

The National
CITIZEN SURVEY™

2005

**Summary Report for the
City of Dallas, Texas**



City of Dallas

Submitted by:

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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).

UNDERSTANDING THE RESULTS

Survey Administration

Following the mailing of a pre-survey notification postcard to a random sample of 8,400 households, surveys were mailed to the same residences approximately one week later. A reminder letter and a new survey were sent to the same households after two weeks. All mailed materials were printed in English and Spanish. Of the mailed postcards, 814 were undeliverable due to vacant or “not found” addresses. Completed surveys were received from 1,919 residents, for a response rate of 25%. Typically, the response rates obtained on citizen surveys range from 25% to 40%. Response rates for individual Council Districts are reported in Appendix II.

It is customary to describe the precision of estimates made from surveys by a “level of confidence” (or margin of error). The 95 percent confidence level for this survey of 8,400 residents is generally no greater than plus or minus 2 percentage points around any given percent reported for the entire sample.

The results were weighted to reflect the demographic profile of all residents in the City of Dallas. (For more information on the survey methodology, see Appendix II in the Report of Results. A copy of the survey materials can be found in Appendix III of the Report of Results.)

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). While symmetrical scales often are the right choice in other measurement tasks, we

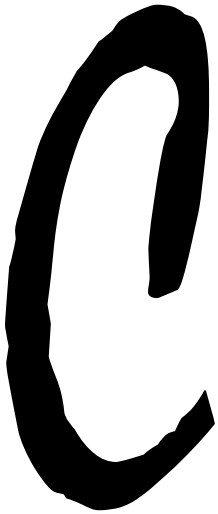
Summary Report

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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 4 representing the best rating and 1 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 2 points based on all respondents.



COMMUNITY LIFE

The National Citizen Survey™ contained many questions related to the life of residents in the community. Survey participants were asked to rate their overall quality of life, as well as other aspects of quality of life in Dallas. They also evaluated characteristics of the community, and gave their perceptions of safety in the City of Dallas. The questionnaire assessed use of the amenities of the community and involvement by respondents in the civic and economic life of Dallas.

- **QUALITY OF LIFE**

When asked to rate the overall quality of life in Dallas, 6% of respondents thought it was “excellent.” Only 8% rated overall quality of life as “poor.” Dallas as a place to live received an average rating of 55 on a 100-point scale.

- **RATINGS OF COMMUNITY CHARACTERISTICS IN DALLAS**

The highest rated characteristics of Dallas were shopping opportunities, opportunities to attend cultural activities and ease of rail/subway travel. When asked about potential problems in Dallas, the three concerns rated by the highest proportion of respondents as a “major problem” were drugs, crime and homelessness. The rate of population growth in Dallas was viewed as “too fast” by 61% of respondents, while 4% thought it was “too slow.”

- **PERCEPTIONS OF SAFETY**

When evaluating safety in the community, 26% of respondents felt “somewhat” or “very safe” from violent crimes in Dallas. In their neighborhood after dark, 38% of survey participants felt “somewhat” or “very safe.”

As assessed by the survey, 29% of households reported that at least one member had been the victim of one or more crimes in the past year. Of those who had been the victim of a crime, 71% had reported it to police.

- **COMMUNITY PARTICIPATION**

Participation in the civic, social and economic life of Dallas during the past year was assessed on the survey. Among those completing the questionnaire, 83% reported visiting a park in Dallas in the past year and 26% had attended a meeting of elected officials or other local public meeting.



LOCAL GOVERNMENT

Several aspects of the government of the City of Dallas were evaluated by residents completing The National Citizen Survey.™ They were asked how much trust they placed in their local government, and what they felt about the services they receive from the City of Dallas. Those who had any contact with a City of Dallas employee in the past year gave their impressions of the most recent encounter.

- **PUBLIC TRUST**

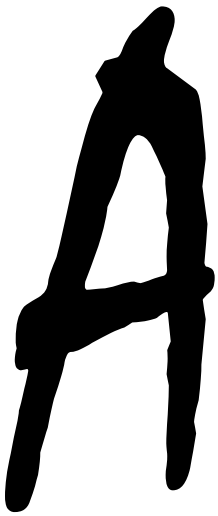
When asked to evaluate whether they were pleased with the overall direction taken by the City of Dallas, residents gave an average rating of 47 on a 100-point scale.

- **SERVICES PROVIDED BY DALLAS**

The overall quality of services provided by the City of Dallas was rated as 43 on a 100-point scale.

- **THE CITY OF DALLAS EMPLOYEES**

Impressions of the City of Dallas employees were assessed on the questionnaire. Those who had been in contact with a City of Dallas employee in the past year (57%) rated their overall impression as 48 on a 100-point scale.



ADDITIONAL QUESTIONS

Four additional questions were asked by the City of Dallas as listed below. The results for these questions are also available in the Report of Results.

Policy Question #1	
	Which school district do you live in?
	Percent of Respondents
Carrollton-Farmers Branch	2%
Cedar Hill	0%
Dallas	82%
DeSoto	0%
Duncanville	1%
Garland	0%
Highland Park	1%
Irving	0%
Mesquite	0%
Plano	3%
Richardson	7%
Sunnyvale	0%
Wilmer-Hutchins	1%
Don't know	3%

Policy Question #2	
	Please rate the school district in which you live
	Percent of Respondents
excellent	11%
good	26%
fair	36%
poor	27%
Note: "Don't Know" responses are removed	

Policy Question #3	
	How do you rate Dallas as a place to do business?
	Percent of Respondents
excellent	14%
good	50%
fair	30%
poor	7%
Note: "Don't Know" responses are removed	

Policy Question #4				
To what degree, if at all, are the following problems in your neighborhood:				
	not a problem	minor problem	moderate problem	major problem
Lack of sidewalks	43%	22%	17%	17%
Broken sidewalks	26%	26%	23%	25%
Note: "Don't Know" responses are removed				