



CIVIC HEALTH & EDUCATION

Achieving more education strongly predicts the likelihood that a person becomes civically engaged. The civic gap between young people without high school diplomas and college graduates is quite large; and in some cases, a college graduate is four or five times as likely to engage in civic actions as someone without a high school diploma.ⁱ

The arrow between civic engagement and education might point in both directions as some research demonstrates that increased engagement may lead to increased access to educational opportunities, better academic performance, and higher retention rates in higher education.ⁱⁱ

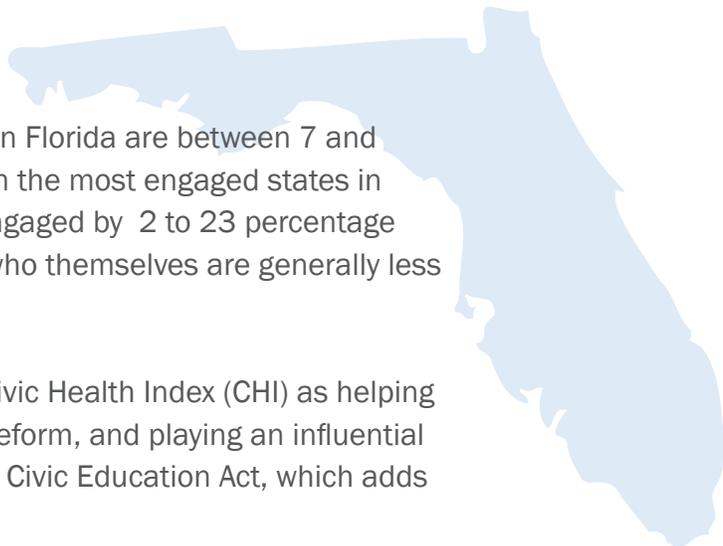
According to research by Tufts University’s Center for Information and Research on Civic Learning and Engagement (CIRCLE), “Students who recall having received better civic education are more likely to be engaged. Discussing current controversial issues seems to boost knowledge and interest. Service-learning is helpful if students feel that they have addressed important social issues (but unhelpful if they do not). Belonging to student groups increases engagement in community life and politics.ⁱⁱⁱ



FINDINGS IN ACTION

Finding: Civic engagement levels of Millennials in Florida are between 7 and 20 percentage points below that of Millennials in the most engaged states in the nation. Millennials in Florida are also less engaged by 2 to 23 percentage points than those aged 30 and over in Florida (who themselves are generally less engaged than the nation).

Action: Partners in Florida have long cited the Civic Health Index (CHI) as helping to demonstrate the urgency for civic education reform, and playing an influential role in the passage of the Sandra Day O’ Connor Civic Education Act, which adds civics to the K-12 accountability system.



“What the 2008 report did was move some legislators to an understanding that there was a real issue in Florida. It took us two more years to actually get the legislation passed but nonetheless even then as the legislation passed, the 2008 report was distributed to the members of the House and Senate by staff and certainly to members of relevant committees. So, it attracted a lot of attention among legislators and those who were concerned about educational policy in the department of education, as well.”

-Doug Dobson, Florida Joint Center for Citizenship

FINDINGS IN ACTION

Finding:

Illinois Millennials are **LESS** likely than their national peers to:

- Vote regularly in local elections (ranking 47th).
- Work with neighbors to address community problems (ranking 48th).
- Speak to or exchange favors with neighbors (ranking 45th and 42nd, respectively).

Action: In Illinois, partners at the Citizen Advocacy Center and McCormick Foundation have played leadership roles in passing new legislation which makes civics a requirement of high school graduation. They have used the data extensively in their efforts to publish letters to editors, inform editorial board endorsements of the bill, and shape the work of the Illinois Civic Mission Coalition.



“We’ve used data from the 2012 IL CHI to demonstrate how our Millennials trail many of their peers when it comes to voting in local elections, exchanging favors with neighbors, and working with them to solve community problems, establishing the need for more and better civic education.”

–Shawn Healy, McCormick Foundation

Finding: In Colorado, when some indicators are considered across location of residence, income levels, ethnic/racial backgrounds, and level of educational attainment, varying levels of civic participation in the state becomes clear.

- For example, voter turnout is 22% higher for residents with a bachelor’s degree compared to those with a high school diploma.
- Coloradans with a bachelor’s degree or higher were more than twice as likely to discuss politics at least a few times a week than were Coloradans who had not completed high school.



Action: The Colorado Civic Health Network has created action teams such as the civic learning action team that is currently engaging residents throughout the state in town hall meetings and focus groups to determine the best way to strengthen civic learning.

“Collaboration was at the heart of the Colorado Civic Health Index report and was a key to its success. It brought together six diverse organizations who leveraged their talent and networks to take on some of Colorado’s greatest civic challenges. The CHI partnership model amplified our individual work and helped drive our success.”

–Mark Potter, Metropolitan State University-Denver

ⁱ Millennials Civic Health Index (www.ncoc.net/MillennialsCHI)

ⁱⁱ Millennials Civic Health Index (www.ncoc.net/MillennialsCHI) and Campus Compact “A Promising Connection” (<http://www.compact.org/wp-content/uploads/2009/01/A-Promising-Connection-corrected.pdf>)

ⁱⁱⁱ <http://civicyouth.org/quick-facts/quick-facts-civic-education>