

## Key Findings from the North Carolina Civic Health Index 2010

### Democracy in Action: Strengthening Civic Life in North Carolina

**North Carolina's young people are the least likely to have volunteered in the past year, worked with their neighbors to fix a problem in their community, participated in a non-electoral political act, contributed \$25 or more, and, among eligible voters, to have voted in the 2008 election.**

- The state's ranking for youth voter turnout moved from 40<sup>th</sup> in 2004 to 16<sup>th</sup> in 2008. Among eligible North Carolinians ages 18 to 29, 55% reported voting in the 2008 election.
- Just 2% of North Carolinians ages 18 to 24 have worked with neighbors to fix a problem in the community; this is 6 percentage points below the state and the national rates.
- In 2008, nearly 90% of young people ages 18 to 24 report that they did not participate in non-electoral political activities during the past year.

**North Carolina's civil society — the voluntary and social organizations that make our communities work — is led by a small group of older, college-educated, mostly white residents who are involved in religious organizations.**

- 84% of North Carolina's young people report that they do not participate in a group or organization, compared with the state average of 67%.
- 88% of Hispanics, 76.8% of African-Americans, and 61% of whites are not participating in civil society. White non-Hispanics are the most likely to be civil leaders; 9.5% are civil leaders, while the state average is 7%.
- Residents with college experience are more than five times more likely to be civil leaders than North Carolinians who never went to college: 2.2% of residents without college experience are civil leaders.

**North Carolinians without college experience are notably more likely to have strong personal connections to family and friends and to help their neighbors than those who have some college education. Rural residents have a higher level of "connectedness" than those living in metropolitan areas.**

- 23% of North Carolinians without college experience report having strong personal connections to family and friends and to help their neighbors, compared with 16.2% nationwide.
- More than 20% of rural residents have strong connections with family and friends and help their neighbors, compared with 15% of those living in metropolitan areas.

**North Carolinians with some college education are more than twice as likely to access the news frequently and engage in political discussions with others than those with no college experience.**

- 28% of North Carolinians access news frequently and discuss politics with others; 32% do neither.
- 44.5% of the state's Millennials neither access news frequently nor discuss politics with others.
- 35% of residents with some college experience access the news frequently and engage in political discussions with others, while 18% of those with no college experience do both.

**Voting in the 2008 Presidential election is the single measure of civic engagement on which North Carolina performs above the national average. It is the state's civic strength.**

- Between 2004 and 2008, North Carolina leapt from ranking 42<sup>nd</sup> to 15<sup>th</sup> in the nation in voter turnout. In 2008, 67.5% of citizens 18 and older reported that they voted.
- 79.3% of residents who have served on active military duty reported voting in 2008, compared to 66% of their civilian counterparts.
- 82.4% of residents living in households with annual incomes at or above \$75,000 reported voting in 2008, compared to 60.4% of residents living in households with incomes below \$35,000.