



THE NCSTM
The National Citizen SurveyTM

Eau Claire, WI

Trends over Time

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. 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 2016 ratings for the City of Eau Claire to its previous survey results in 2003, 2007 and 2012. Additional reports and technical appendices are available under separate covers.

Trend data for Eau Claire 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 2016 surveys, otherwise the comparison between 2012 and 2016 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 Eau Claire for 2016 generally remained stable. Of the 93 items for which comparisons were available, 63 items were rated similarly in 2012 and 2016, 9 items showed a decrease in ratings and 21 showed an increase in ratings. Notable trends over time included the following:

- Ratings for several aspects within the pillar of Community Characteristics increased from 2012 to 2016. Ratings increased for the overall appearance of the city and residents' neighborhoods as places to live, as well as for aspects of Natural Environment like air quality and cleanliness of the city. It is noteworthy that ratings also increased for travel by car, travel by public transportation, the quality of new development in Eau Claire, employment opportunities, recreational opportunities and opportunities to attend cultural, music and art activities. Ratings for the availability of affordable quality housing and housing options declined during this period.
- Ratings for the services provided by the City of Eau Claire overall improved from 2012 to 2016. During this same period, ratings increased for several aspects of Mobility including street cleaning, street lighting, snow removal and sidewalk maintenance. Natural areas preservation, storm drainage and economic development services also saw an increase in ratings over time. Between 2012 and 2016, ratings decreased for bus or transit services. Ratings also decreased for several non-municipal services including recycling, yard waste pick-up and cable television services.
- Rates of participation were generally stable over time; however, there were a few exceptions. When compared to the results of the 2012 survey, more residents in 2016 reported that the economy will have a positive impact on their income in the next six months, and more reported voting in local elections. The proportion of residents who reported that they had used Eau Claire public libraries, watched a local public meeting and participated in religious or spiritual activities declined between 2012 and 2016.

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Table 1: Community Characteristics General

	Percent rating positively (e.g., excellent/good)				2016 rating compared to 2012	Comparison to benchmark			
	2003	2007	2012	2016		2003	2007	2012	2016
Overall quality of life	79%	80%	84%	84%	Similar	Similar	Similar	Similar	Similar
Overall image	NA	82%	83%	83%	Similar	NA	Much higher	Much higher	Similar
Place to live	86%	89%	89%	91%	Similar	Similar	Much higher	Higher	Similar
Neighborhood	77%	81%	75%	82%	Higher	Similar	Similar	Similar	Similar
Place to raise children	84%	84%	86%	90%	Similar	Higher	Much higher	Much higher	Similar
Place to retire	53%	59%	64%	66%	Similar	Similar	Similar	Similar	Similar
Overall appearance	68%	75%	76%	83%	Higher	Similar	Higher	Higher	Similar

Table 2: Community Characteristics by Facet—Safety

		Percent rating positively (e.g., very/somewhat safe)				2016 rating compared to 2012	Comparison to benchmark			
		2003	2007	2012	2016		2003	2007	2012	2016
Safety	Overall feeling of safety	NA	NA	NA	85%	NA	NA	NA	Similar	
	Safe in neighborhood	98%	95%	95%	96%	Similar	Higher	Much higher	Higher	
	Safe downtown/commercial area	87%	89%	90%	91%	Similar	Similar	Much higher	Similar	

Table 3: Community Characteristics by Facet—All Other Facets

		Percent rating positively (e.g., excellent/good)				2016 rating compared to 2012	Comparison to benchmark			
		2003	2007	2012	2016		2003	2007	2012	2016
Mobility	Overall ease of travel	NA	NA	NA	80%	NA	NA	NA	Similar	
	Paths and walking trails	NA	NA	80%	82%	Similar	NA	NA	Much higher	
	Ease of walking	NA	83%	81%	81%	Similar	NA	Much higher	Much higher	
	Travel by bicycle	65%	73%	69%	71%	Similar	Higher	Much higher	Much higher	
	Travel by public transportation	NA	NA	14%	49%	Higher	NA	NA	Much lower	
	Travel by car	63%	73%	70%	78%	Higher	Higher	Much higher	Much higher	
	Public parking	NA	NA	NA	50%	NA	NA	NA	Similar	
	Traffic flow	46%	69%	64%	66%	Similar	NA	NA	Much higher	
Natural Environment	Overall natural environment	NA	NA	84%	88%	Similar	NA	NA	Much higher	
	Cleanliness	NA	NA	74%	84%	Higher	NA	NA	Similar	
	Air quality	NA	89%	85%	92%	Higher	NA	Much higher	Much higher	

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		Percent rating positively (e.g., excellent/good)				2016 rating compared to 2012	Comparison to benchmark			
		2003	2007	2012	2016		2003	2007	2012	2016
Built Environment	Overall built environment	NA	NA	NA	71%	NA	NA	NA	Similar	
	New development in Eau Claire	NA	64%	62%	78%	Higher	NA	Similar	Higher	
	Affordable quality housing	47%	59%	58%	52%	Lower	Higher	Much higher	Similar	
	Housing options	NA	NA	73%	61%	Lower	NA	NA	Much higher	
	Public places	NA	NA	NA	83%	NA	NA	NA	Higher	
Economy	Overall economic health	NA	NA	NA	61%	NA	NA	NA	Similar	
	Vibrant downtown/commercial area	NA	NA	NA	67%	NA	NA	NA	Higher	
	Business and services	NA	NA	72%	77%	Similar	NA	NA	Higher	
	Cost of living	NA	NA	NA	62%	NA	NA	NA	Higher	
	Shopping opportunities	NA	81%	73%	73%	Similar	NA	Much higher	Higher	
	Employment opportunities	20%	33%	38%	49%	Higher	Much lower	Higher	Higher	
	Place to visit	NA	NA	NA	74%	NA	NA	NA	Similar	
	Place to work	NA	58%	61%	64%	Similar	NA	Similar	Higher	
	Health and wellness	NA	NA	NA	81%	NA	NA	NA	Similar	
	Mental health care	NA	NA	NA	51%	NA	NA	NA	Similar	
Recreation and Wellness	Preventive health services	NA	NA	75%	74%	Similar	NA	NA	Much higher	
	Health care	62%	57%	64%	66%	Similar	Much higher	Much higher	Much higher	
	Food	NA	NA	75%	77%	Similar	NA	NA	Much higher	
	Recreational opportunities	62%	78%	74%	82%	Higher	Similar	Much higher	Much higher	
	Fitness opportunities	NA	NA	NA	85%	NA	NA	NA	Higher	
	Religious or spiritual events and activities	NA	NA	84%	84%	Similar	NA	NA	Much higher	
Education and Enrichment	Cultural/arts/music activities	NA	58%	60%	79%	Higher	NA	Similar	Much higher	
	Adult education	NA	NA	NA	75%	NA	NA	NA	Higher	
	K-12 education	NA	81%	82%	80%	Similar	NA	Much higher	Much higher	
	Child care/preschool	51%	54%	62%	62%	Similar	Higher	Much higher	Much higher	
	Social events and activities	NA	NA	73%	78%	Similar	NA	NA	Much higher	
Community Engagement									Higher	

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	Percent rating positively (e.g., excellent/good)				2016 rating compared to 2012	Comparison to benchmark			
	2003	2007	2012	2016		2003	2007	2012	2016
Neighborhood	NA	NA	NA	63%	NA	NA	NA	NA	Similar
Openness and acceptance	47%	52%	56%	57%	Similar	Similar	Lower	Similar	Similar
Opportunities to participate in community matters	NA	NA	72%	77%	Similar	NA	NA	Higher	Similar
Opportunities to volunteer	NA	NA	85%	88%	Similar	NA	NA	Much higher	Higher

Table 4: Governance General

	Percent rating positively (e.g., excellent/good)				2016 rating compared to 2012	Comparison to benchmark			
	2003	2007	2012	2016		2003	2007	2012	2016
Services provided by Eau Claire	74%	77%	74%	83%	Higher	Similar	Higher	Similar	Similar
Customer service	75%	77%	74%	79%	Similar	Similar	Higher	Similar	Similar
Value of services for taxes paid	NA	54%	54%	57%	Similar	NA	Similar	Similar	Similar
Overall direction	52%	58%	63%	71%	Higher	Similar	Similar	Higher	Higher
Welcoming citizen involvement	55%	57%	57%	59%	Similar	Similar	Similar	Higher	Similar
Confidence in City government	NA	NA	NA	58%	NA	NA	NA	NA	Similar
Acting in the best interest of Eau Claire	NA	NA	NA	63%	NA	NA	NA	NA	Similar
Being honest	NA	NA	NA	63%	NA	NA	NA	NA	Similar
Treating all residents fairly	NA	NA	NA	61%	NA	NA	NA	NA	Similar
Services provided by the Federal Government	47%	41%	43%	46%	Similar	Similar	Similar	Similar	Similar

Table 5: Governance by Facet

	Percent rating positively (e.g., excellent/good)				2016 rating compared to 2012	Comparison to benchmark				
	2003	2007	2012	2016		2003	2007	2012	2016	
Safety	Police	82%	85%	83%	87%	Similar	Similar	Much higher	Higher	Similar
	Fire	94%	95%	94%	97%	Similar	Similar	Much higher	Similar	Similar
	Ambulance/EMS	93%	94%	94%	95%	Similar	Similar	Much higher	Higher	Similar
	Crime prevention	70%	77%	78%	78%	Similar	Similar	Much higher	Much higher	Similar
	Fire prevention	85%	84%	87%	88%	Similar	Similar	Much higher	Higher	Similar
	Animal control	71%	71%	76%	80%	Similar	Similar	Much higher	Much higher	Similar
	Emergency preparedness	NA	NA	69%	73%	Similar	NA	NA	Higher	Similar

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		Percent rating positively (e.g., excellent/good)				2016 rating compared to 2012	Comparison to benchmark			
		2003	2007	2012	2016		2003	2007	2012	2016
Mobility	Traffic enforcement	65%	75%	73%	72%	Similar	Similar	Much higher	Much higher	Similar
	Street repair	20%	27%	31%	37%	Similar	Much lower	Much lower	Much lower	Similar
	Street cleaning	50%	63%	57%	67%	Higher	Lower	Higher	Similar	Similar
	Street lighting	58%	67%	66%	73%	Higher	Lower	Much higher	Higher	Similar
	Snow removal	59%	61%	45%	58%	Higher	Lower	Similar	Much lower	Similar
	Sidewalk maintenance	54%	61%	50%	57%	Higher	Similar	Much higher	Similar	Similar
	Traffic signal timing	NA	48%	50%	46%	Similar	NA	Similar	Similar	Similar
	Bus or transit services	85%	79%	71%	63%	Lower	Much higher	Much higher	Much higher	Similar
	Garbage collection	NA	NA	90%	87%	Similar	NA	NA	Similar	Similar
	Recycling	NA	NA	88%	81%	Lower	NA	NA	Much higher	Similar
Natural Environment	Yard waste pick-up	NA	NA	65%	49%	Lower	NA	NA	Much lower	Lower
	Drinking water	84%	82%	81%	86%	Similar	Higher	Much higher	Much higher	Higher
	Natural areas preservation	NA	NA	62%	70%	Higher	NA	NA	Similar	Similar
	Open space	NA	NA	NA	70%	NA	NA	NA	NA	Similar
	Storm drainage	61%	75%	68%	79%	Higher	Similar	Much higher	Higher	Similar
	Sewer services	NA	88%	83%	89%	Similar	NA	Much higher	Much higher	Similar
	Power utility	NA	NA	80%	79%	Similar	NA	NA	Similar	Similar
Built Environment	Utility billing	NA	NA	NA	69%	NA	NA	NA	NA	Similar
	Land use, planning and zoning	41%	53%	59%	63%	Similar	Similar	Much higher	Much higher	Similar
	Code enforcement	47%	52%	53%	52%	Similar	Similar	Higher	Higher	Similar
	Cable television	NA	41%	51%	38%	Lower	NA	Much lower	Lower	Lower
	Economic development	39%	51%	50%	68%	Higher	Lower	Similar	Higher	Similar
	City parks	89%	94%	91%	91%	Similar	Higher	Much higher	Much higher	Similar
	Recreation programs	82%	85%	82%	80%	Similar	Similar	Much higher	Higher	Similar
Recreation and Wellness	Recreation centers	72%	79%	80%	82%	Similar	Similar	Much higher	Higher	Similar
	Health services	73%	78%	82%	80%	Similar	Similar	Much higher	Much higher	Similar

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		Percent rating positively (e.g., excellent/good)				2016 rating compared to 2012	Comparison to benchmark			
		2003	2007	2012	2016		2003	2007	2012	2016
Education and Enrichment	Public libraries	91%	92%	92%	92%	Similar	Similar	Much higher	Much higher	Similar
Community Engagement	Public information	NA	77%	79%	77%	Similar	NA	Much higher	Much higher	Similar

Table 6: Participation General

	Percent rating positively (e.g., always/sometimes, more than once a month, yes)				2016 rating compared to 2012	Comparison to benchmark			
	2003	2007	2012	2016		2003	2007	2012	2016
Sense of community	NA	69%	70%	70%	Similar	NA	Higher	Similar	Similar
Recommend Eau Claire	NA	NA	88%	89%	Similar	NA	NA	Similar	Similar
Remain in Eau Claire	NA	NA	82%	82%	Similar	NA	NA	Similar	Similar
Contacted Eau Claire employees	57%	59%	41%	36%	Similar	NA	NA	Much lower	Similar

Table 7: Participation by Facet

		Percent rating positively (e.g., always/sometimes, more than once a month, yes)				2016 rating compared to 2012	Comparison to benchmark			
		2003	2007	2012	2016		2003	2007	2012	2016
Safety	Stocked supplies for an emergency	NA	NA	NA	18%	NA	NA	NA	NA	Lower
	Did NOT report a crime	NA	NA	NA	81%	NA	NA	NA	NA	Similar
	Was NOT the victim of a crime	19%	13%	89%	90%	Similar	NA	NA	Similar	Similar
Mobility	Used public transportation instead of driving	NA	NA	NA	14%	NA	NA	NA	NA	Lower
	Carpooled instead of driving alone	NA	NA	NA	47%	NA	NA	NA	NA	Similar
	Walked or biked instead of driving	NA	NA	NA	62%	NA	NA	NA	NA	Similar
Natural Environment	Conserved water	NA	NA	NA	69%	NA	NA	NA	NA	Lower
	Made home more energy efficient	NA	NA	NA	72%	NA	NA	NA	NA	Similar
	Recycled at home	96%	98%	97%	97%	Similar	NA	NA	Much higher	Higher
Built Environment	Did NOT observe a code violation	NA	NA	NA	50%	NA	NA	NA	NA	Similar
	NOT under housing cost stress	NA	NA	73%	77%	Similar	NA	NA	Much higher	Similar
Economy	Purchased goods or services in Eau Claire	NA	NA	NA	99%	NA	NA	NA	NA	Similar
	Economy will have positive impact on income	9%	19%	17%	28%	Higher	NA	NA	Similar	Similar
	Work in Eau Claire	NA	NA	NA	64%	NA	NA	NA	NA	Much higher
Recreation and Wellness	Used Eau Claire recreation centers	35%	NA	57%	62%	Similar	NA	NA	Similar	Similar
	Visited a City park	90%	92%	89%	92%	Similar	NA	NA	Higher	Higher

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		Percent rating positively (e.g., always/sometimes, more than once a month, yes)				2016 rating compared to 2012	Comparison to benchmark			
		2003	2007	2012	2016		2003	2007	2012	2016
	Ate 5 portions of fruits and vegetables	NA	NA	NA	79%	NA	NA	NA	Similar	
	Participated in moderate or vigorous physical activity	NA	NA	NA	82%	NA	NA	NA	Similar	
	In very good to excellent health	NA	NA	NA	62%	NA	NA	NA	Similar	
Education and Enrichment	Used Eau Claire public libraries	74%	77%	72%	61%	Lower	NA	NA	Similar	Similar
	Participated in religious or spiritual activities	NA	NA	57%	43%	Lower	NA	NA	Higher	Similar
	Attended a City-sponsored event	NA	NA	NA	71%	NA	NA	NA	NA	Higher
Community Engagement	Campaigned for an issue, cause or candidate	NA	NA	NA	30%	NA	NA	NA	NA	Similar
	Contacted Eau Claire elected officials	NA	NA	NA	18%	NA	NA	NA	NA	Similar
	Volunteered	53%	60%	56%	54%	Similar	NA	NA	Much higher	Higher
	Participated in a club	NA	NA	36%	36%	Similar	NA	NA	Higher	Similar
	Talked to or visited with neighbors	NA	NA	NA	87%	NA	NA	NA	NA	Similar
	Done a favor for a neighbor	NA	NA	NA	73%	NA	NA	NA	NA	Similar
	Attended a local public meeting	22%	26%	20%	19%	Similar	NA	NA	Much lower	Similar
	Watched a local public meeting	56%	59%	38%	24%	Lower	NA	NA	Similar	Similar
	Read or watched local news	NA	NA	NA	86%	NA	NA	NA	NA	Similar
	Voted in local elections	68%	75%	69%	84%	Higher	NA	NA	Lower	Similar