



Museums dominate USA Today's 10Best Readers' Choice Awards

NEWS, 5A



The LEADER

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Foster hometown pride to grow civic engagement



Regular community events, from farmers markets to fireworks, build emotional ties to a place. GETTY IMAGES

Local patriotism one cure for sour feelings about politics

Sean Richey

Georgia State University | THE CONVERSATION

Eileen Higgins won a historic victory in December. She became the first woman ever elected mayor of Miami, as well as its first Democratic mayor since 1997. • Although the stakes in the city's Dec. 9, runoff election were high, interest was not – 4 in 5 registered voters stayed home.

Low turnout is common in municipal elections across the country. While much of the nation's political attention stays focused on Washington, the leaders who control the nation's streets, schools and neighborhoods are typically chosen by a small fraction of citizens.

Although many Americans can identify their U.S. senators or members of Congress, far fewer can name even one of their local elected officials, such as a city council member. To cite one example, a North Carolina study found that 86% of state residents could not identify their own elected leaders, including local government officials.

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Turnout in local elections regularly falls below 20%, often leaving critical decisions in the hands of small, unrepresentative groups, creating an electorate that's disproportionately White, elderly and affluent.

GETTY IMAGES/ISTOCKPHOTO

People who loved their town were more likely to attend city council meetings, contact local officials, volunteer for campaigns and discuss local issues with friends. The same pattern held for civic participation – from volunteering with community groups to organizing neighborhood cleanups.

What to do if a child goes missing in New York

Victoria E. Freile

New York Connect Team
USA TODAY NETWORK

Authorities urge parents and guardians to act immediately if a child goes missing. Law enforcement officials say quick reporting is critical and can significantly increase the chances of safely locating a child.

If a child disappears:

• **Call local police immediately.** Do not wait 24 hours. There is no waiting period to report a missing child in New York.

• **Contact the New York State Missing Persons Clearinghouse,** which helps coordinate investigations and share information statewide.

• **Reach out to the National Center for Missing and Exploited Children,** which can assist with case management, public alerts and recovery

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160 missing children found in NY

Victoria E. Freile

New York Connect Team
USA TODAY NETWORK

Authorities say 160 missing children and teenagers have been located across New York through a series of coordinated, multi-agency recovery operations.

The effort, led by the New York State Division of Criminal Justice Services Missing Persons Clearinghouse and the National Child Protection Task, spans three large-scale operations conducted in Westchester County, Erie County and the Capital Region.

Most recently, 43 children were found during a three-day recovery operation in Westchester County. Earlier efforts in Erie County and the Capital Region located more than 115 missing children combined. State officials said many of the children were considered runaways and were at risk of exploitation, endangerment or harm.

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