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# The City of McAllen, Texas

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## Summary Report 2006



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# SURVEY BACKGROUND

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## About The National Citizen Survey™

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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

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### Survey Administration

The NCS™ was administered using phone data collection. Phone calls were made from June 4, 2006 to June 18, 2006 using a Computer-Assisted Telephone Interviewing system<sup>1</sup>. Random telephone numbers were generated proportional to the number of residential telephone subscribers and active telephone prefixes in the geographic area of the survey. The survey was administered and the data were recorded electronically. A majority of the interviews were completed during the daytime hours, although calls were made on the weekend and during the evening, also. All phone numbers were dialed at least three times before replacing with another number, with at least one of the attempts on either a weekend or weekday. (The dispositions of the numbers dialed during the survey are listed in the table in Appendix B of the Report of Results.)

A total 3,366 phone numbers were dialed during the survey administration. Some of these numbers are considered ineligible for the survey. Of the approximately 1,448 households called<sup>2</sup>, 403 completed interviews providing a response rate of 28%. Approximately 150 households refused the survey.

The results were weighted to reflect the demographic profile of all residents in the City of McAllen. (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

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<sup>1</sup> CATI is a software program that automatically dials phone numbers, logs dispositions and records responses to completed interviews.

<sup>2</sup> Disconnected, fax/data line, or business phone numbers were not included as eligible households. For 984 phone numbers where the eligibility status of the household was unknown, 43% were estimated to be eligible. This proportion was assumed to hold for those households not contacted, or where the household refused, and therefore prevented knowing the eligibility status, and only 43% of these numbers were included in the final response rate calculation.

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.

## PROFILE OF McALLEN

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As assessed by the survey, about 39% of McAllen residents have lived in the community for more than 20 years and 63% are over age 34. Another 12% are over age 64. Sixty-three percent are currently employed; 48% rent; 52% own and 57% live in detached single family homes. Over 65% of McAllen residents have at least some college and 44% have annual household incomes above \$50,000. Seventy-six percent of McAllen residents reported that they are Spanish, Hispanic or Latino and 70% said they are White or Caucasian.

## COMMUNITY LIFE

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

### Quality of Life

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When asked to rate the overall quality of life in McAllen, 32% of respondents thought it was “excellent.” Only 1% rated overall quality of life as “poor.” McAllen as a place to raise children received an average rating of 73 on a 100-point scale.

### Ratings of Community Characteristics

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In 2006, the highest rated characteristics of McAllen were overall appearance of McAllen, access to affordable quality housing, and recreational opportunities. The average rating on a 100-point scale given to overall appearance of McAllen in 2006 was 73 compared to 68 in 2004. When asked about potential problems in McAllen, the three concerns rated by the highest proportion of respondents as a “major problem” in 2006 were drugs, graffiti, and traffic congestion. In 2006 48% rated drugs as a “major problem” compared to 47% in 2004.

### Perceptions of Safety

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When evaluating safety in the community, 75% of respondents felt “somewhat” or “very safe” from violent crimes in McAllen in 2006, compared to 68% in 2004. In their neighborhood after dark, 80% of survey participants felt “somewhat” or “very safe” in 2006, compared to 85% in 2004.

In 2006, as assessed by the survey, 14% of households reported that at least one member had been the victim of one or more crimes in the past year. In 2004, 18% of households had reported that at least one member had been a crime victim. Of those who had been the victim of a crime in 2006, 68% had reported it to police.

### Community Participation

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Participation in the civic, social and economic life of McAllen during the past year was assessed on the survey. Among those completing the questionnaire in 2006, 82% reported visiting a McAllen park in the past year compared to 83% in 2004.

## LOCAL GOVERNMENT

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

### Public Trust

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When asked to evaluate whether they were pleased with the overall direction taken by the City of McAllen, residents gave an average rating of 75 on a 100-point scale in 2006, compared to a rating of 74 in 2004.

### Service Provided by McAllen

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The overall quality of services provided by the City of McAllen was rated as 71 on a 100-point scale in 2006, compared to 68 in 2004.

### The City of McAllen Employees

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Impressions of the City of McAllen employees were assessed on the questionnaire. In 2006, those who had been in contact with a City of McAllen employee in the past year (51%) rated their overall impression as 73 on a 100-point scale, compared to an average rating of 66 received in 2004.

## ADDITIONAL QUESTIONS

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

### Policy Question #1

To what extent do you agree or disagree that traffic circulation in McAllen has improved in the last year?

Strongly agree	25%
Somewhat agree	44%
Somewhat disagree	16%
Strongly disagree	15%
Total	100%

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

### Policy Question #2

To what extent do you agree or disagree that the City is addressing your neighborhood flooding problems?

Strongly agree	39%
Somewhat agree	43%
Somewhat disagree	9%
Strongly disagree	9%
Total	100%

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

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**Policy Question #3**

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**To what extent would you support or oppose the City raising property taxes in order to build a new performing arts center?**

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Strongly agree	20%
Somewhat agree	28%
Somewhat disagree	19%
Strongly disagree	32%
Total	100%

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

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