

The City of Sioux Falls,
South Dakota

Summary Report
2008



TABLE OF CONTENTS

Survey Background.....	1
About The National Citizen Survey™	1
Understanding the Results.....	1
Profile of Sioux Falls	3
Community Life	4
Quality of Life.....	4
Ratings of Community Characteristics	4
Perceptions of Safety	4
Community Participation.....	4
Local Government	5
Public Trust	5
Service Provided by Sioux Falls.....	5
The City of Sioux Falls Employees.....	5
Additional Questions	6

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 3,000 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. Of the mailed postcards, 171 were undeliverable due to vacant or “not found” addresses. Completed surveys were received from 1,011 residents, for a response rate of 36%. Typically, the response rates obtained on citizen surveys range from 25% to 40%.

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 1,011 residents is generally no greater than plus or minus 3 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 Sioux Falls. (For more information on the survey methodology, see Appendix B in the Report of Results. A copy of the survey materials can be found in Appendix C 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 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 1 representing the best rating and 4 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.

PROFILE OF SIOUX FALLS

As assessed by the survey, about 45% of Sioux Falls residents have lived in the community for more than 20 years and 61% are over age 34. Another 15% are over age 64. Eighty percent are currently employed; 39% rent; 61% own and 56% live in detached single family homes. Over 76% of Sioux Falls residents have at least some college and 45% have annual household incomes above \$50,000. Three percent of Sioux Falls residents reported that they are Spanish, Hispanic or Latino and 90% said they are White or Caucasian.

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 Sioux Falls. They also evaluated characteristics of the community, and gave their perceptions of safety in the City of Sioux Falls. The questionnaire assessed use of the amenities of the community and involvement by respondents in the civic and economic life of Sioux Falls.

Quality of Life

When asked to rate the overall quality of life in Sioux Falls, 24% of respondents thought it was “excellent.” Only 2% rated overall quality of life as “poor.” Sioux Falls as a place to raise children received an average rating of 73 on a 100-point scale.

Ratings of Community Characteristics

The highest rated characteristics of Sioux Falls were shopping opportunities, educational opportunities, and overall image/reputation. When asked about potential problems in Sioux Falls, the three concerns rated by the highest proportion of respondents as a “major problem” were drugs, traffic, and homelessness. The rate of population growth in Sioux Falls was viewed as “too fast” by 49% of respondents, while 3% thought it was “too slow.”

Perceptions of Safety

When evaluating safety in the community, 74% of respondents felt “somewhat” or “very safe” from violent crimes in Sioux Falls. In their neighborhood after dark, 80% of survey participants felt “somewhat” or “very safe.”

As assessed by the survey, 11% 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, 72% had reported it to police.

Community Participation

Participation in the civic, social and economic life of Sioux Falls during the past year was assessed on the survey. Among those completing the questionnaire, 57% reported volunteering in the past year.

LOCAL GOVERNMENT

Several aspects of the government of the City of Sioux Falls 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 Sioux Falls. Those who had any contact with a City of Sioux Falls 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 Sioux Falls, residents gave an average rating of 68 on a 100-point scale.

Service Provided by Sioux Falls

The overall quality of services provided by the City of Sioux Falls was rated as 63 on a 100-point scale.

The City of Sioux Falls Employees

Impressions of the City of Sioux Falls employees were assessed on the questionnaire. Those who had been in contact with a City of Sioux Falls employee in the past year (53%) rated their overall impression as 65 on a 100-point scale.

ADDITIONAL QUESTIONS

Four additional questions were asked by the City of Sioux Falls as listed below. The results for these questions are also available in the Report of Results. Open-ended results can be found under a separate cover.

Policy Question #1

Please rate the quality of the City's efforts in addressing each of the following:

	Blighted areas	Promoting redevelopment
Excellent	8%	10%
Good	47%	51%
Fair	37%	33%
Poor	8%	6%
Total	100%	100%

Note: "don't know" responses have been removed.

Policy Question #2

Please rate how well the City is managing growth:

Excellent	10%
Good	52%
Fair	30%
Poor	7%
Total	100%

Note: "don't know" responses have been removed.

Policy Question #3

The City is considering a proposal to build a new "Coliseum" that will be an events center for football, concerts and other events and replace the Howard Wood Stadium at that site. The proposal assumes that a donor would fund up to 50% of the costs for the project and the City would fund the remainder. To what extent do you support or oppose this proposal?

Strongly support	31%
Somewhat support	37%
Somewhat oppose	15%
Strongly oppose	18%
Total	100%

Note: "don't know" responses have been removed.
