

# **Civic Engagement Among Arizona Students**

*A Study Conducted by the Arizona Foundation for Legal Services & Education*

Thank you for taking part in a study about civic engagement among middle school and high school students in Arizona.

Please take the time to read each question carefully, then check the box next to the response that comes closest to your own opinion. Except where you are asked to check all that apply, please mark only one answer for each question. If you do not have an opinion about a question, just leave it blank.

Your answers to the questions included in this study will be completely anonymous and confidential. The only way for anyone to know your responses will be for you to tell them. The results of this study will be published but only the combined data from all participants will be made public. *Please do not put your name or any other identifying information on this questionnaire.*

*Your participation in this study is completely voluntary.* You may withdraw from the study at any time. By filling out and returning this questionnaire, you will be signifying your consent to participate in this project. If you have any questions about your rights as a participant in this project, or if you feel you have been placed at risk, you should contact your teacher, the principal of your school, or Kevin Ruegg, Executive Director of the Arizona Foundation for Legal Services & Education, at (602) 340-7356.

Sincerely,

*Jeff Schrade  
Director, Law Related Education  
Arizona Foundation for Legal Services & Education*

*Tara Blanc  
Doctoral Student  
Arizona State University School of Public Affairs*

*please turn the page and begin*

1. Thinking about the problems you see in your community, how much difference do YOU believe you can personally make in working to solve problems you see?
  1.  I can make a great deal of difference
  2.  I can make some difference
  3.  I don't think I can make very much difference
  4.  I don't think I can make any difference at all
  5.  I don't know
2. How often do you spend time doing volunteer work in your community? (Volunteering means working in some way to help others without receiving pay.)
  1.  frequently
  2.  occasionally
  3.  rarely
  4.  never
3. How often do you participate in activities to help raise money for charity?
  1.  frequently
  2.  occasionally
  3.  rarely
  4.  never
4. Thinking about your family, does anyone in your household other than yourself spend time doing any type of volunteer work or activity?
  1.  yes, on a regular basis
  2.  yes, once in a while
  3.  no
5. Which of the following organized activities have you are participating in or have participated in during the last 12 months? (Check all that apply).
  1.  organized sports
  2.  band/orchestra/chorus/other music group
  3.  student council/student government
  4.  school yearbook
  5.  school newspaper
  6.  speech or debate
  7.  cheerleading/drill or flag team/dance team/other spirit organization
  8.  theater, arts or music groups
  9.  foreign language club
  10.  service club
  11.  National Honor Society
  12.  political clubs such as Young Democrats or Young Republicans
  13.  religious or church groups
  14.  Boys or Girls Club
  15.  Model United Nations
  16.  Boys or Girls State
  17.  4-H
  18.  YMCA
  19.  Boy or Girl Scout organization
  20.  Junior ROTC, Civil Air Patrol or Sea Cadets
  21.  Unitown or Anytown
  22.  other (please specify) \_\_\_\_\_  
 other (please specify) \_\_\_\_\_
6. During an election, have you ever talked to people to try to convince them why they should support one candidate, party or issue over another?
  1.  yes
  2.  no
7. During an election, have you ever worn a campaign button, put a sticker on your car or other belongings, or placed a sign in front of your house?
  1.  yes
  2.  no
8. Have you ever spent any time volunteering (working without pay) for any political organization or candidates?
  1.  yes
  2.  no

***please go on to the next page***

9. When there are elections, do your parents tend to vote:  
1.  in every election 2.  in some elections 3.  rarely 4.  never
10. Thinking about politics, how much influence do YOU believe you can personally have in working to make a difference?  
1.  I can make a great deal of difference  
2.  I can make some difference  
3.  I don't think I can make very much difference  
4.  I don't think I can make any difference at all  
5.  I don't know
11. Have you ever written a letter to the newspaper or another publication to express your opinion about an issue that was important to you?  
1.  yes 2.  no
12. Have you ever called in to a radio or television talk show to express your opinion about an issue that was important to you?  
1.  yes 2.  no
13. Have you ever signed an e-mail petition or an e-mail message that you add your name to and them forward to others you know?  
1.  yes 2.  no
14. Have you ever signed a paper or written petition related to a political or social issue that was important to you?  
1.  yes 2.  no
15. Have you ever taken part in a protest or demonstration?  
1.  yes 2.  no
16. Have you ever used an Internet site to get information about a political cause or group?  
1.  yes 2.  no
17. Have you ever bought or refused to buy a product because of the conditions under which the product was made or the social or political values of the company that produces or provides it?  
1.  yes 2.  no
18. How often do you follow what is happening in government and politics?  
1.  frequently 2.  occasionally 3.  rarely 4.  never
19. How often do you talk about politics or government with your friends?  
1.  frequently 2.  occasionally 3.  rarely 4.  never
20. How often do you talk about politics or government with members of your family?  
1.  frequently 2.  occasionally 3.  rarely 4.  never
21. How often do you get information about politics or government from television news?  
1.  frequently 2.  occasionally 3.  rarely 4.  never
22. How often do you get information about politics or government from blogs on the Internet?  
1.  frequently 2.  occasionally 3.  rarely 4.  never
23. How often do you get information about politics or government from chat rooms on the Internet?  
1.  frequently 2.  occasionally 3.  rarely 4.  never
24. How often do you get information about politics or government from other types of Internet sites?  
1.  frequently 2.  occasionally 3.  rarely 4.  never
25. How often do you get information about politics or government from newspapers?  
1.  frequently 2.  occasionally 3.  rarely 4.  never
26. How often do you get information about politics or government from e-mails?  
1.  frequently 2.  occasionally 3.  rarely 4.  never

*please go on to the next page*

27. How often do you get information about politics or government from your church or religious group?  
1.  frequently    2.  occasionally    3.  rarely    4.  never
28. How often do you get information about politics or government from TV music, comedy or talk shows?  
1.  frequently    2.  occasionally    3.  rarely    4.  never
29. How often do you get information about politics or government from listening to the radio?  
1.  frequently    2.  occasionally    3.  rarely    4.  never
30. How often do you get information about politics or government from reading magazines?  
1.  frequently    2.  occasionally    3.  rarely    4.  never
31. Would you say that your family members generally:  
1.  have a positive view of politics and government  
2.  have a negative view of politics and government  
3.  have mixed views of politics and government  
4.  have neither a positive or negative view of politics and government
32. Would you say that most of your friends generally:  
1.  have a positive view of politics and government  
2.  have a negative view of politics and government  
3.  have mixed views of politics and government  
4.  have neither a positive or negative view of politics and government
33. Would you say that most of your teachers generally:  
1.  have a positive view of politics and government  
2.  have a negative view of politics and government  
3.  have mixed views of politics and government  
4.  have neither a positive or negative view of politics and government
34. How many courses can you remember taking in which you discussed government or politics and related current events?  
1.  none    2.  one    3.  two    4.  three    5.  four    6.  five or more
35. In what kind of class(es) have you had discussions about government or politics and related current events? (Check all that apply.)  
1.  civics    4.  government    7.  history    10.  economics  
2.  social studies    5.  English    8.  reading    11.  other \_\_\_\_\_  
3.  science    6.  math    9.  health
36. How much did these class discussions increase your interest in politics and government?  
1.  a great deal    2.  some    3.  not much    4.  none
37. How much influence do you think that students in your school have on how the school is run?  
1.  a great deal    2.  some    3.  not much    4.  none
38. In the classes you take at your school, do you think there is:  
1.  too much time spent teaching about politics and government?  
2.  too little time spent teaching about politics and government?  
3.  the right amount of time spent teaching about politics and government?

***Thinking about your own views about citizenship, how much influence has each of the following had on what being a good citizen means to you?***

39. A parent  
1.  a great deal    2.  some    3.  not much    4.  none
40. Another family member  
1.  a great deal    2.  some    3.  not much    4.  none
41. A teacher  
1.  a great deal    2.  some    3.  not much    4.  none

*please go on to the next page*

42. A minister, pastor or other religious leader  
1.  a great deal    2.  some    3.  not much    4.  none

43. A friend  
1.  a great deal    2.  some    3.  not much    4.  none

***How much trust would you say you have in each of the following?***

44. People in general  
1.  a great deal    2.  some    3.  not much    4.  none

45. The United States Congress  
1.  a great deal    2.  some    3.  not much    4.  none

46. The news media  
1.  a great deal    2.  some    3.  not much    4.  none

47. The governor of Arizona  
1.  a great deal    2.  some    3.  not much    4.  none

48. Your school's teachers  
1.  a great deal    2.  some    3.  not much    4.  none

49. Federal judges and the court system  
1.  a great deal    2.  some    3.  not much    4.  none

50. Your friends  
1.  a great deal    2.  some    3.  not much    4.  none

51. The United States military  
1.  a great deal    2.  some    3.  not much    4.  none

52. The president of the United States  
1.  a great deal    2.  some    3.  not much    4.  none

53. Your school's administrators  
1.  a great deal    2.  some    3.  not much    4.  none

54. The mayor of your city or town  
1.  a great deal    2.  some    3.  not much    4.  none

55. Your parents  
1.  a great deal    2.  some    3.  not much    4.  none

56. Political parties (Democrats, Republicans, etc.)  
1.  a great deal    2.  some    3.  not much    4.  none

57. Overall, how much trust do you have in the government in Washington to do what is right?  
1.  a great deal    2.  some    3.  not much    4.  none

58. Overall, how much trust do you have in the state government in Arizona to do what is right?  
1.  a great deal    2.  some    3.  not much    4.  none

59. Overall, how much trust do you have in your local town or city government to do what is right?  
1.  a great deal    2.  some    3.  not much    4.  none

***Please tell us whether you agree or disagree with each of the following statements:***

60. I am personally responsible for getting involved to make things better for society  
1.  agree    2.  disagree

61. Elected officials don't care what people like me think.  
1.  agree    2.  disagree

62. Most of the time people try to be helpful.  
1.  agree    2.  disagree

63. Politics and government seem so complicated that a person like me can't really understand what's going on.  
1.  agree    2.  disagree

***please go on to the next page***

64. Most of the time people are just looking out for themselves.  
1.  agree 2.  disagree
65. Most people are moral and honest.  
1.  agree 2.  disagree
66. Being loyal to yourself is more important than being loyal to your community.  
1.  agree 2.  disagree
67. There is a lot about our form of government that I am proud of.  
1.  agree 2.  disagree
68. Americans disagree so much about the right things to do in politics that we need politicians to resolve these disputes.  
1.  agree 2.  disagree
69. Politics is a good thing.  
1.  agree 2.  disagree

***How important are each of the following to you personally?***

70. Feeling safe where you live  
1.  very important 2.  somewhat important 3.  not very important
71. Making a lot of money  
1.  very important 2.  somewhat important 3.  not very important
72. Having strong family relationships  
1.  very important 2.  somewhat important 3.  not very important
73. Having good health  
1.  very important 2.  somewhat important 3.  not very important
74. Working to make your community better  
1.  very important 2.  somewhat important 3.  not very important

***Next, we would like to know your views on a few important social issues.***

75. Would you say that our society treats members of minority groups:  
1.  the same, 2.  better than or 3.  worse than non-minorities?
76. People who are pro-life tend to be opposed to abortion except in extreme cases. People who are pro-choice tend to believe that the decision to have an abortion should be left to the woman. Do you tend to be 1.  pro-life or 2.  pro-choice?
77. Would you 1.  support or 2.  oppose a law that made it legal for people of the same sex to get married?
78. Do you 1.  agree or 2.  disagree with the decision for the United States to invade Iraq?
79. Would you 1.  support or 2.  oppose a law that restricted a citizen's right to own a gun?

***Now we have just a few questions about you.***

80. What grade are you in?  
1.  6th 2.  7th 3.  8th 4.  9th 5.  10th 6.  11th 7.  12th
81. Which of the following best describes your racial/ethnic background?  
1.  Asian/Pacific Islander 4.  Native American 7.  Other (specify) \_\_\_\_\_  
2.  Black/African American 5.  White/Caucasian  
3.  Hispanic or Latino 6.  Multi-racial
82. Aside from weddings and funerals, how often do you attend organized religious services?  
1.  more than once a week 4.  a few times a year  
2.  once a week 5.  seldom  
3.  once or twice a month 6.  never

***please go on to the next page***

83. What was the last year of school your mother completed? If you are being raised by a stepmother or some other female relative, please answer for that person.
- some high school or less
  - high school graduate
  - some college
  - college graduate
  - graduate school/professional degree
  - don't know
84. What was the last year of school your father completed? If you are being raised by a stepfather or some other male relative, please answer for that person.
- some high school or less
  - high school graduate
  - some college
  - college graduate
  - graduate school/professional degree
  - don't know
85. Which of the following best describes who you live with?
- with both my father and mother
  - with one biological parent and a step-parent
  - with only my mother
  - with only my father
  - with a guardian, grandparent or someone else
86. Which of the following best describes the male head of your household?
- works full time outside of the home
  - works part time outside of the home
  - does not work outside of the home
  - there is no male head of the household
87. Which of the following best describes the female head of your household?
- works full time outside of the home
  - works part time outside of the home
  - does not work outside of the home
  - there is no female head of the household
88. What is your current age?
- younger than 12
  - 12
  - 13
  - 14
  - 15
  - 16
  - 17
  - 18
  - older than 18
89. How long has your family lived in Arizona?
- less than 5 years
  - 5 to 10 years
  - more than 10 years but less than 20 years
  - 20 years or more
90. Are you 1.  male or 2.  female
91. Overall, would you describe yourself as
- very happy
  - somewhat happy
  - not very happy

*please go on to the next page*

92. How much time each day would you say you spend on the Internet?  
1.  less than 1 hour      2.  1 to 3 hours      3.  more than 3 hours

***How often do you use the following services?***

93. Text messaging  
1.  frequently      2.  occasionally      3.  rarely      4.  never
94. E-mail  
1.  frequently      2.  occasionally      3.  rarely      4.  never
95. Instant Messenger  
1.  frequently      2.  occasionally      3.  rarely      4.  never
96. MySpace  
1.  frequently      2.  occasionally      3.  rarely      4.  never
97. Internet blogs  
1.  frequently      2.  occasionally      3.  rarely      4.  never
98. Internet chat rooms  
1.  frequently      2.  occasionally      3.  rarely      4.  never
99. Internet game sites  
1.  frequently      2.  occasionally      3.  rarely      4.  never
100. Internet search engines  
1.  frequently      2.  occasionally      3.  rarely      4.  never
101. Internet video sites  
1.  frequently      2.  occasionally      3.  rarely      4.  never

***Please tell us whether you agree or disagree with the following statements:***

102. By using the Internet, people like me can understand politics better.  
1.  agree      2.  disagree
103. By using the Internet, people like me can have more political power.  
1.  agree      2.  disagree
104. By using the Internet, people like me can have more say about what the government does.  
1.  agree      2.  disagree
105. How much time each day would you say you spend watching television?  
1.  less than 1 hour      2.  1 to 3 hours      3.  more than 3 hours

***How often do you watch the following channels?***

106. MTV      1.  frequently      2.  occasionally      3.  rarely      4.  never
107. Comedy Central      1.  frequently      2.  occasionally      3.  rarely      4.  never
108. Cartoon Network      1.  frequently      2.  occasionally      3.  rarely      4.  never
109. VH1      1.  frequently      2.  occasionally      3.  rarely      4.  never
110. Cable news channels such as CNN, MSNBC and/or Fox News  
1.  frequently      2.  occasionally      3.  rarely      4.  never
111. Broadcast channels such as NBC, CBS, ABC, etc.  
1.  frequently      2.  occasionally      3.  rarely      4.  never

*Thank you for helping us complete this study. We appreciate your participation.*