

# **The National Citizen Survey™**

## **Bedford, MA**

Comparisons by Geographic  
Subgroups

2014

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The National Citizen Survey™  
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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. This report discusses differences in opinion of survey respondents by the four Voting Precincts.

Responses in the following tables show only the proportion of respondents giving a certain answer; for example, the percent of respondents who rated the quality of life as “excellent” or “good,” or the percent of respondents who attended a public meeting more than once a month. ANOVA and chi-square tests of significance were applied to these comparisons of survey questions. A “p-value” of 0.05 or less indicates that there is less than a 5% probability that differences observed between Districts are due to chance; or in other words, a greater than 95% probability that the differences observed are “real.” Where differences were statistically significant, they have been shaded grey.

The margin of error for this report is generally no greater than plus or minus five percentage points around any given percent reported for the entire sample (459 completed surveys). For each Precinct, the margin of error rises to approximately plus or minus 10 percentage points since sample sizes were approximately 104 for Precinct 1, 117 for Precinct 2, 117 for Precinct 3 and 121 for Precinct 4. Notable differences between Precincts included the following:

- Within the pillar of Community Characteristics, differences between precincts tended to vary. Residents in Precinct 2 tended to give lower ratings for General Community Characteristics than respondents from the other precincts. Within the facet of Mobility, residents in Precinct 1 gave lower ratings for traffic flow and ease of travel by public transportation.
- When differences within the pillar of Governance were observed, residents in Precinct 2 often gave lower ratings than respondents from the other three precincts. For instance, Precinct 2 respondents gave lower ratings for overall confidence in Bedford government, generally acting in the best interest of the community, police services, fire services, street repair, street cleaning, sidewalk maintenance, garbage collection and land use.
- Few differences existed within the pillar of Participation. When differences were observed they tended to vary, however residents in Precinct 2 did tend to have lower rates of participation than their counterparts.

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Table 1: Community Characteristics - General

Percent rating positively (e.g., excellent/good)	Precinct				Overall
	Precinct 1	Precinct 2	Precinct 3	Precinct 4	
The overall quality of life in Bedford	92%	84%	95%	90%	90%
Overall image or reputation of Bedford	88%	86%	90%	88%	88%
Bedford as a place to live	98%	89%	98%	96%	95%
Your neighborhood as a place to live	87%	83%	92%	84%	86%
Bedford as a place to raise children	94%	88%	95%	93%	92%
Bedford as a place to retire	47%	47%	70%	49%	53%
Overall appearance of Bedford	79%	80%	79%	75%	78%

Table 2: Community Characteristics - Safety

Percent rating positively (e.g., excellent/good, very/somewhat safe)	Precinct				Overall
	Precinct 1	Precinct 2	Precinct 3	Precinct 4	
Overall feeling of safety in Bedford	100%	95%	98%	95%	97%
In your neighborhood during the day	99%	94%	99%	93%	96%
In Bedford's downtown/commercial area during the day	97%	96%	98%	93%	96%

Table 3: Community Characteristics - Mobility

Percent rating positively (e.g., excellent/good, very/somewhat safe)	Precinct				Overall
	Precinct 1	Precinct 2	Precinct 3	Precinct 4	
Overall ease of getting to the places you usually have to visit	66%	69%	70%	67%	68%
Traffic flow on major streets	8%	17%	23%	14%	16%
Ease of public parking	59%	62%	64%	63%	62%
Ease of travel by car in Bedford	44%	51%	58%	49%	50%
Ease of travel by public transportation in Bedford	13%	41%	15%	21%	24%
Ease of travel by bicycle in Bedford	51%	61%	46%	53%	53%
Ease of walking in Bedford	67%	60%	50%	64%	60%
Availability of paths and walking trails	77%	82%	66%	81%	77%

Table 4: Community Characteristics - Natural Environment

Percent rating positively (e.g., excellent/good, very/somewhat safe)	Precinct				Overall
	Precinct 1	Precinct 2	Precinct 3	Precinct 4	
Quality of overall natural environment in Bedford	89%	87%	86%	89%	88%
Air quality	90%	87%	94%	89%	90%
Cleanliness of Bedford	90%	85%	89%	86%	87%

Table 5: Community Characteristics - Built Environment

Percent rating positively (e.g., excellent/good, very/somewhat safe)	Precinct				Overall
	Precinct 1	Precinct 2	Precinct 3	Precinct 4	
Overall "built environment" of Bedford (including overall design, buildings, parks and transportation systems)	57%	54%	55%	47%	53%
Public places where people want to spend time	58%	64%	66%	54%	60%
Variety of housing options	51%	48%	53%	43%	49%
Availability of affordable quality housing	50%	26%	41%	39%	38%
Overall quality of new development in Bedford	53%	47%	52%	58%	53%

Table 6: Community Characteristics - Economy

Percent rating positively (e.g., excellent/good, very/somewhat safe)	Precinct				Overall
	Precinct 1	Precinct 2	Precinct 3	Precinct 4	
Overall economic health of Bedford	89%	74%	82%	84%	82%
Bedford as a place to work	84%	66%	72%	79%	75%
Bedford as a place to visit	58%	55%	62%	53%	57%
Employment opportunities	54%	46%	55%	51%	51%
Shopping opportunities	72%	79%	77%	69%	74%
Cost of living in Bedford	41%	32%	43%	30%	36%
Overall quality of business and service establishments in Bedford	70%	70%	73%	74%	72%
Vibrant downtown/commercial area	37%	48%	27%	38%	38%

Table 7: Community Characteristics - Recreation and Wellness

Percent rating positively (e.g., excellent/good, very/somewhat safe)	Precinct				Overall
	Precinct 1	Precinct 2	Precinct 3	Precinct 4	
Health and wellness opportunities in Bedford	73%	72%	84%	74%	75%
Fitness opportunities (including exercise classes and paths or trails, etc.)	72%	76%	82%	76%	77%
Recreational opportunities	76%	74%	72%	71%	73%
Availability of affordable quality food	70%	66%	79%	69%	71%
Availability of affordable quality health care	64%	71%	76%	57%	66%
Availability of preventive health services	67%	65%	77%	61%	67%
Availability of affordable quality mental health care	51%	61%	58%	33%	51%

Table 8: Community Characteristics - Education and Enrichment

Percent rating positively (e.g., excellent/good, very/somewhat safe)	Precinct				Overall
	Precinct 1	Precinct 2	Precinct 3	Precinct 4	
Overall opportunities for education and enrichment	82%	84%	88%	82%	84%
Availability of affordable quality child care/preschool	81%	66%	79%	69%	73%
K-12 education	94%	96%	97%	97%	96%
Adult educational opportunities	68%	68%	77%	67%	70%
Opportunities to attend cultural/arts/music activities	56%	59%	58%	51%	56%
Opportunities to participate in religious or spiritual events and activities	82%	78%	89%	89%	84%

Table 9: Community Characteristics - Community Engagement

Percent rating positively (e.g., excellent/good, very/somewhat safe)	Precinct				Overall
	Precinct 1	Precinct 2	Precinct 3	Precinct 4	
Opportunities to participate in social events and activities	67%	71%	70%	61%	67%
Opportunities to volunteer	78%	72%	80%	81%	78%
Opportunities to participate in community matters	83%	75%	84%	81%	81%
Openness and acceptance of the community toward people of diverse backgrounds	65%	71%	66%	71%	68%
Neighborliness of Bedford	77%	74%	74%	72%	74%

Table 10: Governance - General

Percent rating positively (e.g., excellent/good)	Precinct				Overall
	Precinct 1	Precinct 2	Precinct 3	Precinct 4	
The Town of Bedford	86%	85%	95%	85%	88%
The value of services for the taxes paid to Bedford	63%	54%	73%	65%	64%
The overall direction that Bedford is taking	72%	57%	71%	67%	66%
The job Bedford government does at welcoming citizen involvement	71%	65%	82%	74%	72%
Overall confidence in Bedford government	80%	57%	73%	75%	71%
Generally acting in the best interest of the community	74%	57%	76%	79%	71%
Being honest	82%	66%	81%	77%	76%
Treating all residents fairly	74%	66%	80%	75%	73%
Overall customer service by Bedford employees (police, receptionists, planners, etc.)	91%	82%	87%	84%	86%
The Federal Government	48%	49%	53%	45%	48%

Table 11: Governance - Safety

Percent rating positively (e.g., excellent/good)	Precinct				Overall
	Precinct 1	Precinct 2	Precinct 3	Precinct 4	
Police services	96%	86%	95%	94%	92%
Fire services	98%	92%	100%	98%	97%
Ambulance or emergency medical services	98%	92%	95%	98%	96%
Crime prevention	93%	88%	92%	84%	89%
Fire prevention and education	92%	86%	96%	90%	91%
Animal control	82%	82%	72%	76%	78%
Emergency preparedness (services that prepare the community for natural disasters or other emergency situations)	80%	75%	71%	76%	75%

Table 12: Governance - Mobility

Percent rating positively (e.g., excellent/good)	Precinct				Overall
	Precinct 1	Precinct 2	Precinct 3	Precinct 4	
Traffic enforcement	80%	67%	75%	62%	70%
Street repair	53%	34%	53%	49%	47%
Street cleaning	71%	54%	72%	66%	65%
Street lighting	77%	61%	66%	70%	68%
Snow removal	91%	82%	77%	78%	82%
Sidewalk maintenance	72%	50%	59%	58%	59%
Traffic signal timing	67%	60%	62%	61%	62%
Bus or transit services	41%	50%	35%	40%	42%

Table 13: Governance - Natural Environment

Percent rating positively (e.g., excellent/good)	Precinct				Overall
	Precinct 1	Precinct 2	Precinct 3	Precinct 4	
Garbage collection	94%	80%	91%	94%	89%
Recycling	93%	87%	91%	94%	91%
Yard waste pick-up	77%	66%	77%	80%	74%
Drinking water	49%	60%	66%	51%	57%
Preservation of natural areas such as open space, farmlands and greenbelts	87%	76%	85%	70%	79%
Bedford open space	77%	64%	70%	68%	69%

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Table 14: Governance - Built Environment

Percent rating positively (e.g., excellent/good)	Precinct				Overall
	Precinct 1	Precinct 2	Precinct 3	Precinct 4	
Storm drainage	81%	65%	75%	68%	72%
Sewer services	76%	77%	84%	84%	80%
Power (electric and/or gas) utility	87%	83%	83%	87%	85%
Utility billing (water/sewer)	71%	62%	72%	78%	71%
Land use, planning and zoning	70%	49%	77%	59%	63%
Code enforcement (weeds, abandoned buildings, etc.)	70%	59%	61%	68%	64%
Cable television	75%	67%	65%	67%	68%

Table 15: Governance - Economy

Percent rating positively (e.g., excellent/good)	Precinct				Overall
	Precinct 1	Precinct 2	Precinct 3	Precinct 4	
Economic development	62%	52%	67%	61%	60%

Table 16: Governance - Recreation and Wellness

Percent rating positively (e.g., excellent/good)	Precinct				Overall
	Precinct 1	Precinct 2	Precinct 3	Precinct 4	
Town parks	83%	78%	75%	84%	80%
Recreation programs or classes	84%	82%	83%	77%	81%
Recreation centers or facilities	78%	76%	77%	75%	77%
Health services	81%	73%	76%	76%	76%

Table 17: Governance - Education and Enrichment

Percent rating positively (e.g., excellent/good)	Precinct				Overall
	Precinct 1	Precinct 2	Precinct 3	Precinct 4	
Public library services	98%	92%	96%	98%	96%
Town-sponsored special events	77%	73%	78%	65%	73%

Table 18: Governance - Community Engagement

Percent rating positively (e.g., excellent/good)	Precinct				Overall
	Precinct 1	Precinct 2	Precinct 3	Precinct 4	
Public information services	80%	78%	82%	86%	81%

Table 19: Participation General

Percent rating positively (e.g., always/sometimes, more than once a month, yes)	Precinct				Overall
	Precinct 1	Precinct 2	Precinct 3	Precinct 4	
Sense of community	80%	71%	77%	74%	75%
Recommend living in Bedford to someone who asks	94%	84%	96%	93%	92%
Remain in Bedford for the next five years	85%	76%	90%	85%	83%
Contacted the Town of Bedford (in-person, phone, email or web) for help or information	63%	52%	61%	67%	61%

Table 20: Participation - Safety

Percent rating positively (e.g., always/sometimes, more than once a month, yes)	Precinct				Overall
	Precinct 1	Precinct 2	Precinct 3	Precinct 4	
Was NOT the victim of a crime	94%	91%	97%	95%	94%
Did NOT report a crime	90%	86%	92%	89%	89%
Stocked supplies in preparation for an emergency	42%	30%	40%	38%	37%

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Table 21: Participation - Mobility

Percent rating positively (e.g., always/sometimes, more than once a month, yes)	Precinct				Overall
	Precinct 1	Precinct 2	Precinct 3	Precinct 4	
Walked or biked instead of driving	63%	66%	44%	70%	61%
Carpooled with other adults or children instead of driving alone	50%	33%	42%	51%	44%
Used bus, rail, subway or other public transportation instead of driving	23%	31%	20%	22%	24%

Table 22: Participation - Natural Environment

Percent rating positively (e.g., always/sometimes, more than once a month, yes)	Precinct				Overall
	Precinct 1	Precinct 2	Precinct 3	Precinct 4	
Recycle at home	97%	96%	95%	94%	95%
Made efforts to make your home more energy efficient	75%	77%	72%	77%	75%
Made efforts to conserve water	84%	68%	75%	76%	75%

Table 23: Participation - Built Environment

Percent rating positively (e.g., always/sometimes, more than once a month, yes)	Precinct				Overall
	Precinct 1	Precinct 2	Precinct 3	Precinct 4	
NOT under housing cost stress	68%	61%	61%	72%	66%
Did NOT observe a code violation	74%	69%	83%	73%	74%

Table 24: Participation - Economy

Percent rating positively (e.g., always/sometimes, more than once a month, yes)	Precinct				Overall
	Precinct 1	Precinct 2	Precinct 3	Precinct 4	
Purchase goods or services from a business located in Bedford	99%	99%	96%	94%	97%
Economy will have positive impact on income	35%	26%	37%	22%	30%
Work in Bedford	35%	32%	30%	37%	34%

Table 25: Participation - Recreation and Wellness

Percent rating positively (e.g., always/sometimes, more than once a month, yes)	Precinct				Overall
	Precinct 1	Precinct 2	Precinct 3	Precinct 4	
Used Bedford recreation centers or their services	75%	50%	49%	67%	60%
Visited a neighborhood park, town park, or conservation area	81%	78%	77%	82%	79%
Eat at least 5 portions of fruits and vegetables a day	93%	91%	80%	87%	88%
Participate in moderate or vigorous physical activity	87%	85%	87%	92%	88%
Reported being in "very good" or "excellent" health	83%	69%	76%	69%	74%

Table 26: Participation - Education and Enrichment

Percent rating positively (e.g., always/sometimes, more than once a month, yes)	Precinct				Overall
	Precinct 1	Precinct 2	Precinct 3	Precinct 4	
Used Bedford public libraries or their services	86%	84%	76%	87%	83%
Participated in religious or spiritual activities in Bedford	47%	37%	38%	51%	43%
Attended a Town-sponsored event	66%	66%	53%	68%	63%

Table 27: Participation - Community Engagement

Percent rating positively (e.g., always/sometimes, more than once a month, yes)	Precinct				Overall
	Precinct 1	Precinct 2	Precinct 3	Precinct 4	
Campaigned or advocated for an issue, cause or candidate	23%	19%	15%	22%	20%
Contacted Bedford elected officials (in-person, phone, email or web) to express your opinion	21%	18%	15%	19%	18%
Volunteered your time to some group/activity in Bedford	48%	39%	41%	49%	44%
Participated in a club	33%	29%	28%	27%	29%
Talked to or visited with your immediate neighbors	86%	92%	91%	91%	90%
Done a favor for a neighbor	80%	81%	82%	89%	83%
Attended a local public meeting	45%	25%	33%	39%	35%
Watched (online or on television) a local public meeting	39%	28%	30%	29%	31%
Read or watch local news (via television, paper, computer, etc.)	90%	82%	78%	84%	83%
Vote in local elections	83%	85%	83%	82%	83%

Table 28: Community Focus Areas

Percent rating positively (e.g., essential/very important)	Precinct				Overall
	Precinct 1	Precinct 2	Precinct 3	Precinct 4	
Overall feeling of safety in Bedford	88%	82%	87%	82%	85%
Overall ease of getting to the places you usually have to visit	80%	67%	81%	84%	78%
Quality of overall natural environment in Bedford	77%	73%	70%	71%	73%
Overall "built environment" of Bedford (including overall design, buildings, parks and transportation systems)	71%	70%	74%	77%	73%
Health and wellness opportunities in Bedford	59%	59%	51%	49%	54%
Overall opportunities for education and enrichment	75%	63%	78%	73%	72%
Overall economic health of Bedford	89%	81%	93%	92%	89%
Sense of community	78%	78%	79%	69%	76%

Table 29: Support for Potential Features of Community Swimming Pool

Please indicate how much you would support or oppose each of the following potential features of a community swimming pool in Bedford: (Percent rating as "strongly support" or "somewhat support").	Precinct				Overall
	Precinct 1	Precinct 2	Precinct 3	Precinct 4	
An outdoor pool for summer use only	63%	61%	67%	54%	61%
A pool with indoor and outdoor features for year-round use	78%	65%	79%	67%	72%
An indoor pool for year-round use	71%	62%	74%	68%	68%
No pool in Bedford	30%	32%	27%	31%	30%

Table 30: Likelihood of Using Types of Pools in Bedford

How likely or unlikely would you or members of your household be to use each of the following types of pools in Bedford?: (Percent rating as "very likely" or "somewhat likely").	Precinct				Overall
	Precinct 1	Precinct 2	Precinct 3	Precinct 4	
Outdoor pool	53%	52%	43%	51%	50%
Pool with indoor and outdoor features	64%	61%	50%	61%	59%
Indoor pool	63%	57%	55%	58%	58%

**Table 31: Likelihood of Purchasing Annual Pass (\$500 to \$999) for Types of Pools in Bedford**

How likely or unlikely would you or members of your household be to use each of the following types of pools in Bedford?: (Percent rating as "very likely" or "somewhat likely").	Precinct				Overall
	Precinct 1	Precinct 2	Precinct 3	Precinct 4	
Outdoor pool	20%	10%	11%	16%	14%
Pool with indoor and outdoor features	40%	28%	30%	30%	31%
Indoor pool	34%	23%	30%	29%	29%

**Table 32: Likelihood of Purchasing Annual Pass (\$1,000 to \$1,500) for Types of Pools in Bedford**

How likely or unlikely would you or members of your household be to use each of the following types of pools in Bedford?: (Percent rating as "very likely" or "somewhat likely").	Precinct				Overall
	Precinct 1	Precinct 2	Precinct 3	Precinct 4	
Outdoor pool	7%	1%	1%	2%	3%
Pool with indoor and outdoor features	19%	11%	8%	9%	11%
Indoor pool	17%	9%	6%	10%	10%

**Table 33: Town of Bedford Priorities**

How much of a priority, if any, should it be for the Town of Bedford to address each of the following in the next two years?: (Percent rating as "high priority" or "medium priority").	Precinct				Overall
	Precinct 1	Precinct 2	Precinct 3	Precinct 4	
Commuter parking for access to public transportation	67%	62%	77%	64%	67%
Bike storage facilities near bikeways, public transportation and schools	67%	62%	70%	62%	65%
A Town bus that would provide fixed route service circulating around the community	74%	70%	75%	71%	73%
Express public transportation connections to established commuter hubs such as Alewife or Commuter Rail	94%	86%	87%	80%	86%