Profile of Illinois: An Engaged State
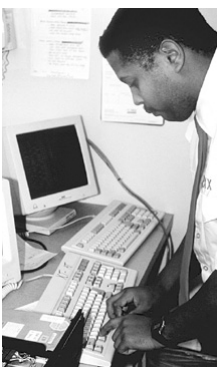
Illinois Civic Engagement Benchmark Survey Results

Report of the Illinois Civic Engagement Project

The Illinois Civic Engagement Project

From the University of Illinois at Springfield, the United Way of Illinois and *Illinois Issues*

United Way OF ILLINOIS

Illinois Issues

~*PLUS*~
68 practical recommendations for enhancing civic engagement in Illinois recommended by the Illinois Civic Engagement Project Steering Committee
See page 15

March 6, 2001

Profile of Illinois: An Engaged State

Illinois Civic Engagement Benchmark Survey Results

By Richard Schuldt, Barbara Ferrara, and Ed Wojcicki
University of Illinois at Springfield

With assistance from Sean O. Hogan, UIS
and
Donna Van De Water, Lipman Hearne, Inc.

~PLUS~
68 practical recommendations
for enhancing civic engagement in Illinois
recommended by the Illinois Civic Engagement
Project Steering Committee
See page 15

March 6, 2001
Springfield, Illinois

"I don't make a significant difference. I think about that a lot. No one person can make a real significant difference ..."

"I am asked to volunteer all the time by members of my social network. Once you're a volunteer, you are asked. They call you all the time, and you can't say no."

This report is dedicated
to the people of Illinois,
and in particular, to people in three sectors :
the private/business sector,
the government/public sector,
the nonprofit/independent sector,
all of whom have a vital role in building our communities.

"The interest in civil society is rooted
partly in honest self-criticism by people
left, right, and center willing to face
evidence that may be inconvenient
to their own arguments..."

— E.J. Dionne, author and columnist

In *Community Works: The Revival of Civil Society in America*
© 1998 Brookings Institute Press, Washington, DC

Contents

Executive summary

Introduction

How involved are Illinoisans in their communities? In what ways? Can we encourage them to be even more engaged in their communities and connected with each other?

This is the first comprehensive statewide report on the types and levels of civic engagement in Illinois. The report provides benchmark data about community involvement. It describes how Illinois people are engaged, and it reveals why some people are not engaged. Finally, this report offers 68 recommendations for stimulating citizen participation in their communities.

We find that most Illinoisans are involved in some form of community activity, but the forms of their activity vary remarkably. Some are most interested in political activity. Others participate in a church, synagogue, temple, or mosque (hereafter, "place of worship") but have little other community involvement. Still others focus their activity on their children's activities or their jobs, while some socialize informally.

In the summer of 2000 and early in 2001, the Illinois Civic Engagement Project commissioned survey research and focus group interviews. We join the important national discussion about civic engagement in the United States. Unlike some national studies that say American communities are facing a civic crisis, we cannot say whether civic engagement is declining in Illinois. We don't know, because this study has not been done before. We hope this benchmark study will be enriched by many discussions and further studies in the years to come. Our concern about the state of civic participation is as old as Tocqueville's study of America in the 1800s. But it is as fresh as the Robert D. Putnam's 1995 article, "Bowling Alone," and his release of a new nationwide survey of civic engagement on March 1, 2001. Putnam has sparked an important national discussion about citizen participation and how that relates to the strength of American communities.

We hope to spark an equally spirited discussion about civic engagement in Illinois. But we go further. We want more than study and debate. So in this report we provide 68 useful, practical suggestions for ways that individuals, leaders, institutions, organizations, and businesses can stimulate and enhance civic engagement in Illinois communities. Our suggestions emerge from our study (see pages 15-30 for the list of action steps).

Why people get involved

We asked a series of questions in the survey research and of the focus groups about why people choose to get involved in their communities. The three top reasons are:

1. **Altruism:** They want to make their community a better place or influence public policy in some way. This was most important to 68%.
2. **Faith or fellowship:** They respond to their own religious beliefs, or they like to be with people they enjoy. Important to 62%.
3. **Rational calculation or self-interest:** They want to make useful contacts, advance their job or career, or perhaps even run for office. This general reason, while significant, was not nearly as important as the first two reasons. Important to 23%.

Why people are not more involved

We also asked a series of questions about what prevents people from being more involved in their communities. The top reasons are:

1. Time pressure due to family (59%) and job (58%) responsibilities.
2. They were not asked to be involved (32%), or they do not feel a part of the community (13%).
3. They do not know enough about the issues (26%), or they do not know how to get involved (23%).
4. They feel they are already involved and cannot be more involved (22%).
5. Rational calculation: They think it is not worth their time and trouble, that nothing will come of their involvement (12%), that people want too much of their time (32%), or they don't like to join groups (17%).
6. Lack of resources: They believe they don't have the skills (13%) or money it takes (18%) to be involved.
7. Poor health (17%) or lack of transportation (9%).
8. They do not like the people who are involved (8%), or no groups exist that deal with issues of interest to them (14%).

Of great significance is that participants and non-participants sometimes differ on why they are not more involved. The single biggest difference between the two groups is that the non-participants are far more likely to say they have not been asked.

Eight major types of activity and seven major engagement groups

This report creates a profile of Illinois that identifies eight important forms of civic engagement activity. Those eight activities become our measures of civic engagement. After extensive analysis, the profile also describes seven basic engagement groups according to their most significant levels of activity (See Tables 1 and 2). The distinctions among the seven groups make it evident that many Illinois people choose their activities selectively. They make choices about what to do. The fact that they are selective should help Illinois leaders develop processes and structures that build upon that civic reality and not expect everybody to be doing everything.

This summary identifies why people choose to get involved or not get more involved. It then lists the eight major forms of civic engagement activity and the profile of the seven types of people. Finally, the research identifies some important differences among Illinoisans according to people's race, gender, age, political party, geographic residence, income, and level of education.

Eight major civic engagement activities and profile of seven major engagement groups in Illinois

Eight major civic engagement activities in Illinois:
1. Community Involvement Activities (secular)
2. Religious and Faith-based Activities
3. Contribution Activities (secular)
4. Political Activities
5. Discussion of Politics and Current Events
6. News Exposure Activities
7. Technology-Based Activities
8. Informal Socializing

Profile of Illinois: Seven "engagement groups" according to significant activities:
1. Civic Leaders: Broadly and Highly Engaged (8% of sample)
2. Community Activists: Politically Engaged (11%)
3. Faith-based Activists: Religiously Engaged (22%)
4. Cyber-Activists: Technologically Engaged (16%)
5. Informal Socializers (11%)
6. Informed Contributors: Passively Engaged (16%)
7. The Relatively Disengaged (16%)

Definition and measures of civic engagement

This research defines "civic engagement" broadly. Other research shows that all forms of citizen interaction and participation contribute to a community's strength. Thus, our definition includes everything from joining an organization to donating to a charity to socializing informally. We cast a wide net and try to count all of the ways that people tell us they are connected with one another outside of their family routines. Then we summarize the activity into eight basic categories, which become our basic measures of civic engagement:

Summary description of the eight major types of civic engagement activity

1. **Community Involvement Activities (secular):** Such activities include volunteering, membership and participation in organizations, working with others to solve community problems, serving on a board, and attending a committee meeting or a board or council meeting. Almost two-thirds of our respondents (66%) reported volunteering time to at least one type of organization. More than one in five (22%) respondents volunteer in youth organizations, and 14% volunteer in civic organizations. Nearly half the respondents (49%) were involved in some kind of humanitarian activity, which is the leading form of community action. More than eight in 10 (83%) belong to at least one type of secular group or organization.

2. **Religious Activities:** Nine in 10 Illinoisans (91%) claim some form of religious affiliation. Two-thirds (67%) belong to a place of worship, and 47% attend religious services weekly. About seven in 10 (72%) contributed money to a place of worship within the past year, and one in five served actively on a board in the past three years. (This type does not include volunteering for a faith-based organization; those activities are included in "Community Involvement" above.)

3. **Contribution Activities:** Almost nine in 10 (87%) reported giving money to a secular charitable or religious organization within the past year, and almost six in 10 (58%) reported giving to both. Almost nine in 10 (88%) also reported donating food, clothing, or toys to a needy family or charitable organization, and 15% reported donating blood. (Our overall score here, however, excludes giving to religious organizations.)

4. **Political Activities:** About eight in 10 (82%) reported voting in the November 2000 national election. (This is somewhat higher than the Illinois State Board of Election's figure of a 69% official voter turnout, but methods of measuring "voter turnout" are in dispute.) About one in six (16%) said they attended a candidate forum, debate, or information night in the past year. About one in 10 (9%) said they worked for a party or candidate in 2000. About one in seven (15%) reported giving money to a political action committee, candidate, interest group, or political cause in the past year. One in twenty (5%) said they had run for public office at some point, and another 16% said they had thought about running.

5. **Discussion of Politics and Current Events:** One in five (20%) said they discuss local politics or community affairs almost every day, and two-thirds said they do so weekly with family members, co-workers, or friends and neighbors.

6. **News Exposure Activities:** Illinoisans watch local television news more frequently than they listen to radio news or read newspapers. That is consistent with national trends. More than seven in 10 (72%) watch the television news every day, while half (50%) read the newspaper every day. Six in 10 (60%) listen to radio news every day. Nearly four in 10 (38%) reported watching or listening to a talk show or call-in show about news or public affairs on radio or television several times a week.

Of those who watched or listened, one in five (22%) said they had attempted to call one of the shows. About one in seven (13%) said they watch C-SPAN several times a week, while about half (54%) said they generally do not watch it.

7. **Technology-Based Activities:** This category is a place to look for new forms of civic engagement. Excluding e-mail used for work, almost half (46%) reported using e-mail at least several times a week, with one in four (26%) reporting daily usage. Seven in 10 overall (72%) have used the Internet. For information about current events and public affairs, one in six (16%) use the Internet every day, and four in 10 (40%) use it at least several times a month. One in four have visited Web sites for local schools or community colleges (26%) and local government (24%). About one in 20 (6%) have visited the site of a local civic group. Four in 10 (38%) have never used e-mail, and almost three in 10 (28%) have never used the Internet. Very few (4%) are using chat rooms every month to discuss current events.

8. **Informal Socializing:** Americans get together in many ways beyond their place of work and formal organizations and institutions. Informal socializing is an important aspect of the social fabric because it provides ways for people to bond with each other, and those bonds help build communities. Seven in 10 respondents (70%) said they participate at least monthly in a small informal group for socializing or recreation such as playing cards, meeting for dinner or drinks, golfing or bowling, or similar activities. Almost half (47%) do so several times a month, and one of eight (13%) do it several times a week.

SUMMARY DESCRIPTION OF THE PROFILE OF ILLINOIS:

Seven engagement groups categorized by civic engagement activity

Extensive analysis of the survey research data led us to see that only a small percentage of Illinoisans is highly engaged in all activities. Most who are engaged seem to specialize in one or a small number of the activity types. And a small percentage of Illinoisans is not very engaged – that is, not involved in any activities, or involved at a level far lower than other people in Illinois. We label each "engagement group" with a name for the sake of conversation and summarization, but we want to be clear that people in each group also engage in some of the other activities at lower levels (see Table 1).

We also discovered that people in the different groups had different reasons for becoming engaged or not being more engaged. Those motivations and barriers are explained in the full report and become significant for people who want to learn more about how to motivate leaders and others to be more involved.

Table 1 – A Profile of Illinois
Overall Activity Profile of Civic Engagement Groups
[Percentiles of Average Scores on Civic Engagement Activities for Each Group]

Seven Engagement Types	Total Civic Engagement and Eight Categories of Engagement								
	Total Civic Engagement	Community Involvement	Religious Activity	Contribution Activity	Political Activity	Discussion of Politics & Curr. Affairs	Active Exposure to Sources of News	Technology-Based Activities	Informal Socializing
Civic Leaders	95th	95th	80th	82nd	93rd	83rd	62nd	74th	64th
Community Activists	86th	75th	46th	75th	86th	85th	71st	70th	78th
Faith-Based Activists	68th	68th	86th	70th	65th	52nd	61st	51st	54th
Cyber-Activists	47th	45th	36th	39th	45th	67th	35th	80th	71st
Informal Socializers	36th	50th	37th	68th	38th	28th	34th	40th	88th
Informed Contributors	34th	39th	43rd	67th	50th	70th	63rd	36th	33rd
The Relatively Disengaged	9th	31st	45th	26th	32nd	14th	24th	42nd	27th

Table 2
Overall Rank of Each Group for Each Type of Activity*

Seven Engagement Types	Total Civic Engagement and Eight Categories of Engagement								
	Total Civic Engage-ment	Commu-nity Involve-ment	Religious Activity	Contri-bution Activity	Political Activity	Discus-sion of Politics & Curr. Affairs	Active Expo-sure to Sources of News	Techno-logy-Based Activities	Informal Social-izing
Civic Leaders	1	1	2	1	1	1-2	2-3-4	2	4
Community Activists	2	2	3-4-5	2	2	1-2	1	3	2
Faith-Based Activists	3	3	1	3-4-5	3	5	2-3-4	4	5
Cyber-Activists	4	5	6-7	6	5	3-4	5-6	1	3
Informal Socializers	5	4	6-7	3-4-5	6	6	5-6	5-6	1
Informed Contributors	6	6	3-4-5	3-4-5	4	3-4	2-3-4	7	6
The Relatively Disengaged	7	7	3-4-5	7	7	7	7	5-6	7

*Multiple ranking for an activity indicates a tie for that activity.

The Seven Engagement Groups

We identify the first four groups as leaders and activists because they are engaged in various activities at levels far higher than the typical person in the total sample. Only the first group of "Civic Leaders" is highly involved in everything, while the next three groups are more specialized in their high levels of activity.

1. **Civic Leaders: Broadly and Highly Engaged (8% of sample)**
   Civic Leaders are highly engaged in many community activities, in political activities, in religious activities, and discussion of current events – and they make donations to causes they deem worthwhile. They seem to show up everywhere. People ask them to be involved, and they ask others. More than eight in 10 (82%) say they have been asked to get involved in the past year, and nearly the same number (79%) have asked others to get involved. The group is evenly divided between men and women. With one in four (24%) being African American, this group contains the highest percentage of African Americans of all seven engagement groups. The Civic Leaders lead the way in every respect. They are highly educated and highly motivated. Two-thirds have a four-year college degree. The median age of people in this group is 49 years old.

2. **Community Activists: Politically Engaged (11%)**
   The typical Community Activist is similar to the Civic Leader, with high levels of involvement in community groups, informal socializing, and making donations. These people are highly engaged in political activity and discussion of current events, but less involved in religious activity. The dropoff in religious activity is what separates them from the Civic Leaders group (See Tables 1 and 2). Nearly two-thirds (64%) of this group is male, and more than eight in 10 (83%) are white. Half of this group (51%) has a college degree. This is the group with the highest proportion of people (72%) who are married or partnered. The median age of people in this group is 47 years old.

3. **Faith-Based Activists: Religiously Engaged (22%)**
   What makes the typical person in this group stand out is a very high level of religious involvement. The Faith-Based Activist has even more place-of-worship and faith-based activity than the Civic Leaders. For this group, religious activity is the most important activity. The typical person in this group belongs to and is active in a church, synagogue, mosque, or temple, and is also highly engaged in community activity and makes donations. This group is only moderately involved in technology-based activities and informal socializing. The typical Faith-Based Activist also engages in discussions about current affairs and is exposed to news sources more than most Illinoisans. More than six in 10 (62%) are women, and the racial makeup is typical of the overall sample, with eight in 10 being white (82%) and 14% being African American. More than half (54%) live in the Chicago suburbs and almost one in five (18%) lives in Chicago. While 70% are married/partnered, one in eight (13%) is widowed. The median age of people in this group is 48 years old.

4. **Cyber-Activists: Technologically Engaged (16%)**

The Cyber-Activist is more technologically engaged than the typical person in any other group. The Cyber-Activist discusses politics and current events and socializes informally at fairly high levels. But the typical member is significantly less engaged than the other leaders and activists in religious activity, exposure to sources of news, and making donations. General community involvement is average. More than four in 10 (44%) of their households have children, and nearly one in five (18%) have pre-school children. Only 2% are widowed, and 44% are single. Nearly half (48%) call themselves political independents. The median age of people in this group is 33 years old, making this the youngest group by far.

5. **Informal Socializers (11%)**

The most common way that these people connect with others in their communities is in informal settings (see Table 2). They are average in general community involvement, and their contribution activity is moderately high. But they don't discuss politics or current affairs much, nor do they spend much time watching the news or reading newspapers. More are single (46%) than married/partnered (43%) – which is different from the statewide figures. Nearly six of 10 (59%) are male, nine in 10 are white. While their median age is 45 years old, they tend not to be middle-aged, but clustered in the youngest or oldest age groups.

6. **Informed Contributors: Passively Engaged (16%)**

The Informed Contributors are older and keep informed by discussing current affairs and paying attention to the news. They also make monetary donations and are moderately active politically, but they are not as active in religious or technological activity. Nor do they spend much time socializing informally. One in six (16%) is widowed, six in 10 are women, and three-fourths have household incomes less than $50,000. More than four in 10 (45%) are Democrats, with the rest evenly split between Republicans and independents, making this the group with the highest proportion of Democrats. The median age of people in this group is 55 years old, the oldest of the seven groups.

7. **The Relatively Disengaged (16%)**

For every activity except religious activity, the people in this group are less active than people in any of the other groups. They rank particularly low on discussion of politics and current events and regular news exposure, they tend toward more religious activity (see Table 2). It is a consistently low level of engagement on the other six types of activity that defines this group. More than half (52%) have a high school diploma or less, and nearly half (47%) are in households in the lowest income category, those making up to $30,000 a year. Democrats and independents are equal in number (38%), with just 23% being Republican. The median age of people in this group is 48 years old.

Differences in involvement by race, gender, age, education, employment, region, and party

Race: There is no significant difference between whites and African Americans on their overall level of civic engagement. (Our sample size of other racial or ethnic groups was not large enough to make significant comparisons.) On specific types of activity: African Americans have a higher level of community involvement than whites. African Americans also volunteer to more types of organizations and have a higher level of religious activity and news exposure. Whites have a higher level of secular contribution activity and technology-based activity. They are similar in their levels of political activity.

Gender: Men and women do not differ in their overall level of civic engagement, although they do differ in the particular forms of engagement. Men are significantly more active in informal socializing, discussion of politics and current affairs, and technology-based activities, while women are significantly more involved in church activities, and women volunteer to more types of organizations. There are no significant differences in the level of political activity, news exposure, and contribution activity.

Age: This study divides adults into three age groups: 60 and older, 40 to 59, and under 40. People between 40 and 59 years old have the highest level of total civic engagement, while the oldest group has the lowest level. However, the pattern of generational involvement depends upon the type of activity. The mid-range group has the highest level of community involvement, political activity, discussion of politics and current affairs, and contributions. The youngest group has the lowest level of political activity and contributions. The oldest group has the highest level of religious activity and exposure to news. The youngest group has the highest level of technology-based activity and informal socializing. In those two categories, the oldest group is lowest in both.

Education: Overall, persons with higher levels of education have a greater level of civic engagement. A higher level of education is also correlated with four specific activities: community involvement, political activity, technology-based activity, and contributions. Education level is less significant when it comes to religious activity, news exposure, and discussion of politics and current events.

Employment: Those with full-time jobs have a higher level of civic engagement than those with part-time jobs. Retired people have the highest level of news exposure, and those with full-time jobs the highest level of technology-based activity. Retired people and those with part-time jobs have higher levels of church activity.

Region: The level of engagement does not differ dramatically among the four regions: city of Chicago, Chicago suburbs, northern/central Illinois, and southern Illinois. However, Chicago suburbanites have the highest level of contribution activity, while Chicago and southern Illinois residents have the lowest . Chicago residents have the highest level of news exposure. Southern Illinois residents have the highest level of political

activity. Northern/central Illinois residents report the highest level of informal socializing. No significant differences for religious activity were found across the four regions.

Political Party: Republicans show the highest level of total civic engagement, religious activity, and contribution activity. Both Republicans and Democrats are more likely to participate in political activity and be exposed to the news. Independents and Republicans are more likely than Democrats to engage in technology-based activities and to socialize informally.

Employers have impact on civic engagement

Employers can have a profound impact on civic engagement in Illinois. Employers' encouragement of community participation is positively correlated with volunteer or contribution activity by employees and with their total level of civic engagement activity. Nearly four of 10 of the employees (38%) said their employer encourages them to volunteer for community projects. More than one in four (28%) reported that their employer gives incentives or recognition to employees who volunteer, and one in four reported that their employer gives money to organizations for which their employees volunteer. Employee contributions to a local charitable organization (aside from religious organizations) are positively correlated to the number of reported employer efforts in this area.

Engagement is also related to perceptions of one's community

We thought it was important to ask people about the context in which their social engagement takes place. Not surprisingly, we found that the more favorably people view their community, the greater their level of civic engagement. Citizens' higher level of civic engagement was related to more positive evaluations of their local government and politics and the role they could have in it.

Overall, one in three (33%) of our respondents viewed their community as an excellent place to live. Another 48% called it good. Almost one in five (18%) rated their communities fair or poor. People in the Chicago suburbs are the most likely to have a sense of civic pride and to rate their community as an excellent place to live.

So what? Addressing the three sectors with 68 ideas to stimulate civic engagement

In our project and in other work about civic engagement around the country, the question inevitably arises, "So what? Why does all of this matter? What can we do?"

We have a partial answer. We have built a list of 68 recommendations to stimulate citizen participation in their communities (see page 15). Most of these suggestions emerge directly from the research, while several come from a combination of our research, the work of others, and our lived experiences. One conclusion that emerges from this work is that leaders have to do a better job of articulating to one another and to their constituencies what "civic

engagement" means. This study shows that community involvement means different things to different people, and leaders can build on that reality . It is with that in mind that we offer the 68 recommendations. Some may not seem new, but in the context of this analysis of civic engagement in Illinois, we fervently hope that these recommendations will be viewed under a new and hopeful light. Our recommendations are divided into these categories:

1. 6 action steps for **everyone**
2. 10 things **individuals** can do
3. 10 things **leaders** can do
4. 8 things **places of worship** should encourage
5. 10 things people in the **business/private sector** can do
6. 10 things people in the **government/public sector** can do
7. 9 things people in the **nonprofit sector** can do
8. 5 ways the **three sectors** can collaborate

We deliberately made an effort in this report to keep three distinct sectors of Illinois in mind: the public/government sector, the private/business sector, and the nonprofit sector. Each sector faces different challenges, and when it comes to civic engagement, some of our recommendations overlap but others are distinct for each one.

TOWARD THE FUTURE:
Keep up with two Web sites

This project deals with how Illinois citizens connect and interact with one another. Therefore, we are giving the project an "extended life" with the creation of two Web sites.

> **Illinois Civic Engagement Project.** The first is about this project itself. Go to civic.uis.edu, the site of the Illinois Civic Engagement Project (but do not type "www" first!). It contains additional information and links to other civic engagement initiatives around the country.

> **Illinois Electronic Neighborhood**, which is accessible by a link from our civic engagement project site. A product of this project, the Illinois Electronic Neighborhood is our effort to provide ongoing information about local Illinois initiatives that enhance civic engagement. There is not only information there about interesting projects around the state. There is also a form you can complete to let us know about creative civic activities or projects being done in your neighborhood or in a group with which you are affiliated. Let's make this an ongoing conversation! Go to civic.uis.edu and then click on Illinois Electronic Neighborhood, or contact *Illinois Issues* or the United Way of Illinois for more information.

About the Illinois Civic Engagement Project

The United Way of Illinois and *Illinois Issues* magazine directed this Illinois Civic Engagement Project, with funding from Caterpillar Inc., Peoria; State Farm Insurance, Bloomington; the Woods Fund of Chicago; and the McCormick Tribune Foundation, Chicago. The United Way of Illinois, based in Oak Brook, serves 106 local United Ways. *Illinois Issues* is a unit of the Institute for Public Affairs at the University of Illinois at Springfield.

The Survey Research Office and Institute for Public Affairs at UIS conducted the telephone survey research, and the firm of Lipman Hearne, Inc., of Chicago conducted the focus groups under the institute's direction. In addition, the Donors Forum of Chicago assisted with in-kind support, the establishment of the steering committee, and project development.

This is the first report, a benchmark study, about the level of civic engagement in Illinois, with a focus on activity at the local level.

The Survey Research Office conducted a telephone survey of a random sample of 1,050 Illinoisans between November 2000 and February 2001. Lipman Hearne, Inc., conducted seven focus groups in December 2000 and January 2001 in Chicago, Deerfield, Peoria, and Carbondale.

Summary

We discovered that most Illinoisans are civically engaged in some way, but their forms of participation and interaction differ significantly. A small percentage are involved in many ways, but most people are more specialized or selective in their forms of engagement. Some focus almost exclusively on their church, for example, while others thrive on political activity. To make sense of the many forms of civic engagement, the research led us to develop a description of seven basic civic engagement groups, which present a new kind of profile of Illinois.

The good news is that many Illinoisans are engaged in their communities. People are still making a difference where they live. The bad news is that people feel significant barriers to participation in their communities.

The challenge for individuals is to choose to make a difference in their communities. They can make that choice, and many do.

The challenge for leaders is to understand what motivates people to become involved. They should remember that we're living in an age when most people already feel they don't have enough time to do what they want to do.

The challenge is to ask people to become involved in ways that satisfy people and in time frames that are manageable.

68 Ways
We Can Make a Difference in Our Communities, and Why We Should

These 68 recommendations offer practical suggestions for ways that individuals, leaders, organizations, and businesses can be involved on behalf of their communities. They are sorted into eight categories:

- 6 action steps that work for **everyone**
- 10 things **individuals** can do
- 10 things **leaders** can do
- 8 things **places of worship** should encourage
- 10 things people in the **business/private sector** can do
- 10 things people in the **government/public** sector can do
- 9 things people in the **nonprofit sector** can do
- 5 ways the **three sectors** can collaborate

Plus, we suggest:

The <u>Illinois Electronic Neighborhood</u>: We are creating the Illinois Electronic Neighborhood, on which we will provide examples of local initiatives to promote civic engagement around the state. You can find this electronic neighborhood at the Web site <u>civic.uis.edu</u>, the site of the Illinois Civic Engagement project. You will also find a form on which you can tell us about a project, and we'll update the list periodically.

Additional resources: This project is released in the midst of an important national discussion about civic engagement. On our Web site, therefore, we recommend many other resources to you. Especially noteworthy are efforts of the Pew Charitable Trusts (<u>www.pewtrusts.com</u>), the reports of the Saguaro Project at Harvard University (<u>www.bettertogether.com</u>), the Kettering Foundation (<u>www.kettering.org</u>), the Independent Sector's push for collaboration (<u>www.indepsec.org</u>), and the Harwook Institute (<u>www.theharwoodgroup.com</u>).

We agree with the person who said at one of our focus groups that life is "a balance of responsibilities and rights. You have rights as a citizen, but you have responsibilities to your community, too."

With that in mind, here are our 68 recommendations:

6 Action steps
that work for everyone

Simple yet powerful ways to truly change Illinois

ACTION:

RATIONALE:

1. Ask people to be involved.

A big difference between nonparticipants and participants in local communities is that nonparticipants often are not asked to help. 32% of those polled said they would be more involved if they were asked. The power of the personal invitation is enormous. Also use newsletters, Web sites, and community bulletin boards to make it easy to identify ways to be involved.

2. Ask for a limited amount of time.

The biggest barrier to participation is pressure people feel due to job and family obligations and responsibilities. So make your request seem reasonable – a specific duration of time and number of hours.

3. Teach civic skills.

People evidently feel intimidated; 23% do not know how to get involved. So they need not only to be asked, but to be told, perhaps step by step, exactly what to do, whom to write, where to go, whom to call.

4. Appeal to people with reasons for which most people get involved.

Some of the main reasons people get involved are to to improve their community, to be with people they like (fellowship) and with those who share their ideals, and to influence policy.

5. Remember the power of faith-based motivation.

35% of people become engaged in response to their faith. Some limit their activity to their place of worship. So extend collaboration to places of worship and faith-based organizations, and help them make connections to other community needs.

6. Also remember the power of corporate commitment.

Many people are engaged through their job. So make such opportunities easier by encouraging employees to join professional organizations, volunteer their time, and make contributions to good causes. Our research shows that the more committed a business is to community involvement, the more involved their employees will become.

10 Things individuals can do

ACTION: RATIONALE:

1. Vote.

While 82% of those surveyed report voting in the last national election, only 57% reported always voting in local elections. What happened in Florida last fall should remind us of how important it is to go to the polls.

2. Stir the pot. Dare to ask questions.

51% of those surveyed say they got involved to learn more about the community. Some things never get done because no one challenges the system. You can write, call, send e-mail, or attend meetings and dare to ask questions that your believe a lot of people want to ask. Dare to ask the tough questions of community leaders.

3. Attend community meetings on issues of importance to you.

Meetings are a great way to get to know others who share your concerns. 23% of those surveyed said they didn't know how to get involved. Attending meetings is one way, but only 29% report going to meetings of neighborhood groups.

4. Invite a friend; bring a friend.

Studies show that people are more likely to get and stay involved when they are asked personally. 32% of those who are not involved attribute it to the fact that they have never been asked.

5. Pick up your phone or your pen and make your voice heard.

Send letters to your legislators and the media expressing your point of view. 34% of those surveyed report having contacted a state or local official, while only 9% have written a letter to a magazine or newspaper. Most elected officials will say they receive only a handful of letters on any given issue. Your letter matters. Officials' addresses and e-mail addresses are available in libraries and many Web sites.

6. Identify your own talents and interests.
You don't have to do everything.

Whether you are good at analyzing policy, interacting with people, making posters, or baking cookies, everyone has something valuable to contribute. Yet 13% feel they lack the necessary skills to get involved. And remember most people are selective in how, when, and where they get involved. So choose carefully. But choose something!

ACTION:	RATIONALE:
7. Civic participation is a learned behavior.	Make opportunities to involve young adults, students and youth groups in civic activities. The responsibility of child care is cited as an impediment to 26% of the respondents. So find ways to make your kids partners in the community. Some companies have "family days" for the involvement of everyone. If you have children, involve them in discussions of community affairs, and when appropriate, take them to meetings. Children whose parents were involved are more likely to become involved themselves as adults.
8. Learn how to become involved.	From your local library to the United Way to your cable access television screen, your communities are full of resources about activities. Many groups probably have tried and failed to reach you. So look for them. 23% of those surveyed said they didn't know how to get involved. Information is as close as your community calendar. The next time you visit the library or supermarket, look for information on upcoming events.
9. Do something for yourself.	Although 65% of citizens believe that everyone should be involved, people have different reasons for doing so. One of the top three reasons is to meet people or improve your own situation in some way. So be "selfish" by getting involved and doing things for others.
10. Realize that your "informal socializing" is healthy for your community.	For some people, getting together informally with friends and family is their primary way of connecting with other people. Those gatherings provide opportunities for discussion of community needs and politics, and that strengthens our democracy. Studies prove it. So get together!

10 Things leaders can do

ACTION:

RATIONALE:

1. **Teach people how to become involved; teach them how to use "civic skills".**

Many people don't know how to become involved or say they don't have the necessary skills. So don't assume people have civic skills or know how to reach their elected officials or sign up to volunteer. Be creative. Reach out. Some people are waiting to be taught.

2. **Conduct forums for dialogue and conversation as a routine step in solution development.**

13% of those polled don't feel they are part of the community, and 9% say they don't participate more because they don't feel welcome. Forums can be casual informational meetings in neighborhoods and homes.

3. **Emphasize public listening more than a formal public hearing when possible.**

All too often, a public hearing is merely an event that satisfies a legal condition for making a decision. Such occasions should be opportunities for people to express themselves. Leaders should listen, then determine specifically about how they will respond to citizens' concerns. Then they must do what they promised to do.

4. **Exploit technology to impart information and encourage such audience participation as cable television programming, telephone call-in, or cyber-town hall meeetings.**

26% report they know too little about the issues, 17% are often not involved because of poor health, and 9% are without transportation. For lots of people, new technology is a primary means of interacting. And 53% watch or listen to a call-in show at least weekly.

ACTION:	RATIONALE:

5. **Be an active listener.**

Some people do not feel heard even when they do show up. They say their efforts do not make a difference, and 30% of those surveyed believe a small number of people control their community.

6. **Publicize efforts to solve community and neighborhood problems that affect people where they live and work.**

19% say the reason they don't participate more is that local politics and community affairs have nothing to do with the important things in life. You have to make the connection for them.

7. **Establish policies that make it easier for employees or constituents to volunteer.**

Research shows that the more an employer shows a commitment, the more an employee contributes money and volunteers time.

8. **Make it clear in many ways how citizens can contact officials in order to get involved or express an opinion.**

This reinforces community interaction, rather than passivity, dependence, and isolation. Advertising studies indicate that when you're tired of putting out a message, the public may just be starting to hear your message.

9. **Conduct asset inventories (such as youth, seniors, etc.) rather than problem inventories to focus you vision on success.**

Every community already has human assets. Focus on people's abilities to solve problems, not to be problems.

10. **Involve diverse constituents.**

View diversity as an opportunity, publicizing and celebrating the many attributes of constituent groups and sectors. Our state is getting more diverse, and leaders have to work at inclusivity.

8 Things places of worship should encourage

Places of worship – churches, congregations, synagogues, mosques – are institutions with members who are among other things (employers, mothers, husbands, doctors, etc.), citizens. Places of worship can be places where people are provided opportunities to enhance and strengthen their responsibility to be good citizens.

Two rationales dominate this list of suggestions: Many people don't know how to get involved, and many are not asked.

Also, keep in mind that one's religious faith often motivates people to become involved:

ACTION: RATIONALE:

1. ***Appoint, hire or find a volunteer coordinator for your church.***

2. ***Establish relationships with groups and organizations such as women's shelters, tutoring programs, and Bread for the World, which need volunteers. Make a list of organizations and encourage members to volunteer. Encourage friends to volunteer together.***

A primary reason people volunteer is to be with people they like.

3. ***Create a child care cooperative, making church facilities available, providing parents with an opportunity to volunteer for something or to gather with other parents to talk about education in their community.***

Lack of child care is a major barrier to participation for 26% of parents.

4. ***Sponsor a gathering, get a speaker, explore themes such as diversity (cultural, social and religious diversity as well as diversity of opinions), provide people with the opportunity to discuss how diversity affects their lives and communities.***

A new national benchmark study on civic engagement identifies diversity as one of the major opportunities for new forms of civic engagement.

ACTION:	RATIONALE:
*5. **Provide facilities where members can volunteer, e.g., establish a "cooking for the homeless" program in your place of worship or provide transportation so that members can visit prison inmates (some prison systems provide opportunities for tutoring as well).***	People volunteer to help their communities and for humanitarian purposes. Sometimes they just need a place to do it or a way to get there.
*6. **Provide legislative advocacy or information opportunities. Highlight important pieces of legislation in which members might be interested. List the addresses and phone numbers of those who should be contacted to express an opinion about an issue.***	This suggestion may depend upon the doctrines and principles of your place of worship. But many people are motivated by their faith and say they don't know enough about issues.
*7. **Sponsor a visit by community, civic, social service professionals, or elected officials.***	As a place of worship, you already have one of the places where people are most likely to get involved. But many don't know enough about issues or don't know how to get involved beyond the church. Bring people together.
*8. **Establish a social concerns committee to encourage all of the above and think of others.***	The number one motivation for people to get involved is to make their community a better place.

10 Things people in the business/private sector can do

ACTION:

RATIONALE:

1. ***Adopt company policies that make it easier for parents to attend their children's functions, and identify opportunities for "family volunteering" events – in which the whole family can get involved.***

Youth-related activities are a main form of civic engagement for adults.

2. ***Encourage your employees to make donations to workplace campaigns.***

Corporate support makes it more likely that employees will donate time and money.

3. ***For parents with children, allow flexible working hours so that their work schedules are more in line with school schedules.***

Despite great changes in the workplace and in families, our society still operates as if two models can coexist independently: the 8-to-5 business hours and the 8:30-to-3 school hours. Surely, schools and businesses could work in better harmony.

4. ***Encourage and pay for participation in business-related and professional associations, locally and nationally.***

For many people, their work IS their life. 28% of our sample belong to a professional organization already, and 9% are active members of a local business or professional group. Encourage more of what people already are doing.

ACTION:	RATIONALE:
5. Make it easy for your employees to contribute to the United Way and other local charities, through payroll deduction if possible. Encourage them to participate and set company goals for participation.	Many people say they don't know how to get involved or that they were never asked. Some said their employers' encouragement led them to give. The company goal lets your employees know that you are concerned about their community.
6. Encourage employees to take walks or do physical exercise and offer them the time to do it, such as at lunchtime.	This lets employees know you are concerned about their overall health and well-being. The number of health clubs is growing rapidly and has the third highest membership in our study, so encouraging workouts on "company time" is good for everybody.
7. Understand different approaches to civic engagement taken by people of different generations.	Some younger people are more technology oriented, and some older people limit themselves to making contributions and watching the news. Build on what people are already doing and respond to how younger people like to get involved.
8. Encourage employees to get involved in a community activity or organization, and give them flexibility in their work schedules to allow it.	Many say the pressures of work and time prevent them from getting involved. So use company newsletters, bulletin boards, verbal encouragement, and leaders' examples to make it known that community service is important. A sustained effort is preferable to a one-time announcement.

ACTION:	RATIONALE:

9. ***Endorse employee requests to scoordinate activities such as Toys for Tots, blood drives and local festivals.***

88% donated food, toys, or clothing within the past year. Hop aboard this bandwagon.

10. ***Provide informal socializing opportunities for employees and provide friendly spaces for such interaction.***

For one of every 10 people, informal socializing is their primary form of social connection. So employers should encourage it at the workplace as a healthy form of civic engagement. That time spent chatting may be valuable to the person's health, your community's development, and your employees' overall job satisfaction. It would also provide settings where one person can ask another person to become involved or talk about community issues and problems.

10 Things people in the public/ government sector can do

ACTION:

RATIONALE:

1. Build on the civic pride in your community – be positive and assertive.

Every public official hears criticism. But 83% of Illinoisans rate their community as an excellent or good place to live, and 79% think most people in their communities have civic pride. Tell people this, and say it's time to put that pride to work instead of dwelling on the criticism.

2. Be a teacher and promoter of civic skills.

A number of people say they do not know how to get involved – write a letter, attend a meeting, participate in a public forum. Do not assume that people know – and don't assume they know how to get in touch with you or other leaders.

3. Provide leadership training as part of the civic-skill building process.

Our form of government depends upon future generations of leaders coming along. Teaching civic skills to children, teenagers, young adults and adults will help develop the leaders of the future. Work with schools and civic groups to identify and promote civic skills.

4. Make it easier for citizens to register to vote.

Perhaps move the registration deadline closer to election day, or allow people to vote on Saturdays. What is so sacred about Tuesday?

5. Get up to speed technologically.

Part of your younger audience is most engaged in technology-based activities. If you want to reach them, you can probably do so with Web sites.

6. Support an Illinois television channel like C-SPAN to track the actions of Illinois state government.

Not enough Illinoisans know what's really happening in state government. Many Illinoisans already are watching C-SPAN regularly, and television is the number one source of news in Illinois.

ACTION:	RATIONALE:
7. ***Foster more relation-ships with businesses, nonprofit organiza-tions, schools, civic organizations, and places of worship****.*	50% believe there is shared power in their community, but 30% believe a small group is in control. Attack this negative attitude with outreach.
8. ***Commit to hosting at least one town hall meeting per quarter****.*	A significant number of people do attend such sessions, and atten-dance would probably increase if people are personally asked to attend. But only about half the respondents said their community has a local forum of some kind.
9. ***When you are with groups, tell citizens the importance of ask-ing others to contact you and other com-munity leaders.***	Of all the people who contacted a public official, four in 10 said some-one had asked them to do so. With civic engagement, there is rarely a substitute for personal contact or a personal suggestion to do some-thing.
10. ***Participate in your statewide associations.***	Many people in Illinois already do. A primary general motivation for participating in society is to influence government policy and to make your community better. Another major reason is to be with people who share your ideals. Associations exist for every kind of public offi-cial. So join.

9 Things people in the nonprofit/independent sector can do

ACTION:

RATIONALE:

1. **Ask citizens to support specific events or programs, get their help as board members, or simply ask their advice.**

41% of those citizens who are "unengaged" have not been asked. Conversely, many of those who give time, money, and expertise were asked by someone to contribute. Citizens need to be invited to participate. Who does the asking is also important: tapping into existing social networks is best. Ask existing volunteers to help recruit their friends and co-workers. See if an existing network like a youth or church group might take on a project.

2. **Structure volunteering opportunities to help participants succeed.**

Offering prospective volunteers small projects, with limited time commitments, and mentoring to make them feel comfortable and capable may help to ease apprehension and, over time, might lead to more involvement. The data also show that potential volunteers want to *believe* that their effort – no matter how big or small – is making a difference.

3. **Utilize untapped potential.**

The work of many community-based organizations has shown that community improvement efforts succeed when impacted populations – youth, older adults, low-income persons, single parents – are part of the process.

4. **Use talk radio as a way to spread the word about the work of your nonprofit.**

Some groups, and particularly nonwhites, rely on talk/news radio as an important source of information.

5. **Invite a religious leader to serve on your board or to help advise on a project.**

Other research indicates that citizens have strong social networks through their church and religious affiliations and are very likely to be involved through these networks.

ACTION:	RATIONALE:
6. *Encourage and recognize employee volunteer involvement and leadership.*	Volunteer activities add value, build camaraderie and relationships among staff, and help employees feel they are making a difference. Short-term projects not related to work can help employees connect with community needs in a different way. The research suggests that employer encouragement does indeed motivate people to participate and volunteer.
7. *Use your office space as a place for meetings of community groups.*	Getting people in the door – even if it's for a different group or issue – helps citizens of all types become more familiar, comfortable, and connected with the work that your nonprofit is doing.
8. *Educate your employees, members, and constituents about public policies related to your issue(s).*	Citizens are involved in issues they care about. By learning how to become active in the policy arena process through your organization (writing a letter about public school funding or a zoning change, for example), they can learn a new skill and add a valuable voice to the policy process. They will also take these skills with them elsewhere in their personal, community, and professional lives.
9. *Find ways to involve youth.*	Not only do they need to be involved, you are giving them valuable skills for the future. Young people are not as involved as other groups in community activities – including those organized and run by nonprofits. Real youth involvement takes work – training, mentoring, skills building and listening.

5 Ways the three major sectors can collaborate civically

ACTION:	RATIONALE:
1. Move beyond partnerships and into true collaboration.	The buzzword used to be "partnerships." Now the trend is to make collaborative efforts more inclusive. The Independent Sector, for example, has an initiative to encourage government, nonprofit, and business leaders to collaborate. See www.independentsector.org for more information.
2. Provide a "safe space" for joint discussions.	Any of the three sectors can call people together . A significant number of people feel alienated from their community. Some people in our study feel nothing would happen as a result of what they think or do. Some officials think they are rarely heard, we have been told. Design a forum in which everyone can share freely their own concerns and interests.
3. Don't invite only the "usual suspects." Look for new suspects. Build relationships.	This is an idea from the Pew Partnership – that new people, organizations, and approaches must be brought into the discussion. A Pew study showed that many leaders do not really believe ordinary citizens have the ability to make a big difference. So Pew emphasizes building relationships over time, not just holding a listening session or having people work together.
4. Promote the concept of interdependence.	There seems to be an organization, publication, or Web site for every cause and interest. While those can be informative and helpful, they can also be a source of factionalization in society.
5. Explore what's already happening in Illinois: a lot! And enter the new Illinois Electronic Neighborhood.	From the "Neighborhood College" in Springfield to the "Common Ground" project in northeastern Illinois to the work of the DuPage Mayors and Managers Conference to the joint efforts of city and suburban mayors, including Mayor Daley, many projects are under way. Go to civic.uis.edu (Illinois Civic Engagement Project) periodically and click on "Illinois Electronic Neighborhood" to get more ideas.

Contents

Acknowledgments

Lending their time to chair our steering committee were Monsignor John J. Egan of Chicago and Thomas L. Fisher, CEO of Nicor, Naperville, who has been an ardent supporter of the United Way. To them we give our thanks as well.

Also deserving of recognition are Valerie Lies and Kristin Lindsey at the Donors Forum of Chicago, who supported our project from the beginning and helped us assemble an outstanding Steering Committee. Those members donated their time and also provided guidance and constructive criticism as we conducted the research and planned the conference. Of special note are the Steering Committee members who helped compile the 68 action steps: Will Burns, Cynthia Canary, Todd Dietterle, Kristin Lindsey, Lynn Montei, Mary Schaafsma.

When crunch time came for the final editing of the report and its release to the public, five of Wojcicki's colleagues at UIS came through: editors Peggy Boyer Long, Maureen McKinney, and Rodd Whelpley; graphic designer Diana Nelson; and graduate assistant Janelle Bandy. Also facing impossible deadlines as the report was being released was Laurie Glenn, senior vice president at Lipman Hearne, Inc., who coordinated the release of the report to the media. She dealt with that complicated task with tenacity.

The partnership between the United Way of Illinois and *Illinois Issues* and their respective networks has been a wonderful example of collaboration among public, private, and nonprofit leaders. We are grateful to all of you who said yes in response to our many requests for support and advice.

Bob Haight, President
United Way of Illinois

Ed Wojcicki, Publisher
Illinois Issues
University of Illinois at Springfield

March 6, 2001

Background on Social Capital and Civic Engagement in the United States

This profile of Illinois is released in the midst of a great American debate. American leaders, citizens, and scholars are engaged in a highly charged debate about civic engagement. Harvard scholar Robert D. Putnam believes that civic engagement is on such a decline that American communities are facing a crisis. Putnam is especially concerned about a drop in "social capital," which he describes as "connections among individuals – social networks and the norms of reciprocity and trustworthiness that arise from them." He raised serious social concerns in an article called "Bowling Alone," published in January 1995 in the *Journal of Democracy*. He said that in almost every measurable way, Americans are connecting less and participating less in their communities, and there has been a steady downward decline for three decades. That article gained widespread attention and sparked numerous responses from the media, from foundations and associations, and from other scholars. Among the responses were:

- The creation of the Saguaro Project at Harvard University. This was a multi-year project that studied Americans' involvement in numerous ways. The project's final report, called *bettertogether: the report of saguaro seminar: civic engagement in America*, was released in December 2000. It included a series of specific recommendations for building social capital in America. See www.bettertogether.org for more information.

- A full-length book by Putnam called *Bowling Alone: The Collapse and Revival of American Community*. Published in 2000, Putnam and many colleagues followed up his 1995 article with extensive research and essentially came to the same conclusion that civic engagement in America is on the decline. He cited four major reasons: pressure of time and money, including the growth of two-career families, which he said accounted for 10% of the cause; suburbanization and sprawl, 10%; electronic entertainment, especially television, 25%; and a "generational change" that accounts for almost half of the decline. Putnam isolated this "generational change" as the most significant independent variable correlated with a decline in civic involvement. He praised "the long civic generation," whose core cohort was born between 1925 and 1930 and "has been exceptionally civic – voting more, joining more, reading more, trusting more, giving more." While praising this group, he says their children – the baby boomers – are less engaged, and the boomers' children are even less engaged.

- A national benchmark survey of civic engagement in 40 American communities. The results were released March 1, 2001. Putnam and colleagues directed this survey.

- Numerous criticisms of Putnam's work and conclusions. Though Putnam has gained national exposure, other scholars have criticized his work in significant ways. Generally, their criticism suggests that society has changed and that people's behavior has changed, but Putnam is ignoring these changes and basing his analysis on the way things used to be.

Some say that Putnam is not asking the right questions or counting everything that should be counted, such as the rise of youth soccer or the rapid increase in the number of self-help groups. Where Putnam sees problems and disengagement, others find that people are very engaged and they feel a "disconnect" between their own experiences and Putnam's portrayal of a society in decline.

- Optimism and hope, not talk of a crisis. Others have looked at the studies of Putnam and his critics and reach different conclusions. "I don't come out of [Putnam's] appraisal nearly so pessimistic or frightened," Brian O'Connell, wrote in a 1999 book, *Civil Society: The Underpinnings of American Democracy.* "I don't think we are in a free fall. In fact, I even see signs that the trends are slowly improving."

- A plethora of programs and initiatives by foundations, national organizations, and local groups. Not all of these emanate directly from Putnam's work, but even a quick search of "civic engagement" and "civil society" on the Internet turns up many ways in the past six years that people have expressed a deep concern about reinvigorating civic engagement and reconnecting Americans to one another in new ways. Some of these got started before the publication of the 1995 "Bowling Alone" article, such as the Points of Light Foundation, some initiatives of the Pew Charitable Trusts and the National Civic League, and Colin Powell's interest in boosting volunteerism in America.

In summary, then, civic engagement is a hot topic at this time for scholars, academics, the media, and people interested in improving their communities. Not everyone agrees with Putnam or his premise, but there is no doubt he has been a catalyst for the widespread discussion about civic engagement.

The State of Civic Engagement in Illinois

This is a presentation of information regarding the current state of civic engagement in Illinois as reported to us by respondents from a random sample of the Illinois public. In this survey and report, we broadly define the term "civic engagement." While we include activities relating to community involvement and political activity, we go beyond this and include such areas as church activity, contributions, discussion of current events and public affairs, and exposure to local news sources. Further, we include relatively new types of engagement such as listening to/watching talk and call-in shows and engaging in relevant technology-based activities. We also include aspects of informal socializing.

For the most part, our investigation into the state of civic engagement in Illinois is limited to local civic engagement. However, we have included some selected activities that, strictly speaking, do go beyond the local level. These activities, as well as our rationale for including them, are noted in the report.

Section I. Civic Engagement Activities

In our presentation of the survey results, we first present a profile resulting from the questions that asked respondents about specific activities. We discovered that these specific activities could be organized into the following eight broad categories of engagement. We thus present our profile according to these forms of activities:

1. Community Involvement Activities (secular)
2. Religious Activities
3. Contribution Activities (secular)
4. Political Activities
5. Discussion of Politics and Current Events
6. News Exposure Activities
7. Technology-Based Activities
8. Informal Socializing

The main departure from this approach comes in the first part of this section, that devoted to community involvement. Before presenting the results of the specific activities asked about, we describe what respondents told us about their general activism and interest in their local community. We also describe what respondents told us about their recent involvement in their community.

ACTIVITY: COMMUNITY INVOLVEMENT

In this section, we first report what respondents told us about their general activism and interest in their local community. Then we describe what respondents told us about their recent community involvement. In this context, we also present information regarding recruitment activity and household involvement.

Finally, we describe the involvement level of the respondents on specific types of community involvement activities. Included in this section is a profile of local volunteering and a profile of local memberships.

General Community Activism and Interest

General Community Activism. Nearly one in 10 (9%) of the respondents reported being "very active" in their community, when asked to consider "any way you are involved in your local community." One-third (35%) reported being "somewhat active," for a total of more than four in 10 (45%) who are *at least* somewhat active. About one-third (32%) indicated they are "not very active," and about one in four (24%) said they are "not at all active."

The level of activism of the respondents is related to reports of how active the respondents' parent(s) were when the respondent grew up. But an even greater relationship is found between the activism of the respondents and reports of how many friends, relatives, and coworkers are actively involved in their community. This suggests that socialization is important but is secondary to the social milieu of the respondent (shared by friends, relatives, and coworkers) in affecting the level of community activism.

General Interest in Local Politics and Community Affairs. Not surprisingly, expressed interest in local politics and community affairs is greater than reported activism. Two-thirds (68%) said they are *at least* somewhat interested, with nearly three in 10 (28%) saying they are "very interested" and another four in 10 (40%) said they are "somewhat interested." About one in five (22%) indicated they are "slightly interested" while only one in 10 (10%) indicated they are "not at all interested."

Community Involvement in the Last Five Years

Community Involvement of the Respondents. Nearly two-thirds (64%) of the respondents reported they have been involved in their community in the last five years. We call these people **the community participants**. Their reports of involvement were given in response to the following question, posed near the beginning of the interview.

> *In the last five years, have you been involved in any activity where you – either alone or with others – provided some kind of volunteer service for a group in the community – or tried to do something about a neighborhood or community issue or problem?*

Another one in seven (15%) said they had wanted to get involved in the last five years but could not. We call these people *the potential community participants*. One in five (21%) had not been involved and did not name an instance in which they wanted to get involved. These are *the community non-participants*.

Involvement Activities of the Participants. We asked the community participants, *"What were the issues or problems you got involved in, or the groups or local causes or projects you gave time to?"* A variety of community activities were identified in response to this question, and we coded up to five types of involvement for each participant. Thus, the items mentioned can be examined either by looking at them in the context of all activities mentioned (percent of "mentions") or by looking at them by the percentage of respondents making each kind of reference. In this report, we will generally focus on the latter.

Nearly half (49%) of the survey respondents mentioned said that they were involved in some sort of **humanitarian type of activity**. This category is the leading form of community action, and constitutes more than one in four (26%) of all activities mentioned. The types of programs that our respondents helped with included Habitat for Humanity, the Salvation Army, shelters for battered women, and soup kitchens. Respondents also reported taking part in a variety of social service programs for the physically and mentally challenged, fundraisers aimed at finding treatment for disease, and a variety of similar activities.

Survey respondents also reported fairly high levels of **neighborhood involvement** (28% of the respondents). These respondents can be found in neighborhood watch programs, block clubs, and organizing community picnics. For one in eight respondents (12%), neighborhood participation has some explicit overlap with a community institution such as local political parties, police agencies, and governing bodies at the county or city level.

The **policy making area** itself is also a frequently mentioned form of community participation (by 21% of the respondents). This policy area includes involvement in school board decisions, local land use policy, and the like. For about one in seven of our respondents (15%), policy making was linked to specific interests, such as neighborhood improvement, school funding, policy preferences influenced by religious conviction, or youth anti-drug programs. Participation through **political campaigns** on behalf of particular parties or candidates was mentioned less frequently (by 9%). Combined, the political and policy categories were mentioned in 16% of the mentions by one-third (32%) of the responding public.

Another important area of community activity includes **youth programs** other than schools (by 25% of respondents). Scouting programs, anti-gang activities, church youth groups, and sports activities for children attracted many of our respondents. Participating directly with the **school system**, such as volunteering to chaperone a dance, read to children, or serve on the school board ranked almost as high as non-school-related youth activities (mentioned by 17%). Not surprising, we found a relationship between involvement in non-school youth programs and participation in school activities.

Potential Involvement Interests of the Respondents. Many of our survey respondents reported that for some reason they could not participate in a community activity. We asked: *"In the last five years, have you wanted to provide some kind of volunteer service for a group in the community, but could not do so?"* We followed up, by asking *"Could you tell me about the group and the service you wanted to provide?"* Separately we asked if there were *"local neighborhood or community issues or problems, or any causes or projects, that you wanted to get involved in but couldn't."*

Among the volunteer services that people couldn't participate in, **humanitarian assistance** ranks highest in the percent of the respondents citing this topic (44%). In terms of neighborhood/community activities that respondents wanted to participate in, humanitarian aid ranked third, mentioned by one in seven (14%) of the respondents.

Youth activities ranks second for volunteer service activities in which respondents wanted to become involved but couldn't (by 24%). Youth programs ranked much lower as a potential neighborhood/community activity (by 4%).

Respondents also said they would have liked to have done more **neighborhood improvement**, as a volunteer service activity (17% of the respondents). This category fared even better as a neighborhood/community activity (by 42% of the respondents).

Respondents also mentioned volunteering with various educational programs (10% of the respondents), their faith communities (by 5%) and in adult recreation activities (by 5%).

Respondents also mentioned that they would like to participate in **public policy** issues as neighborhood/community involvement (43% of the respondents). We understood mentions of land use regulation, school policy, regional development, tax policy, police protection, and other issues requiring governmental intervention as being related to the policy arena. Respondents also expressed interest in participating in **adult recreation** activities (8% of the respondents) and **political campaigns** (by 5% of the respondents).

Community Involvement of Respondent Households

In the interview, we focused primarily on the activities of the respondent. However, a few questions were asked about the community involvement activities of other household members in the last five years.

More than four of 10 respondents (45%) reported that other household members had been involved in their community in the last five years. When these reports are combined with reports of respondents' own involvement, we find that more than one-third (36%) of the respondent households have more than one person who have been involved in the past five years. Respondents are the sole participants in over one-quarter (28%) of the households, and a person other than the respondent has been involved in nearly a tenth of the households (9%). No household members have been involved in about a quarter (27%) of the households.

Who else in the Household Participated? For those who indicated another household member had been involved in their community, we asked who had been involved. It should be noted that many of our respondents listed several other members of the household in giving their responses. Thus, a single respondent may have been giving an account of the activities of several people.

Not surprisingly, spouses and children rank as the most frequently mentioned other household members who have been involved in their community in the past five years. **Spouses** are most frequently mentioned by a clear majority of the respondents (mentioned by 60% of the respondents). **Children**, step-children, or grandchildren rank second in the number of respondents citing them (33%).

Parents, step-parents, or grandparents are in a distant third place (9%). **Siblings** are also mentioned (by 6% of the respondents) as are **extended family** (by 4%) and **roommates or friends** (by 1%).

Activities of other Household Members. We also asked respondents to describe how other household members had been involved. Here, we present the results for all activities mentioned.

More than any other type of activity, **humanitarian assistance** of some sort (mentioned by 38% of the respondents) ranked highest among the activities in which household members participated. **Youth activities** ranked second in terms of the number of respondents (21%) saying that another member of the household joined in this type of action. **Policy-setting** activities also ranked high (by 18% of the respondents). **Religious activities** were also cited frequently (by 16%), about as often as **neighborhood activities** (by 16%). School-related activities, adult recreation programs and political campaigning also received mentions, but from fewer respondents.

Recruitment in the Past Year

Half (50%) of the respondents reported that they were asked *"to get involved with – or give time or service to – any neighborhood or community group, issue, project, or cause in the past year."* And, nearly one-third (31%) reported that they, themselves, had asked others to get involved in the past year.

Combining these recruitment reports, we find that nearly six in 10 (58%) were involved in some kind of recruitment activities in the past year. One in five (22%) of the respondents was asked to get involved and asked others to do so. One in four (27%) was asked to get involved but did not recruit others, while just less than one in 10 (8%) asked others to get involved but was not recruited. More than four in 10 (42%) were not involved in recruitment activities.

Recruitment does appear to be important. For instance, three-quarters (77%) of those who had been asked to get involved in the past year reported they agreed to do so. And, we find that two-thirds (66%) of the community participants (those reporting involvement in the past five years) indicated they were asked to get involved in the

past year compared to about one in four-to-five for both potential participants (24%) and the non-participants (20%).

Who Asked the Respondent to Get Involved? Survey respondents told us that **friends and neighbors** are most responsible for encouraging them to participate in community activities (by 36% of the respondents). Friends were most frequently cited as sources of recruitment (by 23% of respondents). Neighbors were credited by one in eight (13%) of the respondents. Other social relationships, such as relatives, co-workers, classmates, friends of friends, and lay contacts from faith communities were mentioned by less than 5%.

Respondents also credited **community and organization leaders** with encouraging civic engagement (15% of the respondents). Separately, respondents indicated that they responded to solicitations to join or contribute to various organizations (12% of the respondents). **Political party activists and public officials** such as village board members, teachers and agency administrators were cited by about one in seven (14%) of the respondents. Respondents also became active when called upon to do so personally by **spiritual leaders** or some source directly associated with clergy, such as a church newsletter (10% of the respondents).

Specific Community Involvement Activities

We asked about a variety of specific activities in this area. These activities can be placed under the following topics: volunteering; memberships; neighborhood/community activities; and official local board/council activities. (While activities included in this area are predominantly secular in nature, we also include a couple items about volunteering to and membership in religious organizations to round out the local volunteering and membership profiles.)

Volunteering

Respondents were asked whether they had volunteered time to a church, synagogue, temple, or mosque in the past year. They were then asked whether they have volunteered time to six types of secular organizations in the past year – and, if so, whether they volunteered on a regular basis or on an occasional basis. In addition, they were asked whether they volunteered time to any other types of organizations on a regular basis in the past year. So, in total, respondents were asked about volunteering to a religious organization and to seven types of secular organizations.

Nearly two-thirds (66%) reported volunteering time to at least one type of secular organization. This number is about equally split across those reporting one type (22%), two types (22%), and more than two types of organizations (23%).

About four in 10 (42%) reported volunteering time on a regular basis to at least one type of secular organization. Twice as many reported volunteering time on a regular basis to one type of organization (24%) as compared to two types (12%). Further, twice as many reported two types as compared to more than two types (6%).

The average number of types of secular organizations to which respondents had volunteered time in the past year is between one and two (1.5). The average number respondents volunteering time to on a regular basis is somewhat less than one (0.7).

Respondents most frequently volunteer time to religious organizations (churches/syna-gogues/temples/ mosques) and schools followed closely by charity/social service organiza-tions and then youth organiza-tions.[1] Less frequent volunteering is

Profile of Local Volunteering		
Type of Organization	**Any**	**Regular**
Churches/synagogues/temples/ mosques	36%	15%
School/educational institution	37%	14%
Charity/social service	35%	11%
Youth organizations	22%	11%
Civic organizations	14%	6%
Hospital/hospice/nursing home	15%	5%
Arts/cultural organization	10%	4%
Miscellaneous "other" types	—	16%

found for "any civic organizations" (asked after all other specific types); hospitals, hospices, and nursing homes; and arts/cultural organizations. *(See the box above.)*

Volunteer Hours. When asked how many hours per week respondents spend on volunteer activities in their community (including religious, school, and service activities), four of 10 (42%) reported no hours. When these respondents are included, the median number of volunteer hours per week is 1 hour. For the six of 10 who reported volunteer hours, the median number of volunteer hours is 3 hours. Overall, about 40% of these volunteer hours are given to activities specifically related to the respondents' religious faith.

More than six of 10 (63%) respondents spend the same amount of time volunteering as they did one year ago, while twice as many reported they spend less time (24%) compared to more time (11%).

<u>Reasons for Less Involvement</u>. Survey respondents tell us that their **family obligations** (20% of the reasons given), **increased work responsibilities** (17%), and **health and age** (16%) are the primary reasons for reduced volunteer activities. Many of the family concerns revolved around the birth of a child or the illness of an aging parent. About one in 10 (11%) of those who responded to this question said that they had **recently moved**, and so they had not decided how to participate in community life. Almost one in 10 (8%) cited increasing demands from **multiple pressures** at work, home, and other interests. Fewer than one in 20 said they had **become bored, or burned out** with community activities (4%), cited a **lifestyle change –** such as the death of a spouse (3%), or said that a community **problem was solved** (1%).

---

[1] Volunteering to a church, synagogue, temple, or mosque is counted as a "religious activity" when we construct overall activity measures in each area. However, we present the results here to complete our volunteering profile.

Reasons for Increased Involvement. Respondents who said that they are giving more time said they were motivated to do so primarily by their own senses of **civic duty** (25%). Respondents expressed motivations such as these: "I should do more," "I have an interest in my new community," or "I encountered other issues to be involved in."

One in seven (14%) of the respondents who are volunteering more also say they did so because they became more personally **attached to the group**. People in this category said that they developed deeper friendships through associations, felt a deeper commitment to those who benefit from volunteer work, or were called upon by a group to assume a greater role in its functions. Another one in seven (14%) said that they were able to give more community service because their **children had grown** to an age that allowed them more flexibility.

Fewer than one in 10 said they became involved because of their **children's involvement** (7%). The same number (7%) said that they gave more time to the community because they were **retired**, or they had reduced work responsibilities. A similarly small proportion said they became active to distract them from a **lifestyle change**, such as a divorce or death of a loved one (7%). One in 20 (5%) said that they became involved to improve their **health**.

Memberships

Local Memberships. In the section on church activity, respondents were asked whether they are a member of a church, synagogue, temple, or mosque. Later in the interview, respondents were asked a series of questions about memberships in secular organizations. In this section, respondents were asked whether they are members of seventeen kinds of local/community organizations, and, if so, whether they are active members. In addition, they were asked whether they are members of any other type of group/organization that meets or holds activities in their local areas. So, in total, respondents were asked about being a member of eighteen types of local groups/organizations that are secular in nature.

Over 80% (83%) reported being a member of at least one type of secular group or organization. The number of people who reported being a member of one type (22%) and two types (19%) are equally split. Also equally split are the number of people who reported being a member of three types (15%), four types (12%), and more than four types (15%).

Over seven in 10 (72%) reported being an active member of at least one type of secular group or organization. Over one-quarter reported being an active member of one type (27%), while fewer reported being active members of two types (17%) and three or four types (20%). Nearly one in 10 (9%) reported being an active member of more than four types.

Overall, the average number of types of organizations that respondents belong to is between two and three organizations (2.5), and the average number of active memberships is just under two types (1.8).

As seen in the box to the right, the percent of respondents actively involved in any specific type of secular local group/organization ranges a high of more than one-third (36%) to a low of 2%. But, by far, the most frequent type of membership is belonging to a church, synagogue, temple, or mosque.[2] For membership in local secular organizations, the most common type is found for membership in a "group of people sharing a common interest" followed by membership in a sports or health club. Further exploration shows that a variety of types of groups were mentioned by respondents under the rubric of "groups of people sharing a common interest." Some of the more common examples here are book clubs, investment clubs, garden clubs, stamp clubs, and Bible study groups. Other examples here include quilters, singles clubs, retirement clubs, and hunter clubs.

Membership Profile		
Type of Organization	**Any**	**Active**
Church/synagogue/temple/ mosque	67%	45%
Group sharing common interest	36%	31%
Sports/health club	28%	23%
National membership organiz.*	28%	–-
Non-local professional assoc.*	28%	17%
Neighborhood, condo, block assoc.	19%	13%
Sports league/team	14%	11%
Youth service organization	12%	11%
School service group	16%	10%
Labor union	17%	9%
Local business/professional group	13%	9%
Support group	15%	9%
Local seniors organization	11%	7%
Social club/organization	11%	7%
Music/art/drama/literary group	10%	7%
Service club/fraternal lodge	10%	6%
Civic organization interested in betterment of community	6%	5%
Veterans' group	8%	4%
Ethnic/racial/nationality club	5%	4%
Farmers' organization	6%	2%
Miscellaneous "other" local types	—	12%

Non-shaded types indicate secular local types that are included in the "score" for number of local memberships.

The least frequent types of membership are found for being a member of: civic organizations; veterans' groups; ethnic/racial/ nationality clubs; and farmers' organizations. In between are 11 types of organizations, all with total memberships ranging from 10% to 19% of the respondents (and with active memberships ranging from 6% to 13%). The full membership profile is found in the box above.

Non-Local Memberships. Respondents were also asked whether they are a member of a national/state/regional professional society or organization. They were also asked whether they are members of national membership organizations ("that is, ones that don't hold meetings in your local area but you pay dues to and receive, perhaps, a

---

[2] Membership in a church, synagogue, temple, or mosque will be counted as a "religious activity" when we construct our overall measures of activity in each area. But, we provide the results here so that they can be included in our profile of local memberships.

newsletter or member benefits"). For these national membership organizations, respondents were asked to exclude organizations they belong to because of work.

Nearly three in 10 (28%) of the respondents reported being a member of a non-local professional society, with one in six (17%) reporting active membership. And, the same number (28%) reported being a member of a national membership organization. When viewed in the context of the overall group membership profile, these non-local memberships are among the most common types of membership for the respondents.

Neighborhood/Community Group Activities

Respondents were asked about several activities relating to neighborhood and community groups. The following summarizes involvement levels for these activities. (Note that the time period is one year for the first two activities, and about 10 years for the last three activities.)

- Three of 10 (29%) have attended at least one meeting of **a group that deals with neighborhood needs or issues** in the past year. These include meetings of a neighborhood, subdivision, or condo association; a block club; neighborhood watch; or a local meeting of neighbors who get together to discuss common concerns.

- Over one-quarter (28%) have **worked with others to solve a community or neighborhood problem** in the past year.

- Just over one in 10 (13%) have **helped form a new group or organization to try to solve some community problem or work on a community project** during the 1990s/2000s.

- Just over one in 10 (13%) have **served on a board of any organization that deals with neighborhood needs or issues** in the past 10 years.

- Just over one in 10 (12%) have **served on a board of a social service or cultural organization** in their community in the past 10 years.

Official Local Board/Council Activities

Respondents were also asked about two activities relating to their attendance at/participation in official local government boards or councils that deal with community needs or issues (such as a town council, a school board or council, a zoning board, a planning board, and the like.)

- Three of 10 (29%) have attended at least one meeting of **an official local government board or council** in the past year.

- Just over one in 20 (6%) **have served in a non-paid capacity on an official local government board or council** in the past 10 years.

(Note that this activity also overlaps with political activities since it involves aspects of both community and political involvement.)

Two Selected Household Attendance Activities

While nearly all of the specific questions inquired about the activities of the respondent, a couple of the questions asked about attendance of any household member in the past year at: 1) a meeting where the local police were present to discuss local crime concerns; and 2) a meeting at a local school to discuss educational concerns.

We found that one-quarter (25%) of the respondents reported that a household member had, in the past year, attended a meeting on crime, while nearly one-third (31%) reported that a household member had attended a meeting on educational concerns.

Community Town Meetings

Respondents were also asked: "*Some communities make an extra effort to hear the views of people who live in the community – such as having town meetings. Does your community have any kind of process like this?*"

If respondents indicated their communities had made such an effort, they were asked whether they had gone to any of these meetings.

In response to this question, over half (56%) of the respondents indicated their community has such a process. And, of these, one in four (39%) reported they had attended a meeting such as this. Altogether, this amounts to about one in five (22%) of all respondents.

Overall Community Involvement Measure

From all the questions about specific local community activities asked of individual respondents about their own activities, we constructed an overall measure of community involvement. This measure allows us to rank respondents from low to high in terms of their level of overall community involvement activity. This will help us examine relationships between the level of community involvement and other characteristics, such as respondents' attitudes about their community and selected demographic characteristics.

We can also gain a greater understanding of the level of community involvement in the public by profiling the specific activities of respondents at different levels of community activity. We do this by dividing all of our respondents into four groups, approximately equal in size, according to their level of overall community involvement activity. In terms of their community involvement activity, we can call these groups: high; moderately high (mod-high); moderately low (mod-low), and low.

Table I-1 presents activity profiles for our entire sample, as well as for each of our four involvement level groups, on selected community involvement activities.

Table I-1
Profile of Specific Community Involvement Activities
for Total Sample and for Involvement Level Groups

Activity	Total Sample	Community Involvement Level			
		High (25%)	Mod-High (25%)	Mod-Low (25%)	Low (25%)
Respondent involved in community in past five years (open-ended question)	64%	95%	77%	54%	30%
Have been asked to volunteer or get involved – past year	50%	74%	56%	43%	24%
Have asked others to volunteer or get involved – past year	31%	64%	31%	19%	8%
Average number of types of organizations for which respondent volunteers (occasional or regular)	1.5	3.1	1.7	0.9	0.3
Average number of types of organizations for which respondent volunteers on regular basis	0.7	1.7	0.8	0.2	0.0
Average number of local membership types (non-active or active)	2.5	4.8	2.7	1.7	0.7
Average number of active local membership types	1.8	3.9	1.9	1.1	0.3
Attended a meeting of group dealing with neighborhood needs – past year	29%	63%	33%	16%	1%
Worked with others to solve community or neighborhood problem – past year	28%	69%	31%	12%	1%
Helped form group during 1990s/2000s	13%	36%	13%	4%	1%
Served on neighborhood board – past 10 years	13%	34%	14%	3%	1%
Served on board of social service or cultural organization / 10 yrs.	12%	33%	10%	4%	1%
Attend meeting of official board or council – past year	29%	58%	37%	18%	4%
Served in voluntary capacity on official board/council – 10 yrs.	6%	18%	6%	1%	0%

ACTIVITY: RELIGIOUS ACTIVITIES

Questions about religious activities included inquiries about: membership; attendance at religious services; contributions; membership on boards or committees; participation in other groups; and volunteering time to a religious organization.

Membership and Attendance at Religious Services. Two-thirds (67%) of the respondents reported being a member of a church, synagogue, temple, or mosque with more than four of 10 (45%) reporting active membership. Six of 10 (62%) reported attending religious services at least monthly, and nearly half (47%) reported attending weekly.

Other Activities. Other activities inquired about include the following. (Except for being a board member, the time period asked about is the past year.)

- About seven of 10 (72%) have **contributed money** to a church, synagogue, temple, or mosque in the past year. (Hereafter, we will refer to these as "churches/temples" or as "religious organizations.")

- About one in five (21%) have been **a member of a board or committee in a church/temple in the past three years**, with the vast majority reporting active membership (19%).

- Aside from serving on boards or committees, one-third (34%) have **participated in "any other group" at their church/temple** in the past year, with one in three (29%) reporting active participation.

- Over one-third (36%) have **volunteered time** to a church/temple in the past year, with 15% reporting they volunteered on a regular basis.

Overall Religious Activity Measure

From all the questions about specific religious activities asked of individual respondents, we constructed an overall measure of religious activity. This measure allows us to rank respondents from low to high in terms of their level of overall activity in this area. This will help us examine relationships between the level of religious activity and other characteristics, such as selected demographic characteristics of the respondents.

We can also gain a greater understanding of the level of religious activity in the Illinois public by profiling the specific activities of respondents at different levels of religious activity. We do this by dividing all of our respondents into four groups, approximately equal in size, according to their level of overall religious activity. In terms of their religious activity, we can call these groups: high; moderately high (mod-high); moderately low (mod-low), and low.

Table I-2 presents activity profiles for our entire sample, as well as for each of our four involvement level groups, on selected religious activities.

Table I-2
Profile of Specific Religious Activities for Total Sample
and for Religious Involvement Level Groups

Activity	Total Sample	Religious Activity Level			
		High (25%)	Mod-High (25%)	Mod-Low (27%)	Low (23%)
Member of church, synagogue, temple, or mosque	67%	100%	95%	54%	14%
Active member of church/temple	45%	97%	77%	5%	0%
Attend religious services at least monthly	62%	100%	96%	46%	2%
Attend religious services at least weekly	47%	94%	73%	20%	0%
Contributed money to church/temple in past year	72%	99%	97%	83%	0%
Active member of board/ committee of church/temple – past 3 years	19%	67%	8%	0%	0%
Active participation in another group at religious organization	29%	93%	23%	0%	0%
Volunteer to religious organization (occasional or regular) – past year	36%	86%	40%	14%	1%
Regular volunteer to religious organization – past year	15%	49%	8%	2%	0%

ACTIVITY: CONTRIBUTION ACTIVITIES (SECULAR)

Questions about secular contribution activities included inquiries about: contributions of money to local charitable organizations; contributions of food, clothing, or toys to needy families or local charities; and contributions of blood. In addition, we include a description of monetary contributions to local religious organizations in conjunction with the discussion of monetary contributions to local charities.

Humanitarian contributions. In the past year, nearly three-quarters (73%) of the respondents reported giving money to a local charitable organization (secular). This is very similar to the percent who reported contributing to a religious organization (72%). It is interesting to view these contribution reports in combination. Altogether, nearly nine of 10 respondents (87%) reported monetary contributions to either a local charity or church/temple while nearly six of 10 (58%) reported a contribution to both.

Also in the past year:

▪ Nearly nine of 10 respondents (88%) reported donating food, clothing, or toys to a needy family or charitable organization.

- About 15% reported donating blood.

Public Radio/Television Contributions. Just over one-quarter (27%) reported contributing money to a public radio or television station in the past year.

Overall Contribution Activity Measure

From all the questions about secular contributions asked of individual respondents, we constructed an overall measure of contribution activity. This measure allows us to rank respondents from low to high in terms of their level of overall activity in this area. This will help us examine relationships between the level of local, secular contribution activity and other characteristics, such as selected demographic characteristics of the respondents.

We can also gain a greater understanding of the level of local, secular contribution activity in the Illinois public by profiling the specific activities of respondents at different levels of contribution activity. We do this by dividing all of our respondents into three groups, according to their level of overall contribution activity. We can call these groups: high, moderate, and low in terms of their level of contribution activity. The high and low groups are both about 25% of the sample, while the moderate group is about half the sample. (The division of the sample into three rather than four groups was determined by the distribution of scores on the overall contribution measure.)

Table I-3 presents activity profiles for our entire sample, as well as for each of our three involvement level groups, on selected contribution activities.

Table I-3
Profile of Specific Contribution Activities for Total Sample
and for Contribution Level Groups

		Contribution Activity Level		
Activity	Total Sample	High (23%)	Moder-ate (51%)	Low (26%)
Contribution of money to either local charity or church/temple	87%	100%	96%	57%
Contribution of money to local charity (non-church/temple)	73%	97%	91%	18%
Contribution of money to both local charity and church/temple	58%	83%	71%	11%
Contribution of food, clothing, or toys – past year	88%	100%	96%	61%
Contribution of blood	15%	24%	18%	1%
Contribution to / membership in public television/radio station	27%	100%	8%	0%

ACTIVITY: POLITICAL ACTIVITIES

The kinds of political activities asked about include the range of activities identified in established research in this area: voting; partisan and campaign-related activities; interest group-related activities; contact with public officials and the media; official local government activities; petition-related activity; and protest activity. We also asked some questions about whether the respondent had ever – or ever thought about – running for public office.

Moreso than in other areas, many of the specific activities inquired about here go beyond the local level, strictly speaking. However, we included some of these because, even if the activity was conducted for a national-level issue or candidate, it probably occurred locally and put the citizen in contact with other citizens. In other cases, the activity is a conventional way of measuring that aspect of political activity (such as voting).

Voting Activity. Respondents were asked whether they are registered to vote; whether they voted in the last national election; and how frequently they vote in their local elections.

Nine of 10 (90%) reported they are registered to vote. About eight of 10 (82%) reported they voted in the last national election. About two-thirds (68%) reported they vote in most or every local election, while well over half (57%) reported they vote in every local election. About one in seven (13%) reported they vote in local elections "some of the time" or "only a few times" while nearly one in five reported they never vote in local elections.

It should be noted that these voting percentages are higher than the official turnout percentages that are reported. Over-reports of voting activity are common in survey research and can be attributed, at least in part, to a social desirability bias (see, for instance, the finding on how many believe it is a citizen's duty to vote.) We believe this bias is more applicable to voting than to our other questions about involvement. Furthermore, recent research suggests that official turnout estimates are under-estimates of the percentage of the public who is actually eligible to vote.

Partisan and Campaign-Related Activities. About one in six (18%) indicated they attended a candidate forum, debate, or information night in the past year while about one in six indicated they attended a campaign rally or speech (16%).

About one in six (18%) said they contributed money to a party or candidate in the past year. Nearly one in 10 (9%) indicated they actively worked for a party or candidate in the past year, and one in 20 (8%) is a dues-paying member of a political club or organization (with 4% being active members).

Interest Group-Related Activities. About one in seven (15%) reported giving money to a political action committee (PAC), interest group, or political cause in the past year. One in 10 (10%) said they are a member of a lobbying organization or an organization promoting a cause, with 6% reporting active membership.

Contact with Public Officials and Media. Two questions were asked concerning contact with state and local public officials and with the media.

One-third (34%) indicated they had contacted state or local public officials (or a member of their staffs) on a matter that concerned them in the past year. About one in 10 (9%) had done so in terms of writing a letter or an e-mail to a newspaper or magazine in the past year.

Of those who had contacted a public official, four of 10 (39%) said they had been asked to contact the official by a group. Of those who wrote to the media, one in five (19%) said he or she had been asked to make the contact by a group.

Official Local Government Activities. (See the results presented in the section of community involvement activities.)

Petition-Related Activity. Over one-third (36%) of the respondents indicated they signed petitions in the past year about a matter that concerned them. One in 20 (5%) indicated that they had circulated such petitions in the past year.

Protest Activity. In the past two years, just over one in 20 (6%) had participated in any protest, march, demonstration, or rally on some national, state, or local issue – excluding a strike against his or her employer.

Running for Public Office. In a few questions not usually asked in a survey of the general public, we asked respondents whether they had ever run for public office, and if not, whether they had ever thought about running.

About one in five (21%) respondents had either run for office or thought about running. One in 20 (5%) told us he or she had actually run for public office, and another one in six (16%) told us he or she had thought about running. So, about one in five (22%) of those who had ever thought about running had actually done so. (Note that this item was not included in the overall political activity measure discussed below.)

Overall Political Activity Measure

From all the questions about specific political activities asked of individual respondents, we constructed an overall measure of political activity. This measure allows us to rank respondents from low to high in terms of their level of overall activity in this area. This will help us examine relationships between the level of political activity and other characteristics, such as selected demographic characteristics of the respondents.

We can also gain a greater understanding of the level of political activity in the Illinois public by profiling the specific activities of respondents at different levels of political activity. We do this by dividing all of our respondents into four groups, approximately equal in size, according to their level of overall political activity. In terms of their political activity, we can call these groups: high; moderately high (mod-high); moderately low (mod-low), and low.

Table I-4 presents activity profiles for our entire sample, as well as for each of our four involvement level groups, on selected political activities.

Table I-4
Profile of Specific Political Activities for Total Sample
and for Political Activity Level Groups

Activity	Total Sample	Political Activity Level			
		High (25%)	Mod-High (25%)	Mod-Low (28%)	Low (22%)
Registered to vote	90%	98%	97%	95%	71%
Voted in last national election	82%	97%	93%	88%	44%
Vote in local elections every time	58%	86%	71%	64%	3%
Vote in local elections most of the time or every time	69%	95%	84%	74%	15%
Attended candidate forums, debates, voter nights – past year	18%	47%	16%	6%	1%
Attended political campaign rallies or speeches – past year	15%	44%	12%	5%	0%
Actively worked for party or candidate – past year	9%	26%	6%	2%	0%
Contributed money to party or candidate – past year	18%	52%	18%	4%	0%
Dues-paying member of political club or organization	6%	18%	3%	2%	1%
Active dues-paying member of political club or organization	4%	12%	2%	0%	1%
Contributed money to PAC or interest group – past year	15%	47%	10%	2%	0%
Member of lobbying organization or organization promoting cause	9%	28%	6%	4%	0%
Active member of lobbying organization/cause organization	6%	18%	4%	2%	0%
Contacted state or public official (or staff) – past year	34%	70%	49%	13%	1%
Written letter/e-mail to newspaper or magazine – past year	9%	23%	10%	3%	0%
Signed petition – past year	34%	63%	48%	25%	8%
Circulated any petitions – past yr.	5%	12%	9%	0%	0%
Served on official local board/ council /non-paid – past 10 yrs.	6%	19%	6%	0%	0%
Attend any meetings of official local board/council – past year	29%	61%	32%	20%	2%
Participated in protest, march, demonstration – past 2 years	6%	19%	4%	1%	1%

ACTIVITY: DISCUSSION OF POLITICS AND CURRENT EVENTS

Near the very beginning of the interview, respondents were asked how frequently they discuss "local politics and current affairs" with others. Later in the interview, respondents were asked how frequently they discuss "political issues or problems" with three types of people: immediate family; friends and neighbors; and co-workers. (Note that these last three questions are not limited to discussion of local politics. However, the interpersonal context of the questions is local.)

In response to the early general question, one in five (20%) respondents reported he or she discusses local politics or community affairs nearly every day (with 8% of these saying every day). More than one-third (36%) said once or twice a week, and nearly the same number (34%) said less than once a week. About one in 10 (10%) said never.

Discussion of politics with immediate family members is slightly more frequent than discussion with co-workers. (See the box at the right.) This, in turn, is somewhat more frequent than discussion of politics with friends and neighbors. Altogether (across all three types), half (50%) of the respondents reported discussing politics several times a week,

Frequency of Political Discussions Sorted by Types of People		
Frequency discuss politics with ...	**Several/ week**	**Weekly**
Immediate family members	28%	51%
Co-workers	24%	46%
Friends and neighbors	19%	43%
With any of the three types*	50%	66%

*Most frequent response for discussion with any of the three types; if there was more than one "weekly" response, this was coded as "several times a week"

and two-thirds (66%) reported discussing politics at least weekly.

In another interesting question, respondents were asked, "*What do you usually do when you are with people who start talking about local politics?*" About half (53%) of the respondents reported they usually give their opinions, and another one-third (32%) reported they give their opinions once in a while. About one in 10 (12%) reported he or she usually listened, and a few (3%) reported they hardly listen to the discussion. (Note that this item was not included in the construction of the overall discussion measure discussed below.)

Overall Measure of Discussion of Politics and Current Events

From the questions about specific discussion activities asked of individual respondents, we constructed an overall measure of discussion of politics and current events. This measure allows us to rank respondents from low to high in terms of their level of overall activity in this area. This will help us examine relationships between the level of political discussion and other characteristics, such as selected demographic characteristics of the respondents.

We can also gain a greater understanding of the level of political discussion in the Illinois public by profiling the specific activities of respondents at different levels of political discussion. We do this by dividing all of our respondents into four groups, approximately equal in size, according to their level of overall political discussion. In terms of their political discussion, we can call these groups: high; moderately high (mod-high); moderately low (mod-low), and low.

Table I-5 presents activity profiles for our entire sample, as well as for each of our four involvement level groups, on selected discussion activities.

Table I-5
Profile of Specific Discussion Activities for Total Sample
and for Level of Political Discussion Groups

Activity	Total Sample	Discussion Activity Level*			
		High (18%)	Mod-High (21%)	Mod-Low (34%)	Low (27%)
Discuss local politics and current affairs every day	9%	47%	1%	0%	0%
Discuss local politics and current affairs at least nearly every day	20%	100%	6%	3%	0%
Discuss local politics and current affairs at least once a week	56%	100%	100%	43%	9%
Discuss politics with family, relatives, friends, co-workers more than once a week	50%	97%	94%	39%	0%
Discuss politics with family, relatives, friends, co-workers at least weekly	66%	100%	99%	76%	6%

*Because of the distribution of scores, the sizes of the four involvement groups are only approximately equal.

ACTIVITY: NEWS EXPOSURE

Respondents were asked about their exposure to local news through several traditional media sources. They were also asked several questions about a rather new form of news, namely talk and call-in shows. And, we asked about watching C-SPAN, a non-local public affairs television channel but one that is generally available across the state.

Exposure to Traditional Media Sources. Respondents were asked how frequently they attend to three traditional sources of news. More specifically, they were asked how frequently they: 1) read the newspaper; 2) watch local news on television; and 3) listen to the news on the radio.

As seen in the box at the right, watching local news on television daily is more frequent than listening to news on the radio. Listening to news on the radio daily, in turn, is more frequent than reading the newspaper daily. If we look at those

Frequency of News Exposure Through Traditional Sources

News Source	Daily	At least every few days	Not usually
Television	72%	85%	9%
Radio	60%	70%	25%
Newspaper	50%	70%	12%

who attend to these sources at least every few days, watching local news on television is again the most frequent. But here, reading a newspaper is on par with listening to news on the radio. At the other end of the scale, the percentage who do not usually listen to news on the radio is more than double that for the other two sources.

Exposure to Talk and Call-in Shows. In addition to asking about traditional news media sources, respondents were asked how often they watch or listen to a talk show or call-in show on the radio or TV "that deals with news or public affairs." If respondents watch or listen, they were asked whether they had ever called in to such a show.

Nearly four of 10 (38%) respondents reported watching or listening to this type of show several times a week, and just over half (53%) reported doing so at least weekly. Just over one in 10 (12%) reported watching/ listening less often, and one-third (33%) indicated never watching or listening. Of those who said they watched or listened, one in five (22%) said he or she had attempted to call in to one of these shows. This amounts to one in seven (14%) of all respondents.

Frequency of watching C-SPAN. While not local in orientation, we also asked how often respondents watched C-SPAN because it is the one television channel devoted to public affairs that is available across the state. (However, because it is not local, we did not count the responses in the overall news exposure score.)

About one in seven (13%) said he or she watched C-SPAN several times a week, while about one in five (22%) said he or she watched it at least weekly. The same number (22%) said they watch it monthly, while about half (54%) indicated they generally do not watch it.

Overall Measure of News Exposure

From all the questions about specific news exposure activities asked of individual respondents, we constructed an overall measure of news exposure activity. This measure allows us to rank respondents from low to high in terms of their level of overall activity in this area. This will help us examine relationships between the level of news exposure activity and other characteristics, such as selected demographic characteristics of the respondents.

We can also gain a greater understanding of the level of news exposure activity in the Illinois public by profiling the specific activities of respondents at different levels of news exposure. We do this by dividing all of our respondents into four groups, approximately equal in size, according to their level of overall news exposure activity. In terms of their news exposure activity, we can call these groups: high; moderately high (mod-high); moderately low (mod-low), and low.

Table I-6 presents activity profiles for our entire sample, as well as for each of our four involvement level groups, on selected news exposure activities.

Table I-6
Profile of Specific News Exposure Activities for Total Sample
and for Level of News Exposure Groups

Activity	Total Sample	News Exposure Activity Level			
		High (25%)	Mod-High (22%)	Mod-Low (28%)	Low (25%)
Read newspaper daily	50%	73%	59%	49%	21%
Read newspaper at least every few days	70%	92%	80%	68%	42%
Watch local news on television daily	72%	94%	76%	72%	47%
Watch local news on television at least every few days	85%	99%	92%	87%	64%
Listen to news on radio daily	60%	94%	62%	66%	18%
Listen to news on radio at least every few days	70%	98%	79%	78%	27%
Watch or listen to talk/call-in show several times a week	38%	95%	46%	16%	1%
Watch or listen to talk/call-in show at least weekly	53%	99%	85%	30%	7.5%
Ever attempted to call in to talk/call-in show	14%	44%	11%	3%	0%

ACTIVITY: TECHNOLOGY-BASED ACTIVITIES

Particularly intriguing is the extent to which respondents are civically engaged through new technology-based activities. For, if it is true – as some have suggested – that citizens are engaging less in more traditional forms of civic engagement, this is one place to look for new forms of civic engagement.

In this area, we asked about activity that places people in contact with other people as well as activity that is information-seeking in nature.

Interacting with Others. Two types of this technology-based activity involve people interacting with other people: e-mail and chat/discussion-room activity.

Excluding e-mail used for work, nearly half (46%) reported using e-mail at least several times a week, with one-quarter (26%) reporting daily usage. About one in seven (14%) reported less frequent e-mail usage, while one in four (38%) reported never using it.

Very few respondents are participating in chat or discussion rooms where current events are discussed (2% several times a week and 4% several times a month).

Information-Seeking Activity. For information-seeking activity, we asked respondents whether they have ever used the Internet, and, if so, how often they use it as a source for information about current events and public affairs. We also asked how often they had obtained information about local current events and issues from the Internet in the past year. And, we asked whether they had visited Web sites for five selected types of local organizations/groups in the past year.

Seven in 10 (72%) respondents have used the Internet. As a source for information about current events and public affairs, one in six (16%) of all respondents uses the Internet daily, three of 10 (29%) use it at least several times a week, and four in 10 (40%) use it at least several times a month. One in seven (14%) uses it less often, and under half (45%) of all respondents never use it for this purpose.

When asked how often they have obtained information about local current events and issues from the Internet in the past year, four in 10 (39%) of all respondents indicated at least once. One-quarter (25%) said at least three times, and one in six (17%) reported doing so more than five times.

Respondents were also asked whether they had visited five different kinds of locally oriented Web sites in the past year. Of all respondents, about one in four had visited the sites for local schools/community colleges (26%) and local government (24%). About one in seven had visited the sites for a public official (16%) and a local charity (15%). And less than one in 10 (6%) had visited a site for a local civic group.

Across all five sites, four of 10 (40%) have visited at least one of these in the past year, while one in four (26%) has visited at least two of them. Half as many have visited at least three (13%), and half as many again have visited at least four (6%). For those who have visited at least one of these sites, the average number visited is two.

Overall Measure of Technology-Based Activity

From all the questions about specific technology-based activities asked of individual respondents, we constructed an overall measure of technology-based activity. This measure allows us to rank respondents from low to high in terms of their level of overall activity in this area. This will help us examine relationships between the level of technology-related activity and other characteristics, such as selected demographic characteristics of the respondents.

We can also gain a greater understanding of the level of technology-related activity in the Illinois public by profiling the specific activities of respondents at different levels of technology-related activity. We do this by dividing all of our respondents into four groups, approximately equal in size, according to their level of overall technology-based activity. In terms of this activity, we can call these groups: high; moderately high (mod-high); moderately low (mod-low), and low.

Table I-7 presents activity profiles for our entire sample, as well as for each of our four involvement level groups, on selected technology-based activities.

Table I-7
Profile of Specific Technology-Based Activities for Total Sample
and for Technology-Based Activity Level Groups

| Activity | Total Sample | Technology-Based Activity Level | | | |
		High (24%)	Mod-High (25%)	Mod-Low (25%)	Low (26%)
Use e-mail every day (excl. work)	26%	75%	32%	0%	0%
Use e-mail at least several times a week (excluding work)	46%	98%	76%	16%	0%
Ever used Internet	71%	100%	99%	90%	0%
Use Internet as source of info about current events daily	16%	52%	10%	2%	0%
Use Internet as source of info about current events at least several times a week	29%	81%	31%	6%	0%
Used Internet as source of info about local events more than five times – past year	17%	55%	13%	2%	0%
Used Internet as source of info about local events more than twice – past year	25%	71%	26%	5%	0%
Ever used Internet as source of info about local events – past year	39%	92%	55%	12%	0%
Visited Web site for local schools/ community college – past year	26%	68%	33%	4%	0%
Visited Web site for local government in past year	24%	71%	23%	4%	0%
Visited Web site for local official in past year	16%	48%	14%	3%	0%
Visited Web site for local charity in past year	15%	46%	11%	4%	0%
Visited Web site for local civic group in past year	6%	21%	4%	1%	0%
Visited any of the five Web sites for local organizations in past year	40%	97%	54%	12%	0%

ACTIVITY: INFORMAL SOCIALIZING

Two questions were included in the survey to inquire about respondents' level of informal socializing. We have included this category of engagement because informal socialization would seem to present the same kind of opportunity for discussion of civic affairs and issues as do organized activities, such as bowling leagues. In addition, informal socializing would seem to be provide a setting in which the recruitment of others to get involved may be more natural and easy than more formal and/or directed recruitment efforts.

In the first question, we asked respondents, "*How often do you participate in a small group that gets together for socializing or recreation (such as playing cards, meeting for dinner or drinks, going golfing or bowling, and that sort of thing?.*" This activity proved to be a common one, with seven in 10 (70%) saying they do this at least monthly. Nearly half (47%) reported they do this at least several times a month; about one-third (34%) said they do this at least weekly; and over one in 10 (13%) reported they do this several times a week.

In a second question in this area, we asked respondents, *"Some communities have a local coffee shop or bar where people go to relax and visit with others. How often do you go to such a place?"* Over one-third (37%) reported doing this at least monthly; about one-quarter (27%) at least several times a month; nearly one in five (19%) at least weekly; and about one in 10 (10%) several times a week.

Overall Level of Informal Socializing Measure

From the two questions about informal socializing asked of individual respondents, we constructed an overall measure of informal socializing. This measure allows us to rank respondents from low to high in terms of their level of overall activity in this area. This will help us examine relationships between the level of informal socializing and other characteristics, such as selected demographic characteristics of the respondents.

We can also gain a greater understanding of the level of informal socializing in the Illinois public by profiling the specific activities of respondents at different levels of informal socializing. We do this by dividing all of our respondents into four groups, approximately equal in size, according to their level of overall informal socializing. In terms of this activity, we can call these groups: high; moderately high (mod-high); moderately low (mod-low), and low.

Table I-8 presents activity profiles for our entire sample, as well as for each of our four involvement level groups, on selected informal socializing activities.

Table I-8
Profile of Specific Informal Socializing Activities for Total Sample
and for Level of Informal Socializing Groups

Activity	Total Sample	Level of Informal Socializing			
		High (26%)	Mod-High (27%)	Mod-Low (26%)	Low (21%)
Participates in small group that gets together – at least monthly	71%	98%	92%	78%	0%
Participates in small group that gets together – at least several times a month	46%	90%	70%	16%	0%
Participates in small group that gets together – at least weekly	34%	72%	58%	0%	0%
Participates in small group that gets together – more than weekly	13%	30%	19%	0%	0%
Go to coffee shop/bar and visit – at least monthly	37%	98%	33%	9%	0%
Go to coffee shop/bar and visit – at least several times/month	27%	85%	16%	2%	0%
Go to coffee shop/bar and visit – at least weekly	19%	65%	7%	0%	0%
Go to coffee shop/bar and visit – more than weekly	10%	35%	2%	0%	0%

OVERALL CIVIC ENGAGEMENT: A MEASURE

We constructed *a measure of overall, or total, civic engagement*. We did this by adding up the eight overall activity scores for all of the general forms of civic engagement we just described. In doing this, we treated each of the eight forms of activity on an equal par. In other words, we did not evaluate one form of activity as more important than another.

From this measure of overall civic engagement, we can divide the sample into four groups, as we did for most of the eight forms of activity. Similarly, we call these high, moderately high (mod-high), moderately low (mod-low), and low in terms of their overall level of civic engagement activity. Table I-9 presents how these four civic engagement groups fare on each of the overall activity scores for the eight forms of engagement.

Let's offer an example of how to read the information in Table I-9. The basic rule is to read down to see how each civic engagement group does for each of the eight kinds of activity. For instance, 68% of those high in civic engagement also score "high" on civic involvement while 23% of this high civic engagement group are in the moderately high civic involvement group, 7% are in the moderately low civic engagement group, and

only 2% are in the low civic involvement group. The "total sample" column presents similar information for all respondents.

Table I-9
Description of Four Overall Civic Engagement Groups
(Defined by Their Level of Overall Engagement)
in Terms of Their
Levels of Involvement in Eight Categories of Activity

Activity	Total Sample	Overall Level of Civic Engagement			
		High (25%)	Mod-High (25%)	Mod-Low (25%)	Low (25%)
Community Involvement					
High	25%	68%	22%	9%	2%
Moderately High	25%	23%	39%	26%	12%
Moderately Low	25%	7%	30%	34%	30%
Low	25%	2%	9%	32%	56%
Religious Activities					
High	25%	47%	33%	15%	6%
Moderately High	25%	28%	29%	28%	15%
Moderately Low	27%	17%	23%	34%	32%
Low	23%	8%	15%	22%	47%
Contributions (Secular)					
High	23%	46%	28%	15%	3%
Moderate	51%	48%	56%	61%	39%
Low	26%	6%	16%	24%	58%
Political Activities					
High	25%	64%	21%	12%	2%
Moderately High	25%	23%	34%	31%	12%
Moderately Low	28%	12%	36%	29%	32%
Low	22%	0%	8%	28%	53%
Discuss Pol./Current Affrs.					
High	18%	43%	13%	11%	4%
Moderately High	21%	27%	35%	16%	8%
Moderately Low	34%	26%	36%	47%	29%
Low	27%	4%	16%	27%	60%
News Exposure Activities					
High	25%	47%	28%	18%	7%
Moderately High	22%	26%	28%	21%	12%
Moderately Low	28%	19%	30%	33%	31%
Low	25%	7%	14%	28%	50%
Technology-Based Activ.					
High	24%	51%	23%	16%	7%
Moderately High	25%	20%	35%	28%	16%
Moderately Low	25%	18%	22%	29%	32%
Low	26%	11%	20%	27%	45%
Informal Socializing					
High	26%	41%	31%	19%	13%

Moderately High	27%	33%	29%	27%	18%
Moderately Low	26%	22%	26%	35%	21%
Low	21%	4%	14%	19%	48%

One way the information in Table I-9 can be used is in combination with Tables I-1 through I-8 presented earlier. For instance, as we just noted, 68% of those in the high civic engagement group are in the high civic involvement group. The profile in Table I-1 gives us the information to see what this means in terms of how many are doing specific community involvement activities.

Table I-9 shows that there is a strong relationship between our measure of total civic engagement and our overall measures for each of the eight kinds of activity. This is certainly expected, since we created the total civic engagement measure by adding all the eight overall measures together. But there is a less obvious, and more important, point to be made. The information in this table indicates that there is a lot of "picking and choosing," in terms of the eight forms of engagement. If this were not the case, we would find that 100% of those high in total civic engagement are also high on community involvement activity as well as high on every one of the other seven forms of engagement. And, similarly, we would find that 100% of those low in total civic engagement would also be low for every one of the eight forms of activity. This certainly is not the case. The only way that we can get the results presented in Table I-9 is when many people are engaging at different levels across the eight forms of engagement activity.

Section II: Motivations and Barriers to Civic Engagement

Why do people get involved in their community? What prevents them from getting involved? In this project, we attempted to answer this in two different, but complementary, ways.

First, we asked people some open-ended questions. After participants told us how they had been involved in the past five years, we asked them why they had gotten involved in these activities. We also asked all respondents what are the biggest barriers to their being more involved in their local community. And, we asked them what one thing could get them more involved in their community or neighborhood.

Second, we asked community participants (those who reported being involved in their community in the past five years) specific questions about the importance of specific reasons for becoming involved. We also asked all respondents questions about the importance of specific reasons for not being more involved in their community.

Why Participants Have Been Involved

Responses to the open-ended question. Participants in the survey who said that they were active in their communities were also asked: *"what were the issues or problems you got involved in, or the groups or local causes or projects you gave time to?"*

Interviewers recorded these responses in brief dictation and then we organized these verbal replies into 51 detailed categories. Many of our participants cited multiple reasons for their civic activities. The most widely cited of these specific motives for community activity are: neighborhood improvement (by 12% of the responding individuals), for the benefit of youth (by 9%), or because the respondents' own children are involved (by 8%). Respondents also told us that they "had time on my hands" (by 11% of the respondents).

These broad categories were further organized into 11 more general motives. The most regularly mentioned general motivation for these participants is a sense of altruism, or community spirit (by 35%). For instance, survey participants spoke about their sense of "civic duty," or the opportunity "to do good" when asked why they had been involved. References to "a good cause," "to make a difference," or to "return a favor to the community" are also contained in this category.

The second leading general motive for community involvement is to benefit youth (by 17%). Respondents in this category were involved in scouting, youth sports leagues, mentoring programs, and trying to keep children out of criminal activity.

Respondents also tell us that they join community activity to meet people for social interaction (by 15% of the respondents). In addition, respondents cite psychological rewards of participation (by 10%). For example, these respondents tell us that "it feels good to do good."

Respondents also told us that family relationships (by 13% of the respondents) motivate civic participation, as do other prior relationships (by 9%). In the plurality of

these cases, the respondents' children encouraged our survey participants' community activity. Other relationships, such as friends, neighbors, or an acquaintance in an organization, also motivated our respondents' participation. Respondents in this set also said they shared a background with an affected group, that " I grew up there," or that they knew someone who was involved in some kind of activity. Combining the family and acquaintance categories suggests that prior relationships and affiliation accounts for motivating more than one in four (25%) of the community participants in our sample.

Responses to specific selected reasons. Participants were asked about the importance of 11 specific reasons for their decisions to become involved in their community. The percentages for specific reasons range from a high of more than 90% to a low of 8%. The top four specific reasons were all chosen as important by more than six of 10 respondents. In order of importance, these top four are:

1	chance to make the community a better place ……..	93%
2	be with people you enjoy …………………………………	82%
3	work with people who share your ideals ……………..	74%
4	belief that everyone should be involved ……………..	65%

Following these were two reasons which were chosen by nearly half of the respondents: 5) wanted to learn more about the community (52%); and 6) chance to influence government policy (50%). The next two were selected as important by about one-third of the respondents: 7) because of your religious faith (35%); and 8) to make useful contacts (31%). And, the next two were selected by nearly one in four respondents: 9) chance to further job/career (23%); and 10) did not want to say no to someone who asked (22%). The last reason, chosen by less than one in 10, is: might want to run for office (7%). (See the box above for a summary.)

Importance of Selected Specific Reasons for Being Involved in Community

Reason	Percent
Chance to make community a better place	93%
Be with people you enjoy	82%
Work with people who share your ideals	74%
Belief that everyone should be involved	65%
Wanted to learn more about community	51%
Chance to influence government policy	50%
Because of religious faith	35%
Make useful contacts	31%
Chance to further job/career	23%
Not want to say no to someone	22%
Might want to run for office	7%

Further analysis indicates that ***three general reasons for involvement*** underlie the responses to the 11 specific reasons: ***altruism; faith and fellowship; and rational calculation***. These general reasons are in Table II-1 (below) along with the specific reasons that seem to define them the best (called *defining items*). Also presented are items that help define these general reasons but are not as important in this definition (called *secondary items*).

While not specifically asked about, measures for each of these general reasons can be created from the defining items, all of which are specific reasons that were asked about. More specifically, each participant receives a score that represents the average for all the defining items in the respective general area. The score for the general reason can range from 0 to 2 – where 0 represents not important; 1 represents somewhat important; and 2 represents an important reason for involvement. (For a specific reason, "somewhat important" was coded if spontaneously offered by a respondent.)

As illustrated in the average scores for the general reasons that appear in the following table, *altruism is overall the most important reason for involvement* (with an average of 1.37), *followed closely by faith/fellowship* (with an average of 1.23). The averages for both of these general reasons are above "somewhat important." They are basically the equivalents of two-thirds (68%) choosing altruism as an important reason for their involvement and about six in 10 (62%) choosing faith/fellowship as an important reason.

The rational calculation reason is a distant third in importance (with an average of 0.46). The average for this reason is midway between "not important" and "somewhat important." This is the equivalent of nearly one in four (23%) selecting this general reason as an important reason for their involvement.

Table II-1
General Reasons for Involvement
and Specific Reasons that Define Them

Altruism *(Average = 1.37)** *Important to 68%*	Faith and Fellowship *(Average = 1.23)** *Important to 62%*	Rational Calculation *(Average = 0.46)** *Important to 23%*
Defining items	**Defining items**	**Defining items**
Make community a better place	Be with people you enjoy	Make useful contacts
Learn more about community	Religious faith	Further job or career
Influence government policy		Might want to run for office
Everyone should be involved	***Secondary items***	
	Work with people who share ideals	***Secondary items***
Secondary items	*Did not want to say no* *Everyone should be involved*	*Did not want to say no*
Work with people who share ideals		

*Average of "defining items" on scale where: 0 = not important; 1 = somewhat important; 2 = important in decision to get involved. (The "somewhat" response was offered by respondents while "not important" and "important" were categories presented.) Also presented is the percent of respondents who would have to select the general reason as important to obtain the average score.

Why People Are Not More Involved

Responses to open-ended question. Just as we asked about motives for community involvement, we inquired about the barriers as well by asking all survey respondents: *"What are the biggest barriers to your being more involved in your local community?"*

We constructed twelve general categories for the obstacles to community involvement. Survey respondents tell us that their work responsibilities frustrate community involvement more than anything. Three of 10 (30%) of the survey respondents said that long work hours, odd work shifts, and frequent travel frustrate community involvement.

The second leading obstacle to civic engagement, given by one in six (16%) of the respondents, is existing family obligations. Respondents indicated that they "want to spend more time" with family, or that they are too busy participating in the activities of other family members. Closely related is the barrier of caring for a child, elderly, or sick relative (by 9% of the respondents).

Health conditions and age also came up as an obstacle to greater involvement (by 15% of the respondents). Many of these respondents said that they felt "too old" to participate. Several also said they were recovering from an illness and couldn't be involved actively in community programs.

Feelings of social alienation and inadequacy also came up in the responses (by 10% of the respondents). The statements here suggest that these respondents feel like they are outsiders. For instance, these respondents said that they were "too new to town," "don't know what's going on," or that they "can't make a difference" in their communities or with existing organizations.

The responses of these "outsiders" are quite distinct from those who said they "don't like groups," "don't feel like joining," or "want to be left alone" (by 6% of the respondents). Still other comments made reference to community associations being held in low esteem. Several of our respondents said that the groups "are too political" or that "there's nothing going on" (by 7% of the respondents).

Responses to selected specific barriers. All respondents were asked about the importance of 23 selected specific reasons as an explanation for why they are not more involved in their community. For all respondents, the percentages selecting an item range from a high of nearly 60% to a low of less than one in 20 (4%).

The two most important reasons are clearly: time people spend with their families (59%); and time they spend on their jobs (58%). Filling out the top four are two reasons that were each selected by nearly one-third of the respondents: haven't been asked (32%), and "they want too much of our time" (32%).

At the other extreme are four reasons selected by less than one in 10. Three of these were selected by just less than one-tenth: don't feel welcome (9%); don't have transportation (9%); and don't like the people who are involved (8%). At the bottom, chosen by less than one in 20, is: not your responsibility (4%).

The results for all 23 items are found in the box at the right.

Further analysis indicates that **seven general reasons for not being more involved** underlie the responses to these specific reasons. These general reasons, along with their defining items and average scores, are presented in Table II-2 (found below). (These scores were created the same as were the scores

Importance of Selected Reasons for Not Being More Involved in Community

Reason	Percent
Time spend with family	59%
Time spend on job	58%
Haven't been asked	32%
Want too much of your time	32%
Don't know enough about issues	26%
Have to take care of children	26%
Don't know how to get involved	23%
Involved a lot as is	22%
Not relevant to important things that affect life	19%
Can't afford the money it takes	18%
Because of your health	17%
Don't like to join groups	17%
Not interested in getting involved	16%
Groups aren't involved in issues/causes of interest	14%
Have to take care of others (besides children)	13%
Don't have the skills that are needed	13%
Don't feel part of the community	13%
Not worth the time and trouble	13%
Don't think can make a difference	12%
Don't feel welcome	9%
Don't have transportation	9%
Don't like the people who are involved	8%
Not your responsibility	4%

for the general motivation reasons; see the earlier discussion for an explanation.) The scores range from 0 to 2 – where 0 represents not important; 1 represents somewhat important; and 2 represents an important reason for not being more involved.

An examination of the average scores for the seven general reasons show the following.

- **The most important general reason for not being more involved is time pressure due to family and job responsibilities** (avg. = 0.83). The average is equivalent to more than four in 10 (42%) choosing this general reason as an important barrier.

- **The second most important reason is lack of recruitment / knowledge** (avg. = 0.58). For this item, two of the defining items relate to recruitment (haven't been asked, and don't feel part of community) while the other two relate to unfamiliarity with involvement (don't know how to get involved, and don't know the issues.) The average is equivalent to nearly three of 10 (29%) choosing this general reason as an important barrier.

Table II-2
General Reasons for Why People
Are Not More Involved in their Community
and Specific Defining Reasons

1. Family / Job Responsibilities *(Average = 0.83)** *Important to 42%*	2. Lack of Recruitment / Knowledge *(Average = 0.58)** *Important to 29%*
Defining items Time spent with family Take care of children Take care of others Time spent on job	**Defining items** Don't know how to get involved Haven't been asked Don't feel part of community Don't know enough about issues

3. Already Involved a Lot *(Average = 0.48)** *Important to 24%*	4. Rational Calculation *(Average = 0.45)** *Important to 22%*	5. Lack of Resources *(Average = 0.39)** *Important to 20%*
Defining items Involved a lot as it is	**Defining items** Not interested Don't like to join groups Not worth time and effort Want too much time Important things not relevant to politics & community affairs Don't think can make a difference	**Defining items** Don't have skills Don't have money it takes

6. Health / Transportation *(Average = 0.29)** *Important to 14%*	7. No Common Interest / Feeling *(Average = 0.28)** *Important to 14%*
Defining items Health Transportation	**Defining items** Don't feel welcome Don't like people involved No groups interested in issues

_____

*Average on scale where: 0 = not important; 1 = somewhat important; 2 = important in decision to get involved. It should be noted that the only specific reason that is not a "defining item" is: not your responsibility. This is the least-frequent specific reason selected by respondents. Also presented is the percent of respondents who would have to select the general reason as important to obtain the average score.

- ***Three general reasons fall in the middle range of importance: involved a lot as it is*** (avg. = 0.48); ***rational calculation*** (avg. = 0.45); ***and lack of resources*** (avg. = 0.39). We called the second area here "rational calculation" because four of the six defining items suggest a cost/benefit calculation. The remaining two items for this general reason are more general in nature ("not interested" and "not like to join groups"). Defining items for lack of resources are those that point to the lack of skills and the lack of money that are needed to get involved.

The averages for these three general reasons are equivalent to the following percentages choosing each as an important barrier to being more involved in their community: 24% choosing "involved a lot as it is"; 22 % choosing rational calculation; and 20% choosing lack of resources.

- ***Overall, the two general reasons that are found to be least important are: health problems/lack of transportation*** (avg. = 0.29); *and **no common interest or feeling with those who are involved*** (avg. = 0.28). These averages are equivalent to 14% choosing health/transportation problems as an important barrier, and 14% choosing no common interest/feeling as an important barrier.

Reasons for community non-participants. Of particular interest are the barriers to involvement for those who are not involved in their community. In Table II-3, the average scores for the general reasons are presented according to their level of importance for the community non-participants (those who haven't been involved in their community in the last five years). Also presented are the respective average scores for the community participants (those who reported being involved in the past five years). Differences in average scores between the two groups are also presented, with positive differences indicating the reason is more important for non-participants.

Table II-3
General Reasons for Not More Involvement
by Whether Respondent Has Been Involved
in Community in Last Five Years

General Reason	Average for :		Difference*
	Non-Participants	Participants	
Family/job responsibilities	0.79	0.85	-0.06
Lack of recruitment/knowledge	0.75	0.48	**0.27**
Rational calculation	0.60	0.36	**0.24**
Lack of resources (money, skills)	0.52	0.32	**0.20**
Health/transportation problems	0.36	0.25	0.11
No common interest / feeling	0.33	0.25	0.08
Involved a lot as is	0.20	0.64	-0.44

*Positive difference indicates higher average for non-participants. Figures in bold represent the barriers far more important to non-participants than to participants.

The following results are found in this table.

- Two general reasons are the most important for the non-participants (with averages of 0.75 to 0.79): family and job responsibilities, and lack of recruitment/knowledge. However, these two reasons differ in the extent to which they differentiate non-participants from participants. More specifically, non-participants do not differ much from participants in terms of their average scores on family and job responsibilities. But, for lack of recruitment/ knowledge, the barrier is greater for non-participants than it is for participants (as evidenced by the difference in average scores).

- The next two most important general reasons for non-participants are rational calculation and lack of resources (averages of 0.60 and 0.52, respectively). For both of these reasons, the barrier is greater for non-participants than it is for participants – and at about the same level (i.e., same difference in average scores).

- Virtually tied for fifth/sixth positions are the general reasons of: health/ transportation problems and no common interest/feeling (averages of .36 and .33). For these two, the barriers appear to be just somewhat higher for non-participants than they are for participants.

- Not surprisingly, the least important reason for non-participants is "involved a lot as it is." And, again not surprisingly, this reason is the only reason that is a much greater barrier for participants than it is for non-participants.

Table II-4, on the next page, presents similar types of results for the specific reasons asked about. However, here the items in the table are ordered by the difference between non-participants and participants in the percent who identified a reason as being important (with positive differences indicating a reason is more important for non-participants). These results will not be discussed further since they generally reinforce those presented above.

What Would Get People More Involved in their Communities?

We also asked respondents a final open-ended question concerning their community involvement: *"What one thing could get you more involved in your neighborhood or community."*

The most frequent response given to this question was that respondents would participate more if they had **more free time** (given by 25% of the respondents). The responses in this category were vague references to time.

They also said that they would participate more if they were **personally affected** by the outcomes (given by 18% of the respondents). For example, respondents in this category said that they would do more if their neighborhood were affected by a development project, if their jobs depended on some action, or they would in some way benefit individually from social action.

Many respondents expressed a **negative opinion about the political / social system or its leaders** (by 16%). These usually were vague references to a wish to "take politics out" of community affairs or an expression of some grievance against "the political system" or that they did not fee welcomed by community leaders. In one way or another, these respondents said the existing community associations and political leadership had made them feel alienated.

Other respondents said they would participate in community activity **if they felt they could have an effect** (by 11%). Examples here are respondents who said that they would get involved if they knew how, if they had a useful talent, or who said that their participation "would make a difference."

Table II-4
Specific Reasons for Not More Involvement
by Whether Respondent Has Been Involved
in Community in Last Five Years

Specific Reason	Percentage for:		Difference*
	Non-Participants	Participants	
Don't like to join groups	27%	11%	16%
Don't know enough about issues	36%	21%	15%
Important things not relevant	29%	14%	15%
Want too much of your time	41%	26%	15%
Don't feel part of community	22%	8%	14%
Haven't been asked	41%	29%	13%
Don't know how to get involved	31%	18%	13%
Don't have the skills needed	20%	9%	11%
Don't think can make a difference	19%	9%	10%
Groups not into same issues	19%	11%	8%
Can't afford money it takes	23%	15%	8%
Not worth time and trouble	18%	10%	8%
Not interested in getting involved	21%	13%	8%
Because of your health	21%	14%	7%
Not your responsibility	8%	3%	5%
Don't have transportation	12%	7%	5%
Don't feel welcome	9%	7%	2%
Don't like people involved	9%	8%	1%
Have to take care of others	14%	13%	1%
Have to take care of children	25%	27%	-2%
Time spend on job	55%	59%	-4%
Time spend with family	53%	62%	-9%
Involved a lot as it is	8%	29%	-21%

*Positive difference indicates higher percentage for non-participants; the difference percentage may not equal the exact difference in the two columns because of rounding.

Section III: The Seven Civic Engagement Types of People

The results suggest that the Illinois public can be divided into seven types of people, according to their level and types of engagement activities. These seven types, and their respective percentages of the sample, are:

1. **Civic Leaders: Broadly and Highly Engaged (8%)**
2. **Community Activists: Politically Engaged (11%)**
3. **Faith-based Activists: Religiously Engaged (22%)**
4. **Cyber-Activists: Technologically Engaged (16%)**
5. **Informal Socializers (11%)**
6. **Informed Contributors: Passively Engaged (16%)**
7. **The Relatively Disengaged (17%)**

To portray the differing levels and types of engagement activity for these groups, we have constructed an ***Overall Activity Profile for the Seven Civic Engagement Types***. (See Table III-1.) In this Profile, we present the level of total civic engagement and overall level of activity for each of our eight categories of engagement activity. We do this by presenting ***percentiles*** for the total sample and for each of the seven engagement groups. These percentiles ***can be interpreted*** much like we do for college board scores or for report cards on overall school performance issued by the state. For example, a 70th percentile rating means that only 30% of all sample members have higher levels of that activity than does the average member of the group. Similarly, 70% of all sample members have lower levels of activity than does the average member. Thus, groups that have higher percentile scores have higher levels of activity.

In Table III-2, we take this percentile information and rank the seven civic engagement types in terms of their total civic engagement, and in terms of their level of activity in each of the eight activity categories.

We have also constructed a ***Specific Activity Profile for the Total Sample and for the Seven Engagement Types***. (See Table III-3, presented at the end of this section because of its length.) This Profile presents actual percentages of the sample and of each engagement type who are engaged in specific selected activities. In this table, we organize the specific activities into our eight categories of activity. We find this Profile useful for giving clearer meaning to the percentile measures described above.

Table III-1
Overall Activity Profile of the Seven Civic Engagement Groups
[Percentiles of Average Scores on Civic Engagement Activities for Each Group*]

Seven Engagement Types	Total Civic Engagement and Eight Categories of Engagement								
	Total Civic Engagement	Community Involvement	Religious Activity	Contribution Activity	Political Activity	Discussion of Politics & Curr. Affairs	Active Exposure to Sources of News	Technology-Based Activities	Informal Socializing
Civic Leaders	95th	95th	80th	82nd	93rd	83rd	62nd	74th	64th
Community Activists	86th	75th	46th	75th	86th	85th	71st	70th	78th
Religious Activists	68th	68th	86th	70th	65th	52nd	61st	51st	54th
Cyber-Activists	47th	45th	36th	39th	45th	67th	35th	80th	71st
Informal Socializers	36th	50th	37th	68th	38th	28th	34th	40th	88th
Informed Contributors	34th	39th	43rd	67th	50th	70th	63rd	36th	33rd
The Relatively Disengaged	9th	31st	45th	26th	32nd	14th	24th	42nd	27th

*The number is the percentile for the average member of the group. For instance, the average score for Civic Leaders on the total civic engagement measure is at the 95th percentile. This means that only 5% of all sample members have scores higher than this average score, while 95% of all samples members have lower civic engagement scores than does this average score.

Table III-2

Overall Ranking of Seven Civic Engagement Groups for Each Type of Activity*

Seven Engagement Types	Total Civic Engagement and Eight Categories of Engagement								
	Total Civic Engagement	Community Involvement	Religious Activity	Contribution Activity	Political Activity	Discussion of Politics & Curr. Affairs	Active Exposure to Sources of News	Technology-Based Activities	Informal Socializing
Civic Leaders	1	1	2	1	1	1-2	2-3-4	2	4
Community Activists	2	2	3-4-5	2	2	1-2	1	3	2
Religious Activists	3	3	1	3-4-5	3	5	2-3-4	4	5
Cyber-Activists	4	5	6-7	6	5	3-4	5-6	1	3
Informal Socializers	5	4	6-7	3-4-5	6	6	5-6	5-6	1
Informed Contributors	6	6	3-4-5	3-4-5	4	3-4	2-3-4	7	6
The Relatively Disengaged	7	7	3-4-5	7	7	7	7	5-6	7

*Multiple ranking for an activity indicates a tie for that activity

Description of Civic Engagement Types. We now offer a description of these types of civic engagers. In these descriptions, we first describe their overall level of civic engagement and then their overall levels of activity for each of the eight activity categories. We also identify the proportion of those who indicated being involved in their community in the past five years (the community participants), and identify relevant recruitment-related percentages.

We then move to a demographic description of the group. Here we describe the group in terms of:

- gender, age, and race/ethnicity
- education and household income level
- home ownership, employment status, marital status, children
- length of time in community, region of state, and urban/rural
- self-identified political party identification

We complete each description by identifying the motivations for involvement and the barriers to involvement. For the motivations, we rely on responses that were given only by community participants (those who reported being involved in their community in the past five years). For the barriers, we rely on responses given by all respondents. In each of the two sections, we look at the underlying general reasons discovered in our analysis and not the specific reasons actually asked about. And, for ease of interpretation, we have converted the "average score" for these general reasons into percentages of respondents that would have chosen the general reason as an important motivator or barrier.

Civic Leaders: Broadly and Highly Engaged (8%)

Overall level of civic engagement. Overall, members of this group have a very high level of total civic engagement. Indeed, the underlined typical member of this group is at the 95th percentile. That is, only 5% of the sample participates more in the entire range of engagement activities than the typical member of this group.

Types of engagement. The typical member of this group is very highly engaged both in community involvement and in political activities. They are also highly engaged in church activity, secular contributions, and discussion of politics and current events. They also participate a lot in technology-based activity and have moderately high levels of activity on exposure to news and informal socializing.

When asked about their community involvement, over 95% (96%) reported they had been involved in the last five years. Eight of 10 (82%) reported that they had been asked to get involved in the past year, and nearly the same number (79%) reported that they had asked others to get involved.

Demographic characteristics. This group is evenly divided between males and females. The median age of this group is 49 years. More than half (53%) is in our middle-age group, with the others equally split between the youngest and oldest age groups (24% in each). Seven of 10 are white, with the remaining three of 10 being minority. One in four are African-American (24%). It should be noted that this group

contains the highest proportion of minorities (and African-Americans) of all seven engagement groups.

Of our seven engagement groups, this group has the highest level of education and is tied for the highest level of household income. Two-thirds (67%) of this group has a four-year college degree, while one in four (24%) has some post high school education, and fewer than one in 10 (8%) has a high school degree or less. Four in 10 (42%) are in households making more than $75,000 a year, and another quarter (25%) is in households making $50,000 to $75,000. About one-third (33%) is in households that make less, with about one in eight (12%) in a household making $30,000 a year or less.

Over eight of 10 (83%) in this group own their residence. About three-quarters (74%) of this group is employed, with six of 10 (61%) employed full-time. Less than one in five (18%) is retired, and less than one in 10 (8%) is not in the labor force (e.g., homemaker, student, disabled, unemployed). The marital characteristics of this group are typical of the sample as a whole, with a majority being married/partnered (58%), about one-third (35%) single, and less than one in 10 widowed (7%). Four in 10 (40%) of these households have children, which is typical of the sample as whole, but only one in 10 (9%) have pre-school children.

Three of 10 (31%) have lived in their community 10 years or less, equally split between those who have lived in their community up to five years (16%) and five-to-ten years (16%). About one in four (26%) has lived in his or her community 11 to 20 years, and four in 10 (39%) have lived in their community longer than 20 years.

Nearly 70 % of this group lives in the Chicago metro area, with half (49%) living in the Chicago suburbs and about one in five living in the city of Chicago (20%). One in five also live in north/central Illinois (19%). and just over one in 10 (12%) live in southern Illinois. As far as how respondents describe their local community, nearly one-third (32%) describes it as suburban, and the same numbers describe it as urban (32%). About one in five (19%) say they live in a small city or town, about one in 10 (12%) say they live in a middle-sized city, and one in 20 (6%) say they live in a rural area.

In this group, self-identified Democrats slightly outnumber Republicans (38% vs. 35%), and both outnumber independents (27%).

Motivations for involvement. Members of this group appear equally motivated by altruism (80% important) and faith/fellowship (76% important). As a motivator, self-interest for this group is far behind (28% important). It should be noted that this group is generally motivated by each of these general reasons more than all of the other groups (with the slight exception of a tie for self-interest as a motivator).

Barriers to more involvement. Members of this group show two large barriers to more involvement: they are involved a lot as it is (49% important) and family/job responsibilities (40% important). The other five general barriers have average scores equivalent to having about one in 10 choosing the reason as an important barrier.

Community Activists: Politically Engaged (11%)

Overall level of civic engagement. Overall, members of this group have a high level of total civic engagement. Indeed, the typical member of this group is at the 86th percentile. That is, only 14% of the sample participates more in the entire range of engagement activities than the typical member of this group.

Types of engagement. The typical member of this group is highly engaged in political activities and in discussion of politics and current events. For all other activities but religious activity, this typical member is engaged at fairly high levels. For religious activity, the typical member of this group is involved at a moderate level.

When asked about their community involvement, more than eight of 10 (82%) reported they had been involved in the last five years. Six of 10 (59%) reported that they had been asked to get involved in the past year, and four of 10 (42%) reported that they had asked others to get involved.

Demographic characteristics. Nearly two-thirds (64%) of this group is male. The median age of this group is 47 years. Half (51%) is in our middle-age group while those in the youngest age group outnumber those in the oldest age group by a three-to-two margin (30% vs. 19%). Just over eight in 10 (83%) are white, and about one in seven (15%) are African American. Only 2% are members of other minority groups.

Half (51%) of this group has a four-year college degree, while over one-third (38%) has some post high school education, and about one in 10 (11%) has a high school degree or less. More than four in 10 (44%) are in households making more than $75,000 a year, and another quarter (25%) are in households making $50,000 to $75,000. About one-third (32%) are in households that make less, with about one in eight (12%) in a household making $30,000 a year or less. This income composition makes this group tied for highest level of household income across our seven engagement groups.

Well over eight of 10 (85%) of this group own their residence. Seven of 10 (71%) in this group are employed, with six of 10 (62%) employed full-time. About one in five (20%) is retired, and about one in 10 (9%) is not in the labor force (e.g., homemaker, student, disabled, unemployed). About seven in 10 (72%) members of this group are married/partnered while one in four is single (26%) and very few are widowed (2%). This makes this group the one with the highest proportion of those who are married/partnered. Nearly four in 10 (38%) of these households have children, and one in seven (15%) has pre-school children.

Three of 10 (31%) have lived in their community 10 years or less, with twice as many who have lived in their community up to five years (19%) as compared to five-to-ten years (10%). Nearly one in four (23%) has lived in their community 11 to 20 years, and almost half (48%) have lived in their community longer than 20 years. This latter number is equally split between those who have lived in their community 20 to 35 years (24%) and more than this (24%).

Less than six of 10 (58%) live in the Chicago metro area. But the percent living in the city of Chicago (27%) nearly equals the percent who live in the Chicago suburbs (30%). The proportion living in north/central Illinois equals that of the Chicago suburbs (31%), and about one in 10 (11%) live in southern Illinois. Equal numbers describe

their community as urban (28%), suburban (26%), and small city or town (26%). One in seven (13%) describes his or her community as rural, while fewer than one in 10 (8%) reports living in a middle-sized city.

In this group, self-identified Republicans outnumber Democrats by about a four-to-three margin (39% vs. 32%). And, not surprisingly for this group, both outnumber independents (29%).

Motivations for involvement. Members of this group are motivated more by altruism (74% important) than they are by faith/fellowship (54% important). Both of these are far more important than self-interest as a motivator (28% important), although this group is tied with the previous group for being motivated more by self-interest than any other group.

Barriers to more involvement. Members of this group show two large barriers to more involvement: family/job responsibilities (40% important) and they are involved a lot as it is (32% important). Next, in order, for this group are: rational calculation (18% important), and lack of recruitment/knowledge (16% important). The remaining three barriers have average scores equivalent to about one in 10 choosing them as important.

Faith-based Activists: Religiously Engaged (22%)

Overall level of civic engagement. Overall, members of this group have a moderately high level of total civic engagement. The <u>typical</u> member of this group is at the 68th percentile. That is, one-third of the sample participates more in the entire range of engagement activities than the <u>typical</u> member of this group.

Types of engagement. The typical member of this group is highly engaged in religious activities (86th percentile). This member has moderately high engagement for community involvement and contributions as well as for political activity and exposure to news sources. The typical member engages in discussion of politics and current affairs, technology-based activities, and informal socializing at levels pretty typical of the sample as a whole.

When asked about their community involvement, eight of 10 (80%) reported they had been involved in the last five years. Six of 10 (61%) reported that they had been asked to get involved in the past year, and more than four of 10 (45%) reported that they had asked others to get involved.

Demographic characteristics. Over six in 10 (62%) of this group are women. The median age of this group is 48 years. Four in 10 (40%) are middle-aged, while slightly more are in the oldest than youngest age groups (32% vs. 28%). This group's race/ethnicity composition is typical of the overall sample. About eight in 10 (82%) are white, one in seven (14%) is African American, and one in 20 (4%) is a member of another minority group.

Four in 10 (41%) of this group have a four-year college degree, while somewhat more (45%) have some post high school education, and about one in seven (14%) has a high

school degree or less. Members of this group are distributed quite evenly across the four income categories. Just over one in five are in our lowest income category, while nearly three in 10 are in the second lowest. The other half are equally split between the two highest income categories.

Nearly eight of 10 (78%) in this group own their residence. Two-thirds (68%) of this group are employed, with just over four of 10 (44%) employed full-time. Over one-quarter (27%) are retired, and one in seven (14%) is not in the labor force (e.g., homemaker, student, disabled, unemployed). Seven of 10 (70%) members of this group are married/partnered, while one in six (17%) is single and one in eight (13%) is widowed. This makes this group one of two with the highest proportion of those who are married/partnered. More than four in 10 (44%) of these households have children, and one in six (16%) have pre-school children.

More than one-third (36%) have lived in their community 10 years or less, with more who have lived in their community up to five years (22%) as compared to five-to-ten years (14%). Over one in five (22%) have lived in their community 11 to 20 years, and about one in four (42%) has lived in his or her community longer than 20 years. This latter number is equally split between those who have lived in their community 20 to 35 years (22%) and more than this (20%).

Six of 10 (60%) live in the Chicago metro area, with over half (52%) living in the suburbs and one in five (18%) living in the city of Chicago. Over one in five (23%) lives in north/central Illinois, and 7% live in southern Illinois. Nearly one in four (38%) describes his or her community as suburban, one in four (24%) describes it as a small city or town, and one in six (18%) describes it as urban. About one in 10 lives in a rural area (11%), and the same number say they live in a middle-sized city (10%).

In this group, self-identified Republicans outnumber Democrats by about a four-to-three margin (39% vs. 30%). Independents equal the number of Democrats in this group (at 31%).

Motivations for involvement. Members of this group are motivated about equally by faith/fellowship (73% important) and altruism (70% important). Not surprisingly, they are among the two groups most motivated by faith/fellowship. On the other hand, they are the engagement group least motivated by self-interest (16% important).

Barriers to more involvement. The largest barrier for this group is family/job responsibilities (43% important), followed by involved a lot as it is (33% important) and then lacking recruitment/knowledge (23% important). A bit less important are rational calculation (17% important) and lack of resources (15% important). The remaining reasons have average scores equivalent to about one in 10 choosing them as important.

Cyber-Activists: Technologically Engaged (16%)

Overall level of civic engagement. Overall, members of this group have an average level of total civic engagement. The typical member of this group is at the 47ᵗʰ percentile. That is, just over half of the sample participates more in the entire range of engagement activities, while just under half participates less.

Types of engagement. The typical member of this group is highly engaged in technology-based activities. This member also informally socializes and discusses politics and current affairs at fairly high levels.
The typical member's religious activity, contribution activity, and exposure to news sources are fairly low. But the level of community involvement and political activity is on par with that of the typical sample member.

When asked about their community involvement, just over half (52%) reported they had been involved in the last five years. More than four of 10 (45%) reported that they had been asked to get involved in the past year, and about half as many (21%) reported that they had asked others to get involved.

Demographic characteristics. Nearly six of 10 (59%) in this group are males, and the median age of this group is 33 years, making this our youngest group by far. Six in 10 (60%) are under 40 (our youngest age group), just over one-third (35%) are middle-aged, and one in 20 (5%) is in the oldest age group. Eight of 10 (83%) are white, only 6% are African American, and one in 10 (11%) is a member of another minority group.

Nearly half (49%) of this group has a four-year college degree, while nearly one-third (31%) has some post high school education, and about one in five (20%) has a high school degree or less. More than half (56%) are in households making more than $50,000 a year, equally split between those making $50,000 to $75,000 a year (28%) and those making more (27%). Almost the same number (26%) are in households making $30,000+ to $50,000 a year, while one in five (19%) are in households making $30,000 or less.

Just under half (47%) of this group owns a residence. Eight of 10 (79%) in this group are employed, with six of 10 (61%) employed full-time. Only about one in 20 (6%) is retired, and 15% are not in the labor force (e.g., homemaker, student, disabled, unemployed). Over half (54%) of this group is married/partnered, and more than four in 10 (44%) are single, making this group one of the two groups with the most singles. Only 2% are widowed. More than four in 10 (44%) of these households have children, and nearly one in five (18%) has pre-school children.

Almost half (48%) of this group has lived in their community five years or less. And additional one in 10 (9%) has lived in their community five-to-ten years, and twice as many indicated 11-to-twenty years (21%). This equals the number who have lived in their community longer than 20 years (22%).

Nearly three-quarters (74%) live in the Chicago metro area, with nearly half living in the suburbs (48%) and one in four (26%) living in the city of Chicago. One in five (19%) live in north/central Illinois, and 7% live in southern Illinois. About four in 10 (43%) describe their community as suburban in nature, and about one in four say

urban (26%). Equal numbers say their community is a middle-sized city (10%), a small city or town (11%), and a rural area (10%).

Nearly half (48%) of the members of this group call themselves political independents, the highest for any of our seven engagement groups. Self-identified Democrats outnumber Republicans by nearly a three-to-two margin (30 vs. 22%).

Motivations for involvement. Members of this group are motivated somewhat more by altruism (62% important) than by faith/fellowship (55%). As a motivator for involvement, these are far more important than self-interest (25% important).

Barriers to more involvement. The biggest barrier to more involvement for this group is family/job responsibilities (46% important), followed quite closely by lack of recruitment/knowledge (38% important). The next most important barriers for this group are: rational calculation (25% important) and lack of resources (21% important). In turn, these are followed by lack of commonality with those involved (15% important) and involved a lot as it is (14%). Health/transportation comes in last as a barrier for this group (10% important).

Informal Socializers: Informally Engaged (11%)

Overall level of civic engagement. Overall, members of this group have a moderately low level of total civic engagement. Indeed, the <u>typical</u> member of this group is at the 36th percentile. That is, nearly two-thirds of the sample participate <u>more</u> in the entire range of engagement activities than the <u>typical</u> member of this group.

Types of engagement. The typical member of this group is highly engaged in informal socializing (88th percentile). The typical member's contribution activity is moderately high, and their level of community involvement is average. But on all other kinds of activity, the typical member of this group has moderately low levels of activity.

When asked about their community involvement, half (50%) of the group reported they had been involved in the last five years. Nearly four of 10 (38%) reported that they had been asked to get involved in the past year, and about half as many (18%) reported that they had asked others to get involved.

Demographic characteristics. Nearly six of 10 (59%) of this group are male. The median age of this group is 45 years. More than 40% (45%) are in our youngest age group. For the rest, those in the oldest age group outnumber those in the middle-aged group by a small margin (30% vs. 26%). Nine of 10 (91%) in this group are white. About one in 20 (6%) are African American and members of other minority groups (4%).

Four in 10 (42%) of this group have a high school degree or less, and nearly as many (37%) have some post high school education. One in five (21%) has a four-year college degree. Two-thirds (68%) of this group is in a household making $50,000 or less a year, equally split between those in households making $30,000 or less (35%) and

those making between \$30,000 and \$50,000 (33%). The one-third that makes more than \$50,000 is also equally split between those making between \$50,000 and \$75,000 a year (16%), and those making more (15%).

Nearly two-thirds (65%)of the people in this group own their residence. More than half (57%) of this group is employed, with half (50%) employed full-time. Three in 10 (30%) are retired, and about one in seven (14%) is not in the labor force (e.g., homemaker, student, disabled, unemployed). In this group, the proportion of those who are single (46%) actually outnumbers those who are married/partnered (43%), making this group the one with the highest proportion of singles and lowest proportion of those married/partnered. Just over one in 10 (12%) are widowed. One in four (25%) of these households have children, the lowest of our engagement groups, and one in 10 (11%) have pre-school children.

Almost half (46%) of the group members have lived in their community 10 years or less, with a few more saying they have lived in their community up to five years (26%) as compared to five-to-ten years (20%). One in six (16%) has lived in the community 11 to 20 years, and nearly one in four (38%) has lived in the community longer than 20 years. Far more reported living in their community more than 35 years (27%) than reported living there 20 to 35 years (11%).

Just over half (53%) of this group lives in the Chicago metro area, with nearly one in four (38%) living in the Chicago suburbs and one in seven (14%) living in the city of Chicago. The number living in north/central Illinois (37%) equals the Chicago suburban proportion, and one in 10 (11%) live in southern Illinois. Just over one in four (27%) describe their community as a small city or town, with the rest spread evenly across those describing their communities as suburban (21%), rural (19%), middle-sized city (17%), and urban (16%).

In this group, those who call themselves political independents outnumber self-identified Democrats (38% vs. 33%). The latter in turn outnumber Republicans (28%).

Motivations for involvement. Members of this group are motivated more by altruism (64% important) than by faith/fellowship (52%). As a motivator for involvement, these are far more important than self-interest (20% important).

Barriers to more involvement. The two largest barriers for this group are lack of recruitment/knowledge (36% important) and family/job responsibilities (36% important). These are followed by rational calculation (28% important), and then by lack of commonality with those involved (20% important), lack of resources (20% important). Next, in order, is involved a lot as it is (17% important, and – least important of all – is health/transportation problems (12% important).

Informed Contributors: Passively Engaged (16%)

Overall level of civic engagement. Overall, members of this group have a moderately low level of total civic engagement. Indeed, the typical member of this group is at the 34th percentile. That is, two-thirds of the sample participate more in the entire range of engagement activities than the typical member of this group.

Types of engagement. The typical member of this group has moderately high levels of engagement on the more passive types of activity: exposure to news sources; discussion of politics and current affairs; and contribution activity. The typical member of this group is about average for political activity and nearly so for religious activity. For all other kinds, the typical member of this group has moderately low levels of activity.

When asked about their community involvement, six of 10 (59%) reported they had been involved in the last five years. More than four of 10 (45%) reported that they had been asked to get involved in the past year, but only one in seven (15%) reported having asked others to get involved.

Demographic characteristics. Six of 10 (60%) in this group are women. The median age of this group is 55 years, the oldest median age of our seven groups. Members of this group are equally split between those in our oldest and middle age groups (41% and 40%). The remaining one in five (20%) are in the youngest age group. The racial/ethnic composition of this group is typical of our overall sample.

Nearly half (48%) of this group have a high school degree or less, and three in 10 (30%) have some post high school education. One in five (21%) has a four-year college degree. Three-quarters (74%) of these group members are in households making $50,000 or less a year, equally split between those in households making $30,000 or less (38%) and those making between $30,000 and $50,000 (37%). The one-quarter that makes more than $50,000 is split into one in 10 in households making between $50,000 and $75,000 a year (10%) and the remaining 15% in households making more.

Seven of 10 (71%) in this group own their residence. About half (52%) of this group is employed, with less than half (47%) employed full-time. Over one-third (37%) are retired, the highest proportion of any of our seven engagement groups. About one in 10 (11%) is not in the labor force (e.g., homemaker, student, disabled, unemployed). Over half (54%) of this group is married/partnered, and one in three (29%) is single. One in six (16%) are widowed, the highest proportion in any of the seven groups. About one-third (34%) of these households have children, and one in seven (16%) has pre-school children.

Almost one-third (32%) have lived in their community 10 years or less, with twice as many who have lived in their community up to five years (20%) as compared to five-to-10 years (12%). One in five (20%) has lived in their community 11 to 20 years, and almost half (48%) has lived in their community longer than 20 years. This latter number is equally split between those who have lived in their community 20 to 35 years (25%) and more than this (23%).

Two-thirds (66%) live in the Chicago metro area, with twice as many living in the suburbs (44%) as live in the city of Chicago (22%). Nearly one-quarter (23%) live in north/central Illinois, and one in 10 (10%) live in southern Illinois. The respondents' descriptions of their communities in terms of urban/rural are typical of the sample as a whole. About one-third (33%) say they live in a suburban area, while one-quarter (25%) say a small city or town, and one in five (20%) say an urban area. One in seven (14%) describe their community as rural, and just less than one in 10 (8%) say they live in a middle-sized city.

Well over 40% (45%) of this group are self-identified Democrats, the highest proportion for any of our seven engagement groups. The rest are equally split between Republicans (28%) and independents (27%).

Motivations for involvement. Members of this group are motivated far more by altruism (71% important) than by faith/fellowship (52%). As a motivator for involvement, both of these are far more important than self-interest (24% important).

Barriers to more involvement. The most important barrier for this group is family/job responsibilities (40% important), and second as a barrier is lack of recruitment/knowledge (30% important). Three other barriers then follow: lack of resources (24% important); rational calculation (23% important) and health/transportation problems (22% important). Of all seven general barriers, the least important for this group are involved a lot as it is (16% important) and lack of commonality with those involved (16% important).

The Relatively Disengaged (17%)

Overall level of civic engagement. Overall, members of this group have, by far, the lowest level of total civic engagement. Indeed, the typical member of this group is at the 9th percentile. That is, only 9% of the sample participate less in the entire range of engagement activities than the typical member of this group.

Types of engagement. This is the only group in which the typical member is involved in each of the eight activities at levels lower than the typical sample member. (Indeed, for every activity but religious activity, the typical member of this group has either the lowest or among the lowest level of activity.) Indeed, *it is the consistency of this low and moderately low level of activity across all eight activities that is the defining characteristic of this group.*

Across all eight activities, the typical member of this group fares best on church activity and technology-based activity – and fares worst on discussion of politics and current affairs.

When asked about their community involvement, almost four of 10 (38%) reported they had been involved in the last five years. Under three in 10 (28%) reported that they had been asked to get involved in the past year, and about half as many (13%) reported that they had asked others to get involved.

Demographic characteristics. Just over six in 10 (62%) of this group are female. The median age of this group is 48 years. Nearly four of 10 (38%) are middle-aged, and the rest are equally split between the youngest age group (31%) and the oldest age group (32%). Just over one-quarter (77%) of this group are white, about one in seven (14%) are African American, and about one in 10 (10%) are members of another minority group.

Over half (52%) of this group has a high school degree or less, and one in five (22%) has some post-high school education. One in four (26%) has a four-year college degree. Nearly half (47%) of this group are in households in our lowest income category, those making up to $30,000 a year, making this group the one with the lowest level of household income group across our seven engagement groups. Nearly one in four (23%) are in households making between $30,000 and $50,000 a year; about one in six (17%) are in households making between $50,000 and $75,000 a year; and the remaining one in seven (13%) are in households making more.

Less than six in 10 (58%) of this group own their residence. Over half (57%) in this group are employed, with only four of 10 (41%) employed full-time. About one in four (26%) is retired, and about one in six (17%) is not in the labor force (e.g., homemaker, student, disabled, unemployed). Under half (48%) of this group are married/partnered, while one in four (39%) is single and one in eight (13%) is widowed. Just over one-third (36%) of these households has children, and one in seven (16%) has pre-school children.

Four of 10 (42%) have lived in their community 10 years or less, with twice as many who have lived in their community up to five years (28%) as compared to five-to-ten years (14%). One in five (21%) has lived in his or her community 11 to 20 years, and more than one-third (37%) has lived in their community longer than 20 years. This latter number is split between those who have lived in their community 20 to 35 years (21%) and more than this (16%).

Nearly two-thirds (64%) of this group live in the Chicago metro area, with four of 10 (39%) living in the suburbs and one in four living in the city of Chicago (25%). About one in four (22%) live in north/central Illinois, and one in seven (14%) live in southern Illinois. About one in four describe their community as urban in nature (26%), and nearly the same number say they live in a small city or town (25%). One in five lives in a suburban area (22%), and the same number says rural (21%). About 7% say they live in a middle-sized city. It should be noted that, of all seven engagement groups, this group has the greatest proportion of those living in southern Illinois and describing their community as rural.

In this group, self-identified Democrats and independents are equal in size (both at 38%). The proportion who are Republicans falls just less than one-quarter (23%).

Motivations for involvement. Members of this group are motivated equally as much by altruism (52% important) and by faith/fellowship (52%). As a motivator for involvement, both of these are far more important than self-interest (21% important). Compared to other groups, this group is distinctive in being less motivated by altruism.

Barriers to more involvement. The two most important barriers to more involvement for this group are family/job responsibilities (41% important) and lack of recruitment/knowledge (40%). Next most important are lack of resources (32%) and rational calculation (31%), followed by health/transportation problems (25%). For this group, the least important barriers are lack of commonality with those involved (17% important) and, not surprisingly, involved a lot as it is (14%).

Table III-3

Specific Activity Profile, for Total Sample and the Seven Civic Engagement Types

[percent (or avg.) doing selected activities for each group]

Table III-3A: Community Involvement

Activity	Total Sample		Type of Engager						
		Civic Leaders (8%)	Commu-nity Activ. (11%)	Faith-based Activ. (22%)	Cyber-Activ. (16%)	Infor-mal Soclzr (11%)	Infrmd Contr. (16%)	Dis-eng. (17%)
Community involvement	*RANK*	1	2	3	5	4	6	7
Percentile for overall activity		95th	75th	68th	45th	50th	39th	31st
Average number of types of organizations volunteer to (occasional or regular)	1.5	3.8	2.0	2.0	1.0	1.1	0.9	0.8
Average number of types of organizations volunteer to on regular basis	0.7	2.1	0.8	1.0	0.4	0.4	0.2	0.3
Avg. number of local organizations to which belong (inactive or active)	2.5	5.8	3.5	2.9	1.9	2.2	1.5	1.2
Avg. number of local organizations to which belong actively	1.8	4.9	2.6	2.2	1.3	1.5	0.9	0.7
Attended any group dealing with neighborhood needs/issues – past yr.	29%	68%	51%	32%	17%	19%	23%	14%
Worked with others to solve some community/neighborhood problem – yr.	28%	80%	52%	32%	14%	20%	21%	8%
Helped form group in 1990s/2000s	13%	42%	26%	16%	7%	7%	5%	4%
Served on neighborhood board – 10 yrs.	13%	44%	18%	15%	9%	10%	7%	2%
Served on board of social service / cultural organization – past 10 yrs.	12%	39%	17%	15%	8%	9%	4%	3%
Attended any public meetings of official local boards/councils – past year	29%	74%	57%	38%	14%	21%	20%	7%
Served in non-paid capacity on official local board/council – past 10 years	6%	27%	13%	6%	1%	4%	1%	1%

Table III-3A: continued

Activity	Total Sample	Civic Leaders (8%)	Commu-nity Activ. (11%)	Faith-based Activ. (22%)	Cyber-Activ. (16%)	Infor-mal Soclzr (11%)	Infrmd Contr. (16%)	Dis-eng. (17%)
	RANK	1	2	3	5	4	6	7
Community involvement								
Others								
Involved in past five years	*64%*	*96%*	*82%*	*80%*	*52%*	*50%*	*59%*	*38%*
Have been asked to volunteer / get involved in past year	*50%*	*82%*	*59%*	*61%*	*44%*	*38%*	*45%*	*28%*
Have asked others to volunteer / get involved in past year	*31%*	*79%*	*42%*	*45%*	*21%*	*18%*	*15%*	*13%*

Table III-3A: Religious Activities

Activity	Total Sample	Civic Leaders (8%)	Commu-nity Activ. (11%)	Faith-based Activ. (22%)	Cyber-Activ. (16%)	Infor-mal Soclzr (11%)	Infrmd Contr. (16%)	Dis-eng. (17%)
Religious Activity	*RANK*	**2**	**3-4-5**	**1**	**6-7**	**6-7**	**3-4-5**	**3-4-5**
Percentile for overall activity		**80th**	**46th**	**86th**	**36th**	**37th**	**43rd**	**45th**
Member of church, synagogue, temple or mosque	67%	94%	59%	99%	46%	48%	60%	53%
Active member of church/temple	45%	84%	28%	90%	21%	21%	28%	29%
Attend religious services at least monthly	62%	95%	54%	99%	37%	37%	53%	48%
Attend religious services at least weekly	47%	76%	36%	91%	21%	24%	34%	32%
Active member of church/temple board in past three years	19%	48%	3%	56%	2%	2%	4%	5%
Active participant in another church group – past year	30%	66%	10%	78%	8%	10%	5%	16%
Any volunteering to church/temple in past year (occasional or regular)	36%	72%	22%	76%	14%	11%	19%	25%
Regular volunteer to church/temple in past year	15%	34%	5%	43%	2%	3%	1%	10%
Contributed money to church/temple in past year	72%	95%	74%	98%	50%	51%	74%	56%

Table III-3C: Contribution Activities (secular)

Activity	Total Sample	Civic Leaders (8%)	Commu-nity Activ. (11%)	Faith-based Activ. (22%)	Cyber-Activ. (16%)	Infor-mal Soclzr (11%)	Infrmd Contr. (16%)	Dis-eng. (17%)
Contribution Activity	*RANK*	1	2	3-4-5	6	3-4-5	3-4-5	7
Percentile for overall activity		82nd	75th	70th	39th	68th	67th	26th
Contributed money to either local charity or church/temple	87%	99%	96%	99%	72%	80%	90%	71%
Contributed money to local charity (not church/temple)	73%	94%	89%	88%	56%	77%	73%	49%
Contributed money to both local charity and church/temple	58%	89%	66%	87%	33%	46%	56%	34%
Contributed food, clothing, toys in past year	87%	100%	92%	97%	86%	82%	87%	72%
Gave blood in past year	15%	26%	27%	16%	6%	21%	13%	6%
Contributed to / member of public television/radio station	27%	64%	52%	31%	12%	24%	18%	13%

Table III-3D: Political Activities

Activity	Total	Broad	Poli-tical	Reli-gious	Tech	Infor-mal	Pas-sive	Dis-eng.
Political Activity	*RANK*	1	2	3	5	6	4	7
Percentile for overall activity		93rd	86th	65th	45th	38th	50th	32nd
Registered to vote	90%	96%	96%	97%	84%	86%	94%	84%
Voted in last national election	82%	95%	96%	94%	71%	72%	87%	62%
Vote in every local election	58%	91%	83%	68%	37%	45%	66%	31%
Vote in most or every local election	69%	94%	92%	86%	51%	53%	77%	38%
Attended candidate forums, debates, voter info nights – past year	18%	59%	46%	18%	10%	4%	6%	4%
Attended campaign rallies or speeches in past year	15%	52%	41%	16%	12%	3%	6%	1%
Actively worked for party or candidate in past year	9%	30%	20%	10%	3%	3%	7%	1%
Contributed money to party or candidate in past year	18%	55%	47%	20%	9%	3%	12%	5%
Dues-paying member of political club or organization	6%	24%	13%	6%	2%	3%	3%	1%
Active dues-paying member of political club or organization	4%	18%	9%	3%	1%	3%	2%	1%
Contributed money to PAC or interest group in past year	15%	56%	30%	15%	11%	6%	10%	5%
Member of lobbying organization or organization promoting cause	9%	27%	22%	7%	10%	4%	6%	2%
Active member of lobbying organization or organization promoting cause	6%	16%	14%	4%	6%	3%	2%	2%
Contacted state or local public official (or staff) – past year	34%	76%	69%	39%	26%	16%	23%	11%
Written letter or e-mail to newspaper or magazine – past year	9%	28%	21%	6%	8%	3%	7%	2%
Signed petition in past year	37%	62%	57%	46%	34%	26%	32%	13%
Circulated petition in past year	5%	14%	12%	6%	4%	2%	2%	2%

Table III-3D: continued

Activity	Total	Broad	Poli-tical	Reli-gious	Tech	Infor-mal	Pas-sive	Dis-eng.
Political Activity	*RANK*	1	2	3	5	6	4	7
Served non-paid on official local board/council – past 10 years	6%	27%	13%	6%	1%	4%	1%	1%
Attended any meetings of official local boards/councils in past year	29%	74%	57%	38%	14%	21%	20%	7%
Taken part in protest, march, demonstration in past 2 yrs (excl strike)	6%	22%	17%	4%	5%	1%	3%	2%

Table III-3E: Discussion of Politics and Current Events

Activity	Total Sample	Civic Leaders (8%)	Commu-nity Activ. (11%)	Faith-based Activ. (22%)	Cyber-Activ. (16%)	Infor-mal Soclzr (11%)	Infrmd Contr. (16%)	Dis-eng. (17%)
Discussion of Politics	*RANK*	1-2	1-2	5	3-4	6	3-4	7
Percentile for overall activity		83rd	85th	52nd	67th	28th	70th	14th
Discuss local politics and current affairs more than weekly	50%	76%	86%	47%	64%	27%	66%	7%
Discuss local politics and current affairs at least weekly	67%	92%	97%	65%	86%	46%	79%	20%
Discuss politics nearly every day (or every day) with family, friends, coworkers, and neighbors	20%	41%	56%	15%	19%	4%	25%	0%
Discuss politics at least weekly with family, friends, coworkers, and neighbors	73%	82%	62%	66%	34%	66%	17%	56%

Table III-3F: News Exposure Activities

Activity	Total Sample	Civic Leaders (8%)	Community Activ. (11%)	Faith-based Activ. (22%)	Cyber-Activ. (16%)	Informal Soclzr (11%)	Infrmd Contr. (16%)	Dis-eng. (17%)
News Exposure Activity	*RANK*	**2-3-4**	**1**	**2-3-4**	**5-6**	**5-6**	**2-3-4**	**7**
Percentile for overall activity		**62ⁿᵈ**	**71ˢᵗ**	**61ˢᵗ**	**35ᵗʰ**	**34ᵗʰ**	**63ʳᵈ**	**24ᵗʰ**
Read newspaper daily	50%	58%	57%	62%	46%	45%	57%	28%
Read newspaper at least every few days	70%	78%	79%	78%	66%	68%	80%	46%
Watch local news on television daily	72%	79%	83%	73%	57%	71%	85%	63%
Watch local news on television at least every few days	86%	86%	94%	88%	75%	83%	93%	81%
Listen to news on radio daily	60%	65%	82%	71%	48%	48%	76%	35%
Listen to news on radio at least every few days	70%	75%	89%	81%	62%	60%	82%	46%
Watch or listen to talk/call-in show several times a week	38%	42%	61%	44%	30%	20%	57%	15%
Watch or listen to talk/call-in show at least weekly	53%	65%	76%	63%	41%	36%	70%	26%
Ever called into talk/call-in show	14%	28%	29%	15%	9%	5%	18%	3%

Table III-3G: Technology-Based Activities

Activity	Total Sample	Civic Leaders (8%)	Commu-nity Activ. (11%)	Faith-based Activ. (22%)	Cyber-Activ. (16%)	Infor-mal Soclzr (11%)	Infrmd Contr. (16%)	Dis-eng. (17%)
Technology-Based Activities	*RANK*	**2**	**3**	**4**	**1**	**5-6**	**7**	**5-6**
Percentile for overall activity		**74th**	**70th**	**51st**	**80th**	**40th**	**36th**	**42nd**
Use e-mail every day (excluding work)	26%	42%	41%	23%	61%	8%	4%	13%
Use e-mail at least several times a week	47%	64%	65%	47%	93%	28%	11%	28%
Ever used the Internet	72%	86%	91%	72%	100%	63%	46%	55%
Use Internet as source of info about current events at least several times/wk	29%	54%	47%	27%	60%	13%	5%	8%
Use Internet as source of info about current events at least several times/mo.	40%	62%	63%	40%	78%	23%	8%	20%
Used Internet for info about local current events at least once in past year	39%	64%	59%	37%	75%	21%	12%	20%
Used Internet for info about local current events more than twice in past year	25%	46%	46%	21%	48%	14%	6%	10%
Used Internet for info about local current events more than five times – past year	17%	35%	36%	12%	36%	8%	3%	5%
Visited Web site for local schools / community college in past year	26%	52%	35%	24%	50%	10%	5%	14%
Visited Web site for local govt – past yr.	24%	48%	49%	15%	54%	5%	4%	11%
Visited Web site for local officials – year	16%	39%	36%	12%	32%	1%	2%	2%
Visited Web site for local charity – year	15%	33%	27%	14%	29%	7%	0%	4%
Visited Web site for local civic group – in past year	6%	14%	16%	6%	10%	2%	1%	2%
Visited any of the five local Web sites in past year	40%	73%	64%	39%	79%	14%	8%	19%

Table III-3H: Informal Socializing

Activity	Total Sample	Civic Leaders (8%)	Commu-nity Activ. (11%)	Faith-based Activ. (22%)	Cyber-Activ. (16%)	Infor-mal Soclzr (11%)	Infrmd Contr. (16%)	Dis-eng. (17%)
Informal Socializing	*RANK*	4	2	5	3	1	6	7
Percentile for overall activity		64th	78th	54th	71st	88th	33rd	27th
Participate in small group that gets together for socializing/recreation – at least weekly	34%	42%	60%	29%	39%	76%	16%	5%
Participate in small group that gets together for socializing/recreation – at least monthly	71%	85%	86%	80%	83%	96%	53%	30%
Go to coffee shop/bar to visit – at least weekly	19%	12%	38%	8%	25%	63%	4%	2%
Go to coffee shop/bar to visit –at least monthly	37%	39%	61%	24%	53%	87%	15%	8%

99

Section IV: The Impact of Employers on Civic Engagement

Survey respondents who worked for an employer (i.e., not self-employed) were asked several questions about whether their employer encourages employees to contribute time and money to their community.

About one-third (34%) of the employees reported that their employer matches monetary contributions to charities and community organizations. Four of 10 (42%) reported that their employer does something else in addition to this. Many of these "other" mentions made reference to their employer supporting or allowing charitable fund-raising campaigns at the workplace. For both of these, substantially more full-time employees than part-time employees reported the practice. (See the box to the right.)

Reports of Employer Efforts to Encourage Contributions and Volunteering

Employer Activity	Total	Full-Time	Part-Time
Match monetary contributions to charities & community organizations.	34%	38%	17%
Other encouragement for monetary contributions	42%	45%	28%
Sponsor community project	38%	38%	34%
Give money to organizs. employees volunteer to	25%	28%	12%
Incentives/recognition to employees who volunteer	28%	29%	22%
Other ways encourage employees to volunteer	17%	18%	14%

Nearly one in four (38%) of the employees reported that their employer sponsors a community project, for which they encourage their employees to volunteer. More than one in four (28%) reported that their employer gives incentives/recognition to employees who volunteer, and one in four reported that their employer gives money to organizations their employees volunteer to. One in six (17%) reported that their employer does other activities to encourage volunteerism. Substantially more full-time than part-time employees reported the practice of giving money to organizations that employees volunteer to. The percentages are closer for the other items. (See box.)

And, there is evidence that employer efforts here pay off.

- The percentage of employees who contribute to a local charitable organization (aside from religious organizations) is positively related to the number of reported employer efforts in this area (the first two described above). Two-thirds of those who reported no employer effort here contributed to local charities. This increases to three-quarters (74%) for those who reported one employer effort, and increases again to eight in 10 (80%) for those who reported two efforts.

- The number of types of organizations to which employees volunteer is also positively related to the number of reported employer efforts in this area (the last four described above). For example, as seen in the box, the average number of organizations to which employees volunteer (either at all or on a regular basis) increases as reports of

Average Number of Types of Organizations to which Employees Volunteer and Reported Employer Encouragement of Volunteerism

Number of Reported Employer Efforts	Avg. # types volunteer to (occasional/reg)	Avg. # types regularly volunteer to
None	1.34	0.58
One	1.77	0.75
Two	1.73	0.78
Three or four	2.21	0.95

employer efforts here go from none to one or two. Another increase in this average number occurs for employees who report three or four employer efforts.

Furthermore, there is evidence that the degree of overall employer commitment to encourage their employees to give to their community pays off in a more general sense as well. This is seen in the positive and significant relationship that is found between the total number of employer efforts reported here (a total of six, two for contributions and four for volunteerism) and the level of overall civic engagement of employees. This is perhaps best illustrated by looking at the average number of reported employer efforts for each of four civic engagement groups: low in overall civic engagement (avg. of 1.3 efforts reported); moderate-low (avg. of 1.7 efforts); moderate-high (avg. of 1.9 efforts); and high in overall civic engagement (avg. of 2.4 efforts reported).

Section V: The Community and Civic Engagement

The Relationship between Community Attitudes and Civic Engagement

Civic engagement is significantly related to attitudes about one's community. With few exceptions, we found that the more favorably a respondent viewed his/her community, fellow citizens, and local government, the greater his/her level of overall civic engagement.

Table V-1 summarizes the results of the analysis of the relationship between a respondent's attitudes about their community and their overall civic engagement score. We measured community attitudes through a series of 26 questions that asked about the social and political context in which civic engagement takes place and the individual's sense of acceptance and efficacy. For each community attitude, the table shows the percentage who have an overall civic engagement score that falls within four groups: the high level group; the moderate-high group; the moderate-low group; and the low level of civic engagement group. For the sample as a whole, these percentages are equal (25% for each level). In the following descriptions, we generally will focus on the "extreme" groups (i.e., those who have the most and least favorable attitudes and those who fall within the highest and lowest levels of civic engagement) to illustrate the relationships.

Evaluations of the local community as a place to live, and its residents, are related to civic engagement. As seen in the table, by a three-to-two ratio, those who rated their community as an excellent place to live scored in the top 25% in civic engagement (28%) as compared to those who rated their community as a fair or poor place to live (19%).

Those who thought that most people in the community could be trusted to do the right thing, and that most people showed concern for others, were significantly more likely to be among the top 25% in civic engagement (27%) than those who did not (18%). In contrast, those who did not think others could be trusted or did not show concern were significantly more likely to be among the lowest 25% in civic engagement (32%) than those who did (22%).

A sense of civic pride and altruism also are related to the level of civic engagement. Respondents who believe that most people in their community have a sense of civic pride are significantly more likely to be among the top 25% in civic engagement (30%) than those who do not believe this is true (23%). More of those who agreed that every person should give some time for the good of their community are among the top 25% in civic engagement (33%) than those who disagreed (17%). Significantly more of those who believed *"It is no use paying attention to local current events and public affairs because you can't do anything about them anyway,"* scored in the lowest 25% in civic engagement (43%), than those who disagreed (17%). These two questions – every person should give time and it's no use paying attention to local events – were combined in the analysis to form an index of altruism vs. rational calculus. Not surprisingly, those who held *relatively* more altruistic views were more likely to be among the most civically engaged (40%) than those whose views, *relatively speaking*, reflected more of a rational calculus as to their time and effort (16%).

Being part of a mutual support network contributes significantly to civic engagement. Five times as many respondents who have someone outside their family they can count on for help if they need it, and who have friends or neighbors who count on them for help, and who had helped a friend or neighbor in the past month, scored in the top 25% in civic engagement (31%) than those who did not (6%).

Perceptions of the openness and acceptance of the community also are related to level of civic engagement. Those who thought it was very easy for a newcomer to fit in, who felt they themselves fit in a lot and were accepted, and who thought people in their community were very friendly, were more likely to be among the most civically engaged (27%) than those who did not feel this way (20%).

Perceptions of power and influence in the community also are significantly related to civic engagement. As expected, those who reported that they and their immediate family had a lot of influence in their local community were significantly more likely to be among the top 25% in civic engagement (51%) than those who felt they had no influence at all (8%). Whether the community power structure is seen as more elitist or more pluralistic also makes a difference in level of civic engagement. Significantly more of those who said power is shared by a number of groups scored in highest 25% in civic engagement than is the case for those who said a small group controls power (32% vs. 24%).

Civic engagement also is related to a feeling of efficacy – the power to have an effect. Those who believe that individuals in their community can do a lot to improve their lives are significantly more likely to be among the most civically engaged (30%) than those who thought there was little or nothing individuals can do to improve their lives (13%). Similarly, more of those who thought that individuals like themselves could do a lot to affect what their local government does are among the most civically engaged (44%), compared to those who thought there was not much or nothing at all individuals like them could do (11%).

Citizens' perceptions of the attention local government pays to them also is related to the level of civic engagement. Significantly more of those who believe that their local government leaders pay a lot of attention to what the people think when they are deciding what policies to adopt, and who believe that if they took some complaint to a local government council member that the official would pay a lot of attention to it, are among the most civically engaged (36%), compared to those who believe their local government leaders pay, or would pay, very little attention or none at all (20%).

Perceptions of citizenship also were related to civic engagement. Those who *disagreed* with the statement, *"It is the duty of every citizen to vote,"* were more than twice as likely to be among the least civically engaged (48%) than those who agreed with the statement (22%). On the other hand, those who *strongly disagreed* that *"There is no other way than voting that people like you can influence the actions of your local government"* were twice as likely to be among the most civically engaged (41%), compared to those who strongly agreed with the statement (19%).

Finally, alienation is related to civic engagement, but with an exception. We constructed a local government alienation scale from the questions regarding degree of agree/disagree: that people like you are not represented in local government; and that when you think about politics in your community, you feel like an outsider. From the

responses to these questions, we categorized respondents into a scale with five ranks, ranging from high alienation to low alienation.

We certainly find that those with the lowest alienation have the greatest overall civic engagement (41% in the highest 25% of civic engagement) and the fewest in with the lowest overall civic engagement (13% of these in the lowest 25%). And as alienation increases, we find that overall civic engagement decreases – <u>with one important exception, those with the most alienation</u>. Those with the most alienation actually have a higher overall level of civic engagement than do those with a level of alienation just "beneath them." In short, it appears that increasing alienation acts to decrease overall civic engagement to a point. But once this alienation reaches a very high level, it actually increases civic engagement among some of those who are alienated.

Table V-1
Overall Level of Civic Engagement
by Selected Community Attitudes

Community Attitudes	Level of Overall Civic Engagement			
	Rate High	Rate Mod-High	Rate Mod-Low	Rate Low
TOTAL SAMPLE	**25%**	**25%**	**25%**	**25%**
Read ACROSS, as in: 28% of those who say excellent are in the high level of civic engagement group; 27% are in the mod-high group; 24% are in the mod-low group; and 22% are in the low level of civic engagement group.				
Rate community as place to live				
Excellent	28%	27%	24%	22%
Good	26%	26%	25%	23%
Fair or poor	19%	16%	29%	36%
Social trust/concern index*				
High	27%	30%	22%	22%
Middle	27%	24%	25%	24%
Low	18%	20%	30%	32%
Most have civic pride				
Strongly agree	30%	28%	21%	21%
Agree	22%	24%	27%	26%
Disagree/strongly disagree	23%	19%	29%	29%
Every person should give time				
Strongly agree	33%	27%	24%	16%
Agree	18%	23%	26%	33%
Disagree/strongly disagree	17%	19%	26%	38%
No use pay attention to local events				
Agree	10%	21%	26%	43%
Somewhat disagree	20%	27%	27%	27%
Strongly disagree	34%	25%	25%	17%
Altruism/rational calculus index*				
Altruism	40%	26%	22%	12%
Middle	21%	28%	28%	23%
Rational calculus	16%	22%	26%	36%

(continued on next page)

	Level of Civic Engagement

Table V-1 (continued)				
Community Attitudes	**Rate High**	**Rate Mod-High**	**Rate Mod-Low**	**Rate Low**
Mutual support index				
High	31%	27%	23%	19%
Middle	11%	22%	34%	34%
Low	6%	12%	27%	54%
Fit in/friendly index*				
High	27%	28%	26%	19%
Middle-high	27%	35%	20%	18%
Middle	32%	20%	24%	25%
Middle-low	22%	22%	30%	27%
Low	20%	23%	30%	27%
How much influence have				
Lot	51%	17%	22%	10%
Some	36%	29%	20%	16%
Not much	15%	28%	30%	26%
None	8%	16%	30%	46%
Elitism/pluralism				
Small groups controls power	24%	29%	23%	24%
Power shared by groups	32%	25%	23%	20%
Other	8%	16%	36%	39%
General individual efficacy				
A lot can do	30%	24%	25%	21%
Some	21%	26%	25%	28%
Not much/nothing	13%	20%	27%	40%
Political efficacy				
A lot can do	44%	24%	21%	11%
Some	23%	29%	26%	22%
Not much/nothing	11%	14%	29%	45%
Attention of government leaders index*				
High	36%	29%	25%	10%
Middle-high	37%	28%	22%	13%
Middle-low	22%	25%	27%	26%
Low	20%	22%	24%	33%
Citizen duty to vote				
Strongly agree	28%	26%	24%	22%
Agree	13%	22%	31%	34%
Disagree/strongly disagree	14%	16%	22%	48%
No other way than voting to influence local government				
Strongly agree	19%	26%	28%	27%
Somewhat agree	16%	21%	25%	38%
Somewhat disagree	22%	28%	27%	22%
Strongly disagree	41%	25%	23%	11%

(continued on next page)

	Level of Civic Engagement		

Community Attitudes	Rate High	Rate Mod-High	Rate Mod-Low	Rate Low
Table V-1 (continued)				
Local government alienation index*				
High	21%	18%	34%	27%
Middle-high	9%	28%	25%	38%
Middle	24%	25%	23%	28%
Middle-low	26%	32%	25%	17%
Low	41%	23%	23%	13%

*Explanations for indexes:

The social trust index is comprised of two items: "Most people in the community can be trusted to do the right thing" and "Most people in the community show concern for others." Both items were a four-point agreement scale ranging from strongly agree to strongly disagree.

The altruism/rational calculus index is comprised of two items: "Every person should give some time for the good of their local community," and "It is no use paying attention to local current events and public affairs because you can't do anything about them anyway." Both items were a four-point agreement scale.

The mutual support index is comprised of three items: "Do you have someone outside your immediate family whom you can count on to help you if you need it?"; "Do you have friends or neighbors who count on you to help them when they need it?"; "In the past month, have you helped a friend or neighbor?" Response categories were yes, no, don't know.

The fit in/friendly index is comprised of three items: "How easy or difficult do you think it is for a newcomer to fit into your local community?"; "How well do you feel you fit into and are accepted by your local community?"; "How friendly are the people in your local community?" Each item had a four-point scale.

The attention of government leaders index is comprised of two items: "When your local government leaders decide what policies to adopt, how much attention do you think they pay to what the people think?"; "If you had some complaint and took it to a member of the local government council, do you think that member would pay a lot of attention?" Each item had a four-point scale.

The local government alienation index is comprised of two items: "People like you aren't represented in your local government"; "When you think about politics in your community, you feel like an outsider." Both were four-point agreement scales.

_____

Analysis of Community Attitudes by Region of the State

Because of their apparent importance in affecting the level of civic engagement, it is worth looking at these selected community attitudes more closely. Here, we look at the distribution of these attitudes in the total sample. We also look at how these attitudes compare across different kinds of communities. For this purpose, we examine these attitudes both by geographic region and by the self-described urban/rural nature of the respondents' local communities. (See the results that are presented in Table V-2.)

For our geographic analysis, we divided Illinois into four geographic regions: city of Chicago; Chicago area suburbs; north/central Illinois; and southern Illinois. For the urban/rural analysis, respondents identified their community in terms of one of the following five descriptions: urban, suburban, middle-sized city, small city or town, and rural.

It should be noted that when there are differences in geographic regions or in urban/rural areas, the reasons could be related to characteristics about the region and/or area, they could be due to the types of people who live there, or a combination of both.

Evaluations of community as a place to live. One-third (35%) of the respondents rated their community "excellent" as a place to live, while half (48%) rated it as "good," and one in five (18%) rated it "fair" or "poor."

Our geographic look at these ratings shows that those in the Chicago suburban area overall gave their communities the most positive ratings here followed closely by those in north/central Illinois. Respondents in southern Illinois and in the city of Chicago gave their communities much less positive ratings, in that order.

When we look at these ratings by the urban/rural nature of the respondents' communities, we find that suburban respondents overall gave their communities the most positive ratings followed by those in small cities/towns and then those in rural areas. Those in urban areas and in middle-sized cities (the two "urban" areas) are the least positive in their evaluations here.

Social trust/concern index. One in five (21%) of all respondents are in strong agreement that you can trust others in their community and that those in their community show concern for others. Another one in five (20%) disagree with these statements. One in six (59%) are more qualified in their responses, with a mixture of qualified agreement and disagreement.

The overall level of reported social trust/concern is greatest in north/central Illinois and in the Chicago suburbs and is lowest in the city of Chicago. For urban/rural areas, those in rural areas reported the greatest level of trust/concern, and those in urban areas reported the lowest level of trust/concern.

Civic pride. One-third (34%) of all respondents strongly agree that most people in their community have a sense of civic pride, and another 45% agree. One in five (20%) disagree. Those in the Chicago suburbs and in north/central Illinois reported the highest overall level of civic pride, while more of those in the city of Chicago than in other areas disagreed that most people have civic pride. For urban/rural areas, the order in terms of reported civic pride is: rural area respondents (1st by a small margin); suburban respondents (2nd); respondents in small cities/towns and in middle-sized cities (tied for 3rd); and respondents in urban areas (last).

Attitudes regarding altruism (everyone should give some time) and no use paying attention to local current events. Nearly half (48%) of all respondents strongly agreed that *every person should give some time for the good of their community*, and another four of 10 (43%) indicated they somewhat agree. Only one in 10 (9%) disagree. Here, there are no significant differences across the four regions or across the five urban/rural areas. However, it is worth mentioning that those who strongly agree with this are more prevalent in the city of Chicago and in north/central Illinois than in the other two regions. And, generally speaking, respondents in the Chicago suburbs, and suburban respondents in general, expressed less agreement with this than those in the other regions/areas.

Half (51%) of the respondents strongly disagreed that it is *no use paying attention to local current events and public affairs because you can't do something about them anyway*. Another three of 10 (28%) indicated they somewhat disagree with this. About one in five (21%) agreed. Here, there are no significant differences across either the four regions of the state or across the five urban/rural areas. However, it is worth pointing out that three in 10 (30%) of those in southern Illinois agreed with this, compared to one in five (20%) in every other region.

(As mentioned earlier, both of these items were combined into an index of altruism vs. rational calculus, a measure that places respondents into altruistic and rational

categories <u>only relative</u> to all other responses. For this particular analysis, the more meaningful results are presented for the specific items above.)

Mutual support. Seven of 10 (70%) respondents score at the highest level on our mutual support index. That is, they have someone they can count on if they need it; they are a person that someone else counts on; and they have helped a friend or neighbor in the past month. One in five (21%) responded "yes" to two of the three items, and less than one in 10 (8%) responded "yes" to either one or none of these three items.

There is no significant difference in mutual support across the four regions. But it is worth noting that the percentage who score low on this index are more prevalent in small cities and towns and in rural areas than in the more urban/suburban areas (11 to 12% vs. 6 to 7%).

Perceptions of openness, acceptance, and friendliness of community. We asked three questions that relate to respondents' opinions in these areas. When asked *how easy or difficult it is for a newcomer to fit into their local community*, nearly one in three (28%) of all respondents said "very easy," and nearly half (46%) said "somewhat easy." One in four (26%) said it would be difficult. When asked *how well the respondents themselves fit into and are accepted by their local community*, more than four in 10 (44%) of all respondents said "a lot." More than one-third (36%) said "some," and the remaining one in five (20%) either said "not much" or "not at all." And, when asked *how friendly are the people in your community*, one in four (27%) said "very friendly." Six of 10 (60%) said "somewhat friendly," and one in eight (13%) said either "not very friendly" or "not at all friendly."

These three items were combined into *an overall index* measuring overall perceptions of a community's openness, acceptance, and friendliness. We then divided the sample into five groups, roughly equal in size, based upon their index scores (high, middle-high, middle, middle-low, and low). As seen in the results, presented in Table X2, respondents in the Chicago suburbs and in north/central Illinois overall report more openness, acceptance, and friendliness than do those in the city of Chicago or in southern Illinois. And, overall, those in urban areas have the lowest index scores here followed by those in rural areas.

Evaluations of influence and power. Two questions were asked that assessed respondents' evaluations of their own influence and that of the power structure in their local community.

When asked *how much influence you and your immediate family have in your local community*, one in 10 (9%) said "a lot," four in 10 (40%) said "some," three in 10 (31%) said "not much," and one in five (19%) said "none at all." Across all four regions, there is no significant difference in these assessments (although fewer in north/central Illinois say "none at all"). But there is a significant difference across the five urban/rural areas. Overall, those in rural areas assess their influence as greater than do those in other areas. Respondents in urban areas are more likely than all but the respondents in rural areas to say they have "a lot" of influence; however, they are also the most likely to say that they have no influence at all.

When asked whether *a small group controls the power in your local community or is power shared by a number of groups* (elitism vs. pluralism), three of 10 (30%) say

power is shared, half (50%) say power is shared, and the remaining one in five (20%) offered another response. Those in southern Illinois are far more likely than those in the other regions to say that a small group controls the power, and those in the Chicago metro region are least likely to say so. Consistent with this, as the size of the community decreases, the percentage of respondents who say a small group controls power increases: urban and suburban areas (26% and 24% say so); middle-sized cities (31%); small cities and towns (34%); and rural areas (39%).

General efficacy and political efficacy. Two questions were asked to assess respondents' efficacy (the belief that one's action can make a difference), one of which asked about general efficacy and the other that specifically asked about political efficacy.

When asked *how much do you think individuals can do to improve their lives* (general efficacy), more than half (54%) of all respondents said "a lot," and nearly four in 10 (38%) said "some." Less than one in 10 (8%) said either "not much" or "nothing." Overall, those in the Chicago metro area show a higher level of general efficacy than do "downstate" respondents, and – within the Chicago metro area – those in the city of Chicago show more general efficacy than do those in the Chicago suburbs. Looking at the overall results for urban/rural areas, respondents in the middle-sized cities show the greatest general efficacy, followed by those in urban areas, then suburban areas, and then rural areas. Overall, those in small cities/towns reported having less general efficacy than those in other areas.

When asked *how much you think individuals like you can do to affect what your local government does* (political efficacy), one in four (24%) said "a lot," while half (52%) said "some" and another one in four (24%) said either "not much" or "nothing." More of those in southern Illinois (of the four regions) and in rural areas (of the five urban/rural regions) reported they can do little or nothing.

Attitudes about ways to influence government. Two questions were about ways that citizens have to influence local government. The first asked about their agreement with the statement that *it is the duty of every citizen to vote*. Eight of 10 (80%) of all respondents strongly agreed, and another one in seven (14%) agreed somewhat. Only one in 20 (6%) disagreed. This does not differ significantly by either region or by urban/rural area.

The second asked about respondents' agreement with the statement, *there is no other way than voting that people like you can influence the actions of government*. Somewhat more disagreed (55%) than agreed (45%) with this statement. Three of 10 (29%) strongly disagreed, two of 10 (19%) strongly agreed, and the rest were equally split between those who agreed and disagreed somewhat (26% each). The proportion who strongly agree with this is more in the city of Chicago than it is in the other three regions. There is no significant difference in this attitude across the urban/rural areas.

Evaluations of attention of local government. Two questions were asked regarding respondents' evaluations of the extent to which its local governmental leaders paid attention to the people, and to them.

First, respondents were asked, *"When your local government leaders decide what policies to adopt, how much attention do you think they pay to what the people think?"*

One in four (25%) of all respondents said "a lot," and half (52%) said "some." One in six (17%) said "very little," and about one in 20 (6%) said "none at all."

In the next question, respondents were asked, *"If you had some complaint and took it to a member of the local government council, how much attention would that member pay?"* Just over one in five (22%) said "a lot," and more than half (55%) said "some." Just less than one in five (18%) said "not much," and less than one in 20 (4%) said "none at all."

Responses to these two items were combined to produce *an index measuring evaluations of the attention of local government leaders*. In terms of their combined attentiveness ratings, respondents were categorized into those with relative attention ratings of high (15%), moderately-high (18%), moderately-low (39%), and low (29%). On this index, respondents living in the Chicago suburbs and in north/central Illinois show more positive evaluations than do those living in southern Illinois. And the latter show more positive evaluations than do those living in the city of Chicago. Respondents living in suburban areas and in small cities/towns show more positive evaluations here than do those living in middle-sized cities or rural areas. And both of these show more positive evaluations than do those living in urban areas.

Alienation from local government. Two questions inquired about respondents' alienation from their local government. In the first, respondents were asked their agreement with the statement that *people like them are not represented in their local government*. Nearly six of 10 (58%) disagreed with this statement (26% strongly, 32% somewhat), and four of 10 agreed (14% strongly agreeing, and 28% somewhat agreeing).

In the second question, respondents were asked about their agreement with the statement that *when they think about politics, they feel like an outsider*. Here, just over half disagreed (54% – with 24% strongly disagreeing, and 29% somewhat disagreeing), while just less than half agreed (42% – with 19% strongly agreeing, and 27% somewhat agreeing).

Responses to these two items were combined to produce *a local government alienation index.* The overall sample was divided into five groups, depending upon their overall alientation scores. Consistent with the results for the items reported above, the size of the groups with the lower alienation scores were somewhat bigger than those with the higher alienation scores.

Analyzing this alienation index by geographic region shows the lowest overall alienation present in the Chicago suburbs and then north/central Illinois and relatively more alienation present in both the city of Chicago and in southern Illinois. While differences across the five urban/rural areas are not significant, it is worth noting the highest proportions of those with low alienation are found in the suburban and rural areas.

Table V-2
Selected Community Attitudes
for Total Sample and by Region of State and by Urban/Rural Nature of Community

Community attitudes	Total sample	REGION OF STATE				URBAN / RURAL DESCRIPTION				
		City of Chicago	Chicago suburbs	North / central	South-ern	Urban area	Subur-ban	Middle-sized city	Small city / town	Rural area
Read DOWN, as in: 35% of the total sample rated their community excellent as a place to live, 48% rated it good, and 18% rated it fair or poor. Doing this, we can compare attitudes in four different regions of the state and in five different types of "urban/rural areas," as described by the respondents themselves.										
Rate community as place to live										
Excellent	35%	19%	45%	38%	18%	25%	46%	26%	36%	31%
Good	48%	50%	44%	46%	62%	50%	45%	55%	46%	47%
Fair or poor	18%	31%	12%	16%	19%	25%	10%	18%	18%	22%
Social trust/concern index*										
High	21%	10%	25%	24%	17%	13%	25%	18%	21%	29%
Middle	59%	60%	56%	63%	62%	58%	57%	64%	65%	55%
Low	20%	30%	19%	13%	21%	30%	19%	19%	15%	16%
Most have civic pride										
Strongly agree	34%	24%	40%	38%	25%	29%	40%	30%	32%	40%
Agree	45%	48%	41%	45%	56%	43%	40%	52%	52%	45%
Disagree/strongly disagree	20%	28%	19%	16%	18%	28%	20%	18%	16%	16%
Every person should give time										
Strongly agree	48%	54%	44%	50%	44%	51%	43%	48%	47%	53%
Agree	43%	39%	44%	42%	48%	42%	46%	45%	45%	34%
Disagree/strongly disagree	9%	7%	11%	7%	8%	7%	11%	6%	8%	13%
No use paying attention to local events										
Agree	21%	20%	20%	20%	30%	20%	19%	22%	23%	25%
Somewhat disagree	28%	28%	27%	29%	23%	30%	29%	33%	22%	25%
Strongly disagree	51%	52%	52%	51%	47%	51%	52%	45%	56%	49%
Mutual support index*										
High	70%	71%	69%	72%	71%	75%	69%	72%	68%	70%
Middle	21%	20%	24%	20%	18%	18%	26%	21%	20%	19%
Low	8%	8%	8%	9%	11%	7%	6%	6%	12%	11%

Table V-2 (continued)		REGION OF STATE				URBAN / RURAL DESCRIPTION				
Community attitudes	Total sample	City of Chicago	Chicago suburbs	North / central	South-ern	Urban area	Subur-ban	Middle-sized city	Small city / town	Rural area
Fit in/friendly index*										
High	18%	11%	22%	20%	13%	14%	21%	21%	21%	12%
Middle-high	21%	20%	21%	23%	17%	21%	18%	21%	22%	25%
Middle	19%	21%	20%	12%	21%	22%	20%	14%	14%	21%
Middle-low	22%	18%	21%	26%	22%	16%	25%	25%	22%	22%
Low	20%	30%	15%	19%	27%	27%	16%	20%	20%	20%
How much influence have										
Lot	9%	12%	7%	11%	8%	12%	6%	6%	8%	16%
Some	40%	42%	40%	40%	41%	40%	37%	42%	44%	41%
Not much	31%	25%	33%	34%	30%	25%	37%	32%	31%	28%
None	19%	21%	21%	14%	22%	22%	20%	20%	17%	15%
Elitism/pluralism										
Small groups controls power	30%	23%	27%	33%	46%	26%	24%	31%	34%	39%
Power shared by groups	50%	51%	52%	52%	39%	51%	51%	52%	52%	45%
Other	20%	26%	22%	14%	16%	23%	26%	18%	14%	16%
General individual efficacy										
A lot can do	54%	62%	56%	45%	48%	62%	55%	58%	44%	50%
Some	38%	28%	35%	50%	44%	28%	35%	40%	50%	41%
Not much/nothing	8%	10%	9%	5%	8%	10%	10%	2%	6%	9%
Political efficacy										
A lot can do	24%	24%	26%	21%	19%	22%	26%	22%	26%	18%
Some	52%	52%	54%	52%	47%	54%	54%	62%	48%	47%
Not much/nothing	24%	24%	20%	27%	34%	23%	20%	16%	26%	34%
Attention of government leaders index*										
High	15%	4%	18%	18%	15%	8%	18%	16%	16%	17%
Middle-high	18%	12%	21%	19%	15%	15%	19%	19%	21%	15%
Middle-low	39%	34%	39%	42%	38%	36%	42%	36%	39%	36%
Low	29%	50%	22%	21%	33%	40%	21%	29%	24%	32%
Citizen duty to vote										
Strongly agree	80%	80%	82%	78%	81%	80%	84%	78%	80%	76%
Agree	14%	14%	12%	17%	15%	14%	10%	18%	14%	18%
Disagree/strongly disagree	6%	6%	7%	4%	4%	6%	6%	4%	6%	6%

Table V-2 (continued)		REGION OF STATE					URBAN / RURAL DESCRIPTION				
Community attitudes	Total sample	City of Chicago	Chicago suburbs	North / central	South-ern	Urban area	Subur-ban	Middle-sized city	Small city / town	Rural area
No other way than voting to influence local government										
Strongly agree	19%	27%	18%	16%	18%	20%	19%	19%	19%	20%
Somewhat agree	26%	24%	23%	31%	29%	26%	23%	26%	29%	29%
Somewhat disagree	26%	23%	28%	24%	26%	25%	26%	23%	28%	24%
Strongly disagree	29%	26%	32%	28%	26%	29%	32%	32%	24%	27%
Local government alienation index*										
High	16%	20%	13%	13%	24%	20%	13%	14%	16%	16%
Middle–high	17%	18%	16%	20%	11%	16%	17%	21%	19%	13%
Middle	21%	18%	21%	20%	26%	18%	20%	25%	22%	20%
Middle–low	21%	24%	19%	22%	20%	24%	19%	18%	20%	21%
Low	26%	19%	31%	26%	20%	21%	31%	22%	23%	30%

Section VI: Selected Demographic Groups and Civic Engagement

Next in this report, we will examine the level of civic engagement by selected demographic groups. Earlier, when describing the seven types of engagers, we offered demographic profiles for each of the groups. So here we will focus on similarities and differences for total civic engagement and for activity levels in each of the eight categories of activity.

Does Civic Engagement Differ by Geographic Region?

We analyzed the aspects of civic engagement by four geographic regions of the state: city of Chicago; Chicago suburbs; north/central Illinois; and southern Illinois.

The level of overall civic engagement does not differ much at all for three of the four regions (north/central Illinois, Chicago suburbs, and city of Chicago, in that order). But southern Illinois residents show a somewhat lower level of overall civic engagement.

The same is basically true for the level of community involvement. Within this area, the number of types of local organizations to which respondents belong does differ by region, with the number increasing consistently as one moves from southern Illinois up to the city of Chicago. However, the number of types of organizations to which respondents volunteer does not differ significantly across the four regions.

Perhaps surprisingly, no significant differences are found across the four regions for overall religious activity. And the same is true for discussion of politics and current events. But other activity areas show greater differences.

Chicago suburban respondents have the highest level of contribution activity, while residents of the city of Chicago and southern Illinois have the lowest. On the other hand, city of Chicago residents have the highest level of news exposure, while again southern Illinois residents, by a small margin over Chicago suburban respondents, have the lowest level. City of Chicago residents also have the highest level of technology-based activity, and again southern Illinois residents have the lowest level.

On the other hand, southern Illinois respondents reported the highest level of political activity. And, for informal socializing, north/central residents reported the highest level of activity.

Does Civic Engagement Differ by Urban/Rural Areas?

For this analysis, we rely on respondents' own reports of the nature of their community. They were asked to describe their community as urban, suburban, middle-sized city, small city or town, or rural.

The level of overall civic engagement does differ by the urban/rural nature of the community, with residents of urban areas showing the highest level of civic engagement and residents of rural areas showing the lowest level.

The same observation holds for the level of community involvement. And within this area, the number of types of organizations respondents volunteer to and are members of is generally greatest in urban areas and fewest in rural areas.

No significant difference is found across the five urban/rural regions in their levels of religious activity, political activity, and discussion of current events and public affairs. But differences are apparent in other activity areas.

Residents of middle-size cities reported far more informal socializing than was the case in any other urban/rural area. For contribution activity, suburban residents and then middle-sized cities residents reported the highest levels of activity while rural residents reported the lowest.

Rural residents also reported the lowest level of news exposure, while those in urban areas reported the highest level. And, for technology-based activity, the level of activity consistently increases as we move from the more rural to the more urban areas.

Do Men and Women Differ in Civic Engagement?

Men and women are very similar in their level of total civic engagement. But there are differences between them with regard to some of the areas of engagement.

For instance, men are significantly more active in informal socializing, discussion of politics and current affairs, and technology-based activities. But women are significantly more active in religious activities.

There are no significant differences between men and women in their level of political activities, news exposure, and contribution activity. Neither is there a significant difference between men and women in their level of community involvement as a whole. But, within this area, women do volunteer to more types of organizations than do men. And, while men are members of more types of local organizations than are women, this difference disappears when only active memberships are considered.

Do Age Groups Differ in Civic Engagement?

For purposes of analysis, the sample was split into three age groups: 60 years of age and older (the oldest age group); 40 to 59 years old (the middle-aged group); and under 40 years of age (the youngest age group).

There are significant differences across these age groups for total civic engagement and for each of the eight broad types of activity. However, the pattern of the differences changes depending upon the type of activity.

Middle-aged respondents show the highest level of total civic engagement, while the oldest age group shows the lowest level. The same is true for community involvement. And within this community involvement area, this is also the case for the number of types of organizations respondents volunteer to on a regular basis and the number they are active members of.

Middle-aged respondents also show the highest level for political activity, discussion of politics and current affairs, and contributions. For political activity and contributions, the youngest respondents show the lowest level of activity. For discussion of politics and current events, it is the oldest group who shows the lowest level.

For two types of engagement, church activity and news exposure, the level of activity is positively related to age. That is, the oldest respondents have the highest level of activity followed by those who are middle-aged and then the youngest group, which has the lowest level of activity.

For two other types of engagement, technology-based activity and informal socializing, the order is reversed. Here, the youngest group has the highest level of activity and the oldest group has the lowest level of activity.

Do Racial/Ethnic Groups Differ in Civic Engagement?

Given the sample sizes for the various racial/ethnic groups, *it is only possible to compare the similarities and differences between white respondents and African-American respondents.* This in no way is meant to convey that other racial/ethnic groups are not important; rather, it is a limitation of a statewide study of this nature. (See discussion of this in Strengths and Limitations of the Study.)

There is no significant difference between white respondents and African-American respondents on their overall level of civic engagement. However, there are differences in some of the eight activity areas. (Just to note, respondents in the "other" racial/ethnic groups do show a lower level of civic engagement than do either white or African-American respondents.)

African-Americans have a higher level of community involvement than do whites. And, within this area, they volunteer to more types of organizations and are members of more types of organizations. African-Americans also have a higher level of religious activity and a higher level of news exposure.

On the other hand, white respondents have higher levels of secular contribution activity, informal socializing, and technology-based activity.

The two racial groups are very similar in their level of political activity and do not differ significantly in their level of discussion of politics and current affairs.

Does Education Make a Difference for Civic Engagement?

We examined aspects of civic engagement by three education levels: respondents with a high school diploma or G.E.D. or less education; respondents with some post-high school education or training; and respondents with a four-year college degree or more.

Respondents with higher education levels have a greater level of total civic engagement than do those with lower education levels. This observation also holds for four of the eight types of civic engagement activities as well: community involvement; political activity; technology-based activity; and contributions. It generally also holds for the

number of organizations respondents volunteer and belong to (within the community involvement area.)

For three of the four exceptions – church activity, news exposure, and discussion of politics and current events – those with a four-year college degree and those with some post-high school education have similar levels of activity. In turn, they show more activity here than do respondents with a high school diploma or less education. For informal socializing, those with some post-high school education have a higher level of activity than those with a four-year college degree. And both of these two groups socialize informally at higher levels than do those with a high school diploma or less.

Does Income Make a Difference for Civic Engagement?

For the purpose of analysis, respondents were divided into four groups according to their household income: 1) those with household incomes up to $30,000 a year; 2) those with household incomes between $30,000 and $50,000 a year; 3) those with household incomes between $50,000 and $75,000 a year; and 4) those with household incomes over $75,000 a year.

Respondents with consistently higher household income levels have consistently greater levels of total civic engagement. This pattern also holds for five of the eight types of activity: community involvement (as well as the number of types of organizations respondents volunteer to and are members of); contributions; political activity; technology-based activity; and discussion of politics and current affairs.

The exceptions lie in the areas of informal socializing, religious activity, and news exposure, where there is little difference across the groups for informal socializing; those in the top three income categories have similar levels of religious activity and more than that for those in the lowest income category; and those in the highest income category have a higher level of news exposure compared to all those in the three lower income categories.

Does Owning a Home Make a Difference for Civic Engagement?

For this analysis, respondents were categorized into those who own their residence and those who rent or live with others.

Those who own their homes have a higher level of civic engagement than those who do not. This is the case for every area of activity but two. For technology-based activity, those who do not own their residence have a higher level of activity than do homeowners. And the two groups are similar on the degree to which they discuss politics and current events.

Does Marital Status Make a Difference for Civic Engagement?

For this analysis, respondents were categorized into those who are married; those who are widowed; and those who are single or partnered. (For this particular analysis, partnered respondents seemed to have more in common with single respondents than with married respondents. In our earlier discussion of the types of engagers, placing

partnered respondents with either married or single respondents did not make a difference in the overall analysis.)

Married respondents have the highest level of total civic engagement followed by single respondents, and then widows. The same is true for community involvement (including, generally, volunteering and memberships) and discussion of politics and current events. Married respondents also have the highest level of contribution activity, but here single respondents are lowest. And, married respondents have the highest level of political activity, but here the other two groups are similar.

By a small margin, widows exceed married respondents in having the highest level of religious activity. And widows also have the highest level of regular exposure to news, with singles last in this area. Not surprisingly, singles have the highest levels of technology-based activity and informal socializing, and widows have the lowest levels.

Does Having Children Make a Difference for Civic Engagement?

Respondents were analyzed by whether or not they had children at home who were less than 18 years of age.

In terms of total civic engagement, those respondents with children are not significantly different than those without children. The same is true for political activity, regular exposure to news sources, and contributions.

For four of the activities, those with children are more engaged than those without children: community involvement; church activity; discussion of politics and current affairs; and technology-based activity. And, within the area of community involvement, those with children volunteer to and belong to a greater number of types of organizations than those without children.

On the other hand, those without children are more likely to socialize informally with others.

When the same analysis is done for *those who have or do not have pre-school children*, those with pre-school children more often than not have lower levels of engagement.

Does Having a Job Make a Difference for Civic Engagement?

For this analysis, respondents' employment status was categorized as employed full-time; employed part-time; retired; and not in the labor force (e.g., homemaker, student, disabled, and unemployed).

Having a job does make a difference for total civic engagement. Those with full-time jobs have a higher level of civic engagement than those with part-time jobs. They, in turn, have a higher level of civic engagement than do those who are retired. And they, in turn, have a higher level of civic engagement than do those who are not in the labor force.

For most areas of activity, there are differences across these four groups, but the pattern changes by area. Generally, however, either those with full-time jobs or the

retired are usually the ones who have the highest level of activity. And it is usually the case that those not in the labor force are among those with the lowest level of activity.

In the area of community involvement, those who have a job (either full-time or part-time) have a higher level of civic engagement than do those who do not (either retired or not in labor force). Within this activity, the same is generally true for the number of types of organizations to which respondents volunteer and belong.

Those with full-time jobs have the highest level of technology-based activity, discussion of politics and current events, and contribution activity. But for each of these areas, those with the lowest level differ: those who are retired (technology-based activity); those who do not have a job, either retired or not in labor force (discussion of politics and current events); and those not in the labor force (contribution activity).

Those not in the labor force are also lowest on political activity, but here those who are retired are slightly more active than those having jobs. And, it is the retired respondents who have, by far, the highest level of regular news exposure. Those with part-time jobs and those not in the labor force, have the lowest levels of such exposure. Retired respondents, this time along with those with part-time jobs, are also found to have higher levels of church activity than do the other two groups (those with full-time jobs and those not in the labor force).

Finally, the four groups are similar in their degree of informal socializing.

Does Civic Engagement Differ by Political Party?

Respondents were analyzed by their self-identified political party: Republican, Democrat, or independent. (Those who identified with other parties or who did not know were categorized as independent.)

Republicans show the highest level of total civic engagement, while Democrats and independents are quite similar. Republicans also show the highest level of activity for religious activity and contributions. For both, independents show the lowest level of activity. Republicans, by a smaller margin, also discuss politics and current affairs more than do either Democrats or independents, who are similar.

Both Republicans and Democrats are more likely than independents to participate in political activity and to regularly read, watch, or listen to the news. Independents and Republicans are more likely than Democrats to engage in technology-based activities and to socialize informally.

No significant difference is present across the three groups for community involvement. The same is true for the number of types of organizations that respondents volunteer and belong to.

Methodology of the Study: Survey Research

The Illinois Civic Engagement Project Survey Instrument was developed by staff of the Institute for Public Affairs and of the Survey Research Office of the University of Illinois at Springfield. The development of the instrument started in the spring of 1995 and then proceeded in "fits and starts," with the final push to completion coming after the survey was actually commissioned. In the development of this questionnaire, staff borrowed heavily from existing literature and survey instruments, but also wrote some of the questions themselves.

Pre-testing of a preliminary instrument, which contained much of the final closed-ended questions, was conducted with more than 400 respondents in the spring of 1999. In addition to giving us guidance on specific problems with question wording, this pre-testing helped us determine the order of the sections and suggested that we insert opinion-type questions in the midst of sections that inquired about whether or not respondents had done various activities. Frankly, consecutive questions of the latter type were tedious, both to those interviewed and to interviewers.

Another, and expanded, version of the questionnaire was pre-tested in the fall of 2000. This pre-test convinced us that the length of the survey would have to be cut. The major casualty in this cutting was a section involving the presence or absence of skills useful for civic engagement, and the sources of these skills (workplace, church, school, or other organizational activity).

Those contacted were selected from a random sample of telephone numbers, stratified by seven regions of the state: city of Chicago; Cook County suburbs; collar county suburbs; northern Illinois; central Illinois; Metro East (St. Louis-area counties in Illinois); and rural southern Illinois. The households chosen that had listed numbers (and thus home addresses) were sent an advance letter informing them about the study. All phone numbers were called a minimum of six times at different times and day of week.

The survey was conducted by telephone interviewing more than 1,000 respondents during a two and half month period, beginning in late November 2000 and ending in mid-February 2001. Nearly 1,050 (1,048) began the interview, and just over 1,000 (1,001) completed the entire interview. The average length of the interview was more than 30 minutes (median = 33 minutes). The telephone interviewing was conducted from the interviewing laboratory of the Survey Research Office of the University of Illinois at Springfield.

Overall, the sampling error for a statewide random sample of this size (about 1,000) is +/- 3% at the 95% confidence level. That is, 95 times out of 100, the actual results from the sample will be within 3 percentage points of the actual population characteristic being measured. The sampling error for subgroups is greater. As an illustration, we present examples for each of four geographic groups used in our analyses: city of Chicago (+/- 7%); Chicago suburbs (+/- 5%); north/central Illinois (+/- 6%); and southern Illinois (+/- 7%).

Examination of the demographic characteristics of the actual respondents suggested that the final sample needed to be adjusted for region of state, gender, race/ethnicity, and unlisted/listed number. Accordingly, these adjustments were made. Statisticians

call this "weighting." What happens here is counting those in groups who we know are under-represented somewhat more than "one each," and counting those in groups we know to be over-represented less than "one each." These adjustments result in a sample that is more representative of people in the state as a whole. In turn, this results in better estimates of the characteristics we are attempting to measure.

The following explains a bit more about the why's and what's of our specific weighting procedures for those who are interested.

- Weighting for region of state was built into our original sample design, and was necessitated by our desire to be able to reach conclusions about the less populated areas of the state. Regardless of the population in an area, the fact is you have to talk to a certain number of respondents for the results to be valid.

- We always over-represent female respondents, regardless of the methods we use to minimize this. So we always adjust for this.

- For this survey, we also adjusted for race/ethnicity, particularly within the city of Chicago. We think this was done successfully for African-Americans, because the adjustment necessary here was minimal. However, for other minority groups – such as Hispanics in Chicago – the adjustment we were willing to make had limits. [These limits stemmed not from any belief that this group (or others) is not important; rather, we could not take a very small number of respondents, resulting from our statewide sample number, and artificially inflate them to a number and "pretend" they were representative of the entire group. It seemed better to acknowledge this limitation of the study.]

- We also adjusted for the proportion of households who have listed versus unlisted numbers.

In addition, we had a concern about the length of the survey, one of the longest we have conducted with the general public, and the possibility of bias. Specifically, we had a concern that those with more community involvement would be more likely to respond than those who were not involved. Yet, there was another potential bias, expressed by a Steering Committee member who was very "civically engaged" and who said, "I wouldn't have the time to do the interview." So it was not at all clear that the bias, across all individual sample members, would only be in the direction of inflating our activity percentages.

We attempted to minimize any such bias in several ways. First, we indicated in our survey introduction that talking to people who are not involved – and learning more about why they are not involved – was as important to the study as talking to those who were involved. Second, for listed households, we emphasized this in our advance letter as well. And third, we called back households that originally refused the longer interview and offered to give them an abbreviated 10-minute version. The abbreviated interview did not, by necessity, include most of the closed-ended questions about whether or not respondents had done the various specific activities in each of the eight areas. Yet, it did contain the initial questions about community involvement over the last five years so that we could gain some indication of how much, if any, our original sample was overestimating civic engagement.

We completed nearly 300 (278) of these abbreviated interviews. Earlier in this summary, we reported that 64% of the respondents who completed the longer interview indicated they have been involved in their community in the last five years. In the shorter interviews, 60% indicated such. From this we conclude that the length of the interview itself only inflates the activity percentages by an extremely small amount. And it should be emphasized that this summary report is based upon those who completed the lengthier interview. Indeed, most of the findings contained in this summary report could only be based on these respondents who completed the longer survey (given the measures of civic engagement that we constructed).

Strengths and Limitations of the Survey

The Strengths. Perhaps the greatest strength of our study of civic engagement in Illinois is the variety of engagement activities that we ask about, all within the context of one interview. Frankly, constructing a survey instrument that allowed us to do this and also make it at least somewhat interesting to the respondents was a challenge from the beginning, particularly given the results from the initial pre-test and feedback from interviewers at this stage. But the importance of including the variety of activities was reinforced by Project Steering Committee members when they indicated that this "multi-dimensional" aspect was a unique characteristic of this study. In the end, we felt this was accomplished, and through a telephone interview that we felt "flowed well." Interviewers also reported it did so.

We also include a variety of "new" kinds of activity that we believe are a part of civic engagement, or at least have important consequences for the nature of civic engagement (depending upon one's definition of civic engagement). These new kinds of activity include talk/call-in show exposure, informal socializing, and technology-based activity.

Another strength, and one that we admittedly have just "scratched the surface," is addressing areas that had been relatively neglected in the literature on participation and involvement. At the time we were developing our survey questionnaire, research had focused on the "demand side" of participation and involvement. That is, it had focused on the public's interest and degree of activity, and the demographic characteristics giving rise to this interest and activity. A neglected aspect had been the "supply side" of this equation, and we attempted to address some of the topics on this side of "the equation." In fact, we added questions to our initial survey instrument to specifically do so. More specifically, we added questions about the issues that motivated respondents' involvement as well as the recruitment networks that did so. We also asked respondents about their local communities, to assess the extent to which they perceived characteristics of these communities as supporting or impeding their involvement.

While overlapping with some of the strengths above, it is also worth pointing out that the first part of our survey instrument in large part was devoted to respondents' reporting aspects of their community and neighborhood involvement in the past five years in response to numerous open-ended questions. Thus, the survey instrument, as a whole, contains a rich blend of both open-ended reports of community involvement and responses to closed-ended questions about pre-determined activities.

While in a very important respect a limitation (see below), the nature of our sample is also a strength in another respect. This is because it allows us to generalize about areas of the state that are less populous. Specifically, we mean that we can make conclusions about southern Illinois and, even more so (given some of the findings), the self-identified rural areas of the state. It also means we can make some conclusions about residents of the middle-sized cities in Illinois.

The Limitations. While in some ways a strength (see above), one of the biggest limitations of our study also has to do with its sample. Because we wanted a statewide study and had a limit on the total number we could survey, we lack the ability to generalize to minority groups other than African-Americans. And even for African-Americans, we knew that further demographic breakdowns of them (by such characteristics as age, level of education, or income) would not be valid. For minority groups other than African-Americans (for instance, Hispanics), we acknowledge that our final sample also under-represents them, even when weighting is done. For our statewide results, we would argue that this has a minimal effect on our results. But at the same time, we would argue that our limitation here calls for additional research into their civic engagement levels, because they are important in and of themselves, and because they are an increasingly important part of the Illinois population.

Other limitations are related to how we measured several concepts in this study. For instance, in the measurement of the number of local organizations to which respondents volunteered and belonged, we asked whether respondents belonged to various specific types of organizations. Thus, those who volunteered – or belonged to – more than one organization of a given type are under-counted. We believe this was alleviated, at least to some extent, by asking a question about volunteering to – or belonging to – an "other" organization, thus allowing respondents to identify important organizations to them. (And, because of this limitation, we counted this as an additional type when we constructed our volunteering and membership index scores.)

We also believe that how we measured the level of activity in some of the areas – such as technology-based activity and informal socializing, for example – need more work. Much of the needed work here is no doubt conceptual, perhaps even theoretical, in nature; more specifically, we need to think about how activity in these areas does relate, *and can relate*, to civic engagement. The same is true for some specific activities within the broad categories, such as talk/call-in show activity with the area of news exposure.

Still another limitation is that we, by necessity in this kind of research, focused on the quantity of activities identified and, when we could, on the amount of activity expended. We did not measure the quality of the activity itself, as relevant to the concept of civic engagement.

A final limitation we wish to note relates to the part of the questionnaire we had to drop because of the length of the interview. This part was the one asking about the development of civic skills and where these skills were developed. This area is in need of more research.

FOCUS GROUP REPORT

Executive Summary

The Illinois Civic Engagement Project set out to help individuals and organizations in Illinois enhance and sustain civic engagement for the benefit of their communities. Specifically, members of the Project wanted to understand better the differences between those individuals who are civically engaged and those who are not, and to explore the role social networks play in civic engagement in Illinois.

Focus groups with civically engaged and those who are minimally engaged, or non-engaged individuals present an important opportunity to understand the impact social networks have on volunteer activity. In fall 2000, the Illinois Civic Engagement Project engaged Lipman Hearne Inc. in Chicago to conduct qualitative focus group research to help identify the differences between individuals who are highly engaged and those who are not and to help identify means for engaging Illinois citizens in volunteer activity. Seven focus groups were conducted in four locations. Three focus groups were conducted with civically engaged individuals (one group each in Carbondale, Peoria, and Deerfield) and four focus groups were conducted with civically unengaged individuals (one group each in Carbondale, Peoria, Deerfield, and Chicago).

The following section highlights the central conclusions of the focus-group discussions as well as the implications and recommendations for the Project. A full report of the methodology and key findings follows this summary.

Focus Groups: Overall Conclusions

- Individuals' definitions of "involvement" vary tremendously. We defined "unengaged" as having limited involvement with activities, causes, and community issues. However, many of the unengaged respondents were either currently involved with or had been involved with civic activities or causes, although they did not initially define their activities as "civic" in nature. In some instances, involvement was not top-of-mind or was perceived to as not "bettering the community."

- Engaged respondents were more aware of and involved in their social groups and were more likely to become involved in a community issue or civic organization through these social groups than were unengaged respondents. Unengaged respondents, on the other hand, were less involved with social networks and more likely to be involved in community and/or civic organizations or issues through their children, an individual neighbor, or a personal interest cause (e.g., a benefit for a friend who needs surgery or emergency care).

- In addition to a lack of awareness about volunteer opportunities in their communities, unengaged respondents were more concerned with the specific details pertaining to their potential involvement than were engaged respondents. To feel comfortable and capable of becoming involved, unengaged respondents needed to know the length of the commitment, the number of hours involved, and the type of work required. They were also concerned about whether they could be personally successful at the job and feared working on a project that didn't fit their already known skills.

- The problems respondents identified in their communities (such as gang activity, crime, high taxes, and so on) were seen as so pervasive and uncontrollable that it was difficult for unengaged respondents to see how their small share of potential volunteer activity could make a difference.

- There was a sense, particularly in Chicago and Carbondale, that people work hard to create "safe places" for them and their families. The need for civic engagement implies that there is a threat to these safe places or that they could potentially be spoiled.

- Engaged respondents had a sense of the larger whole, that there was a "ripple effect" to their involvement. They viewed their activities as having effects beyond themselves and that their involvement with an individual, group or cause would have an impact on the larger community, even on seemingly unrelated issues. They recognized that even simple acts such as keeping their yards tidy could indeed have a positive impact on large, serious problems in their community.

- As schools have become more regional and businesses more national, we no longer live and work in the same communities. Residents may not be aware of issues and concerns in their own communities because they spend relatively little time in their hometowns. Business owners and managers are not as concerned with the communities in which they do business because they answer to supervisors in other cities and states. Community communication networks appear to have broken down. Community residents may not know business owners, teachers or coaches as they may have in the past. In the past, these were often the people who saw community problems and issues and brought them to the public's attention. The need now exists to identify other means and ways to "get the word out."

Implications and Recommendations

Engaging Illinois citizens will require that not-for-profit organizations and civic leadership work smarter and more strategically. Citizens are eager to help, but are not always aware of the opportunities that exist, and if they are, they fear being "over tasked" and "over asked." There are several ways organizations can assist citizens to move beyond their fears and "get the word out." Some of these methods include:

Lower the threshold of entry
- Identify and provide opportunities for first-time volunteers to be successful
- Clearly lay out the different levels of commitment, offering one-shot opportunities along with more lengthy time commitments
- Highlight start and end times and dates of commitment
- Communicate clearly the necessary steps to get involved
- Provide positive feedback about the impact of volunteer activities for both individuals who are involved as well as the cumulative effects of volunteer activities in the community
- Inform citizens through local newspapers, flyers and the Internet
- Establish a civic support/volunteer calendar or newsletter to be distributed through local newspapers, town halls, and/or local businesses
- Highlight "local heroes" in the news letter and what these individuals have done on both small and large scales

- Engage newly arrived individuals through a survey or talent bank questionnaire (perhaps distributed through organizations such as "Welcome Wagon") outlining volunteer opportunities and soliciting volunteer interests
- Establish a volunteer database, listing individuals' contact information, volunteer interests, and time availability. This volunteer database could, in turn, be accessed by local towns to assist in contacting potential volunteers.
- Support the creation of community Web sites which highlight volunteer opportunities

Encourage those already involved to share their positive experiences
- Educate potential volunteers about the "ripple effect" and the impact one individual can have on the larger community
- Personalize the volunteer experience and the important role of just one volunteer
- Describe the stages from beginning to end of a volunteer experience

Explain in detail what it means to be a volunteer
- Either through a newsletter, the Web, or word-of-mouth help potential volunteers understand what it means to be a volunteer
- Highlight the importance of one-shot opportunities along with longer term commitments
- Identify specific skills required for wide range of projects

Create a personal comfort zone for volunteers
- Allow volunteers to say "no" to any given volunteer opportunity
- Encourage volunteers to be involved with organization on different levels
- Allow volunteers to have intermittent contact with the organization
- Educate volunteers on the usefulness of their contribution and the "ripple effect"

Focus group detailed report, including methodology

Focus groups were conducted with Illinois residents defined as civically engaged or civically unengaged in December 2000 and January 2001. Lipman Hearne researchers conducted a total of seven focus groups in four cities with the following constituents:

- Three groups of civically engaged individuals between the ages of 29 and 65 (one each in Carbondale, Peoria, and Deerfield). These individuals were screened to ensure that they had:
  - Had been involved in any civic activity, either alone or with others, provided a service for a group in the community, or tried to do something about a neighborhood or community issue or problem in the past year (other than a church-related issue or problem)
  - Considered themselves to be somewhat or very active in the community

- Four groups of civically unengaged individuals between the ages of 25 to 70 (one group each in Carbondale, Peoria, Deerfield, and Chicago). These individuals were screened to ensure that they:
  - Had not been involved in any civic activity, either alone or with others, provided a service for a group in the community or tried to do something about a neighborhood or community issue or problem in the past year (other than a church-related issue or problem)

- Considered themselves to be not very or not at all active in the community

- All focus group participants worked full or part time (at least 20 hours per week)

Specific objectives of the project were to:

- Understand the difference between individuals who are highly engaged in the civic arena and those who are not
- Determine their reasons for participating or not participating
- Identify the networks of civically engaged individuals and how they differ from those who are minimally or not at all engaged
- Determine how various networks facilitate or hinder civic involvement and how these networks are utilized to enhance engagement
- Identify different forms of civic engagement and participants' understanding of involvement
- Assess interest in current and future civic involvement
- Ascertain ways to enhance and sustain civic engagement
- Identify community and regional differences

The issues discussed in the focus groups included:

- ***Citizenship and Community***: how respondents describe their community/neighborhood as a place to live; what problems there are in the community; what it means to be a citizen in the community; how involved they are in the community

- ***Social Networks***: how respondents describe their social networks; solicitations from friends, relatives, and/or members of social networks to participate in volunteer or civic activities; awareness of leaders in the community and their relationships with those individuals

- ***Civic Involvement***: how respondents describe their perceived impact on community; identification of the community issues or problems they have been involved with in the past year; motivation to stay involved; knowledge or skills that are useful for civic involvement

This report summarizes key findings and implications of the focus group discussions in the following three sections:

- Community membership and citizenship
- Social networks and civic involvement
- Leadership and civic involvement

The moderator's guides, developed in consultation with the Illinois Civic Engagement Project team, can be found in Appendix A. A copy of the screener used to determine membership in either the civically engaged or unengaged group can be found in Appendix B. The focus groups were audiotaped and transcriptions can be found in Appendix C of this report. Direct quotes of participants' comments are italicized throughout the report.

Caveat

It should be remembered that qualitative research findings such as these cannot be considered absolute or necessarily representative of specific market segments due to limited sample sizes, nonrandom recruiting, and general group discussion dynamics. The information in this report should be considered directional and as a stimulus to discussion and further planning. It is also important to note that the research findings report respondents' *images and perceptions*, which in some cases we recognize as not being factually correct.

Community membership implies a sense of belonging

Engaged and unengaged respondents held similar attitudes and beliefs about community and citizenship. Overall, they believed that living in a community involves a sense of belonging – you know your neighbors, people watch out for each other, and individuals are actively involved with what goes on in the neighborhood. Communities that encouraged and facilitated this sense of belonging were good places to raise children, were often centered around the school, and were friendly and open places to live.

It was not unusual for the civically engaged respondents to seek out communities where there was a sense of being neighborly and citizen involvement. The civically engaged respondents sought out communities that they felt would be "good places to raise children" and where people were familiar with one another. They expressed deep concern about both maintaining the positive and improving the negative aspects of their communities. They involved themselves in a wide range of community activities from chaperoning a junior high school dance, to petitioning, to running school Market Day, to being a board member of a social service organization, to coaching a son or daughter's team. They recognized the importance of their role in maintaining their communities. The engaged respondents also saw their involvement as a way to "connect" on a variety of levels with their children, neighbors, coworkers, and government. They recognized that no matter how they were involved themselves in their communities, they were indeed able to make them good places to live.

> *"The neighbors have become very close all up and down the block. We help shovel each other out. We take each other's mail in. And most of my neighbors and I really take an active interest in watching out for each other. We know who is on vacation and when and how long they're going to be gone for and things like that."*

> *"I think the town is a great place. I do recruiting for students for the company. And when I talk to them, I tell them [this city] is a great place to raise your kids because it's big enough that they learn some commonsense and some street values, but it's not large enough that you have to worry about them coming home at night if they go someplace."*

Please note, however, that engaged and unengaged respondents from Carbondale appeared to be more alienated from their neighbors than those in Peoria or the Chicago suburbs, perhaps because the community is a university town and more transient than the other communities.

Regardless of where they lived, respondents cited similar problems and concerns, including crime and gangs, along with high taxes, overcrowding, congestion and traffic, and commercialization.

Section VI: Selected Demographic Groups and Civic Engagement

Next in this report, we will examine the level of civic engagement by selected demographic groups. Earlier, when describing the seven types of engagers, we offered demographic profiles for each of the groups. So here we will focus on similarities and differences for total civic engagement and for activity levels in each of the eight categories of activity.

Does Civic Engagement Differ by Geographic Region?

We analyzed the aspects of civic engagement by four geographic regions of the state: city of Chicago; Chicago suburbs; north/central Illinois; and southern Illinois.

The level of overall civic engagement does not differ much at all for three of the four regions (north/central Illinois, Chicago suburbs, and city of Chicago, in that order). But southern Illinois residents show a somewhat lower level of overall civic engagement.

The same is basically true for the level of community involvement. Within this area, the number of types of local organizations to which respondents belong does differ by region, with the number increasing consistently as one moves from southern Illinois up to the city of Chicago. However, the number of types of organizations to which respondents volunteer does not differ significantly across the four regions.

Perhaps surprisingly, no significant differences are found across the four regions for overall religious activity. And the same is true for discussion of politics and current events. But other activity areas show greater differences.

Chicago suburban respondents have the highest level of contribution activity, while residents of the city of Chicago and southern Illinois have the lowest. On the other hand, city of Chicago residents have the highest level of news exposure, while again southern Illinois residents, by a small margin over Chicago suburban respondents, have the lowest level. City of Chicago residents also have the highest level of technology-based activity, and again southern Illinois residents have the lowest level.

On the other hand, southern Illinois respondents reported the highest level of political activity. And, for informal socializing, north/central residents reported the highest level of activity.

Does Civic Engagement Differ by Urban/Rural Areas?

For this analysis, we rely on respondents' own reports of the nature of their community. They were asked to describe their community as urban, suburban, middle-sized city, small city or town, or rural.

The level of overall civic engagement does differ by the urban/rural nature of the community, with residents of urban areas showing the highest level of civic engagement and residents of rural areas showing the lowest level.

There were no differences in ethnic background or religious affiliation between engaged and unengaged respondents.

Civically engaged more active with their social networks than were unengaged respondents

The civically engaged and unengaged groups differed dramatically in their awareness of, access to, and involvement with social networks. More often than not, unengaged respondents were not actively involved in any social networks, nor were they very familiar with what these networks were. Some mentioned church involvement, which usually consisted of attending a church and some of its programs or being involved with schools (when they had children at home). A few talked about professional associations, although their involvement consisted only of paying dues and reading the literature received in the mail. A few unengaged respondents did mention that they had occasional involvement with social networks consisting of a neighbor or group of neighbors involved in a community-based issue.

> *I think when you have children in a school system, you're just much more involved and more aware of what's going on and participate in a lot more community activities that particularly involve younger people."*

> *"I'm more involved in my church community as opposed to my neighborhood community."*

> *"I belong to a couple professional organizations, but I'm not active in them. It's mainly to get the literature and it's kind of like an honorary kind of thing. It's the American Institute of CPAs. So pretty much everybody who's got a CPA belongs, whether you do anything or not."*

The engaged respondents, however, were much more actively involved with and aware of social networks in all areas of their daily lives than were the unengaged respondents. The workplace was a frequent source of many social networks, along with professional and career organizations. Their children's elementary, junior, and high schools were other frequently mentioned places where respondents were linked to social networks. Others were members of unions or social clubs within which they had established social networks and were actively involved. Most of the respondents were also actively involved with their neighborhoods, either through a neighborhood watch program or simply helping each other out.

> *"In the unit I work in, there are about 30 people that make up the three shifts including a couple of the doctors that I'm fairly close with. We are a very close group. Everyone is married, and just about everyone has kids. So we're all kind of in the same boat, and I couldn't ask for a better group of people. We go to each other's weddings and funerals, and our kids play together. And it's a very close unit. So there's a large network there."*

> *"I have networking at the school that I work at and also at the school I attend as a student in the evening."*

> *"I am actively involved with my daughter's schools because I appreciate how much the teachers do. I started coaching my daughter's cheerleading team because the previous coach quit."*

Social networks linked to community involvement

Civically engaged respondents were indeed likely to become involved in community issues or civic organizations through their social networks. Those who were civically engaged often referred to members of their social networks as the main influencers of their decision to become involved in a social cause or civic organization. For example, in the workplace, several respondents referred to requests from their bosses or office co-workers to be a part of a volunteer organization or community project as a primary reason for their involvement. Civically engaged respondents also mentioned social networks in schools as an important catalyst for becoming involved either in a one-time project, annual fundraising event, or monthly activities (such as Market Day).

> *"Well, actually the deputy chief came up to me and asked me if I wanted to volunteer for [the Citizens Police Academy] or if I would put the time into it, so I did it. Actually, the first time I was thinking 'Do I really have the time to do it?' and I did it because he asked. Then the second time I did it myself. It was kind of fun."*

> *"I am asked to volunteer all the time by members of my social network. Once you're a volunteer, you are asked. They call you all the time, and you can't say no. I got asked to be one of the Guardians, which are 24 volunteers and the director of each area."*

> *"In my spare time other than raising my two kids, I do volunteer work at the school. I head up Market Day, which is a co-op food program. It raises money for the school. And I've been doing that for nine years."*

There were a few respondents, however, who mentioned choosing to become involved not through a personal request from a member of their social network, but through personal motivation and a desire to "give back." Nevertheless, in all cases, someone asked these individuals to step up and participate in a cause or activity.

> *"My church has an Outreach right down the street. I've helped them cook. I've helped clean up the place. They also have a little drug program there, about eight guys. I help them because the need's there. And there needs to be more people reaching out to other people who need the help. I've been there, down on my luck and addicted to drugs and they can relate to me more."*

> *"I think how it originally started was I've got this thing about kids. I just love kids and I relate to them pretty well. And I try to make a difference somehow. Maybe keep them on the right path and maybe give them a little encouragement to do the right thing or whatever it may be. But I started out tutoring."*

> *"In my community I feel that you have a responsibility to help your neighbors, keep up your property, shovel walks for elderly, and show respect for each other. It is part of your responsibility to give something back."*

Those unengaged respondents who had been involved in a cause or civic organization were more likely to become involved through a single neighbor or friend rather than a network of individuals. While one or two mentioned involvement through their social networks at work, more often it was through an individual with a specific cause who

requested their involvement for a limited amount of time, rather than an extended period of volunteer time, work, and/or commitment.

> *"I helped out with a benefit for a woman who had severed her spine. I was asked by friends to help by cooking food for the benefit and I thought it was a good cause."*

In addition, some unengaged respondents commented that if the cause was worthy and tugged at their heartstrings (a serious illness or accident) then it often did not matter who asked them; they would be willing to help out in a limited way, e.g., buy a raffle ticket, within a set time period. This was especially the case among both engaged and unengaged respondents in Peoria.

> *"You don't have to know the person. I read about the issue in the newspaper and have been out on my luck too and am willing to also help out."*

Perceived benefits of civic involvement differ between engaged and unengaged

Among the civically engaged respondents, more so than among the unengaged respondents, there appeared to be a sense that civic involvement enhances a sense of community and of belonging to a larger whole or social network. There was an overall desire among these respondents to become involved, to be able to make a difference, to interact more with their neighbors, to return a favor that was done for them, and/or to learn more about an issue at hand and share that knowledge. They agreed to take on leadership roles to get the job done. In addition they took satisfaction in knowing that they were part of the solution no matter what role they played.

> *"Well, when you get involved in your neighborhood as an election judge, you find out more of what's going on that you didn't know before."*

> *"Getting involved more I found out exactly what each person's job is. Why do we have a Circuit Clerk? Why do we have an Auditor? I've gotten to know those people and I know their jobs and I have learned things. Now I'm preaching to people what people used to preach to me. I've learned why it is important to get out there and vote, to get involved with it."*

Enhancing self-esteem was also important to some respondents as was strengthening relationships with significant others. Some respondents spoke about how being involved enables them to stay involved with their children's lives and to set an example for them. Another felt it was an honor to be entrusted by her boss to work on a community project. Another became politically active to assist her fiancé when he ran for local office.

> *"Whenever I do anything and even if it's just putting my pocket change in the Salvation Army bucket, I always have my three year old do it. I try to involve him in as much as I can even at his age because I want him to realize that this is not something special. This is a way of life so that he can make choices and be a responsible citizen when he gets older. In the back of my mind, it's always about my kids."*

> *"The head of the department that I work in. She's an extremely hardworking person and is really dedicated and if she asked you to do something, it's because*

she knows that you're capable of doing a good job, and I would take it as a compliment."

However, the unengaged respondents appeared to be more focused on trying to understand the specifics of their potential involvement. For example, they were concerned with the length of commitment, the project having a defined beginning and end, and a clear awareness of what needs to be done and accomplished. Understanding the end result of the civic project was also critically important to these respondents. They needed to understand the definition of successful involvement, how their participation would be useful, and if their participation would serve the needs of the project and those involved. One respondent was particularly worried about the commitment making his life be out of control, as it was busy enough already without any additional volunteer work. However, when probed, respondents' concerns about lack of time for volunteer activity appeared to be masking a genuine fear of involvement. Unengaged respondents were unsure about what volunteer activity involved, how to become involved and if they had the skills and/or talents necessary. There also appeared to concern, particularly in Carbondale, about associated oneself with a cause or issue that is not well known or mainstream (for example one respondent discussed the near impossibility of getting signatures for a petition to address a neighborhood parking problem).

I think I would look for commitments that are defined, more of a project orientation as opposed to an open-ended, being part of a committee."

"The project needs a beginning and an end. And it's not going to be five times as many hours of commitment as they tell you when you originally say, yeah, I could do this."

"Well, I'm nervous about not doing a good job I think is largely what it is. I don't feel that I have the expertise necessary and, yet, I'm looking to gain it."

Leadership and civic involvement

While respondents did not necessarily see themselves as leaders, in our view many of those in the engaged group discussions were demonstrating key leadership traits. Leaders were described in these focus groups by both engaged and unengaged respondents, as individuals who hold influence in the community. They were described variously as block leaders, influential neighbors, elected officials –village presidents, presidents of chambers of commerce, aldermen or mayors – business leaders or church pastors. Respondents did not necessarily associate community leaders with elected officials. Respondents view these leaders and others who head civic and not-for-profit organizations as strongly motivated, able to take charge, and having a desire to make a difference. Engaged and unengaged respondents did not necessarily view being a leader differently, although a few of the unengaged respondents felt that leaders were just born that way and it was a part of their nature. Engaged respondents, on the other hand, were more likely to see leaders as those who happen to be committed to a certain cause and build experience and expertise in a particular area, that basically anybody with the passion and desire could do it.

"I think a leader is somebody who takes control no matter what the position is. If you sit around and talk about it all the time, it gets nowhere. You're not a leader.

You have to be the person in your community or wherever who takes control and moves it forward."

"You have to feel passionate about whatever it is whether it's politics or whether it's helping the homeless or whatever it may be. You have to feel it inside. You have to be passionate about it."

Individuals need time and information to be more involved

Respondents discussed a wide range of reasons why they are not more involved or why individuals don't get involved in civic organizations and/or causes. In general, both groups shared concerns of time management as the main impediments toward civic engagement. Engaged respondents, however, more often discussed problems of not being informed or aware of civic opportunities, while unengaged respondents focused on issues of personal motivation and length of commitment as the main obstacles to their involvement. According to several engaged respondents, organizations such as churches, schools, and local town government need to do a better job of reaching out to members of the community and soliciting their help. Community newsletters, magazines, and even Web sites can be used to get the word out. In addition, several engaged respondents felt that organizations need to make the volunteer tasks more manageable and less intimidating to help potential volunteers feel successful.

"To get people involved I think it would be other people in the neighborhood or people through the schools or the churches to get people more into a small group. And you have to call the people. You have to ask them to help you. If you don't ask, you don't get it. I mean that's what I find. People don't just come up to you and say, "Hey, I'll do this.""

"If it wasn't for us by word of mouth saying the meetings are coming up on such and such date, I wouldn't know when it is unless you took the initiative to call and find out what's going on. So I think that a town newspaper is a good thing."

"In order to get people involved, organizations need to give them a bit part. Allow them to observe and see that something which sounds intimidating is really easy to do and manageable. Also, they can explain to people why it is important to volunteer and what the end result will be."

While a few unengaged respondents felt they needed more information about volunteer opportunities, most of them were concerned with becoming over committed and "over asked" as one respondent put it. Several respondents felt that if you agree to one commitment, then you will be asked and asked again and one's life will get out of control. They felt that volunteer commitments are too open ended and more needs to be done to establish defined timelines and work schedules. A few also suggested making the involvement a social gathering (for example, a place where single people can meet others).

"I think it's fear of being over-asked to do things and not being able to say no. Sometimes I really need to say no but I can't out of guilt."

"I feel like doing things sometimes, but I have this fear of the neediness of the organization. So, once I say, "Oh, sure, I'll help out on that Saturday afternoon

bake sale," well, the next thing I know, they're calling me to do something every week, or "Well, can't you do the bookkeeping, too, because you know how to do that." And then it's like "Argh," the guilt of having to say no."

Making a difference more viable reason for engaged than unengaged respondents

An important aspect of civil engagement is a belief that an individual can make a difference to and have an affect on social change, no matter how small their role. In general, engaged and unengaged respondents, especially those from Chicago, differed in their beliefs about whether they can make a difference in the community. Engaged respondents believed that individuals, including themselves, can make a difference. They recognized that they enhance the quality of life in their communities and/or help others in need simply by helping someone with their groceries or organizing a benefit for a terminally ill neighbor. They also felt they could make a big difference in the schools by attending meetings and helping out with school events.

> *"Helping out helps me be more comfortable with others and builds a sense of community."*

> *"We can make a difference by just helping carry groceries for people, being a big brother to your own children by being a role model to them and to other children. Just to have some character about yourself and let that rub off on somebody else. And just reach out and touch people."*

> *"You have to still go to the right people. You can't just sit around and whine all the time. Nobody will do anything. You have to do something. You have to call or go or write."*

However, several unengaged respondents from Chicago felt that as individuals they could not make a big difference. They could perhaps influence their children, but could not have an impact on the larger community. They did not recognize the possible cumulative effects of individual involvement. Some felt that they could make a difference through political channels by voting, being a good citizen, and "*doing the right thing.*"

> *"To be honest, if it's just me, myself, no. If I am making a difference, it's so tiny."*

> *"I don't make a significant difference. I think about that a lot. No one person can make a real significant difference unless that person is blessed with that type of energy."*

> *"I think I'm more influential to my friends more than – compared to my community – just supporting them or whenever they need anything."*

Illinois Civic Engagement Project Funders

Caterpillar Inc.
McCormick Tribune Foundation
State Farm Insurance
Woods Fund of Chicago

Illinois Civic Engagement Project Steering Committee

Co-Chairs   **Monsignor John J. Egan**
                DePaul University, Chicago

            Thomas L. Fisher
                Chairman, Board of Directors
                United Way/Crusade of Mercy, Chicago
                Chairman, President & CEO
                Nicor Inc., Naperville

Steering Committee Members

            Kenneth Alderson
            Dr. Juan Andrade Jr.
            Dr. Donna Avery
            Dr. Ellen Benjamin
            Valerie Bruggeman
            Will Burns
            Cynthia Canary
            Todd Dietterle
            Robert Gannett
            Paula Corrigan-Halpern
            Karen Hasara
            Jill Jones
            Mike Lawrence
            Marilyn Leyland
            Leonard Lieberman
            Kristin Lindsey
            Alicia Rodman McCray
            Rev. Myron McCoy
            Lynn Montei
            Lucy Murphy
            Malik Nevels
            Mary Schaafsma
            Richard Sewell
            Al Sharp
            Dick Snyder
            Barbara Stankus
            David Turner
            Cheryl Waterman
            Barbara Weller

Illinois Civic Engagement Project Staff*

A project of *Illinois Issues* and the United Way of Illinois

Project directors

*Ron Melka, President
United Way of Illinois
900 Jorie Boulevard
Suite 260
Oak Brook, IL 60523
(630) 645-6302
ronmelka@uwsc.net

*Ed Wojcicki
University of Illinois at Springfield
One University Plaza
Springfield, IL 62703-5407
(217) 206-7795
wojcicki.ed@uis.edu

Researchers

Richard Schuldt, Director
Survey Research Office
University of Illinois at Springfield
HRB 30
Springfield, IL 62703-5407
(217) 206-6591
schuldt.richard@uis.edu

Barbara Ferrara, Interim Executive
Director
Center for State Policy and Leadership
University of Illinois at Springfield
PAC 409
Springfield, IL 62703-5407
(217) 206-7094
ferrara.barbara@uis.edu

Project Web site

civic.uis.edu

[NOTE: no "www" in Web site URL]

*Updated to provide current contacts in January 2006.
In 2001, when this project was completed, Bob Haight
was president of the United Way of Illinois, and Ed
Wojcicki was publisher of *Illinois Issues* magazine.
Mr. Haight has moved out of state, and Mr. Wojcicki
is in a different position at UIS.