

Exploring the Texas Civic Health Data Up-Close

Objective: Exploring the Texas Civic Health data and guiding a discussion about how to improve the state's relative lack of civic and political engagement

Time Needed: 45 minutes-One hour

Materials:

- Texas Civic Health Index report (Can be found at www.txcivichealth.org)
- Whiteboard, blackboard and/or chart paper
- Markers
- Graphs (pgs. 2-8)
- Possible Observations

Before the Activity

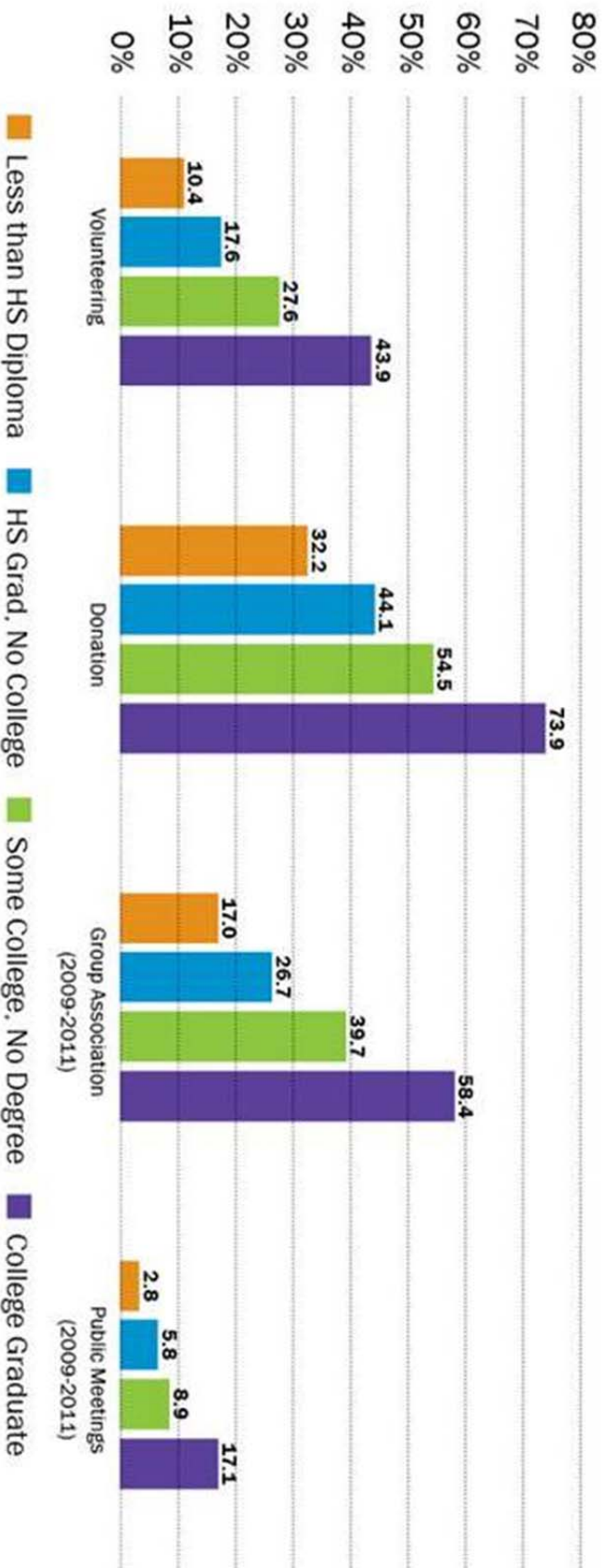
Note: Before getting started, familiarize yourself with the Texas Civic Health Index at www.txcivichealth.org

1. Before the session begins, post up the six Civic Health data graphics (provided below) on chart paper around the room. Next to each graph, post two sheets of butcher or chart paper. At the front of the room on chart paper or on a Power Point slide, display three questions:
 - a. What story is this graph telling you?
 - b. What are the opportunities or obstacles for engagement?
 - c. What can be done?(Hint: There are no wrong answers and an educated guess is just fine.)

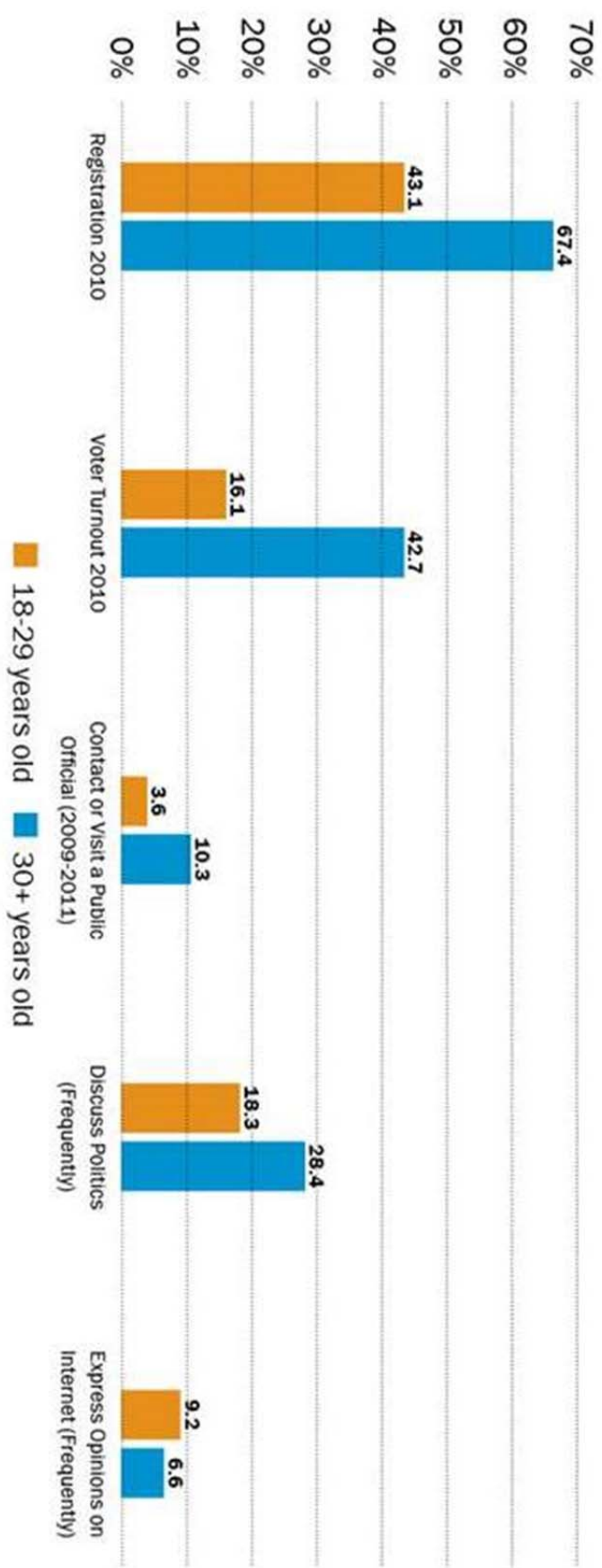
Run the Activity

1. Break your participants into pairs or groups of three. Ask participants to circulate to each "station" (aka graph and chart paper) and answer the posted questions on chart paper. Each group should spend approximately 5-7 minutes at each station.
 - a. If your group is too large or your room is too small to walk around and rotate between stations, you may opt to have participants remain seated for the activity. To make the activity seated, create a couple of sets of the "Civic Health Data Graphics" and number them 1-6. Ask participants to work individually and pass the graphics around the room, switching every 5-7 minutes. They should reference the graphics' number and answer the questions on paper.
2. As soon as participants have finished rotating through each station, invite the group to share their observations on each graph. A list of possible observations that might be raised by the group is outlined below.
3. To conclude, you may want to highlight solutions raised by the group or take the opportunity to discuss next steps for how the data and report could be used.

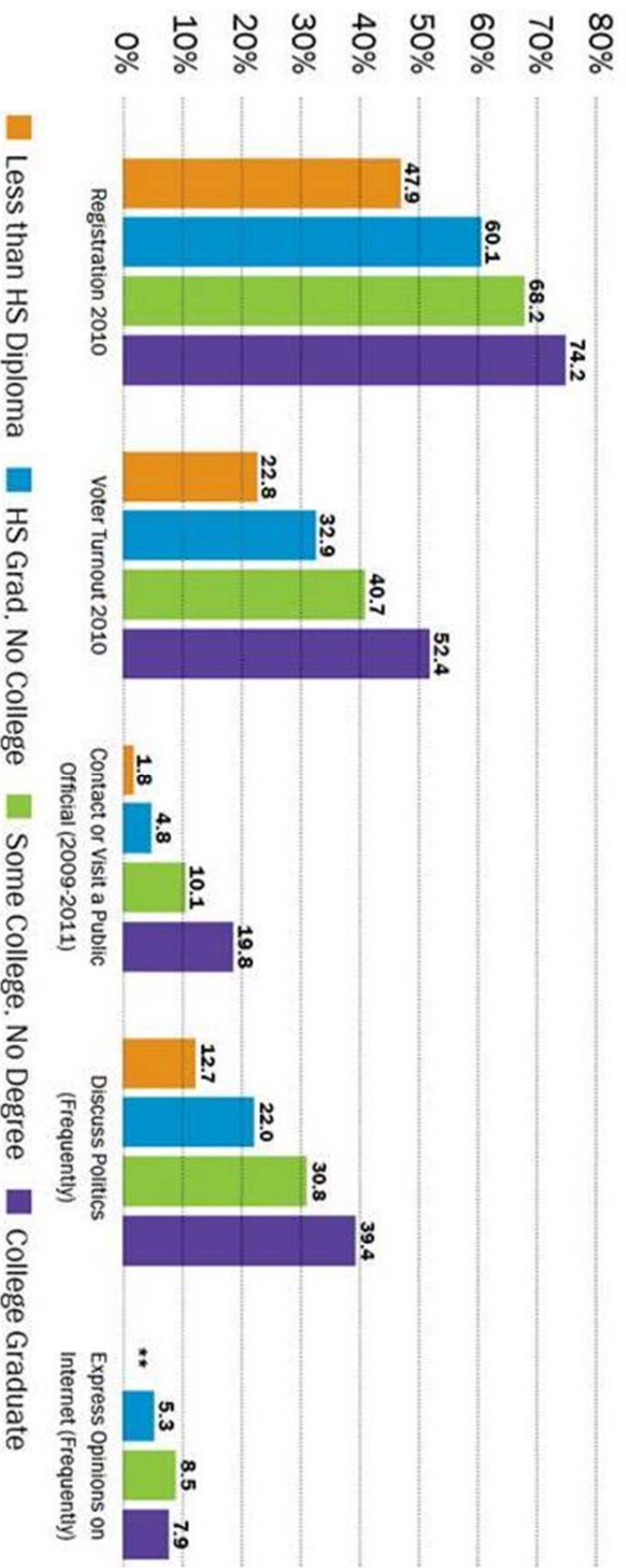
Civic Involvement by Education Level in Texas



Age and Political Participation in Texas

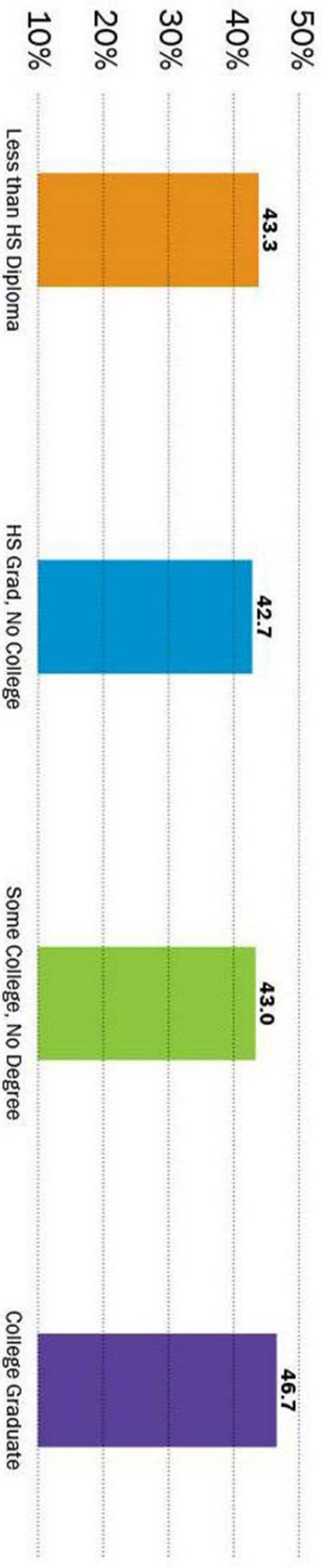


Education Levels and Political Participation in Texas

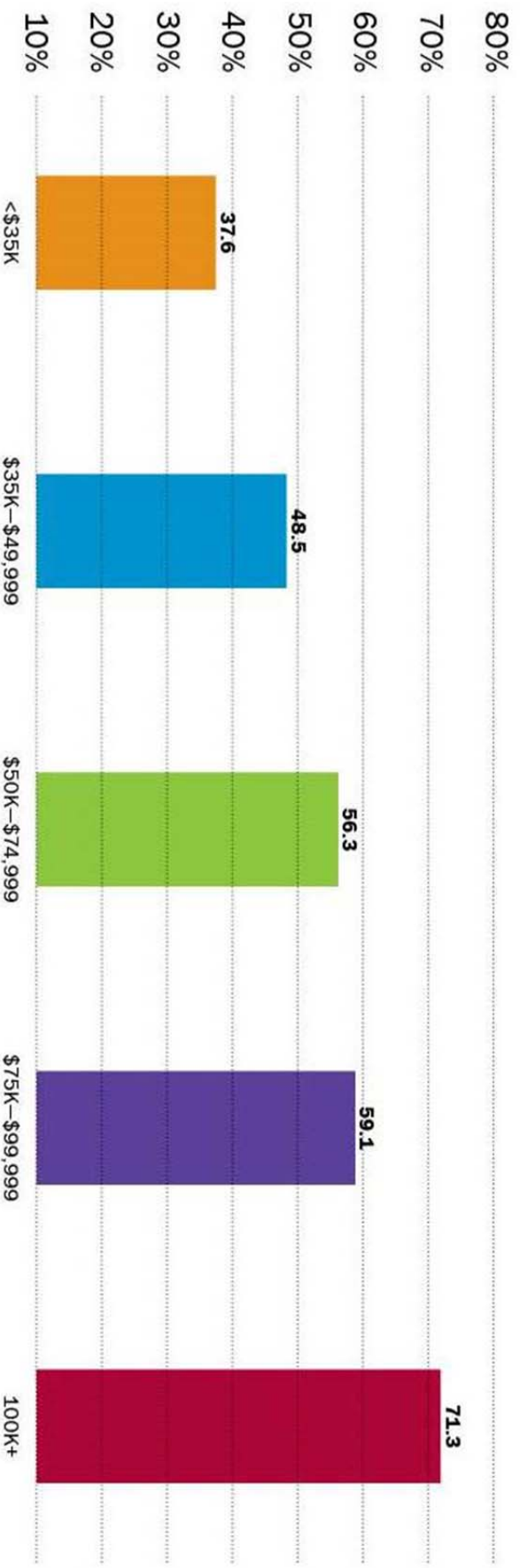


**No data available

Talk with Neighbors (Frequently), by Education Level



Trust People in Neighborhood (All or Most), by Income



Possible Responses to Looking at the Graphs

Questions to be answered:

- a. What story is this graph telling you?
- b. What are the opportunities or obstacles for engagement?
- c. What can be done?

Age and Political Participation

- a. What is the graph telling you? Voter turnout among individuals under the age of 30 is much lower than older adults. There is less of a disparity in voter registration.
- b. What are the opportunities or obstacles for engagement? Many young people are getting registered to vote so there is some level of interest in electoral engagement. There is limited interest advocacy-based engagement.
- c. What can be done? Same-day registration, educating young people about elections and polling locations, awareness raising campaigns

Education and Political Participation

- a. What is the graph telling you? The more education that a person possesses the more likely they are to be politically engaged.
- b. What are the opportunities or obstacles for engagement? It would be interesting to examine what specifically is happening in schools to entice these political behaviors. If your peers are more involved, you're more likely to be involved (self-perpetuating trend)
- c. What can be done: Improve access to education and graduation rates.

Age and Civic Involvement

- a. What story is this graph telling you? Those over 30 are more civically engaged than those that are under 30.
- b. What are the opportunities or obstacles for engagement? People of all ages are rarely volunteering. There may be opportunity for older people to engage younger people in civic life. Access to financial resources for donating.
- c. What can be done? Target donation and volunteer activities among young professionals in the workplace; encourage groups to do some kind of community service; have classrooms in schools raise money for a cause.

Education and Civic Involvement

- a. What story is this graph telling you? The more education that one possesses the more likely they are to engage in civic activity.
- b. What are the opportunities or obstacles for engagement? Donating is somewhat more popular than the other forms of civic involvement. It would be interesting to explore how to best leverage this interest to increased volunteer and group association rates. Identify, specifically, the values and interventions at universities that seem to make a difference in improving rates of civic engagement. Share those successes with high schools and community colleges.
- c. What can be done? Improve access to education and graduation rates.

Trust by Income and Talk to Neighbors by Education Level

- a. What story are these graphs telling you? Trust by Income: Just over a third of low income people trust their neighbors and nearly 3 out of 4 high income people do. Talk to Neighbors by Education: We talk to one another at virtually the same rates, regardless of education.
- b. What are the opportunities and obstacles for engagement? Talking to neighbors is an important social activity that seems to be unaffected by level of education – that could be an opportunity for improving civic life. Those making \$50-99K have similar levels of trust in one another – that could be an opportunity or an obstacle.
- c. What can be done? Individuals need to be leaders in their own communities and foster relationships among neighbors. Neighborhood clubs and activities like crime watch groups or letting kids play together or carpooling to school.