



# Civic Engagement Sector: Recommendations to Advance Social Connection



Coalition to End  
Social Isolation  
& Loneliness

*We envision a society where every individual will one day have the opportunities and supports necessary to be socially engaged.*

## The Challenge

Social isolation and loneliness take a toll on individuals, leading to poorer health outcomes, higher rates of mortality, and higher healthcare costs. Social connection, or lack of social connection, is a social determinant of health that influences physical, mental, and emotional health outcomes. A lack of social connection has been compared to the health impact of smoking 15 cigarettes a day.

## Our Recommendations

The Coalition believes leveraging existing social services and supports fostering social connectedness at the local and community level will have a role in reducing the prevalence of social isolation and loneliness. Specifically, civic engagement should be prioritized, which includes supporting individuals to be engaged in activities within their community, the development of leadership skills, and social ties, trust, and cooperation between community members, community-based organizations, and government agencies.



**To address social isolation and loneliness and to encourage social connection in civic engagement (e.g., voting, volunteerism, public work), policymakers should:**

1. Support legislation that strengthens the Voting Rights Act.



2. Automate voter registration and restoration for formerly incarcerated individuals and newly eligible voters.



3. Expand federal student loan forgiveness and repayment flexibilities to additional civic engagement programs and opportunities (e.g., Resilience Corps, City, Year, participation in community advisory boards and other programs).



4. Provide guidance and technical assistance to local governments and community-based organizations to improve public awareness of and ease of accessing civic engagement opportunities.



5. Engage with stakeholders on existing programs within Corporation for National and Community Service (e.g., AmeriCorps, AmeriCorps Senior) to provide volunteer services to Americans affected by social isolation and loneliness.



**Join us in advocating for solutions that encourage greater social connection. Read our full 2023-2024 Policy Priorities [here](#).**

### **About Us**

The Coalition to End Social Isolation & Loneliness, founded in 2018, advocates for policy change that combats the adverse effects of social isolation and loneliness. The Coalition represents some of the most influential consumer groups, patient advocates, health plans, community-based organizations, behavioral health groups, and private sector innovators in the United States. Visit our website at [www.endsocialisolation.org](http://www.endsocialisolation.org)