



Community Conversations

Funded through the Office of Research and Evaluation at the Corporation for National and Community Service (CNCS), VCU's Center on Society and Health and the Engaging Richmond team collected community-level data through multiple "community conversations" in the city of Richmond, VA in order to better understand civic engagement and volunteering at the local level.

The "Community Conversations" helped to:

1. **Identify examples of how volunteering and civic engagement, "at the community level," are manifested**
2. **Identify factors that promote or inhibit the realization of these activities**
3. **Identify practices that can potentially strengthen the capacity of local communities to foster civic engagement and volunteering**
4. **Enhance the capacity of communities to measure these activities and their outcomes**
5. **Assess the relative feasibility of various data collection strategies for community level Civic Engagement**

This pilot project involved targeted research in a local community and specialized data collection activities with local residents and partners that are rooted in

the methodology of community-based participatory research. A partnership between CNCS, VCU and the local community, it brings a local perspective to national statistics on civic engagement and volunteering.

Three community conversations were held in Richmond, VA over the course of three days in October 2016. Each event lasted for three hours, and participants shared their experience with volunteering and civic engagement through a variety of ways, including focus groups, one-one-one interviews, and survey and cognitive interviews. Many also shared their story on camera about what it means to volunteer and be engaged in their community.

Engaging Richmond worked together to analyze the data and used the findings to make recommendations about the types of civic engagement questions and themes that can best tap into resident experiences with volunteering and civic engagement.

This project is part of a larger feasibility study focusing on the methodology CNCS may employ in future efforts to assess civic engagement within American communities. The other sites in the 2016-2017 pilot include San Marcos, CA, Washington D.C., and Flint, MI.

ABOUT THE CENTER

The Center on Society and Health is an academic research center that studies the connections between social factors and health.

FOR MORE INFORMATION

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