



Get the Facts - Civic Engagement

Symposium on Race & Equity in NH | October 16, 2017 | Concord, New Hampshire

Definition

Civic engagement means working to make a difference in the civic life of our communities and developing the combination of knowledge, skills, values and motivation to make that difference. It means promoting the quality of life in a community, through both political and non-political processes.ⁱ

What Works

The economic and cultural vitality of communities is enhanced when all people are included and involved in civic life through activities such as:

- Using the Participatory Budgeting process to increase numbers of residents engaged in local community planning.
- Convening inclusive community dialogues that involve residents in decision making.
- Hosting trainings to engage all citizens in becoming involved in local governments and running for office.

6%

NH State Legislators who are black, Hispanic, Asian, multiracial or other minorities.ⁱⁱ



Case Example

The Concord New Hampshire Civics Academy is a six-part educational series for residents of Concord who want to learn about how their government works and how they can get involved in the community. The program is a joint effort between the City of Concord, the American Friends Service Committee and the Welcoming Concord Initiative.

The series covers a variety of topics including public schools, public safety and the courts, economic development, the arts, community resources, city infrastructure and the City Council. Participants meet city officials, including the Mayor and are involved in discussions about topics effecting their neighborhoods. They learn how to become involved in local government.ⁱⁱⁱ



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Selected Resources

Readings:

- Anne Colby, Thomas Ehrlich, Elizabeth Beaumont and Jason Stephens, Discussion Guide for 'Educating Citizens', American Democracy Project
http://www.nytimes.com/ref/college/collegespecial2/coll_aascu_ecintro.html
- Bruce Mallory, 2012 New Hampshire Civic Index, University of New Hampshire Carsey Institute
<http://scholars.unh.edu/cgi/viewcontent.cgi?article=1192&context=carsey>
- Adam Davis, The Civically Engaged Reader, Chicago, IL: Great Books Foundation, 2006

Programs:

- American Democracy Project for Civic Engagement is a national, multi-campus initiative to foster civic engagement focusing on undergraduate college students. <http://www.aascu.org/programs/ADP/>
- Campus Compact is a national coalition of colleges and universities that supports student education for civic and social responsibility <https://compact.org/>
- Participatory Budgeting is a demographic process in which community members directly decide how to spend part of a public budget: <https://www.participatorybudgeting.org/>
- New Hampshire Listens is a civic engagement initiative of the Carsey School of Public Policy at the University of New Hampshire: <https://carsey.unh.edu/nhlistens>
- The Equity Leaders Fellowship draws on the expertise of New Hampshire leaders of color to train a cohort of community leaders to make a positive impact on important community issues:
<http://snhahec.org/ELF.cfm>
- Emerging Leaders in Communities of Color (ELCC) is nine-month leadership program for leaders who engage with and advocate on behalf of New Hampshire's diverse communities."
<http://emerginglcc.wixsite.com/emerginglcc>

Websites:

- Welcoming New Hampshire <http://welcomingnh.org/>
- Vermont Partnership for Fairness and Diversity <https://vermontpartnership.org/what-we-do/>

ⁱ Definition of Civic Engagement http://www.nytimes.com/ref/college/collegespecial2/coll_aascu_defi.html

ⁱⁱ National Conference of State Legislators Legislator's Race and Ethnicity 2015
http://www.ncsl.org/Portals/1/Documents/About_State_Legislatures/Raceethnicity_Rev2.pdf

ⁱⁱⁱ Concord Civics Academy <https://www.afsc.org/event/concord-civics-academy-2017>