



What is Civic Engagement? Exploring New Paradigms

Webinar Abstract: In recent decades, scholars and practitioners have called for more expansive definitions of civic engagement that are inclusive to all the activities people engage in to make a difference in their communities. In this webinar, "What is Civic Engagement? Exploring New Paradigms," we introduced several frameworks for conceptualizing civic engagement, presented novel findings from the longitudinal survey about civic engagement trends in the United States, and shared insights on how civic engagement emerges through local mutual aid efforts. We concluded with a reflection about how national service can contribute to this broader understanding of what counts as civic engagement.

Date and Time: Wednesday, March 15, 2:30 p.m. – 4 p.m. ET.

Webinar Introduction: Andrea Robles, PhD, research and evaluation manager, AmeriCorps

Presenters:

- Laura Hanson Schlachter, PhD, research analyst, AmeriCorps
- Kei Kawashima Ginsberg, PhD, Newhouse director, Center for Information and Research on Civic Learning and Engagement (CIRCLE), Tisch College of Civic Life, Tufts University
- Penn Loh, director of the Master of Public Policy Program and Community Practice, Tufts University

The webinar highlighted findings and themes from a variety of resources related to civic engagement, which are listed below and organized by speaker.

Welcome and Introductions

Speaker: Andrea Robles

- **The Office of Research and Evaluation (ORE) at AmeriCorps**
https://americorps.gov/sites/default/files/document/2021_05_12_OfficeofResearchandEvaluationOne-Pager_ORE.pdf
- **Data Driven: How ORE Supports the AmeriCorps Mission**
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=XWi7sMaV1LA&t=2s>
- **Civic Engagement and Social Cohesion Report**
<https://nap.nationalacademies.org/catalog/18831/civic-engagement-and-social-cohesion-measuring-dimensions-of-social-capital>
- **AmeriCorps Research Grants**
<https://www.americorps.gov/grantees-sponsors/research-evaluation/grantee-profiles>

What's the first thing that comes to mind when you think about civic engagement?

Speaker: Laura Hanson Schlachter

- **AmeriCorps' Volunteering and Civic Life in America Research**
<https://americorps.gov/volunteeringinamerica>
- **U.S. Census Bureau's America Counts: Stories Behind the Numbers Series**
<https://www.census.gov/library/stories/2023/01/volunteering-and-civic-life-in-america.html>
- **2017-2021 CEV Datasets and Full Documentation**
https://data.americorps.gov/browse?q=cev&sortBy=last_modified&utf8=%E2%9C%93
- **Formal Volunteering and Informal Helping in America**
https://americorps.gov/sites/default/files/document/CEV%20Volunteering%20Helping_030123_final_508.pdf
- **New Statistics on Volunteering & Civic Life with Dr. Mary Hyde**
<https://tobijohnson.com/048-statistics-on-volunteering/>

Youth Civic and Political Engagement

Speaker: Kei Kawashima Ginsberg

- **Media-Making about Social and Political Issues Builds Confidence in Teens**
<https://circle.tufts.edu/latest-research/media-making-about-social-and-political-issues-builds-confidence-teens>
- **American Views 2022: Part 2. Trust, Media, and Democracy**
<https://knightfoundation.org/wp-content/uploads/2023/02/American-Views-2022-Pt-2-Trust-Media-and-Democracy.pdf>
- **Gen Z, Aware of its Power, Wants to Have Impact on a Wide Range of Issues**
<https://circle.tufts.edu/latest-research/gen-z-aware-its-power-wants-have-impact-wide-range-issues>
- **Young People Created Media to Uplift their Voices in 2020**
<https://circle.tufts.edu/latest-research/young-people-created-media-uplift-their-voices-2020>
- **Youth Are Interested in Political Action, but Lack Support and Opportunities**
<https://circle.tufts.edu/latest-research/youth-are-interested-political-action-lack-support-and-opportunities>
- **Deeply Affected by the Pandemic, Youth Are Committed to Helping Others**
<https://circle.tufts.edu/latest-research/deeply-affected-pandemic-youth-are-committed-helping-others>

- **AmeriCorps' Volunteering and Civic Life in America Research Summary**
<https://americorps.gov/sites/default/files/document/volunteering-civic-life-america-research-summary.pdf>
- **CIRCLE's Growing Voters: Building Institutions and Community Ecosystems for Equitable Electoral Participation Report**
<https://circle.tufts.edu/circlegrowingvoters>
- **Study: 60 percent of rural millennials lack access to a political life**
<https://theconversation.com/study-60-percent-of-rural-millennials-lack-access-to-a-political-life-74513>
- **The Republic is (Still) at Risk — and Civics is Part of the Solution**
<https://tischcollege.tufts.edu/research/republic-still-risk-and-civics-part-solution>

Mutual Aid as Civic Engagement

Speaker: Penn Loh

- **Grounded and Interconnected in the Pandemic: Community engagement and organizing adaptations from COVID response efforts in Metro Boston**
<https://pennloh-practical.vision/2022/11/03/new-report-how-community-responses-to-covid-in-the-boston-area-are-building-new-infrastructures-of-care-and-community-engagement/>
- **Lessons from the Pandemic for Building Resilience**
<https://www.barrfoundation.org/blog/lessons-from-the-pandemic-for-building-resilience>
- **Pandemic Responses and Mutual Aid Are Building Climate Resilience and Justice**
<https://www.progressivecity.net/single-post/pandemic-responses-and-mutual-aid-are-building-climate-resilience-and-justice>

About the Office of Research and Evaluation

The [AmeriCorps Office of Research and Evaluation \(ORE\)](#) assists AmeriCorps and its partners in collecting, analyzing, and disseminating data and insights about AmeriCorps programs and civic life in America.

About AmeriCorps

AmeriCorps, the federal agency for national service and volunteerism, provides opportunities for Americans to serve their country domestically, address the nation's most pressing challenges, improve lives and communities, and strengthen civic engagement. Each year, the agency places more than 250,000 AmeriCorps members and AmeriCorps Seniors volunteers in intensive service roles; and empowers millions more to serve as long-term, short-term, or one-time volunteers. Learn more at <https://americorps.gov/>.