MAIN STREET AMERICA®

Nationally recognized.
Locally powered.™

FOSTERING CONNECTION ON MAIN STREET

The US Chamber of Connection's Six Points of Connection

3 March 2026

Image: Metuchen Downtown Alliance (New Jersey) - Christopher Bruno Photography

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PLEASE NOTE:

This webinar is being recorded.
It will be available for replay in the Main Street America Knowledge Hub.

Use the “Chat” feature to respond and interact.
Your responses will be visible to everyone.

<< Try this now!
Send your name and your Main Street program or city/state in the chat box.

Use the “Q&A” feature to send a question for panelists.
Your question will be queued.

Resource links will appear in the chat.
(So you can save the tabs for later!)

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TODAY'S AGENDA

- Intro to Main Street America
- Six Points of Connection with Aaron Hurst
- Discussion & Questions

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About MSA

Main Street America leads a movement committed to strengthening communities through preservation-based economic development in older and historic downtowns and neighborhood commercial districts.

Image: Downtown Florence Main Street

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MAIN STREET

BY THE NUMBERS: 2025

1,600+
communities served

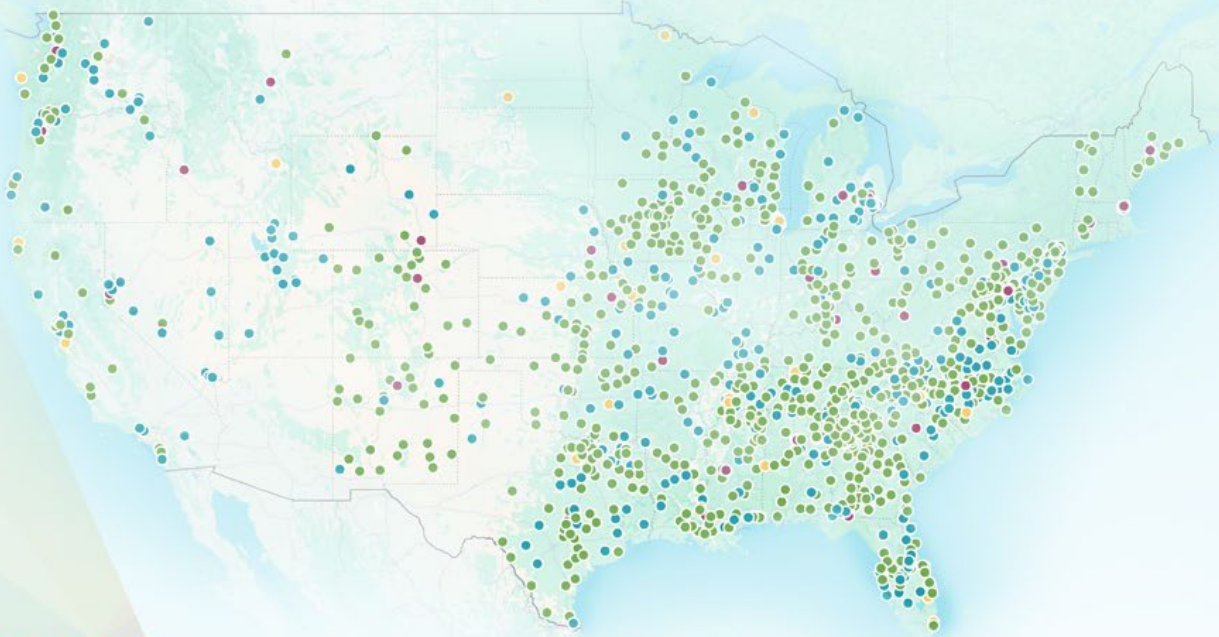
47
state, regional, and citywide Coordinating Programs

440M
people visited Main Streets

2,200,674
jobs provided by Main Street districts

POWERING A WIDE NETWORK

Main Street America leads a powerful network made up of small towns, big cities, and everything in between.



Nearly **2 MILLION** Americans live in a Main Street district

- COORDINATING PROGRAMS
- ACCREDITED PROGRAMS
- AFFILIATE PROGRAMS
- MSA PARTNER PROGRAMS

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SUPPORTING LOCAL COMMUNITIES

We strengthen local Main Street communities through training, direct technical assistance, capacity-building programs, advocacy, professional development, grants, and more.

We provided **330** communities with direct technical assistance and training

We disbursed **$5.6M** in grants to communities

CHAMPIONING SMALL BUSINESSES

We support small business owners through direct technical assistance, grant opportunities, digital tools, and training, as we know that those who maintain close ties with their local Main Street program have higher confidence in their business' future success.*

We surveyed nearly **3,000** small business owners in more than 500 cities to better understand their needs.

We provided **$5.75M** in grants to small businesses

ENERGIZING LOCAL ECONOMIES

Each year, Main Street programs bring their communities together to generate meaningful economic impact.** In 2024, the Main Street network achieved:

$7.65B IN LOCAL REINVESTMENT

helped open	facilitated the creation of	rehabilitated	and logged
6,324	**33,835**	**10,126**	**1.9M**
new businesses	new jobs	historic buildings	volunteer hours

On average, for every dollar that a Main Street program spent to support their operations, $21.73 was reinvested into their downtown and commercial corridor communities.

* *According to Main Street America's Fall 2025 Small Business Survey*

** *This data is based on reports gathered from 1,275 Main Street America designated programs, accounting for their work performed from January 1, 2024 to December 31, 2024.*

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Richmond Main Street (CA)
Ellen Gailing

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Toccoa Main Street (GA)
Steph's Photography

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Downtown Milford, Inc. (DE)

Image:
Owosso Main Street (MI)

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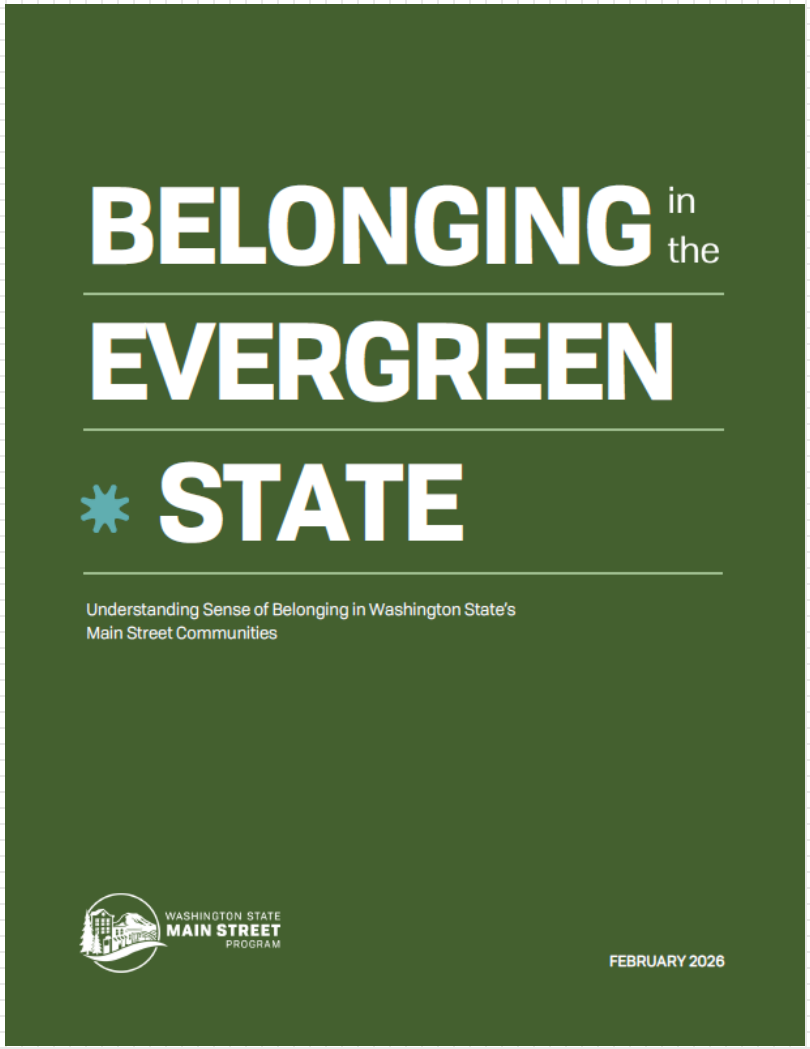

Washington Main Street – Belonging Barometer

https://preservewa.org/programs/mainstreet/belonging-barometer-report/

Percent for Place

Talking Points:
Civic Infrastructure and Social Isolation

https://percentforplace.org/resources

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More than 20%

of Main Street program directors would like to prioritize increasing social connection and sense of belonging in 2026.

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United States
Chamber of
Connection

Aaron Hurst Founder & CEO

Aaron Hurst is a visionary social entrepreneur and CEO whose work advances social impact, purpose-driven leadership, and human connection. He has founded several influential organizations—including the Taproot Foundation, Imperative, and Board.Dev—each dedicated to building more connected, purposeful, and resilient communities. His latest venture, the United States Chamber of Connection, addresses the greatest challenge of the day - declining social connection and trust, uniting leaders and communities to strengthen civic engagement and relational bonds.

chamberofconnection.org

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THE SIX POINTS OF CONNECTION 2026

THE STATE OF CONNECTION IN AMERICA REPORT

United States
Chamber of
Connection

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United States Chamber of Connection

AMERICA ISN'T THRIVING

Social disconnection now defines the American experience, impacting our health, democracy, and quality of life.

27%	50%	45%	40%	55%
Lack Reliable Social Support	Not Thriving / Flourishing	Don't Trust Others	Uninterested in Connecting Across Difference	Feel Politically Disempowered

One-in-Two Americans' Social Connection is Vulnerable or at High Risk

52%

Based on the 2026 Social Connection Index

People in this group report lower levels of social support, trust in other people, political voice, openness to connecting across differences, and life satisfaction.

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The Other Half Are Healthy or Thriving

48%

Based on the 2026 Social Connection Index

People in this group report higher levels of social support, trust in other people, belief in their political voice, openness to connecting across differences, and life satisfaction.

United States Chamber of Connection

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What do healthy and thriving people consistently experience?

The 48% of people who are thriving are accessing Six Points of Connection — ordinary, place-based behaviors of connection.

These behaviors reflect how connection actually shows up in daily life, not just how connected people feel.

01 Neighborhood Contact

02 Community of Identity

03 One-on-One Relationships

04 Third Place

05 Community of Play

06 Community Service

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How and when to enable connection

Access to spaces, norms, and institutional support determines whether people can engage in in the Six Points of Connection.

Over time, consistent access to these conditions shape individual social capacity, which the Social Connection Index makes visible at scale.

Design systems to **help people get started** building their Six Points

Match and support people to get started together in shared activities

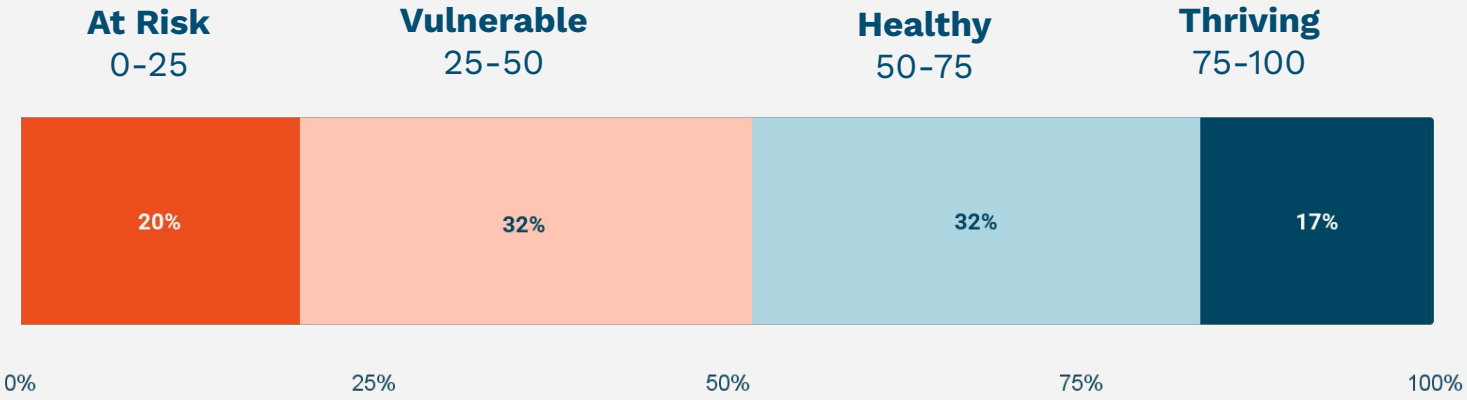
Help people build connection **during life transitions** (e.g., moving)

Develop social and civic infrastructure that intentionally bridges communities

Invest in efforts making the Six Points accessible for everyone

An Uneven State of Connection

52% of U.S. adults fall in the at-risk or vulnerable range, bands associated with lower access to relationships, support, and shared places.



Distribution of Social Connection Index Scores (n = 1,997 adults)

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Four Different Lived Experiences

AT RISK
20%

People have very limited durable relationships, low trust, little civic voice, and minimal access to shared or bridging spaces in daily life.

VULNERABLE
32%

People have some connections, but inconsistent support, fragile trust, limited influence, and fewer relationships across difference.

HEALTHY
32%

People have dependable relationships, baseline trust, and access to community that supports everyday life and participation.

THRIVING
17%

People have strong, diverse connections and broad civic ties, marked by high trust, voice, and resilience.

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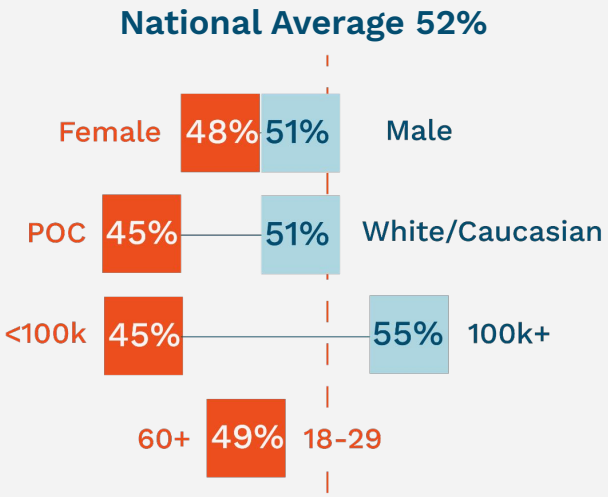
Connection Varies by Income, Race & Gender

Differences reflect conditions and access, not individual capacity.

Income differences are substantially larger than differences by race or gender.



Disaggregated subgroup scores; not population-weighted or mutually exclusive. No statistical difference by age.

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No Shared Social & Civic Infrastructure for Connection

Social infrastructure makes everyday connection possible;

Civic infrastructure enables it to be measured, coordinated, and sustained over time.

Connection matters everywhere, but there is no shared infrastructure to build and sustain it.

- **No shared ownership:** Connection is everyone's concern — but responsibility for building it is diffuse and unclear.
- **No common metric:** We lack a shared way to align action and track progress.
- **No coordinated system:** Efforts are fragmented across sectors, populations, and funding streams.

Americans Lack the Connection They Need

One in two people have one or fewer points of connection established.

Only one in four have four or more of the Six Points of Connection.

Our social and civic infrastructure for connection has significant gaps for nearly everyone.

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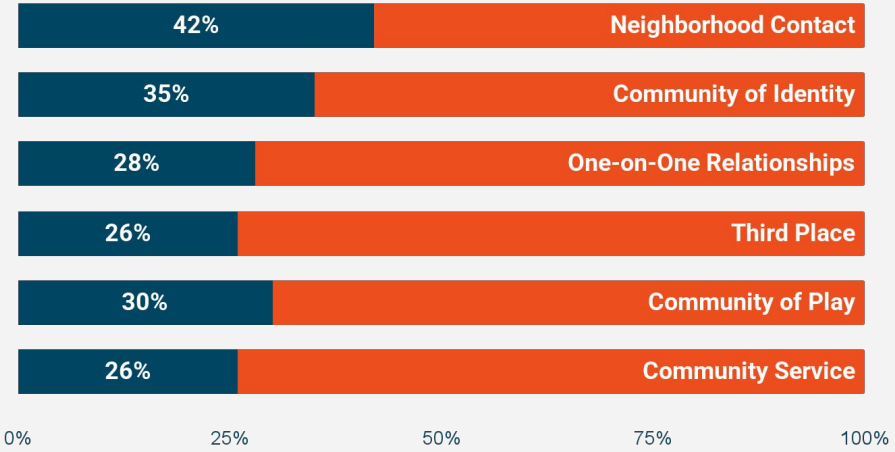
No Point is Widely Practiced in America

Most of the Six Points are adopted by less than one-in-three people.

Percentage of people reporting healthy or thriving levels of adoption of each of the Six Points of Connection.



Across the report, Community of Play is associated with higher adoption of other Six Points.

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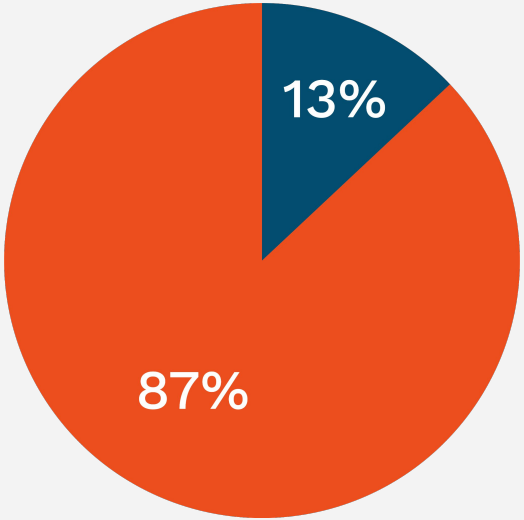
Where Connection Can Be Strengthened

- **87% report barriers to connecting**
  Helping people get started is key
- **Transitions impact 53% of adults**
  Major opportunities: 25% navigating health changes and 12% moving
- **People want more diverse relationships**
  60% open to connect across difference

Most People Report Barriers to Connection

87% of people report at least one barrier to build and maintain connection.

There are clearly barriers that need to be addressed to increase connection.



Percent of people who reported one or more barriers to connection compared to those who selected “None of the Above”.

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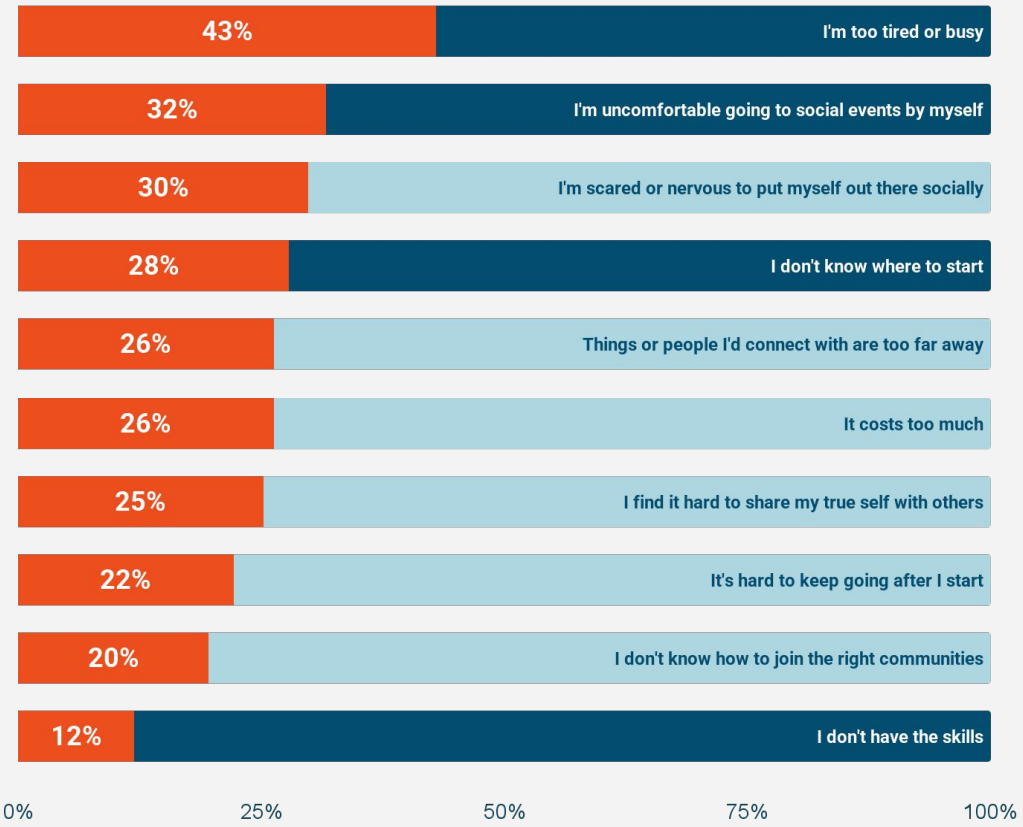
Reported Barriers to Connection Are Wide Ranging

However, only four reported barriers were linked to lower SCI scores.

Which of the following are barriers that make it difficult for you to build or maintain connections right now?



Dark blue indicates that this barrier is associated with lower SCI scores.

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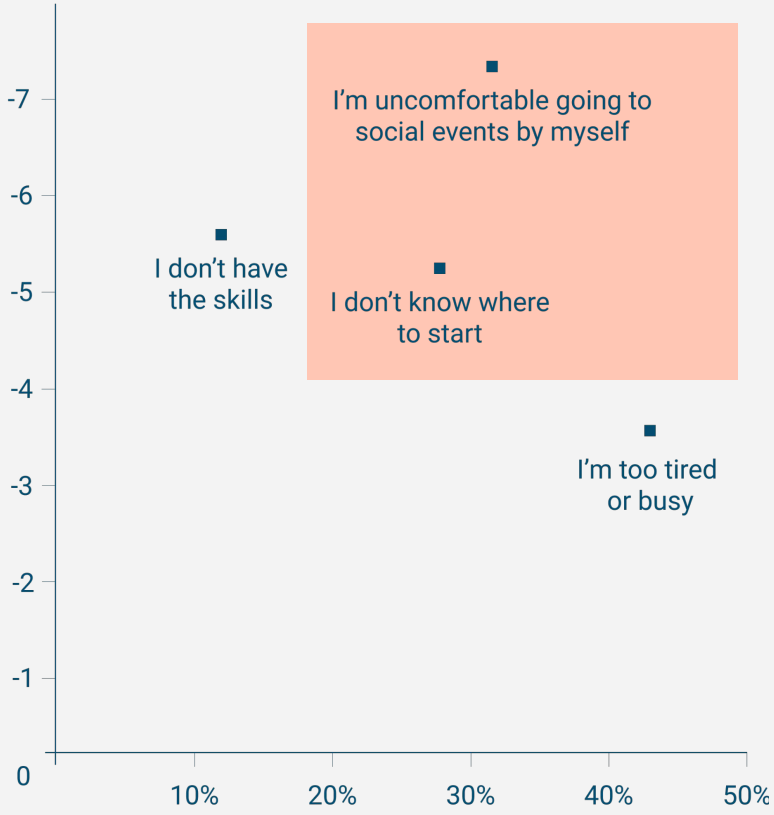
Some Barriers Matter Far More For Connection Than Others

Two barriers stand out because they affect large populations and are linked to lower SCI scores.

Both can be addressed through design, support, and access.

Barrier Impact vs Frequency (Items With Measured Effect Only)



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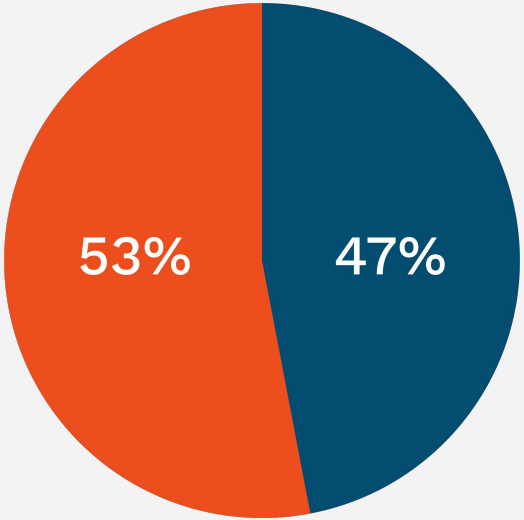
Half of People Are Navigating Life Changes

53% of people experienced one or more major life changes in the last year.

There is a significant opportunity to build social and civic infrastructure to support connecting during these transitions.



Percent of people who reported one or more life transitions in the last year compared to those who selected “None of the Above.”

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When Support Isn't Built-In, Life Transitions Lead to Lower Connection

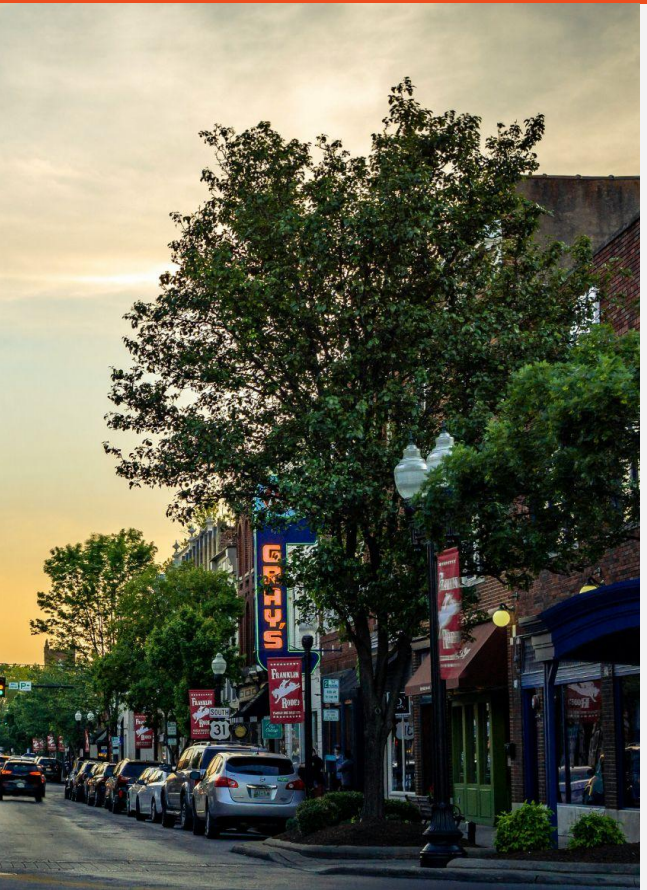
Built-in support includes institutions, routines, shared spaces, and default social pathways.

A third of people navigate two common life transitions that lack built-in support – and connection suffers.

More Built In Support Higher SCI Scores	**Less Infrastructure** Lower SCI Scores
Got a new job (14%)	**Experienced a significant change in your health or ability (25%)**
Became a parent or began caring for a child (8%)	**Moved to a new city or town (12%)**
Started school (7%)	Separated, divorced, or ended a long-term relationship (8%)
Got married or started living with a partner (8%)	Retired from full-time work (6%)
	Had all your children move out of your home (3%)

Bold items represent transitions affecting the largest share of the population.

Pathways to Reconnect America Are Emerging



- Most people want more connection (including across difference) but lack clear pathways to build it.
- Connection breaks down at predictable moments, especially during life transitions.
- Barriers are common, but only a few drive meaningful impact.
- Where support is intentionally designed, connection improves.

Recommendations to Activate People & Institutions

Adopt the Six Points of Connection as a shared framework for action.

Help people get started—especially during life transitions.

Design simple on-ramps into everyday connection.

Support people to act together, not alone.

Recommendations to Build Systems That Make Connection Durable & Scalable

A Shared Framework: Use the Six Points and SCI as common language for design and measurement.

Local Ownership: Establish cross-sector leadership tables to coordinate action.

Capacity at Scale: Mobilize funding and volunteers around connection as a civic cause.

Social Infrastructure: Expand third places, groups, and service that bring people together.

United States
Chamber of
Connection

We serve as a backbone for the social connection movement.

Connection as a Cause
Elevate connection and the Six Points as shared civic priorities

Backbone Measures
Create shared measures and standards for the Six Points

Ecosystems
Align cross-sector actors around action

Cities
Launch and support local Chambers of Connection who own the Six Points locally

Aaron Hurst
CEO & Founder
aaron@chamberofconnection.org

501(c)3 registered nonprofit Organization.

PARTNER WITH US

United States Chamber of Connection

We need your leadership and support to grow the movement.

For Cities & Regions

- Launch a local Chamber of Connection
- Convene a standing commission of cross-sector partners to own the Six Points
- Use the Six Points and SCI to guide and track investments

For Employers

- Engage employees as Welcome Committee volunteers
- Embed connection into onboarding and transitions
- Provide Six Points training to employees

For Funders & Field Leaders

- Invest in shared infrastructure and measurement
- Advance learning and scale what works
- Help institutions adopt the Six Points as an action framework

Rebooting the Welcome Committee

Mobilize Volunteers Across the Nation

With half the country disconnected, it's time to treat everyone as a newcomer and invite people back into connection and community.

We're mobilizing 10,000 volunteers to renew the Welcome Committee for modern life, helping people get started — together, not alone.

Interested in volunteering or launching a program at your company?

Learn more at our website.

Employers

Volunteers

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Connected Cities Summit

Designing Connection as Civic Infrastructure

An invitation-only design studio for city leaders and place-based institutions

October 15-16, 2026

Seattle

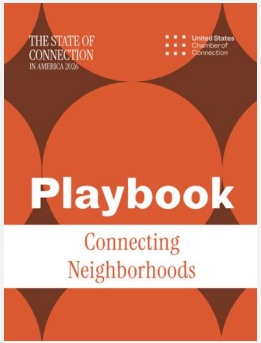
Hosted at the

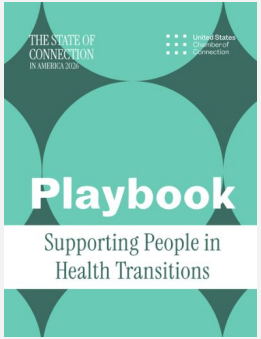
National Nordic Museum

Nordic Museum

United States Chamber of Connection

Playbooks to Guide the Field





Deep-dive into the data about how different people are building each behavior across demographics.

Review of existing relevant research from the field.

Case studies showing how people are building the infrastructure across the country.

Recommendations for how to build the infrastructure in your community.