



## Clearwater, FL

Trends over Time

2017



**NRC**  
National Research Center Inc.

2955 Valmont Road Suite 300  
Boulder, Colorado 80301  
n-r-c.com • 303-444-7863



*Leaders at the Core of Better Communities*

777 North Capitol Street NE Suite 500  
Washington, DC 20002  
icma.org • 800-745-8780

# 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 2017 ratings for the City of Clearwater to its previous survey results in 2008 and 2014. Additional reports and technical appendices are available under separate cover.

Trend data for Clearwater 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 2014 and 2017 surveys, otherwise the comparison between 2014 and 2017 are noted as being "similar." Additionally, national 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 Clearwater for 2017 generally remained stable. Of the 124 items for which comparisons were available, 101 items were rated similarly in 2014 and 2017, nine items showed a decrease in ratings and 14 showed an increase in ratings. Notable trends over time included the following:

- Within the pillars of Community Characteristics and Governance, four increases in 2017 were concentrated in the area of Economy: overall economic health, employment opportunities, Clearwater as a place to work and economic development. No Economy measures were rated lower in 2017 than in 2014.
- Changes for Built Environment included two increases and four decreases in positive assessments between the two survey administrations. Residents' ratings for utility billing and code enforcement services trended upward since 2014, while participants were more critical of the availability of affordable quality housing, storm drainage, power utility and cable television in 2017.
- Other decreases over time included availability of mental health care and yard waste pick-up. Conversely, residents' were more satisfied with their neighborhoods as places to live, K-12 education, fire prevention, street cleaning and public information services in 2017 than in 2014.
- Overall, rates of Participation were similar across the two most recent survey iterations. However, there were a few notable differences. In 2017, more residents were optimistic about the impact the economy would have on their incomes, had reached out to Clearwater employees and were less likely to have observed a code violation (which coincides with the increase in evaluations of code enforcement) than in 2014. Meanwhile, fewer Clearwater participants had stocked supplies, used public libraries or watched a local public meeting in 2017 compared to 2014.

# The National Citizen Survey™

Table 1: Community Characteristics General

	Percent rating positively (e.g., excellent/good)			2017 rating compared to 2014	Comparison to benchmark		
	2008	2014	2017		2008	2014	2017
Overall quality of life	75%	78%	84%	Similar	Similar	Similar	Similar
Overall image	67%	72%	69%	Similar	Similar	Similar	Similar
Place to live	83%	85%	90%	Similar	Similar	Similar	Similar
Neighborhood	76%	74%	80%	Higher	Similar	Similar	Similar
Place to raise children	60%	68%	71%	Similar	Much lower	Similar	Similar
Place to retire	67%	75%	81%	Similar	Higher	Similar	Higher
Overall appearance	67%	72%	75%	Similar	Similar	Similar	Similar

Table 2: Community Characteristics by Facet

		Percent rating positively (e.g., excellent/good, very/somewhat safe)			2017 rating compared to 2014	Comparison to benchmark		
		2008	2014	2017		2008	2014	2017
Safety	Overall feeling of safety	NA	69%	71%	Similar	NA	Similar	Similar
	Safe in neighborhood	92%	90%	91%	Similar	Similar	Similar	Similar
	Safe downtown/commercial area	77%	68%	74%	Similar	Lower	Lower	Lower
Mobility	Overall ease of travel	NA	57%	59%	Similar	NA	Lower	Similar
	Paths and walking trails	65%	65%	65%	Similar	Higher	Similar	Similar
	Ease of walking	51%	56%	52%	Similar	Lower	Similar	Similar
	Travel by bicycle	44%	48%	43%	Similar	Similar	Similar	Similar
	Travel by public transportation	NA	33%	27%	Similar	NA	Lower	Similar
	Travel by car	42%	43%	45%	Similar	Much lower	Lower	Lower
	Public parking	NA	35%	32%	Similar	NA	Lower	Lower
	Traffic flow	29%	29%	34%	Similar	Much lower	Lower	Similar
	Overall natural environment	61%	73%	70%	Similar	Lower	Similar	Similar
Natural Environment	Cleanliness	64%	71%	73%	Similar	Lower	Similar	Similar
	Air quality	59%	72%	74%	Similar	Similar	Similar	Similar
	Overall built environment	NA	52%	50%	Similar	NA	Similar	Similar
Built Environment	New development in Clearwater	50%	40%	43%	Similar	Lower	Lower	Similar
	Affordable quality housing	29%	46%	38%	Lower	Similar	Similar	Similar
	Public places	NA	64%	67%	Similar	NA	Similar	Similar
	Overall economic health	NA	54%	64%	Higher	NA	Similar	Similar
Economy	Vibrant downtown/commercial area	NA	30%	33%	Similar	NA	Lower	Lower
	Business and services	60%	59%	65%	Similar	Similar	Similar	Similar
	Cost of living	NA	41%	43%	Similar	NA	Similar	Similar
	Shopping opportunities	75%	76%	77%	Similar	Much higher	Higher	Higher

# The National Citizen Survey™

		Percent rating positively (e.g., excellent/good, very/somewhat safe)			2017 rating compared to 2014	Comparison to benchmark		
		2008	2014	2017		2008	2014	2017
	Employment opportunities	34%	35%	47%	Higher	Similar	Similar	Similar
	Place to visit	NA	88%	90%	Similar	NA	Higher	Much higher
	Place to work	50%	58%	69%	Higher	Lower	Similar	Similar
Recreation and Wellness	Health and wellness	NA	74%	70%	Similar	NA	Similar	Similar
	Mental health care	NA	50%	43%	Lower	NA	Similar	Similar
	Preventive health services	51%	63%	67%	Similar	Similar	Similar	Similar
	Health care	46%	64%	64%	Similar	Similar	Similar	Similar
	Food	59%	69%	71%	Similar	Similar	Similar	Similar
	Recreational opportunities	74%	74%	76%	Similar	Much higher	Similar	Similar
	Fitness opportunities	NA	74%	72%	Similar	NA	Similar	Similar
	Cultural/arts/music activities	62%	66%	66%	Similar	Higher	Similar	Similar
	Adult education	NA	59%	55%	Similar	NA	Similar	Similar
	K-12 education	54%	51%	57%	Higher	Much lower	Lower	Lower
Education and Enrichment	Child care/preschool	34%	54%	51%	Similar	Lower	Similar	Similar
	Social events and activities	61%	57%	60%	Similar	Similar	Similar	Similar
Community Engagement	Neighborliness	NA	52%	55%	Similar	NA	Similar	Similar
	Openness and acceptance	56%	57%	58%	Similar	Similar	Similar	Similar
	Opportunities to participate in community matters	59%	58%	62%	Similar	Similar	Similar	Similar
	Opportunities to volunteer	76%	72%	76%	Similar	Similar	Similar	Similar

Table 3: Governance General

	Percent rating positively (e.g., excellent/good)			2017 rating compared to 2014	Comparison to benchmark		
	2008	2014	2017		2008	2014	2017
Services provided by Clearwater	70%	75%	77%	Similar	Similar	Similar	Similar
Customer service	75%	71%	73%	Similar	Similar	Similar	Similar
Value of services for taxes paid	48%	48%	53%	Similar	Much lower	Similar	Similar
Overall direction	47%	50%	52%	Similar	Much lower	Similar	Similar
Welcoming citizen involvement	43%	46%	50%	Similar	Much lower	Similar	Similar
Confidence in City government	NA	44%	49%	Similar	NA	Similar	Similar
Acting in the best interest of Clearwater	NA	47%	48%	Similar	NA	Similar	Similar
Being honest	NA	49%	52%	Similar	NA	Similar	Similar
Treating all residents fairly	NA	45%	50%	Similar	NA	Similar	Similar
Services provided by the Federal Government	40%	40%	38%	Similar	Similar	Similar	Similar

# The National Citizen Survey™

Table 4: Governance by Facet

		Percent rating positively (e.g., excellent/good)			2017 rating compared to 2014	Comparison to benchmark		
		2008	2014	2017		2008	2014	2017
Safety	Police	76%	76%	81%	Similar	Similar	Similar	Similar
	Fire	92%	90%	90%	Similar	Similar	Similar	Similar
	Ambulance/EMS	88%	90%	90%	Similar	Similar	Similar	Similar
	Crime prevention	59%	60%	66%	Similar	Similar	Similar	Similar
	Fire prevention	70%	67%	75%	Higher	Lower	Similar	Similar
	Emergency preparedness	73%	73%	72%	Similar	Much higher	Similar	Similar
Mobility	Traffic enforcement	59%	55%	60%	Similar	Lower	Similar	Similar
	Street repair	51%	40%	45%	Similar	Similar	Similar	Similar
	Street cleaning	63%	58%	65%	Higher	Similar	Similar	Similar
	Sidewalk maintenance	57%	53%	50%	Similar	Similar	Similar	Similar
	Traffic signal timing	42%	35%	38%	Similar	Lower	Lower	Similar
	Garbage collection	89%	84%	79%	Similar	Much higher	Similar	Similar
Natural Environment	Recycling	77%	84%	78%	Similar	Higher	Similar	Similar
	Yard waste pick-up	79%	82%	75%	Lower	Much higher	Similar	Similar
	Drinking water	50%	52%	49%	Similar	Much lower	Lower	Lower
	Open space	NA	53%	51%	Similar	NA	Similar	Similar
	Storm drainage	60%	67%	59%	Lower	Higher	Similar	Similar
	Sewer services	69%	72%	68%	Similar	Similar	Similar	Similar
Built Environment	Power utility	NA	75%	60%	Lower	NA	Similar	Lower
	Utility billing	NA	60%	70%	Higher	NA	Similar	Similar
	Land use, planning and zoning	38%	43%	44%	Similar	Similar	Similar	Similar
	Code enforcement	42%	37%	45%	Higher	Similar	Similar	Similar
	Cable television	68%	55%	47%	Lower	Much higher	Similar	Similar
	Economic development	36%	40%	48%	Higher	Lower	Similar	Similar
Recreation and Wellness	City parks	82%	76%	81%	Similar	Higher	Similar	Similar
	Recreation programs	74%	76%	74%	Similar	Higher	Similar	Similar
	Recreation centers	76%	77%	75%	Similar	Higher	Similar	Similar
Education and Enrichment	Special events	NA	66%	68%	Similar	NA	Similar	Similar
	Public libraries	88%	81%	83%	Similar	Higher	Similar	Similar
Community Engagement	Public information	71%	63%	70%	Higher	Higher	Similar	Similar

# The National Citizen Survey™

Table 5: Participation General

	Percent rating positively (e.g., always/sometimes, more than once a month, yes)			2017 rating compared to 2014	Comparison to benchmark		
	2008	2014	2017		2008	2014	2017
Sense of community	47%	49%	46%	Similar	Much lower	Lower	Similar
Recommend Clearwater	82%	85%	88%	Similar	Similar	Similar	Similar
Remain in Clearwater	84%	83%	85%	Similar	Similar	Similar	Similar
Contacted Clearwater employees	53%	40%	46%	Higher	Much lower	Similar	Similar

Table 6: Participation by Facet

		Percent rating positively (e.g., always/sometimes, more than once a month, yes)			2017 rating compared to 2014	Comparison to benchmark		
		2008	2014	2017		2008	2014	2017
Safety	Stocked supplies for an emergency	NA	57%	49%	Lower	NA	Much higher	Higher
	Did NOT report a crime	NA	74%	75%	Similar	NA	Similar	Similar
	Was NOT the victim of a crime	84%	87%	88%	Similar	Similar	Similar	Similar
Mobility	Carpooled instead of driving alone	NA	38%	35%	Similar	NA	Similar	Similar
	Walked or biked instead of driving	NA	58%	57%	Similar	NA	Similar	Similar
Natural Environment	Conserved water	NA	88%	91%	Similar	NA	Similar	Similar
	Made home more energy efficient	NA	80%	75%	Similar	NA	Similar	Similar
	Recycled at home	80%	85%	87%	Similar	Similar	Similar	Similar
Built Environment	Did NOT observe a code violation	NA	47%	54%	Higher	NA	Similar	Similar
	NOT under housing cost stress	NA	67%	69%	Similar	NA	Similar	Similar
Economy	Purchased goods or services in Clearwater	NA	96%	97%	Similar	NA	Similar	Similar
	Economy will have positive impact on income	10%	24%	33%	Higher	Much lower	Similar	Similar
	Work in Clearwater	NA	43%	45%	Similar	NA	Similar	Similar
Recreation and Wellness	Used Clearwater recreation centers	55%	58%	54%	Similar	Similar	Similar	Similar
	Visited a City park	86%	79%	81%	Similar	Similar	Similar	Similar
	Ate 5 portions of fruits and vegetables	NA	83%	81%	Similar	NA	Similar	Similar
	Participated in moderate or vigorous physical activity	NA	88%	84%	Similar	NA	Similar	Similar
	In very good to excellent health	NA	61%	61%	Similar	NA	Similar	Similar
Education and Enrichment	Used Clearwater public libraries	76%	64%	51%	Lower	Higher	Similar	Lower
	Attended a City-sponsored event	NA	47%	49%	Similar	NA	Similar	Similar
Community Engagement	Campaigned for an issue, cause or candidate	NA	22%	25%	Similar	NA	Similar	Similar
	Contacted Clearwater elected officials	NA	15%	20%	Similar	NA	Similar	Similar
	Volunteered	38%	40%	35%	Similar	Lower	Similar	Similar
	Participated in a club	32%	27%	24%	Similar	Similar	Similar	Similar

# The National Citizen Survey™

		Percent rating positively (e.g., always/sometimes, more than once a month, yes)			2017 rating compared to 2014	Comparison to benchmark		
		2008	2014	2017		2008	2014	2017
	Talked to or visited with neighbors	NA	92%	89%	Similar	NA	Similar	Similar
	Done a favor for a neighbor	NA	83%	83%	Similar	NA	Similar	Similar
	Attended a local public meeting	24%	14%	20%	Similar	Lower	Similar	Similar
	Watched a local public meeting	56%	31%	25%	Lower	Much higher	Similar	Similar
	Read or watched local news	NA	90%	87%	Similar	NA	Similar	Similar
	Voted in local elections	NA	82%	79%	Similar	NA	Similar	Similar