

Florida Civic Advance Releases New Report Examining Civic Engagement Among Florida's Older Adults

Civic Matters report finds older Floridians face a lack of civic pathways. Calls for investment in the infrastructure that connects residents to civic life

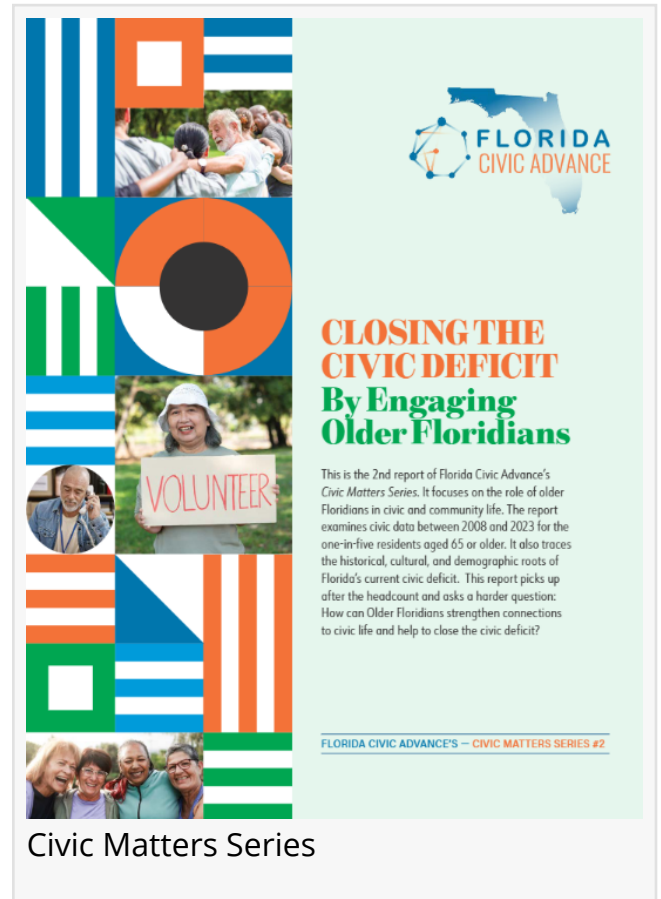
TALLAHASSEE, FL, UNITED STATES, September 29, 2026 /EINPresswire.com/ -- TALLAHASSEE, Fla. – As Florida's older adult population continues to grow and diversify, a new report from Florida Civic Advance (FCA) finds that the state has an opportunity to better harness the experience, knowledge, and willingness of older Floridians to participate in civic life.

Today, Florida Civic Advance released its second [Civic Matters report](#), "[Closing the Civic Deficit by Engaging Older Floridians](#)," an analysis of civic participation among Floridians age 65 and older. Examining 15 years of civic participation data from 2008 to 2023, the report finds that Florida's older adults face a lack of accessible civic pathways, rather than a lack of motivation to engage.

The report comes at a pivotal time for Florida. By 2030, all Baby Boomers will be older than 65, and Florida's older population is expected to continue growing across every region of the state. By 2050, nearly half of Florida's older adults are projected to be Black, Hispanic, or Asian, compared with roughly one-quarter today.

How Florida responds to that demographic shift will have lasting implications for who has access to civic life and whose voices are represented in Florida communities.

"Florida's seniors are ready to engage, but the pathways are too often missing," said Agatha Caraballo, Ph.D., founding director of the Maurice A. Ferré Institute for Civic Leadership at Florida International University. "This report provides a roadmap for reimagining and constructing the



civic infrastructure needed.”

Building on FCA’s inaugural Civic Matters report, the 2026 report focuses specifically on older adults. It examines the historical, structural, and demographic factors contributing to Florida’s civic participation deficit. It also documents disparities in civic participation within the state’s older population and identifies opportunities to create stronger connections between residents and the institutions that shape their communities.

The report points to an important distinction between informal community connection and formal civic participation. Older Floridians already contribute substantial time and energy to their communities, including nearly 130 million volunteer hours statewide in one recent year. Yet participation remains significantly more limited in activities such as attending public meetings, contacting public officials, or engaging in community problem-solving.

Rather than viewing that deficit as evidence of civic apathy, FCA’s report identifies it as an infrastructure challenge and outlines practical opportunities to make civic participation more accessible.

The report identifies three groups positioned to help close Florida’s civic deficit:

Organizations serving older Floridians can integrate civic participation into trusted spaces like senior centers and aging networks, providing accessible information and opportunities to build civic skills.

Foundations and funders can invest in long-term civic infrastructure, supporting trusted community institutions and initiatives that create stronger pathways to participation.

Local governments can make civic participation more accessible by reducing barriers to public meetings, expanding resident advisory opportunities, and creating more ways for older adults to participate in local decision-making.

The report highlights existing efforts that demonstrate how this infrastructure can work, including AARP Florida volunteer programs and Florida communities participating in the AARP Age-Friendly Network.

Florida Civic Advance’s Civic Matters Series provides a statewide analysis of civic participation and identifies opportunities to build stronger, more connected communities. FCA’s work centers on strengthening civic culture by building trust and authentic relationships, expanding civic education and improving access to accurate information.

“Closing the Civic Deficit by Engaging Older Floridians” is available beginning September 28 at FloridaCivicAdvance.com.

About Florida Civic Advance

Florida Civic Advance is a statewide organization working to advance civic connections and participation across Florida. Through research, collaboration, education, and the Civic Matters Series, FCA works to better understand the state of civic participation in Florida and identify actionable solutions that help build stronger, more connected communities.

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