

The National Citizen Survey™

Jackson County, MI

Trends over Time

2014

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The National Citizen Survey™
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National Research Center, Inc.
2955 Valmont Road, Suite 300
Boulder, CO 80301
www.n-r-c.com • 303-444-7863

International City/County Management Association
777 North Capitol Street NE, Suite 500
Washington, DC 20002
www.icma.org • 202-289-ICMA

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 Jackson County to its previous survey results in 2009 and 2011. Additional reports and technical appendices are available under separate cover.

Trend data for Jackson County 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 2011 and 2013 surveys, otherwise the comparison between 2011 and 2013 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 trends in Jackson County for 2013 were mixed. Of the 90 items for which comparisons were available, 38 items were rated similarly in 2011 and 2013, 33 items showed a decrease in ratings and 19 showed an increase in ratings. Notable trends over time included the following:

- All but one of the General Community Characteristics remained stable or increased in 2013 when compared to 2011, including overall quality of life. Only Jackson County as a place to retire declined during this period.
- Overall, ratings in the area of Governance mostly remained stable or declined between 2011 and 2013. Of the 36 service items that were rated in both years, 17 did not change and 18 declined, particularly in the facets of Natural Environment, Built Environment and Recreation and Wellness. Ratings of the overall direction that Jackson County is taking improved.
- A majority of Participation measures had lower ratings in 2013 than in 2011, especially in the area of Community Engagement. In particular, fewer Jackson County residents reported recycling, using public libraries and visiting County Parks. Also, more said they had been the victim of a crime. Still a number of Participation measures improved; more County residents had voted, had plans to remain in Jackson County, would recommend living there and felt that the economy would have a positive impact on their income.
- In 2013, most Community Characteristics were either similar to ratings in 2011 or had improved. Improvements occurred in every area, particularly Natural Environment, Economy, Recreation and Wellness and Education and Enrichment. Specific areas of improvement included feelings of safety in neighborhoods, ease of travel by car, quality of the overall natural environment, cleanliness of Jackson County, employment opportunities, Jackson County as a place to work, the availability of health care and opportunities to attend cultural/arts/music activities.

Table 1: Community Characteristics General

	Percent rating positively (e.g., excellent/good)			2013 compared to 2011	Comparison to benchmark		
	2009	2011	2013		2009	2011	2013
Overall quality of life	48%	45%	50%	Higher	Much lower	Much lower	Much lower
Overall image	27%	25%	23%	Similar	Much lower	Much lower	Much lower
Place to live	58%	52%	59%	Higher	Much lower	Much lower	Much lower
Neighborhood	75%	71%	79%	Higher	Lower	Much lower	Similar
Place to raise children	62%	51%	53%	Similar	Much lower	Much lower	Much lower
Place to retire	36%	35%	31%	Lower	Much lower	Much lower	Much lower
Overall appearance	40%	33%	37%	Similar	Much lower	Much lower	Much lower

Table 2: Community Characteristics by Facet

		Percent rating positively (e.g., excellent/good, very/somewhat safe)			2013 compared to 2011	Comparison to benchmark		
		2009	2011	2013		2009	2011	2013
Safety	Overall feeling of safety	NA	NA	49%	NA	NA	NA	Much lower
	Safe in neighborhood	92%	84%	93%	Higher	Similar	Lower	Similar
	Safe downtown/commercial area	77%	76%	79%	Similar	Much lower	Much lower	Similar
Mobility	Overall ease travel	NA	NA	68%	NA	NA	NA	Similar
	Paths and walking trails	55%	56%	57%	Similar	Lower	Similar	Similar
	Ease of walking	44%	49%	53%	Similar	Much lower	Much lower	Similar
	Travel by bicycle	NA	49%	40%	Lower	NA	Similar	Similar
	Travel by public transportation	39%	NA	36%	Similar	Lower	NA	Lower
	Travel by car	59%	59%	65%	Higher	Similar	Similar	Similar
	Public parking	NA	NA	49%	NA	NA	NA	Similar
	Traffic flow	NA	49%	49%	Similar	NA	Similar	Similar
	Natural Environment	Overall natural environment	52%	55%	65%	Higher	Much lower	Much lower
Cleanliness		38%	31%	39%	Higher	Much lower	Much lower	Much lower
Air quality		NA	64%	66%	Similar	NA	Lower	Similar
Built Environment	Overall built environment	NA	NA	37%	NA	NA	NA	Lower
	New development in Jackson County	15%	20%	22%	Similar	Much lower	Much lower	Much lower
	Affordable quality housing	NA	39%	38%	Similar	NA	Similar	Similar
	Housing options	NA	42%	41%	Similar	NA	Much lower	Lower
	Public places	NA	NA	43%	NA	NA	NA	Lower
Economy	Overall economic health	NA	NA	13%	NA	NA	NA	Much lower
	Vibrant downtown/commercial area	NA	NA	19%	NA	NA	NA	Lower
	Business and services	39%	38%	38%	Similar	Much lower	Much lower	Lower
	Cost of living	NA	NA	40%	NA	NA	NA	Similar
	Shopping opportunities	45%	43%	42%	Similar	Similar	Much lower	Similar
	Employment opportunities	7%	6%	12%	Higher	Much lower	Much lower	Lower

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		Percent rating positively (e.g., excellent/good, very/somewhat safe)			2013 compared to 2011	Comparison to benchmark		
		2009	2011	2013		2009	2011	2013
	Place to visit	NA	NA	32%	NA	NA	NA	Much lower
	Place to work	26%	26%	37%	Higher	Much lower	Much lower	Lower
Recreation and Wellness	Health and wellness	NA	NA	51%	NA	NA	NA	Lower
	Mental health care	NA	NA	32%	NA	NA	NA	Lower
	Preventive health services	45%	47%	52%	Higher	Much lower	Much lower	Similar
	Health care	30%	40%	49%	Higher	Much lower	Much lower	Similar
	Food	55%	55%	51%	Lower	Lower	Lower	Similar
	Recreational opportunities	47%	48%	48%	Similar	Much lower	Much lower	Lower
	Fitness opportunities	NA	NA	55%	NA	NA	NA	Lower
	Religious or spiritual events and activities	67%	64%	69%	Higher	Much lower	Lower	Similar
Education and Enrichment	Cultural/arts/music activities	34%	37%	41%	Higher	Much lower	Much lower	Lower
	Adult education	NA	NA	48%	NA	NA	NA	Lower
	K-12 education	NA	47%	51%	Similar	NA	Much lower	Lower
	Child care/preschool	NA	33%	40%	Higher	NA	Lower	Similar
Community Engagement	Social events and activities	39%	37%	36%	Similar	Much lower	Much lower	Lower
	Neighborhoodness	NA	NA	33%	NA	NA	NA	Lower
	Openness and acceptance	38%	37%	38%	Similar	Much lower	Much lower	Lower
	Opportunities to participate in community matters	48%	48%	42%	Lower	Much lower	Much lower	Lower
	Opportunities to volunteer	69%	73%	64%	Lower	Lower	Similar	Similar

Table 3: Governance General

	Percent rating positively (e.g., excellent/good)			2013 compared to 2011	Comparison to benchmark		
	2009	2011	2013		2009	2011	2013
Services provided by Jackson County	39%	44%	45%	Similar	Much lower	Much lower	Lower
Customer service	72%	60%	50%	Lower	Lower	Much lower	Much lower
Value of services for taxes paid	25%	29%	33%	Similar	Much lower	Much lower	Lower
Overall direction	19%	24%	30%	Higher	Much lower	Much lower	Lower
Welcoming citizen involvement	24%	26%	23%	Similar	Much lower	Much lower	Much lower
Confidence in Jackson County government	NA	NA	23%	NA	NA	NA	Much lower
Acting in the best interest of Jackson County	NA	NA	32%	NA	NA	NA	Lower
Being honest	NA	NA	29%	NA	NA	NA	Lower
Treating all residents fairly	NA	NA	27%	NA	NA	NA	Lower
Services provided by the Federal Government	23%	20%	20%	Similar	Much lower	Much lower	Lower

Table 4: Governance by Facet

		Percent rating positively (e.g., excellent/good)			2013 compared to 2011	Comparison to benchmark			
		2009	2011	2013		2009	2011	2013	
Safety	Police	62%	66%	65%	Similar	Much lower	Much lower	Lower	
	Fire	NA	76%	76%	Similar	NA	Much lower	Lower	
	Ambulance/EMS	NA	79%	79%	Similar	NA	Much lower	Lower	
	Crime prevention	41%	43%	40%	Similar	Much lower	Much lower	Lower	
	Fire prevention	NA	59%	58%	Similar	NA	Much lower	Lower	
	Animal control	32%	36%	31%	Lower	Much lower	Much lower	Lower	
	Emergency preparedness	40%	44%	32%	Lower	Much lower	Much lower	Lower	
Mobility	Traffic enforcement	53%	53%	50%	Similar	Much lower	Much lower	Similar	
	Street repair	12%	11%	7%	Lower	Much lower	Much lower	Much lower	
	Street cleaning	NA	NA	20%	NA	NA	NA	Much lower	
	Street lighting	NA	NA	35%	NA	NA	NA	Lower	
	Snow removal	38%	36%	36%	Similar	Much lower	Much lower	Lower	
	Sidewalk maintenance	NA	NA	26%	NA	NA	NA	Lower	
	Traffic signal timing	NA	NA	32%	NA	NA	NA	Lower	
	Bus or transit services	40%	47%	44%	Similar	Lower	Similar	Similar	
	Natural Environment	Garbage collection	NA	75%	67%	Lower	NA	Much lower	Lower
		Recycling	56%	61%	45%	Lower	Much lower	Much lower	Much lower
Yard waste pick-up		NA	38%	22%	Lower	NA	Much lower	Much lower	
Drinking water		NA	57%	50%	Lower	NA	Much lower	Lower	
Natural areas preservation		NA	41%	40%	Similar	NA	Much lower	Lower	
Open space		46%	55%	45%	Lower	Much lower	Much lower	Lower	
Built Environment	Storm drainage	48%	49%	36%	Lower	Lower	Much lower	Lower	
	Sewer services	NA	65%	55%	Lower	NA	Lower	Lower	
	Power utility	NA	67%	56%	Lower	NA	Much lower	Lower	
	Utility billing	NA	NA	50%	NA	NA	NA	Lower	
	Land use, planning and zoning	NA	28%	20%	Lower	NA	Much lower	Lower	
	Code enforcement	NA	19%	11%	Lower	NA	Much lower	Much lower	
	Cable television	NA	47%	44%	Similar	NA	Lower	Lower	
Economy	Economic development	9%	15%	14%	Similar	Much lower	Much lower	Much lower	
Recreation and Wellness	County parks	78%	75%	65%	Lower	Lower	Lower	Lower	
	Recreation programs	60%	60%	46%	Lower	Much lower	Much lower	Lower	
	Recreation centers	54%	55%	45%	Lower	Much lower	Much lower	Lower	
	Health services	45%	49%	49%	Similar	Much lower	Much lower	Similar	
Education and Enrichment	Special events	NA	NA	40%	NA	NA	NA	Lower	
	Public libraries	NA	75%	72%	Similar	NA	Lower	Similar	
Community Engagement	Public information	35%	51%	44%	Lower	Much lower	Much lower	Lower	

Table 5: Participation General

	Percent rating positively (e.g., always/sometimes, more than once a month, yes)			2013 compared to 2011	Comparison to benchmark		
	2009	2011	2013		2009	2011	2013
Sense of community	35%	35%	26%	Lower	Much lower	Much lower	Much lower
Recommend Jackson County	46%	52%	66%	Higher	Much lower	Much lower	Much lower
Remain in Jackson County	68%	75%	83%	Higher	Much lower	Similar	Similar
Contacted Jackson County employees	49%	40%	31%	Lower	Much lower	Much lower	Lower

Table 6: Participation by Facet

		Percent rating positively (e.g., always/sometimes, more than once a month, yes)			2013 compared to 2011	Comparison to benchmark		
		2009	2011	2013		2009	2011	2013
Safety	Stocked supplies for an emergency	NA	NA	38%	NA	NA	NA	Similar
	Did NOT report a crime	NA	NA	70%	NA	NA	NA	Similar
	Was NOT the victim of a crime	85%	87%	79%	Lower	Similar	Similar	Similar
Mobility	Used public transportation instead of driving	NA	NA	13%	NA	NA	NA	Lower
	Carpooled instead of driving alone	NA	NA	46%	NA	NA	NA	Similar
	Walked or biked instead of driving	NA	NA	41%	NA	NA	NA	Lower
Natural Environment	Conserved water	NA	NA	70%	NA	NA	NA	Lower
	Made home more energy efficient	NA	NA	86%	NA	NA	NA	Similar
	Recycled at home	72%	80%	74%	Lower	Much lower	Similar	Lower
Built Environment	Did NOT observe a code violation	NA	NA	46%	NA	NA	NA	Similar
	NOT under housing cost stress	68%	70%	73%	Similar	Higher	Much higher	Similar
Economy	Purchased goods or services in Jackson County	NA	NA	98%	NA	NA	NA	Similar
	Economy will have positive impact on income	10%	13%	22%	Higher	Much lower	Lower	Similar
	Work in Jackson County	NA	NA	49%	NA	NA	NA	Similar
Recreation and Wellness	Used Jackson County recreation centers	53%	50%	54%	Similar	Lower	Much lower	Similar
	Visited a County park	86%	85%	75%	Lower	Similar	Similar	Lower
	Ate 5 portions of fruits and vegetables	NA	NA	80%	NA	NA	NA	Similar
	Participated in moderate or vigorous physical activity	NA	NA	84%	NA	NA	NA	Similar
	In very good to excellent health	NA	NA	56%	NA	NA	NA	Similar
	Used Jackson County public libraries	69%	71%	61%	Lower	Similar	Similar	Similar
Education and Enrichment	Participated in religious or spiritual activities	57%	55%	55%	Similar	Higher	Higher	Similar
Community Engagement	Attended a County-sponsored event	NA	NA	46%	NA	NA	NA	Similar
	Campaigned for an issue, cause or candidate	NA	NA	28%	NA	NA	NA	Similar
	Contacted Jackson County elected officials	NA	NA	26%	NA	NA	NA	Similar

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	Percent rating positively (e.g., always/sometimes, more than once a month, yes)			2013 compared to 2011	Comparison to benchmark		
	2009	2011	2013		2009	2011	2013
Volunteered	57%	51%	46%	Lower	Much higher	Much higher	Similar
Participated in a club	32%	34%	28%	Lower	Similar	Higher	Similar
Talked to or visited with neighbors	NA	NA	95%	NA	NA	NA	Similar
Done a favor for a neighbor	NA	NA	85%	NA	NA	NA	Similar
Attended a local public meeting	31%	27%	21%	Lower	Similar	Similar	Similar
Watched a local public meeting	42%	41%	27%	Lower	Similar	Similar	Similar
Read or watched local news	NA	NA	89%	NA	NA	NA	Similar
Voted in local elections	76%	71%	89%	Higher	Similar	Lower	Higher