



243 South Allen Street • State College, PA 16801 • T: (814) 234-7100 • F: (814) 231-3082 • www.statecollegepa.us

The Borough of State College, Pennsylvania

Report of Normative Comparisons 2007



National Research Center, Inc.
3005 30th St. • Boulder, CO 80301 • T: (303) 444-7863 • F: (303) 444-1145 • www.n-r-c.com

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SURVEY BACKGROUND

About The National Citizen Survey™

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 survey methods and comparable results across The National Citizen Survey™ jurisdictions. Participating households are selected at random and the household member who responds is selected without bias. Multiple mailings give each household more than one chance to participate with self-addressed and postage paid envelopes. Results are statistically weighted to reflect the proper demographic composition of the entire community.

The National Citizen Survey™ customized for this jurisdiction was developed in close cooperation with local jurisdiction staff. The Borough of State College staff selected items from a menu of questions about services and community problems; they defined the jurisdiction boundaries NRC used for sampling; and they provided the appropriate letterhead and signatures for mailings. Borough of State College staff also determined local interest in a variety of add-on options to The National Citizen Survey™ Basic Service.

UNDERSTANDING THE NORMATIVE COMPARISONS

Comparison Data

National Research Center, Inc. has collected citizen surveys conducted in over 500 jurisdictions in the United States. Responses to thousands of survey questions dealing with resident perceptions about the quality of community life and services provided by local government were recorded, analyzed and stored in an electronic database.

The jurisdictions in the database represent a wide geographic and population range as shown in the table below.

Jurisdiction Characteristic	Percent of Jurisdictions
Region	
West Coast ¹	16%
West ²	21%
North Central West ³	12%
North Central East ⁴	12%
South Central ⁵	9%
South ⁶	25%
Northeast West ⁷	3%
Northeast East ⁸	2%
Population	
Less than 40,000	38%
40,000 to 74,999	21%
75,000 to 149,000	17%
150,000 or more	24%

¹ Alaska, Washington, Oregon, California, Hawaii

² Montana, Idaho, Wyoming, Colorado, Utah, Nevada, Arizona, New Mexico

³ North Dakota, South Dakota, Nebraska, Kansas, Iowa, Missouri, Minnesota

⁴ Illinois, Indiana, Ohio, Michigan, Wisconsin

⁵ Oklahoma, Texas, Louisiana, Arkansas

⁶ West Virginia, Virginia, Kentucky, Tennessee, Mississippi, Alabama, Georgia, Florida, South Carolina, North Carolina, Maryland, Delaware, Washington DC

⁷ New York, Pennsylvania, New Jersey

⁸ Connecticut, Rhode Island, Massachusetts, New Hampshire, Vermont, Maine

Use of the “Excellent, Good, Fair, Poor” Response Scale

The scale on which respondents are asked to record their opinions about service and community quality is “excellent,” “good,” “fair” or “poor” (EGFP). This scale has important advantages over other scale possibilities (very good to very bad; very satisfied to very dissatisfied; strongly agree to strongly disagree, as examples). EGFP is used by the plurality of jurisdictions conducting citizen surveys across the U.S. The advantage of familiarity is one we did not want to dismiss because elected officials, staff and residents already are acquainted with opinion surveys measured this way. EGFP also has the advantage of offering three positive options, rather than only two, over which a resident can offer an opinion. While symmetrical scales often are the right choice in other measurement tasks, we have found that ratings of almost every local government service in almost every jurisdiction tend, on average, to be positive (that is, above the scale midpoint). Therefore, to permit finer distinctions among positively rated services, EGFP offers three options across which to spread those ratings. EGFP is more neutral because it requires no positive statement of service quality to judge (as agree-disagree scales require) and, finally, EGFP intends to measure absolute quality of service delivery or community quality (unlike satisfaction scales which ignore residents’ perceptions of quality in favor of their report on the acceptability of the level of service offered).

Putting Evaluations onto a 100-Point Scale

Although responses to many of the evaluative questions were made on a 4 point scale with 1 representing the best rating and 4 the worst, many of the results in this summary are reported on a common scale where 0 is the worst possible rating and 100 is the best possible rating. If everyone reported “excellent,” then the result would be 100 on the 100-point scale. Likewise, if all respondents gave a “poor” rating, the result would be 0 on the 100-point scale. If the average rating for quality of life was “good,” then the result would be 67 on a 100-point scale; “fair” would be 33 on the 100-point scale. The 95 percent confidence interval around an average score on the 100-point scale is no greater than plus or minus 3 points based on all respondents.

Interpreting the Results

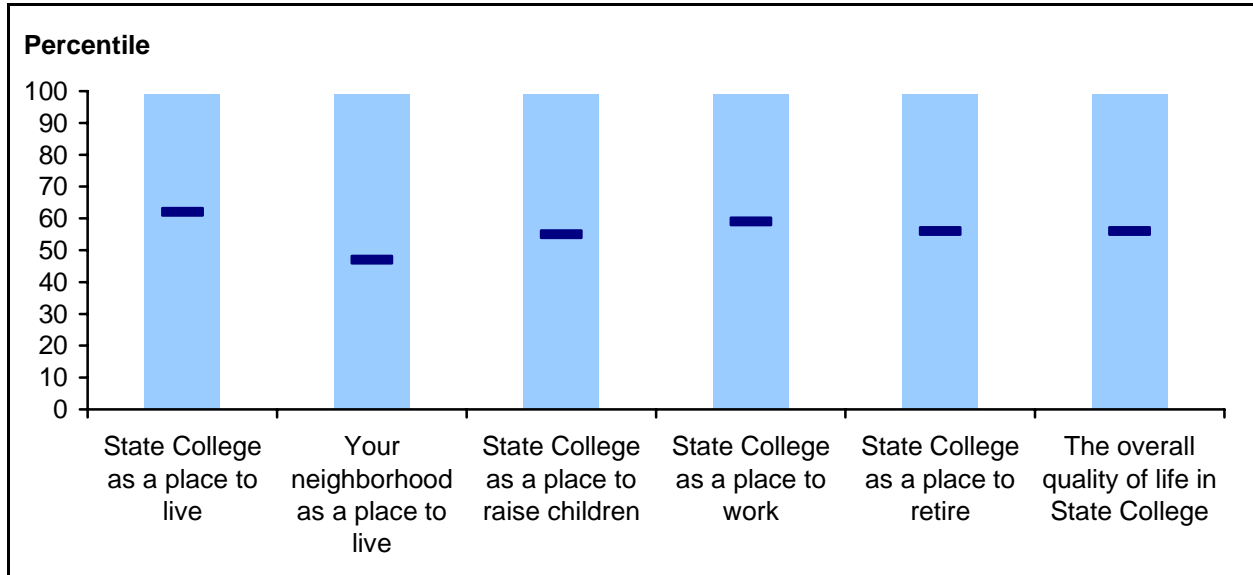
Comparisons are provided when similar questions are included in our database, and there are at least five other jurisdictions in which the question was asked. Where comparisons are available, three numbers are provided in the table. The first column is your jurisdiction's rating on the 100-point scale. The second column is the rank assigned to your jurisdiction's rating among jurisdictions where a similar question was asked. The third column is the number of jurisdictions that asked a similar question. Fourth, the rank is expressed as a percentile to indicate its distance from the top score. This rank (5th highest out of 25 jurisdictions' results, for example) translates to a percentile (the 80th percentile in this example). A percentile indicates the percent of jurisdictions with identical or lower ratings. Therefore, a rating at the 80th percentile would mean that your jurisdiction's rating is equal to or better than 80 percent of the ratings from other jurisdictions. Conversely, 20 percent of the jurisdictions where a similar question was asked had higher ratings.

Alongside the rank and percentile appears a comparison: "above the norm," "below the norm" or "similar to the norm." This evaluation of "above," "below" or "similar to" comes from a statistical comparison of your jurisdiction's rating to the norm (the average rating from all the comparison jurisdictions where a similar question was asked). Differences of no more than 3 points on the 100-point scale between your jurisdiction's ratings and the average based on the appropriate comparisons from the database are considered "statistically significant," and thus are marked as "above" or "below" the norm. When differences between your jurisdiction's ratings and the national norms are less than 3 points, they are marked as "similar to" the norm.

The data are represented visually in a chart that accompanies each table. Your jurisdiction's percentile for each compared item is marked with a black line on the chart.

COMPARISONS

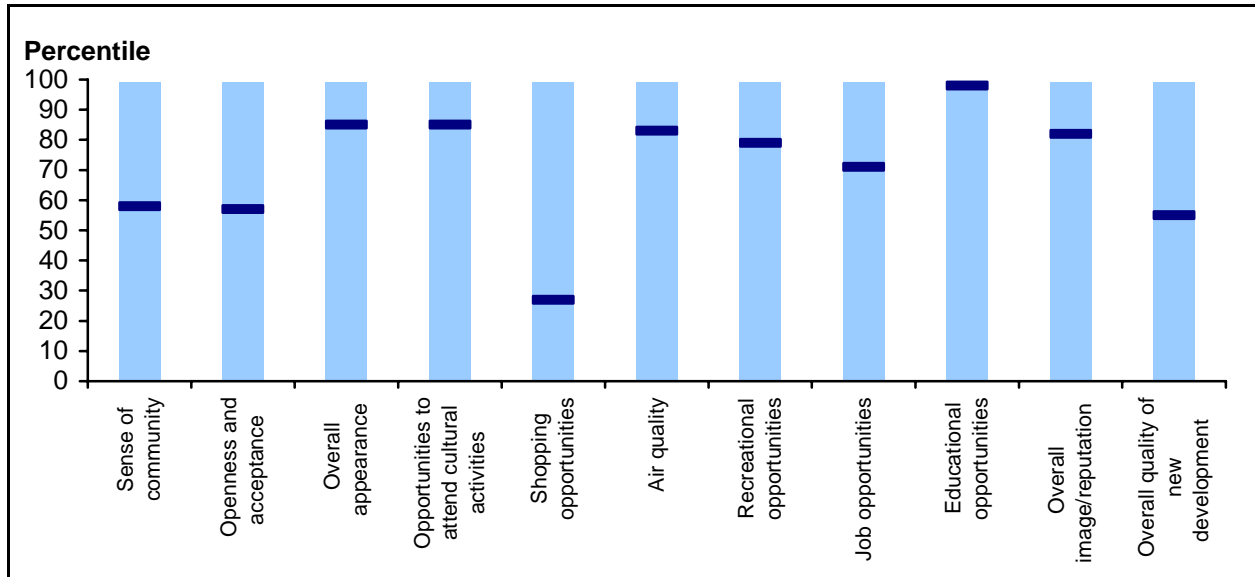
Figure 1: Quality of Life Ratings



Quality of Life Ratings

	Borough of State College Rating	Rank	Number of Jurisdictions for Comparison	Borough of State College Percentile	Comparison of State College Rating to Norm
How do you rate State College as a place to live?	71	81	209	62%ile	Above the norm
How do you rate your neighborhood as a place to live?	67	73	138	47%ile	Similar to the norm
How do you rate State College as a place to raise children?	68	80	176	55%ile	Similar to the norm
How do you rate State College as a place to work?	55	41	98	59%ile	Similar to the norm
How do you rate State College as a place to retire?	58	71	161	56%ile	Similar to the norm
How do you rate the overall quality of life in State College?	69	93	210	56%ile	Above the norm

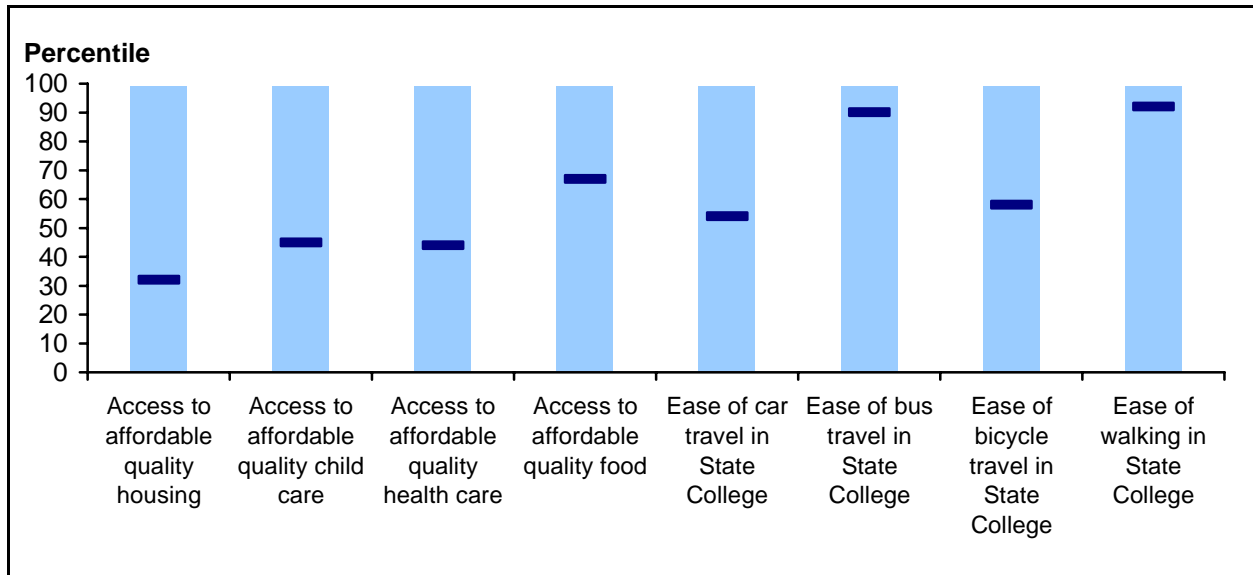
Figure 2: Characteristics of the Community: General and Opportunities



Characteristics of the Community: General and Opportunities

	Borough of State College Rating	Rank	Number of Jurisdictions for Comparison	Borough of State College Percentile	Comparison of State College Rating to Norm
Sense of community	57	60	140	58%ile	Similar to the norm
Openness and acceptance of the community towards people of diverse backgrounds	55	50	116	57%ile	Similar to the norm
Overall appearance of State College	70	25	159	85%ile	Above the norm
Opportunities to attend cultural activities	63	20	125	85%ile	Above the norm
Shopping opportunities	41	91	125	27%ile	Below the norm
Air quality	69	13	72	83%ile	Above the norm
Recreational opportunities	66	31	141	79%ile	Above the norm
Job opportunities	42	44	149	71%ile	Above the norm
Educational opportunities	86	2	60	98%ile	Above the norm
Overall image/reputation of State College	72	19	100	82%ile	Above the norm
Overall quality of new development in State College	54	37	81	55%ile	Similar to the norm

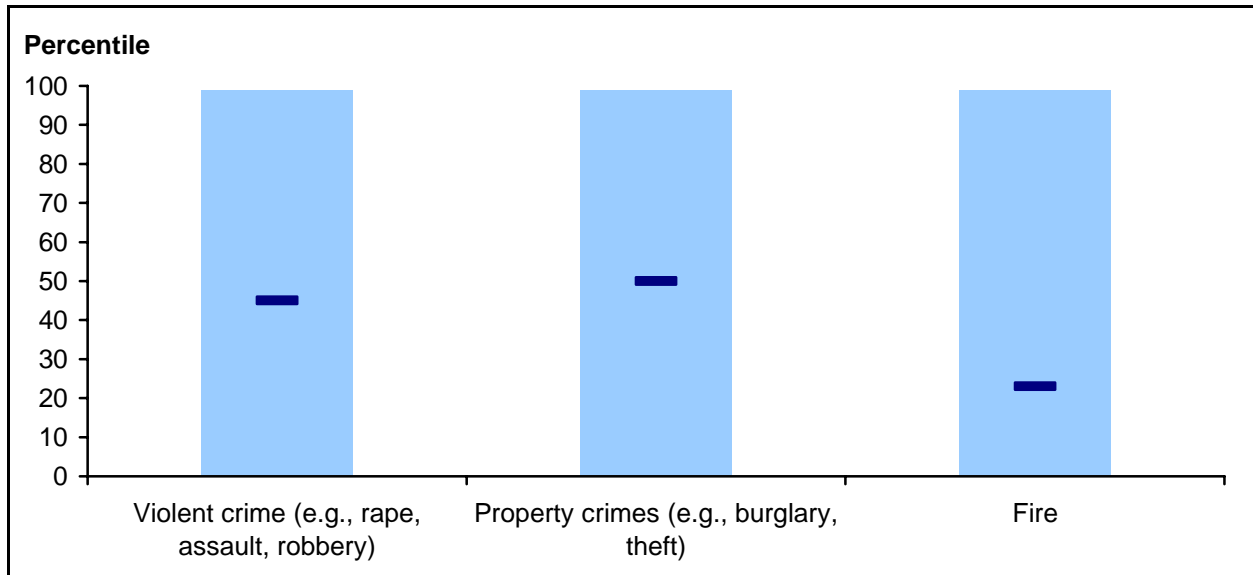
Figure 3: Characteristics of the Community: Access and Mobility



Characteristics of the Community: Access and Mobility

	Borough of State College Rating	Rank	Number of Jurisdictions for Comparison	Borough of State College Percentile	Comparison of State College Rating to Norm
Access to affordable quality housing	35	120	176	32%ile	Below the norm
Access to affordable quality child care	43	55	100	45%ile	Similar to the norm
Access to affordable quality health care	45	50	88	44%ile	Similar to the norm
Access to affordable quality food	60	13	37	67%ile	Above the norm
Ease of car travel in State College	52	57	123	54%ile	Above the norm
Ease of bus travel in State College	56	9	78	90%ile	Above the norm
Ease of bicycle travel in State College	48	52	121	58%ile	Similar to the norm
Ease of walking in State College	70	10	119	92%ile	Above the norm

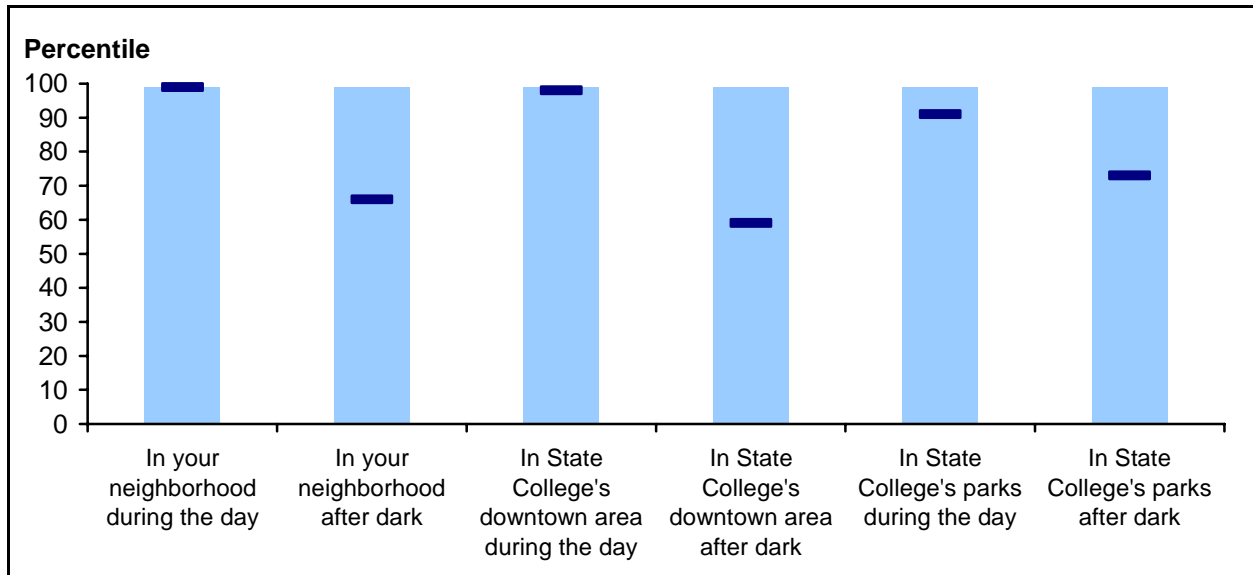
Figure 4: Ratings of Safety from Various Problems



Ratings of Safety From Various Problems

	Borough of State College Rating	Rank	Number of Jurisdictions for Comparison	Borough of State College Percentile	Comparison of State College Rating to Norm
Violent crime (e.g., rape, assault, robbery)	70	73	133	45%ile	Similar to the norm
Property crimes (e.g., burglary, theft)	62	66	131	50%ile	Similar to the norm
Fire	70	101	131	23%ile	Below the norm

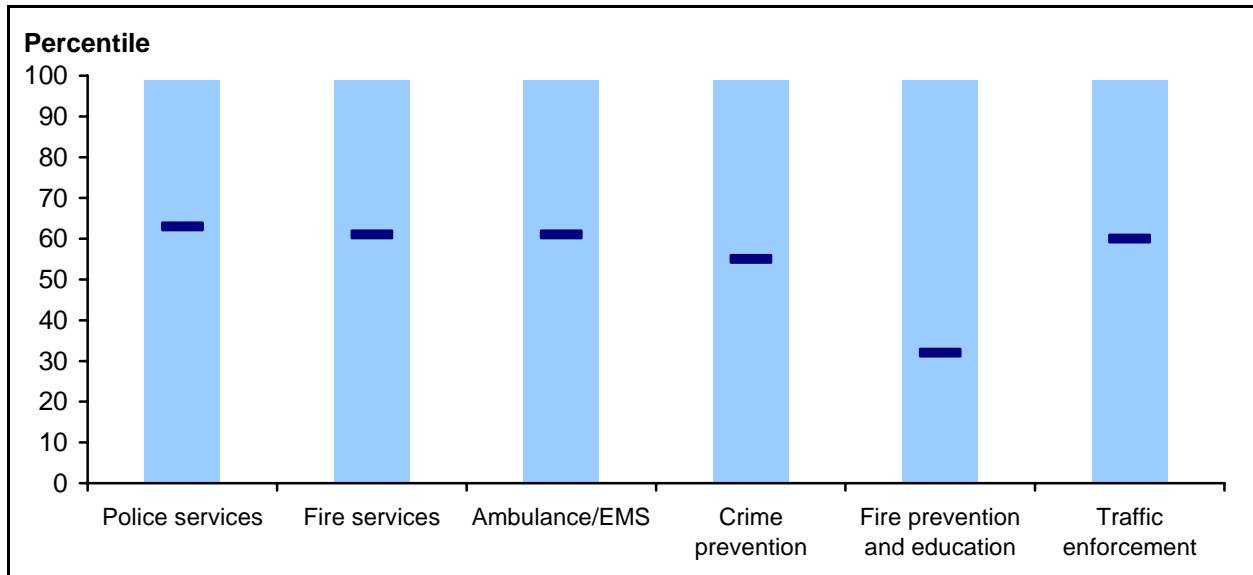
Figure 5: Ratings of Safety in Various Areas



Ratings of Safety in Various Areas

	Borough of State College Rating	Rank	Number of Jurisdictions for Comparison	Borough of State College Percentile	Comparison of State College Rating to Norm
In your neighborhood during the day	95	2	157	99%ile	Above the norm
In your neighborhood after dark	75	58	170	66%ile	Above the norm
In State College's downtown area during the day	94	3	131	98%ile	Above the norm
In State College's downtown area after dark	65	62	149	59%ile	Above the norm
In State College's parks during the day	92	13	131	91%ile	Above the norm
In State College's parks after dark	60	36	131	73%ile	Above the norm

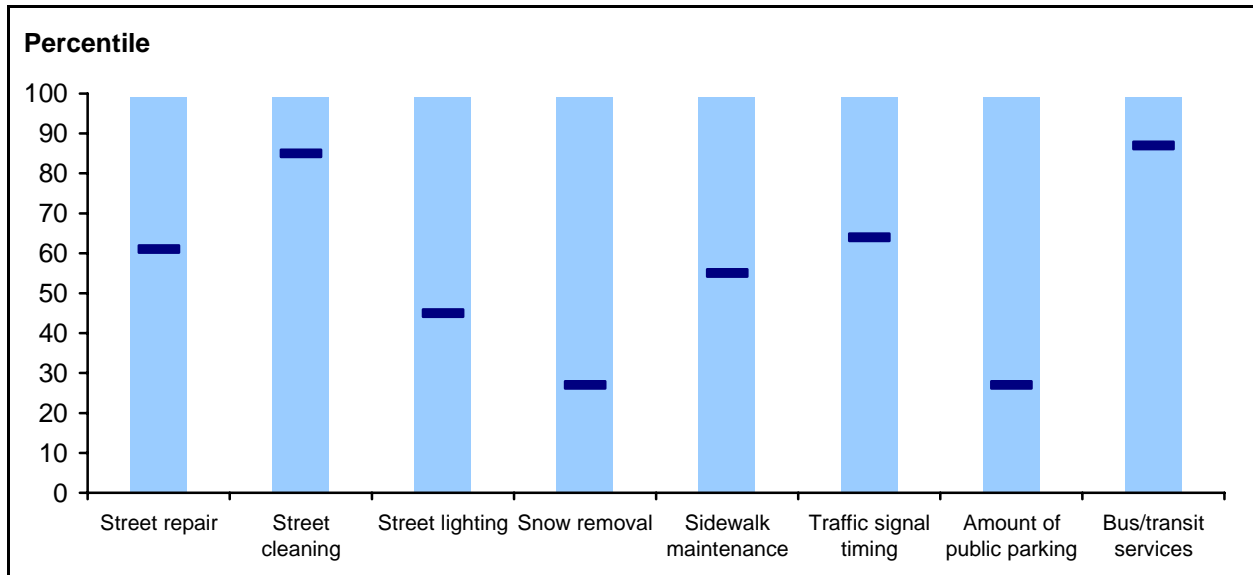
Figure 6: Quality of Public Safety Services



Quality of Public Safety Services

	Borough of State College Rating	Rank	Number of Jurisdictions for Comparison	Borough of State College Percentile	Comparison of State College Rating to Norm
Police services	67	89	239	63%ile	Above the norm
Fire services	77	80	201	61%ile	Similar to the norm
Ambulance/emergency medical services	75	61	156	61%ile	Similar to the norm
Crime prevention	59	64	142	55%ile	Similar to the norm
Fire prevention and education	61	77	113	32%ile	Below the norm
Traffic enforcement	57	70	175	60%ile	Similar to the norm

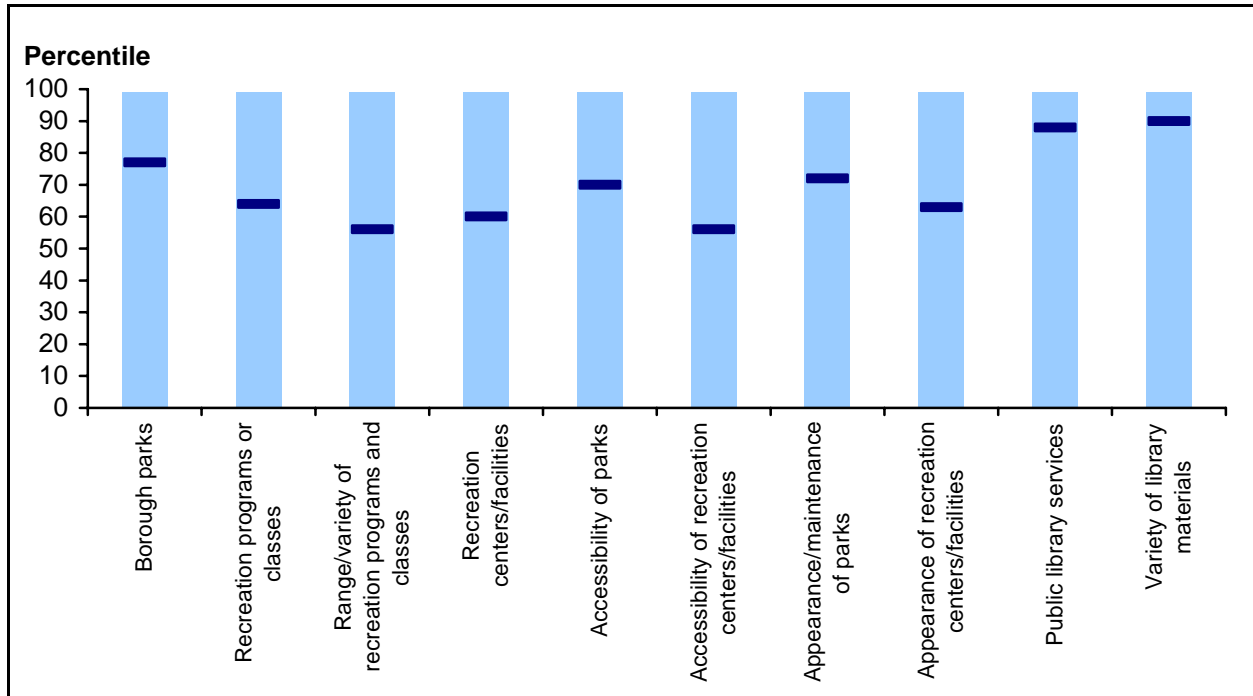
Figure 7: Quality of Transportation Services



Quality of Transportation Services

	Borough of State College Rating	Rank	Number of Jurisdictions for Comparison	Borough of State College Percentile	Comparison of State College Rating to Norm
Street repair	48	83	210	61%ile	Above the norm
Street cleaning	64	23	150	85%ile	Above the norm
Street lighting	52	89	162	45%ile	Similar to the norm
Snow removal	51	109	149	27%ile	Below the norm
Sidewalk maintenance	50	65	144	55%ile	Similar to the norm
Traffic signal timing	46	36	99	64%ile	Similar to the norm
Amount of public parking	38	62	85	27%ile	Below the norm
Bus/transit services	65	14	99	87%ile	Above the norm

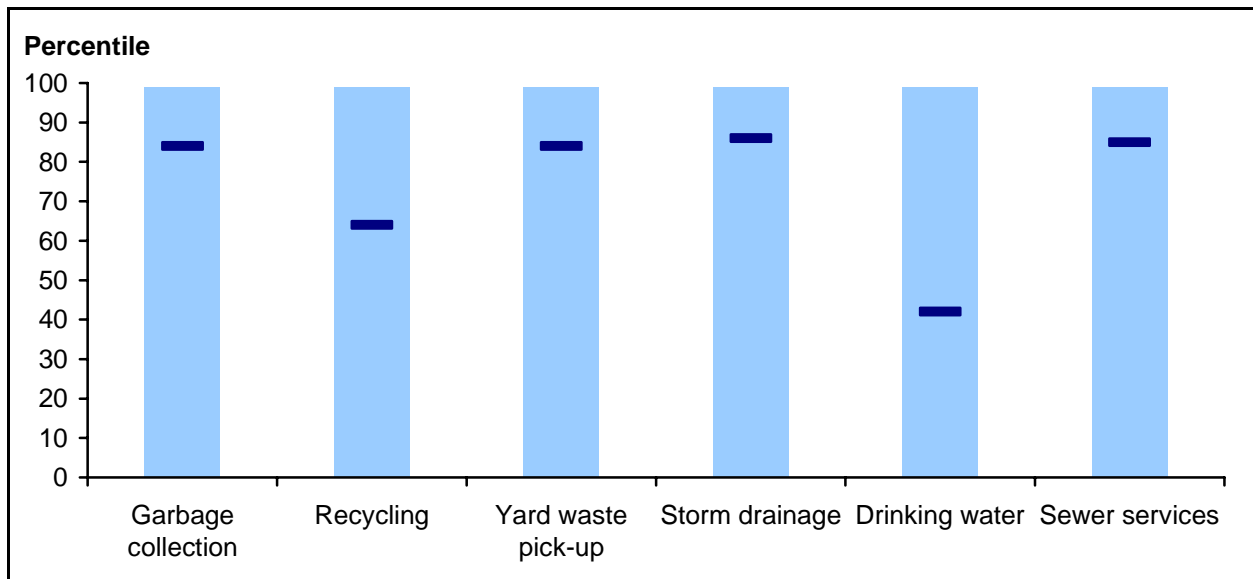
Figure 8: Quality of Leisure Services



Quality of Leisure Services

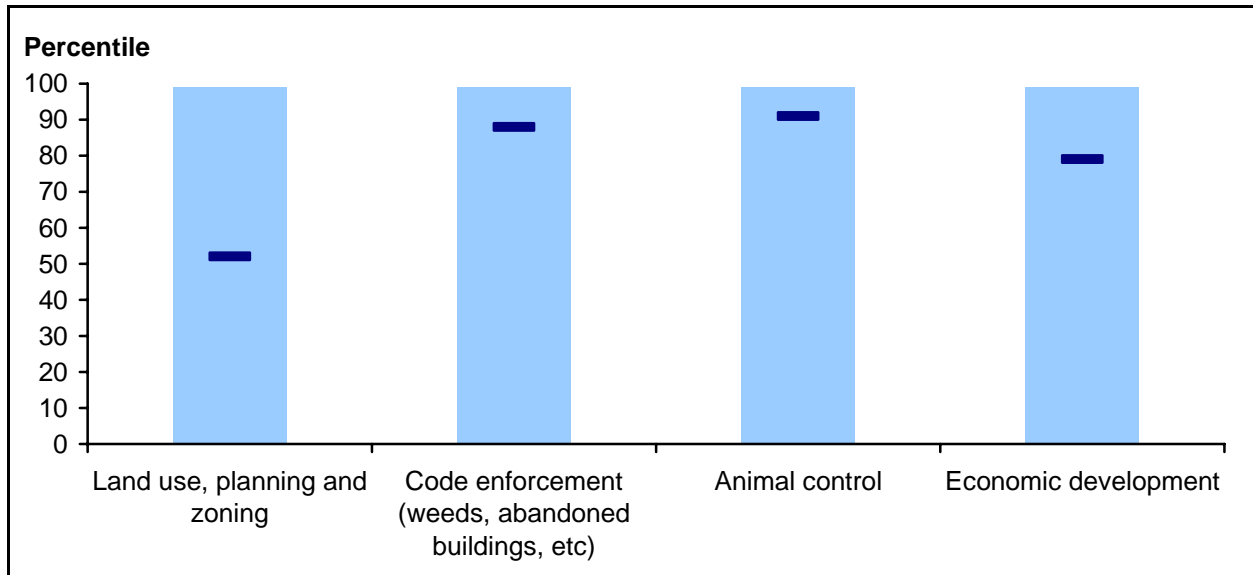
	Borough of State College Rating	Rank	Number of Jurisdictions for Comparison	Borough of State College Percentile	Comparison of State College Rating to Norm
Borough parks	72	35	148	77%ile	Above the norm
Recreation programs or classes	65	59	161	64%ile	Above the norm
Range/variety of recreation programs and classes	62	47	105	56%ile	Similar to the norm
Recreation centers/facilities	62	52	127	60%ile	Similar to the norm
Accessibility of parks	70	36	118	70%ile	Above the norm
Accessibility of recreation centers/facilities	63	37	83	56%ile	Similar to the norm
Appearance/maintenance of parks	71	44	156	72%ile	Above the norm
Appearance of recreation centers/facilities	65	34	90	63%ile	Above the norm
Public library services	78	21	172	88%ile	Above the norm
Variety of library materials	74	9	80	90%ile	Above the norm

Figure 9: Quality of Utility Services



Quality of Utility Services					
	Borough of State College Rating	Rank	Number of Jurisdictions for Comparison	Borough of State College Percentile	Comparison of State College Rating to Norm
Garbage collection	76	28	175	84%ile	Above the norm
Recycling	69	54	150	64%ile	Above the norm
Yard waste pick-up	71	17	99	84%ile	Above the norm
Storm drainage	61	24	166	86%ile	Above the norm
Drinking water	53	75	129	42%ile	Similar to the norm
Sewer services	67	20	130	85%ile	Above the norm

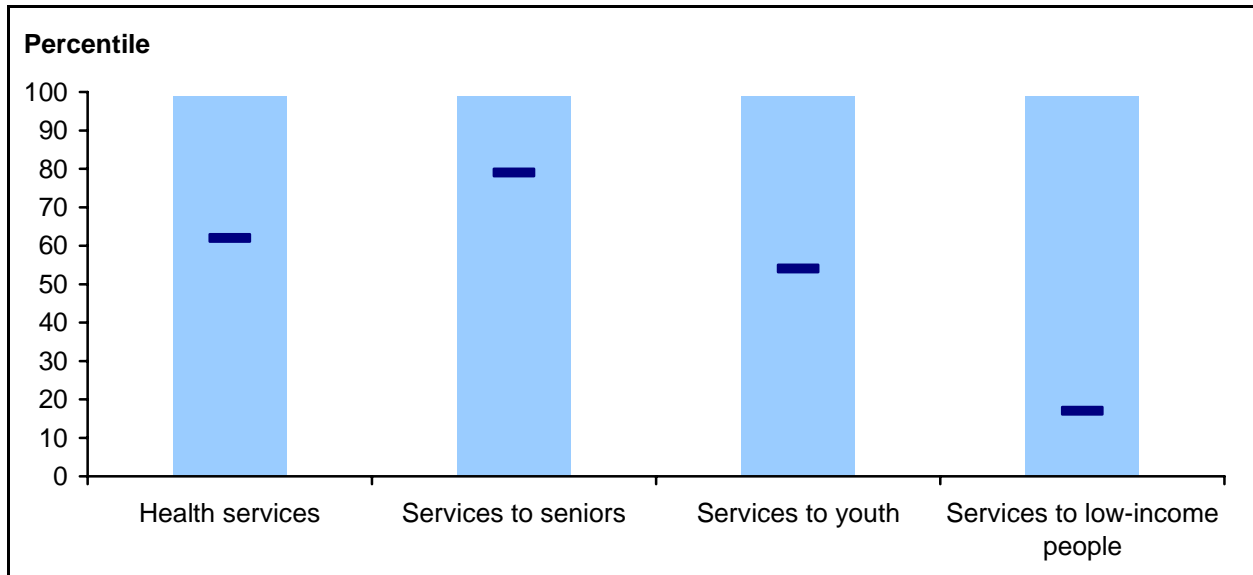
Figure 10: Quality of Planning and Code Enforcement Services



Quality of Planning and Code Enforcement Services

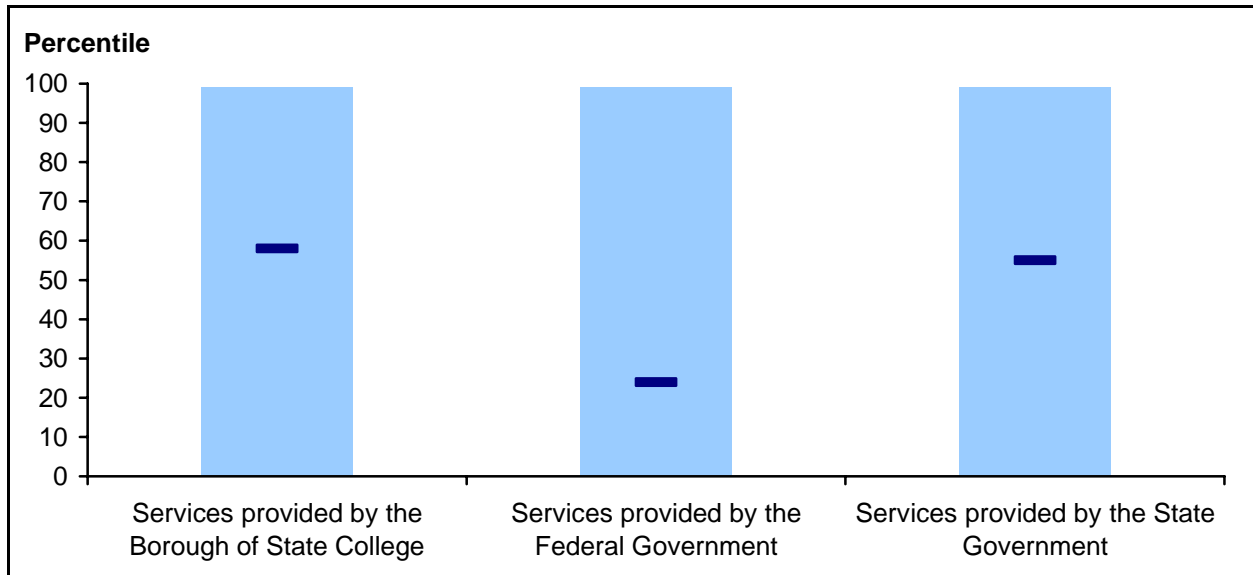
	Borough of State College Rating	Rank	Number of Jurisdictions for Comparison	Borough of State College Percentile	Comparison of State College Rating to Norm
Land use, planning and zoning	42	65	135	52%ile	Similar to the norm
Code enforcement (weeds, abandoned buildings, etc)	58	21	173	88%ile	Above the norm
Animal control	63	14	147	91%ile	Above the norm
Economic development	53	27	127	79%ile	Above the norm

Figure 11: Quality of Services to Special Populations and Other Services



Quality of Services to Special Populations and Other Services					
	Borough of State College Rating	Rank	Number of Jurisdictions for Comparison	Borough of State College Percentile	Comparison of State College Rating to Norm
Health services	58	29	75	62%ile	Above the norm
Services to seniors	64	28	132	79%ile	Above the norm
Services to youth	53	55	119	54%ile	Similar to the norm
Services to low-income people	35	81	97	17%ile	Below the norm

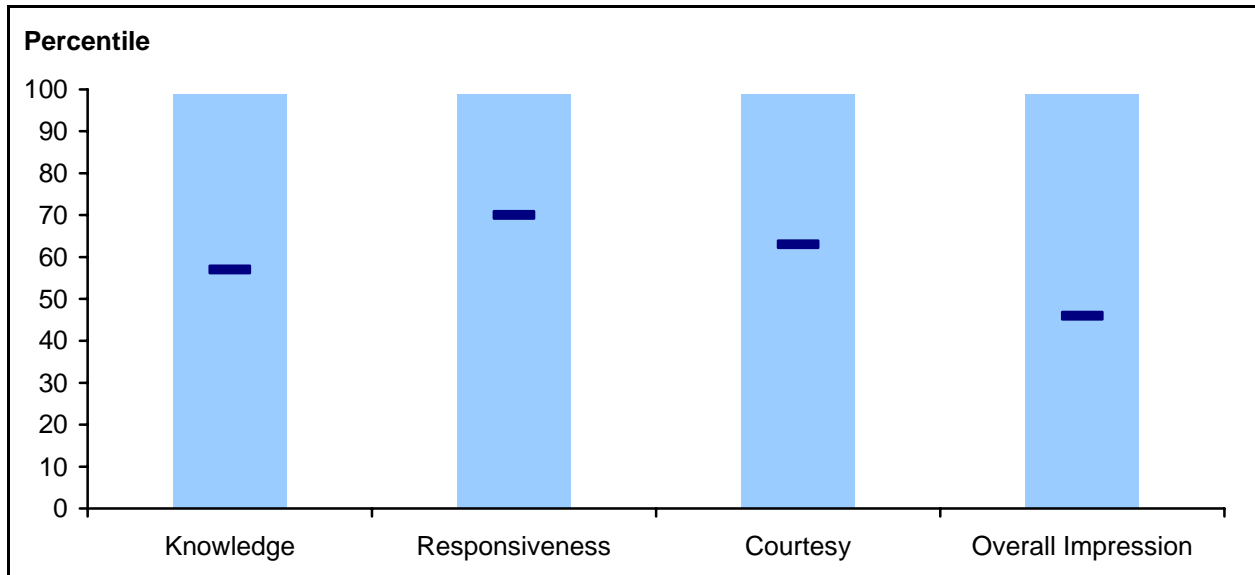
Figure 12: Overall Quality of Services



Overall Quality of Services

	Borough of State College Rating	Rank	Number of Jurisdictions for Comparison	Borough of State College Percentile	Comparison of State College Rating to Norm
Services provided by the Borough of State College	63	80	190	58%ile	Similar to the norm
Services provided by the Federal Government	40	91	120	24%ile	Below the norm
Services provided by the State Government	45	56	122	55%ile	Similar to the norm

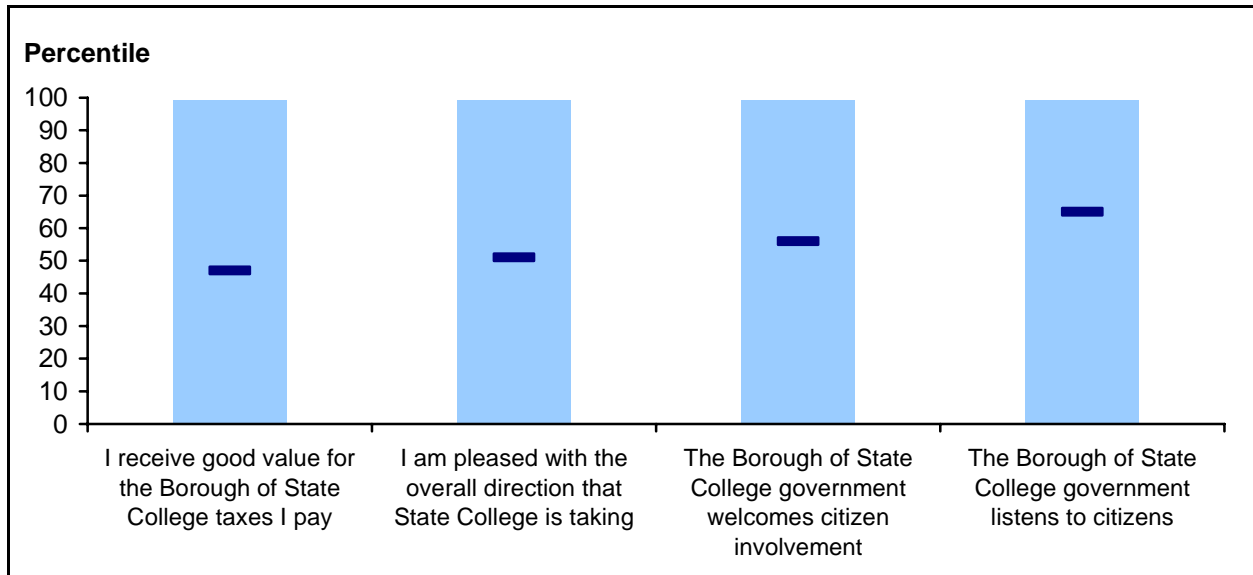
Figure 13: Ratings of Contact with Borough Employees



Ratings of Contact with the City Employees

	Borough of State College Rating	Rank	Number of Jurisdictions for Comparison	Borough of State College Percentile	Comparison of State College Rating to Norm
Knowledge	69	71	165	57%ile	Similar to the norm
Responsiveness	69	50	162	70%ile	Above the norm
Courtesy	70	49	131	63%ile	Similar to the norm
Overall Impression	64	101	185	46%ile	Similar to the norm

Figure 14: Ratings of Public Trust



Ratings of Public Trust

	Borough of State College Rating	Rank	Number of Jurisdictions for Comparison	Borough of State College Percentile	Comparison of State College Rating to Norm
I receive good value for the Borough of State College taxes I pay	58	93	173	47%ile	Similar to the norm
I am pleased with the overall direction that the Borough of State College is taking	59	72	145	51%ile	Similar to the norm
The Borough of State College government welcomes citizen involvement	63	70	157	56%ile	Similar to the norm
The Borough of State College government listens to citizens	57	49	137	65%ile	Above the norm

APPENDIX A: LIST OF JURISDICTIONS INCLUDED IN NORMATIVE COMPARISONS

Jurisdiction Name	State	2000 Population
Homer	AK	3,946
Alabaster	AL	22,169
Auburn	AL	42,987
Phenix City	AL	28,265
Fayetteville	AR	58,047
Fort Smith	AR	80,268
Hot Springs	AR	35,613
Siloam Springs	AR	10,000
Chandler	AZ	176,581
Flagstaff	AZ	52,894
Safford	AZ	9,232
Scottsdale	AZ	202,705
Sedona	AZ	10,192
Tucson	AZ	486,699
Agoura Hills	CA	20,537
Bellflower	CA	72,878
Benicia	CA	26,865
Capitola	CA	10,033
Carlsbad	CA	78,247
Chula Vista	CA	173,556
Claremont	CA	33,998
Concord	CA	121,780
Cupertino	CA	50,546
Del Mar	CA	4,389
El Cerrito	CA	23,171
La Mesa	CA	54,749
Laguna Beach	CA	23,727
Livermore	CA	73,345
Long Beach	CA	461,522

The Borough of State College Citizen Survey

Jurisdictions in Comparisons

Jurisdiction Name	State	2000 Population
Lynwood	CA	69,845
Mission Viejo	CA	93,102
Morgan Hill	CA	33,556
Oceanside	CA	161,029
Oxnard	CA	170,358
Palm Springs	CA	42,807
Palo Alto	CA	58,598
Poway	CA	48,044
Rancho Cordova	CA	55,060
Redding	CA	80,865
Richmond	CA	99,216
Ridgecrest	CA	24,927
Riverside	CA	255,166
San Bernardino County	CA	1,709,434
San Francisco	CA	776,733
San Jose	CA	894,943
San Ramon	CA	44,722
Santa Barbara County	CA	399,347
Santa Monica	CA	84,084
Sunnyvale	CA	131,760
Walnut Creek	CA	64,296
Archuleta County	CO	9,898
Arvada	CO	102,153
Boulder	CO	94,673
Boulder County	CO	291,288
Broomfield	CO	38,272
Castle Rock	CO	20,224
Denver (City and County)	CO	554,636
Douglas County	CO	175,766
Durango	CO	13,922
Englewood	CO	31,727
Fort Collins	CO	118,652
Fruita	CO	6,478
Golden	CO	17,159
Greenwood Village	CO	11,035

The Borough of State College Citizen Survey

Jurisdictions in Comparisons

Jurisdiction Name	State	2000 Population
Highlands Ranch	CO	70,931
Jefferson County	CO	527,056
Lakewood	CO	144,126
Larimer County	CO	251,494
Lone Tree	CO	4,873
Longmont	CO	71,093
Louisville	CO	18,937
Loveland	CO	50,608
Mesa County	CO	116,255
Northglenn	CO	31,575
Parker	CO	23,558
Thornton	CO	82,384
Westminster	CO	100,940
Wheat Ridge	CO	32,913
West Hartford	CT	63,589
Wethersfield	CT	26,271
Windsor	CT	28,237
Dover	DE	32,135
Bonita Springs	FL	32,797
Bradenton	FL	49,504
Brevard County	FL	476,230
Broward County	FL	1,623,018
Cape Coral	FL	102,286
Clearwater	FL	108,787
Coral Springs	FL	117,549
Dania Beach	FL	20,061
Daytona Beach	FL	64,112
Delray Beach	FL	60,020
Duval County	FL	778,879
Kissimmee	FL	47,814
Melbourne	FL	71,382
Miami Beach	FL	87,933
Miami-Dade County	FL	2,253,362
North Port	FL	22,797
Ocoee	FL	24,391

The Borough of State College Citizen Survey

Jurisdictions in Comparisons

Jurisdiction Name	State	2000 Population
Oldsmar	FL	11,910
Oviedo	FL	26,316
Palm Bay	FL	79,413
Palm Beach County	FL	1,131,184
Palm Beach Gardens	FL	35,058
Palm Coast	FL	32,732
Pinellas County	FL	921,482
Port Orange	FL	45,823
Sarasota	FL	52,715
Seminole	FL	10,890
South Daytona	FL	13,177
Tallahassee	FL	150,624
Titusville	FL	40,670
Volusia County	FL	443,343
Walton County	FL	40,601
Cartersville	GA	15,925
Columbus	GA	185,781
Decatur	GA	18,147
Macon	GA	97,255
Milledgeville	GA	18,757
Honolulu	HI	876,156
Maui	HI	128,094
Adams County	IA	4,482
Ames	IA	50,731
Ankeny	IA	27,117
Bettendorf	IA	31,275
Cedar Falls	IA	36,145
Clarke County	IA	9,133
Davenport	IA	98,359
Des Moines	IA	198,682
Indianola	IA	12,998
Iowa County	IA	15,671
Marion	IA	7,144
Newton	IA	15,579
Polk County	IA	374,601

The Borough of State College Citizen Survey

Jurisdictions in Comparisons

Jurisdiction Name	State	2000 Population
Sheldahl	IA	336
Urbandale	IA	29,072
Waukee	IA	5,126
West Des Moines	IA	46,403
Moscow	ID	21,291
Batavia	IL	23,866
DeKalb	IL	39,018
Elmhurst	IL	42,762
Evanston	IL	74,239
Gurnee	IL	28,834
Highland Park	IL	31,365
Homewood	IL	19,543
Naperville	IL	128,358
O'Fallon	IL	21,910
Skokie	IL	63,348
Village of Oak Park	IL	52,524
Woodridge	IL	30,934
Fishers	IN	37,835
Fort Wayne	IN	205,727
Gary	IN	102,746
Munster	IN	21,511
Calgary	INT	878,866
District of Saanich,Victoria	INT	103,654
North Vancouver	INT	44,303
Prince Albert	INT	34,291
Thunder Bay	INT	109,016
Winnipeg	INT	619,544
Arkansas City	KS	11,963
Lenexa	KS	40,238
Merriam	KS	11,008
Olathe	KS	92,962
Overland Park	KS	149,080
Salina	KS	45,679
Wichita	KS	344,284
Ashland	KY	21,981

The Borough of State College Citizen Survey

Jurisdictions in Comparisons

Jurisdiction Name	State	2000 Population
Bowling Green	KY	49,296
Daviess County	KY	91,545
Lexington	KY	260,512
Jefferson Parish	LA	455,466
Orleans Parish	LA	484,674
Andover	MA	31,247
Barnstable	MA	47,821
Cambridge	MA	101,355
Shrewsbury	MA	31,640
Worcester	MA	172,648
College Park	MD	242,657
Rockville	MD	47,388
Saco	ME	16,822
Ann Arbor	MI	114,024
Battle Creek	MI	53,364
Delhi Township	MI	22,569
Detroit	MI	951,270
Meridian Charter Township	MI	38,987
Novi	MI	47,386
Ottawa County	MI	238,314
Sault Sainte Marie	MI	16,542
Troy	MI	80,959
Village of Howard City	MI	1,585
Blue Earth	MN	3,621
Carver County	MN	70,205
Chanhassen	MN	20,321
Dakota County	MN	355,904
Duluth	MN	86,918
Fridley	MN	27,449
Grand Forks	MN	231
Hutchinson	MN	13,080
Mankato	MN	32,427
Maplewood	MN	34,947
Minneapolis	MN	382,618
North Branch	MN	8,023

The Borough of State College Citizen Survey

Jurisdictions in Comparisons

Jurisdiction Name	State	2000 Population
Polk County	MN	31,369
Prior Lake	MN	15,917
Scott County	MN	89,498
St. Cloud	MN	59,107
St. Louis County	MN	200,528
St. Paul	MN	287,151
Washington County	MN	201,130
Blue Springs	MO	48,080
Columbia	MO	84,531
Ellisville	MO	9,104
Grandview	MO	24,881
Independence	MO	113,288
Joplin	MO	45,504
Kansas City	MO	441,545
Lee's Summit	MO	70,700
Maryland Heights	MO	25,756
Maryville	MO	10,581
O'Fallon	MO	46,169
Platte City	MO	3,866
Springfield	MO	151,580
Biloxi	MS	50,644
Starkville	MS	21,869
Bozeman	MT	27,509
Cary	NC	94,536
Charlotte	NC	540,828
Concord	NC	55,977
Durham	NC	187,038
Hudson	NC	3,078
Knightdale	NC	5,958
Wilmington	NC	90,400
Grand Forks	ND	49,321
Cedar Creek	NE	396
Kearney	NE	27,431
Dover	NH	26,884
Willingboro Township	NJ	33,008

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Jurisdictions in Comparisons

Jurisdiction Name	State	2000 Population
Alamogordo	NM	35,582
Albuquerque	NM	448,607
Bloomfield	NM	6,417
Los Alamos County	NM	18,343
Taos	NM	4,700
Carson City	NV	52,457
Henderson	NV	175,381
North Las Vegas	NV	115,488
Reno	NV	180,480
Sparks	NV	66,346
Washoe County	NV	339,486
Beekman	NY	11,452
Canandaigua	NY	11,264
Rye	NY	14,955
Akron	OH	217,074
Columbus	OH	711,470
Dublin	OH	31,392
Hudson	OH	22,439
Lebanon	OH	16,962
Sandusky	OH	27,844
Broken Arrow	OK	74,839
Edmond	OK	68,315
Oklahoma City	OK	506,132
Stillwater	OK	39,065
Ashland	OR	19,522
Corvallis	OR	49,322
Gresham	OR	90,205
Lake Oswego	OR	35,278
Portland	OR	529,121
Springfield	OR	52,864
Borough of Ebensburg	PA	3,091
Cumberland County	PA	213,674
Ephrata Borough	PA	13,213
Philadelphia	PA	1,517,550
Upper Merion Township	PA	28,863

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Jurisdictions in Comparisons

Jurisdiction Name	State	2000 Population
East Providence	RI	48,688
Newport	RI	26,475
Columbia	SC	116,278
Mauldin	SC	15,224
Myrtle Beach	SC	22,759
Pickens County	SC	110,757
Rock Hill	SC	49,765
Aberdeen	SD	24,658
Cookeville	TN	23,923
Oak Ridge	TN	27,387
Arlington	TX	332,969
Austin	TX	656,562
Benbrook	TX	20,208
Bryan	TX	34,733
Corpus Christi	TX	277,454
Dallas	TX	1,188,580
Duncanville	TX	36,081
El Paso	TX	563,662
Fort Worth	TX	534,694
Grand Prairie	TX	127,427
Irving	TX	191,615
Lewisville	TX	77,737
McAllen	TX	106,414
Missouri City	TX	52,913
Pasadena	TX	141,674
Round Rock	TX	61,136
San Marcos	TX	34,733
Sugar Land	TX	63,328
The Colony	TX	26,531
Farmington	UT	12,081
Riverdale	UT	7,656
Washington City	UT	8,186
Albemarle County	VA	79,236
Arlington County	VA	189,453
Bedford County	VA	60,371

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Jurisdictions in Comparisons

Jurisdiction Name	State	2000 Population
Blacksburg	VA	39,357
Botetourt County	VA	30,496
Chesterfield County	VA	259,903
Hanover County	VA	86,320
Hopewell	VA	22,354
Lynchburg	VA	65,269
Newport News	VA	180,150
Northampton County	VA	13,093
Prince William County	VA	280,813
Stafford County	VA	92,446
Staunton	VA	23,853
Williamsburg	VA	11,998
Chittenden County	VT	146,571
Bellevue	WA	109,569
Kent	WA	79,524
King County	WA	1,737,034
Kirkland	WA	45,054
Kitsap County	WA	231,969
Lynnwood	WA	33,847
Marysville	WA	12,268
Ocean Shores	WA	3,836
Pasco	WA	32,066
Richland	WA	38,708
Tacoma	WA	193,556
Vancouver	WA	143,560
Appleton	WI	70,087
Ashland County	WI	16,866
Eau Claire	WI	61,704
Milton	WI	5,132
Ozaukee County	WI	82,317
Suamico	WI	8,686
Superior	WI	27,368
Village of Brown Deer	WI	12,170
Wauwatosa	WI	47,271
Whitewater	WI	13,437

The Borough of State College Citizen Survey

Jurisdictions in Comparisons

Jurisdiction Name	State	2000 Population
Morgantown	WV	26,809
Cheyenne	WY	53,011
Gillette	WY	19,646
Teton County	WY	18,251

APPENDIX B: FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS ABOUT THE CITIZEN SURVEY DATABASE

What is in the citizen survey database?

NRC's database includes the results from citizen surveys conducted in over 500 jurisdictions in the United States. These are public opinion polls answered by hundreds of thousands of residents around the country. We have recorded, analyzed and stored responses to thousands of survey questions dealing with resident perceptions about the quality of community life and public trust and residents' report of their use of public facilities. Respondents to these surveys are intended to represent over 50 million Americans.

What kinds of questions are included?

Residents' ratings of the quality of virtually every kind of local government service are included – from police, fire and trash haul to animal control, planning and cemeteries. Many dimensions of quality of life are included such as feeling of safety and opportunities for dining, recreation and shopping as well as ratings of the overall quality of community life and community as a place to raise children and retire.

What is so unique about National Research Center's Citizen Survey database?

It is the only database of its size that contains the people's perceptions about government service delivery and quality of life. For example, others use government statistics about crime to deduce the quality of police services or speed of pot hole repair to draw conclusions about the quality of street maintenance. Only National Research Center's database adds the opinion of service recipients themselves to the service quality equation. We believe that conclusions about service or community quality are made prematurely if opinions of the community's residents themselves are missing.

What is the database used for?

Benchmarking. Our clients use the comparative information in the database to help interpret their own citizen survey results, to create or revise community plans, to evaluate the success of policy or budget decisions, to measure local government performance. We don't know what is small or tall without comparing. Taking the pulse of the community has little meaning without knowing what pulse rate is too high and what is too low. So many surveys of service satisfaction turn up at least "good" citizen evaluations that we need to know how others rate their services to understand if "good" is good enough. Furthermore, in the absence of national or peer community comparisons, a jurisdiction is left with comparing its fire protection rating to its street maintenance rating. That comparison is unfair. Streets always lose to fire. We need to

ask more important and harder questions. We need to know how our residents' ratings of fire service compare to opinions about fire service in other communities.

So what if we find that our public opinions are better or – for that matter – worse than opinions in other communities? What does it mean?

A police department that provides the fastest and most efficient service—one that closes most of its cases, solves most of its crimes and keeps the crime rate low—still has a problem to fix if its clients believe services are not very good compared to ratings received by objectively “worse” departments.

National Research Center's database can help that police department – or any city department – to understand how well citizens think it is doing. Without the comparative data from National Research Center's database, it would be like bowling in a tournament without knowing what the other teams are scoring. We recommend that citizen opinion be used in conjunction with other sources of data to help managers know how to respond to comparative results.

Aren't comparisons of questions from different surveys like comparing apples and oranges?

It is true that you can't simply take a given result from one survey and compare it to the result from a different survey. National Research Center, Inc. principals have pioneered and reported their methods for converting all survey responses to the same scale. Because scales responses will differ among types of survey questions, National Research Center, Inc. statisticians have developed statistical algorithms, which adjust question results based on many characteristics of the question, its scale and the survey methods. All results are then converted to the PTM (percent to maximum) scale with a minimum score of 0 (equaling the lowest possible rating) to a maximum score of 100 (equaling the highest possible rating). We then can provide a norm that not only controls for question differences, but also controls for differences in types of survey methods. This way we put all questions on the same scale and a norm can be offered for communities of given sizes or in various regions.

How can managers trust the comparability of results?

Principals of National Research Center, Inc. have submitted their work to peer reviewed scholarly journals where its publication fully describes the rigor of our methods and the quality of our findings. We have published articles in *Public Administration Review*, *Journal of Policy Analysis and Management* and *Governing*, and we wrote a book, *Citizen Surveys: How to do them, how to use them, what they mean*, that describes in detail how survey responses can be adjusted to provide fair comparisons for ratings among many jurisdictions. Our work on calculating national norms for resident opinions about service delivery and quality of life won the Samuel C. May award for research excellence from the Western Governmental Research Association.