

March 22, 2016

Value Your Voice

Redefining Indiana

A Public Deliberation on Improving Civic Health in Indiana

The National Conference on Citizenship defines civic health as “**a measure of how actively citizens engage in their communities.**” There are many different ways to be involved in Indiana: volunteering, staying informed about issues, organizing for social change, interacting with neighbors, and becoming involved in politics are all examples of civic engagement.

According to the 2015 Indiana Civic Health Report, this issue is important to our state because engaged citizens “are the foundation of a well-functioning democracy.” Engaged citizens help their communities improve, deal with crises, and make our state a better place for all.

Our goal today is to inspire change in Indiana communities across our state by analyzing different potential solutions to our lacking civic health. We'll review some key statistics about Indiana's civic health and highlight areas that need improvement. We'll also brainstorm and discuss potential actions to improve our state's civic health.

In this conversation we encourage you to express your voice, have an open mind, and consider different options that will come about from today's conversation, focusing on possible solutions that citizens, government, and organizations can work together to implement.

**This deliberation is sponsored by the
Office of the Attorney General of the
State of Indiana.**



**This deliberation is designed
and facilitated by
Wabash Democracy and Public Discourse.**

WABASH COLLEGE
Wabash Democracy & Public Discourse Initiative

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Value Your Voice Agenda

Summerville Room, Columbus Learning Center, IUPU Columbus

- 4:30 Welcome
Remarks from Interim Chancellor and Dean Larry Richards
Remarks from Attorney General Gregory Zoeller
Introduction and Framing
- 5:00 First Group Discussion:
Civic Health in Indiana – Your Experiences and Concerns
- 5:25 Prioritization of Concerns around Civic Health
- 5:45 Second Group Discussion:
Discussion of Prioritized Concerns
Consideration of Actions for Improvement
- 6:15 Large Group Summary
Closing Remarks from WDPD

At each of your tables you will find trained, impartial facilitators and notetakers from the Wabash Democracy and Public Discourse Initiative. They will be leading you through the deliberation process today. During the discussion, we want to hear everyone's voice and have a good conversation that identifies what pathways forward the community gathered prefers.

During our conversation we ask that you participate and abide by the ground rules below:

1. Share your opinions honestly and openly to the extent you feel comfortable.
2. Respect the opinions of all participants.
3. Allow everyone a chance to speak.
4. Listen to other perspectives and be considerate of new ideas as you engage.
5. Work through ideas and suggestions thoroughly.

This guide was designed by Michael Lumpkin, Jack Kellerman, Austin Weirich, Adam Burtner, and Sara Drury of Wabash Democracy and Public Discourse. Questions/comments to wdpd@wabash.edu

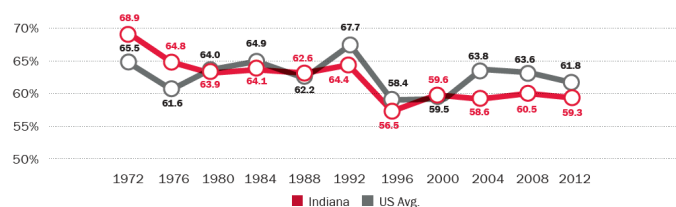
Key Facts about Indiana's Civic Health

All statistics are taken from the 2015 Indiana Civic Health Index report, available online at http://www.inbf.org/Portals/0/INCHI_2015_FINAL.pdf

- Indiana ranks **26th** among U.S. states in volunteer activity, with 26.9% of Hoosiers reporting that they volunteer.
- Hoosiers are **very connected to family and friends**. The U.S. average of citizens who report that they see or hear from family and friends frequently is 75.7%; Hoosiers report that they see or hear frequently at 83.9%. Additionally 93% of Hoosiers say they eat dinner as a family at least once per week.
- The rate at which Hoosiers work together in their communities to solve issues or undertake improvements is below that of other states; Indiana is one of the lowest ranked states in this form of civic engagement. **Our ranking in working together to solve issues has fallen over the past three years from 45th in the nation in 2010 (6.5% of population) to 47th in the nation in 2013 (5.6% of population).**

- In the 2012 Presidential Election, Indiana ranked **38th in voter turnout** among eligible citizens (U.S. citizens aged 18 and over) with a rate of 59.3%. The national turnout rate was 61.8% that year.

Chart 3. Indiana Voter Turnout During Presidential Election Years 1972 - 2012



- Although we report being connected, **our involvement in associations is very low compared to other states**: Hoosiers rank 46th in public meeting attendance; 44th in participation in school group, neighborhood or community associations; and 47th in working with neighbors to fix or improve something in the community.

What are your experiences with civic health and engagement in Indiana?

What concerns about civic health seem most pressing?

What are actions that will encourage positive change around civic health?

What do you want to do?

Check out the summary of this conversation, available at <http://blog.wabash.edu/wabashdpd/>