

THE NCSTM
The National Citizen SurveyTM

Urbandale, IA

Trends over Time

2018



NRC
National Research Center Inc

2955 Valmont Road Suite 300
Boulder, Colorado 80301
n-r-c.com • 303-444-7863

ICMA

Leaders at the Core of Better Communities

777 North Capitol Street NE Suite 500
Washington, DC 20002
icma.org • 800-745-8780

Summary

The National Citizen Survey™ (The NCS™) is a collaborative effort between National Research Center, Inc. (NRC) and the International City/County Management Association (ICMA). The survey and its administration are standardized to assure high quality research methods and directly comparable results across The NCS communities. The NCS captures residents' opinions within the three pillars of a community (Community Characteristics, Governance and Participation) across eight central facets of community (Safety, Mobility, Natural Environment, Built Environment, Economy, Recreation and Wellness, Education and Enrichment and Community Engagement). This report discusses trends over time, comparing the 2018 ratings for the City of Urbandale to its previous survey results in 2009, 2011, 2013 and 2016. Additional reports and technical appendices are available under separate cover.

Trend data for Urbandale represent important comparison data and should be examined for improvements or declines. Deviations from stable trends over time, especially, represent opportunities for understanding how local policies, programs or public information may have affected residents' opinions.

Meaningful differences between survey years have been noted within the following tables as being "higher" or "lower" if the differences are greater than six percentage points between the 2016 and 2018 surveys, otherwise the comparisons between 2016 and 2018 are noted as being "similar." Additionally, benchmark comparisons for all survey years are presented for reference. Changes in the benchmark comparison over time can be impacted by various trends, including varying survey cycles for the individual communities that comprise the benchmarks, regional and national economic or other events, as well as emerging survey methodologies.

Overall, ratings in Urbandale for 2018 generally remained stable. Of the 131 items for which comparisons were available, 111 items were rated similarly in 2016 and 2018, nine items showed a decrease in ratings and 11 showed an increase in ratings. Notable trends over time included the following:

- Within the pillar of Community Characteristics, there were nine aspects that increased from 2016 to 2018. Urbandale residents gave higher ratings to traffic flow and housing options. Economy ratings were on the rise, including employment opportunities, a vibrant downtown/commercial area and Urbandale as a place to work. Ratings for employment opportunities have been consistently increasing since 2009. Residents also gave more positive marks to K-12 education, religious or spiritual events and activities and opportunities to participate in community matters compared to 2016. However, fewer residents gave positive ratings to travel by public transportation and mental health care.
- The majority of ratings within the pillar of Governance remained positive and stable from 2016 to 2018, but a few changes were observed. Urbandale residents gave lower ratings to bus or transit services, water/garbage billing, recreation centers and recreation programs.
- Almost all reported rates of Participation remained stable from 2016 to 2018, however, residents felt more positively about their personal economic outlook and more reported that they worked in Urbandale. Fewer residents reported they had used Urbandale recreation centers, participated in a club and read or watched local news.

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Table 1: Community Characteristics General

	Percent rating positively (e.g., excellent/good)					2018 rating compared to 2016	Comparison to benchmark				
	2009	2011	2013	2016	2018		2009	2011	2013	2016	2018
Overall quality of life	96%	95%	93%	94%	95%	Similar	Much higher	Much higher	Higher	Higher	Similar
Overall image	90%	91%	90%	92%	91%	Similar	Much higher	Much higher	Higher	Higher	Similar
Place to live	97%	96%	97%	97%	97%	Similar	Much higher	Much higher	Higher	Higher	Similar
Neighborhood	93%	93%	95%	94%	94%	Similar	Much higher	Much higher	Higher	Higher	Similar
Place to raise children	96%	96%	92%	96%	98%	Similar	Much higher	Much higher	Higher	Higher	Higher
Place to retire	75%	81%	82%	83%	83%	Similar	Much higher	Much higher	Higher	Higher	Similar
Overall appearance	87%	90%	92%	92%	92%	Similar	Much higher	Much higher	Higher	Higher	Higher

Table 2: Community Characteristics by Facet

		Percent rating positively (e.g., excellent/good, very/somewhat safe)					2018 rating compared to 2016	Comparison to benchmark				
		2009	2011	2013	2016	2018		2009	2011	2013	2016	2018
Safety	Overall feeling of safety	NA	NA	94%	96%	94%	Similar	NA	NA	Similar	Higher	Similar
	Safe in neighborhood	97%	98%	98%	98%	97%	Similar	Much higher	Much higher	Similar	Similar	Similar
	Safe downtown/commercial area	95%	92%	96%	95%	93%	Similar	Much higher	Higher	Similar	Similar	Similar
	Overall ease of travel	NA	NA	90%	91%	90%	Similar	NA	NA	Higher	Higher	Similar
	Paths and walking trails	87%	89%	92%	93%	91%	Similar	Much higher	Much higher	Much higher	Much higher	Higher
	Ease of walking	87%	88%	89%	87%	85%	Similar	Much higher	Much higher	Higher	Higher	Higher
	Travel by bicycle	78%	74%	72%	76%	73%	Similar	Much higher	Much higher	Higher	Higher	Similar
	Travel by public transportation	NA	NA	45%	44%	38%	Lower	NA	NA	Similar	Similar	Similar
Mobility	Travel by car	87%	87%	85%	86%	88%	Similar	Much higher	Much higher	Higher	Higher	Similar
	Traffic flow	71%	77%	77%	71%	79%	Higher	Much higher	Much higher	Higher	Higher	Higher
Natural Environment	Overall natural environment	87%	89%	91%	92%	90%	Similar	Much higher	Much higher	Higher	Higher	Similar
	Cleanliness	89%	92%	93%	95%	92%	Similar	Much higher	Much higher	Higher	Higher	Similar
	Air quality	93%	95%	96%	95%	95%	Similar	Much higher	Much higher	Higher	Higher	Higher
Built Environment	Overall built environment	NA	NA	81%	86%	83%	Similar	NA	NA	Higher	Higher	Similar
	New development in Urbandale	83%	86%	75%	75%	78%	Similar	Much higher	Much higher	Similar	Higher	Higher

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		Percent rating positively (e.g., excellent/good, very/somewhat safe)					2018 rating compared to 2016	Comparison to benchmark				
		2009	2011	2013	2016	2018		2009	2011	2013	2016	2018
	Affordable quality housing	75%	75%	78%	74%	70%	Similar	Much higher	Much higher	Much higher	Much higher	Higher
	Housing options	87%	79%	85%	81%	87%	Higher	Much higher	Much higher	Higher	Higher	Higher
	Public places	NA	NA	81%	85%	82%	Similar	NA	NA	Similar	Higher	Similar
Economy	Overall economic health	NA	NA	87%	89%	91%	Similar	NA	NA	Higher	Higher	Higher
	Vibrant downtown/commercial area	NA	NA	43%	41%	48%	Higher	NA	NA	Similar	Similar	Similar
	Business and services	80%	78%	75%	81%	83%	Similar	Much higher	Much higher	Similar	Similar	Similar
	Cost of living	NA	NA	67%	72%	76%	Similar	NA	NA	Higher	Higher	Higher
	Shopping opportunities	63%	63%	64%	65%	65%	Similar	Much higher	Much higher	Similar	Similar	Similar
	Employment opportunities	51%	55%	63%	64%	81%	Higher	Much higher	Much higher	Much higher	Higher	Higher
	Place to visit	NA	NA	68%	71%	71%	Similar	NA	NA	Similar	Similar	Similar
	Place to work	84%	85%	86%	83%	91%	Higher	Much higher	Much higher	Higher	Higher	Higher
	Health and wellness	NA	NA	82%	84%	83%	Similar	NA	NA	Similar	Higher	Similar
	Mental health care	NA	NA	73%	68%	54%	Lower	NA	NA	Higher	Higher	Similar
Recreation and Wellness	Preventive health services	79%	83%	83%	87%	84%	Similar	Much higher	Much higher	Higher	Higher	Similar
	Health care	79%	77%	84%	88%	85%	Similar	Much higher	Much higher	Higher	Higher	Similar
	Food	84%	82%	84%	87%	84%	Similar	Much higher	Much higher	Higher	Higher	Similar
	Recreational opportunities	72%	71%	78%	81%	83%	Similar	Much higher	Higher	Similar	Similar	Similar
	Fitness opportunities	NA	NA	85%	82%	90%	Higher	NA	NA	Similar	Higher	Similar
	Education and enrichment opportunities	NA	NA	80%	84%	83%	Similar	NA	NA	Similar	Similar	Similar
	Religious or spiritual events and activities	78%	82%	85%	81%	90%	Higher	Higher	Similar	Similar	Similar	Similar
Education and Enrichment	Cultural/arts/music activities	44%	41%	53%	56%	61%	Similar	Similar	Lower	Similar	Similar	Similar
	Adult education	NA	NA	67%	72%	76%	Similar	NA	NA	Similar	Similar	Similar
	K-12 education	87%	88%	91%	84%	90%	Higher	Much higher	Much higher	Higher	Similar	Similar
	Child care/preschool	67%	70%	72%	75%	78%	Similar	Much higher	Much higher	Higher	Higher	Higher

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		Percent rating positively (e.g., excellent/good, very/somewhat safe)					2018 rating compared to 2016	Comparison to benchmark				
		2009	2011	2013	2016	2018		2009	2011	2013	2016	2018
Community Engagement	Social events and activities	71%	69%	63%	67%	72%	Similar	Much higher	Higher	Similar	Similar	Similar
	Neighborhoodness	NA	NA	71%	77%	77%	Similar	NA	NA	Similar	Higher	Similar
	Openness and acceptance	73%	78%	70%	74%	76%	Similar	Much higher	Much higher	Similar	Similar	Similar
	Opportunities to participate in community matters	73%	77%	70%	72%	78%	Higher	Much higher	Much higher	Similar	Similar	Similar
	Opportunities to volunteer	76%	79%	73%	76%	82%	Similar	Higher	Higher	Similar	Similar	Similar

Table 3: Governance General

	Percent rating positively (e.g., excellent/good)					2018 rating compared to 2016	Comparison to benchmark				
	2009	2011	2013	2016	2018		2009	2011	2013	2016	2018
Services provided by Urbandale	88%	90%	89%	91%	91%	Similar	Much higher	Much higher	Similar	Higher	Similar
Customer service	81%	83%	85%	89%	91%	Similar	Much higher	Much higher	Similar	Similar	Similar
Value of services for taxes paid	67%	75%	72%	71%	68%	Similar	Much higher	Much higher	Similar	Higher	Similar
Overall direction	77%	84%	81%	86%	82%	Similar	Much higher	Much higher	Higher	Higher	Similar
Welcoming citizen involvement	60%	68%	69%	68%	71%	Similar	Similar	Much higher	Higher	Similar	Similar
Confidence in City government	NA	NA	76%	78%	78%	Similar	NA	NA	Higher	Higher	Similar
Acting in the best interest of Urbandale	NA	NA	76%	82%	79%	Similar	NA	NA	Higher	Higher	Similar
Being honest	NA	NA	79%	83%	81%	Similar	NA	NA	Higher	Higher	Similar
Treating all residents fairly	NA	NA	77%	76%	80%	Similar	NA	NA	Higher	Higher	Similar
Services provided by the Federal Government	44%	42%	32%	51%	50%	Similar	Higher	Similar	Similar	Similar	Similar

Table 4: Governance by Facet

	Percent rating positively (e.g., excellent/good)					2018 rating compared to 2016	Comparison to benchmark					
	2009	2011	2013	2016	2018		2009	2011	2013	2016	2018	
Safety	Police	89%	92%	90%	95%	94%	Similar	Much higher	Much higher	Similar	Higher	Similar
	Fire	95%	96%	97%	98%	98%	Similar	Higher	Higher	Similar	Similar	Similar
	Ambulance/EMS	95%	96%	96%	99%	99%	Similar	Much higher	Much higher	Similar	Similar	Similar
	Crime prevention	82%	90%	88%	92%	89%	Similar	Much higher	Much higher	Higher	Higher	Higher
	Fire prevention	88%	91%	88%	94%	93%	Similar	Much higher	Much higher	Similar	Higher	Similar
	Animal control	75%	79%	75%	83%	87%	Similar	Much higher	Much higher	Similar	Higher	Similar

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		Percent rating positively (e.g., excellent/good)					2018 rating compared to 2016	Comparison to benchmark				
		2009	2011	2013	2016	2018		2009	2011	2013	2016	2018
Mobility	Emergency preparedness	73%	78%	76%	82%	83%	Similar	Much higher	Much higher	Similar	Higher	Similar
	Traffic enforcement	76%	86%	76%	80%	81%	Similar	Much higher	Much higher	Similar	Higher	Similar
	Street repair	57%	62%	60%	61%	65%	Similar	Much higher	Much higher	Higher	Higher	Similar
	Street cleaning	75%	77%	75%	77%	82%	Similar	Much higher	Much higher	Similar	Similar	Similar
	Street lighting	76%	76%	77%	79%	82%	Similar	Much higher	Much higher	Similar	Higher	Similar
	Snow removal	82%	81%	77%	85%	83%	Similar	Much higher	Much higher	Similar	Higher	Similar
	Sidewalk maintenance	73%	75%	71%	70%	75%	Similar	Much higher	Much higher	Higher	Higher	Similar
	Traffic signal timing	61%	59%	63%	62%	67%	Similar	Much higher	Much higher	Similar	Similar	Similar
	Bus or transit services	58%	55%	59%	67%	53%	Lower	Higher	Similar	Similar	Higher	Similar
Natural Environment	Garbage collection	94%	95%	93%	97%	95%	Similar	Much higher	Much higher	Similar	Higher	Similar
	Recycling	93%	93%	89%	93%	90%	Similar	Much higher	Much higher	Similar	Higher	Similar
	Yard waste pick-up	89%	97%	89%	93%	93%	Similar	Much higher	Much higher	Higher	Higher	Higher
	Drinking water	89%	89%	86%	86%	86%	Similar	Much higher	Much higher	Higher	Similar	Similar
	Natural areas preservation	68%	75%	69%	78%	75%	Similar	Much higher	Much higher	Similar	Higher	Similar
	Open space	NA	NA	71%	78%	77%	Similar	NA	NA	Similar	Higher	Similar
Built Environment	Storm drainage	80%	82%	81%	80%	76%	Similar	Much higher	Much higher	Similar	Higher	Similar
	Sewer services	94%	90%	89%	88%	90%	Similar	Much higher	Much higher	Similar	Similar	Similar
	Power utility	NA	93%	88%	93%	92%	Similar	NA	Much higher	Similar	Higher	Similar
	Water/garbage billing	NA	NA	84%	89%	80%	Lower	NA	NA	Similar	Higher	Similar
	Land use, planning and zoning	64%	71%	74%	75%	75%	Similar	Much higher	Much higher	Higher	Higher	Higher
	Code enforcement	64%	70%	69%	68%	67%	Similar	Much higher	Much higher	Higher	Higher	Similar

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		Percent rating positively (e.g., excellent/good)					2018 rating compared to 2016	Comparison to benchmark				
		2009	2011	2013	2016	2018		2009	2011	2013	2016	2018
Economy	Economic development	72%	69%	81%	78%	84%	Similar	Much higher	Much higher	Much higher	Higher	Higher
Recreation and Wellness	City parks	92%	94%	91%	94%	90%	Similar	Much higher	Much higher	Similar	Higher	Similar
	Recreation programs	85%	83%	78%	89%	81%	Lower	Much higher	Much higher	Similar	Similar	Similar
	Recreation centers	74%	80%	78%	86%	78%	Lower	Higher	Much higher	Similar	Similar	Similar
	Special events	NA	NA	72%	82%	81%	Similar	NA	NA	Similar	Similar	Similar
Education and Enrichment	Public libraries	93%	94%	95%	96%	97%	Similar	Much higher	Much higher	Similar	Higher	Higher
Community Engagement	Public information	84%	80%	83%	85%	85%	Similar	Much higher	Much higher	Similar	Higher	Similar

Table 5: Participation General

		Percent rating positively (e.g., always/sometimes, more than once a month, yes)					2018 rating compared to 2016	Comparison to benchmark				
		2009	2011	2013	2016	2018		2009	2011	2013	2016	2018
Sense of community		79%	76%	74%	80%	77%	Similar	Much higher	Much higher	Similar	Higher	Similar
Recommend Urbandale		95%	95%	97%	96%	97%	Similar	Much higher	Much higher	Higher	Higher	Higher
Remain in Urbandale		90%	89%	91%	96%	94%	Similar	Much higher	Much higher	Similar	Higher	Higher
Contacted Urbandale employees		54%	42%	41%	44%	47%	Similar	Lower	Much lower	Similar	Similar	Similar

Table 6: Participation by Facet

		Percent rating positively (e.g., always/sometimes, more than once a month, yes)					2018 rating compared to 2016	Comparison to benchmark				
		2009	2011	2013	2016	2018		2009	2011	2013	2016	2018
Safety	Stocked supplies for an emergency	NA	NA	23%	24%	22%	Similar	NA	NA	Lower	Lower	Lower
	Did NOT report a crime	NA	NA	87%	88%	87%	Similar	NA	NA	Higher	Higher	Similar
	Was NOT the victim of a crime	94%	95%	94%	94%	96%	Similar	Much higher	Much higher	Similar	Similar	Similar
Mobility	Used public transportation instead of driving	NA	NA	5%	6%	4%	Similar	NA	NA	Much lower	Much lower	Much lower
	Carpooled instead of driving alone	NA	NA	30%	30%	31%	Similar	NA	NA	Lower	Lower	Lower

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		Percent rating positively (e.g., always/sometimes, more than once a month, yes)					2018 rating compared to 2016	Comparison to benchmark				
		2009	2011	2013	2016	2018		2009	2011	2013	2016	2018
Natural Environment	Walked or biked instead of driving	NA	NA	51%	52%	52%	Similar	NA	NA	Similar	Similar	Similar
	Conserved water	NA	NA	79%	70%	71%	Similar	NA	NA	Similar	Lower	Lower
	Made home more energy efficient	NA	NA	82%	77%	73%	Similar	NA	NA	Similar	Similar	Similar
Built Environment	Recycled at home	94%	89%	91%	92%	92%	Similar	Much higher	Much higher	Similar	Similar	Similar
	Did NOT observe a code violation	NA	NA	71%	69%	68%	Similar	NA	NA	Higher	Higher	Higher
	NOT under housing cost stress	82%	82%	81%	83%	86%	Similar	Much higher	Much higher	Higher	Higher	Higher
Economy	Purchased goods or services in Urbandale	NA	NA	98%	96%	96%	Similar	NA	NA	Similar	Similar	Similar
	Economy will have positive impact on income	17%	14%	20%	26%	35%	Higher	Similar	Lower	Similar	Similar	Similar
	Work in Urbandale	NA	NA	26%	26%	36%	Higher	NA	NA	Much lower	Lower	Similar
Recreation and Wellness	Used Urbandale recreation centers	54%	49%	51%	60%	43%	Lower	Lower	Much lower	Similar	Similar	Lower
	Visited a City park	85%	87%	80%	88%	90%	Similar	Similar	Similar	Similar	Similar	Similar
	Ate 5 portions of fruits and vegetables	NA	NA	81%	83%	82%	Similar	NA	NA	Similar	Similar	Similar
	Participated in moderate or vigorous physical activity	NA	NA	83%	84%	85%	Similar	NA	NA	Similar	Similar	Similar
	In very good to excellent health	NA	NA	65%	70%	66%	Similar	NA	NA	Similar	Similar	Similar
Education and Enrichment	Used Urbandale public library	77%	76%	71%	68%	71%	Similar	Higher	Higher	Similar	Similar	Similar
	Participated in religious or spiritual activities	44%	41%	39%	40%	38%	Similar	Much lower	Much lower	Lower	Similar	Similar
	Attended a City-sponsored event	NA	NA	47%	52%	50%	Similar	NA	NA	Similar	Similar	Similar
Community Engagement	Campaigned for an issue, cause or candidate	NA	NA	17%	23%	28%	Similar	NA	NA	Similar	Similar	Similar
	Contacted Urbandale elected officials	NA	NA	12%	11%	12%	Similar	NA	NA	Similar	Similar	Similar
	Volunteered	37%	34%	25%	34%	29%	Similar	Much lower	Much lower	Lower	Similar	Lower
	Participated in a club	24%	21%	19%	25%	18%	Lower	Much lower	Much lower	Lower	Similar	Similar

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	Percent rating positively (e.g., always/sometimes, more than once a month, yes)					2018 rating compared to 2016	Comparison to benchmark				
	2009	2011	2013	2016	2018		2009	2011	2013	2016	2018
Talked to or visited with neighbors	NA	NA	NA	91%	94%	Similar	NA	NA	NA	Similar	Similar
Done a favor for a neighbor	NA	NA	NA	80%	84%	Similar	NA	NA	NA	Similar	Similar
Attended a local public meeting	17%	12%	11%	18%	16%	Similar	Much lower	Much lower	Lower	Similar	Similar
Watched a local public meeting	23%	17%	12%	17%	13%	Similar	Much lower	Much lower	Much lower	Lower	Lower
Read or watched local news	NA	NA	89%	93%	84%	Lower	NA	NA	Similar	Similar	Similar
Voted in local elections	89%	82%	83%	89%	87%	Similar	Much higher	Much higher	Similar	Similar	Similar