

# Kentuckians' Experiences with Civic Engagement



Results From The Health Foundation of Greater Cincinnati and the Foundation for a Healthy Kentucky

Between September 2009 and September 2010, 1 in 4 Americans ages 16 and older (26%) did some sort of volunteer work. On average, these Americans spent 52 hours a year—or 1 hour a week—volunteering.<sup>1</sup>

Much has been written about the public and personal benefits of community involvement.<sup>2</sup> The Foundation for a Healthy Kentucky and The Health Foundation of Greater Cincinnati believe that communities are strengthened when their residents donate their time and talents and actively participate.

To find out how involved Kentuckians are in their communities, the *Kentucky Health Issues Poll* (KHIP) asked about civic engagement activities such as community service and being involved in the political process.

## Most Kentuckians Volunteer in Their Communities

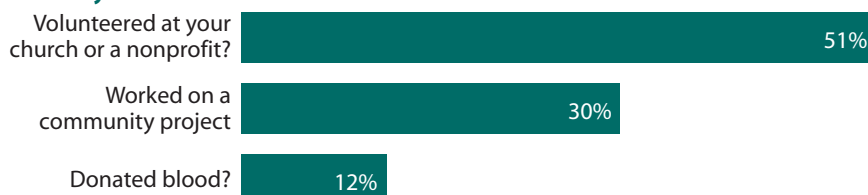
More Kentucky adults give back to their communities than participate

<sup>1</sup> Bureau of Labor Statistics (2011). Volunteering in the United States. Washington, DC: Author. Retrieved from [www.bls.gov/news.release/volun.toc.htm](http://www.bls.gov/news.release/volun.toc.htm).

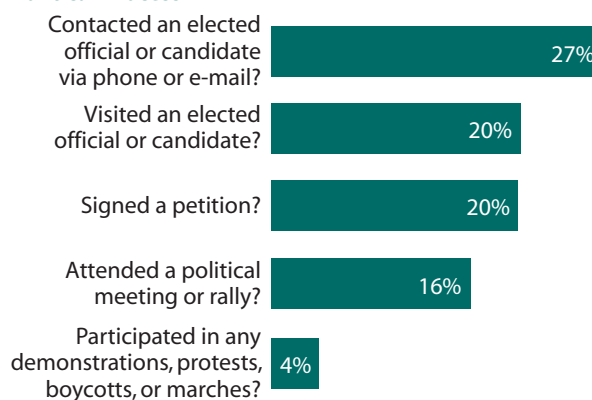
<sup>2</sup> Corporation for National and Community Service, Office of Research and Policy Development (2007). The Health Benefits of Volunteering: A Review of Recent Research. Washington, DC: Author. Retrieved from [www.nationalcivic.org/pdf/07\\_0506\\_hbr.pdf](http://www.nationalcivic.org/pdf/07_0506_hbr.pdf).

**In the past 12 months, have you...** (Graph presents percentage of Kentucky adults who answered "yes" they had done the specified activity.)

### Community Service



### Political Process



in political activities. Half of Kentucky adults (51%) reported that they had volunteered at their place of worship or a local nonprofit in the past year. Nearly 1 in 3 adults (30%) had worked on a community project and 1 in 8 adults (12%) had donated blood in the previous year.

## 1 in 4 Kentuckians Engaged in Political Process

As policymakers across the Commonwealth and the nation are considering decisions that will affect the lives and health of

Kentuckians, we are reminded that our democratic system works best when elected officials know what their constituents think about the issues.

Fewer Kentuckians reported participating in parts of the political process compared to community service activities. About 1 in 4 adults (27%) had contacted an elected official or a candidate for office by phone or e-mail, and 1 in 5 adults (20%) had visited an elected official or candidate in the past year.

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Other advocacy activities were less commonly reported. Of those surveyed, 1 in 5 adults (20%) had signed a petition; 1 in 6 adults (16%) had attended a political meeting or rally; and 1 in 25 adults (4%) had participated in a demonstration, protest, boycott, or march.

There are about 3.3 million people in Kentucky ages 18 and over,<sup>3</sup> and 2.9 million<sup>4</sup>—or 88% of them—are registered to vote. Registered voters were much more likely than adults not registered to vote to report participating in the political activities listed on KHIP.

<sup>3</sup> U.S. Census Bureau. *State and County QuickFacts*. Available at <http://quickfacts.census.gov/qfd/states/21000.html>.

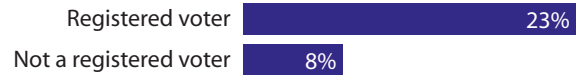
<sup>4</sup> Kentucky State Board of Elections. *Voter Registration Statistics*. Retrieved March 25, 2011 from <http://elect.ky.gov/stats/regstat.htm>.

**In the past 12 months, have you...** (Graph presents percentage of Kentucky adults who answered "yes" they had done the specified activity.)

**Contacted an elected official or candidate via phone or email?**



**Visited an elected official or candidate?**



**Signed a petition?**



**Attended a political meeting or rally?**



**Participated in any demonstrations, protests, boycotts, or marches?**

