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Trust, Belonging and Engagement: A Virtuous Cycle to Improve Health Outcomes

Benjamin Schwartz, MD

Divisions of Epidemiology & Population Health



Outline

1. How did we get here? Why now?
2. Exploring the concepts
 - Trust
 - Belonging
 - Civic engagement
 - Community engagement
3. A framework to link the concepts
4. Measuring success
5. Questions and challenges



Why Now? (My Journey)

- Focus of public health on population health, reducing disparities, and challenge of how to make sustainable change at scale
- Trust and COVID-19 vaccination
 - Need to continue to show up after the pandemic
- NACCHO funded Salon discussion
- Emerging experience, literature and understanding of trust, belonging, and engagement => recognition of an opportunity
- Political/CDC support



Trust

- Definition
- Focus groups
- Effect on individual health behaviors
 - Vaccination (dis/mis-information)
 - Medication adherence
- Participation in community engagement and effect on population health



Trust in Healthcare: Research Insights

Health Affairs, January 2022

- Trust impacts key health behaviors and outcomes, such as vaccine acceptance, treatment adherence, and patient satisfaction. However, we have seen and continue to see an erosion of trust as the national discourse around issues of health, policy, science, and information is becoming increasingly polarized.
- The issue of trust has gained increasing attention in the past couple of years. We speculate that this is largely motivated by the COVID-19 pandemic, renewed emphasis on racial justice, and the increased proliferation of mis- and disinformation
- The emphasis on community settings reflects the established need for community-based solutions to trust challenges

<https://www.healthaffairs.org/content/forefront/trust-health-care-insights-ongoing-research>



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Transformational community engagement, RWJF

- Transformational community engagement shares power with community and is built on trust, transparency, and mutual accountability. Shifting power to the community can be done in a variety of ways. In addition to sharing decision-making power with the community, increasing access to the decision-making process is key.
- Community engagement is one of the ways states are attempting to establish and maintain trust while improving the accessibility and quality of healthcare services for everyone.
- Transformational community engagement shares power with community and is built on trust, transparency, and mutual accountability.

Search term: transformational community engagement in public health

<https://www.rwjf.org/en/insights/our-research/2023/01/transformational-community-engagement-to-advance-health-equity.html#:~:text=Transformational%20community%20engagement%20shares%20power,decision%2Dmaking%20process%20is%20key.>

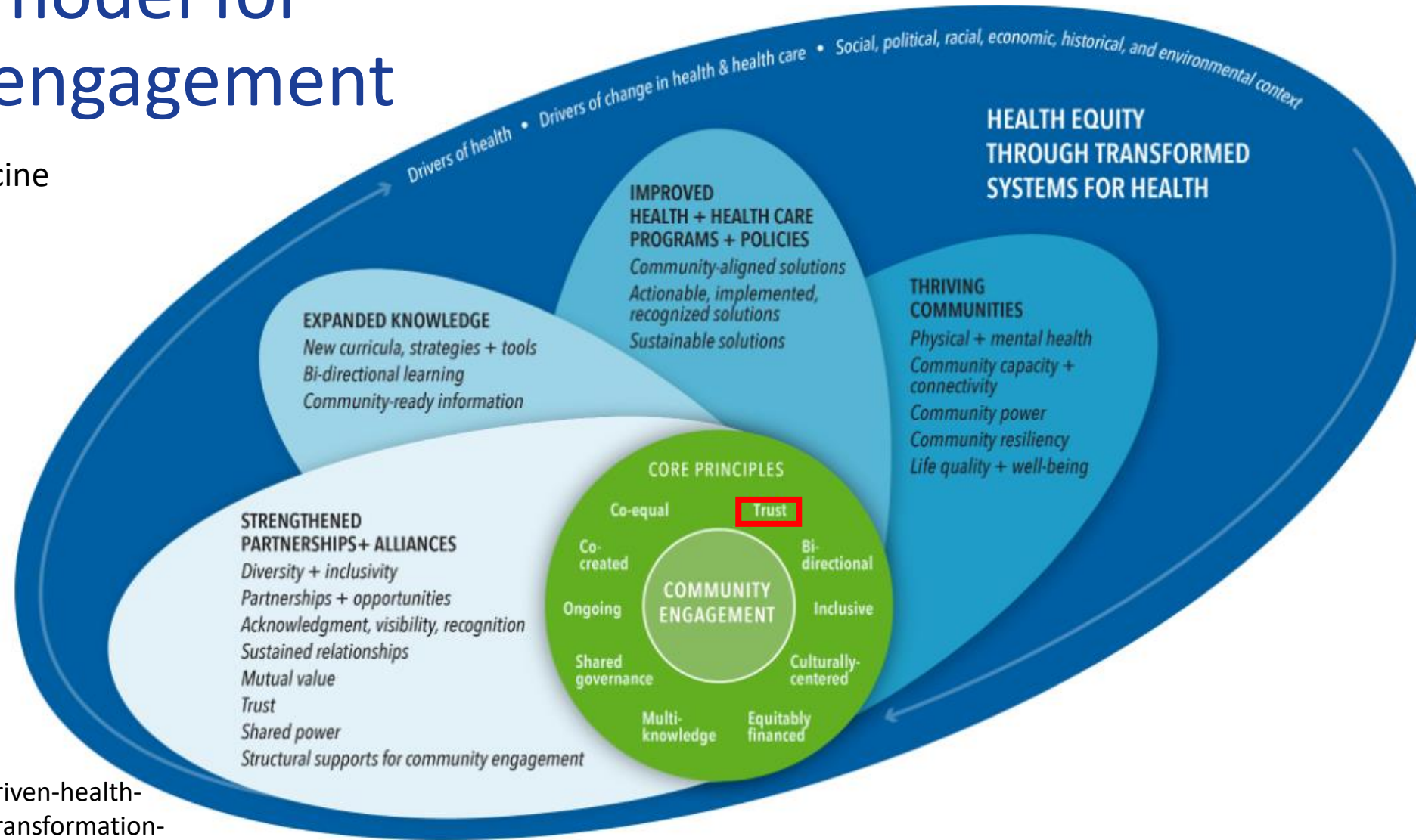


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Conceptual model for community engagement

National Academy of Medicine



<https://nam.edu/programs/value-science-driven-health-care/achieving-health-equity-and-systems-transformation-through-community-engagement-a-conceptual-model/>



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NAM Conceptual Model & Trust

- **Trust is a core component of engagement.** It requires showing up authentically, being honest, following through on commitments, and committing to transparency in order to build a long-lasting and robust relationship. Genuine partnerships grounded in trust require change on the part of all partners. Trust also requires that entities engaging communities commit themselves to being trustworthy. Mistrust among communities of representatives of health care and other systems is often an adaptive response to historical and contemporary injustice perpetrated by these systems. A foundational component of building trust with communities is demonstrating that community trust is warranted, will not be abused or exploited.



Belonging

- Definition
- Effect on individual health and well-being
- Effect on engagement and population health



Belonging, Participation, and Well-Being

- This study aimed to investigate an interplay between well-being, sense of belonging, and connectedness, and meaningful participation in a range of daily life occupations among healthy adults of working age in Israel... An association was found between sense of belonging and connectedness, the participation subjective dimension, and well-being ($0.18 < r_p < 0.47$, $p < 0.05$). Sense of belonging explained in a significant way the variance in well-being ($F(3) = 14.7$, $p < 0.001$; $R^2 = 0.274$) and was found to be a mediator between participation and well-being ($1.86 < \text{Sobel test} < 2.39$, $p < 0.05$). The study provides empirical support to the interrelationship between meaningful participation, sense of belonging and connectedness, and well-being in a healthy population. Participation in a range of meaningful activities that contribute to the sense of belonging and connectedness as a universal concept could further promote well-being.

<https://www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/pmc/articles/PMC10002207/pdf/ijerph-20-04121.pdf>



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Civic Participation: County Health Rankings 2023



Civic Engagement

- Definition
- Effect on individual health
- Effect on population health



Civic Engagement and Health: Rand Corp Review

- The majority of studies meeting our selection criteria found that increases in physical and mental health and well-being are related to increases in civic engagement, whether through voting or through such activities as volunteering and membership in civic organizations. These findings held across various health outcomes, including self-reported health, physical disability, various aspects of mental health, the prevalence of healthy behaviors, and (in some cases) specific health conditions. (p51)
- Most of the studies we located relied on cross-sectional data sets, thus, limiting our ability to assess whether empirical relationships are truly causal, discern whether good health increases civic engagement, or vice versa
- Several [studies] compare the civic engagement-health connection across health conditions. However, there is much less attention to whether individual-level engagement is related to community health and to the community level conditions (e.g., infrastructure, policies) that shape health.

https://www.rand.org/content/dam/rand/pubs/research_reports/RR3100/RR3163/RAND_RR3163.pdf



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Civic Participation: County Health Rankings 2023

- Civic health reflects the opportunities people have to participate in their communities. It starts in our local communities and is the cornerstone of our democracy, representing promise, opportunity, belonging and shared responsibility.
- CIVIC PARTICIPATION, which includes the ways people engage in community life to improve conditions and shape the community's future, whether through political activities such as voting and advocacy, or community activities such as volunteering and mentoring.
- History shows that when previously disenfranchised groups built power and expressed their will through voting and advocacy, the policies that followed benefited the health and well-being of all. We will make progress toward health equity when all people can be heard and have meaningful involvement in decision-making processes.

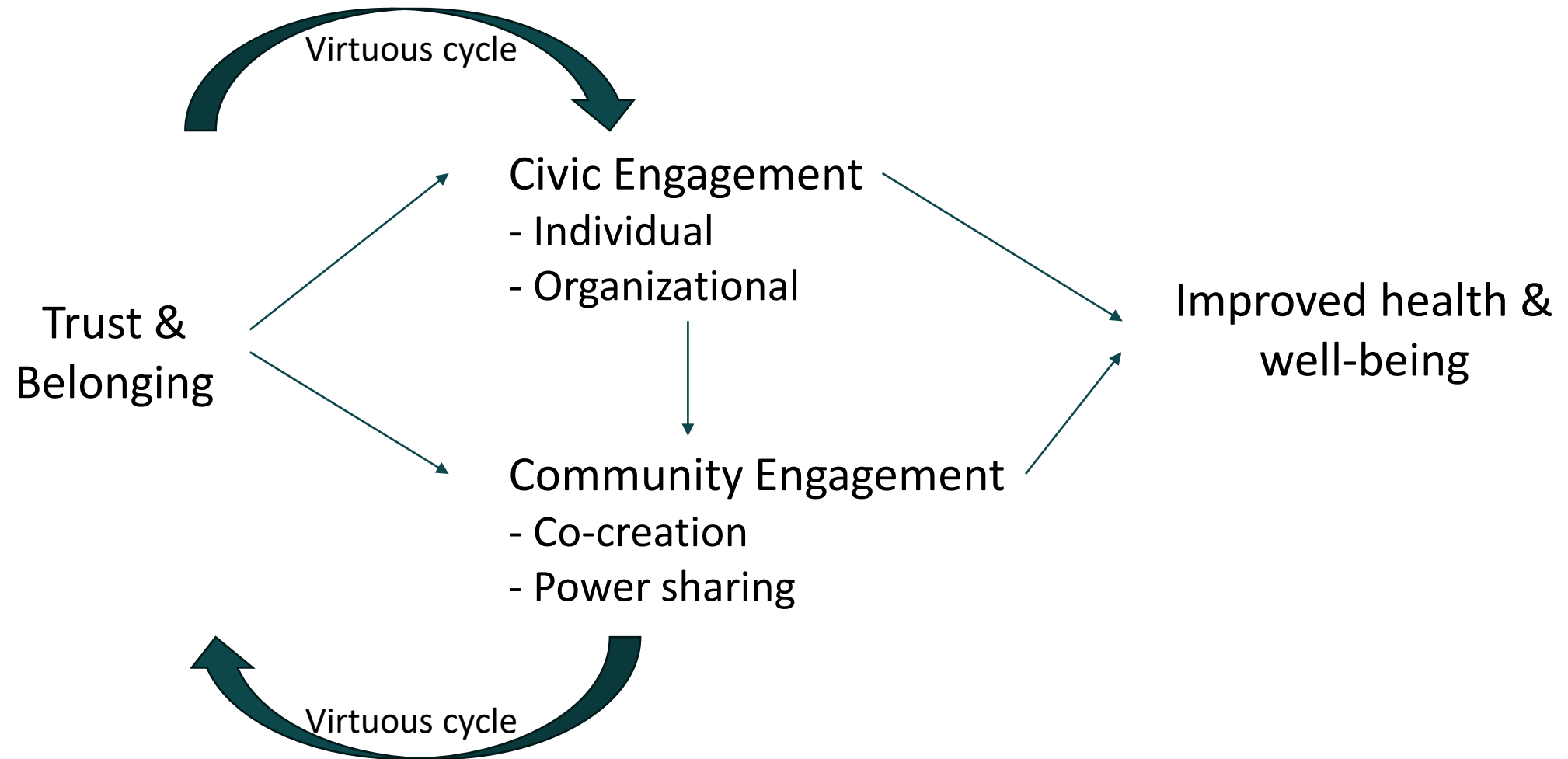
<https://www.countyhealthrankings.org/reports/2023-county-health-rankings-national-findings-report>



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Model of Trust, Belonging, and Engagement



Other Stuff



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- Democracy in peril – need trust, belonging and engagement



Civic Engagement as an SDoH, HP 2030

- Research measure: Increase the proportion of the voting-age citizens who vote (SDOH-R02)
- Civic participation encompasses a wide range of formal and informal activities, such as voting, volunteering, participating in group activities, and community gardening. Some are individual activities that benefit society (e.g., voting) or group activities that benefit either the group members (e.g., recreational soccer teams) or society (e.g., volunteer organizations). In addition to the direct benefit that civic participation provides to the community, it also produces secondary health benefits for participants.
- One way civic participation improves health is by building social capital, which is defined as “features of social organization such as networks, norms, and social trust that facilitate coordination and cooperation for mutual benefit.”

<https://health.gov/healthypeople/priority-areas/social-determinants-health/literature-summaries/civic-participation>



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Trust in Public Health Agencies

Search: belonging and public health
scholarly articles

- Abstract: Public health agencies' ability to protect health in the wake of COVID-19 largely depends on public trust. In February 2022 we conducted a first-of-its-kind nationally representative survey of 4,208 US adults to learn the public's reported reasons for trust in federal, state, and local public health agencies. Among respondents who expressed a "great deal" of trust, that trust was not related primarily to agencies' ability to control the spread of COVID-19 but, rather, to beliefs that those agencies made clear, science-based recommendations and provided protective resources. Scientific expertise was a more commonly reported reason for "a great deal" of trust at the federal level, whereas perceptions of hard work, compassionate policy, and direct services were emphasized more at the state and local levels. Although trust in public health agencies was not especially high, few respondents indicated that they had no trust. Lower trust was related primarily to respondents' beliefs that health recommendations were politically influenced and inconsistent. The least trusting respondents also endorsed concerns about private-sector influence and excessive restrictions and had low trust in government overall.

<https://www.healthaffairs.org/doi/abs/10.1377/hlthaff.2022.01204>



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Civic Engagement as an SDoH

- Health funders believe that systemic change is needed to achieve a just, equitable, and healthy society and such change requires meaningful reforms across multiple public policy domains, including health care, housing, education, employment, criminal justice, environmental protections, and economic development.
- Fair and constructive policy advancements fundamentally depend on a healthy democracy. This includes a collective system of self-governance, which includes how individuals interact with each other and their political system through many forms of civic engagement.
- Civic engagement [may be defined] as “the collection of nonpartisan ideas, activities, and field building interventions that serve to promote reform in the areas of social attitudes and behaviors, public policy, and politics.”

Search: Civic engagement and health outcomes

<https://www.gih.org/publication/civic-engagement-is-a-social-determinant-of-health/>



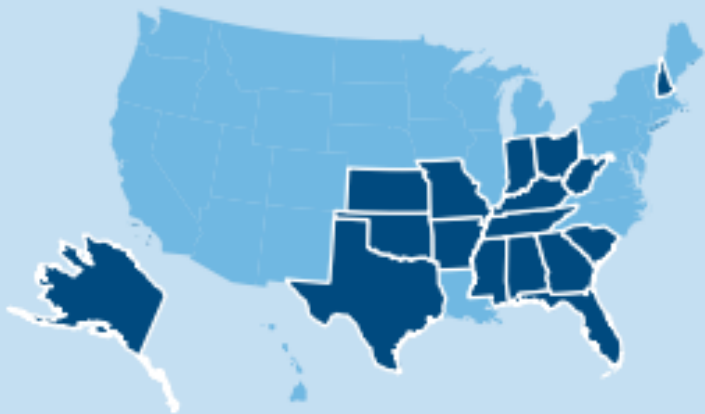
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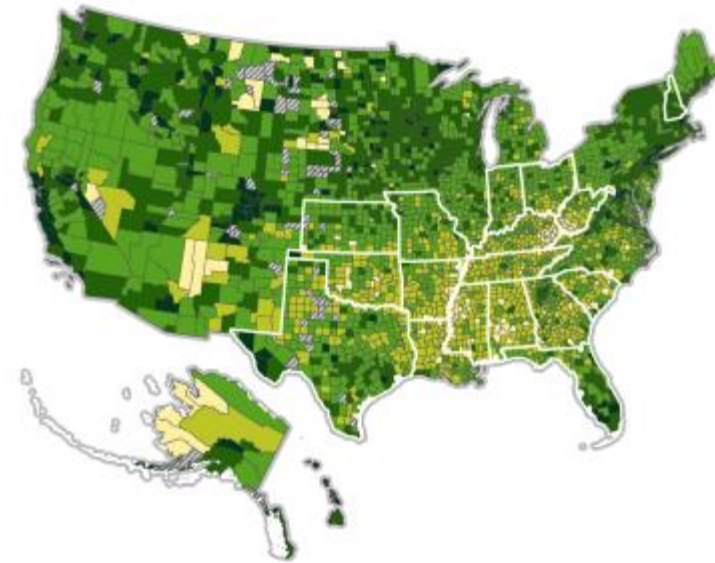
Civic Participation: County Health Rankings 2023

Some states have more structural barriers to civic health (highlighted below).

Structural barriers are policies and practices that create or maintain unfair and unjust outcomes. Examples of structural barriers to civic health include gerrymandered districts, laws and practices that create obstacles to voting and disinvested civic infrastructure. See Glossary of Terms & Technical Notes on pages 16–17 for more information on structural barriers to civic health.



Life Expectancy Across U.S. Counties and Among States with More Structural Barriers to Civic Health



Average number of years from birth a person can expect to live (2018-2020)



Highlighted states have more structural barriers to civic health

Data sources: National Center for Health Statistics – Mortality Files; 2020 Cost of Voting Index



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Fairfax in County Health Rankings

Health Outcomes

Health outcomes represent how healthy a county is right now, in terms of length of life but quality of life as well.

Fairfax (FI) is ranked among the healthiest counties in Virginia (Highest 75%-100%).



Voter Turnout* in Fairfax, Virginia

	Fairfax (FI) County	Virginia	United States
Voter Turnout	80.6%	72.0%	67.9%

Percentage of citizen population aged 18 or older who voted in the 2020 U.S. Presidential election.

In Fairfax County, Virginia, 80.6% of the citizen population who were 18 years old or older voted in the 2020 U.S. Presidential Election.

Years of data used: 2020 & 2016-2020

Health Factors

Health Factors represent those things we can modify to improve the length and quality of life for residents.

Fairfax (FI) is ranked among the healthiest counties in Virginia (Highest 75%-100%).



Census Participation* in Fairfax, Virginia

	Fairfax (FI) County	Virginia	United States
Census Participation	77.6%		65.2%

Percentage of all households that self-responded to the 2020 census (by internet, paper questionnaire or telephone).

In Fairfax County, Virginia, 77.6% of households self-responded to the 2020 census (by internet, paper questionnaire or telephone). Self-responding refers to submitting census information for their own household, not through a household interview, information filled from a federal administrative record, or a proxy interview with a landlord/neighbor.

Years of data used: 2020



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