VOLUNTEERISM INDICATORS

Local Volunteer Rates (EVS ID CC01001)

Recent Performance

This trend is negative or declining.

In 2010 (the latest year for which local data are available), Erie had an average volunteer rate of 25.8 percent, which was less than the 28.5 percent volunteer rate in 2009. In addition, Erie's volunteer rate trailed behind the average of 30.1 percent among 17 metro areas including Pittsburgh and Philadelphia.

Erie's 2010 volunteer rate was also slightly below that for Pennsylvania (26.9 percent) and the U.S. as a whole (26.3 percent). As of 2013, the volunteer rate in Pennsylvania has risen slightly to 27.0 percent, while the national volunteer rate has fallen to 25.4 percent.

The Basics

Volunteerism is the use or involvement of people who freely offer their time and labor, especially in community services.

Why It's Important

Measuring volunteerism is a way of seeing how many citizens freely invest their time and efforts in the community. In other words, measuring volunteerism shows how many people care enough about their community to freely invest in it. If many citizens are volunteering in a community, one can conclude that the area is well taken care of. People will take better care of, or be more aware of the happenings in their community if they are devoted to it. Volunteering is one such way that people invest themselves in their community. If volunteerism is strong, it can be concluded that the community is well taken care of. The community that has weak volunteerism indicates low investment of the citizens, and an area that is not well cared for.

The Details

A major source of information on volunteerism is the Corporation for National & Community Service. The original data source is a supplement to the Current Population Survey (CPS) conducted by the U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics (BLS). However, the BLS does not publish that data set; it only puts out annual summaries with national data.

All the Nitty-Gritty Details

Corporation for National & Community Service, Volunteering and Civic Life in America 2014: National, Regional, State, and City Information

Subcategories

This EVS indicator has no subcategories.

Peer areas

These variables include data on 10 of the 13 standard EVS peer areas, along with U.S. and PA data. Data are also available for other cities such as Pittsburgh and Philadelphia.

Frequency

Annual

Source

Corporation for National & Community Service, [Volunteering and Civic Life in America 2014: National, Regional, State, and City Information](#)

Other Related Data

Additional Studies and Research

U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics, [Economic News Release: Volunteering in the United States, 2014](#)

PA & US Volunteer Rates (EVS ID CC01002)

Recent Performance

This trend is mixed or inconclusive. It has stabilized for Pennsylvania in recent years, but fell slightly in the U.S. between 2012 and 2013.

As of 2013, the volunteer rate in Pennsylvania stood at 27.0 percent. This was below the 2004 high of 32.5 percent. After increasing slightly in 2007 to 28.7 percent, the PA volunteer rate has stabilized at about 27 percent since 2010.

With a few minor exceptions, the volunteer rate in Pennsylvania has been consistently above the rate for the U.S. as a whole throughout the period 2002-2013, and was higher than the rate of 25.8 percent for Erie in 2010 (the latest year for which local data are available).

The U.S. volunteer rate has fallen to 25.4 percent in 2013 compared to 28.8 percent in 2005. Although the rate was relatively stable at about 26 percent from 2006 to 2012, it decreased slightly between 2012 and 2013.

The Basics

Volunteerism is the use or involvement of people who freely offer their time and labor, especially in community services.

Why It's Important

Measuring volunteerism is a way of seeing how many citizens freely invest their time and efforts in the community. In other words, measuring volunteerism shows how many people care enough about their community to freely invest in it. If many citizens are volunteering in a community, one can conclude that the area is well taken care of. People will take better care of, or be more aware of the happenings in their community if they are devoted to it. Volunteering is one such way that people invest themselves in their community. If volunteerism is strong, it can be concluded that the community is well taken care of. The community that has weak volunteerism indicates low investment of the citizens, and an area that is not well cared for.

The Details

A major source of information on volunteerism is the Corporation for National & Community Service. The original data source is a supplement to the Current Population Survey (CPS) conducted by the U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics (BLS). However, the BLS does not publish that data set; it only puts out annual summaries with national data.

All the Nitty-Gritty Details

Corporation for National & Community Service, Volunteering and Civic Life in America 2014: National, Regional, State, and City Information

Subcategories

This EVS indicator has no subcategories.

Peer areas

Along with U.S. and PA data, these variables include data on 10 of the 13 standard EVS peer areas. Data are also available for other cities such as Pittsburgh and Philadelphia.

Frequency

Annual

Source

Corporation for National & Community Service, Volunteering and Civic Life in America 2014: National, Regional, State, and City Information

Other Related Data

Additional Studies and Research

U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics, Economic News Release: Volunteering in the United States, 2014

⬆ Total Number of Volunteers - PA & US (EVS ID CC01003)

Recent Performance

This trend has been positive in the most recent year, although it is not back up to the levels reached in the mid-2000s.

In 2004, there were 3,161,210 volunteers in Pennsylvania, but the number declined by over 14 percent to 2,714,156 in 2012. The good news is that the number of volunteers in Pennsylvania increased by 1.6 percent from 2011 to 2012.

For the U.S. as a whole, the number of volunteers in 2012 was 64,512,846, but this decreased by 1.3 percent compared to the number of volunteers in 2005. The good news is that the number of volunteers in the U.S. increased slightly by 0.4 percent from 2011 to 2012.

The Basics

Volunteerism is the use or involvement of people who freely offer their time and labor, especially in community services.

Why It's Important

Measuring volunteerism is a way of seeing how many citizens freely invest their time and efforts in the community. In other words, measuring volunteerism shows how many people care enough about their community to freely invest in it. If many citizens are volunteering in a community, one can conclude that the area is well taken care of. People will take better care of, or be more aware of the happenings in their community if they are devoted to it. Volunteering is one such way that people invest themselves in their community. If volunteerism is strong, it can be concluded that the community is well taken care of. The community that has weak volunteerism indicates low investment of the citizens, and an area that is not well cared for.

The Details

A major source of information on volunteerism is the Corporation for National & Community Service. The original data source is a supplement to the Current Population Survey (CPS) conducted by the U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics (BLS). However, the BLS does not publish that data set; it only puts out annual summaries with national data.

All the Nitty-Gritty Details

Corporation for National & Community Service, Volunteering and Civic Life in America 2014: National, Regional, State, and City Information

Subcategories

This EVS indicator has no subcategories.

Peer areas

Along with U.S. and PA data, these variables include data on 10 of the 13 standard EVS peer areas. Data are also available for other cities such as Pittsburgh and Philadelphia.

Frequency
    Annual

Source
    Corporation for National & Community Service, Volunteering and Civic Life in America 2014: National, Regional, State, and City Information

Other Related Data

Additional Studies and Research
    U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics, Economic News Release: Volunteering in the United States, 2014

OFFENSES COMMITTED & ARRESTS MADE INDICATORS

Note about crime data: The EVS crime data come from two related but separate sources: the Pennsylvania Uniform Crime Reporting System (UCRS) and the U.S. Federal Bureau of Investigation (FBI). Each has its advantages and shortcomings, but together they give us a fuller picture of crime in Erie and its peer areas, as well as in the state and the nation. UCRS has detailed data on categories of crimes and has more recent data (through 2014), but only goes back to 2005 and only covers areas in Pennsylvania. The FBI statistics report data back to 1995 in some cases, and for all metro areas of the U.S. so we can get data for Erie's peers there. But it reports on fewer crime categories and it takes longer to compile all those data, so the most recent are for 2013 at this point. The result of this is that some of the EVS graphs only go through 2013 and cover less-detailed crime categories (when we wish to explore Erie relative to its peers) while other data are more recent or detailed, but sacrifice data for peer areas.

Total Offenses Committed (EVS ID CC02001)

Recent Performance

This trend is improving.

This trend is improving. The total number of offenses committed in Erie has fallen every year since 2011 to a low of 19,288 in 2014. The drop is greater in the property crime category than in the violent crime category. Compared to its peers, Erie had a lower crime rate in 2013 than the U.S. and seven of the eleven peers for which we had data, although Erie's rate was higher than PA's rate.

The Basics

This indicator reports the actual number of offenses committed, and also offenses per 100,000 population for comparison across areas of different size.

Why It's Important

Measuring offenses committed is a way of seeing how much violence, theft, or other criminal activity there is in a community. The level of crime, which may be influenced by many different variables, will affect the degree to which residents of an area feel safe living in the community.

The Details

This variable measures the actual number of criminal offenses committed in Erie during a given year.

All the Nitty-Gritty Details

Pennsylvania Uniform Crime Reporting System: http://www.paucrs.pa.gov/UCR/ComMain.asp
Federal Bureau of Investigation Crime Statistics: www.fbi.gov/stats-services/crimestats

Subcategories

Total crime, violent crime, and property crime.

Peer areas

The PA data source provides statistics for Erie and other areas in Pennsylvania. The FBI source provides national and peer area data.

Frequency

Annual

Source

Pennsylvania Uniform Crime Reporting System: http://www.paucrs.pa.gov/UCR/ComMain.asp
Federal Bureau of Investigation Crime Statistics: www.fbi.gov/stats-services/crimestats

Other Related Data

⬇ **Total Arrests** (EVS ID CC02002)

Recent Performance

This trend is negative or needs improvement.

After decreasing from 2011 to 2013, total arrests made in Erie County have increased again from 2013 to 2014. Although the number of arrests is still considerably less than the levels reached back in 2006, but this may simply reflect the reduction in number of offenses committed.

The Basics

This indicator reports the number of arrests made as a result of criminal offenses.

Why It's Important

The number of arrests reflects the activities of local law enforcement authorities in response to criminal activity, and indicates the number of offenses that are deemed to be severe enough to warrant legal authority detainment. The level of crime, which may be influenced by many different variables, will affect the degree to which residents of an area feel safe living in the community.

The Details

This variable measures the total number of arrests by police in a given year.

All the Nitty-Gritty Details

Pennsylvania Uniform Crime Reporting System: http://www.paucrs.pa.gov/UCR/ComMain.asp

Subcategories

This EVS indicator has no subcategories.

Peer areas

The PA data source provides statistics for Erie and other areas in Pennsylvania. The FBI source provides national and peer area data.

Frequency

Annual

Source

Pennsylvania Uniform Crime Reporting System: http://www.paucrs.pa.gov/UCR/ComMain.asp

Other Related Data

% of Crimes Resulting in an Arrest (EVS ID CC02003)

Recent Performance

This trend is positive.

The percent of crimes in Erie resulting in arrest fell from a high of 40.7 percent in 2006 to 37.5 percent in 2013. However, it has risen back up to 41.7 percent in 2014. It had been as low as 36.4 percent in 2012.

The Basics

This variable measures the total number of arrests divided by the total number of crimes reported. A higher percent means that local law enforcement is holding offenders accountable at a higher rate.

Why It's Important

The percentage of crimes resulting in an arrest reflects the activities of local law enforcement authorities in response to criminal activity, and indicates the number of offenses that are deemed to be severe enough to warrant legal authority detainment. The level of crime, which may be influenced by many different variables, will affect the degree to which residents of an area feel safe living in the community.

The Details

The percentage of crimes resulting in an arrest is measured by the total number of arrests divided by the total number of crimes.

All the Nitty-Gritty Details

Pennsylvania Uniform Crime Reporting System: http://www.paucrs.pa.gov/UCR/ComMain.asp

Subcategories

This EVS indicator has no subcategories.

Peer areas

The PA data source provides statistics for Erie and Pennsylvania.

Frequency

Annual

Source

Pennsylvania Uniform Crime Reporting System: http://www.paucrs.pa.gov/UCR/ComMain.asp

Other Related Data

OFFENSES COMMITTED BY CATEGORY INDICATORS

Offenses Committed by Category (EVS ID CC02004, CC02005, CC02006, CC02007, CC02008, CC02009, CC02010, CC02011, CC02012, CC02013, CC02014, CC02015, CC02016, CC02017, CC02018, CC02019, CC02020, CC02021, CC02022, CC02023, CC02024, CC02025, CC02026, CC02027, and CC02028)

Recent Performance

This trend is mixed or inconclusive.

Although the total number of offenses committed in Erie has fallen every year since 2011, offenses in some specific crime categories have actually increased, while those in other categories have decreased. Especially of concern is the rate of increase in more serious or violent crimes, such as weapons-related offenses and murder and non-negligent manslaughter.

Larceny-theft was the category with the highest number of offenses (4,438) committed in Erie County in 2014, while gambling had no recorded offenses committed.

The top ten crime categories with the *highest* number of offenses committed in Erie County in 2014 were: larceny-theft (4,438); assault (2,526); disorderly conduct (1,831); vandalism (1,720); burglary (1,332); driving under the influence (1,109); drunkenness (975); forgery/counterfeiting, fraud, embezzlement (973); drug sale/manufacturing, drug possession (840); and sex offenses excluding rape and prostitution (264).

The crime categories with the *lowest* number offenses committed in Erie County in 2014 were: motor vehicle theft (134); stolen property (106); rape (93); offenses against family (72); arson (44); murder and non-negligent manslaughter (12); vagrancy (12); prostitution (6); manslaughter by negligence (2); and gambling (0).

The crime categories with the highest number of *arrests* in Erie County in 2014 were: assault (1,407); larceny-theft (1,126); driving under the influence (1,065); drunkenness (1,003); and disorderly conduct (843).

Between 2006 and 2014, the crime categories that had the *highest rates of increase* in Erie County were: weapons-related offenses (increasing to 207 from 69, or 200 percent); murder and non-negligent manslaughter (increasing to 12 from 6, or 100 percent); and offenses against family (increasing to 72 from 45, or 60 percent).

In the more recent period, between 2013 and 2014, the crime categories that had the *highest rates of increase* in Erie County were: murder and non-negligent manslaughter (increasing to 12 from 4, or 200 percent); weapons-related offenses (increasing to 207 from 109, or 89.9 percent); and arson (increasing to 44 from 35, or 25.7 percent).

Between 2006 and 2014, the crime categories that had the *highest rates of decrease* in Erie County were: liquor law offenses (decreasing to 218 from 785, or 72.2 percent); prostitution (decreasing to 6 from 16, or 62.5 percent); and robbery (decreasing to 136 from 309, or 56 percent).
In the more recent period, between 2013 and 2014, the crime categories that had the *highest rates of decrease* in Erie County were: prostitution (decreasing to 6 from 17, or 64.7 percent); robbery (decreasing to 136 from 226 or 39.8 percent); and vagrancy (decreasing to 12 from 17, or 29.4 percent).

The Basics

This indicator reports the actual number of offenses committed, and also offenses per 100,000 population for comparison across areas of different size. These are reported for a broad set of crime categories, as well as

for some broader classifications such as violent and property crimes. It also reports crimes per 100,000 population to allow comparison across areas of different sizes.
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Why It's Important

Measuring offenses committed is a way of seeing how much violence, theft, or other criminal activity there is in a community. In addition, measuring offenses committed broken down by crime category allows a community to see which criminal activities are more prevalent and the extent to which more severe or violent crimes versus less serious crimes are being committed. These measures may be useful in helping a community decide on the most appropriate strategy to allocate law enforcement resources. The level of crime, which may be influenced by many different variables, will affect the degree to which residents of an area feel safe living in the community.

The Details

"The Basics" says it all.

All the Nitty-Gritty Details

Pennsylvania Uniform Crime Reporting System: http://www.paucrs.pa.gov/UCR/ComMain.asp
Federal Bureau of Investigation Crime Statistics: www.fbi.gov/stats-services/crimestats

Subcategories

This EVS indicator has no subcategories.

Peer areas

The PA data source provides statistics for Erie and other areas in Pennsylvania. The FBI source provides national and peer area data.

Frequency

Annual

Source

Pennsylvania Uniform Crime Reporting System: http://www.paucrs.pa.gov/UCR/ComMain.asp
Federal Bureau of Investigation Crime Statistics: www.fbi.gov/stats-services/crimestats

Other Related Data

VOTER PARTICIPATION INDICATORS

Registered & Eligible Voters - General Elections (EVS ID CC03001)

Recent Performance

This trend has been slightly positive in the most recent few years, although it is not back up to the level reached in 2009.

Between 2000 and 2014, the number of registered and eligible voters in the general elections in Erie County reached a high of 195,105 in 2009. The number fell by 12.0 percent to 171,694 in 2011, although it has risen in each of the last three years, rising by 3.8 percent between 2011 and 2014 to stand at 178,160. However, as a *percent* of citizens who are eligible to vote (Erie County residents age 18 and older), registered and eligible voters in the general elections fell to about 81 percent in 2012 from about 90 percent in 2009.

It is also interesting to note that, in the previous three presidential election years, fewer people in Erie were registered to vote for the 2012 general election than in the 2004 and 2008 general elections.

The Basics

A voter is a person who formally indicates a choice between two or more candidates or courses of action expressed typically through a ballot, show of hands, or by voice. Voter participation is the overall act of the voter(s) taking part in the polling process. General elections are held in November.

Why It's Important

Voting is an important component of a democratic system and the number of registered and eligible voters reflects the extent to which citizens in an area are willing to engage in the democratic process. Voting participation of a community can indicate a variety of different things. High voting participation can indicate a very controversial or important election. Likewise, low voting participation can indicate a very unpopular election where both or all candidates are not liked, or in which the issues are not perceived by voters to be important. Voting participation may also be related to other demographic variables such as the level of education.

The Details

Registered and eligible voters in the general elections are the total number of registered voters in November of each year, as recorded by the Pennsylvania Department of State.

All the Nitty-Gritty Details

Pennsylvania Department of State**,** Voter Registration Statistics

Subcategories

This EVS indicator has no subcategories. However, the Pennsylvania Department of State does provide data on the number of registered and eligible voters by political party affiliation.

Peer areas

The data source used here only provides statistics for counties in Pennsylvania.

Frequency
Annual

Source
Pennsylvania Department of State, Voter Registration Statistics

Other Related Data

⬆ Registered & Eligible Voters - Primary Elections (EVS ID CC03002)

Recent Performance

This trend has been slightly positive in the most recent few years, although it is not back up to the level reached in 2009.

Between 2000 and 2014, the number of registered and eligible voters in the primary elections in Erie County reached a high of 195,123 in 2009. The number fell by 12.4 percent to 170,941 in 2011, although it has risen in each of the last three years, rising by 4.4 percent between 2011 and 2014 to stand at 178,501. However, as a *percent* of citizens who are eligible to vote (Erie County residents age 18 and older), registered and eligible voters in the primary elections fell to about 78.7 percent in 2012 from about 90 percent in 2009.

It is also interesting to note that, in the previous three presidential election years, the number of registered and eligible voters in the primary elections in Erie Country in 2012 was lower than in 2008, but higher than in 2004.

The Basics

A voter is a person who formally indicates a choice between two or more candidates or courses of action expressed typically through a ballot, show of hands, or by voice. Voter participation is the overall act of the voter(s) taking part in the polling process. Primary elections, which are based on political party affiliation, are generally held in the spring.

Why It's Important

Voting is an important component of a democratic system and the number of registered and eligible voters reflects the extent to which citizens in an area are willing to engage in the democratic process. Voting participation of a community can indicate a variety of different things. High voting participation can indicate a very controversial or important election. Likewise, low voting participation can indicate a very unpopular election where both or all candidates are not liked, or in which the issues are not perceived by voters to be important. The number of registered and eligible voters in the primary elections may reflect the relative strengths of various political party affiliations. Voting participation may also be related to other demographic variables such as the level of education.

The Details

Registered and eligible voters in the primary elections are the total number of registered voters in the spring of each year, as recorded by the Pennsylvania Department of State.

All the Nitty-Gritty Details

Pennsylvania Department of State, Voter Registration Statistics

Subcategories

This EVS indicator has no subcategories. However, the Pennsylvania Department of State does provide data on the number of registered and eligible voters by political party affiliation.

Peer areas

The data source used here only provides statistics for counties in Pennsylvania.

<u>Frequency</u>

Annual

<u>Source</u>

Pennsylvania Department of State, Voter Registration Statistics

<u>Other Related Data</u>

⬆ Total Voting Eligible Population (EVS ID CC03003)

Recent Performance

This trend has been positive.

The total voting eligible population in Erie County has increased slowly but steadily each year since 2005. Between 2005 and 2013, the voting eligible population increased by 9.0 percent to 219,180, the highest level reached so far in the first decade of the new century.

The Basics

The total voting eligible population is the number of individuals who are old enough to vote (18 and over).

Why It's Important

Voting is an important component of a democratic system and the total voting eligible population reflects the number of individuals who can potentially engage in the democratic process, although not all eligible voters will chose to participate. Voting participation of a community can indicate a variety of different things. High voting participation can indicate a very controversial or important election. Likewise, low voting participation can indicate a very unpopular election where both or all candidates are not liked, or in which the issues are not perceived by voters to be important. Voting participation may also be related to other demographic variables such as the level of education.

The Details

The total voting eligible population is the number of individuals who are old enough to vote (18 and over). These statistics are based on estimates compiled and reported by the U.S. Census Bureau.

All the Nitty-Gritty Details

U.S. Census Bureau, American Fact Finder

Subcategories

This EVS indicator has no subcategories.

Peer areas

The U.S. Census Bureau does provide statistics based on geographical location.

Frequency

Annual

Source

U.S. Census Bureau, American Fact Finder

Other Related Data

⬇ Voter Participation Rates (EVS ID CC03004)

Recent Performance

This trend has been negative.

During the past four presidential election years, the voter participation rate in Erie reached a peak of 62.2 percent in 2004, and has declined in both 2008 and 2012.

Erie's voter participation rate used to be higher than that in Pennsylvania, but recently has fallen below the state's rate.

Both Erie County and the state of Pennsylvania have historically had higher voter participation rates than the U.S. as a whole.

The Basics

The voter participation rate is the percentage of voting age residents that voted for President.

Why It's Important

Voting is an important component of a democratic system and the voter participation rate reflects the extent to which citizens in an area are willing to engage in the democratic process. Voting participation of a community can indicate a variety of different things. High voting participation can indicate a very controversial or important election. Likewise, low voting participation can indicate a very unpopular election where both or all candidates are not liked, or in which the issues are not perceived by voters to be important. Voting participation may also be related to other demographic variables such as the level of education.

The Details

For Erie and the state of Pennsylvania, the voter participation rate is calculated by taking the sum of votes cast for President, as reported by the Pennsylvania Department of State, divided by the total voting age population as reported by the U.S. Census Bureau in its American Community Survey (ACS) and population estimates. For the U.S., this is calculated by taking the sum of votes cast for President, reported by the U.S. Federal Election Commission (FEC), divided by the total voting age population as reported by the U.S. Census Bureau in its American Community Survey (ACS) and population estimates.

All the Nitty-Gritty Details

U.S. Federal Election Commission (FEC), Election Results
Pennsylvania Department of State, Election Statistics
U.S. Census Bureau, American Fact Finder

Subcategories

This EVS indicator has no subcategories.

Peer areas

Data are available based on geographical location.

Frequency

Every election

Sources

U.S. Federal Election Commission (FEC), Election Results
Pennsylvania Department of State, Election Statistics
U.S. Census Bureau, American Fact Finder

Other Related Data

SOCIAL CAPITAL INDICATORS

 Social Capital (EVS ID CC04001, CC04002, CC04003, CC04004, CC04005, CC04006, and CC04007)

Recent Performance

This trend is better or improving.

Measures of social capital in Erie County are generally higher or comparable with peer counties and the U.S. as a whole. Erie County residents are exceptionally social. More than half (58%) have visited or been visited by a relative at least twice per month during the past twelve months, while 60% had friends to their home at least once a month during the same time period. Forty-two percent get together at least once per month with others to play cards or board games, and 28% socialized with coworkers at least once per month. Not surprisingly, faith-based engagement among Erie County residents is high. More than two-thirds (69%) of respondents indicated that they were a member of a church, synagogue or other religious/spiritual community, and 52% have taken part in some activity, such as bible study, associated with a church during the past twelve months.

Perhaps the one area where Erie can improve is civic and political engagement, which has long been recognized as a key indicator of the civic health of a community. While Erie has relatively high voter registration and turnout, other forms of democratic participation, such as signing petitions, attending rallies, working on a community project, and attending a march, are practiced by far fewer Erie County residents. Two-thirds of survey respondents had never attended a public meeting involving town or school affairs.

The Basics

Social capital is defined as the networks of relationships among people who live in a particular society, enabling that society to function effectively. The social trust index is a percent rating showing how much residents trust other people. The diversity of friendship index is a percent rating indicating how diverse residents' personal friendships are. The civic and political engagement index is a percent rating indicating how involved in politics and community projects residents are. The faith-based engagement index is a percent rating indicating how involved in faith-based activities residents are. The diversity of formal group involvement index is a percent rating indicating how diverse residents' group affiliations are. The informal social interaction index is a percent rating showing how much social interaction residents have. The organized group interaction index is a percent rating showing how much involvement residents have with organized groups.

Why It's Important

Measuring social capital can reveal a variety of different things, showing the nature and dynamics of relationships of the people in Erie County. Communities with high levels of social capital are more likely to have higher educational achievement, faster economic growth, and less crime and violence. In areas with greater social connectedness, there will be higher volunteer rates and voter participation as these are actions that people take part in when they are involved in their community.

The Details

The indexes measuring *social trust*, *informal social interaction*, and *organized group interaction* are calculated by taking the average of individual survey responses, and then converting them into a percentage of the highest score of the index.

The indexes measuring *diversity of friendship*, *civic and political engagement*, *faith-based engagement*, and *diversity of formal group involvement* are calculated by taking "yes" or "no" survey responses. The responses are added together, and then individual totals are averaged and expressed as a percentage of the maximum score.

All the Nitty-Gritty Details
Mercyhurst University, Erie County Social Capital and Civic Engagement Benchmark Study, March 2011.

Subcategories
Social capital is measured by calculating indexes for the following subcategories: social trust; diversity of friendships; civic and political engagement; faith-based engagement; diversity of formal group involvement; informal social interaction; and organized group interaction.

Peer areas
Data are not available for the thirteen Erie Vital Signs peer areas in 2011. However, some limited data are available for selected counties and the U.S. in 2006.

Frequency
The data for Erie are from a one-time survey conducted by Mercyhurst University in 2011.

Source
Mercyhurst University, Erie County Social Capital and Civic Engagement Benchmark Study, March 2011.

Other Related Data

Additional Studies and Research
Harvard University, Kennedy School of Government, Social Capital Community Benchmark Survey
Roper Center, 2000 Social Capital Community Benchmark Survey
Robert D. Putnam and Lewis Feldstein, Better Together
Robert D. Putnam, Bowling Alone