

The National Citizen Survey™

McAllen, TX

Trends over Time

2013

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The National Citizen Survey™
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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 2013 ratings for the City of McAllen to its previous survey results in 2004, 2006, 2008 and 2011. Additional reports and technical appendices are available under separate cover.

Trend data for McAllen 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 nine percentage points between the 2011 and 2013 surveys, otherwise the comparison between 2011 and 2013 are noted as being "similar." Additionally benchmark comparison 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 McAllen for 2013 generally remained stable. Of the 90 items for which comparisons were available, 46 items were rated similarly in 2011 and 2013, 37 items showed a decrease in ratings and seven showed an increase in ratings. Notable trends over time included the following:

- There were declines within all facets of Community Characteristics, with the most decreases in Community Engagement (opportunities to participate in community matters, opportunities to volunteer, openness and acceptance and social events and activities).
- Facets within Community Characteristics that had increased ratings were Mobility (traffic flow and travel by car), Recreation and Wellness (health care) and Education and Enrichment (child care/preschool).
- There were decreases in Safety both in Governance and Community Characteristics. The Safety aspects that saw lower ratings from 2011 to 2013 were: safety downtown, police, crime prevention, fire prevention and emergency preparedness. All other aspects of Safety were similar compared to 2011 ratings.
- General Participation ratings received similar ratings in 2011 compared to 2013 (sense of community, remaining in McAllen and recommending McAllen, etc.).
- In the pillar of Participation, there was a decrease in Recreation and Wellness (the number of people visiting a City park) and there were increases in Built Environment (the number of people NOT experiencing housing cost stress), Education and Enrichment (participated in religious or spiritual events or activities) and Community Engagement (voted in local elections). When available, all other Participation ratings remained the same from 2011 compared to 2013.

Table 1: Community Characteristics General

	Percent rating positively (e.g., excellent/good)					2013 current compared to 2011	Comparison to benchmark				
	2004	2006	2008	2011	2013		2004	2006	2008	2011	2013
Overall quality of life	83%	82%	83%	87%	79%	Similar	Similar	Similar	Higher	Much higher	Similar
Overall image	NA	NA	77%	77%	73%	Similar	NA	NA	Much higher	Much higher	Similar
Place to live	88%	84%	88%	94%	84%	Lower	Higher	Similar	Higher	Much higher	Similar
Neighborhood	84%	76%	77%	84%	68%	Lower	Similar	Lower	Similar	Similar	Similar
Place to raise children	82%	83%	84%	87%	84%	Similar	Higher	Similar	Much higher	Higher	Similar
Place to retire	81%	83%	80%	79%	71%	Similar	Much higher	Higher	Much higher	Much higher	Similar
Overall appearance	77%	84%	78%	83%	70%	Lower	Higher	Higher	Much higher	Much higher	Similar

Table 2: Community Characteristics by Facet

		Percent rating positively (e.g., excellent/good, very/somewhat safe)					2013 current compared to 2011	Comparison to benchmark				
		2004	2006	2008	2011	2013		2004	2006	2008	2011	2013
Safety	Overall feeling of safety	NA	NA	NA	NA	70%	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA	Similar
	Safe in neighborhood	94%	97%	92%	90%	91%	Similar	Similar	Similar	Similar	Similar	Similar
	Safe downtown/commercial area	85%	86%	77%	83%	70%	Lower	Lower	Similar	Much lower	Lower	Lower
Mobility	Overall ease travel	NA	NA	NA	NA	85%	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA	Similar
	Paths and walking trails	NA	NA	60%	66%	55%	Lower	NA	NA	Similar	Higher	Similar
	Ease of walking	NA	64%	59%	58%	55%	Similar	NA	Similar	Similar	Similar	Similar
	Travel by bicycle	NA	NA	51%	50%	43%	Similar	NA	NA	Similar	Similar	Similar
	Travel by public transportation	NA	NA	NA	NA	59%	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA	Similar
	Travel by car	68%	NA	52%	71%	80%	Higher	Much higher	NA	Similar	Much higher	Higher
	Public parking	NA	NA	NA	NA	58%	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA	Similar
Natural Environment	Traffic flow	40%	40%	40%	45%	62%	Higher	NA	NA	Similar	Similar	Similar
	Overall natural environment	NA	NA	74%	70%	69%	Similar	NA	NA	Similar	Similar	Similar
	Cleanliness	NA	NA	77%	74%	64%	Lower	NA	NA	Higher	Similar	Similar
Built Environment	Air quality	NA	NA	72%	71%	72%	Similar	NA	NA	Similar	Higher	Similar
	Overall built environment	NA	NA	NA	NA	56%	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA	Similar
	New development in McAllen	NA	NA	85%	83%	62%	Lower	NA	NA	Much higher	Much higher	Similar
	Affordable quality housing	71%	68%	53%	59%	47%	Lower	Much higher	Higher	Much higher	Much higher	Similar
	Housing options	NA	NA	70%	67%	52%	Lower	NA	NA	Much higher	Much higher	Similar
	Public places	NA	NA	NA	NA	59%	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA	Similar
	Overall economic health	NA	NA	NA	NA	65%	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA	Similar
Economy	Vibrant downtown/commercial area	NA	NA	NA	NA	48%	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA	Similar
	Business and services	NA	NA	81%	81%	67%	Lower	NA	NA	NA	Much higher	Similar

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		Percent rating positively (e.g., excellent/good, very/somewhat safe)					2013 current compared to 2011	Comparison to benchmark				
		2004	2006	2008	2011	2013		2004	2006	2008	2011	2013
	Cost of living	NA	NA	NA	NA	53%	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA	Higher
	Shopping opportunities	86%	NA	90%	85%	75%	Lower	Much higher	NA	Much higher	Much higher	Higher
	Employment opportunities	52%	63%	55%	46%	44%	Similar	Higher	Much higher	Much higher	Much higher	Similar
	Place to visit	NA	NA	NA	NA	65%	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA	Similar
	Place to work	NA	NA	68%	75%	69%	Similar	NA	NA	Much higher	Much higher	Similar
Recreation and Wellness	Health and wellness	NA	NA	NA	NA	67%	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA	Similar
	Mental health care	NA	NA	NA	NA	44%	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA	Similar
	Preventive health services	NA	NA	57%	63%	65%	Similar	NA	NA	NA	Similar	Similar
	Health care	NA	NA	49%	51%	66%	Higher	NA	NA	Similar	Higher	Similar
	Food	NA	NA	71%	71%	67%	Similar	NA	NA	Higher	Much higher	Similar
	Recreational opportunities	61%	63%	58%	53%	46%	Similar	Similar	Similar	Similar	Similar	Lower
	Fitness opportunities	NA	NA	NA	NA	61%	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA	Lower
Education and Enrichment	Religious or spiritual events and activities	NA	NA	70%	76%	68%	Similar	NA	NA	Similar	Similar	Similar
	Cultural/arts/music activities	57%	55%	56%	56%	42%	Lower	Similar	Lower	Similar	Higher	Similar
	Adult education	NA	NA	NA	NA	60%	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA	Similar
	K-12 education	NA	NA	70%	74%	74%	Similar	NA	NA	Higher	Higher	Similar
	Child care/preschool	NA	NA	51%	52%	71%	Higher	NA	NA	Much higher	Much higher	Higher
Community Engagement	Social events and activities	NA	NA	59%	65%	52%	Lower	NA	NA	Similar	Similar	Similar
	Neighborliness	NA	NA	NA	NA	53%	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA	Similar
	Openness and acceptance	71%	NA	59%	80%	49%	Lower	Much higher	NA	Similar	Much higher	Similar
	Opportunities to participate in community matters	NA	NA	59%	68%	55%	Lower	NA	NA	Similar	Similar	Similar
	Opportunities to volunteer	NA	NA	72%	74%	59%	Lower	NA	NA	Similar	Similar	Lower

Table 3: Governance General

	Percent rating positively (e.g., excellent/good)					2013 current compared to 2011	Comparison to benchmark				
	2004	2006	2008	2011	2013		2004	2006	2008	2011	2013
Services provided by McAllen	81%	83%	76%	86%	75%	Lower	Similar	Similar	Higher	Much higher	Similar
Customer service	76%	86%	70%	83%	63%	Lower	Similar	Similar	Similar	Higher	Lower
Value of services for taxes paid	NA	72%	60%	70%	48%	Lower	NA	Higher	Similar	Much higher	Similar
Overall direction	78%	76%	78%	78%	70%	Similar	Much higher	Higher	Much higher	Much higher	Similar
Welcoming citizen involvement	76%	76%	61%	71%	56%	Lower	Higher	Similar	Similar	Much higher	Similar
Confidence in City government	NA	NA	NA	NA	62%	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA	Similar
Acting in the best interest of McAllen	NA	NA	NA	NA	61%	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA	Similar
Being honest	NA	NA	NA	NA	57%	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA	Similar
Treating all residents fairly	NA	NA	NA	NA	53%	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA	Similar
Services provided by the Federal Government	71%	67%	57%	61%	57%	Similar	Much higher	Higher	Much higher	Much higher	Higher

Table 4: Governance by Facet

		Percent positive					2013 current compared to 2011	Comparison to benchmark				
		2004	2006	2008	2011	2013		2004	2006	2008	2011	2013
Safety	Police	81%	78%	70%	84%	74%	Lower	Similar	Similar	Similar	Similar	Similar
	Fire	92%	94%	93%	92%	86%	Similar	Similar	Similar	Similar	Similar	Similar
	Ambulance/EMS	88%	87%	80%	NA	74%	Similar	Similar	Similar	Similar	NA	Lower
	Crime prevention	63%	68%	60%	77%	60%	Lower	Similar	Similar	Similar	Higher	Similar
	Fire prevention	78%	79%	77%	80%	67%	Lower	Similar	Lower	Similar	Similar	Similar
	Animal control	NA	NA	63%	57%	53%	Similar	NA	NA	Similar	Similar	Similar
	Emergency preparedness	NA	NA	71%	82%	68%	Lower	NA	NA	Higher	Much higher	Similar
	Traffic enforcement	72%	70%	67%	69%	61%	Similar	Similar	Similar	Similar	Similar	Similar
	Street repair	62%	66%	54%	59%	48%	Lower	Similar	Higher	Much higher	Much higher	Similar
	Street cleaning	73%	NA	67%	65%	59%	Similar	Higher	NA	Higher	Higher	Similar
Mobility	Street lighting	70%	68%	58%	74%	49%	Lower	Similar	Similar	Similar	Much higher	Similar
	Sidewalk maintenance	69%	NA	60%	73%	58%	Lower	Much higher	NA	Much higher	Much higher	Similar
	Traffic signal timing	71%	NA	51%	63%	50%	Lower	Much higher	NA	Similar	Much higher	Similar
	Bus or transit services	71%	74%	66%	70%	62%	Similar	Higher	Higher	Higher	Much higher	Similar
	Garbage collection	87%	88%	76%	80%	80%	Similar	Similar	Similar	Similar	Similar	Similar
	Recycling	82%	88%	74%	78%	76%	Similar	Similar	Similar	Similar	Similar	Similar
Natural Environment	Yard waste pick-up	67%	NA	57%	49%	54%	Similar	Similar	NA	Much lower	Much lower	Lower

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		Percent positive					2013 current compared to 2011	Comparison to benchmark					
		2004	2006	2008	2011	2013		2004	2006	2008	2011	2013	
	Drinking water	57%	57%	50%	65%	52%	Lower	Lower	Lower	Lower	Similar	Lower	
	Natural areas preservation	NA	NA	55%	62%	49%	Lower	NA	NA	Similar	Higher	Similar	
	Open space	NA	NA	NA	NA	45%	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA	Lower	
	Storm drainage	57%	62%	54%	58%	51%	Similar	Similar	Similar	Similar	Similar	Similar	
	Sewer services	75%	81%	67%	77%	65%	Lower	Similar	Similar	Similar	Higher	Similar	
	Power utility	NA	NA	70%	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA	Similar	NA	NA	
	Utility billing	NA	NA	NA	NA	65%	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA	Similar	
	Land use, planning and zoning	67%	NA	59%	68%	55%	Lower	Much higher	NA	Much higher	Much higher	Similar	
	Code enforcement	57%	63%	53%	57%	49%	Similar	Similar	Similar	Higher	Higher	Similar	
	Built Environment	Cable television	NA	NA	68%	63%	61%	Similar	NA	NA	Much higher	Higher	Similar
		Economy	Economic development	79%	NA	76%	73%	63%	Lower	Much higher	NA	Much higher	Much higher
Recreation and Wellness	City parks	83%	82%	78%	88%	74%	Lower	Similar	Similar	Higher	Higher	Similar	
	Recreation programs	81%	76%	72%	82%	61%	Lower	Similar	Similar	Similar	Similar	Similar	
	Recreation centers	80%	79%	70%	78%	62%	Lower	Similar	Similar	Similar	Higher	Similar	
	Health services	NA	NA	67%	72%	63%	Similar	NA	NA	Higher	Higher	Similar	
	Education and Enrichment	Special events	NA	NA	NA	NA	53%	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA	Similar
Public libraries		88%	NA	77%	81%	83%	Similar	Similar	NA	Similar	Similar	Similar	
Community Engagement	Public information	76%	78%	71%	75%	75%	Similar	Higher	Similar	Higher	Higher	Similar	

Table 5: Participation General

	Percent rating positively (e.g., always/sometimes, more than once a month, yes)					2013 current compared to 2011	Comparison to benchmark				
	2004	2006	2008	2011	2013		2004	2006	2008	2011	2013
Sense of community	73%	NA	58%	68%	61%	Similar	Higher	NA	Similar	Similar	Similar
Recommend McAllen	NA	NA	88%	84%	87%	Similar	NA	NA	Similar	Much higher	Similar
Remain in McAllen	NA	NA	82%	90%	84%	Similar	NA	NA	Similar	Much higher	Similar
Contacted McAllen employees	NA	NA	NA	44%	47%	Similar	NA	NA	NA	Much lower	Similar

Table 6: Participation by Facet

		Percent rating positively (e.g., always/sometimes, more than once a month, yes)					2013 current compared to 2011	Comparison to benchmark				
		2004	2006	2008	2011	2013		2004	2006	2008	2011	2013
Safety	Stocked supplies for an emergency	NA	NA	NA	NA	38%	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA	Similar
	Did NOT report a crime	NA	NA	NA	NA	68%	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA	Lower
	Was NOT the victim of a crime	NA	NA	NA	88%	81%	Similar	NA	NA	NA	Similar	Similar
Mobility	Used public transportation instead of driving	NA	NA	NA	NA	18%	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA	Lower
	Carpooled instead of driving alone	NA	NA	NA	NA	33%	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA	Lower
	Walked or biked instead of driving	NA	NA	NA	NA	38%	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA	Lower
Natural Environment	Conserved water	NA	NA	NA	NA	91%	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA	Similar
	Made home more energy efficient	NA	NA	NA	NA	79%	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA	Similar
	Recycled at home	NA	NA	NA	87%	85%	Similar	NA	NA	NA	Higher	Similar
Built Environment	Did NOT observe a code violation	NA	NA	NA	NA	34%	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA	Much lower
	NOT under housing cost stress	NA	NA	NA	63%	73%	Higher	NA	NA	NA	Similar	Similar
	Purchased goods or services in McAllen	NA	NA	NA	NA	96%	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA	Similar
Economy	Economy will have positive impact on income	NA	NA	NA	39%	31%	Similar	NA	NA	NA	Much higher	Higher
	Work in McAllen	NA	NA	NA	NA	56%	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA	Higher
	Used McAllen recreation centers	NA	NA	NA	69%	62%	Similar	NA	NA	NA	Much higher	Similar
Recreation and Wellness	Visited a City park	NA	NA	NA	92%	82%	Lower	NA	NA	NA	Higher	Similar
	Ate 5 portions of fruits and vegetables	NA	NA	NA	NA	86%	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA	Similar
	Participated in moderate or vigorous physical activity	NA	NA	NA	NA	81%	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA	Similar
	In very good to excellent health	NA	NA	NA	NA	52%	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA	Similar
	Used McAllen public libraries	NA	NA	NA	68%	74%	Similar	NA	NA	NA	Lower	Similar
	Education and Enrichment	Participated in religious or spiritual activities	NA	NA	NA	60%	73%	Higher	NA	NA	NA	Higher
Community Engagement	Attended a City-sponsored event	NA	NA	NA	NA	57%	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA	Similar
	Campaigned for an issue, cause or candidate	NA	NA	NA	NA	26%	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA	Similar
	Contacted McAllen elected officials	NA	NA	NA	NA	22%	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA	Similar
	Volunteered	NA	NA	NA	44%	39%	Similar	NA	NA	NA	Similar	Similar
	Participated in a club	NA	NA	NA	32%	34%	Similar	NA	NA	NA	Similar	Similar
	Talked to or visited with neighbors	NA	NA	NA	NA	22%	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA

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	Percent rating positively (e.g., always/sometimes, more than once a month, yes)					2013 current compared to 2011	Comparison to benchmark				
	2004	2006	2008	2011	2013		2004	2006	2008	2011	2013
Done a favor for a neighbor	NA	NA	NA	NA	72%	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA	
Attended a local public meeting	NA	NA	NA	22%	27%	Similar	NA	NA	NA	Lower	Similar
Watched a local public meeting	NA	NA	NA	45%	45%	Similar	NA	NA	NA	Similar	Similar
Read or watched local news	NA	NA	NA	NA	91%	NA	NA	NA	NA	Similar	
Voted in local elections	NA	NA	NA	47%	73%	Higher	NA	NA	NA	Much lower	Similar