

National Service and Civic Engagement Grant Competition FY 2015

University of Texas-Austin Population Research Center

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Office of Sponsored Projects
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Purpose/Research Questions:

How can local administrative or digital networking data complement and extend our existing survey measures of social capital and civic engagement at the community level? Does social capital at the community level influence important economic and health outcomes? Or does the economic well-being or health of a community influence levels of social capital? This project addresses these questions and others, as recommended by the National Research Council report, *Civic Engagement and Social Cohesion: Measuring Dimensions of Social Capital to Inform Policy*. The Corporation for National and Community Service, academic researchers, and local politicians, administrators, activists, and citizens will all benefit from a rigorous county-level measure of social capital that can be tracked over time and related to important social, economic, and health outcomes.

Using confirmatory factor analysis, the project will test new county-level measures of social capital and civic engagement drawn from the IRS, the Census, CNCS, Meetup.com and Google and integrate them with existing measures drawn largely from supplements to the Current Population Survey. Then, using a longitudinal cross-lagged panel design, the project will test whether county-level social capital influences several important economic and health outcomes while acknowledging the likely reciprocal relationship from economic well-being and health back to social capital.