



THE NCSTM
The National Citizen SurveyTM

Urbandale, IA

Trends over Time

2016



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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 2016 ratings for the City of Urbandale to its previous survey results in 2009, 2011 and 2013. 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 seven percentage points between the 2013 and 2016 surveys, otherwise the comparison between 2013 and 2016 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 2016 generally remained stable. Of the 129 items for which comparisons were available, 116 items were rated similarly in 2013 and 2016, 2 items showed a decrease in ratings and 11 showed an increase in ratings. Notable trends over time included the following:

- Ratings within the pillar of Community Characteristics were generally stable over time. The only aspect that showed a significant change in ratings was K-12 education, which declined from 2013 to 2016.
- Ratings for several aspects in the pillar of Governance improved from 2013 to 2016. Ratings increased over time for animal control, snow removal, bus or transit services, natural areas preservation, recreation centers, recreation programs, City-sponsored special events and services provided by the Federal Government. No aspects of Governance saw a significant decrease in ratings from 2013 to 2016.
- Rates of Participation were generally stable over time; however, there were a few notable exceptions. In 2016, more residents had used Urbandale recreation centers, visited a City park and volunteered their time to some group/activity in Urbandale. Fewer participants reported making efforts to conserve water in 2016 compared to 2013.

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Table 1: Community Characteristics General

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

Table 2: Community Characteristics by Facet

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

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		Percent rating positively (e.g., excellent/good, very/somewhat safe)				2016 rating compared to 2013	Comparison to benchmark			
		2009	2011	2013	2016		2009	2011	2013	2016
	Affordable quality housing	75%	75%	78%	74%	Similar	Much higher	Much higher	Much higher	Much higher
	Housing options	87%	79%	85%	81%	Similar	Much higher	Much higher	Higher	Higher
	Public places	NA	NA	81%	85%	Similar	NA	NA	Similar	Higher
Economy	Overall economic health	NA	NA	87%	89%	Similar	NA	NA	Higher	Higher
	Vibrant downtown/commercial area	NA	NA	43%	41%	Similar	NA	NA	Similar	Similar
	Business and services	80%	78%	75%	81%	Similar	Much higher	Much higher	Similar	Similar
	Cost of living	NA	NA	67%	72%	Similar	NA	NA	Higher	Higher
	Shopping opportunities	63%	63%	64%	65%	Similar	Much higher	Much higher	Similar	Similar
	Employment opportunities	51%	55%	63%	64%	Similar	Much higher	Much higher	Much higher	Higher
	Place to visit	NA	NA	68%	71%	Similar	NA	NA	Similar	Similar
	Place to work	84%	85%	86%	83%	Similar	Much higher	Much higher	Higher	Higher
	Health and wellness	NA	NA	82%	84%	Similar	NA	NA	Similar	Higher
	Mental health care	NA	NA	73%	68%	Similar	NA	NA	Higher	Higher
Recreation and Wellness	Preventive health services	79%	83%	83%	87%	Similar	Much higher	Much higher	Higher	Higher
	Health care	79%	77%	84%	88%	Similar	Much higher	Much higher	Higher	Higher
	Food	84%	82%	84%	87%	Similar	Much higher	Much higher	Higher	Higher
	Recreational opportunities	72%	71%	78%	81%	Similar	Much higher	Higher	Similar	Similar
	Fitness opportunities	NA	NA	85%	82%	Similar	NA	NA	Similar	Higher
	Religious or spiritual events and activities	78%	82%	85%	81%	Similar	Higher	Similar	Similar	Similar
	Cultural/arts/music activities	44%	41%	53%	56%	Similar	Similar	Lower	Similar	Similar
Education and Enrichment	Adult education	NA	NA	67%	72%	Similar	NA	NA	Similar	Similar
	K-12 education	87%	88%	91%	84%	Lower	Much higher	Much higher	Higher	Similar
	Child care/preschool	67%	70%	72%	75%	Similar	Much higher	Much higher	Higher	Higher
	Social events and activities	71%	69%	63%	67%	Similar	Much higher	Higher	Similar	Similar
Community Engagement	Neighborhoodliness	NA	NA	71%	77%	Similar	NA	NA	Similar	Higher

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		Percent rating positively (e.g., excellent/good, very/somewhat safe)				2016 rating compared to 2013	Comparison to benchmark			
		2009	2011	2013	2016		2009	2011	2013	2016
	Openness and acceptance	73%	78%	70%	74%	Similar	Much higher	Much higher	Similar	Similar
	Opportunities to participate in community matters	73%	77%	70%	72%	Similar	Much higher	Much higher	Similar	Similar
	Opportunities to volunteer	76%	79%	73%	76%	Similar	Higher	Higher	Similar	Similar

Table 3: Governance General

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

Table 4: Governance by Facet

		Percent rating positively (e.g., excellent/good)				2016 rating compared to 2013	Comparison to benchmark			
		2009	2011	2013	2016		2009	2011	2013	2016
Safety	Police	89%	92%	90%	95%	Similar	Much higher	Much higher	Similar	Higher
	Fire	95%	96%	97%	98%	Similar	Higher	Higher	Similar	Similar
	Ambulance/EMS	95%	96%	96%	99%	Similar	Much higher	Much higher	Similar	Similar
	Crime prevention	82%	90%	88%	92%	Similar	Much higher	Much higher	Higher	Higher
	Fire prevention	88%	91%	88%	94%	Similar	Much higher	Much higher	Similar	Higher
	Animal control	75%	79%	75%	83%	Higher	Much higher	Much higher	Similar	Higher
	Emergency preparedness	73%	78%	76%	82%	Similar	Much higher	Much higher	Similar	Higher
Mobility	Traffic enforcement	76%	86%	76%	80%	Similar	Much higher	Much higher	Similar	Higher

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		Percent rating positively (e.g., excellent/good)				2016 rating compared to 2013	Comparison to benchmark			
		2009	2011	2013	2016		2009	2011	2013	2016
	Street repair	57%	62%	60%	61%	Similar	Much higher	Much higher	Higher	Higher
	Street cleaning	75%	77%	75%	77%	Similar	Much higher	Much higher	Similar	Similar
	Street lighting	76%	76%	77%	79%	Similar	Much higher	Much higher	Similar	Higher
	Snow removal	82%	81%	77%	85%	Higher	Much higher	Much higher	Similar	Higher
	Sidewalk maintenance	73%	75%	71%	70%	Similar	Much higher	Much higher	Higher	Higher
	Traffic signal timing	61%	59%	63%	62%	Similar	Much higher	Much higher	Similar	Similar
	Bus or transit services	58%	55%	59%	67%	Higher	Higher	Similar	Similar	Higher
Natural Environment	Garbage collection	94%	95%	93%	97%	Similar	Much higher	Much higher	Similar	Higher
	Recycling	93%	93%	89%	93%	Similar	Much higher	Much higher	Similar	Higher
	Yard waste pick-up	89%	97%	89%	93%	Similar	Much higher	Much higher	Higher	Higher
	Drinking water	89%	89%	86%	86%	Similar	Much higher	Much higher	Higher	Similar
	Natural areas preservation	68%	75%	69%	78%	Higher	Much higher	Much higher	Similar	Higher
	Open space	NA	NA	71%	78%	Similar	NA	NA	Similar	Higher
Built Environment	Storm drainage	80%	82%	81%	80%	Similar	Much higher	Much higher	Similar	Higher
	Sewer services	94%	90%	89%	88%	Similar	Much higher	Much higher	Similar	Similar
	Power utility	NA	93%	88%	93%	Similar	NA	Much higher	Similar	Higher
	Utility billing	NA	NA	84%	89%	Similar	NA	NA	Similar	Higher
	Land use, planning and zoning	64%	71%	74%	75%	Similar	Much higher	Much higher	Higher	Higher
	Code enforcement	64%	70%	69%	68%	Similar	Much higher	Much higher	Higher	Higher
Economy	Economic development	72%	69%	81%	78%	Similar	Much higher	Much higher	Much higher	Higher
Recreation and Wellness	City parks	92%	94%	91%	94%	Similar	Much higher	Much higher	Similar	Higher

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		Percent rating positively (e.g., excellent/good)				2016 rating compared to 2013	Comparison to benchmark			
		2009	2011	2013	2016		2009	2011	2013	2016
	Recreation programs	85%	83%	78%	89%	Higher	Much higher	Much higher	Similar	Similar
	Recreation centers	74%	80%	78%	86%	Higher	Higher	Much higher	Similar	Similar
Education and Enrichment	Special events	NA	NA	72%	82%	Higher	NA	NA	Similar	Similar
	Public libraries	93%	94%	95%	96%	Similar	Much higher	Much higher	Similar	Higher
Community Engagement	Public information	84%	80%	83%	85%	Similar	Much higher	Much higher	Similar	Higher

Table 5: Participation General

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

Table 6: Participation by Facet

		Percent rating positively (e.g., always/sometimes, more than once a month, yes)				2016 rating compared to 2013	Comparison to benchmark			
		2009	2011	2013	2016		2009	2011	2013	2016
Safety	Stocked supplies for an emergency	NA	NA	23%	24%	Similar	NA	NA	Lower	Lower
	Did NOT report a crime	NA	NA	87%	88%	Similar	NA	NA	Higher	Higher
	Was NOT the victim of a crime	94%	95%	94%	94%	Similar	Much higher	Much higher	Similar	Similar
Mobility	Used public transportation instead of driving	NA	NA	5%	6%	Similar	NA	NA	Much lower	Much lower
	Carpooled instead of driving alone	NA	NA	30%	30%	Similar	NA	NA	Lower	Lower
	Walked or biked instead of driving	NA	NA	51%	52%	Similar	NA	NA	Similar	Similar

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

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