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EVIDENCE and FURTHER READING

Evidence & Context re Power of Youth Engagement in Civics, etc.
- [Youth.gov](#)
- [CIRCLE: THE CENTER FOR INFORMATION & RESEARCH ON CIVIC LEARNING AND ENGAGEMENT](#)

Track Record: Unsilence
- [Website](#)
- [Video](#)
- [Example Learning Experience](#)

Track Record: Civic ArtWorks
- [Municipal](#)
- [Past Regenerate Neighborhoods Action Maps](#)
- [Video](#)
- [Student speaking about impact](#) on her community from her Regenerate Neighborhoods project:

Urban Design/Community Development in Chicago
- Wacker's Manual: [a base to innovate from](#) and [more context here](#).
- The Chicago Architecture Foundation’s [Wacker’s Manual](#)
- City of Chicago’s Youth Violence Prevention [Plan](#)
September 20, 2018

Greetings, Google Impact Challenge Review Team –

I am excited to share my support for the Unsilence and Civic Artworks Google Impact Challenge Illinois application featuring the Regenerate Neighborhoods curriculum.

The Chicago Learning Exchange (CLX) has supported Regenerate Neighborhoods since its development four years ago. As background, CLX cultivates a growing community of more than 100 organizations to remake learning so it is enhanced by technology, driven by learners’ interests, and connected to future opportunities. Though CLX was formed earlier this year, we have a nearly decade-long track record of catalyzing collaborative and innovative approaches to learner-centered practices, platforms, credentials, and spaces across the city. Before becoming an independent nonprofit, we operated as the Hive Chicago Fund for Connected Learning at The Chicago Community Trust.

Because we provided funding support for Regenerate Neighborhoods since its inception, I’ve had a front-row seat watching it develop, and I’ve witnessed its capacity to support students in addressing issues relevant to their schools, communities, and, ultimately, local economies. I observed this firsthand when I participated in the first Regenerate Neighborhood Campaign Day at ChicagoQuest School where I listened to students describe the challenges that their communities faced and what they proposed to change. They spoke with authority and maturity to adult neighbors, local leaders, and civic organizations. It was apparent that the knowledge that they had gained from the classroom experience, the validation they had received from other members of the community, and the exposure to professionals with whom they had the opportunity to interact enhanced their experience – and their growth.

CLX is committed to the Regenerate Chicago Neighborhoods curriculum and to supporting successful, mutually enriching collaborations between our community members and students in neighborhood public schools across Chicago. If you have any questions about our past support of the program feel free to contact me.

Sincerely,

Maria Hibbs
Executive Director, Chicago Learning Exchange
September 8, 2018

To whom it may concern:

I am delighted to write this letter in support of the application of Civic ArtWorks and Unsilence for the Regenerate Neighborhoods Program.

During the 2017-2018 school year, the Social Science & Civic Engagement Department (CPS) partnered with Unsilence to train and support a cohort of our high school civics teachers in implementing a service learning project in Civics using the Unsilence framework. Increasing discussion and deliberation of controversial issues with students is a priority for CPS — and Unsilence has proven to be the right partner in this work, as noted by one of the teachers:

Framing conversations as "unsilencing" issues that affect my students has been transformative to my teaching. I have done social issue projects and question-based inquiry projects, but this is a really great way of getting students to think outside the box and be motivated intrinsically.  - Carver Military Academy

Annie Rezac of Unsilence has shared details around the Regenerate Neighborhood Project, and I can confirm that this innovative collaboration promises to tackle a primary challenge my team tackles every day: how to authentically engage students in understanding — and then reshaping — their communities in a way that prioritizes student voice and student agency. Additionally, the focus on connecting with suburban and down-state schools also aligns with social science and civics standards and priorities.

My department hopes to continue to partner with these great nonprofits in the future, building a generation of empowered change agents!

Sincerely,

Heather Van Benthuysen

Heather Van Benthuysen
Civic Education Manager
Department of Social Science and Civic Engagement
Chicago Public Schools
501 W 35th Street
Chicago, IL 60675
HB 4025

Replaces everything after the enacting clause. Amends the School Code. Provides that of the 2 years of social studies required of high school students, at least one semester must be civics, which shall help young people acquire and learn to use the skills, knowledge, and attitudes that will prepare them to be competent and responsible citizens throughout their lives. Provides that course content shall focus on government institutions, the discussion of current and controversial issues, service learning, and simulations of the democratic process. Allows school districts to utilize private funding available for the purposes of offering civics education.

99th Illinois General Assembly
Our world today, and education today, we need to be thinking about ways of engaging our students that allow them to have voice and ownership over the things that they do, by presenting their ideas, by giving them an opportunity to be change agents, because so often our kids are silenced at this age, in middle school and high school, where they want to speak out the most. Opportunities like this give kids a chance to do the talking and as you can see they shine in a way that is incredibly unique and incredibly powerful and beautiful to see.

Nancy Nassr
Associate Director former
CICS ChicagoQuest High School
On our second day of the fellowship, Governor Edgar put all of us on a bus and he's like, "Look, I want to take all of you to a working farm." So he goes to a farm outside Champaign. He looks at the Chicagoans and says, 'I'm glad you got to see a working farm. What's grown on this farm gets traded on LaSalle Street." Then he turns to the rest of the fellows. "You've got to stop complaining about the CTA getting funding. The structure that supports LaSalle Street doesn't exist without the CTA. If there's no LaSalle Street, you have no place to trade your grain."

Ameya Pawar
Alderman for the 47th Ward, City of Chicago
Former Candidate for Governor, Illinois

excerpt from Downstate Hate: A history of the bitter, nearly 200-year rivalry between Chicago and the rest of Illinois by Edward McClellandn of the Chicago Reader  https://goo.gl/CsZbTJ
95% of Unsilence workshop participants report that they are more comfortable engaging in difficult conversations about injustice.

we spark dialogue, support critical thinking, and build empathy to inspire healing and social change
Unsilence is a non-profit service organization that fills a critical gap in civic education. We unsilence hidden injustices and marginalized voices. Our work lays a crucial foundation for educators, change-makers, and community leaders, giving them key tools to succeed in their civic and social change efforts.

Unsilence's unique method leverages the power of storytelling, the arts, and game design to engage participants as “Unsilencers”—their mission: to identify root causes of silencing and engage in difficult conversations.

Through our highly-interactive, research-based learning experiences, Unsilencers learn to bridge perspectives, break down engrained stigmas, and build collective empathy and understanding.

our vision
a just society that values all voices
why is it so hard to talk about the things that matter most?

Shame, trauma, fear of public ridicule, social norms, and even school and government policies keep people silent and stories hidden.

If we can’t talk about injustice, then we can’t find solutions.

“There are so many excuses why not to talk about tough issues. We need more reasons for people to go for it and if we can break down some barriers and get people thinking about things differently […] that makes conditions better for everyone.”

- Zach Borders
CEO, CivicArtworks
3 forms of silencing

Institutional Silencing
“Our friend died by suicide, but our school doesn’t let us talk about that.”

Cultural Silencing
“It’s hard to open up about my experience as a rape survivor. Talking about it makes my friends uncomfortable.”

Personal Silencing
“My family doesn’t know I’m transgender. I’m afraid to tell them but I know I need support.”
the tools we use

Storytelling

stories build empathy; stories give voice to marginalized, lived experiences and allow us to bear witness

The Arts

art challenges us to see the world through a different point of view; art helps us communicate in ways that words alone cannot

Games

“serious games” are serious learning\(^1\); puzzles and innovative problem solving can help us navigate the complexities of social justice

Human Rights

human rights do not exist in isolation; they are a social contract and intersect with our daily lives in many ways, big and small

\(^1\) International Journal of Serious Games, 2018
grounded in

Racial Equity
investigating how existing disparities of race—and the forces perpetuating those disparities—impede individual and community advancement

Inclusion
examining how individuals with marginalized identities are valued, welcomed, and provided growth opportunities within a community

Intersectionality & Historical Context
exploring how systems of power and oppression are deeply intertwined in historical events, systems, and structures, and collectively impact all members of society

Mental Health & Wellness
reflecting on human emotion, discomfort, and vulnerability, as well as the psychological and social well-being of individuals within a community
“It is challenging to have rigorous and deep discussions around the tough issues that communities face which can leave students unsure of how to authentically tackle social change.”

- Heather Van Benthuysen
  Director, Department of Social Science and Civic Engagement at Chicago Public Schools
who we serve

schools
neighborhood communities
non-profit organizations
cultural institutions
businesses & corporations

Unsilence programs have reached more than 10,000 individuals across 10 states in more than 100 communities.

“There are so many things we should talk about but don’t because we’re afraid or we don’t know how. The fact that we have a voice here, it matters because we don’t always have a voice.”

- Chicago Public School Student, age 17

“A safe space doesn’t silence people, it empowers people to speak up. If a school is going to educate someone, educate them culturally, socially, and academically.”

- Chicago Public School Student, age 16
“[W]e can have this respectful and open dialogue with one another where we can share and see ourselves in someone else’s story which often times can help you.”

break down barriers to open dialogue with an in-depth unpacking of the fundamentals of institutional, cultural, and personal silencing

explore connected, complex histories of the victims and perpetrators of genocide, and the ongoing persecution of the same groups today

“My mind is blown [...] I finally feel comfortable teaching and discussing these taboo subjects.”

collaborative songwriting workshops give young people tools to experience the power of vulnerability

“The collaboration fostered has increased in the students. They are more willing to share ideas and accept others’ ideas even though they don’t match their own.”
DIGITAL FEATURES

partnering artists with communities to deeply investigate, document, and publicly amplify marginalized voices through live and digital interactive exhibitions.

SHADOWS: A HUMAN RIGHTS TREASURE HUNT

a dynamic quest-based learning experience designed to shine light on injustices hidden in plain sight and spark individual and collective action.

web-based stories, interactives, and educator resources create entry-points to learning about hidden atrocities, stigmas, personal struggles, and perseverance.

“DIGITAL FEATURES

“You showed me how to turn a sensitive issue into a positive, meaningful discussion with students.”

“You know, a lot of people don’t even see us as humans.”

“DIGITAL FEATURES

“I used to think that human rights abuses were more of the outliers in their frequency, but now I think it’s more the norm and everyone has a related story.”

“DIGITAL FEATURES

“You showed me how to turn a sensitive issue into a positive, meaningful discussion with students.”

“You know, a lot of people don’t even see us as humans.”

“DIGITAL FEATURES

“I used to think that human rights abuses were more of the outliers in their frequency, but now I think it’s more the norm and everyone has a related story.”
Impact Goal #1

Increase and sustain Unsilence reach to more than 5,000 young people, educators, business leaders, and members of the public per year.

Impact Goal #2

90% of Unsilence program participants will demonstrate increased understanding of the root causes that silence injustice in their communities.

major funders & partners

- Chicago Public Schools
- Civic Artworks
- Cradles 2 Crayons
- Illinois Holocaust Museum and Education Center
- Lush Charitable Cosmetic Foundation
- Daniel & Susan Asher Family Foundation
- Woods Fund of Chicago
- Young Leaders Fund of Chicago Community Trust
financial snapshot

Expenses

- Administration
- Programs
- Fundraising
- Technology & Design

Income

- Program Fees
- Individual Donors
- Foundation Support
- Corporate Sponsorship
In the past year, 300+ program participants have designed & implemented public art, games, or group forums to address injustices within their communities.

we can’t Unsilence without you

Unsilence
641 W Lake St. #200,
Chicago, IL 60626
unsilence@unsilence.org
www.unsilence.org
CIVIC HEALTH AND UNEMPLOYMENT: Can Engagement Strengthen the Economy?
ABOUT THE PARTNERS

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

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

CIRCLE
CIRCLE (The Center for Information and Research on Civic Learning and Engagement) conducts research on civic education in schools, colleges, and community settings and on young Americans’ voting and political participation, service, activism, media use, and other forms of civic engagement. It is based at the Jonathan M. Tisch College of Citizenship and Public Service at Tufts University.

CIVIC ENTERPRISES
Civic Enterprises is a public policy firm that helps corporations, nonprofits, foundations, universities and governments develop and spearhead innovative public policies to strengthen our communities and country. Civic Enterprises draws on some of the best minds in the country to fashion new initiatives and strategies that achieve measurable results.

SAGUARO SEMINAR: CIVIC ENGAGEMENT IN AMERICA
THE SAGUARO SEMINAR: CIVIC ENGAGEMENT IN AMERICA is an initiative of Professor Robert D. Putnam at John F. Kennedy School of Government at Harvard University focused on the study of “social capital” (the value of social networks) and community engagement. The Seminar’s mission is both to improve social capital measurement and the availability of social capital data and to undertake analysis of building social capital in a changing environment.

NATIONAL CONSTITUTION CENTER
Located on Independence Mall in Historic Philadelphia, the National Constitution Center is America’s first and only nonprofit, nonpartisan institution devoted to the U.S. Constitution. As a cutting-edge museum, national town hall and educational facility, the Center illuminates constitutional ideals and inspires acts of citizenship through must-see multimedia exhibitions, live performances, timely public programs and dynamic educational resources. The museum dramatically tells the story of “We the People” through more than 100 interactive exhibits, films, photographs and rare artifacts; the stirring theatrical performance Freedom Rising, and the iconic attraction Signers’ Hall, featuring 42 life-sized bronze statues of the Founding Fathers. As America’s town hall for constitutional dialogue, the Center regularly engages political leaders, scholars, pundits and journalists of diverse viewpoints. The Center also houses the Annenberg Center for Education and Outreach, which serves as the hub for national constitutional education and provides exceptional civic learning resources both onsite and online.

The report partners would like to acknowledge the contributions of Nathan Dietz of the Corporation for National and Community Service.
Civic Health and Unemployment: Can Engagement Strengthen the Economy?

States and localities have weathered the recent recession and its aftermath quite differently. For example, between 2006 and 2010, the unemployment rate rose by ten points in Nevada yet by only one point in North Dakota. The increase was nine percentage points in Riverside, CA and its neighboring communities, but just two percentage points in San Antonio, TX.

In seeking to explain such differences, analysts largely have examined economic and policy factors. A Goldman Sachs study found that states suffered less from unemployment if their housing prices had been less inflated prior to 2006, if oil and gas industries played relatively large roles in their economies, and if high proportions of their workers were employed in occupations defined by the Bureau of Labor Statistics as “professional and related” (which include engineers, physicians, lawyers, teachers, and others). The Goldman Sachs analysts tested but were able to dismiss the other economic and policy explanations.¹

What about the role of civic engagement or civic health in the economic resilience of a state or city? Using the Census Current Population Supplement (CPS), strong positive correlations were found between civic engagement and resilience against unemployment. States and localities with more civic engagement in 2006 saw less growth in unemployment between 2006 and 2010. This was true even after adjusting for the economic factors that others have found to predict unemployment rates over this period. The forms of civic engagement tested included volunteering, attending public meetings, helping neighbors, voting, and registering to vote.

Note: Although these findings are important, these correlations do not prove that civic engagement lowers unemployment at the state level. There are alternative explanations for the statistical relationships found here. The evidence in favor of the idea that civic engagement actually boosts economic resilience is circumstantial, suggestive, and far from conclusive. The findings and related evidence are presented in order to promote further research and public discussion of the potential economic impact of civic engagement.

States with More Civic Engagement Have Experienced Less Unemployment

Based on published literature, eight economic factors that were likely to predict unemployment since 2006 were assembled for this study. These factors explain about 38% of the variation in the change in unemployment rates among the states. The factors that emerged as statistically significant predictors of unemployment change were the size of the state’s oil and gas industry and the proportion of the state’s adult population which held a high school diploma. The housing bubble (measured as the inflation in housing prices since 1991) and residential mobility (the percentage of people who had moved in the past five years) missed being statistically significant predictors by relatively small margins. The other demographic factors included in the analysis and states’ gross product per capita were not related to unemployment change.²

Civic Health and the Current Population Survey

Civic health is defined as the measure of the civic attitudes, actions, and behaviors of a group of individuals. In 2010, the Current Population Survey (CPS), a regular survey of about 50,000 households conducted by the Bureau of the Census for the Bureau of Labor Statistics, included 19 questions appropriate for assessing the civic health of states and communities. The categories for these measures include:

- Volunteering and Service  
  Including working with neighbors to fix a community problem
- Participating in a Group
- Connecting to Information and Current Events
- Social Connectedness  
  Including talking with and exchanging favors with neighbors
- Political Action

In 2006, only volunteering, working with neighbors, attending community meetings, registering to vote and voting were measured on the CPS. In 2008, all of the above were measured along with use of the news media.

More on the civic health indicators is available at http://civic.serve.gov and NCeC.net/CHI
When the five civic engagement measures were added—volunteering, attending public meetings, working with neighbors to address community problems, registering to vote, and voting—the model explained more (64%) of the variation in unemployment change. In other words, understanding a state’s civic health in 2006 helped predict how it weathered the recession even if one also knew its economic conditions in 2006. In a regression model with the eight economic factors and the five civic engagement measures, the civic indicators strongly predicted unemployment change, while none of the economic factors were significantly related to unemployment change. Many forms of civic engagement correlate with each other: the same people who attend meetings also volunteer and vote. Therefore, it is helpful to examine the civic engagement measures one at a time, controlling for all the economic factors. Using this method:

An increase of one point in the state’s rate of working with neighbors was associated with a decrease of 0.256 percentage points in the unemployment rate when the economic factors were controlled. An extra percentage point of public meeting attendance corresponded to 0.239 points less unemployment when the economic factors were controlled. An increase of one point in volunteering was associated with 0.192 percentage points less unemployment, controlling for the eight economic variables. An increase of one percent in the voter registration rate was associated with a decrease of about one tenth of one point in unemployment.

Other Forms of Civic Engagement

Volunteering, voting, attending meetings, and working with neighbors are by no means the only ways in which Americans engage in civic life. People also belong to and lead groups, exchange favors with neighbors, socialize with friends and family, interact online, follow the news, and try to influence the government. In 2008, the CPS expanded its civic surveys to assess many of these forms of engagement (see text box). Our analysis suggests that several of these forms of engagement are also related to unemployment change.

Because this report aims to estimate the change in unemployment between 2006 and 2010, a 2008 survey is a problematic source. One does not normally explain something that happens in a given year as a result of something that is measured two years later. Yet it appears the 2008 CPS may provide a reasonable estimate of the relative level of civic engagement in each state two years earlier. Civic engagement declined nationally from 2006-10, but states with relatively high civic engagement in 2006 still had relatively high engagement in 2008 and 2010. Thus we have predicted unemployment change on the basis of the 2008 civic engagement measures, adjusting for economic factors at the start of the recession (2006). This analysis requires extra caution because the civic questions were not asked in 2006, but it finds that the following forms of civic engagement were significantly related to states’ resilience against unemployment: volunteering; meeting attendance; working with neighbors on community problems; contacting
public officials; belonging to a service or civic group; belonging to a group of any kind; serving as an officer or committee member of a group; and registering to vote.\(^9\)

**Discussion**

Although there are some important reasons for caution, one possible explanation of these relationships is that—to some extent—**having stronger civic health helps states weather recessions better.** There is research that supports the plausibility of this hypothesis:

**Participation in civil society can develop skills, confidence, and habits that make individuals employable and strengthen the networks that help them to find jobs.**\(^{10}\)

Fifty-nine percent of volunteers in national service programs believe their service will improve their chance of finding jobs. National service participation has also been found to boost “basic work skills, including gathering and analyzing information, motivating coworkers, and managing time.”\(^{11}\) Middle school and high school students who participate in service-learning during class or who serve in school government succeed much better academically than peers with similar backgrounds.\(^{12}\) Many individuals owe their employment to fellow members of social or civic groups or have learned their most marketable skills in national and volunteer service. National service itself can engage the unemployed in productive work at low-cost through existing networks of community-based nonprofits.

**People get jobs through social networks.** Job opportunities are often found through friends, family, professional connections. Multi-billion-dollar online social networks have been created to facilitate these connections for hiring. This suggests the need for those seeking employment to maintain strong relationships with neighbors and members of their service and civic organizations. As noted above, belonging to groups and serving on committees were correlated with unemployment change at the state level from 2006-10.

**Participation in civil society spreads information.** Attending meetings, working with neighbors on community problems, volunteering, and receiving newsletters from nonprofit organizations are examples of valuable ways of learning about local issues and opportunities. In communities with better flows of information, it is easier for individuals to find jobs or educational programs, for businesses to find partners and employees, and for citizens to hold government accountable.

**Participation in civil society is strongly correlated with trust in other people.** Although measures of trust are not included in this analysis, most studies find that trusting other people encourages individuals to join groups, and participating in groups builds trust.\(^{13}\) In turn, trust is a powerful predictor of economic success because people who trust are more likely to enter contracts and business partnerships, and confidence in others is a precondition for investing and hiring.\(^{14}\)

**Communities and political jurisdictions with stronger civil societies are more likely to have good governments.** Rates of voting (in 2006), registering to vote (in 2006 and 2008), and contacting public officials (in 2008) predict states’ resilience against unemployment from 2006-10. Those are measures of citizens’ engagement with government. Active and organized citizens can demand and promote good governance and serve as partners to government in addressing public problems. States with more civic engagement have much higher performing public schools (regardless of the states’ demographics, spending, and class sizes).\(^{15}\) American cities with stronger civic organizations are better able to make wise but difficult policy decisions.\(^{16}\) Even internationally, regions with stronger civil societies handled an increase in responsibilities much better than those with weaker civil societies.\(^{17}\) In the current economic crisis, governments that benefit from better civic engagement may be able to reduce the scale of unemployment through more efficient and equitable policies.

**Civic engagement can encourage people to feel attached to their communities.** The proportion of people who report being attached to their communities predicts economic growth. Perhaps liking and caring about where one lives increases the odds that one will invest, spend, and hire there.\(^{18}\)
Cautions: Despite the significant correlations with which we began this report and the research
cited above, a reader should not conclude, per se, that civic engagement alone boosts employment.
The following cautions are important:

There are other plausible hypotheses that we have not been able to test, because civic
engagement was not included in the Current Population Supplement or other federal surveys
until recently. For example, perhaps the housing bubble, which tripled housing prices in
some states between 1991 and 2006, eroded civic health in those states by drawing in
many new residents who had not had time to put down roots. When the bubble burst after
2005, those states were especially badly hurt by the recession, but their civic health had
already declined. In that case, the relationship between civic engagement and employment
that we found during 2006-10 would be misleading.¹⁹

Other unknown events may have lowered both civic health and employment between 2006
and 2010. An example would be a specific economic policy that was implemented in some
states but not in others.

Although the hypothesis is that civic health in 2006 affected unemployment change from
2006-10, the inverse is also entirely possible—that unemployment has affected civic engage-
ment. In fact, by most measures, the civic health of the nation has declined since 2006, and a
leading explanation of that decline is the economic recession and its aftermath. Thus, even
if the relationship between civic engagement and unemployment is meaningful, the causal
arrow could point either way, or could point both ways at once. Reciprocal relationships are
very common in the social sciences and still important to examine in more detail.

Patterns in Metropolitan Areas

In addition to examining the relationship between civic health and unemployment in the 50 states,
these relationships have also been investigated in large metropolitan areas. Because we were
not able to find reliable local statistics on some of the factors that we included in our state
model (such as the size of the gas and oil industries), and because we did not have scholarly
literature on the predictors of recent unemployment change in metropolitan areas, we chose
economic factors that often prove significant in research on economic performance: residential
stability, educational attainment, per capita wealth, racial demographics, and percentage
of workers in professional jobs. The data limitations make our findings for the metropolitan areas
more tentative than those for states. Nevertheless, the same basic pattern applies to metro areas:
those with higher civic engagement in 2006 have weathered the recession considerably
better, even when important economic factors are controlled. A model including the five civic
engagement indicators measured in 2006 plus five economic control variables can explain
64.2% of the variation in metro areas’ unemployment change from 2006-10, with volunteering
and voter registration emerging as the two most important factors. If civic health does affect
unemployment at the state level, its effects are likely felt at the community level as well.

Conclusion

Even at a time when the global economy has been buffeted by strong and dangerous forces, all
communities have capital and skills that can be deployed to create or preserve jobs. Investors
may be more willing to create jobs locally if they trust other people and the local government, if
they feel attached to their community, if they know about opportunities and can disseminate
information efficiently, and if they feel that the local workforce is skilled. All these factors correlate
with civic engagement. Those correlations, plus the other evidence cited in this report, lend
plausibility to the thesis that civic health matters for economic resilience. This topic deserves
more consideration by researchers, policymakers, and the public.
End Notes


2. The eight measures were: housing price inflation (1991-2006); age dependency ratio (people age 18-65/who population); nonwhite population as percentage of whole population; percent of workforce in professional jobs; per capita GDP; oil and gas extraction per GDP (2003); percent living at current address, 5 yrs (oil residents); percent of adults age 25+ holding a high school degree or greater.

3. We refer to a regression model with state unemployment change (2006-10) as the dependent variable and the eight independent variables listed in note 2 plus volunteering (2006), attending public meetings (2006), working with neighbors (2006), registering to vote in 2006, and voting in the 2006 election. All the civic measures are from the Current Population Supplement. R²=.639.

4. In this model, r²=.551. For working with neighbors, the standardized coefficient is : .256 and p<.005.

5. In this model, r²=.480. For the meeting attendance variable, the standardized coefficient is : .239 and p<.05.

6. In this model, r²=.546. For the volunteering variable, the standardized coefficient is : .192 and p<.001.

7. In this model, r²=.505. For registering to vote, the standardized coefficient is : .105 and p<.005. Using this method, voting masses being statistically significant (p=.228).

8. The correlations between state volunteering and meeting attendance rates in 2006, 2008, and 2010 exceeded 0.9. For working with neighbors, the correlations were somewhat lower at 0.78-.81. In the models using 2006 and 2008 data, the confidence intervals overlap for the three community engagement variables that were measured in both years.

9. The method is to regress these factors, as measured in 2008, individually against the unemployment change from 2006-2010, with models that control for the same eight 2006 economic factors listed in note 2. We report the results that are significant at p<.05. Factors that missed being statistically significant predictors of unemployment change were: voting in the 2008 election; talking regularly with neighbors; regularly discussing politics; regularly listening to radio news; obtaining news regularly from a newspaper; boycotting or “buying out” products; belonging to church, school or “other” groups; regularly eating dinner with family members; and communicating with friends and family online. Obtaining news regularly from magazines, the Internet, and television were positively associated with unemployment change: higher rates of consuming these media were associated with greater growth in unemployment to statistically significant degrees.


17. Robert D. Putnam, Making Democracy Work: Civic Traditions in Modern Italy (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1994). Although the topic is Italy rather than the United States, this book is important for its strong methodology and contribution to basic theory.


19. We acknowledge Robert Putnam for this suggestion.

20. These groups are not ranked because often the differences among the states and metropolitan areas that are listed here are not statistically significant. By the same token, often the differences between the listed states and the runners-up would not be significant.

Civic Health indicators working group

Justin Bibb
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Director, Center for Democracy and Citizenship

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

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

Kristen Cambell
Chief Program Officer, National Conference on Citizenship

Doug Dobson
Executive Director, Florida Joint Center for Citizenship

David Eisner
President and CEO, National Constitution Center

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