



6 Communicating Results to the Public

Overview

In this section, we share thoughts about where you may want to host civic health information in your local community—such as a link on a town web page. We also provide examples of how you could display the results of civic health data, including case studies and community profiles. Lastly, we share some examples of dashboards so you could continue tracking civic health data over time.

Communicating Civic Health Information with the Public

It's important to think through where you will house civic health results for the long-term so that the public can continue to draw upon these resources for ongoing improvement efforts. You could create a dedicated website where the report and relevant data could be maintained and updated, either as a stand-alone site or as a part of another public and trusted site (e.g., the public library or town offices). Given political controversies these days, it's important to identify a home for civic health data that is a trusted entity, so that people don't feel the host of the information is biased. This might be a municipal office, a nonprofit coalition such as a Main Street program, a Chamber of Commerce, a 4-H Club, a Y, or similar resource that is seen as being inclusive and nonpartisan. Ideally a website that hosts civic health information would be connected to related local data that affects civic engagement, such as information from the city planning department, SAU office, or public health office.²

Over time, civic health information could be used in a variety of ways, including:

- ▶ Informing city/town strategic plans
- ▶ Helping city or town managers to make decisions about community programs, public spaces, and policies
- ▶ Providing information about where attention is needed to strengthen civic health in the community that town select boards or city councils can shape policy around
- ▶ Informing local nonprofit and volunteer organizations' priorities and strategies

Selecting a Homebase for the Work, Findings and Recommendations

- ▶ Consider a trusted entity whose purpose is to serve the full community inclusively and nonpartisan, such as:
 - » Local library
 - » Municipal offices
 - » Nonprofit coalition

2. See *Designing and Conducting a Community-Based Civic Health Index*, Bruce Mallory and Quixada Moore-Vissing, March 25, 2021, Carsey School of Public Policy, <https://carsey.unh.edu/publication/designing-conducting-community-based-civic-health-index>



- » Chamber of Commerce
 - » 4-H Club
 - » YMCA / YWCA
 - » Regional Planning Commissions
 - » Local hospital community fund
- ▶ Determine who will maintain the information: time commitment, funding, community inclusion, technical upkeep/maintenance

How Should We Share the Data Itself?

There are lots of creative ways to share information with the public, and you may want to consider more than one strategy to do so. Here are some suggestions we have for sharing local civic health information:

- ▶ A video
- ▶ A community dialogue
- ▶ A public presentation with slides
- ▶ A written report with graphs and charts

Considerations When Sharing Information Publicly

Here are a few tips to consider when you are creating public facing documents.

- ▶ Accessibility—If hosting online, ensure there are also ways for people to access the information that don't have consistent internet access
- ▶ Readability—Avoid too technical wording, make easily readable for all in community
- ▶ Languages—Ensure product is available in all languages spoken in community and is correctly translated

What Are Effective Ways to Display Information?

We have seen civic health information displayed in many different ways. These include the following:

- ▶ **Community profiles and brief summaries**—Community profiles are generally short documents of 1–2 pages with bulleted information about civic health. These are a quick way to learn about civic health at a glance, but many of these statistics need more elaboration and follow up in a longer report.
- ▶ **Case studies**—You may want to tell some stories about local civic health, including model programs or lived experiences. A case study can be a great way to take people through a history in the community or a personal story of an individual or group.
- ▶ **Key findings**—There are likely some key takeaways about civic health you want to share that are the “meat” of your project. These might be big picture trends, like seeing that youth don't vote as much as other generations.
- ▶ **Dashboards**—Dashboards can be a helpful way to continue to track data about local civic health over time. Dashboards usually lay out a series of indicators the community feels contribute to civic health, and then within each indicator, there are one or more measures.

Below we provide examples of each of these approaches to help inform your own work.

Community Profiles and Brief Summaries

- ▶ Wolfeboro has designed a *Wolfeboro Community Profile* with key information about local life. You could take this format to design a “civic health profile”, displaying key information about civic life. In the *2020 NH Civic Health Index*, we shared key information about who lives in the community through an [interactive web interface](#). Essentially, when you click on a trend like “We Are Small” a statistic displays at the bottom of the screen with more information.

WHO ARE WE?

Understanding New Hampshire's Demographic Composition

These metrics tell us that New Hampshire is experienced in various ways by its diverse residents. Opportunities to thrive, to be a contributing member of one's community, to feel welcome and included are not the same regardless of where one lives or works or one's social identity. The 2020 Index unpacks some of these differences as they relate to engagement, social capital, and how our residents interact with and trust each other.

CLICK A METRIC BELOW TO LEARN MORE

WE ARE SMALL. **WE ARE OLD.** **WE ARE FROM AWAY.** **WE ARE DIVERSE.**

SOME OF US HAVE HIGH INCOMES, OTHERS DO NOT. **WE ARE WELL EDUCATED.**

CHILDHOOD POVERTY VARIES CONSIDERABLY BY REGION. **RACE MATTERS.**

THE GAP BETWEEN THE RICH AND POOR IS GROWING. **OPPORTUNITY IS CONNECTED TO EDUCATION.**

New Hampshire is one of the smallest states in the country as a function of both geographic size and population. Our population in 2018 was 1.36 million people, making us the ninth smallest state in the United States. This represents a 3% increase since 2000, a modest gain, especially compared to our growth in previous decades.²

- ▶ The State of Maine created a simple report, *Annual Maine Profile: Volunteering and Civic Health*, sharing information about civic health.

Case Studies

The National Civic League has created a number of case studies from communities across the country who are practicing strong civic health. See the sections entitled “Engaged Residents,” “Inclusive Community Leadership,” “Collaborative Institutions,” and “Embracing Diversity, Equity” that start on page 4/8 of the *National Civic League Civic Index*.

Key Findings

In the *2020 NH Civic Health Index*, we pulled out a list of key findings we thought would be most interesting to our readers. Later on in the report, we elaborated on each of these findings. Here is an example of the [key findings](#).

2020 NH Civic Health Index Report

KEY FINDINGS

Successes and Areas of Growth

New Hampshire has some things to celebrate when it comes to the strength of its civic health. The Granite State ranked:

- **Second in the nation in charitable giving of \$25 or more in the past year**
- **Fifth in the nation in voting in the 2016 election**
- **Fifth in the nation in connecting regularly with friends and family**
- **Sixth in attending public meetings**
- **Seventh in talking about important political, societal, or local issues with friends and family**

In addition,

- **Granite Staters volunteered at the highest rates measured since 2002**
- **The majority of New Hampshire residents feel they matter to their community and can make an impact**
- **In midterm elections in 2018, the state achieved the highest voter turnout since 1978**

However, there are aspects of our civic health that need attention, as well as some warning signs that our civic health could be at risk in the future.

Although Granite Staters demonstrated relatively strong civic health in categories such as Volunteering and Giving (p. 37) and Civic Awareness and Engagement (p. 15), residents displayed more of a mixed bag in Connecting in Community (p. 30). Voter turnout has declined in the last two presidential elections, 2012 and 2016. Since 2001, trust in the national government has fallen dramatically, and trust in local government and local news media is also declining. Granite Staters reported that they feel more barriers to engagement than they did in 2001. There was a large disparity between what Granite Staters did civically with friends and family compared with what they did with their neighbors. For example:

- **Granite Staters ranked in the top ten in the nation for connecting with friends and family regularly (5th) and talking about political, societal, or local issues with friends and family (7th)**
- **Granite Staters ranked toward the bottom in the nation when it came to connecting with neighbors regularly (38th), talking with neighbors about political, societal, or local issues (33rd), and doing favors for neighbors (40th).²⁷ Part of this disparity may relate to trust in those outside one's immediate social circle—since 2001, Granite Staters' trust in their neighbors has also declined.**

New Hampshire residents ranked very low compared with national averages in terms of:

- **Posting their views about political, societal, or local issues online (38th).**
- **Helping out friends or extended family with food, housing, or money (45th).**
- **New Hampshire ranked in the bottom five states in the nation in terms of connecting with people of different racial, ethnic, or cultural backgrounds (46th).**

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If you examine the [NH Civic Health website](#), you will see many ways of displaying civic health information.

The cities of New Haven, Connecticut, and Albuquerque, New Mexico, and the state of Alaska also have done a good job of sharing civic information. Here are there reports below if you want to check them out

▶ [New Haven, Connecticut](#)

▶ [Albuquerque 2012 Progress Report Snapshot](#)

We have also provided a picture from Albuquerque and Alaska's report below:

Albuquerque Report

City of Albuquerque | 2012 Albuquerque Progress Report Snapshot | full report online at www.abqprogress.com
3

GOAL

1

HUMAN AND FAMILY DEVELOPMENT

Why is this goal important?

As an Albuquerque resident, there are probably conditions in your life that you feel are ideal for yourself and your family members, such as a good education, being healthy, having a good living environment, and overall being prepared to be an active member of your community. Each day you make decisions toward achieving these conditions. And yet you're not alone. Your communities, schools, the local city government, as well as state and federal agencies, all support you in your mission to achieve these desired conditions for you and your family.



Using Comparisons

Comparisons are used because just looking at the 4-year ABQ trend doesn't tell the entire story. At times, the 4-year Albuquerque (ABQ) trend could be desirable and yet we lag behind our peers and/or the nation at large. This is important to see and yet there are multiple factors and differences from city to city, so please keep this in mind as comparisons can be misleading.



Goal 1: People of all ages have the opportunity to participate in the community and economy and are well sheltered, safe, healthy and educated.



Goal 1: How is Albuquerque doing?

Desired Condition	Key Indicator	Latest ABQ Data	Peer City Rank	United States	4 Year ABQ Trend	
Responsible youth	Teens (16-19) not working & not in school	10%	4th of 6	9%	Undesirable	● needs focus
Educated youth	High school graduation rate (peer by state)	63%	5th of 6	73%	Stable	● needs focus
Secure/stable families	Families living in poverty	15%	4th of 7	12%	Undesirable	● needs focus
Good public health	STD cases per 100,000 population	740	7th of 7	531	Undesirable	● needs focus
Safe, affordable housing	Percent of Homeowners paying 30%+ for housing costs	35%	5th of 7	37%	Desirable	● improving
Basic needs provided	Individuals below poverty level	19%	2nd of 7	16%	Undesirable	● improving
Educated, literate residents	Residents with high school education or more	89%	2nd of 7	86%	Desirable	● in focus
Active, healthy residents	Percent of residents frequently exercising	58%	1st of 7	52%	Desirable	● in focus
Access to health care	Infant mortality rates (deaths per 1,000 births)	5	2nd of 6	6	Stable	● in focus
Seniors age in place	Seniors (65+) below the poverty level	8%	1st of 7	9%	Desirable	● in focus

What can we tell from the data?

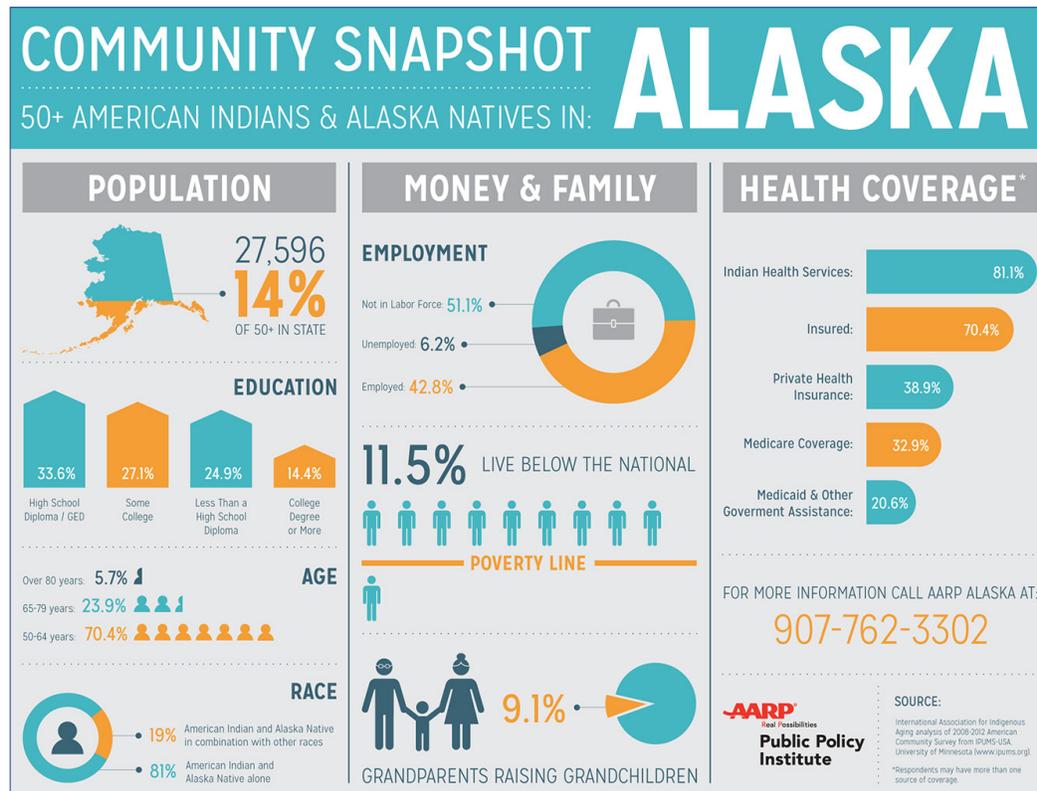
- Albuquerque has a high rate of teens not working and not in school, and a low graduation rate.
- Over the last four years, the percent of individuals (●) and families (●) below the poverty level has increased in a similar way to the majority of peer communities and the nation at large.
- The level at which homeowners are paying 30% or more for their housing costs is improving and better than the U.S. average, and yet we still lag behind peer communities. The number of renters in Albuquerque increased 3% from 2010 to 2011 versus a 1.3% decrease in homeowners in the same period.
- Compared to peer communities and the nation at large, Albuquerque citizens exercise more frequently.
- Albuquerque has the lowest percentage of seniors below poverty level among peer communities, and less than the U.S. as a whole.





The full report is online at: www.abqprogress.com

Alaska Report



Dashboards

Below are some examples of dashboards in case you want to consider continually tracking civic data over time. If you decided to pursue a dashboard, you would want people in your community to continually update the dashboard measures so that you have the most up-to-date information on the indicators you are tracking. For instance, if voting is one of your dashboard measures, you might be measuring voting through voter records and would want to update the measure after each election.

Examples:

- ▶ <http://www.tib.wa.gov/Dashboard/>
- ▶ <https://www.arizonafuture.org/progress-meters/>
- ▶ <https://performance.sandiego.gov/>

Taking Action

As you share your results about local civic health, who could you invite who you think would help you to publicize and take action with your results? Is it the local media? School leaders? The local police? Community activists? Faith communities? You may want to think through a guest list of people who you know will want to learn about local civic health.

Conclusion

There are lots of ways to communicate with the public about civic health information. You will want to consider where the most accessible and trusted spaces are to display civic health data, and who will maintain and update this information over time. Clearly communicating information is critical to success, and you may even want to consult with a data analyst and communications specialist about the best ways to do this!