



**THE NCS**<sup>TM</sup>  
The National Citizen Survey<sup>TM</sup>

# Jackson County, MI

Trends over Time  
2016



**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 2015 ratings for Jackson County to its previous survey results in 2009, 2011 and 2013. 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 eight percentage points between the 2013 and 2015 surveys, otherwise the comparison between 2013 and 2015 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 Jackson County for 2015 generally remained stable. Of the 134 items for which comparisons were available, 106 items were rated similarly in 2013 and 2015, 9 items showed a decrease in ratings and 19 showed an increase in ratings. Notable trends over time included the following:

- Trends between 2013 and 2015 were mixed in the pillar of Community Characteristics. Ratings in 2015 for neighborhood as a place to live were slightly lower in than in 2013 while ratings for Jackson County as a place to retire improved during this time. Other items with higher ratings in 2015 compared to 2013 were employment opportunities, business and services and neighborliness. Areas trending down between 2013 and 2015 included feelings of safety in the downtown/commercial area and in neighborhoods.
- In the pillar of Governance, ratings in 2015 were higher in many areas and did not decline in any aspects. Most of the aspects trending up in 2015 compared to 2013 were focused in Safety and Built Environment though improvements were seen in Mobility, Natural Environment and Economy as well. The remaining 33 items that were compared remained stable between 2013 and 2015.
- Most of the items within the pillar of Participation received similar ratings between 2013 and 2015, but there were a few exceptions. More residents stated that they did not report a crime, and that they had a better sense of community in 2015 compared to 2013. Meanwhile, fewer residents reported carpooling instead of driving, using Jackson County recreation centers, voting in local elections, campaigning for an issue, cause or candidate or contacting Jackson County officials in 2015 than in 2013.

The National Citizen Survey™

Table 1: Community Characteristics General

	Percent rating positively (e.g., excellent/good)				2015 rating compared to 2013	Comparison to benchmark			
	2009	2011	2013	2015		2009	2011	2013	2015
Overall quality of life	48%	45%	50%	49%	Similar	Much lower	Much lower	Much lower	Much lower
Overall image	27%	25%	23%	20%	Similar	Much lower	Much lower	Much lower	Much lower
Place to live	58%	52%	59%	59%	Similar	Much lower	Much lower	Much lower	Much lower
Neighborhood	75%	71%	79%	69%	Lower	Lower	Much lower	Similar	Lower
Place to raise children	62%	51%	53%	58%	Similar	Much lower	Much lower	Much lower	Lower
Place to retire	36%	35%	31%	41%	Higher	Much lower	Much lower	Much lower	Much lower
Overall appearance	40%	33%	37%	37%	Similar	Much lower	Much lower	Much lower	Much lower

Table 2: Community Characteristics by Facet

		Percent rating positively (e.g., excellent/good, very/somewhat safe)				2015 rating compared to 2013	Comparison to benchmark			
		2009	2011	2013	2015		2009	2011	2013	2015
Safety	Overall feeling of safety	NA	NA	49%	51%	Similar	NA	NA	Much lower	Much lower
	Safe in neighborhood	92%	84%	93%	83%	Lower	Similar	Lower	Similar	Similar
	Safe downtown/commercial area	77%	76%	79%	71%	Lower	Much lower	Much lower	Similar	Lower
	Overall ease of travel	NA	NA	68%	70%	Similar	NA	NA	Similar	Similar
	Paths and walking trails	55%	56%	57%	58%	Similar	Lower	Similar	Similar	Similar
Mobility	Ease of walking	44%	49%	53%	50%	Similar	Much lower	Much lower	Similar	Lower
	Travel by bicycle	NA	49%	40%	41%	Similar	NA	Similar	Similar	Lower
	Travel by public transportation	39%	NA	36%	41%	Similar	Lower	NA	Lower	Similar
	Travel by car	59%	59%	65%	65%	Similar	Similar	Similar	Similar	Similar
	Public parking	NA	NA	49%	46%	Similar	NA	NA	Similar	Similar
	Traffic flow	NA	49%	49%	56%	Similar	NA	Similar	Similar	Similar
	Overall natural environment	52%	55%	65%	59%	Similar	Much lower	Much lower	Similar	Lower
Natural Environment	Cleanliness	38%	31%	39%	37%	Similar	Much lower	Much lower	Much lower	Much lower
	Air quality	NA	64%	66%	64%	Similar	NA	Lower	Similar	Similar
	Overall built environment	NA	NA	37%	43%	Similar	NA	NA	Lower	Lower
Built Environment	New development in Jackson County	15%	20%	22%	29%	Similar	Much lower	Much lower	Much lower	Lower
	Affordable quality housing	NA	39%	38%	39%	Similar	NA	Similar	Similar	Similar
	Housing options	NA	42%	41%	39%	Similar	NA	Much lower	Lower	Lower
	Public places	NA	NA	43%	44%	Similar	NA	NA	Lower	Lower

The National Citizen Survey™

		Percent rating positively (e.g., excellent/good, very/somewhat safe)				2015 rating compared to 2013	Comparison to benchmark				
		2009	2011	2013	2015		2009	2011	2013	2015	
Economy	Overall economic health	NA	NA	13%	17%	Similar	NA	NA	Much lower	Much lower	
	Vibrant downtown/commercial area	NA	NA	19%	22%	Similar	NA	NA	Lower	Lower	
	Business and services	39%	38%	38%	47%	Higher	Much lower	Much lower	Lower	Lower	
	Cost of living	NA	NA	40%	43%	Similar	NA	NA	Similar	Similar	
	Shopping opportunities	45%	43%	42%	42%	Similar	Similar	Much lower	Similar	Similar	
	Employment opportunities	7%	6%	12%	21%	Higher	Much lower	Much lower	Lower	Lower	
	Place to visit	NA	NA	32%	35%	Similar	NA	NA	Much lower	Much lower	
	Place to work	26%	26%	37%	44%	Similar	Much lower	Much lower	Lower	Lower	
	Health and Wellness	Health and wellness	NA	NA	51%	52%	Similar	NA	NA	Lower	Lower
		Mental health care	NA	NA	32%	37%	Similar	NA	NA	Lower	Similar
Preventive health services		45%	47%	52%	51%	Similar	Much lower	Much lower	Similar	Similar	
Health care		30%	40%	49%	50%	Similar	Much lower	Much lower	Similar	Similar	
Food		55%	55%	51%	52%	Similar	Lower	Lower	Similar	Lower	
Recreational opportunities		47%	48%	48%	46%	Similar	Much lower	Much lower	Lower	Lower	
Education and Enrichment	Fitness opportunities	NA	NA	55%	51%	Similar	NA	NA	Lower	Lower	
	Religious or spiritual events and activities	67%	64%	69%	72%	Similar	Much lower	Lower	Similar	Similar	
	Cultural/arts/music activities	34%	37%	41%	39%	Similar	Much lower	Much lower	Lower	Lower	
	Adult education	NA	NA	48%	46%	Similar	NA	NA	Lower	Similar	
	K-12 education	NA	47%	51%	54%	Similar	NA	Much lower	Lower	Lower	
Community Engagement	Child care/preschool	NA	33%	40%	47%	Similar	NA	Lower	Similar	Similar	
	Social events and activities	39%	37%	36%	38%	Similar	Much lower	Much lower	Lower	Lower	
	Neighborliness	NA	NA	33%	46%	Higher	NA	NA	Lower	Lower	
	Openness and acceptance	38%	37%	38%	40%	Similar	Much lower	Much lower	Lower	Lower	
	Opportunities to participate in community matters	48%	48%	42%	49%	Similar	Much lower	Much lower	Lower	Similar	
	Opportunities to volunteer	69%	73%	64%	61%	Similar	Lower	Similar	Similar	Similar	

The National Citizen Survey™

Table 3: Governance General

	Percent rating positively (e.g., excellent/good)				2015 rating compared to 2013	Comparison to benchmark			
	2009	2011	2013	2015		2009	2011	2013	2015
Services provided by Jackson County	39%	44%	45%	48%	Similar	Much lower	Much lower	Lower	Lower
Customer service	72%	60%	50%	57%	Similar	Lower	Much lower	Much lower	Lower
Value of services for taxes paid	25%	29%	33%	36%	Similar	Much lower	Much lower	Lower	Lower
Overall direction	19%	24%	30%	35%	Similar	Much lower	Much lower	Lower	Lower
Welcoming citizen involvement	24%	26%	23%	30%	Similar	Much lower	Much lower	Much lower	Lower
Confidence in County government	NA	NA	23%	25%	Similar	NA	NA	Much lower	Lower
Acting in the best interest of Jackson County	NA	NA	32%	32%	Similar	NA	NA	Lower	Lower
Being honest	NA	NA	29%	25%	Similar	NA	NA	Lower	Much lower
Treating all residents fairly	NA	NA	27%	29%	Similar	NA	NA	Lower	Lower
Services provided by the Federal Government	23%	20%	20%	30%	Higher	Much lower	Much lower	Lower	Similar

Table 4: Governance by Facet

		Percent rating positively (e.g., excellent/good)				2015 rating compared to 2013	Comparison to benchmark			
		2009	2011	2013	2015		2009	2011	2013	2015
Safety	Police	62%	66%	65%	74%	Higher	Much lower	Much lower	Lower	Similar
	Fire	NA	76%	76%	86%	Higher	NA	Much lower	Lower	Similar
	Ambulance/EMS	NA	79%	79%	87%	Higher	NA	Much lower	Lower	Similar
	Crime prevention	41%	43%	40%	47%	Similar	Much lower	Much lower	Lower	Lower
	Fire prevention	NA	59%	58%	66%	Higher	NA	Much lower	Lower	Similar
	Animal control	32%	36%	31%	32%	Similar	Much lower	Much lower	Lower	Much lower
	Emergency preparedness	40%	44%	32%	47%	Higher	Much lower	Much lower	Lower	Lower
Mobility	Traffic enforcement	53%	53%	50%	60%	Higher	Much lower	Much lower	Similar	Similar
	Street repair	12%	11%	7%	8%	Similar	Much lower	Much lower	Much lower	Much lower
	Street cleaning	NA	NA	20%	17%	Similar	NA	NA	Much lower	Much lower
	Street lighting	NA	NA	35%	31%	Similar	NA	NA	Lower	Lower
	Snow removal	38%	36%	36%	37%	Similar	Much lower	Much lower	Lower	Lower
	Sidewalk maintenance	NA	NA	26%	24%	Similar	NA	NA	Lower	Lower

The National Citizen Survey™

		Percent rating positively (e.g., excellent/good)				2015 rating compared to 2013	Comparison to benchmark			
		2009	2011	2013	2015		2009	2011	2013	2015
	Traffic signal timing	NA	NA	32%	41%	Higher	NA	NA	Lower	Similar
	Bus or transit services	40%	47%	44%	36%	Similar	Lower	Similar	Similar	Similar
Natural Environment	Garbage collection	NA	75%	67%	74%	Similar	NA	Much lower	Lower	Similar
	Recycling	56%	61%	45%	50%	Similar	Much lower	Much lower	Much lower	Much lower
	Yard waste pick-up	NA	38%	22%	30%	Similar	NA	Much lower	Much lower	Much lower
	Drinking water	NA	57%	50%	57%	Similar	NA	Much lower	Lower	Lower
	Natural areas preservation	NA	41%	40%	51%	Higher	NA	Much lower	Lower	Similar
	Open space	46%	55%	45%	43%	Similar	Much lower	Much lower	Lower	Lower
Built Environment	Storm drainage	48%	49%	36%	38%	Similar	Lower	Much lower	Lower	Lower
	Sewer services	NA	65%	55%	58%	Similar	NA	Lower	Lower	Lower
	Power utility	NA	67%	56%	67%	Higher	NA	Much lower	Lower	Similar
	Utility billing	NA	NA	50%	55%	Similar	NA	NA	Lower	Lower
	Land use, planning and zoning	NA	28%	20%	32%	Higher	NA	Much lower	Lower	Lower
	Code enforcement	NA	19%	11%	19%	Higher	NA	Much lower	Much lower	Much lower
	Cable television	NA	47%	44%	41%	Similar	NA	Lower	Lower	Similar
Economy	Economic development	9%	15%	14%	22%	Higher	Much lower	Much lower	Much lower	Lower
Recreation and Wellness	County parks	78%	75%	65%	68%	Similar	Lower	Lower	Lower	Similar
	Recreation programs	60%	60%	46%	50%	Similar	Much lower	Much lower	Lower	Lower
	Recreation centers	54%	55%	45%	47%	Similar	Much lower	Much lower	Lower	Lower
	Health services	45%	49%	49%	54%	Similar	Much lower	Much lower	Similar	Lower
Education and Enrichment	Special events	NA	NA	40%	42%	Similar	NA	NA	Lower	Lower
	Public libraries	NA	75%	72%	72%	Similar	NA	Lower	Similar	Similar
Community Engagement	Public information	35%	51%	44%	46%	Similar	Much lower	Much lower	Lower	Lower

The National Citizen Survey™

Table 5: Participation General

	Percent rating positively (e.g., always/sometimes, more than once a month, yes)				2015 rating compared to 2013	Comparison to benchmark			
	2009	2011	2013	2015		2009	2011	2013	2015
Sense of community	35%	35%	26%	34%	Higher	Much lower	Much lower	Much lower	Much lower
Recommend Jackson County	53%	61%	66%	56%	Lower	Much lower	Much lower	Much lower	Much lower
Remain in Jackson County	73%	79%	83%	78%	Similar	Much lower	Similar	Similar	Similar
Contacted Jackson County employees	49%	40%	31%	25%	Similar	Much lower	Much lower	Lower	Much lower

Table 6: Participation by Facet

		Percent rating positively (e.g., always/sometimes, more than once a month, yes)				2015 rating compared to 2013	Comparison to benchmark			
		2009	2011	2013	2015		2009	2011	2013	2015
Safety	Stocked supplies for an emergency	NA	NA	38%	42%	Similar	NA	NA	Similar	Similar
	Did NOT report a crime	NA	NA	70%	79%	Higher	NA	NA	Similar	Similar
	Was NOT the victim of a crime	85%	87%	79%	84%	Similar	Similar	Similar	Similar	Similar
Mobility	Used public transportation instead of driving	NA	NA	13%	8%	Similar	NA	NA	Lower	Lower
	Carpooled instead of driving alone	NA	NA	46%	33%	Lower	NA	NA	Similar	Similar
	Walked or biked instead of driving	NA	NA	41%	42%	Similar	NA	NA	Lower	Lower
Natural Environment	Conserved water	NA	NA	70%	71%	Similar	NA	NA	Lower	Lower
	Made home more energy efficient	NA	NA	86%	84%	Similar	NA	NA	Similar	Similar
	Recycled at home	72%	80%	74%	70%	Similar	Much lower	Similar	Lower	Lower
Built Environment	Did NOT observe a code violation	NA	NA	46%	47%	Similar	NA	NA	Similar	Similar
	NOT under housing cost stress	68%	70%	73%	68%	Similar	Higher	Much higher	Similar	Similar
Economy	Purchased goods or services in Jackson County	NA	NA	98%	96%	Similar	NA	NA	Similar	Similar
	Economy will have positive impact on income	10%	13%	22%	27%	Similar	Much lower	Lower	Similar	Similar
	Work in Jackson County	NA	NA	49%	55%	Similar	NA	NA	Similar	Higher
Recreation and Wellness	Used Jackson County recreation centers	53%	50%	54%	44%	Lower	Lower	Much lower	Similar	Lower
	Visited a County park	86%	85%	75%	73%	Similar	Similar	Similar	Lower	Similar
	Ate 5 portions of fruits and vegetables	NA	NA	80%	77%	Similar	NA	NA	Similar	Similar

The National Citizen Survey™

		Percent rating positively (e.g., always/sometimes, more than once a month, yes)				2015 rating compared to 2013	Comparison to benchmark			
		2009	2011	2013	2015		2009	2011	2013	2015
	Participated in moderate or vigorous physical activity	NA	NA	84%	84%	Similar	NA	NA	Similar	Similar
	In very good to excellent health	NA	NA	56%	55%	Similar	NA	NA	Similar	Similar
Education and Enrichment	Used Jackson County public libraries	69%	71%	61%	56%	Similar	Similar	Similar	Similar	Similar
	Participated in religious or spiritual activities	57%	55%	55%	52%	Similar	Higher	Higher	Similar	Similar
	Attended a County-sponsored event	NA	NA	46%	40%	Similar	NA	NA	Similar	Lower
	Campaigned for an issue, cause or candidate	NA	NA	28%	16%	Lower	NA	NA	Similar	Similar
Community Engagement	Contacted Jackson County elected officials	NA	NA	26%	10%	Lower	NA	NA	Similar	Similar
	Volunteered	57%	51%	46%	38%	Similar	Much higher	Much higher	Similar	Similar
	Participated in a club	32%	34%	28%	22%	Similar	Similar	Higher	Similar	Similar
	Talked to or visited with neighbors	NA	NA	95%	94%	Similar	NA	NA	Similar	Similar
	Done a favor for a neighbor	NA	NA	85%	88%	Similar	NA	NA	Similar	Similar
	Attended a local public meeting	31%	27%	21%	14%	Similar	Similar	Similar	Similar	Similar
	Watched a local public meeting	42%	41%	27%	20%	Similar	Similar	Similar	Similar	Similar
	Read or watched local news	NA	NA	89%	92%	Similar	NA	NA	Similar	Similar
	Voted in local elections	76%	71%	89%	81%	Lower	Similar	Lower	Higher	Similar