



**THE NCS**<sup>TM</sup>  
The National Citizen Survey<sup>TM</sup>

## Elk Grove, CA

Trends over Time

2015



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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 2015 ratings for the City of Elk Grove to its previous survey results in 2009, 2011 and 2013. Additional reports and technical appendices are available under separate cover.

Trend data for Elk Grove 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 eight percentage points between the 2013 and 2015 surveys, otherwise the comparison between 2013 and 2015 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 Elk Grove for 2015 generally remained stable. Of the 120 items for which comparisons were available, 102 items were rated similarly in 2013 and 2015, 9 items showed a decrease in ratings and 9 showed an increase in ratings. Notable trends over time included the following:

- Ratings for aspects of Community Characteristics in 2015 were generally similar to ratings given in 2013. Ratings decreased over time for two aspects of Mobility from 2013 to 2015 (traffic flow on major streets and overall ease of travel) as well as for recreational opportunities within the facet of Recreation and Wellness and neighborliness of residents within the facet of Community Engagement. However, 2015 ratings increased for aspects of Education and Enrichment (K-12 education, opportunities to participate in religious or spiritual events and activities and adult education) and more residents reported feeling safe in Elk Grove's downtown/commercial area in 2015 than in 2013.
- Ratings were also generally stable over time within the pillar of Governance. Ratings increased in 2015 for animal control within Safety and storm drainage within Built Environment. Ratings within Governance decreased for emergency preparedness (within the facet of Safety), cable television (Built Environment) and the job Elk Grove government does at welcoming citizen involvement (Community Engagement) in 2015 compared to 2013.
- The proportion of residents who did not observe a code violation decreased since the last iteration of the survey, as did the rating for the sense of community in Elk Grove. However, rates of Participation for stocking supplies for an emergency, carpooling instead of driving alone and participating in moderate or vigorous physical activity increased from 2013 to 2015.

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Table 1: Community Characteristics General

	Percent rating positively (e.g., excellent/good)				2015 rating compared to 2013	Comparison to benchmark			
	2009	2011	2013	2015		2009	2011	2013	2015
Overall quality of life	73%	74%	81%	81%	Similar	Lower	Lower	Similar	Similar
Overall image	64%	64%	74%	70%	Similar	Lower	Similar	Similar	Similar
Place to live	80%	82%	88%	87%	Similar	Lower	Lower	Similar	Similar
Neighborhood	79%	83%	82%	83%	Similar	Similar	Similar	Similar	Similar
Place to raise children	74%	80%	86%	86%	Similar	Similar	Similar	Similar	Similar
Place to retire	49%	60%	69%	65%	Similar	Much lower	Lower	Similar	Similar
Overall appearance	78%	81%	79%	75%	Similar	Higher	Higher	Similar	Similar

Table 2: Community Characteristics by Facet

		Percent rating positively (e.g., excellent/good, very/somewhat safe)				2015 rating compared to 2013	Comparison to benchmark			
		2009	2011	2013	2015		2009	2011	2013	2015
Safety	Overall feeling of safety	NA	NA	79%	72%	Similar	NA	NA	Similar	Similar
	Safe in neighborhood	88%	91%	93%	90%	Similar	Similar	Similar	Similar	Similar
	Safe downtown/commercial area	84%	85%	83%	92%	Higher	Lower	Lower	Similar	Similar
Mobility	Overall ease of travel	NA	NA	75%	67%	Lower	NA	NA	Similar	Similar
	Paths and walking trails	59%	59%	73%	66%	Similar	Similar	Similar	Similar	Similar
	Ease of walking	61%	62%	71%	66%	Similar	Similar	Similar	Similar	Similar
	Travel by bicycle	57%	52%	57%	58%	Similar	Similar	Similar	Similar	Similar
	Travel by public transportation	NA	NA	41%	44%	Similar	NA	NA	Lower	Similar
	Travel by car	52%	54%	58%	59%	Similar	Lower	Similar	Similar	Similar
	Public parking	NA	NA	NA	68%	NA	NA	NA	NA	Similar
	Traffic flow	39%	37%	48%	35%	Lower	Similar	Lower	Similar	Lower
Natural Environment	Overall natural environment	59%	64%	77%	74%	Similar	Much lower	Lower	Similar	Similar
	Cleanliness	77%	80%	80%	74%	Similar	Similar	Similar	Similar	Similar
	Air quality	54%	58%	73%	69%	Similar	Much lower	Much lower	Similar	Similar
Built Environment	Overall built environment	NA	NA	65%	63%	Similar	NA	NA	NA	Similar
	New development in Elk Grove	53%	57%	52%	49%	Similar	Similar	Similar	Similar	Similar
	Affordable quality housing	49%	44%	50%	48%	Similar	Much higher	Higher	Similar	Similar
	Housing options	62%	56%	63%	57%	Similar	Higher	Similar	Similar	Similar
	Public places	NA	NA	58%	62%	Similar	NA	NA	NA	Similar
Economy	Overall economic health	NA	NA	63%	68%	Similar	NA	NA	Similar	Similar
	Vibrant downtown/commercial area	NA	NA	30%	31%	Similar	NA	NA	NA	Lower
	Business and services	55%	58%	59%	62%	Similar	Similar	Similar	Similar	Similar
	Cost of living	NA	NA	43%	45%	Similar	NA	NA	Similar	Similar

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	Percent rating positively (e.g., excellent/good, very/somewhat safe)				2015 rating compared to 2013	Comparison to benchmark				
	2009	2011	2013	2015		2009	2011	2013	2015	
	Shopping opportunities	47%	52%	50%	55%	Similar	Similar	Similar	Similar	Similar
	Employment opportunities	14%	22%	32%	33%	Similar	Much lower	Lower	Similar	Similar
	Place to visit	NA	NA	45%	41%	Similar	NA	NA	Lower	Lower
	Place to work	49%	42%	59%	55%	Similar	Lower	Much lower	Similar	Similar
Recreation and Wellness	Health and wellness	NA	NA	74%	68%	Similar	NA	NA	NA	Similar
	Mental health care	NA	NA	57%	50%	Similar	NA	NA	NA	Similar
	Preventive health services	51%	58%	70%	68%	Similar	Similar	Similar	Higher	Similar
	Health care	53%	59%	73%	68%	Similar	Similar	Higher	Higher	Similar
	Food	65%	67%	66%	65%	Similar	Similar	Similar	Similar	Similar
	Recreational opportunities	50%	59%	69%	58%	Lower	Lower	Similar	Similar	Similar
	Fitness opportunities	NA	NA	77%	74%	Similar	NA	NA	Similar	Similar
Education and Enrichment	Religious or spiritual events and activities	66%	64%	65%	74%	Higher	Lower	Much lower	Similar	Similar
	Cultural/arts/music activities	38%	44%	44%	45%	Similar	Much lower	Lower	Similar	Similar
	Adult education	NA	NA	59%	67%	Higher	NA	NA	NA	Similar
	K-12 education	78%	NA	78%	86%	Higher	Much higher	NA	Similar	Similar
Community Engagement	Child care/preschool	39%	39%	60%	57%	Similar	Similar	Similar	Higher	Similar
	Social events and activities	49%	58%	52%	49%	Similar	Lower	Similar	Similar	Similar
	Neighborliness	NA	NA	59%	46%	Lower	NA	NA	Similar	Similar
	Openness and acceptance	73%	69%	63%	66%	Similar	Higher	Higher	Similar	Similar
	Opportunities to participate in community matters	55%	60%	54%	50%	Similar	Lower	Similar	Similar	Similar
	Opportunities to volunteer	51%	62%	62%	60%	Similar	Much lower	Much lower	Similar	Similar

Table 3: Governance General

	Percent rating positively (e.g., excellent/good)				2015 rating compared to 2013	Comparison to benchmark			
	2009	2011	2013	2015		2009	2011	2013	2015
Services provided by Elk Grove	66%	67%	70%	75%	Similar	Similar	Similar	Similar	Similar
Customer service	66%	67%	66%	66%	Similar	Similar	Lower	Similar	Similar
Value of services for taxes paid	45%	48%	48%	52%	Similar	Much lower	Similar	Similar	Similar
Overall direction	35%	43%	52%	52%	Similar	Much lower	Lower	Similar	Similar
Welcoming citizen involvement	41%	40%	52%	38%	Lower	Much lower	Lower	Similar	Similar
Confidence in City government	NA	NA	49%	44%	Similar	NA	NA	Similar	Similar

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	Percent rating positively (e.g., excellent/good)				2015 rating compared to 2013	Comparison to benchmark			
	2009	2011	2013	2015		2009	2011	2013	2015
Acting in the best interest of Elk Grove	NA	NA	55%	50%	Similar	NA	NA	NA	Similar
Being honest	NA	NA	53%	46%	Similar	NA	NA	NA	Similar
Treating all residents fairly	NA	NA	56%	49%	Similar	NA	NA	NA	Similar
Services provided by the Federal Government	30%	31%	39%	37%	Similar	Lower	Lower	Similar	Similar

Table 4: Governance by Facet

		Percent rating positively (e.g., excellent/good)				2015 rating compared to 2013	Comparison to benchmark			
		2009	2011	2013	2015		2009	2011	2013	2015
Safety	Police	76%	77%	71%	74%	Similar	Similar	Similar	Similar	Similar
	Crime prevention	58%	61%	62%	68%	Similar	Lower	Lower	Similar	Similar
	Animal control	58%	64%	58%	71%	Higher	Similar	Similar	Similar	Similar
	Emergency preparedness	47%	62%	57%	39%	Lower	Much lower	Similar	Similar	Lower
	Traffic enforcement	59%	61%	62%	63%	Similar	Similar	Similar	Similar	Similar
Mobility	Street repair	53%	57%	62%	62%	Similar	Higher	Much higher	Similar	Higher
	Street cleaning	59%	65%	66%	61%	Similar	Similar	Similar	Similar	Similar
	Street lighting	70%	67%	72%	69%	Similar	Much higher	Higher	Similar	Similar
	Sidewalk maintenance	67%	66%	67%	67%	Similar	Much higher	Much higher	Similar	Similar
	Traffic signal timing	43%	53%	50%	48%	Similar	Similar	Similar	Similar	Similar
	Bus or transit services	53%	56%	56%	53%	Similar	Similar	Similar	Similar	Similar
	Garbage collection	89%	79%	83%	87%	Similar	Higher	Similar	Similar	Similar
	Recycling	88%	81%	84%	87%	Similar	Much higher	Higher	Similar	Similar
	Yard waste pick-up	84%	80%	79%	86%	Similar	Much higher	Higher	Similar	Higher
	Natural areas preservation	50%	53%	61%	60%	Similar	Lower	Similar	Similar	Similar
Natural Environment	Open space	NA	NA	59%	51%	Similar	NA	NA	Lower	Similar
	Storm drainage	68%	71%	68%	80%	Higher	Much higher	Higher	Similar	Higher
Built Environment	Utility billing	NA	NA	59%	56%	Similar	NA	NA	Lower	Similar
	Land use, planning and zoning	38%	50%	53%	46%	Similar	Similar	Similar	Similar	Similar
	Code enforcement	39%	49%	47%	50%	Similar	Similar	Similar	Similar	Similar
	Cable television	60%	61%	56%	47%	Lower	Higher	Similar	Similar	Similar
	Economy	Economic development	33%	37%	47%	45%	Similar	Much lower	Lower	Similar

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		Percent rating positively (e.g., excellent/good)				2015 rating compared to 2013	Comparison to benchmark			
		2009	2011	2013	2015		2009	2011	2013	2015
Education and Enrichment	Special events	NA	NA	59%	57%	Similar	NA	NA	Similar	Similar
	Public libraries	74%	74%	79%	79%	Similar	Lower	Much lower	Similar	Similar
Community Engagement	Public information	60%	60%	64%	66%	Similar	Similar	Similar	Similar	Similar

Table 5: Participation General

	Percent rating positively (e.g., always/sometimes, more than once a month, yes)				2015 rating compared to 2013	Comparison to benchmark			
	2009	2011	2013	2015		2009	2011	2013	2015
Sense of community	55%	62%	66%	51%	Lower	Similar	Similar	Similar	Similar
Recommend Elk Grove	76%	85%	88%	91%	Similar	Much lower	Similar	Similar	Similar
Remain in Elk Grove	82%	81%	87%	87%	Similar	Similar	Similar	Similar	Similar
Contacted Elk Grove employees	37%	37%	39%	39%	Similar	Much lower	Much lower	Lower	Similar

Table 6: Participation by Facet

		Percent rating positively (e.g., always/sometimes, more than once a month, yes)				2015 rating compared to 2013	Comparison to benchmark			
		2009	2011	2013	2015		2009	2011	2013	2015
Safety	Stocked supplies for an emergency	NA	NA	31%	45%	Higher	NA	NA	NA	Similar
	Did NOT report a crime	NA	NA	74%	74%	Similar	NA	NA	NA	Similar
	Was NOT the victim of a crime	82%	90%	86%	86%	Similar	Lower	Higher	Similar	Similar
Mobility	Used public transportation instead of driving	NA	NA	18%	20%	Similar	NA	NA	NA	Similar
	Carpooled instead of driving alone	NA	NA	49%	62%	Higher	NA	NA	NA	Higher
	Walked or biked instead of driving	NA	NA	57%	59%	Similar	NA	NA	NA	Similar
Natural Environment	Conserved water	NA	NA	89%	96%	Similar	NA	NA	NA	Higher
	Made home more energy efficient	NA	NA	79%	79%	Similar	NA	NA	NA	Similar
	Recycled at home	94%	96%	96%	98%	Similar	Much higher	Much higher	Higher	Higher
Built Environment	Did NOT observe a code violation	NA	NA	60%	41%	Lower	NA	NA	NA	Lower
	NOT under housing cost stress	52%	43%	57%	64%	Similar	Much lower	Much lower	Similar	Similar
	Purchased goods or services in Elk Grove	NA	NA	97%	99%	Similar	NA	NA	NA	Similar
Economy	Economy will have positive impact on income	14%	18%	30%	29%	Similar	Similar	Similar	Higher	Similar
	Work in Elk Grove	NA	NA	28%	29%	Similar	NA	NA	NA	Lower

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		Percent rating positively (e.g., always/sometimes, more than once a month, yes)				2015 rating compared to 2013	Comparison to benchmark			
		2009	2011	2013	2015		2009	2011	2013	2015
Recreation and Wellness	Ate 5 portions of fruits and vegetables	NA	NA	88%	86%	Similar	NA	NA	NA	Similar
	Participated in moderate or vigorous physical activity	NA	NA	79%	90%	Higher	NA	NA	NA	Similar
	In very good to excellent health	NA	NA	58%	60%	Similar	NA	NA	NA	Similar
Education and Enrichment	Used Elk Grove public libraries	63%	61%	56%	57%	Similar	Much lower	Much lower	Lower	Similar
	Participated in religious or spiritual activities	44%	50%	45%	50%	Similar	Much lower	Similar	Similar	Similar
	Attended a City-sponsored event	NA	NA	47%	55%	Similar	NA	NA	NA	Similar
Community Engagement	Campaigned for an issue, cause or candidate	NA	NA	20%	14%	Similar	NA	NA	NA	Similar
	Contacted Elk Grove elected officials	NA	NA	13%	9%	Similar	NA	NA	NA	Similar
	Volunteered	36%	43%	32%	39%	Similar	Much lower	Similar	Lower	Similar
	Participated in a club	23%	23%	21%	26%	Similar	Much lower	Much lower	Similar	Similar
	Talked to or visited with neighbors	48%	44%	93%	94%	Similar	Much lower	Lower	Much higher	Similar
	Done a favor for a neighbor	94%	93%	82%	82%	Similar	Similar	Similar	Lower	Similar
	Attended a local public meeting	22%	19%	19%	18%	Similar	Lower	Much lower	Similar	Similar
	Watched a local public meeting	28%	22%	18%	21%	Similar	Much lower	Much lower	Lower	Similar
	Read or watched local news	NA	NA	92%	90%	Similar	NA	NA	NA	Similar
	Voted in local elections	80%	78%	81%	85%	Similar	Higher	Higher	Similar	Similar