

WHAT YOU CAN DO

Georgia’s success depends on residents being connected to each other and involved in their communities and political process.

**Individuals** can help improve Georgia’s civic health by making an effort to get to know their neighbors, joining local groups and attending meetings, and contacting local representatives.

**Organizations** can help improve Georgia’s civic health by convening diverse groups of residents around shared events and issues, integrating civics education into meetings and programs, and partnering with other agencies to find joint civic engagement opportunities.

**Decision-makers** can help improve Georgia’s civic health by providing opportunities for all residents to participate in policymaking, reaching out to underrepresented groups and youth to help them gain civic experience, encouraging voter registration, and removing barriers to participation.

Finally, we know that increased civic knowledge leads to higher rates of civic engagement. All of us—as individuals or leaders of community organizations or government entities—can help improve our collective civic health by promoting civics learning with both youth and adults. iCivics, a free, online, non-partisan, evidence-based curriculum is one resource available to everyone. Educators and community leaders across Georgia already are using the curriculum—available in both English and Spanish.

THANK YOU

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Community Foundation of Central Georgia  
East West Bank  
Knight Foundation



2019 GEORGIA  
CIVIC HEALTH INDEX  
Executive Summary

WHAT IS CIVIC HEALTH?

Civic health is the way communities are organized to define and address public problems. Civic health includes a wide range of civic engagement indicators, from social interactions among friends and family to the ways people participate in groups and communities. Civic health also reflects the ways people politically express themselves in traditional measures, like voter registration and turnout, as well as in social measures like discussing politics and sharing information.

The *Georgia Civic Health Index* (CHI) examines three main areas:

- 1. Social Connectedness
- 2. Community Involvement
- 3. Political Action

WHY DOES CIVIC HEALTH MATTER?

Research shows that civic engagement is related to improved public health outcomes, economic resilience, low unemployment and lower violent crime rates, as well as higher academic achievement and social and emotional adjustment in adolescents. Improving Georgia’s civic health at state, regional, and local levels can help achieve improved outcomes for children, families, and communities.

BACKGROUND AND OVERVIEW

In 2013, Georgia Family Connection Partnership—along with the Carl Vinson Institute of Government, Georgia Forward, and the National Conference on Citizenship—published the first CHI. The goals of the 2019 report are to support and broaden existing conversations, create and promote new conversations, and examine strategies and evidence-based practices to improve civic health at the state and local levels.

Both the 2013 and 2019 Georgia CHI report findings are based on the National Conference on Citizenship (NCoC) analysis of the U.S. Census Current Population Survey data. The 2019 report also examines local civic health from six Georgia counties—Bibb, Camden, Cook, Fayette, Stephens, and Washington. The survey used in these communities included the core civic health questions used to generate the state data for the CHI.

The 2019 report:

- compares the ways that Georgia’s civic health has changed since the 2013 CHI was published;
- explores the way civic participation changes across demographic variables—income, educational attainment, age, race/ethnicity, and geography; and
- compares Georgia’s rates of civic participation to other states and to national averages.



INDICATORS AND RANKINGS

Civic health in the Peach State has shown little overall improvement, and has declined in a few areas, since the first report was published more than five years ago. When compared to the rest of the nation, Georgia has a lower-than-average ranking in 17 of the 21 measures.

Georgia Rankings: At or Above National Averages	
Frequently post views about political, societal, or local issues on the internet or social media	13th
Donate to political organizations (\$25 or more)	27th
Frequently provide food, housing, money, or help to friends or extended family	29th
Frequently talk to, or spend time with, people of different racial, ethnic, or cultural backgrounds	29th

Georgia Rankings: Below National Averages	
Frequently discuss political, societal, or local issues with family or friends	33rd
Attend a public meeting	34th
Buy or boycott a product or service	36th
Vote	37th
Register to vote	37th
Voted in last local election	40th
Volunteer	44th
Frequently volunteer	44th
Frequently discuss political, societal, or local issues with neighbors	44th
Frequently read, watch, or listen to news or information about political, societal, or local issues	44th
Work with neighbors to do something positive for neighborhood or community	45th
Donate to charitable or religious organizations (\$25 or more)	47th
Frequently do favors for neighbors	47th
Contact or visit a public official	49th
Participate in a group	49th
Frequently hear from, or spend time with, family or friends	50th
Frequently talk with, or spend time with, neighbors	50th



KEY MEASURES AND TAKEAWAYS

Social Connectedness

Defined as how Georgians interact with each other and is measured by both the quality and number of connections an individual has with those in his or her inner circle.

Key Takeaways

All six counties reported higher percentages of contact with family and friends than the state average. Georgia millennials provide food, housing, money, or help to friends or extended family in higher percentages than both the state and national averages.

Community Involvement

Defined as the actions and relationships Georgia residents have beyond their inner circles and is measured by how Georgians participate in their neighborhoods and communities.

Key Takeaways

Georgia ranks near the bottom of the nation for volunteerism, charitable giving, and group participation. Suburban residents are significantly more likely to donate to charity than urban or rural residents.

Political Action

Defined as voter registration and turnout, contacting elected officials, and expressing political opinions.

Key Takeaways

Compared with data from 2010 state and local elections, Georgia’s voter registration and voter turnout are up significantly. The state ranked 49th in contacting public officials, but Georgians share their views on the internet or social media more frequently than the national average.