

# National Citizen Survey

Results for Santa Fe County, NM

January, 2014

# National Citizen Survey – Background and Purpose

In the Spring of 2013 the BCC voted to contract with the National Research Center (NRC) to conduct its National Citizen Survey in Santa Fe County.

The National Citizen Survey was undertaken to learn more about how the citizens rate the County, primarily with respect to the County’s “livability”, its services and its governance. The resulting information was intended to be used to assist the Commission and management in prioritizing County resources.

This particular survey was selected because it is a standardized survey which can be directly compared with other jurisdictions, and can be “fed” directly into the International City/County Management Association (ICMA) Centers for Performance Management CPM 101 program in which the County participates.

The results of the survey were enlightening and provided a great deal of information about how the County compares to other jurisdictions.

# National Citizen Survey – Timeline

- The National Research Center contract was fully executed on 6/24/13.
- Customization and preparation of the survey instrument was completed on 9/4/13.
- Survey materials were produced and mailed:
  - Pre-notification postcards sent 9/13/13
  - 1<sup>st</sup> wave of surveys sent 9/21/13
  - 2<sup>nd</sup> wave of surveys sent 9/27/13
- Data collection was completed 10/25/13.
- Data analysis was conducted and report drafts were completed and submitted by NRC on 11/15/13.
- Review of draft was completed and returned to NRC with changes on 12/2/13.
- Reports were finalized on 1/2/14.

## SURVEY STATISTICS

- Surveys mailed out - 3,000
- Undeliverable surveys - 185 / 6%
- Surveys completed - 882 / 31%\*
- Margin of Error - 3%

Compared to the FY 2011 survey which had 709 respondents and a 3.7% error rate.

\* Average response rate for National Citizen Survey is 25% to 40%.

# National Citizen Survey – Understanding the Report

The percentages in the slides that follow indicate the percentage of respondents that rate Santa Fe County positively (excellent or good) in the given category, while the shading on bar charts indicates how Santa Fe County compares to other jurisdictions or the national benchmark.

Thus, a category may be rated positively by a majority of Santa Fe County respondents and still fall below the national benchmark. This is because other respondents in other areas rate their jurisdiction higher. The opposite could also occur.

“Special topics” are custom questions which the County developed to obtain specific information and do not have direct comparative data to other jurisdictions or a national benchmark.

# National Citizen Survey – Quality of Life

## Survey Captures resident's Opinion Within Three Pillars of a Community, Across Eight Central Facets of Community

### Pillars of a Community:

1. Community Characteristics
2. Governance
3. Participation

### Facets of a Community:

1. Safety
2. Mobility
3. Natural Environment
4. Built Environment
5. Economy
6. Recreation & Wellness
7. Education & Enrichment
8. Community Engagement

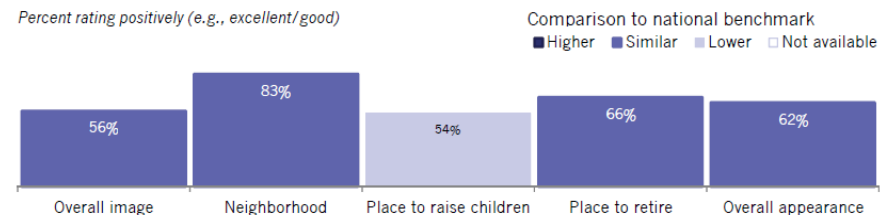
- Overall quality of life was rated good or excellent by 73% of respondents, this is similar to national benchmarks.
- The two facets rated **most important**, called “key drivers,” to respondents’ overall quality of life are Safety and Economy.
- Natural Environment, Economy and Community Engagement were rated similar to the national benchmarks.

Thus, a solid majority of the respondents rate their quality of life as good or excellent and compared to other jurisdictions that have been surveyed, Santa Fe County respondents rate comparably in three of eight areas and not as high as other jurisdictions in five of eight areas.

# National Citizen Survey Pillar 1– Community Characteristics

**Community Characteristics =  
What makes a community  
livable, attractive and a place  
where people want to be?**

- 80% of respondents rate Santa Fe County as a excellent or good place to live.
- More than 50% of respondents rated Santa Fe County excellent or good for overall image, neighborhood, place to raise children, place to retire and overall appearance. This is similar to how other jurisdictions rated except for Santa Fe County as a place to raise children which was below the national benchmark.



# National Citizen Survey Pillar 2 - Governance

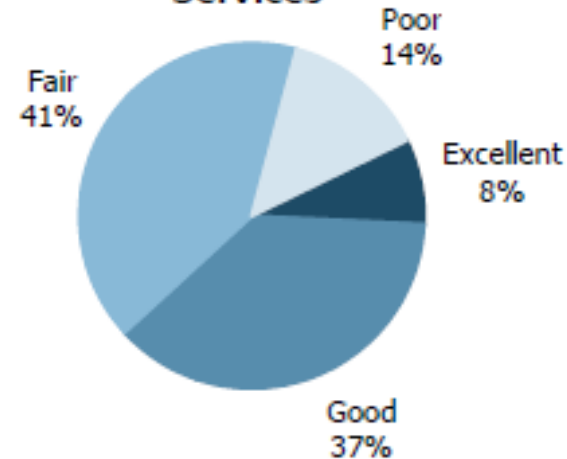
***Governance = How well does the government of Santa Fe County meet the needs and expectations of the residents?***

Respondents were asked to rate the quality of 25 specific Santa Fe County services.

Almost eight out of ten rated the overall quality of County services as “good” or “fair”.

Almost half of respondents rated the County’s overall customer service positively.

Overall Quality of County Services

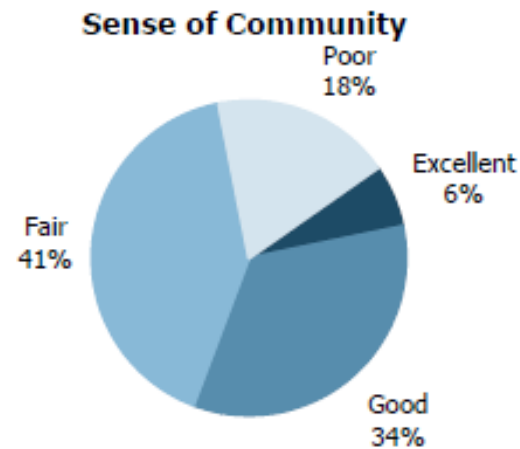


# National Citizen Survey Pillar 3– Participation

***Participation = Are the residents of Santa Fe County connected to the community and to each other?***

The survey included 19 activities and behaviors for which respondents indicated how often they participated in or performed each, if at all. These activities ranged from attending public meetings, to reading the local news, to volunteering time to a group or activity, to making efforts to conserve water, to talking with their neighbor.

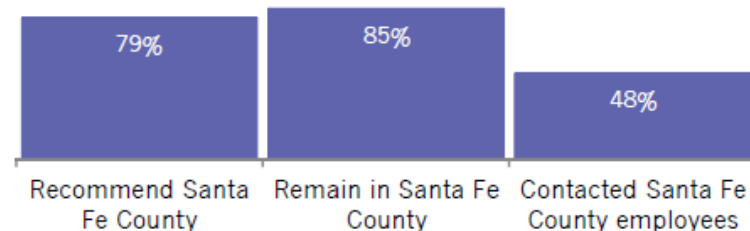
About four in ten respondents rated their sense of community positively. The vast majority of respondents would recommend Santa Fe County as a place to live and plan to remain in Santa Fe County for the next five years. Nearly half of respondents have contacted a County employee in the last 12 months.



Percent rating positively  
(e.g., very/somewhat likely,  
yes)

Comparison to national  
benchmark

- Higher
- Similar
- Lower
- Not available



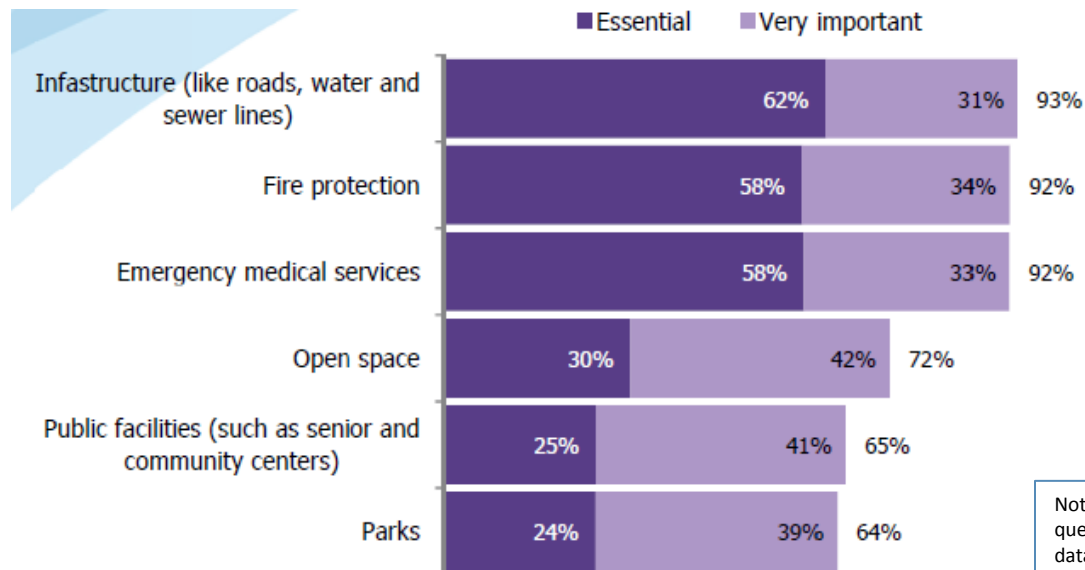


# National Citizen Survey – Special Topics

The survey asked respondents the following:

***How important, if at all, are each of the following services to your quality of life in Santa Fe County?***

- Infrastructure (like roads, water and sewer lines)
- Fire protection
- Emergency medical services
- Open space
- Public facilities (such as senior and community centers)
- Parks



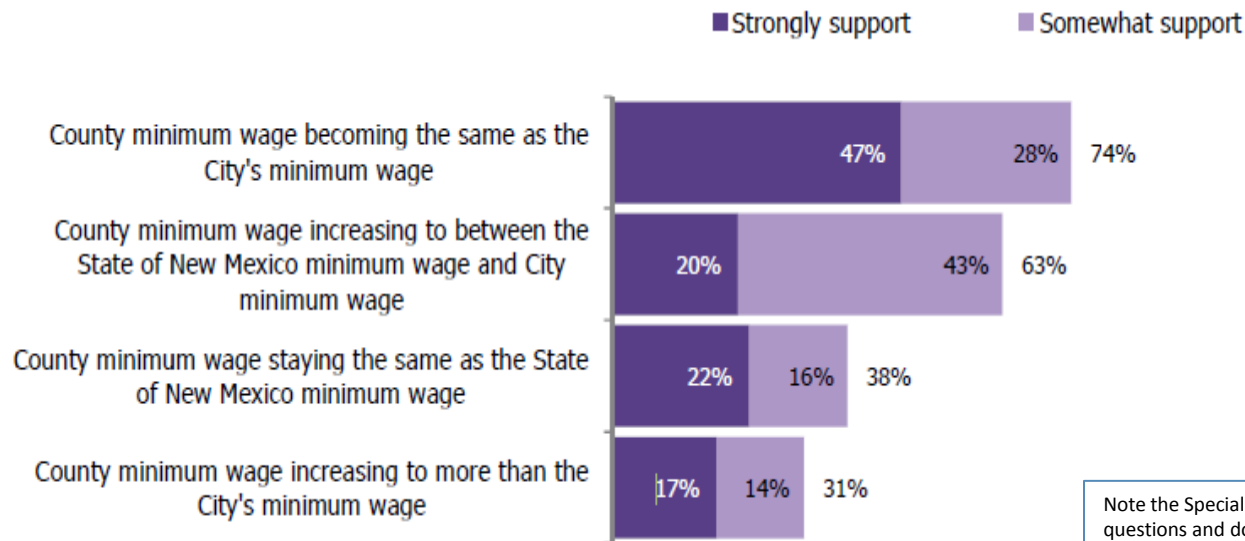
Note the Special Topics are custom questions and do not have comparative data to other jurisdictions.

# National Citizen Survey – Special Topics

The survey asked respondents the following:

***The City of Santa Fe currently has a “living wage” that means that all employees of City businesses are paid no less than \$10.51/hour (as compared with the State of New Mexico minimum wage of \$7.50/hour). To what extent to you support or oppose each of the following minimum wage scenarios for the unincorporated areas of Santa Fe County?***

- *City minimum wage becoming the same as the City’s minimum wage.*
- *County minimum wage increasing to between the State of NM minimum wage and City minimum wage.*
- *County minimum wage staying the same as the State of New Mexico minimum wage.*
- *County minimum wage increasing to more than the City’s minimum wage.*

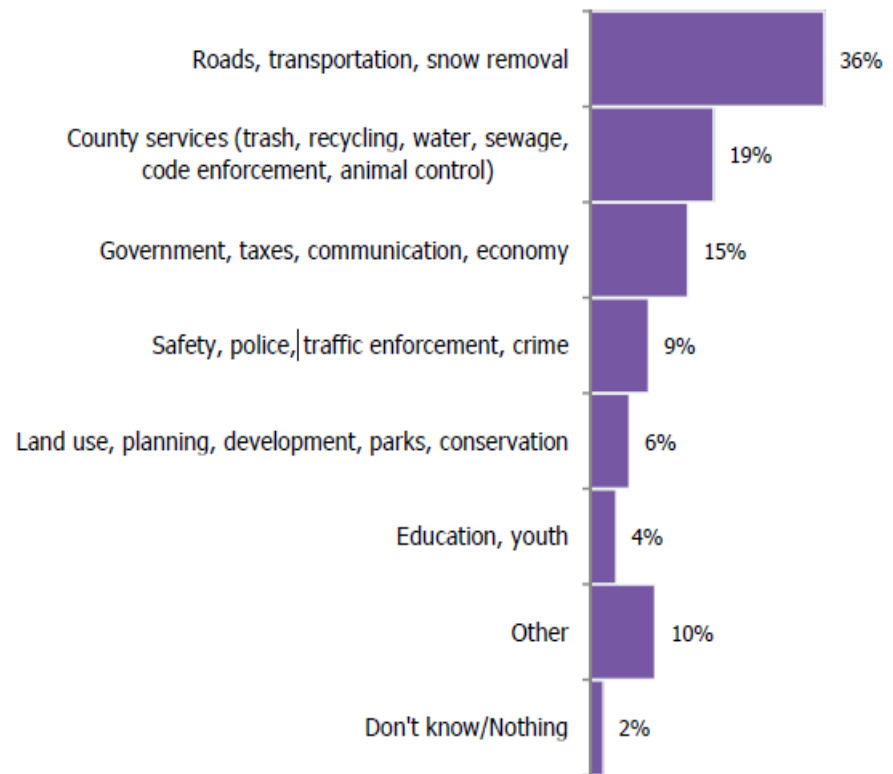


Note the Special Topics are custom questions and do not have comparative data to other jurisdictions.

# National Citizen Survey – Special Topics

Respondents were asked to record in their own words the one service the County could change or improve. The responses were placed into categories for reporting.

Of the 507 respondents who wrote in a response, most were concerned about roads, transportation and snow removal, while a very small number of respondents were concerned about education and youth.



Note the Special Topics are custom questions and do not have comparative data to other jurisdictions.

# National Citizen Survey – What We Learned from the Survey



What we have going for us...

Citizens like living in Santa Fe County, plan to stay and would recommend living here to others. In general, residents like their neighborhoods, feel safe there and consider the County a good place to retire and a decent place to raise children.

Residents believe that safety is “key driver” of their quality of life and feel that fire services, EMS/ambulance services and law enforcement do a good job. The vast majority of residents did not report a crime and were not victims of crime and have an overall feeling of safety. This feeling of safety is particularly high in the residents’ own neighborhoods. (Fire protection and emergency medical services are considered essential or very important by more than nine in ten residents.)

# National Citizen Survey – What We Learned from the Survey

What we have going for us...

Economy is another “key driver” of quality of life for the residents of Santa Fe County. The majority of residents purchase goods in Santa Fe County and work in Santa Fe County. A strong majority of residents think Santa Fe is a good place to visit which indicates that they are generally satisfied with the area, its amenities and the overall image and appearance of the County.

The natural environment, clean air and opportunities for recreation, fitness and cultural/arts and music activities are positives for the County. The majority of resident believe that they have good, clean drinking water and that the County has good open space, parks and public libraries. Seven out of ten residents consider open space essential or very important.

# National Citizen Survey – What We Learned from the Survey

What we have going for us...

Most residents find it pretty easy to get around Santa Fe County by vehicle and almost all find infrastructure such as roads and water/sewer lines to be essential or very important.

Santa Fe County residents believe that there is an adequate availability of affordable quality food and try to practice healthy habits such as eating five portions of fruits and vegetables per day, participating in moderate to vigorous physical activity, and utilizing paths and walking trails. A majority of residents believe they are in very good to excellent health.

# National Citizen Survey – What We Learned from the Survey

What we have going for us...

Santa Fe County residents have a “green” mentality with the vast majority of residents reporting water conservation and energy efficiency efforts at home as well as recycling at home. Nearly half of residents reported carpooling instead of driving alone some of the time and more than 1/3<sup>rd</sup> report walking or biking instead of driving at times.

Santa Fe County is considered by its residents to be open and accepting with good opportunities to participate in community issues. It is also viewed as having good opportunities to volunteer with nearly half of residents doing so. Citizens also try to be informed by reading or watching local news and almost nine out of ten vote in local elections.

# National Citizen Survey – What We Learned from the Survey

Areas to review and improve ...

With economy being a “key driver” of quality of life for County residents it is important for Santa Fe County to look at the local economy and economic development initiatives to improve in this area. The overall economic health of the County along with cost of living and employment opportunities weren't rated positively.

Hand in hand with the modest view of the economic health of the County, is the issue of availability of housing options and affordable housing in the area. Nearly half of residents are under housing cost stress.

Santa Fe County residents did not rate the ability to travel by bicycle and public transportation well. The positive rating for ease of travel by vehicle would indicate that there are enough roads in Santa Fe County, however the condition of the roads remains a concern for residents as does snow removal, street lighting and cleaning and storm drainage.



# National Citizen Survey – What We Learned from the Survey

Areas to review and improve ...

Just over half of residents reported observing a code violation and a high percentage of residents did not rate the County's cleanliness (illegal dumps, weeds, litter, graffiti, etc.) positively. A number of the responses indicate that land development should be controlled and limited due to current infrastructure and scarcity of water resources in the County. However, residents would also like to see an easier and cheaper building permit process.

Availability of affordable quality health and mental health services as well as preventive health services is an issue nationally, however Santa Fe County residents are less positive about availability of these services than other jurisdictions with about 1/3<sup>rd</sup> rating health and preventive health services positively and 1/4<sup>th</sup> rating mental health services positively. About 1/3<sup>rd</sup> of residents rated the County's health services positively.



# National Citizen Survey Pillar 1– Community Characteristics

- **Safety** – a solid majority of respondents rated Santa Fe County positively, however two of three aspects rated lower than other jurisdictions.
- **Mobility** – most respondents rated mobility positively. Aspects related to ease of vehicle travel and availability of walking paths and trails rated comparably to other jurisdictions while travel by bicycle, public transportation and overall ease of travel were not as high.
- **Natural Environment** – a significant majority of respondents rated their natural environment positively.
- **Built Environment** – Santa Fe County’s built environment did not rate as high with affordable quality housing, new development, housing options and overall built environment receiving fair or poor ratings which all ranked below other jurisdictions.
- **Economy** – In general the majority of respondents rated Santa Fe County unfavorably in this aspect of community characteristics with the lowest rating going to employment opportunities (just 14% positive). The exception was Santa Fe County as a place to visit which was rated favorably by 80% of respondents.
- **Recreation and Wellness** – Aspects related to mental health and health care were rated unfavorably by the majority of respondents while aspects related to food quality, recreational/fitness opportunities rated favorably.
- **Education and Enrichment** – of the two aspects in this category, one, cultural/arts/music activities, rated positively by a solid majority of respondents and the other, education and enrichment opportunities did not rate as high with four out of ten rating this aspect favorably.
- **Community Engagement** – four areas comprise this category and each rated positively by a majority of respondents. These ratings were comparable to other jurisdictions.

# National Citizen Survey Pillar 2– Governance

- **Safety** – Ratings for fire, ambulance/EMS and fire prevention were rated positively by the majority of respondents as was law enforcement.
- **Mobility** – Road maintenance and transit services were rated as positively in general. However, the verbatim responses to our open ended questions indicate that many respondents were not clear on which roads the County maintains citing issues with I-25, St. Francis, 84/285 to name a few.
- **Natural Environment** – Water, preservation of natural areas and open space were rated positively by the majority of respondents. About half of respondents rated recycling favorably.
- **Built Environment** – Aspects of this category were not rated as favorably by the majority of respondents. About half of respondents rated these aspects as “good” or “fair” and a significant number (about one in four) reported “don’t know.”
- **Economy**–Many respondents did not rate economic development as favorably in Santa Fe County, however a significant number (about one in four) reported “don’t know.”
- **Recreation and Wellness** – The aspects of this category did not rate as favorably, but a strong majority rated as “good” or “fair.”
- **Education and Enrichment** – The majority of residents rate this positively. *Note this question related to Santa Fe County government only.*
- **Community Engagement** - Aspects of community engagement were not rated as favorably by the majority of respondents, however more than half gave a “good” or “fair” rating and a significant number (almost one in three) reported “don’t know.”

# National Citizen Survey Pillar 3– Participation

- **Safety** – The vast majority of respondents had not reported a crime or been a victim of a crime in the last year which compares similarly to how other jurisdictions rate.
- **Mobility** – In general, respondents did not participate in the activities that these particular questions focus on: use of public transportation, carpooling and walking or biking instead of driving.
- **Natural Environment** – More than 80% of respondents made efforts to make their homes more energy efficient and to recycle at home. More than 90% reported making efforts to conserve water. These are very positive statistics. There was comparative data for recycling only which rates similarly to other jurisdictions.
- **Built Environment** – Respondents responded similarly to other jurisdictions with almost half reporting that they observed NO code violations and about half reporting that they were NOT under housing cost stress.
- **Economy** – Almost all (95%) respondents reported purchasing goods in Santa Fe County and more than half work in Santa Fe County. Only a small percentage (20%) believed that the economy would have a positive impact on their income in the next year. These responses are comparable to other jurisdictions.
- **Recreation and Wellness** – A solid majority of respondents report eating 5 portions of fruits and vegetables and participating in moderate or vigorous physical activity and being in very good or excellent health. These are all comparable responses to other jurisdictions. Also, 73% of respondents reported visiting a County park.
- **Education and Enrichment** – Slightly more than half of respondents report using a public library and slightly less than half report attending a County-sponsored event.
- **Community Engagement** - About one in three respondents report campaigning for an issue, cause or candidate and attending or watching a public meeting in the last twelve months. Almost half reported volunteering during the same time frame. Almost all, about nine in ten, read or watched local news and vote in local elections. In general, Santa Fe County's community engagement is similar to other jurisdictions.