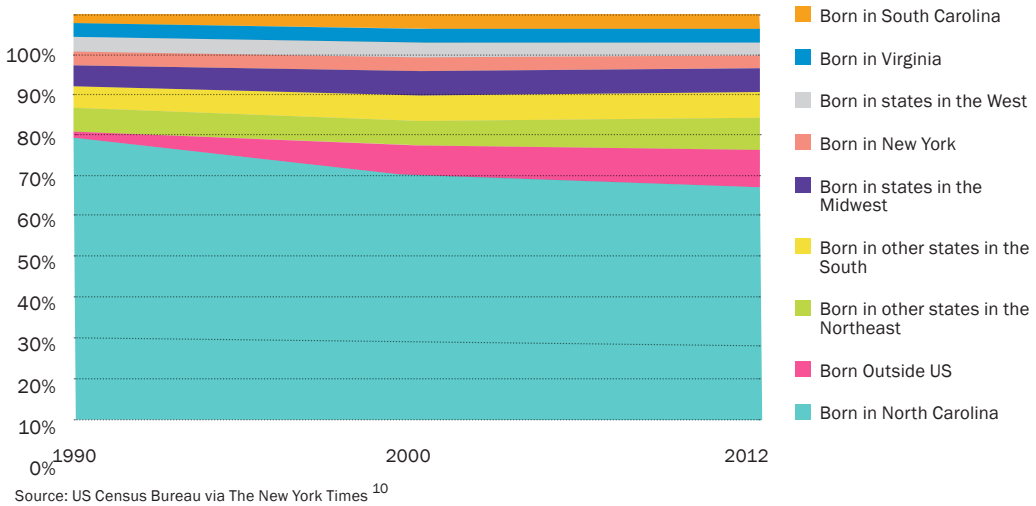
Due in part to this business friendly environment, North Carolina has experienced rapid population growth in the past several decades. The state's population grew by 20% in the 1990s and again in the 2000s, jumping from 6.6 million to 9.3 million in 20 years. North Carolina was the nation's sixth fastest-growing state between 2000 and 2010, increasing at twice the national rate in that decade.[6] In 2015, North Carolina's population is forecast to reach 10 million. Demographers expect continued growth of roughly 100,000 per year through 2040, at which time North Carolina will become the eighth-most populous state.[7]

Meanwhile, as North Carolina's overall population grows, its demographic and socioeconomic profile is changing dramatically. The state is quickly aging, diversifying, urbanizing, and gaining in average educational attainment. We are also witnessing population decline in many rural areas, stagnant median household incomes, a widening income gap across the state, and increasing concentrated poverty in our urban communities.

One of the most immediate demographic changes is the state's aging population. Today, 13% of residents are 65 or older. This figure is expected to climb to a peak of nearly 20% by 2030. Across the state, this aging will occur unevenly, but by 2030 a staggering one in three North Carolina counties will have senior populations of at least 25%.[8] A handful of these counties will be retirement destinations for the high-income elderly. Most, however, will find themselves in circumstances driven by the exodus of younger residents who have departed in search of better opportunity. As the population ages, government at all levels will be increasingly challenged to find sufficient revenue to meet the care needs of these older residents, while also investing to educate and provide other development opportunities to younger generations.

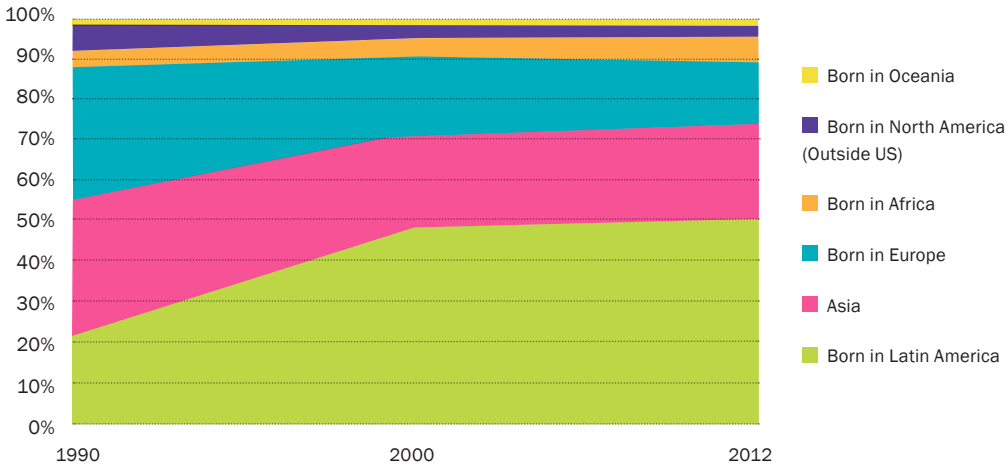
Besides growing and aging, our Tar Heel population is also becoming more racially and ethnically diverse. Since 1990, 70% of the state's population growth has come from net in-migration.[9] In 2012, some 42% of North Carolina residents were born outside the state, including 9% born abroad.[10] Latino in-migration, which has mostly occurred since 1990, represents North Carolina's most significant racial and ethnic change (Charts 1 and 2). Today, North Carolina is home to the nation's sixth fastest-growing Latino population, now 9% of the state's total population.[11]

Chart 1. Where People Living in North Carolina Were Born



Source: US Census Bureau via The New York Times [10]

Chart 2. Place of Birth for Foreign Born North Carolinians



Source: US Census Bureau via the Migration Policy Institute [12]

42%
of North Carolinians were born outside of the state as of 2012.

Whites are gradually declining as a percentage of the total population. In 1990, non-Latino whites made up about 75% of the state's population. That figure declined to 70% by 2000 and to about 65% by 2010. At some time between 2040 and 2045, whites will no longer represent a majority of the state's population, just as is expected for the US population as a whole.[13] Among North Carolinians younger than 18 years old, whites today represent only a slight majority.[14]

Most of North Carolina's population increase in recent decades has been concentrated in the state's metropolitan areas. A little over 30% of the state's population growth from 1990 to 2010 occurred in Mecklenburg County and Wake County, home to Charlotte and Raleigh, two of the nation's fastest-growing cities. The two counties already account for 20% of state population and are projected to absorb 42% of the state's one million new residents between 2010 and 2020.[15]

For the most part, North Carolina's rural areas have not shared in the state's population boom, and many rural communities are now facing static or declining populations. Between now and 2020, a stunning one in three North Carolina counties is projected to lose population, most of them rural counties in the far western and northeastern parts of the state.[16] With relatively high levels of unemployment and declining job opportunities, rural North Carolina is losing its young adults to other areas. Between 2000 and 2010, of North Carolina's 85 rural counties, 47 lost a portion of their young adult population (ages 24-30). Twenty of these counties lost more than 15% of this age group.[17]

Sunset over Blue Ridge Mountains, Western North Carolina, photo provided by Will Evans

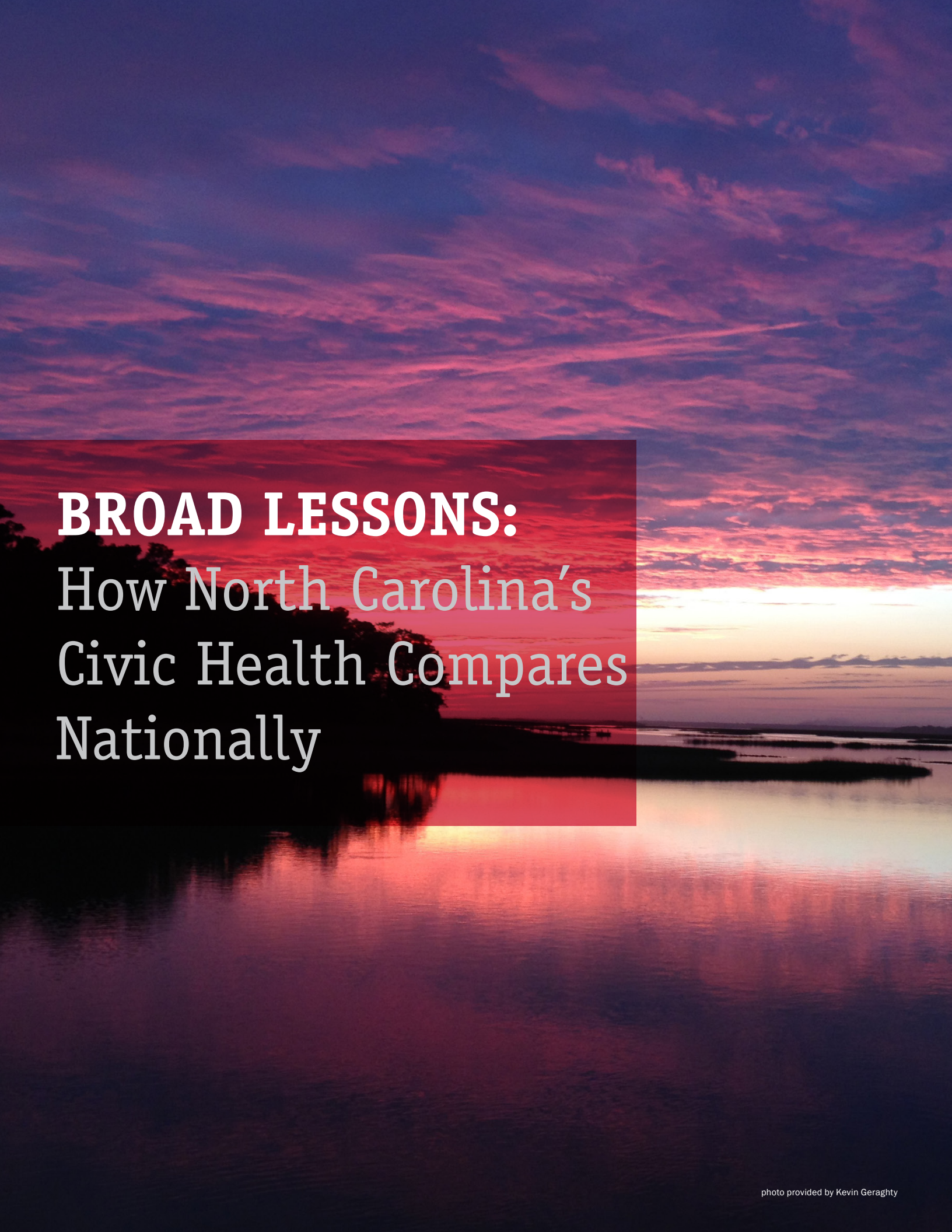
In the midst of this overall population growth and demographic change, North Carolinians are gaining ground in educational attainment levels.[18] Today, 86% of adult North Carolinians have graduated from high school, up from 70% in 1990. We have also seen an increase in post-secondary attainment. Some 28% of adults age 25 and older have at least a bachelor's degree, compared to 17% in 1990.[19] Some economists expect that, by 2020, two-thirds of the state's newly created jobs will require some training past high school.[20] The upward trend in educational levels means more of the state's residents will be prepared for those higher-paying jobs. Greater educational attainment will also offer greater employment stability during economic downturns.

Despite significant expansion of the state's economy and rising educational attainment levels, statewide median household income stagnated, sliding slightly from $47,642 in 1990 to $46,450 in 2012 (using inflation-adjusted 2012 dollars). The absence of middle-income growth mirrors a wider national trend. North Carolina's "Gini index," a common measure of relative income inequality, jumped from 0.43 in 1989 to 0.48 in 2013, moving North Carolina from 21st to 14th among the states by this measure.[21] In the same period, the number of North Carolina families living in poverty increased from 10% to 13%.[22]

North Carolina's economic gains have disproportionately favored key urban centers, especially metropolitan Charlotte and the broad Research Triangle region. Yet, these areas have not escaped expanding pockets of significant economic hardship. Between 2000 and 2012, the Charlotte and Raleigh metro areas - among the nation's 100 most-populous such areas - witnessed the third and fourth-largest numerical gains of persons living in poverty. The number of poor nearly doubled in each of these communities.[23] More generally, the state's urban areas included two-thirds of the state's most economically distressed census tracts.[24] Whether urban or rural, these areas of concentrated poverty experienced higher rates of crime, worse health outcomes, and diminished social and economic opportunities, especially for their youngest residents.[25] A recent study of the nation's 100 largest metro areas ranked Fayetteville, Charlotte, Greensboro and Raleigh among the 10 places with the least opportunity for social mobility for children born poor.[26]

*"**Civic engagement** is an opportunity to be enriched, to be self-actualized, and to be personally satisfied as a human being by connecting with others who may seem very different from you."*

-Robin Emmons, Founder and Executive Director,
Sow Much Good, Inc.



BROAD LESSONS:
How North Carolina's Civic Health Compares Nationally

photo provided by Kevin Geraghty

BROAD LESSONS: HOW NORTH CAROLINA'S CIVIC HEALTH COMPARES NATIONALLY

Broadly speaking, North Carolina's current rates of civic engagement mirror those of the US population as a whole (Table 1). We are a bit better than the national averages on some indicators, and a bit lower on others.

In this section, we review civic engagement averages for North Carolina as a whole in comparison to other states and to the US average. Comparing North Carolina's current civic engagement levels to those of other state and US averages allows us to gauge how far we must lift civic engagement levels so that North Carolina stands out as a clear national leader in overall civic health. Higher levels of civic engagement mean better civic health, which, in turn, is a critical differentiator of future economic success in an increasingly competitive global economy.

While North Carolina overall is about average in its civic engagement, there is a worrisome story within the story: not all North Carolinians are engaged. In fact, there are groups that are decidedly disengaged from the measures used in this report. We examine this issue below, particularly in the section on subgroup trends and divides.

Given the strong correlations between civic health, innovation capacity, and social and economic prosperity, the findings we report in the following pages are a call to action for our state's leaders, institutions, and citizens. North Carolina's history suggests that we aspire to have a better than "average" ranking in our civic engagement, and that we desire greater inclusion of all population segments in our state. By investing time, thought, and other resources, we can improve our civic health across all groups and, in turn, build the strong neighborhoods and communities needed to support the changes occurring all over North Carolina.

Farmer's Market in North Carolina, photo provided by Carol Anne Hartsman Photograpby

"Nothing is more vital than the practice of open and unfettered discussion of ideas and public issues."

-William C. "Bill" Friday,
Former University of North Carolina System President

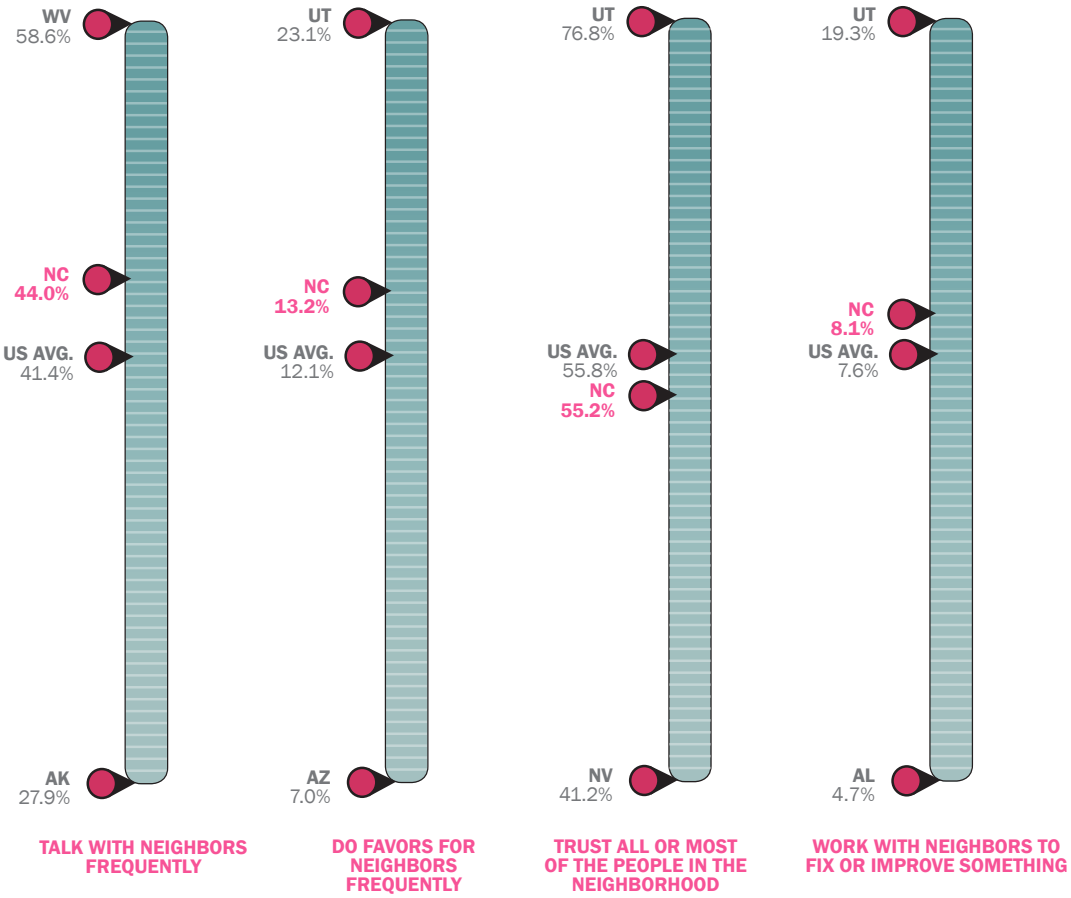
Table 1. North Carolina Civic Health At-a-Glance vs. US Averages

		North Carolina	US
INTERACTIONS WITH NEIGHBORS [1]	Talk with neighbors frequently	44.0%	41.4%
	Do favors for neighbors frequently	13.2%	12.1%
	Trust the people in your neighborhood all or most of the time	55.2%	55.8%
	Work with neighbors to fix something in the community	8.1%	7.6%
GROUP PARTICIPATION [2]	Group participation with at least one organization	38.5%	36.3%
	Group participation: school group, neighborhood, or community association	17.7%	13.9%
	Group participation: service or civic association	6.3%	6.8%
	Group participation: sports or recreation association	7.5%	9.9%
	Group participation: church, synagogue, mosque, or other religious institution[27]	25.0%	19.4%
	Group participation: any other type of organization	4.7%	5.0%
	Officer or member of committee for group or organization	10.6%	9.7%
VOLUNTEERING & GIVING [2]	Volunteering	26.0%	25.4%
	Charitable giving ($25 or more)	53.3%	50.1%
CONFIDENCE IN INSTITUTIONS [2]	Express confidence in corporations (some or a great deal)	62.1%	64.5%
	Express confidence in media (some or a great deal)	49.4%	55.0%
	Express confidence in schools (some or a great deal)	85.4%	84.5%

[1] Current Population Survey 2013: November Civic Engagement Supplement age 18+; and September Volunteering Supplement
[2] Current Population Survey 2013: November Civic Engagement Supplement age 18+

CONNECTING WITH NEIGHBORS

Traditionally, it has been embedded in our Southern DNA to engage with our neighbors. This form of connection is a powerful means of developing social capital – the relationships and networks of trust and cooperation that support a community's wider wellbeing. North Carolinians report that they connect with neighbors at rates close to national averages, albeit at levels often far below those reported by leading states (see below).[28]



Emerging Issues Commons, photo provided by IEI

VOTING AND POLITICAL INVOLVEMENT IN NORTH CAROLINA

When we think of civic engagement, we often think first of voting. It is, after all, one of the clearest barometers of the health of our democracy.

North Carolinia fares well on this measure. Our state's residents turn out in high numbers in presidential election years. For the highly competitive Obama-McCain presidential race in 2008, large numbers registered and voted. That year, North Carolina's registered voters numbered 6.3 million, and fully 70% cast ballots.[29] The record turnout prompted the 2010 North Carolina Civic Health Index report to question whether the high level of voting would be sustained. In the 2012 presidential cycle, the answer was a clear "yes." That year, nearly 69% of North Carolina's 6.6 million registered voters cast ballots.[30]

Mid-term elections present a different story. In the 2006 elections, of the 5.6 million North Carolinians then registered to vote, just 37% went to the polls. This turnout increased to 44% of registered voters casting ballots both in 2010 and 2014.[31]

North Carolina's Voter Turnout

37% — 2006 Midterm Election

70% — 2008 Presidential Election

44% — 2010 Midterm Election

69% — 2012 Presidential Election

44% — 2014 Midterm Election

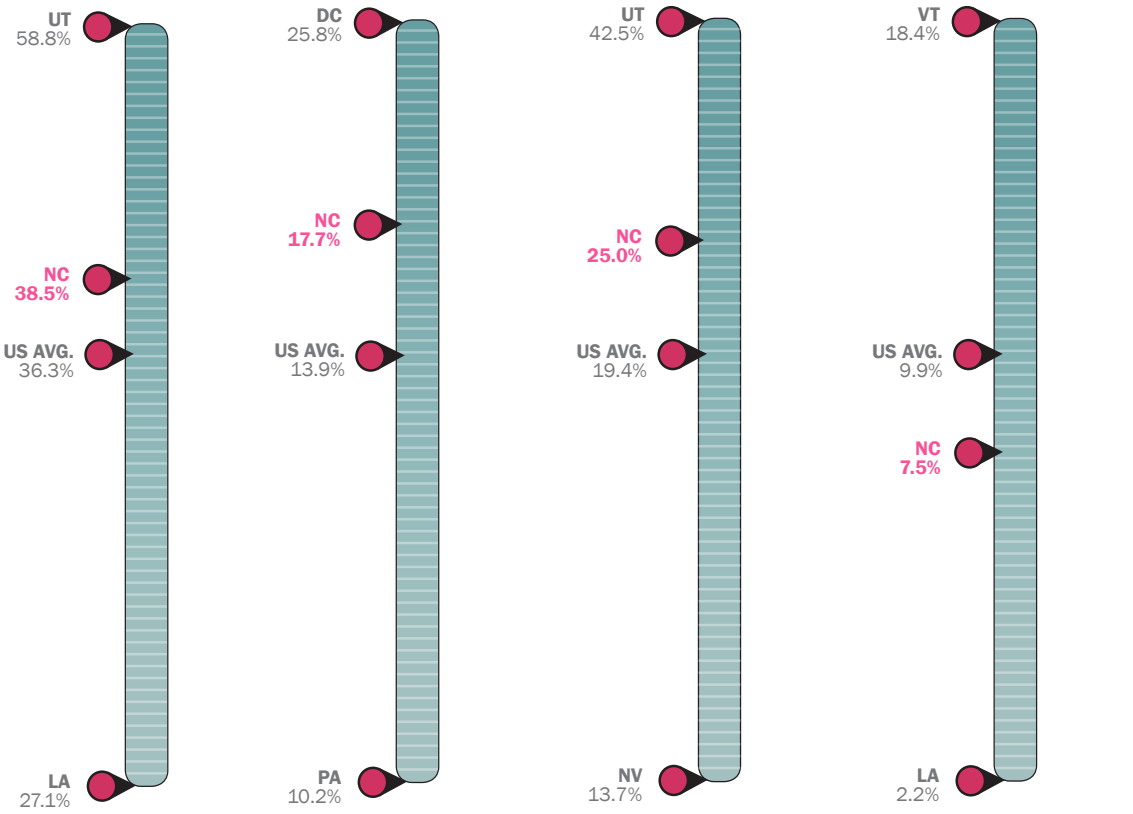
GROUP PARTICIPATION

Observers have long characterized the United States as "a nation of joiners," arguing that the strong habit to participate in groups and organizations is a core characteristic of our national civic character. When Alexis de Tocqueville visited the United States in the 1830s, he became enthralled with what he saw as Americans' propensity for civic association:

> *Americans of all ages, all stations in life, and all types of disposition, are forever forming associations. There are not only commercial and industrial associations in which all take part, but others of a thousand different types – religious, moral, serious, futile, very general and very limited, immensely large and very minute.... Nothing, in my view, deserves more attention than the intellectual and moral associations in America.*[32]

For decades, however, researchers have been documenting American's declining levels of group engagement. Participation in parent-teacher organizations has dropped drastically over the last generation, as has involvement in traditional groups such as the Boy Scouts and even religious institutions.

When it comes to participating in at least one group, North Carolina mostly mirrors national norms. We participate at rates above national averages in school, neighborhood, and community groups and in religious institutions, but we join sporting and recreational groups at comparatively lower rates.



GROUP PARTICIPATION WITH AT LEAST ONE ORGANIZATION

GROUP PARTICIPATION IN SCHOOLS, NEIGHBORHOODS, AND COMMUNITY ASSOCIATIONS

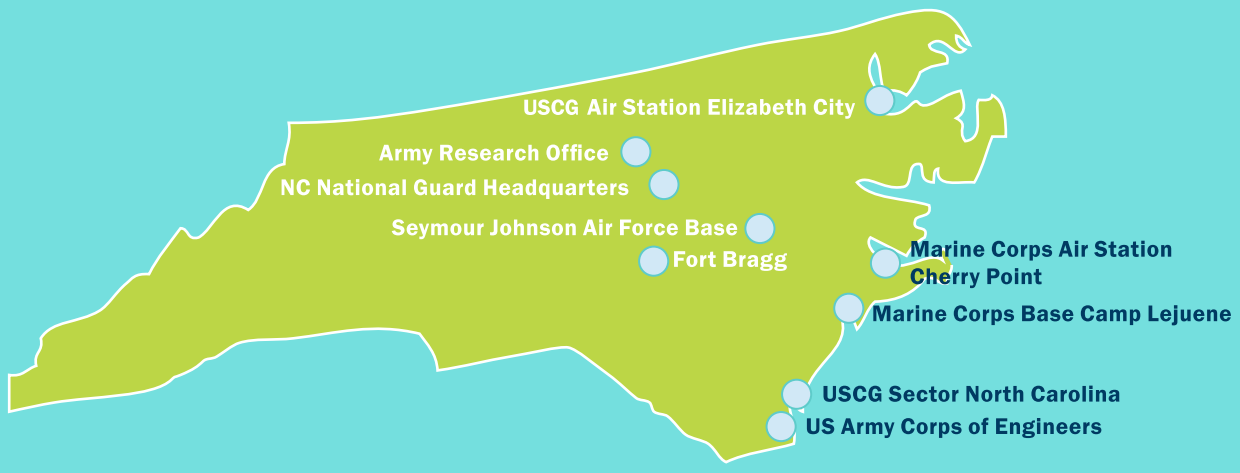
GROUP PARTICIPATION IN CHURCH, SYNAGOGUE, MOSQUE OR OTHER RELIGIOUS INSTITUTION

GROUP PARTICIPATION IN SPORTS OR RECREATION ASSOCIATION

VETERANS AS CIVIC LEADERS IN NORTH CAROLINA

Many North Carolinians proudly tout that our state has the nation's third-largest active-duty military population. They also know the state's many major military installations contribute significantly to the state's economy. They are less familiar, however, with the strong civic boost given to communities by the large numbers of veterans who live in North Carolina.

North Carolina's 790,000 veterans are civic engagement superstars. They consistently register and vote, volunteer, make charitable donations, and join groups at rates exceeding both state and national averages. In some cases, veterans' rates of civic engagement are double those of non-veterans.



As the US Department of Defense continues to shrink the active-duty roster, North Carolina communities will likely gain new veterans. Fort Bragg, our largest military facility, is currently home to 550,000 active-duty personnel, but that figure is projected to fall to 490,000 in 2015 and to 420,000 the following year.[33]

The many soon-to-be veterans represent a great opportunity to boost the civic health of the communities where they choose to settle.

Below: Paratroopers from the 82nd Airborne Division line in formation during a ceremony, photo provided by Becky Kirkland, NC State University

GROUP LEADERSHIP

Group leadership is a key indicator of civic engagement, signaling a deeper level of personal investment, connection, and commitment. In North Carolina, 10.6% of respondents report having provided group leadership by serving as a group officer or committee member. This is a rate of leadership participation very close to the national average.[34]

As explored later in this report, those in leadership roles reflect limited diversity. Leaders disproportionately are older, white, higher-income, and better-educated residents (Chart 3).

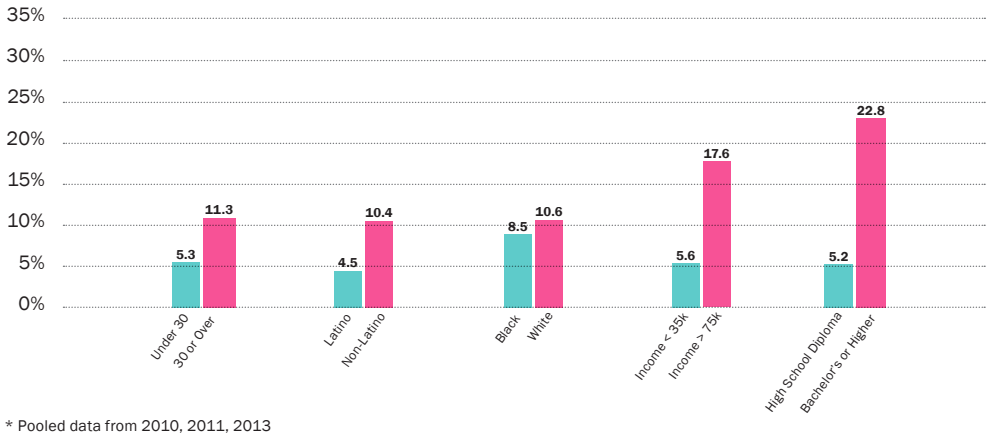
Table 2. A Comparison of Group Leadership

Ranking[35]	State	%
1st	Vermont	20.3%
29th	North Carolina	10.6%
51st	Arizona	5.9%
	US	9.7%

29th

North Carolina's rank among states for residents serving as a group officer or committee member with a rate of 10.6%.

Chart 3. Demographics of NC Group Leadership*



* Pooled data from 2010, 2011, 2013

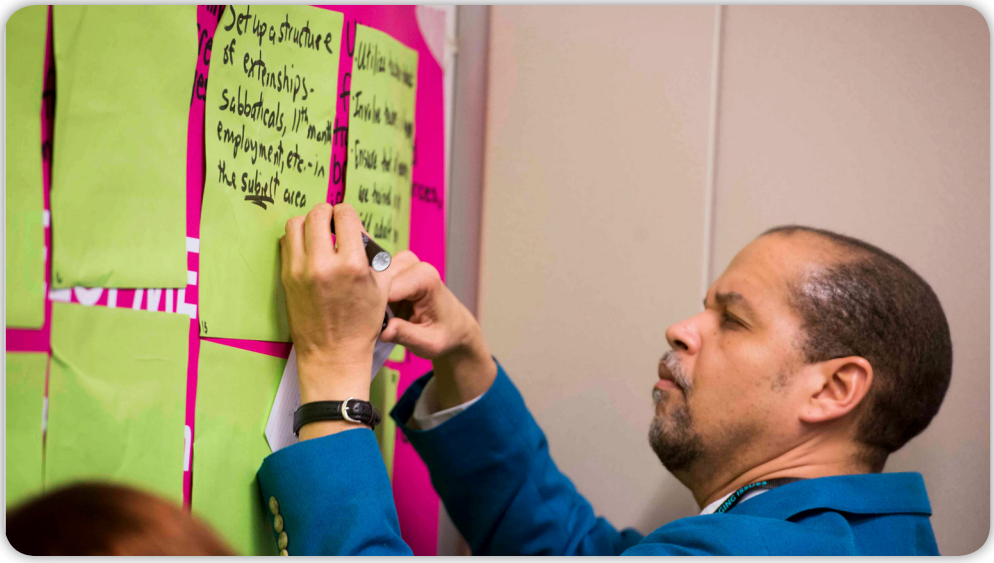


Photo provided by IEI

GIVING AND VOLUNTEERING

North Carolinians are willing to invest time and money on causes that matter to them. In 2013, 26% of North Carolinians volunteered, slightly above the national rate of 25.4%. Thus, nearly two million North Carolinians felt strongly enough about an issue or organization to volunteer. Both in North Carolina and nationally, volunteers are most likely to spend their time volunteering for religious organizations, followed by educational and social service organizations.

Table 3. A Comparison of Volunteering

Ranking	State	%
1st	Utah	45.3%
29th	North Carolina	26.0%
51st	Louisiana	16.7%
	US	25.4%

In 2013, 53.3% of North Carolinians made a charitable donation of $25 or more, besting the comparable figure of 50.1% for the US as a whole.

Table 4. A Comparison of Charitable Giving ($25 or more)

Ranking	State	%
1st	Utah	66.9%
21st	North Carolina	53.3%
51st	Louisiana	35.8%
	US	50.1%

Emerald Isle Sea Turtle Protection Program volunteers, photo provided by Kevin Geraghty

CONFIDENCE IN PUBLIC INSTITUTIONS

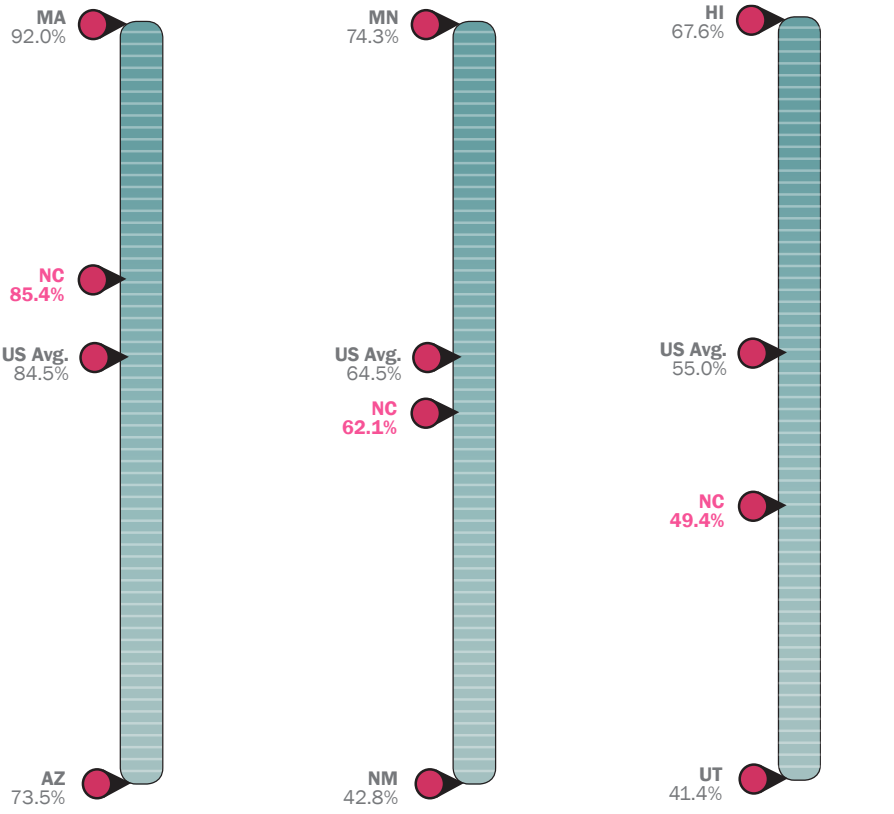
Levels of confidence in public instituations are a key indicator of civic health. In strong communities, citizens are able to trust these institutions to contribute consistently to the community's wellbeing.

More than four out of five Americans report some or a great deal of confidence in their public schools, much higher than their confidence in corporations and especially the media. North Carolina's confidence levels for all three institutions are similar to national averages but slightly lower confidence in the media and corporations.

Belk Foundation's Teacher Ambassadors gather for the 2014 Emerging Issues Forum, photo provided by IEI

85%

of North Carolinians have some or a great deal of confidence in public schools.



*Confidence is defined here as the percentage of repondents who indicated "some or a great" deal of confidence in the institution.

IEI's BUSINESS COMMITTEE ON CIVIC HEALTH

Good civic health strengthens general economic prosperity and the bottom line for companies. Many business experts, including Harvard Business School corporate strategy expert Michael Porter, now advocate for community engagement as a strategic means of generating financial returns via increased consumer and employee loyalty. For firms in sectors that are highly sensitive to consumer perception, community engagement is associated with subsequent sales growth. Consumers are more likely to buy a product associated with a corporate-nonprofit partnership that supports causes they care about. Therefore, businesses should be natural partners in enhancing the state's overall civic health.

Recognizing this link between civic health, a stronger economy, and increased business profitability, the Institute for Emerging Issues established a *Business Committee on Civic Health (BCCH)*, representing companies across the state in banking and financial services, healthcare, technology, agricultural products, law, manufacturing, and energy. BCCH members supported IEI in the development and release of the 2015 North Carolina Civic Health Index, and are integrating the report's recommendations into their company strategies for civic engagement.

With just 62% of North Carolinians expressing some or a great deal of confidence in corporations, BCCH members are rightly emphasizing the importance of civic engagement practices to foster strong, trusting relationships with their communities. As they devise their individual company implementation plans, BCCH members will draw on insights available in the 2014 *The Civic 50* report, an initiative of the Points of Light Foundation in partnership with Bloomberg LP.[36] The annual report champions the nation's 50 most civically-minded corporations, and reviews best practices for corporate and employee engagement.

Four-fifths of *The Civic 50* corporations provide paid time-off to employees who volunteer, a practice that helps lift overall rates of volunteering among their employees to 35%. Meanwhile, half of *The Civic 50* companies include community engagement as a criterion in performance reviews of some or all staff.[37]

Here in North Carolina, *The Civic 50* 2014 honoree Bank of America encourages employees to volunteer, serve on boards, and contribute to community development. Last year, Bank of America employees contributed 190,000 volunteer hours repairing homes, building new units of affordable housing, and providing other forms of service.[38]

There are other interesting approaches in our state. One North Carolina-based certification program, *Green Plus*, recognizes small and medium-sized businesses for civic engagement efforts as part of a wider survey of sustainability indicators. For example, when examining civic engagement, *Green Plus* assesses how many members of senior management take leadership roles in community groups or with local government boards.[39]

Alert to the different resource contraints of small businesses to adress issues such as civic engagement, IEI's BCCH is cataloging private sector approaches, such as *Green Plus*, which support and recognize businesses that launch successful civic engagement initiatives. BCCH members pointed early to co-working and entrepreneurial hubs as potential focal points through which smaller businesses might coordinate joint engagement programs for greater efficiency and impact.[40] BCCH members also emphasize the value of providing public recognition to smaller businesses that support civic activity. Many small enterprises lack large media and outreach budgets, so the recognition serves as an important incentive.

There are convincing reasons for North Carolina businesses, irrespective of size, to reach for best practices in corporate and employee civic engagement. Civic engagement directly boosts the bottom line, as a growing body of research confirms. When companies encourage employee engagement in the community, these employees in turn score higher on measures of morale, pride, and productivity. For example, Millennials who take advantage of volunteer opportunities provided by their company are twice as likely to report strong satisfaction with their career progression.[41] Additionally, high levels of employee civic engagement connect companies to the critical advantages of vibrant networks, including idea sharing, collaborative problem solving, and opportunities to shape creative partnerships. In all of these ways, strong, trusting relationships facilitate economic transactions and promote innovation in business.[42] As business success increasingly hinges on innovation capacity, the bottom-line significance of civic engagement continues to climb.

NORTH CAROLINA SUBGROUPS:
Trends and Divides

Photo provided by Kevin Geraghty

NORTH CAROLINA SUBGROUPS: TRENDS AND DIVIDES

In this section, we look beyond aggregate civic engagement figures for the state as a whole, breaking the numbers down by demographic subgroups to gain further insight. Viewing the data this way, we see clear patterns: civic engagement levels are lowest for our poorer, less educated, younger, non-white, and Latino citizens. Geographically, engagement rates tend to be higher in suburban areas, although with notable exceptions. These findings reinforce the need for targeted efforts to address and overcome the current disparities observed in civic engagement levels for particular demographic groups and communities.

Plainly, much work remains if we are to expand civic engagement among all segments of our society. In view of the state's ongoing social and economic changes, North Carolina's overall level of civic engagement will climb only if we are able to lift civic engagement rates among all of the state's diverse communities and citizenry.

ENGAGEMENT BY ECONOMIC STATUS

55%
of North Carolina residents with a family income above $75,000 participate in at least one group.

As a general rule, higher incomes are associated with higher levels of civic participation. In 2013, North Carolinians with family incomes of $75,000 or above reported civic engagement levels far outpacing those with family earnings of less than $35,000 on most measures. These differences were fairly consistent with national averages.

Chart 4. Engagement by Annual Income

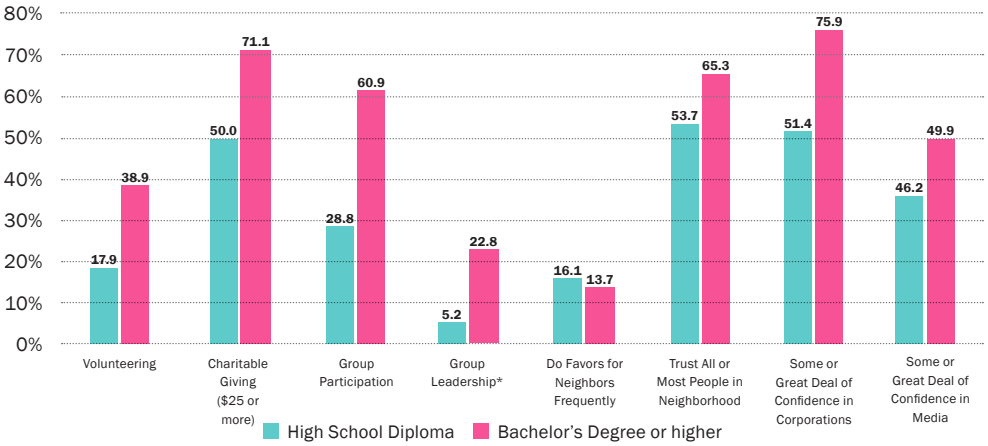
* Pooled data from 2010, 2011, 2013

EDUCATIONAL ATTAINMENT MATTERS

As with income, higher levels of educational attainment are linked with greater rates of civic participation across most engagement indicators. Individuals holding at least a bachelor's degree in many instances are substantially more engaged, often by absolute margins of 10% or more, compared to persons with only a high school diploma. If North Carolina's increasing educational attainment pattern holds, it is likely to gradually help lift overall civic engagement levels.

In a departure from the trend where higher education yields higher engagement, North Carolinians whose education concluded with a high school diploma more often did favors for neighbors than those with at least a bachelor's degree. Engagement rates here are 16.1% and 13.7%, respectively.

Chart 5. Engagement by Educational Attainment



* Pooled data from 2010, 2011, 2013

Emerging Issues Commons, Photo provided by IEI

NC State University Winter 2011 Graduation, photo provided by Roger W. Winstead/NCSU

28%

of North Carolina residents 25 or older have a bachelor's degree or higher compared to 17% in 1990.

A GENERATIONAL GAP

Across the vast majority of indicators, North Carolinians 30 years of age or older participate at higher levels than do our young adults, here defined as individuals who are 18-29 years old.

For example, these older adults' rates of participation exceed those of our young adults by more than 25 percentage points for charitable giving of at least $25, and for trusting most or all of the people in their neighborhood (Chart 6). Older adults also engage at twice the rates of younger adults when it comes to doing favors for neighbors, holding group leadership positions, and participating in a religious institution. The two areas where young adults exceeded older adults' engagement rates was in confidence in corporations and the media.

Photo provided by the Corporation for National & Community Service

22%

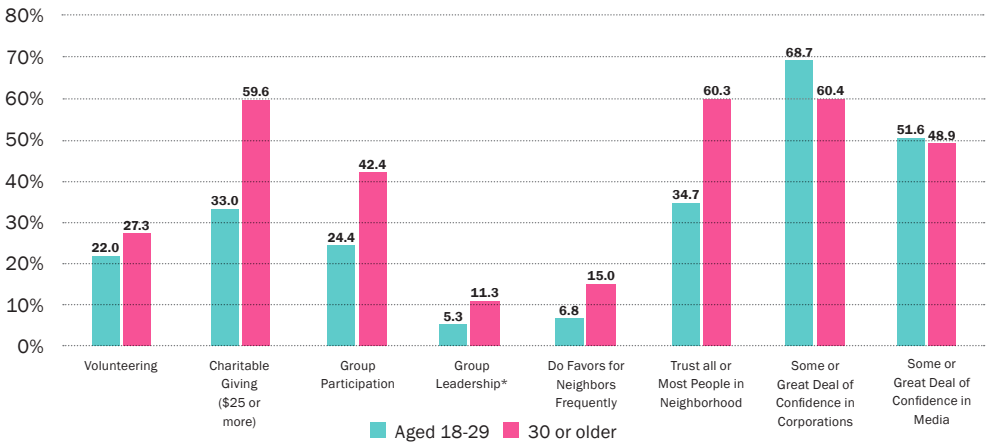
of North Carolina's 18-29 year olds volunteered in their communities.

Evaluated by our current set of indicators, North Carolina's young adults generally match their peers nationally in being substantially less civically engaged than older Americans. North Carolina's 18-29 year olds are part of the Millennial generation, broadly defined as those born after 1980 and before 2000. By some definitions, Millennials surpass the Baby Boom generation as the nation's largest cohort. Although we have only begun to see their impact, they are already catalyzing change and pushing the boundaries of innovation in communities, businesses, and government. Studies suggest that Millennials believe government can serve as a powerful tool for addressing social problems, but this so-called startup generation is also perfectly willing to look outside of government and forge individual pathways as social entrepreneurs rather than investing in collective citizen engagement. The National Conference on Citizenship's *Millennials Civic Health Index* revealed a mixed picture of Millennial civic engagement.[43] While rates of volunteering have risen for this generation nationally, conventional group membership, trusting other people, and working with neighbors are all down for this age group since the 1970s. Furthermore, while Millennials turned out in record numbers in the 2012 election, their turnout is much lower in midterm election years.

Whatever the extent of current Millennial engagement, one thing is clear: new technologies, like mobile apps and social media, are allowing Millennials to engage on their own terms, rather than those of previous generations. They lead in the civic use of social media, and one recent study found that 48% of 18-29 year olds resolve to learn more about political or social issues because of what they see on social networking sites.[44]

As we look to a future of Millennial leadership, we can meanwhile consider the possible consequences of the aging Baby Boom generation. As North Carolina's median age continues to rise, this shift will drive yet-to-be-determined changes to the state's rates in civic participation.

Chart 6. Engagement by Age Group



* Pooled data from 2010, 2011, 2013

VOICES OF YOUTH AND YOUNG ADULTS

Today's youth and young adults have come of age in a time of shifting landscapes and tumultuous change. They were born into the Information Age and, greatly empowered by their access to information, demand transparency and authenticity. Their almost unfettered access to customization and choice in the marketplace has contributed to liberation from brand loyalty. As a result, companies seeking capable, idealistic, and energetic young partners and leaders must think differently about their engagement strategies.

Nearly 45% of the world's population is not yet 25 years of age, and young adults have a lot to say about everything that really matters.[45] They want to do more than just talk, however. They want to be meaningfully involved. We see this involvement daily. Youth and young adults are driving change of every sort, whether by inventing innovative solutions to sanitation challenges in the developing world or by forcing major corporations to rethink their basic marketing approaches. Their lack of brand loyalty suggests they yearn for good ideas and don't care about the source. In the view of one recent global survey, "This young group is impatient and ready to change the world" and is focused on results. This generation "has everything to do with people and very little to do with political ideology."[46]

Above: Photos from IEI's Emerging Issues Forums

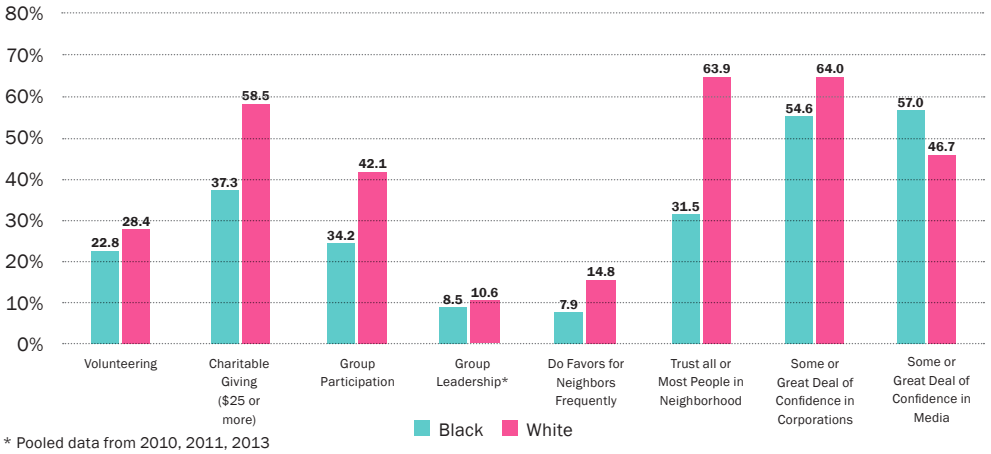
Does your group or community reach out to engage youth and young adults? Are you a youth or young adult looking to get involved? There is no shortage of opportunities, but how do you know which engagement opportunities are the right fit? When evaluating opportunities for engagement, consider the degree to which they offer meaningful participation. Be sure that youth and young adults are not mere tokens. In projects led by older adults, youth and younger adults should be informed, consulted, given appropriate responsibility, and should share in decision making whenever possible. Youth and young adults should also initiate and direct projects of their own choosing and on their own terms. Here, youth and young adults may choose to work independently with little or no input from older adults, or to invite older adults to join these efforts as consultants or equal partners.[47] In North Carolina, groups such as Youth Empowered Solutions and SaySo offer models of youth-directed engagement.

RACE AND ETHNICITY DIFFERENCES

Generally speaking, African-Americans report lower civic engagement levels than do whites. Similarly, Latinos report lower civic engagement levels than non-Latinos (Charts 7-8). If this pattern persists as the state continues to become more diverse both racially and ethnically, it will have the effect of reducing North Carolina's overall rates of civic engagement, thus undermining civic health and limiting its vital economic benefits.

The persistent race/ethnicity divide is most pronounced on the question of "trusting most or all of the people in your neighborhood," where African-Americans are only half as likely as whites, 31.5% vs 63.9% respectively, to trust their neighbors.

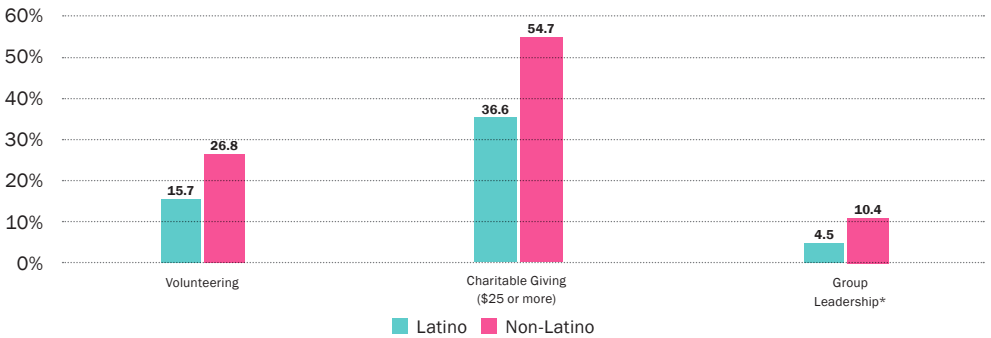
Chart 7. Engagement by Race



* Pooled data from 2010, 2011, 2013

Photo provided by Daemmrich Photography

Chart 8. Engagement by Ethnicity[48]



* Pooled data from 2010, 2011, 2013

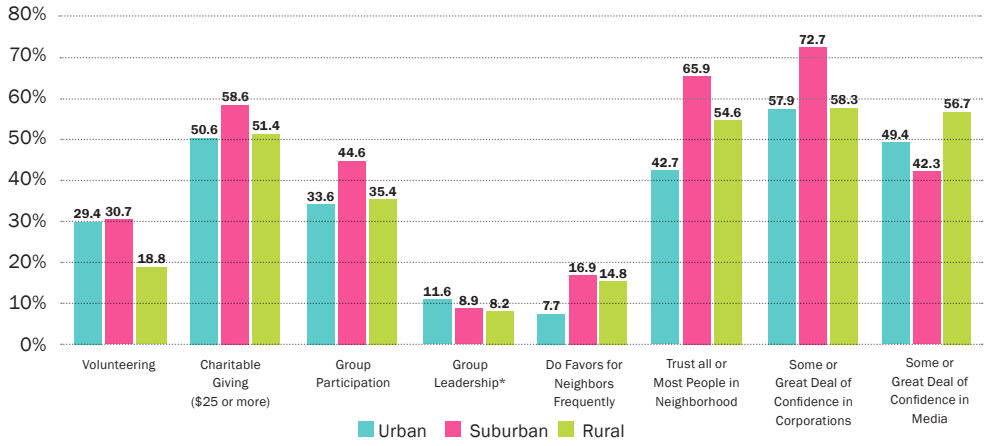
DISTINCT GEOGRAPHICAL PATTERNS

When we evaluate North Carolinians' civic engagement levels by place of residence – urban, suburban, or rural – we find that, on a majority of indicators, suburbanites tend to lead their urban and rural peers. In a particularly sharp split, rural residents reported less volunteering activity than did residents of urban and suburban areas.

Urban residents tend to underperform their suburban and rural counterparts when it comes to engagement with neighbors. While they may be more trusting of their neighbors than urban counterparts, rural residents report substantially less volunteering activity.

With two-thirds of North Carolinians now living in urban or suburban areas[49] and urbanization trends continuing, low levels of trust among urban neighbors may present an ongoing challenge to social cohesion and social capital in our state's major population centers. Although urban residents appear to be taking advantage of the volunteer opportunities made possible by relative proximity and variety, volunteering does not seem to encourage greater trust of neighbors.

Chart 9. Engagement by Geography



* Pooled data from 2010, 2011, 2013

*"**Brain power** doesn't only come to those in blue pinstripe suits."*

-Hugh McColl, Former Chairman and CEO of Bank of America

Photo credit: Kevin Geraghty

CALL TO ACTION

Civic health, which results from strong relationships, is essential to community vibrancy. People desire to work and live in places where residents come together in their neighborhoods, across their larger communities, and in partnership with their public officials. Strong relationships promote strong civic health, a higher quality of life, and more resilient economies. Given the critical link between strong social networks and increased capacity to innovate, places with strong civic health are likely to enjoy distinct competitive advantages in a global economy, which increasingly demands innovative responses to guarantee prosperity.

Civic engagement is about building and fostering strong relationships, and using these connections and social networks to address community challenges. This report makes clear that North Carolina is changing in ways that both help and hinder relationship building. Across the state, demographic changes are impacting communities in different ways. Each of us should consider what changes in age, income, race/ethnicity, and educational attainment imply for our community's civic engagement levels now and in the future.

Each of us can take action – in our personal and work lives – to build and expand relationships within our neighborhood and throughout our community more broadly. As we engage, we can identify inequities and encourage solutions. We can speak up, join, lead, and encourage friends and family members to do the same. The more voices in the process, the stronger the network we build.

As we examine ways that we can build relationships, special attention must be paid to groups less networked and engaged: young adults, those less educated, our poorer residents, and minorities.

Civic engagement is a means to many ends, each of which is worthwhile. Taken together, the benefits of civic engagement arguably are central to human wellbeing.

Following is a list of specific recommendations, with particular attention to those less engaged in our communities.

*"**Authentic civic engagement** never begins with a solution or proposition brought forth to the masses. It often begins with a cup of coffee in a diner with a neighbor, or a brief encounter at the post office. When we put enough of those conversations together, then we can know the why, which is a far more important question than the what."*

-Annette Saunooke Clapsaddle, Executive Director, Cherokee Preservation Foundation

Each of us can:

- Share meals frequently with family, and encourage conversation about local issues and challenges.
- Get to know our neighbors. Invite neighbors to dinner or organize a block party; join or start a neighborhood group to discuss and act on local issues; offer to help a neighbor. Reach out across lines of age, gender, race/ethnicity, and education.
- Leverage the power of social networks to organize community projects.
- Get involved with a local nonprofit, religious institution, or other community group by making a donation, volunteering, participating in events, or taking a leadership role.
- Embrace new online and mobile platforms for civic engagement.

Community-based organizations can:

- Actively recruit diverse participants, especially newcomers and those from traditionally under-engaged groups. Nearly half of volunteers report that they chose to participate simply because they were asked to do so.[50]
- Identify and remove barriers to participation by offering transportation, childcare, language support, skills training, or compensation.
- Recruit and mentor a more diverse group of civic leaders.
- Collect and disseminate stories about people and programs that make a difference in the community.

Public officials can:

- Actively integrate new and existing residents into civic life.
- Expand beyond traditional mechanisms for citizen input (such as public hearings) to establish regular and varied opportunities, including digital platforms, for public participation.
- Address barriers that may otherwise limit participation, particularly by under-engaged groups, such as transportation, childcare, language proficiency, skills training, digital infrastructure, or compensation.
- Increase the reach of leadership programs to raise participation rates by members of under-engaged groups.
- Create and empower neighborhood-based organizations to provide meaningful input on local issues.
- Create and support government “youth councils” at the state and local levels.
- Collect and share civic engagement data.
- Encourage the use of public libraries as natural venues for productive civic exchange.
- Develop and promote public spaces that encourage people to come together, such as downtown public spheres and neighborhoods designed to promote face-to-face contact, and sponsor and support a wide array of public events and community gatherings.

Media can:

- Highlight local citizens and groups, particularly those typically under-engaged, and government initiatives that are making a difference.
- Survey citizens to find out which issues they want to see covered.
- Engage in “public” or “civic” journalism by organizing, or partnering with those adept at organizing, public discussions around important community issues, and then reporting on the views expressed and clearly explaining how leaders responded.

Companies can:

- Offer leadership development programs to student interns and apprentices, particularly for members of under-engaged groups and communities.
- Promote and fund nonprofits using innovative and/or collaborative approaches to meet community needs, particularly in under-engaged groups and communities.
- Form partnerships with community-based organizations to increase graduation rates and promote higher education opportunities, particularly for under-engaged groups and communities.
- Participate in community dialogue around important issues and support collective efforts to address them.
- Promote volunteering by organizing specific volunteer opportunities and by providing paid time off for volunteer service, including skills-based volunteering. Encourage employees to bring friends and family to these volunteer opportunities.
- Recognize and reward employees who are making a substantial difference in the community.
- Have corporate leaders model civic engagement by volunteering with nonprofits or by serving on nonprofit boards, particularly those focused on under-engaged groups and communities.
- Allow community-based charities and nonprofits to access employees during fund-raising efforts. Consider matching employee contributions, especially for organizations that work with under-engaged groups and communities.

Schools can:[51]

- Ensure that young adults are learning about civics, and the importance and many benefits of civic engagement in all of its many forms. Include instruction in government, history, law, and democracy. Provide teachers with the professional development and resources to teach civics effectively throughout the full curriculum.
- Encourage student participation in simulations of democratic processes and procedures.
- Encourage student participation in school governance.
- Incorporate discussion of current local, national, and international issues and events into the classroom, particularly those that young people view as important to their lives. Promote critical thinking and creative problem solving around challenges facing the community.
- Provide students with meaningful community service opportunities linked to the formal curriculum and classroom instruction. Address barriers to participation by under-engaged groups.
- Offer extracurricular activities that provide opportunities for young people to get involved in their schools and communities. Address barriers to participation by under-engaged groups.
- Test and share successful strategies that build student understanding of the nature and importance of civic engagement.

Researchers can:

- Gather and share local civic health data and related stories, especially those involving under-engaged groups and communities, to promote awareness and track results.
- Create research projects focused on effectively promoting increased civic engagement, particularly among under-engaged groups and communities.
- Investigate the social and economic impacts of civic health and civic engagement to citizens and communities.
- Engage leaders from the public, private, and nonprofit sectors around the importance of civic engagement and civic health.
- Support organizations, such as Campus Compact, that support civic engagement efforts across college and university campuses.

THE EMERGING ISSUES COMMONS AND OTHER INNOVATIVE PLATFORMS FOR CIVIC ENGAGEMENT

The Digital Age has opened up countless new ways to connect online, and we can now use virtual tools to greatly expand our patterns of civic engagement. We can use our computers, tablets, and phones to connect and build productive relationships with neighbors, community members, schools and organizations, and public officials. Working online, we can collaborate to make a difference on issues of shared concern.[52]

New and innovative virtual platforms for civic engagement continue to emerge. In 2013, IEI launched the Emerging Issues Commons, an award-winning "civic engagement gallery" in the Hunt Library on the North Carolina State University campus. The interactive Commons offers informative videos, data, and other information to inspire visitors, who are invited to become active collaborators in seeking consensus solutions to North Carolina's biggest challenges. The Commons' companion digital platform, **emergingissuescommons.org**, allows citizens statewide to join these conversations as full participants.

The Emerging Issues Commons, photo provided by IEI

Here are a few other examples of innovative virtual civic engagement platforms:

SeeClickFix allows citizens to report non-emergency issues quickly and efficiently to local governments. See a pothole? The app makes it simple to send a GPS-stamped photo to the responsible transportation officials.

VolunteerMatch makes it easier for good people and good causes to connect. It offers online services that support community nonprofits, volunteers, and business leaders committed to civic engagement. The service can be an important virtual recruiting tool for nonprofits.

Nextdoor creates online social networks restricted to individual neighborhoods and their residents. The platform helps neighbors get to know each other, share information (need a babysitter, or to report a break-in?), and build strong, trusting relationships.

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26 Measured in absolute upward mobility as calculated by: Chetty, Raj, Nathaniel Hendren, Patrick Kline, Emmanuel Saez, Nicholas Turner, "Mobility in the 100 Largest Commuting Zones," The Equality of Opportunity Project, 2014, http://www.equality-of-opportunity.org/index.php/city-rankings/city-rankings-100.

27 Regarding participation in religious institutions, survey respondents were asked, "Please tell me whether or not you participated in any of these groups during the last 12 months: A church, synagogue, mosque or other religious institutions or organizations, NOT COUNTING your attendance at religious services." Older adults outpaced young adults on this indicator 28.2% to 13.6%

28 These "thermometer" style charts all include the states which ranked the highest and lowest on the selected indicator. State rankings also include the District of Columbia.

29 Ibid and http://enr.ncsbe.gov/ElectionResults/.

30 Ibid.

31 Ibid.

32 Tocqueville, Alexis de, Democracy in America, ed. J.P. Maier, trans. George Lawrence (Garden City, N.Y. : Anchor Books, 1969), 513-17.

33 North Carolina Military Foundation, http://www.ncmilitary.org/content/unique-military-presence

34 Note: Census question asks, "In the last 12 months, have you been an officer or served on a committee of any group or organization?"

35 Note: State rankings include the District of Columbia.

36 Points of Light, "The Civic 50: A Roadmap for Corporate Community Engagement in America," p. 5 & 10, 2014. Available at: http://www.civic50.org/Civic50_2014_SummaryReport_FINAL.pdf.

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38 Ibid, p. 27.

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41 Points of Light, "The Civic 50: A Roadmap for Corporate Community Engagement in America," p. 5, 2014. Available at: http://www.civic50.org/Civic50_2014_SummaryReport_FINAL.pdf.

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43 The National Conference on Citizenship, "Millennials Civic Health Index," 2013. Available at: http://www.ncoc.net/MillennialsCHI.

44 Smith, Aaron, "Civic Engagement in the Digital Age," Pew Research Center, 2013. Available at: http://www.pewinternet.org/files/old-media/Files/Reports/2013/PIP_CivicEngagementintheDigitalAge.pdf.

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47 For additional examples and to see the inspiration for this section, see the Texas Civic Health Index. Annette Strauss Institute for Civic Life, "Texas Civic Health Index," 2013. Available at: http://moody.utexas.edu/strauss/texas-civic-health-index.xx

48 The Latino sample size was too small to generate results for some questions.

49 Source: US Census Bureau, 2010 Census.

50 North Carolina Civic Health Index. 2010. Available at: http://www.ncoc.net/ncchi2010

51 Six of these recommendations come directly from an excellent study on schools and civic engagement. The Campaign for the Civic Mission of Schools, "Guardian of Democracy Civic Mission of Schools," 2011. Available at: http://civicmission.s3.amazonaws.com/118/f0/5/171/1/Guardian-of-Democracy-report.pdf.

52 For additional examples and to see the inspiration for this section, see the Texas Civic Health Index. Annette Strauss Institute for Civic Life, "Texas Civic Health Index," 2013, p. 27. Available at: http://moody.utexas.edu/strauss/texas-civic-health-index

53 Bridgeland, John. "Fostering a More Engaged Citizenry: Philanthropy's Role in a Civic Reawakening." Philanthropy for Active Civic Engagement, May 2005. Available at: http://www.pacefunders.org/pdf/essays/Bridgeland%20FINAL.pdf

54 Bloomberg L.P., Available at: http://www.bloomberg.com/company/.

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 North Carolina.

ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

In undertaking this report, the Institute for Emerging Issues and its partners hope to encourage increased attention to the importance of civic health, and to build momentum around this critical issue. Across the nation, a great number of K-12 schools are making civic engagement an explicit part of their missions. Colleges and universities are themselves implementing path-breaking programs on campuses to foster a culture of civic engagement and reward useful research that supports these important cultural shifts. National and local non-profit organizations are also engaged in important work. New programs are being developed daily to train young leaders on our nation's founding principles, provide background on our urgent problems and models for success, and encourage work on a non-partisan basis to find common ground. Perhaps in ways surprising to some, the business sector is also providing important leadership on civic engagement. After President George W. Bush convened a new movement called "Business Strengthening America" in 2002, more than 800 CEOs representing five million employees committed to making institutional changes to support a culture of service in communities throughout our nation.[53] *The Civic 50*, an initiative of the Points of Light Foundation in partnership with Bloomberg L.P.,[54] annually names and honors the 50 most community-minded companies on the basis of how they use their time, skills, and other resources to improve the quality of life in their communities where they do business. We have drawn particular inspiration from these efforts.

We have more directly been buoyed by the support of the business community in North Carolina. The partners extend special thanks to IEI's Business Committee on Civic Health, which enthusiastically supported the development and dissemination of the 2015 North Carolina Civic Health Index.

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Photo provided by the Town of Emerald Isle

TECHNICAL NOTE

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, 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 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 North Carolina CPS sample size used for this Report ranges from 812 (civic engagement supplement) to 1,881 (volunteer supplement), 1,903 (voting supplement) residents from across North Carolina. 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 US residents ages 16 and older. Estimates for civic engagement and social connection indicators (e.g., favors with neighbors, discuss politics) are based on US residents ages 18 and older. Voting and registration statistics are based on US 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 North Carolina 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 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
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

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
Institute for Emerging Issues
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

Atlanta
Community Foundation of Greater Atlanta

Chicago
McCormick Foundation

Kansas City & Saint Louis
Missouri State University
Park University
Saint Louis Univeristy
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

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