

## Civic Engagement – An Introduction

### The Definition of Civic Engagement

« A morally and civically responsible individual recognizes himself or herself as a member of a larger social fabric and therefore considers social problems to be at least partly his or her own; such an individual is willing to see the moral and civic dimensions of issues, to make and justify informed moral and civic judgments, and to take action when appropriate. »


Thomas Ehrlich (ed.), *Civic Responsibility and Higher Education*

### Types of Civic Engagement

*How a citizen can take part in the evolution of society and contribute to the community and the world? What are the different forms of civic engagement?*

Civic and political involvement in America	
The proportion of adults who did each of the following in the last 12 months	
Sign a petition	32%
Contact a national, state or local government official about an issue	30
Work with fellow citizens to solve a problem in your community	28
Attend a political meeting on local, town, or school affairs	24
Contribute money to a political candidate or party or any other political organization or cause	18
Be an active member of a group that tries to influence public policy or government	15
Attend a political rally or speech	12
Send a letter to the editor to a newspaper or magazine	10
Work or volunteer for a political party or candidate	8
Make a speech about a community or local issue	7
Attend an organized protest	4
<b>Any of these</b>	<b>63</b>

Source: Pew Internet & American Life Project August 2008 Survey. Margin of error is +/-2% based on all adults (n=2,251).



# Defining Civic Engagement

## Rank Ordering Civic Engagement.

*Below are actions that could define civic engagement. Keep in mind that the represented actions below are not the only forms of civic engagement.*

*What are the actions that best defines your highest idea of civic engagement ?*

- Helping to start an after-school tutoring program for children
- Boycotting products or vendors
- Volunteering at a soup kitchen in a homeless shelter
- Joining the armed forces
- Giving to the United Way or another charity
- Peacefully protesting a social issue or war
- Making major purchases during a low economy
- Attending a concert or movie that supports an issue
- Participating in a walk or fundraiser for a foundation (ex. AIDS, Cancer, Alzheimer's, etc.)
- Wearing a ribbon that symbolizes a cause of personal interest
- Giving blood
- Lobbying an issue of personal importance
- Calling/e-mailing an elected official
- Volunteering as a tutor at a university
- Picketing and protesting at a local plant that has laid off a large number of its workforce
- Attending a campus or neighborhood meeting
- Visiting different houses of worship (churches, synagogues, mosques, etc.) to learn about different religions in the community
- Voting
- Serving on a jury
- Leaving your car at home and biking or walking to school/work every day

Measures of civic engagement		
Civic	Electoral	Political voice
Community problem solving	Regular voting	Contacting officials
Regular volunteering for a non-electoral organization	Persuading others to vote	Contacting the print media
Active membership in a group or association	Displaying buttons, signs, stickers	Contacting the broadcast media
Participation in fund-raising run/walk/ride	Campaign contributions	Protesting
Other fund-raising for charity	Volunteering for candidate or political organizations	Email petitions
		Written petitions
		Boycotting
		Buycotting
		Canvassing