



THE NCSTM
The National Citizen SurveyTM

Urbandale, IA

Comparisons by Geographic Subgroups

2016



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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. This report discusses differences in opinion of survey respondents who lived in Urbandale within the boundaries of Polk County or Dallas County.

Responses in the following tables show only the proportion of respondents giving a certain answer; for example, the percent of respondents who rated the quality of life as “excellent” or “good,” or the percent of respondents who attended a public meeting more than once a month. ANOVA and chi-square tests of significance were applied to these comparisons of survey questions. A “p-value” of 0.05 or less indicates that there is less than a 5% probability that differences observed between Counties are due to chance; or in other words, a greater than 95% probability that the differences observed are “real.” Where differences were statistically significant, they have been shaded grey.

The margin of error for this report is generally no greater than plus or minus five percentage points around any given percent reported for the entire sample (444 completed surveys). For each area (Polk County or Dallas County), the margin of error rises to approximately plus or minus eight percentage points since sample sizes were approximately 297 for Polk County and 147 for Dallas County. Notable differences between Counties included the following:

- Residents of Polk County gave higher ratings than their counterparts in Dallas County to the overall ease of getting to the places you usually have to visit in Urbandale and to ease of walking in the city. Residents of Dallas County gave lower ratings than their counterparts in Polk County to Urbandale as a place to visit and to public places where people want to spend time.
- Where statistically significant differences occurred, respondents from Dallas County tended to give somewhat lower ratings to general aspects of Governance, like the value of services for taxes paid and the overall direction that Urbandale is taking, than their counterparts in Polk County. Polk County residents gave more favorable ratings to street lighting than their counterparts in Dallas County.
- Rates of participation were generally not significantly different between Dallas and Polk County; however, there were two notable exceptions. Residents of Dallas County were more likely to talk or visit with neighbors than Polk County residents, while residents of Polk County reported higher levels of attending local public meetings.
- Residents of Polk County were more likely than their Dallas County counterparts to indicate that the quality of the overall natural environment should be an essential or very important focus area for the Urbandale community in the coming two years.
- Polk County residents gave higher ratings than Dallas County residents to the job the City of Urbandale does at distinguishing itself from surrounding communities and promoting its services to city residents.

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Table 1: Community Characteristics - General

Percent rating positively (e.g., excellent/good)	Polk or Dallas County		Overall
	In Polk County	In Dallas County	
The overall quality of life in Urbandale	93%	97%	94%
Overall image or reputation of Urbandale	92%	90%	92%
Urbandale as a place to live	96%	99%	97%
Your neighborhood as a place to live	93%	97%	94%
Urbandale as a place to raise children	96%	97%	96%
Urbandale as a place to retire	83%	82%	83%
Overall appearance of Urbandale	91%	96%	92%

Table 2: Community Characteristics - Safety

Percent rating positively (e.g., excellent/good, very/somewhat safe)	Polk or Dallas County		Overall
	In Polk County	In Dallas County	
Overall feeling of safety in Urbandale	96%	97%	96%
In your neighborhood during the day	98%	99%	98%
In Urbandale's downtown/commercial area during the day	95%	94%	95%

Table 3: Community Characteristics - Mobility

Percent rating positively (e.g., excellent/good, very/somewhat safe)	Polk or Dallas County		Overall
	In Polk County	In Dallas County	
Overall ease of getting to the places you usually have to visit	92%	82%	91%
Traffic flow on major streets	71%	71%	71%
Ease of travel by car in Urbandale	87%	84%	86%
Ease of travel by public transportation in Urbandale	45%	41%	44%
Ease of travel by bicycle in Urbandale	78%	67%	76%
Ease of walking in Urbandale	89%	78%	87%
Availability of paths and walking trails	93%	91%	93%

Table 4: Community Characteristics - Natural Environment

Percent rating positively (e.g., excellent/good, very/somewhat safe)	Polk or Dallas County		Overall
	In Polk County	In Dallas County	
Quality of overall natural environment in Urbandale	91%	95%	92%
Air quality	95%	97%	95%
Cleanliness of Urbandale	94%	98%	95%

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Table 5: Community Characteristics - Built Environment

	Polk or Dallas County		Overall
	In Polk County	In Dallas County	
Percent rating positively (e.g., excellent/good, very/somewhat safe)			
Overall "built environment" of Urbandale (including overall design, buildings, parks and transportation systems)	87%	79%	86%
Public places where people want to spend time	86%	76%	85%
Variety of housing options	80%	87%	81%
Availability of affordable quality housing	74%	77%	74%
Overall quality of new development in Urbandale	74%	78%	75%

Table 6: Community Characteristics - Economy

	Polk or Dallas County		Overall
	In Polk County	In Dallas County	
Percent rating positively (e.g., excellent/good, very/somewhat safe)			
Overall economic health of Urbandale	89%	93%	89%
Urbandale as a place to work	82%	89%	83%
Urbandale as a place to visit	73%	60%	71%
Employment opportunities	64%	65%	64%
Shopping opportunities	63%	72%	65%
Cost of living in Urbandale	73%	68%	72%
Overall quality of business and service establishments in Urbandale	82%	80%	81%
Vibrant downtown/commercial area	42%	36%	41%

Table 7: Community Characteristics - Recreation and Wellness

	Polk or Dallas County		Overall
	In Polk County	In Dallas County	
Percent rating positively (e.g., excellent/good, very/somewhat safe)			
Health and wellness opportunities in Urbandale	84%	87%	84%
Fitness opportunities (including exercise classes and paths or trails, etc.)	82%	83%	82%
Recreational opportunities	79%	87%	81%
Availability of affordable quality food	87%	89%	87%
Availability of affordable quality health care	87%	90%	88%
Availability of preventive health services	87%	91%	87%
Availability of affordable quality mental health care	67%	72%	68%

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Table 8: Community Characteristics - Education and Enrichment

Percent rating positively (e.g., excellent/good, very/somewhat safe)	Polk or Dallas County		Overall
	In Polk County	In Dallas County	
Overall opportunities for education and enrichment	84%	85%	84%
Availability of affordable quality child care/preschool	74%	77%	75%
K-12 education	83%	90%	84%
Adult educational opportunities	72%	75%	72%
Opportunities to attend cultural/arts/music activities	57%	48%	56%
Opportunities to participate in religious or spiritual events and activities	82%	81%	81%

Table 9: Community Characteristics - Community Engagement

Percent rating positively (e.g., excellent/good, very/somewhat safe)	Polk or Dallas County		Overall
	In Polk County	In Dallas County	
Opportunities to participate in social events and activities	67%	67%	67%
Opportunities to volunteer	76%	79%	76%
Opportunities to participate in community matters	71%	72%	72%
Openness and acceptance of the community toward people of diverse backgrounds	76%	67%	74%
Neighborliness of residents in Urbandale	77%	75%	77%

Table 10: Governance - General

Percent rating positively (e.g., excellent/good)	Polk or Dallas County		Overall
	In Polk County	In Dallas County	
The City of Urbandale	92%	87%	91%
The value of services for the taxes paid to Urbandale	73%	61%	71%
The overall direction that Urbandale is taking	88%	74%	86%
The job Urbandale government does at welcoming citizen involvement	72%	51%	68%
Overall confidence in Urbandale government	79%	71%	78%
Generally acting in the best interest of the community	83%	80%	82%
Being honest	84%	79%	83%
Treating all residents fairly	77%	72%	76%
Overall customer service by Urbandale employees (police, receptionists, planners, etc.)	91%	82%	89%
The Federal Government	52%	46%	51%

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Table 11: Governance - Safety

Percent rating positively (e.g., excellent/good)	Polk or Dallas County		Overall
	In Polk County	In Dallas County	
Police/Sheriff services	95%	98%	95%
Fire services	98%	98%	98%
Ambulance or emergency medical services	99%	100%	99%
Crime prevention	92%	92%	92%
Fire prevention and education	95%	91%	94%
Animal control	83%	84%	83%
Emergency preparedness (services that prepare the community for natural disasters or other emergency situations)	82%	81%	82%

Table 12: Governance - Mobility

Percent rating positively (e.g., excellent/good)	Polk or Dallas County		Overall
	In Polk County	In Dallas County	
Traffic enforcement	80%	81%	80%
Street repair	62%	60%	61%
Street cleaning	79%	70%	77%
Street lighting	81%	70%	79%
Snow removal	84%	85%	85%
Sidewalk maintenance	70%	67%	70%
Traffic signal timing	63%	54%	62%
Bus or transit services	69%	57%	67%

Table 13: Governance - Natural Environment

Percent rating positively (e.g., excellent/good)	Polk or Dallas County		Overall
	In Polk County	In Dallas County	
Garbage collection	96%	97%	97%
Recycling	93%	93%	93%
Yard waste pick-up	93%	95%	93%
Drinking water	87%	85%	86%
Preservation of natural areas such as open space, farmlands and greenbelts	79%	78%	78%
Urbandale open space	78%	78%	78%

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Table 14: Governance - Built Environment

Percent rating positively (e.g., excellent/good)	Polk or Dallas County		Overall
	In Polk County	In Dallas County	
Storm drainage	78%	86%	80%
Sewer services	88%	91%	88%
Power (electric and/or gas) utility	93%	91%	93%
Utility billing	89%	88%	89%
Land use, planning and zoning	76%	71%	75%
Code enforcement (weeds, abandoned buildings, etc.)	68%	65%	68%

Table 15: Governance - Economy

Percent rating positively (e.g., excellent/good)	Polk or Dallas County		Overall
	In Polk County	In Dallas County	
Economic development	78%	79%	78%

Table 16: Governance - Recreation and Wellness

Percent rating positively (e.g., excellent/good)	Polk or Dallas County		Overall
	In Polk County	In Dallas County	
City parks	94%	94%	94%
Recreation programs or classes	89%	88%	89%
Recreation centers or facilities	85%	89%	86%

Table 17: Governance - Education and Enrichment

Percent rating positively (e.g., excellent/good)	Polk or Dallas County		Overall
	In Polk County	In Dallas County	
Public library services	95%	97%	96%
City-sponsored special events	84%	75%	82%

Table 18: Governance - Community Engagement

Percent rating positively (e.g., excellent/good)	Polk or Dallas County		Overall
	In Polk County	In Dallas County	
Public information services	86%	81%	85%

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Table 19: Participation General

Percent rating positively (e.g., always/sometimes, more than once a month, yes)	Polk or Dallas County		Overall
	In Polk County	In Dallas County	
Sense of community	81%	75%	80%
Recommend living in Urbandale to someone who asks	96%	99%	96%
Remain in Urbandale for the next five years	96%	96%	96%
Contacted the City of Urbandale (in-person, phone, email or web) for help or information	43%	49%	44%

Table 20: Participation - Safety

Percent rating positively (e.g., always/sometimes, more than once a month, yes)	Polk or Dallas County		Overall
	In Polk County	In Dallas County	
Was NOT the victim of a crime	94%	92%	94%
Did NOT report a crime	89%	82%	88%
Stocked supplies in preparation for an emergency	24%	26%	24%

Table 21: Participation - Mobility

Percent rating positively (e.g., always/sometimes, more than once a month, yes)	Polk or Dallas County		Overall
	In Polk County	In Dallas County	
Walked or biked instead of driving	50%	62%	52%
Carpooled with other adults or children instead of driving alone	30%	31%	30%
Used bus, rail, subway or other public transportation instead of driving	6%	6%	6%

Table 22: Participation - Natural Environment

Percent rating positively (e.g., always/sometimes, more than once a month, yes)	Polk or Dallas County		Overall
	In Polk County	In Dallas County	
Recycle at home	92%	90%	92%
Made efforts to make your home more energy efficient	76%	79%	77%
Made efforts to conserve water	69%	79%	70%

Table 23: Participation - Built Environment

Percent rating positively (e.g., always/sometimes, more than once a month, yes)	Polk or Dallas County		Overall
	In Polk County	In Dallas County	
NOT under housing cost stress	82%	88%	83%
Did NOT observe a code violation	68%	70%	69%

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Table 24: Participation - Economy

Percent rating positively (e.g., always/sometimes, more than once a month, yes)	Polk or Dallas County		Overall
	In Polk County	In Dallas County	
Purchase goods or services from a business located in Urbandale	96%	96%	96%
Economy will have positive impact on income	25%	33%	26%
Work in Urbandale	27%	25%	26%

Table 25: Participation - Recreation and Wellness

Percent rating positively (e.g., always/sometimes, more than once a month, yes)	Polk or Dallas County		Overall
	In Polk County	In Dallas County	
Used Urbandale recreation centers or their services	60%	59%	60%
Visited a neighborhood park or City park	88%	89%	88%
Eat at least 5 portions of fruits and vegetables a day	82%	87%	83%
Participate in moderate or vigorous physical activity	83%	88%	84%
Reported being in "very good" or "excellent" health	70%	73%	70%

Table 26: Participation - Education and Enrichment

Percent rating positively (e.g., always/sometimes, more than once a month, yes)	Polk or Dallas County		Overall
	In Polk County	In Dallas County	
Used Urbandale public libraries or their services	68%	70%	68%
Participated in religious or spiritual activities in Urbandale	39%	42%	40%
Attended a City-sponsored event	52%	53%	52%

Table 27: Participation - Community Engagement

Percent rating positively (e.g., always/sometimes, more than once a month, yes)	Polk or Dallas County		Overall
	In Polk County	In Dallas County	
Campaigned or advocated for an issue, cause or candidate	22%	27%	23%
Contacted Urbandale elected officials (in-person, phone, email or web) to express your opinion	10%	16%	11%
Volunteered your time to some group/activity in Urbandale	35%	33%	34%
Participated in a club	26%	22%	25%
Talked to or visited with your immediate neighbors	90%	97%	91%
Done a favor for a neighbor	81%	73%	80%
Attended a local public meeting	20%	10%	18%
Watched (online or on television) a local public meeting	17%	14%	17%
Read or watch local news (via television, paper, computer, etc.)	93%	90%	93%
Vote in local elections	90%	85%	89%

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Table 28: Community Focus Areas

Percent rating positively (e.g., essential/very important)	Polk or Dallas County		Overall
	In Polk County	In Dallas County	
Overall feeling of safety in Urbandale	94%	94%	94%
Overall ease of getting to the places you usually have to visit	84%	82%	83%
Quality of overall natural environment in Urbandale	85%	73%	83%
Overall "built environment" of Urbandale (including overall design, buildings, parks and transportation systems)	74%	70%	73%
Health and wellness opportunities in Urbandale	67%	66%	67%
Overall opportunities for education and enrichment	72%	71%	72%
Overall economic health of Urbandale	89%	88%	89%
Sense of community	84%	77%	83%

Table 29: Police Department Performance

Please rate the job the Urbandale Police Department does at each of the following: (Percent rating as "Excellent" or "Good").	Polk or Dallas County		Overall
	In Polk County	In Dallas County	
Enforcing the law	92%	93%	92%
Using appropriate (not excessive) force on suspects	96%	96%	96%
Protecting residents from violent crime	95%	99%	95%
Treating all residents fairly	91%	91%	91%
Customer service	92%	91%	92%

Table 30: City of Urbandale Reputation and Promotion

Please rate the job the City of Urbandale does at each of the following: (Percent rating as "Excellent" or "Good").	Polk or Dallas County		Overall
	In Polk County	In Dallas County	
Distinguishing itself from surrounding communities	76%	65%	75%
Promoting its services to Urbandale residents	69%	49%	66%