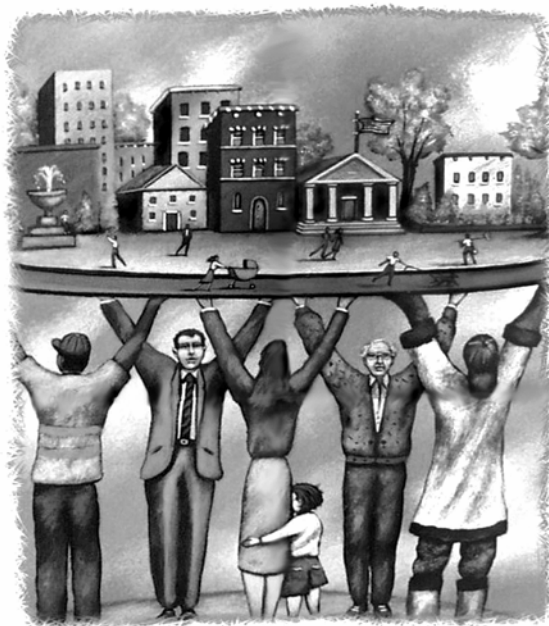


The National
CITIZEN SURVEY™

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**Summary Report for
the City of Lynchburg, Virginia**



Submitted by:

NATIONAL RESEARCH CENTER, INC.
3005 30th Street • Boulder, CO 80301
tel. 303-444-7863 • fax. 303-441-1145
e-mail: ncs@n-r-c.com • www.n-r-c.com

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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 and County Management Association (ICMA).

UNDERSTANDING THE RESULTS

Survey Administration

Following the mailing of a pre-survey notification postcard to a random sample of 1,200 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, 87 were undeliverable due to vacant or “not found” addresses. Completed surveys were received from 431 residents, for a response rate of 39%. 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 1,200 residents is generally no greater than plus or minus 5 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 Lynchburg. (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 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).

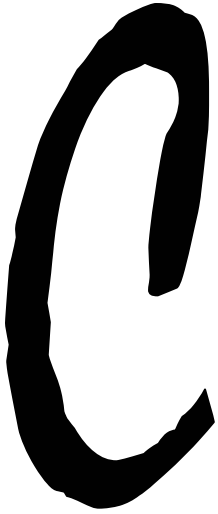
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Therefore, to permit finer distinctions among positively rated services, EGFP offers three options across which to spread those ratings. EGFP is more neutral because it requires no positive statement of service quality to judge (as agree-disagree scales 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 5 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 Lynchburg. They also evaluated characteristics of the community, and gave their perceptions of safety in the City of Lynchburg. The questionnaire assessed use of the amenities of the community and involvement by respondents in the civic and economic life of Lynchburg.

- **QUALITY OF LIFE**

When asked to rate the overall quality of life in Lynchburg, 18% of respondents thought it was “excellent.” Only 6% rated overall quality of life as “poor.” Lynchburg as a place to raise children received an average rating of 67 on a 100-point scale.

- **RATINGS OF COMMUNITY CHARACTERISTICS IN LYNCHBURG**

The highest rated characteristics of Lynchburg were the overall appearance of Lynchburg, sense of community, and shopping opportunities. When asked about potential problems in Lynchburg, the three concerns rated by the highest proportion of respondents as a “major problem” were drugs, taxes, and run down buildings, weed lots, or junk vehicles. The rate of population growth in Lynchburg was viewed as “too fast” by 24% of respondents, while 19% thought it was “too slow.”

- **PERCEPTIONS OF SAFETY**

When evaluating safety in the community, 61% of respondents felt “somewhat” or “very safe” from violent crimes in Lynchburg. In their neighborhood after dark, 76% of survey participants felt “somewhat” or “very safe.”

As assessed by the survey, 13% 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 Lynchburg during the past year was assessed on the survey. Among those completing the questionnaire, 82% reported visiting a Lynchburg park in the past year.



LOCAL GOVERNMENT

Several aspects of the government of the City of Lynchburg 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 Lynchburg. Those who had any contact with a City of Lynchburg employee in the past year gave their impressions of the most recent encounter.

- **PUBLIC TRUST**

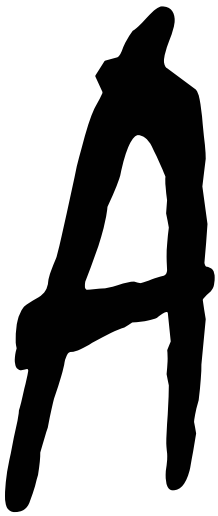
When asked to evaluate whether they felt they received good value for taxes they pay, residents gave an average rating of 56 on a 100-point scale.

- **SERVICES PROVIDED BY LYNCHBURG**

The overall quality of services provided by the City of Lynchburg was rated as 54 on a 100-point scale.

- **THE CITY OF LYNCHBURG EMPLOYEES**

Impressions of the City of Lynchburg employees were assessed on the questionnaire. Those who had been in contact with a City of Lynchburg employee in the past year (70%) rated their overall impression as 66 on a 100-point scale.



ADDITIONAL QUESTIONS

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

Figure 25: Policy Question #1	
	To what extent do you support or oppose increasing taxes and fees to maintain current services and programs?
	Percent of Respondents
strongly support	5%
somewhat support	21%
neither support nor oppose	11%
somewhat oppose	24%
strongly oppose	30%
don't know	8%
Total	100%

Figure 26: Policy Question #2	
	Please indicate the degree to which you would support or oppose giving public funds to non-profit agencies in the City as determined by the City Council
	Percent of Respondents
strongly support	11%
somewhat support	29%
neither support nor oppose	15%
somewhat oppose	18%
strongly oppose	17%
don't know	10%
Total	100%

Figure 27: Policy Question #3	
	How likely or unlikely are you to use the Internet to conduct business with the City?
	Percent of Respondents
very likely	33%
somewhat likely	26%
neither likely nor unlikely	6%
somewhat unlikely	9%
very unlikely	22%
don't know	4%
Total	100%

