
Expanding Opportunity Framework Racial Disparities Analysis

*Understanding Different Approaches for Addressing
Racial Disparities*

Section 7 Social Capital & Community Leadership

A tool developed by:
The Community Advancement Network (CAN) - Austin, TX
Updated August 2026

Expanding Opportunity Framework Racial Disparities Analysis

A tool developed by the Community Advancement Network

Addressing
Concentrated
Wealth & Power

Safety &
Justice

State/National
Legislation &
Policy

Housing,
Health &
Human
Services

Social Capital
& Community
Leadership

Educational
& Economic
Opportunity

Expand
Opportunity
for Youth &
Adults

Workforce
Development

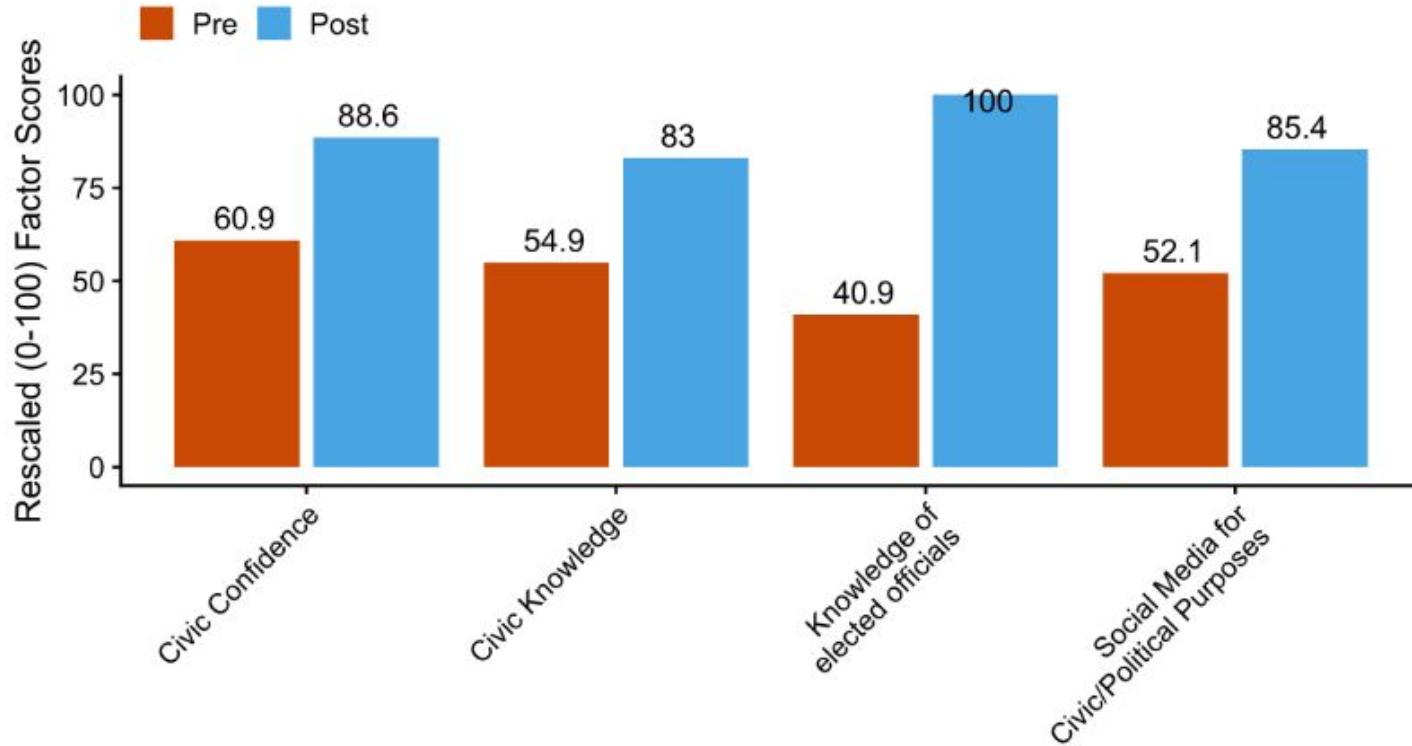
Section 7

Introduction

This section pertains to helping individuals and families build social networks and/or other forms of social capital; and develop and utilize skills that they possess to take leadership in their personal lives as well as the lives of their family and the well-being of their community.

National Parent Leadership Initiative

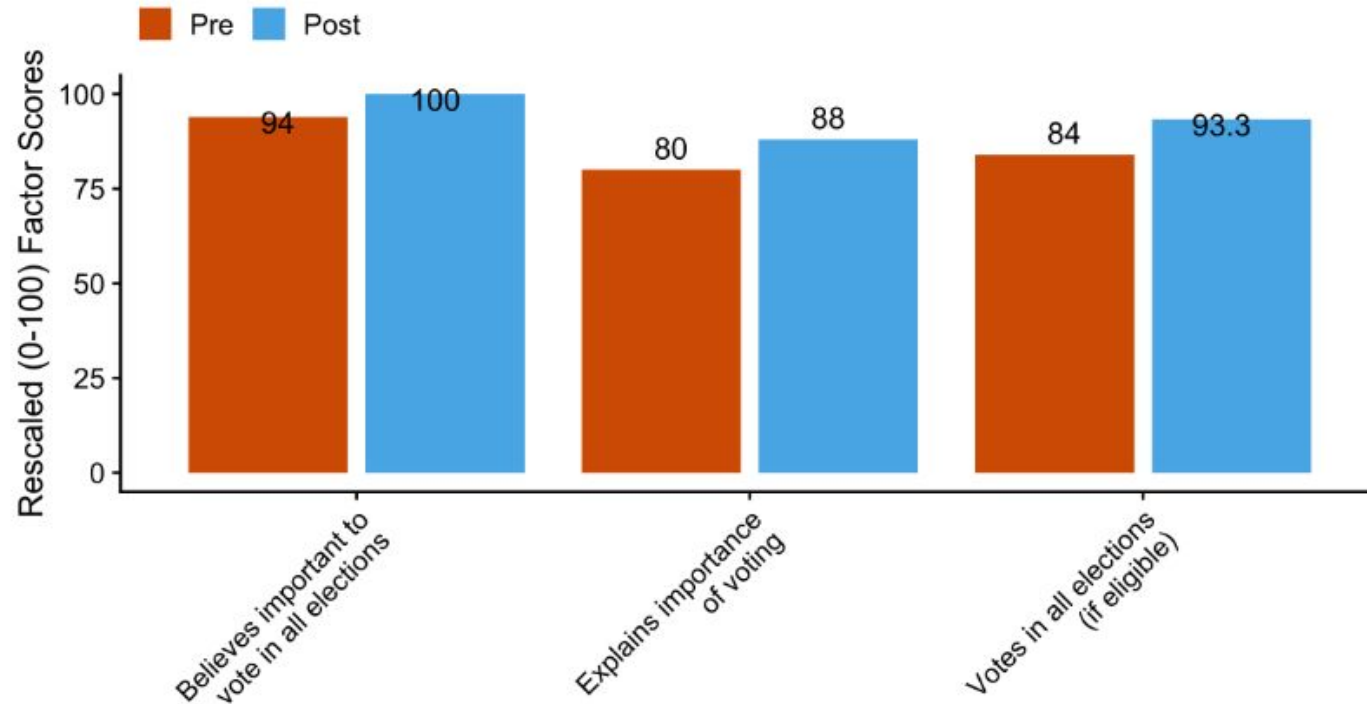
Parent Leader Survey 2023-24: Results for Civic Outcomes



Source: Prepared for NPLI by Metropolitan for Research on Equity and the Transformation of Schools

National Parent Leadership Initiative

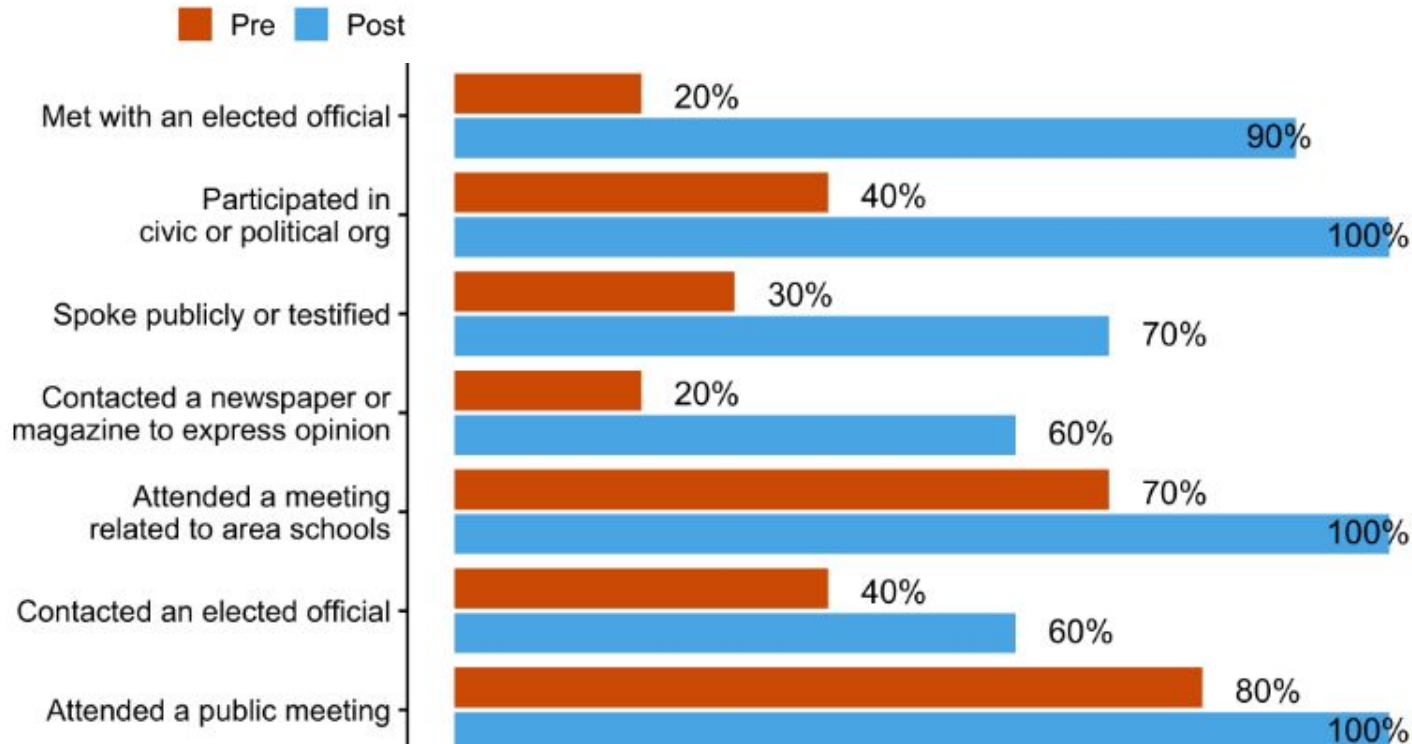
Parent Leader Survey 2023-24: Results for Voting Attitudes & Behavior



Source: Prepared for NPLI by Metropolitan for Research on Equity and the Transformation of Schools

National Parent Leadership Initiative

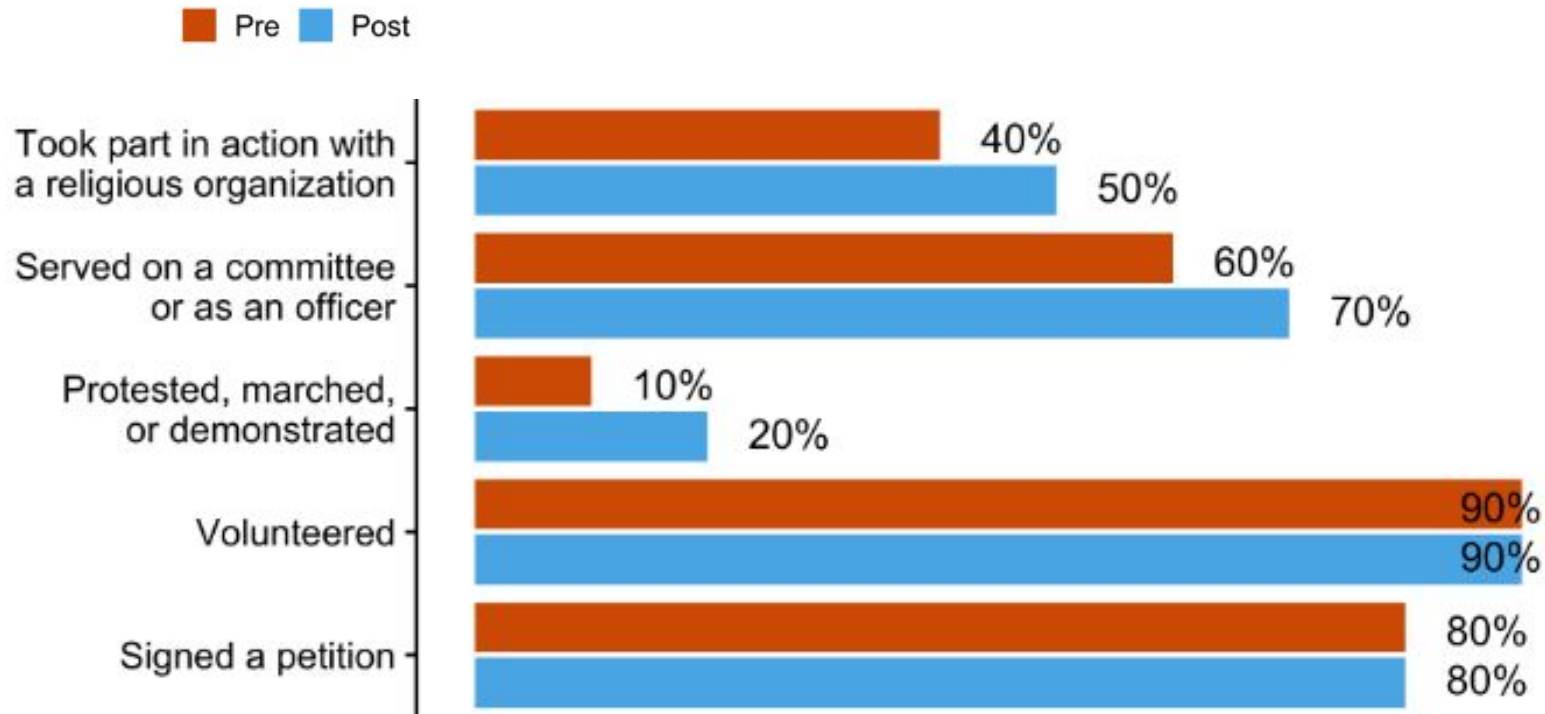
Parent Leader Survey 2023-24: Results for Civic Action



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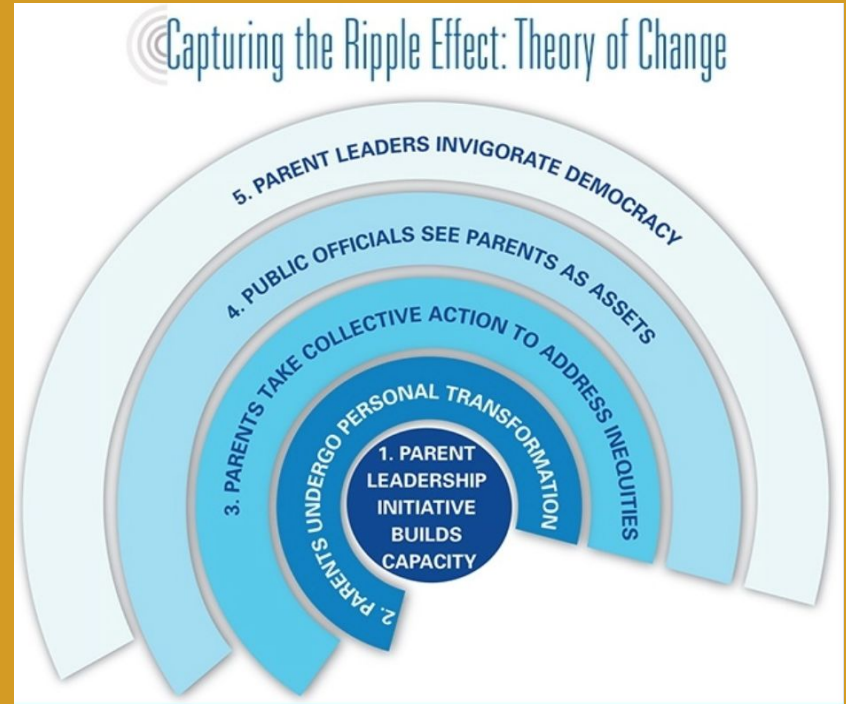
Parent Leader Survey 2023-24: Results for Civic Action



Source: Prepared for NPLI by Metropolitan for Research on Equity and the Transformation of Schools

COMMUNITY LEADERSHIP

When evaluating the benefits of parent leadership initiatives, one must not only view benefits to participants in terms of personal transformation. If structured appropriately, such initiatives can also facilitate collective action, enhance appreciation for community voice among leaders, and invigorate democracy. These factors must be incorporated into program design and evaluation.



Annenberg Institute for School Reform (2016), *Capturing the Ripple Effect: Developing a Theory of Change for Evaluating Parent Leadership Initiatives*, pg 4.

ORGANIZATIONS WORKING TO ADDRESS RACIAL DISPARITIES THROUGH:

COMMUNITY LEADERSHIP

Austin Justice Coalition*

<https://austinjustice.org/>

Hispanic Austin Leadership*

<https://www.gahcc.org/leadership>

Black Leaders Collective ATX*

<https://www.blackleaderscollectiveatx.com/>

African-American Leadership Institute*

<https://www.aaliaustin.org/>

Leadership Austin

<http://leadershipaustin.org/>

Asian Chamber of Commerce Leadership
Accelerator

https://docs.google.com/forms/d/e/1FAIpQLSd55UmTCvorFT9VMncrM016UqWGjvinSE8cnS8nnlbV7_g_vQ/viewform

*Denotes people of color-led organizations.

SOCIAL CAPITAL

The Connections to Success Program supports participants in building social capital through bonding (growing connections with people like me), bridging (growing connections with people different from me) and linking (growing connections with people in positions of power).

After a year in the program, the program documented high levels of employment, increased earnings and stronger relationships for program participants.

Example #2

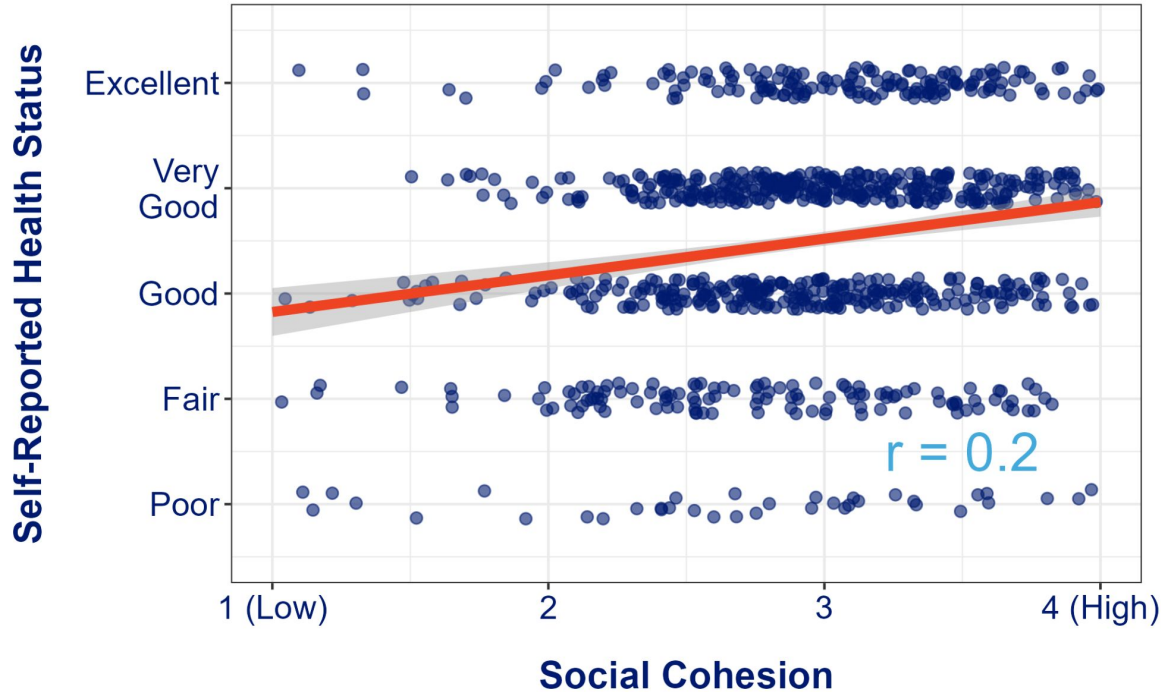
Connections to Success Outcomes

Monthly surveys of 375 participants served over the past 12 months indicate the following:

- 70% of participants retained their jobs 9 months after getting them;
- 82% increased their earnings within 6 months of employment;
- 84% reported reduced conflict in co-parenting relationships;
- 82% reported increased involvement with their children; and
- a 14% recidivism rate for participants 12 months after release from incarceration, compared with 44% nationally.

Strengthening Rural and Urban Communities through Social Capital - "Connections to Success" St. Louis & Kansas City Case Study (2019)

SOCIAL CAPITAL AND HEALTH STATUS (Austin MSA)

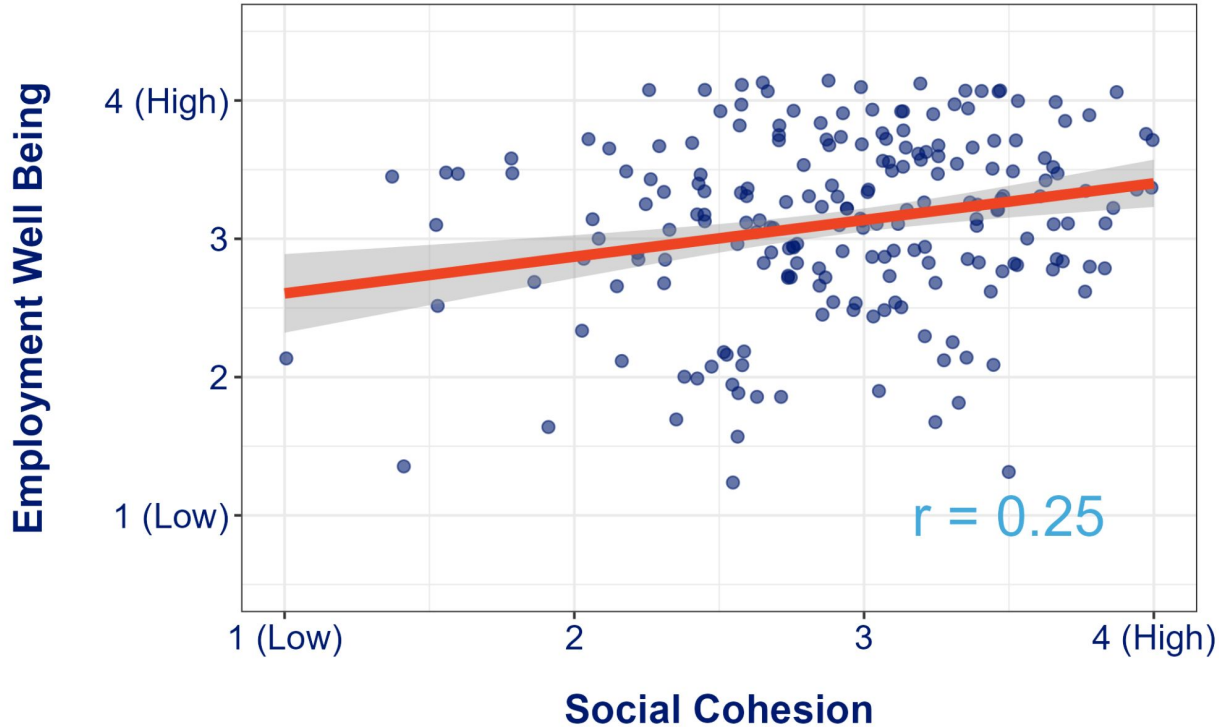


HEALTH STATUS

Residents reporting greater social capital/cohesion report better health.

Residents from the metropolitan area counties (Bastrop, Caldwell, Hays, Travis & Williamson) were surveyed for this community assessment.

SOCIAL CAPITAL & EMPLOYMENT WELL-BEING (AUSTIN MSA)



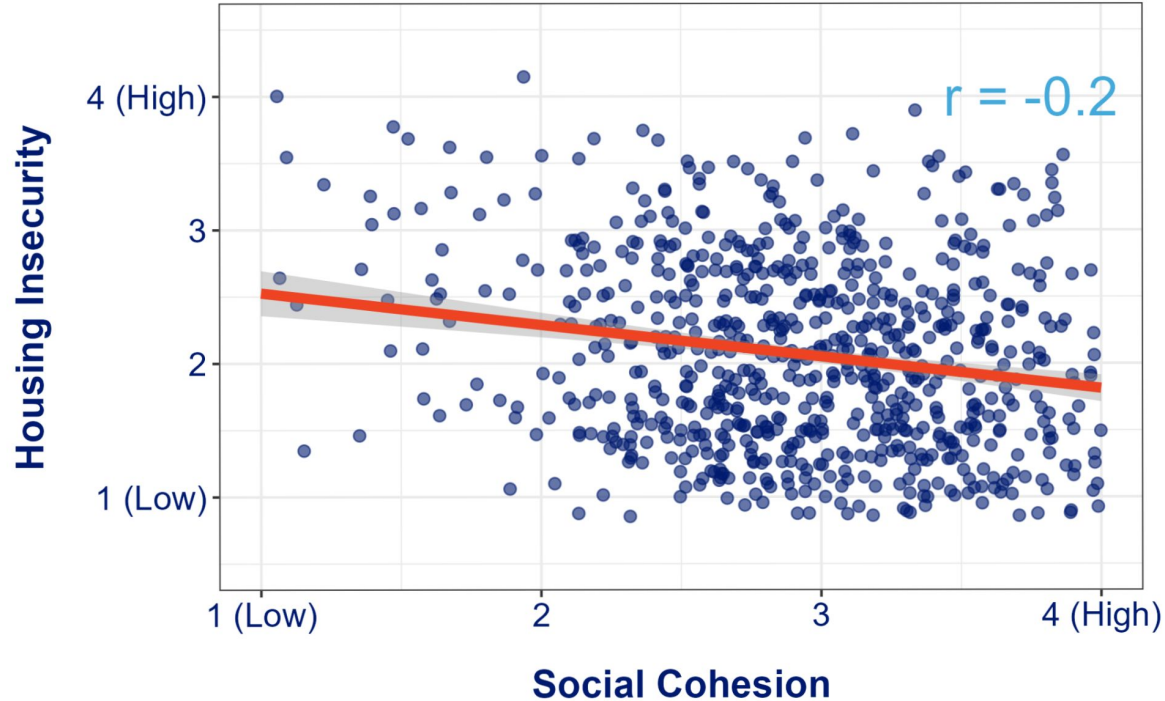
EMPLOYMENT WELLBEING

Residents reporting greater social capital/cohesion report better employment outcomes.

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Austin Area Sustainability Indicators - "Central Texas Community Assessment Analysis of Social, Environmental and Economic Well-Being" (2025). <https://a2si.lbj.utexas.edu/reports>

SOCIAL CAPITAL AND HOUSING SECURITY (AUSTIN MSA)

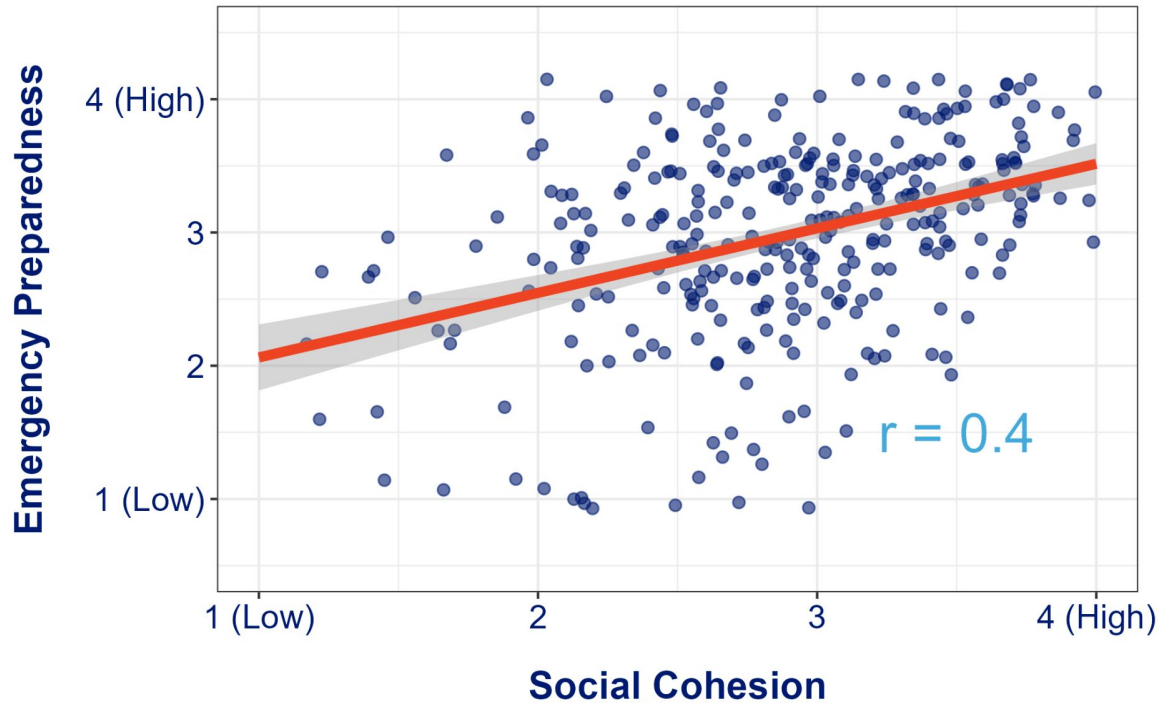


HOUSING SECURITY

Residents reporting greater social capital/cohesion are less likely to struggle with housing access.

Residents from the metropolitan area counties (Bastrop, Caldwell, Hays, Travis & Williamson) were surveyed for this community assessment.

SOCIAL CAPITAL & EMERGENCY PREPAREDNESS (AUSTIN MSA)



EMERGENCY PREPAREDNESS

Residents reporting greater social capital/cohesion are more prepared for emergencies.

Residents from the metropolitan area counties (Bastrop, Caldwell, Hays, Travis & Williamson) were surveyed for this community assessment.

Social Capital & Economic Mobility

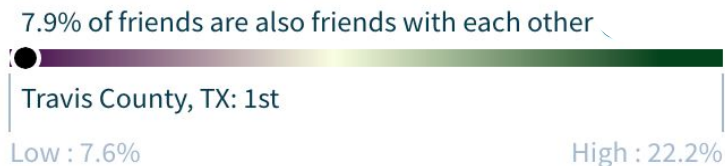
Economic Connectedness

Based on Current Income



Cohesiveness

Clustering



Civic Engagement

Volunteering Rates



Social capital – the strength of our relationships and communities – has been shown to play an important role in outcomes ranging from income to health. Opportunity Insights collected data to measure 3 types of social capital:

Economic Connectedness: The degree to which low-income and high-income people are friends with each other

Cohesiveness: The degree to which social networks are fragmented into cliques

Civic Engagement: Rates of volunteering and participation in community organizations

Opportunity Insights "Social Capital Atlas" (2022)

Social Capital & Economic Mobility

Social networks are highly segregate by income.

Children who grow up in communities with more cross-class interaction are much more likely to rise out of poverty.

Economic connectedness is strongly associated with upward mobility, but other measures of social capital are not.

Difference in economic connectedness can explain why racially segregated communities and areas with high poverty rates have lower rates of upward mobility.

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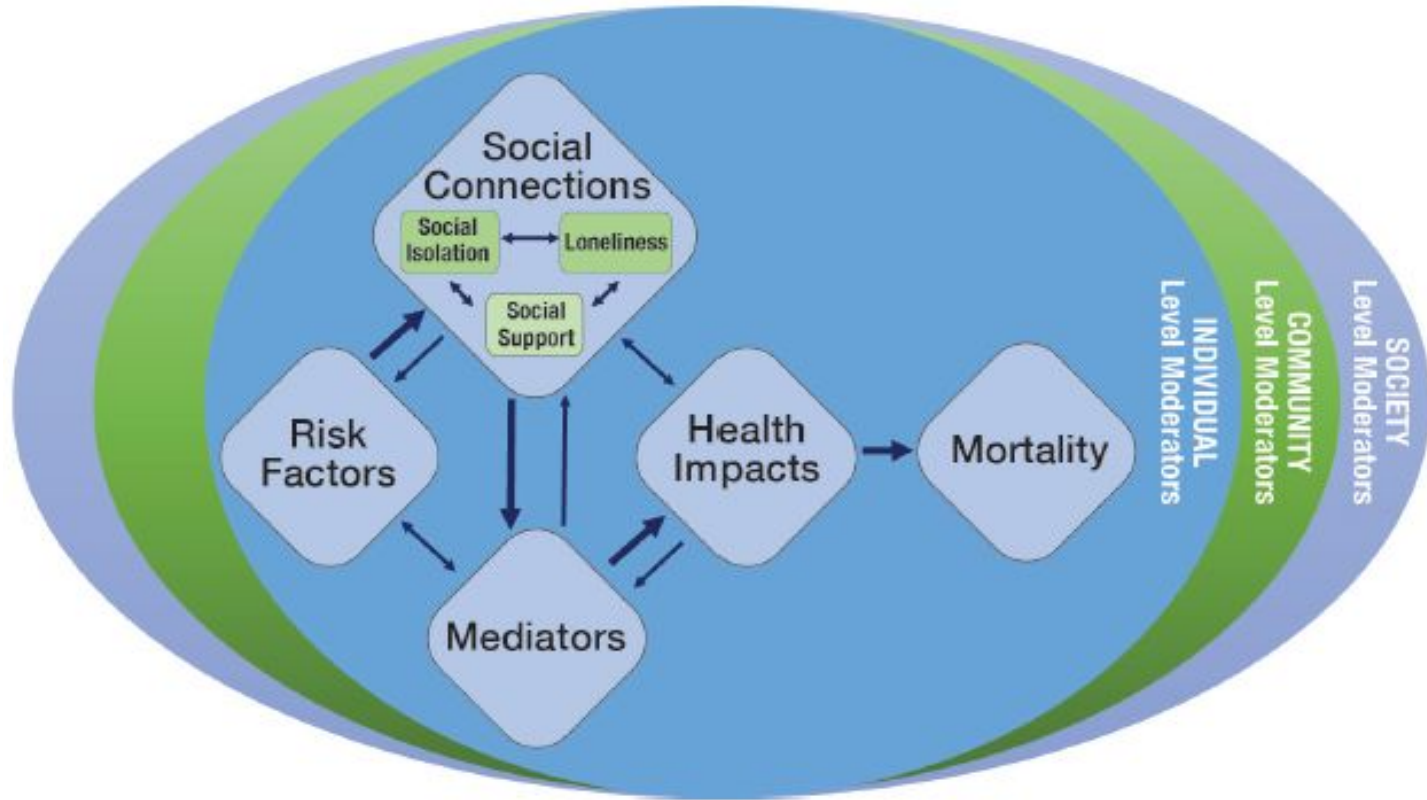
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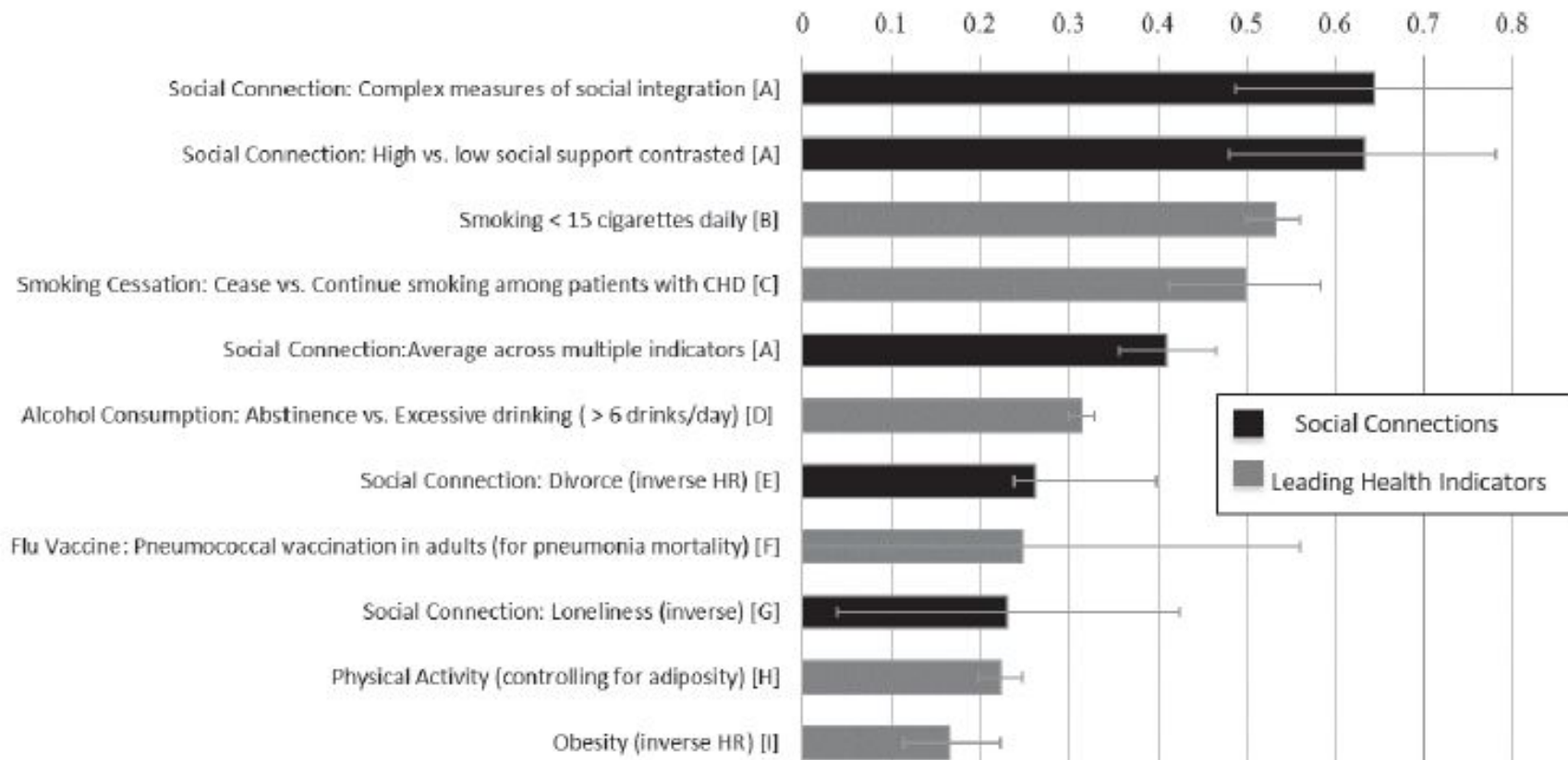
Social Isolation and Loneliness in Older Adults (2020) Guiding Framework



Source: National Academies of Sciences, Engineering & Medicine- Social Isolation & Loneliness in Older Adults

Social Isolation and Loneliness in Older Adults (2020)

Factors That Could Decrease Mortality - Social Connection vs Leading Health Ind.



Source: National Academies of Sciences, Engineering & Medicine- Social Isolation & Loneliness in Older Adults

ORGANIZATIONS WORKING TO ADDRESS RACIAL DISPARITIES THROUGH:

SOCIAL CAPITAL

United Way 2-Gen Coalition for Economic
Advancement

<https://www.unitedwayaustin.org/?s=2-gen>

Austin Area Urban League*

<https://aaul.org/>

African-American Youth Harvest Foundation*

<https://aayhf.org/>

Up Together*

<https://uptogether.org/>

*Denotes people of color-led organizations.

ADDITIONAL RESOURCES FOR BUILDING SOCIAL CAPITAL

State / National Organizations Working In This Arena

U.S. Department of Health & Human Services
Strengthening Human Services Through
Social Capital (research; podcast; case
studies)

<https://aspe.hhs.gov/strengthening-human-services-through-social-capital>

Search Institute

<https://www.search-institute.org/>

Center for Disease Control - Social
Connection

<https://www.cdc.gov/social-connectedness/about/index.html>

COMMUNITY RESOURCES

TRAINING OPPORTUNITIES

Undoing White Supremacy Austin - Unlearning Circles

<https://undoingwhitesupremacy.org/unlearning-circles/>

Community Healing Circles

<https://students.austincc.edu/truth-racial-healing-and-transformation-center/racial-healing-circles/>

RESOURCE TO LEARN ABOUT ENGAGEMENT OPPORTUNITIES

CAN "Get Engaged" Community Calendar

<https://docs.google.com/spreadsheets/d/1FUkB R8pDw7Pb4HNIoT1dBn09UXnuVvOa1HP9KMF3aMo/edit?gid=1003257320#gid=1003257320>

COALITIONS WORKING TO ADDRESS RACIAL DISPARITIES

Black Austin Coalition

<https://blackaustincoalition.com/>

Austin Justice Coalition

<https://austinjustice.org/>

Brave Communities

<https://bravecommunities.org/>

Communities of Color United

<https://www.facebook.com/CCUCoalition/>

Community Resilience Trust

<https://communityresiliencetrust.org/>