

# The National Citizen Survey™

## State College, PA

Trends over Time

2014

# 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 2014 ratings for the Borough of State College to its previous survey results in 2007, 2009, 2010, 2011 and 2012. Additional reports and technical appendices are available under separate cover.

Trend data for State College 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 six percentage points between the 2012 and 2014 surveys, otherwise the comparison between 2012 and 2014 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 State College for 2014 generally remained stable. Of the 92 items for which comparisons were available, 65 items were rated similarly in 2012 and 2014, 16 items showed a decrease in ratings and 11 showed an increase in ratings. Notable trends over time included the following:

- When compared to 2012, ratings varied for Education and Enrichment. Ratings increased for cultural/arts/music activities and religious or spiritual events and activities; also, there was an especially large increase in the ratings for the availability of affordable quality child care/preschool (21% increase). However, some ratings decreased within Education and Enrichment. Fewer participants are using the Schlow Centre Region library and fewer participants are participating in religious or spiritual activities.
- Within the facet of Recreation and Wellness, ratings decreased for Borough parks and less people are visiting Borough parks and using State College recreation centers. However, ratings increased for the availability of affordable quality health care, the availability of affordable quality food and preventive health services.
- Ratings decreased for natural areas preservation, storm drainage and power utility. However, ratings increased for air quality. While most ratings within Mobility remained stable, ratings did decrease for street repair, snow removal and sidewalk maintenance.
- Compared to the 2012 survey, most Economy ratings were unchanged, but ratings for shopping opportunities and businesses and services increased.
- Other notable changes included decreases in Community Engagement (fewer participants are volunteering and attending or watching local public meetings) and fewer participants plan on remaining in State College. Alternately, more participants approve of the overall direction State College is going and more participants would recommend State College to others.

Figure 1: Community Characteristics General

	Percent rating positively (e.g., excellent/good)						2014 rating compared to 2012	Comparison to benchmark					
	2007	2009	2010	2011	2012	2014		2007	2009	2010	2011	2012	2014
Overall quality of life	79%	85%	88%	83%	85%	89%	Similar	Higher	Higher	Much higher	Higher	Higher	Similar
Overall image	86%	85%	81%	82%	73%	74%	Similar	Much higher	Much higher	Much higher	Much higher	Much higher	Similar
Place to live	83%	87%	89%	88%	90%	88%	Similar	Higher	Higher	Much higher	Higher	Much higher	Similar
Neighborhood	78%	74%	79%	78%	80%	81%	Similar	Similar	Similar	Similar	Similar	Similar	Similar
Place to raise children	73%	74%	71%	70%	78%	81%	Similar	Similar	Similar	Similar	Similar	Higher	Similar
Place to retire	61%	60%	57%	60%	61%	66%	Similar	Similar	Similar	Lower	Similar	Lower	Similar
Overall appearance	84%	81%	87%	81%	86%	88%	Similar	Much higher	Much higher	Much higher	Much higher	Much higher	Higher

Figure 2: Community Characteristics by Facet

		Percent rating positively (e.g., excellent/good, very/somewhat safe)						2014 rating compared to 2012	Comparison to benchmark					
		2007	2009	2010	2011	2012	2014		2007	2009	2010	2011	2012	2014
Safety	Overall feeling of safety	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA	94%	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA	Higher
	Safe in neighborhood	98%	99%	99%	99%	98%	98%	Similar	Much higher	Much higher	Much higher	Much higher	Much higher	Similar
	Safe downtown/commercial area	96%	99%	98%	98%	97%	98%	Similar	Much higher	Much higher	Much higher	Much higher	Much higher	Similar
	Overall ease of travel	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA	81%	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA	Similar
	Paths and walking trails	NA	76%	80%	79%	83%	82%	Similar	NA	Much higher	Much higher	Much higher	Much higher	Higher
	Ease of walking	80%	91%	88%	89%	89%	91%	Similar	Much higher	Much higher	Much higher	Much higher	Much higher	Much higher
	Travel by bicycle	49%	63%	68%	68%	69%	65%	Similar	Similar	Much higher	Much higher	Much higher	Much higher	Similar
	Travel by public transportation	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA	63%	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA	Higher
Mobility	Travel by car	56%	58%	57%	60%	63%	62%	Similar	Higher	Similar	Similar	Higher	Much higher	Similar
	Public parking	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA	40%	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA	Lower
	Traffic flow	49%	41%	51%	46%	52%	54%	Similar	NA	Similar	Higher	Similar	Higher	Similar

The National Citizen Survey™

		Percent rating positively (e.g., excellent/good, very/somewhat safe)						2014 rating compared to 2012	Comparison to benchmark					
		2007	2009	2010	2011	2012	2014		2007	2009	2010	2011	2012	2014
Natural Environment	Overall natural environment	NA	81%	88%	83%	88%	86%	Similar	NA	Much higher	Much higher	Much higher	Much higher	Similar
	Cleanliness	NA	85%	84%	76%	87%	87%	Similar	NA	Much higher	Much higher	Much higher	Much higher	Higher
	Air quality	79%	87%	86%	84%	84%	94%	Higher	Much higher	Much higher	Much higher	Much higher	Much higher	Higher
Built Environment	Overall built environment	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA	66%	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA	Similar
	New development in State College	61%	55%	61%	56%	59%	56%	Similar	Similar	Similar	Higher	Similar	Similar	Similar
	Affordable quality housing	26%	31%	36%	32%	36%	34%	Similar	Much lower	Similar	Similar	Lower	Lower	Similar
	Housing options	NA	55%	52%	46%	49%	49%	Similar	NA	Similar	Similar	Much lower	Much lower	Similar
	Public places	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA	75%	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA	Similar
	Overall economic health	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA	78%	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA	Higher
	Vibrant downtown/commercial area	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA	68%	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA	Higher
	Business and services	NA	70%	66%	68%	65%	72%	Higher	NA	Higher	Much higher	Much higher	Similar	Similar
	Cost of living	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA	40%	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA	Similar
	Shopping opportunities	39%	49%	42%	45%	44%	51%	Higher	Much lower	Similar	Much lower	Lower	Much lower	Similar
Economy	Employment opportunities	41%	50%	49%	51%	49%	51%	Similar	Much higher	Much higher	Much higher	Much higher	Much higher	Higher
	Place to visit	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA	62%	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA	Similar
	Place to work	59%	68%	62%	67%	69%	66%	Similar	Similar	Much higher	Much higher	Much higher	Much higher	Similar
	Health and wellness	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA	80%	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA	Similar
	Mental health care	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA	64%	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA	Higher
	Preventive health services	NA	60%	64%	66%	70%	76%	Higher	NA	Higher	Much higher	Much higher	Much higher	Higher
	Health care	43%	58%	56%	55%	60%	71%	Higher	Similar	Higher	Much higher	Higher	Much higher	Higher
	Food	64%	70%	70%	67%	65%	72%	Higher	Higher	Higher	Much higher	Higher	Much higher	Similar
	Recreational opportunities	74%	76%	73%	72%	73%	77%	Similar	Much higher	Much higher	Much higher	Much higher	Much higher	Higher
	Fitness opportunities	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA	79%	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA	Similar
Education and	Religious or spiritual	NA	82%	81%	82%	83%	91%	Higher	NA	Higher	Much	Much	Much	Higher

The National Citizen Survey™

		Percent rating positively (e.g., excellent/good, very/somewhat safe)						2014 rating compared to 2012	Comparison to benchmark					
		2007	2009	2010	2011	2012	2014		2007	2009	2010	2011	2012	2014
Enrichment	events and activities										higher	higher	higher	
	Cultural/arts/music activities	65%	64%	69%	67%	68%	79%	Higher	Much higher	Much higher	Much higher	Much higher	Much higher	Higher
	Adult education	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA	85%	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA	Higher
	K-12 education	NA	90%	84%	90%	92%	90%	Similar	NA	Much higher	Much higher	Much higher	Much higher	Higher
	Child care/preschool	40%	40%	51%	42%	51%	72%	Higher	Similar	Similar	Much higher	Higher	Much higher	Higher
Community Engagement	Social events and activities	NA	78%	79%	81%	78%	73%	Similar	NA	Much higher	Much higher	Much higher	Much higher	Similar
	Neighborhoodness	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA	58%	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA	Similar
	Openness and acceptance	56%	63%	69%	67%	73%	71%	Similar	Similar	Higher	Much higher	Much higher	Much higher	Similar
	Opportunities to participate in community matters	NA	70%	67%	73%	68%	73%	Similar	NA	Higher	Higher	Much higher	Much higher	Similar
	Opportunities to volunteer	NA	79%	81%	84%	82%	84%	Similar	NA	Much higher	Much higher	Much higher	Much higher	Similar

Figure 3: Governance General

	Percent rating positively (e.g., excellent/good)						2014 rating compared to 2012	Comparison to benchmark					
	2007	2009	2010	2011	2012	2014		2007	2009	2010	2011	2012	2014
Services provided by State College	76%	83%	82%	79%	83%	81%	Similar	Similar	Much higher	Much higher	Much higher	Much higher	Similar
Customer service	75%	81%	78%	79%	82%	78%	Similar	Similar	Similar	Much higher	Much higher	Much higher	Similar
Value of services for taxes paid	49%	68%	59%	63%	65%	69%	Similar	Similar	Higher	Much higher	Much higher	Much higher	Similar
Overall direction	48%	64%	67%	63%	63%	71%	Higher	Similar	Similar	Much higher	Much higher	Much higher	Similar
Welcoming citizen involvement	52%	51%	56%	57%	57%	58%	Similar	Similar	Lower	Much higher	Much higher	Much higher	Similar
Confidence in Borough government	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA	64%	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA	Similar
Acting in the best interest of State College	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA	71%	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA	Similar
Being honest	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA	75%	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA	Higher
Treating all residents fairly	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA	66%	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA	Similar

The National Citizen Survey™

	Percent rating positively (e.g., excellent/good)						2014 rating compared to 2012	Comparison to benchmark					
	2007	2009	2010	2011	2012	2014		2007	2009	2010	2011	2012	2014
Services provided by the Federal Government	34%	46%	56%	45%	49%	39%	Lower	Lower	Higher	Much higher	Higher	Much higher	Similar

Figure 4: Governance by Facet

		Percent rating positively (e.g., excellent/good)						2014 rating compared to 2012	Comparison to benchmark					
		2007	2009	2010	2011	2012	2014		2007	2009	2010	2011	2012	2014
Safety	Police	80%	76%	81%	81%	81%	80%	Similar	Higher	Similar	Higher	Higher	Higher	Similar
	Fire	94%	94%	91%	95%	90%	93%	Similar	Similar	Similar	Similar	Higher	Similar	Similar
	Ambulance/EMS	92%	91%	92%	94%	92%	96%	Similar	Similar	Similar	Higher	Much higher	Higher	Similar
	Crime prevention	66%	68%	71%	71%	76%	81%	Similar	Similar	Similar	Much higher	Higher	Much higher	Similar
	Fire prevention	70%	73%	78%	79%	79%	79%	Similar	Lower	Similar	Higher	Higher	Higher	Similar
	Animal control	77%	78%	77%	80%	77%	83%	Similar	Much higher	Much higher	Much higher	Much higher	Much higher	Higher
	Emergency preparedness	NA	55%	62%	62%	65%	70%	Similar	NA	Lower	Similar	Similar	Higher	Similar
	Traffic enforcement	63%	58%	63%	63%	65%	61%	Similar	Similar	Similar	Similar	Similar	Similar	Similar
	Street repair	47%	50%	54%	55%	57%	45%	Lower	Higher	Similar	Much higher	Much higher	Much higher	Similar
	Street cleaning	74%	78%	81%	78%	82%	78%	Similar	Much higher	Much higher	Much higher	Much higher	Much higher	Higher
Mobility	Street lighting	55%	68%	66%	59%	63%	66%	Similar	Similar	Higher	Much higher	Higher	Higher	Similar
	Snow removal	52%	68%	65%	63%	75%	69%	Lower	Lower	Higher	Much higher	Higher	Much higher	Similar
	Sidewalk maintenance	52%	64%	65%	57%	70%	60%	Lower	Similar	Much higher	Much higher	Much higher	Much higher	Similar
	Traffic signal timing	51%	55%	55%	56%	58%	61%	Similar	Similar	Higher	Much higher	Much higher	Much higher	Similar
	Bus or transit services	73%	87%	84%	80%	81%	79%	Similar	Much higher	Much higher	Much higher	Much higher	Much higher	Higher
	Garbage collection	84%	88%	91%	91%	89%	91%	Similar	Much higher	Higher	Much higher	Much higher	Much higher	Similar
	Recycling	77%	78%	78%	81%	77%	74%	Similar	Higher	Higher	Much higher	Much higher	Much higher	Similar
Natural Environment	Yard waste pick-up	80%	78%	75%	79%	77%	78%	Similar	Much higher	Higher	Much higher	Much higher	Much higher	Similar

The National Citizen Survey™

		Percent rating positively (e.g., excellent/good)						2014 rating compared to 2012	Comparison to benchmark						
		2007	2009	2010	2011	2012	2014		2007	2009	2010	2011	2012	2014	
	Drinking water	57%	65%	61%	59%	67%	71%	Similar	Similar	Similar	Similar	Similar	Similar	Similar	Similar
	Natural areas preservation	NA	62%	70%	60%	72%	64%	Lower	NA	Higher	Much higher	Higher	Much higher	Much higher	Similar
	Open space	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA	58%	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA	Similar
Built Environment	Storm drainage	69%	75%	73%	72%	79%	68%	Lower	Much higher	Much higher	Much higher	Much higher	Much higher	Much higher	Similar
	Sewer services	83%	83%	82%	81%	85%	87%	Similar	Much higher	Much higher	Much higher	Much higher	Much higher	Much higher	Similar
	Power utility	NA	NA	78%	71%	79%	73%	Lower	NA	NA	Higher	Similar	Higher	Higher	Similar
	Utility billing	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA	66%	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA	Similar
	Land use, planning and zoning	36%	50%	57%	56%	55%	54%	Similar	Similar	Much higher	Much higher	Much higher	Much higher	Much higher	Similar
	Code enforcement	70%	67%	68%	69%	68%	70%	Similar	Much higher	Much higher	Much higher	Much higher	Much higher	Much higher	Higher
	Cable television	NA	65%	63%	63%	64%	63%	Similar	NA	Higher	Much higher	Much higher	Much higher	Much higher	Similar
	Economic development	57%	62%	61%	60%	62%	67%	Similar	Much higher	Much higher	Much higher	Much higher	Much higher	Much higher	Higher
Economy	Borough parks	87%	90%	91%	93%	94%	85%	Lower	Much higher	Much higher	Much higher	Much higher	Much higher	Much higher	Similar
	Recreation programs	75%	74%	79%	81%	84%	84%	Similar	Higher	Higher	Much higher	Much higher	Much higher	Much higher	Similar
	Recreation centers	68%	79%	77%	77%	81%	83%	Similar	Similar	Higher	Much higher	Much higher	Much higher	Much higher	Similar
Recreation and Wellness	Health services	66%	75%	73%	75%	78%	82%	Similar	Higher	Much higher	Much higher	Much higher	Much higher	Much higher	Higher
	Special events	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA	68%	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA	Similar
Education and Enrichment	Public libraries	92%	95%	88%	91%	91%	94%	Similar	Much higher	Much higher	Much higher	Much higher	Much higher	Much higher	Similar
Community Engagement	Public information	NA	80%	75%	77%	81%	81%	Similar	NA	Much higher	Much higher	Much higher	Much higher	Much higher	Similar

Figure 5: Participation General

	Percent rating positively (e.g., always/sometimes, more than once a month, yes)						2014 rating compared to 2012	Comparison to benchmark					
	2007	2009	2010	2011	2012	2014		2007	2009	2010	2011	2012	2014
Sense of community	62%	67%	67%	70%	69%	71%	Similar	Similar	Higher	Much higher	Much higher	Much higher	Similar
Recommend State College	NA	70%	74%	75%	75%	82%	Higher	NA	Lower	Similar	Similar	Similar	Similar
Remain in State College	NA	42%	41%	41%	48%	39%	Lower	NA	Much lower	Much lower	Much lower	Much lower	Much lower
Contacted State College employees	45%	43%	38%	38%	37%	33%	Similar	NA	Much lower	Much lower	Much lower	Much lower	Lower

Figure 6: Participation by Facet

		Percent rating positively (e.g., always/sometimes, more than once a month, yes)						2014 rating compared to 2012	Comparison to benchmark					
		2007	2009	2010	2011	2012	2014		2007	2009	2010	2011	2012	2014
Safety	Stocked supplies for an emergency	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA	20%	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA	Lower
	Did NOT report a crime	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA	84%	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA	Similar
	Was NOT the victim of a crime	89%	86%	91%	91%	90%	91%	Similar	NA	Similar	Much higher	Higher	Higher	Similar
Mobility	Used public transportation instead of driving	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA	66%	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA	Much higher
	Carpooled instead of driving alone	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA	51%	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA	Similar
	Walked or biked instead of driving	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA	87%	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA	Much higher
Natural Environment	Conserved water	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA	67%	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA	Lower
	Made home more energy efficient	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA	71%	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA	Similar
	Recycled at home	89%	89%	92%	93%	95%	90%	Similar	NA	Much higher	Much higher	Much higher	Much higher	Similar
Built Environment	Did NOT observe a code violation	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA	76%	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA	Much higher
	NOT under housing cost stress	NA	39%	40%	43%	44%	41%	Similar	NA	Much lower	Much lower	Much lower	Much lower	Much lower
Economy	Purchased goods or services in State College	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA	97%	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA	Similar



The National Citizen Survey™

		Percent rating positively (e.g., always/sometimes, more than once a month, yes)						2014 rating compared to 2012	Comparison to benchmark					
		2007	2009	2010	2011	2012	2014		2007	2009	2010	2011	2012	2014
	Economy will have positive impact on income	20%	3%	15%	9%	22%	19%	Similar	NA	Much lower	Similar	Much lower	Much higher	Similar
	Work in State College	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA	61%	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA	Higher
Recreation and Wellness	Used State College recreation centers	59%	NA	NA	NA	NA	40%	Lower	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA	Lower
	Visited a Borough park	83%	83%	87%	87%	90%	82%	Lower	NA	Similar	Similar	Similar	Much higher	Similar
	Ate 5 portions of fruits and vegetables	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA	79%	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA	Similar
	Participated in moderate or vigorous physical activity	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA	85%	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA	Similar
	In very good to excellent health	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA	76%	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA	Similar
	Used State College public libraries	60%	52%	51%	60%	60%	51%	Lower	NA	Much lower	Much lower	Much lower	Much lower	Lower
Education and Enrichment	Participated in religious or spiritual activities	NA	39%	46%	45%	50%	38%	Lower	NA	Much lower	Much lower	Much lower	Similar	Lower
	Attended a Borough-sponsored event	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA	42%	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA	Lower
	Campaigned for an issue, cause or candidate	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA	17%	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA	Similar
Community Engagement	Contacted State College elected officials	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA	10%	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA	Similar
	Volunteered	59%	50%	59%	54%	61%	49%	Lower	NA	Higher	Much higher	Much higher	Much higher	Similar
	Participated in a club	NA	42%	40%	42%	46%	46%	Similar	NA	Much higher	Much higher	Much higher	Much higher	Higher
	Talked to or visited with neighbors	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA	69%	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA	Much lower
	Done a favor for a neighbor	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA	53%	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA	Much lower
	Attended a local public meeting	24%	18%	18%	18%	18%	10%	Lower	NA	Much lower	Much lower	Much lower	Much lower	Lower
	Watched a local public meeting	37%	33%	33%	32%	31%	19%	Lower	NA	Much lower	Much lower	Much lower	Much lower	Lower

The National Citizen Survey™

		Percent rating positively (e.g., always/sometimes, more than once a month, yes)						2014 rating compared to 2012	Comparison to benchmark					
		2007	2009	2010	2011	2012	2014		2007	2009	2010	2011	2012	2014
	Read or watched local news	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA	72%	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA	Lower
	Voted in local elections	61%	78%	68%	63%	57%	57%	Similar	NA	Higher	Much lower	Much lower	Much lower	Much lower