

New Research Shows Sports Stadiums Are Effective Polling Sites

Key Findings from Civic Responsibility Project-Backed Report Show Widespread Nonpartisan Support, Promising Future for Sports Franchise Collaboration on Civic Activities

June 22, 2022 [CITY, STATE] - Today, [Civic Responsibility Project](#) released a body of research that proves stadium voting to be an effective partnership to encourage civic engagement. With support from the [Center for Election Innovation and Research](#) and the [Civic Alliance](#), the cohort surveyed voters, local election officials, and team representatives from cities across the country – including Baltimore, Atlanta, Los Angeles, Philadelphia, Milwaukee, Washington, D.C., Louisville, Tampa, Indianapolis, Phoenix, Boston, Green Bay, Cleveland, and Charlotte – where major league sports teams converted stadiums into polling sites in the 2020 election. Virtually all stakeholders involved expressed praise for the initiative, indicating great potential for efforts to be replicated and built upon in future elections.

In the 2020 election, there was a reckoning on the sports world to respond to the devastating effects of the COVID-19 pandemic and support social justice by encouraging civic engagement. Teams rose to the occasion by offering up their facilities as safe, socially-distant, and accessible polling sites. Civic Responsibility Project—a cohort of nonprofits, brands, and influencers working to shift the culture around civic engagement and strengthen our democracy—supported research to explore the impact of this unprecedented response.

“The 2020 election produced the highest voter turnout in over a century and shifted the conversation around corporate involvement in civic engagement,” said Ashley Spillane, Co-Founder of the Civic Responsibility Project. “The near-unanimous praise for stadium polling across party lines is an encouraging indication of the potential such collaborative efforts have to build on the momentum of the last election and drive participation in the midterms.”

The report offers five case studies with teams in Atlanta, Charlotte, Los Angeles, Indianapolis, and Washington, D.C. Overall, the interviews reflect a new attitude of sports franchises towards civic engagement, widespread support from local election officials, and optimism on both ends to collaborate on future civic activities. The positive feedback is attributed to a range of factors including the size of facilities, which allows for shorter waiting times and increased safety, available parking, and disability access. The impact on vote times was particularly dramatic in several locations: voters waited an average of 26 minutes to vote at the Atlanta Hawks' State Farm Arena in 2020, while the average wait time in some places in the county was 4 hours. Teams also cited ease in organizing logistics due to similarities in processes for games and concerts.

“The partnership with the teams was a great thing for our city and our county,” said Michael Dickerson, Director of Elections, Mecklenburg County, North Carolina (Charlotte). “This was the most powerful thing I have ever been associated with,” said Steve Koonin, CEO of the Atlanta Hawks & State Farm Arena.

“The key to success here was the relationships built between the local election officials and team representatives that honored and uplifted each of their areas of expertise,” said Natalie Tran, Co-Founder of the Civic Alliance and Executive Director of the CAA Foundation. “These findings demonstrate the power businesses have to support our democratic process through meaningful partnerships that emphasize mutual respect and clear communication. We’re proud to see the impact Civic Alliance member companies like these are making in their communities, and we’re excited to apply these learnings to future collaborations with our corporate partners.”

In addition, an online survey of a representative sample of adults in the U.S. was conducted to understand citizens’ thoughts on stadium voting. Results showed broad support across the political spectrum. When asked whether they support or oppose using sports stadiums as polling places for voting, 77% of respondents “Strongly” or “Somewhat” supported voting at stadiums. Democrats offer the strongest base of support with 36% “Strongly” supporting and 50% “Somewhat” supporting. Republican and politically unaffiliated respondents echoed that sentiment with a clear majority “Strongly” or “Somewhat” supporting—66% for Republicans and 71% for unaffiliated.

A core component of this research was also to understand who voted at stadiums and why, which presented a challenge due to the lack of available data in most counties. However, three jurisdictions—Los Angeles County, California, Mecklenburg County, North Carolina, and Washington, D.C.—provided viable, comparative data. A key finding was the variability across jurisdictions and stadiums with regard to the composition of voters. Despite preconceptions among some that non-white or Democratic voters would take greater advantage of stadium voting, the data do not show a consistent difference in Democratic turnout and Republican turnout at stadium polling sites. No single demographic or partisan group consistently benefited from or took advantage of stadium voting.

The report wraps with a breakdown of lessons learned to inform and improve future stadium voting initiatives. Highlights include an emphasis on cultivating strong relationships between teams and local election officials, strong outreach and education efforts, and a call for teams and leagues to tap into their potential to do more to elicit impact.

For additional information, visit civicresponsibility.org and follow their journey on Twitter [@WeAreCRP](https://twitter.com/WeAreCRP) and Instagram [@wearecrp](https://www.instagram.com/wearecrp).

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About Civic Responsibility Project

Civic Responsibility Project is a non-partisan coordinating hub for nonprofits, brands, and influencers working to create a vibrant civic culture in the United States. Bringing together a

variety of previously siloed stakeholders in our democracy, Civic Responsibility Project's mission is to shift the culture around voting and strengthen our democracy. During the 2020 election, the cohort brought together—for the first time—a coalition of nonprofits, election holidays, business alliances, influencers, and celebrities to drive mass voter turnout. In 2022, Civic Responsibility Project is re-activating this coalition to build off the unprecedented turnout seen in 2020, and to ensure that in this pivotal moment for civic engagement and voting, no voter is unprepared for Election Day.

The research was conducted by:

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