



SUNSHINE STATE SURVEY

COLLEGE OF ARTS & SCIENCES
UNIVERSITY OF SOUTH FLORIDA

Quick Facts

Data Release No. 1 | Oct. 6, 2016

Most Important Issue | Economy | Environment

The USF-Nielsen Sunshine State Survey

Florida, the nation's third largest state, is also one of the most diverse in terms of the people who live here. The constant in- and out-migration of people from other states and countries, as well as within-state re-locations, give rise to new problems and differing opinions as to how to resolve them. The goal of the annual USF-Nielsen Sunshine State Survey is to provide the state's government, business, and not-for-profit leaders, as well as citizens, in-depth analyses of public opinion on a wide-range of issues so that they might better serve the people who choose Florida as their home.

MOST IMPORTANT ISSUE FACING FLORIDA

(An open-ended question)

Economy and jobs are still top of minds for Floridians, up slightly from last year; Environment and crime and policing also up.

- The seven most-cited issues are (in descending order): economy and jobs (24%), environment (13%), crime and policing (11%), education and schools (9%), health care (5%), government officials (5%) and immigration (5%).
- Together, the top seven issues account for 72% of all responses.
- Males and working age Floridians are most concerned about the economy and jobs. The environment is the top issue for residents of the Naples area and older Floridians. Educational concerns are highest among females and those with a child at home. Crime and policing is the most important issue for African-Americans, lower income households, and Floridians with lower educational attainment. (See full data release for details.)

THE ECONOMY

Financial Stress in Florida Households

Nearly two-thirds of Floridians are feeling financial stress in their own household.

- 63% of Floridians report feeling financial stress in their household, about equally split in terms of severity: 23% are feeling "a little," 17% are feeling "some," and 23% are feeling "a lot." 26% report feeling no stress.
- Financial stress is greatest among households with a child, low-income earners, and Floridians without a college degree.
- The proportion of Floridians feeling stress fell 8% since last year.

Biggest Threat to the Economy

(an open-ended question)

Top identified threats to Florida's economy include the lack of well-paying jobs, government actions, and illegal immigration.

- The top three threats to the state's economy are: the lack of well-paying jobs (28%); government waste, taxes and regulations (24%); and illegal immigration (18%). Together, these three issues encompass 70% of all responses. Those most concerned about the lack of well-paying jobs are Floridians with a child at home, racial/ethnic minorities, and low- to mid-income households. Whites are the most concerned about illegal immigration. Younger Floridians see an inadequate education system as the biggest threat to the state's economy. (See full data release for details.)
- The biggest increases from last year were the lack of well-paying jobs and an inadequate education system.

The USF-Sunshine State Survey is in collaboration with



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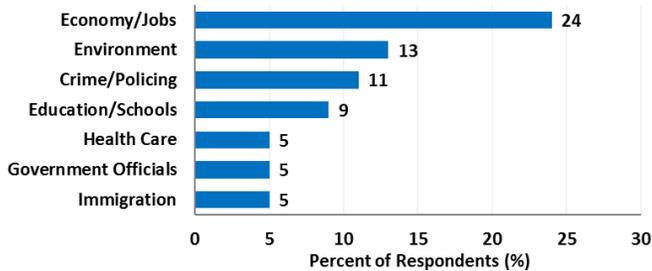
Quick Facts

Data Release No. 1 | Oct. 6, 2016

Most Important Issue | Economy | Environment

Economy is dominant in the minds of Floridians; top seven issues account for 72% of all responses

Question: In your opinion, what is the most important issue facing the State of Florida today? (Open-ended) Top seven responses shown.



Source: Telephone survey of a random sample of 1,248 Floridians age 18 and older conducted September 1–19, 2016. Margin of error ± 2.77%.

USF-NIELSEN SUNSHINE STATE SURVEY

THE ENVIRONMENT

Biggest Environmental Problem Facing Florida Today

The most-cited threats to the state’s environment are water-related problems, loss of natural land, and climate change.

- The top reported environmental problems facing the state are water-related problems (34%), loss of natural lands for wildlife (20%), and climate change/global warming (18%). Together, these three problems account for 72% of all responses.
- Water-related problems are the biggest environmental concern of older Floridians, whites, and residents of the Naples and Palm Beach areas. Younger Floridians and more affluent households are the most likely to cite the loss of natural lands, while residents of Miami/Ft. Lauderdale point to climate change. For racial/ethnic minorities and low-income households air pollution is the most threatening. (See full data release for details.)

- The citation rates of both climate change (+13%) and loss of natural lands (+9%) went up the most since last year’s survey.

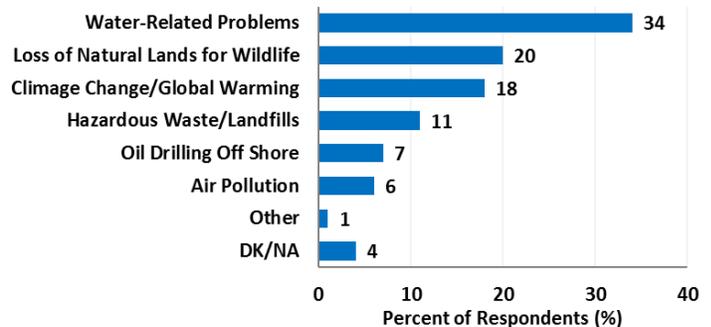
State Performance: Addressing Sinkholes

Most Floridians rate the state’s performance addressing sinkholes as only “fair” or “poor.”

- A new question asked Floridians to rate state performance addressing sinkholes. Over half rated it as either “fair” (30%) or “poor” (21%). One-third gave the state an “excellent” or “good” mark, while a sizable portion of Floridians—16%—did not express an opinion on the question.
- Residents of the Tampa Bay and Miami areas are most critical of state efforts to address the problem of sinkholes, while residents of North Florida are the most approving.

Water-related problems are the top environmental concern of over one-third of Floridians

Question: What is the biggest environmental problem facing Florida today?



Source: Telephone survey of a random sample of 1,248 Floridians age 18 and older conducted September 1–19, 2016. Margin of error ± 2.77%

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Detailed Analysis of Hot Topics and Additional Questions on Economy/Development, The Environment, and Public Finance—Budgets, Taxes, and Spending

Detailed Contents

Hot Topics: Most Important Issue, Economy, and Environment

-  Most Important Issue Facing Florida
-  Financial Stress in Florida Households
-  Biggest Threat to the Economy
-  Biggest Environmental Problem in Florida Today
- NEW** State Government Performance Ratings – Addressing the Problem of Sinkholes

Economy/Development

- NEW** Floridians Currently Making Payments on Student Loan Debt
- NEW** Right or Wrong Direction? – Increase Minimum Wage to \$15 per hour
-  State Government Performance Ratings – Creating Jobs
-  Citizen Trust Ratings – Business Community Leaders
-  Citizen Trust Ratings – Social Service/Non-Profit Leaders
-  Right or Wrong Direction? – Pass Stricter Growth Management Regulations

Environment

- NEW** Fracking – Allow, Ban, or Not Enough Information
-  Right or Wrong Direction? – Allow Off-Shore Drilling for Oil and Gas
-  State Government Performance – Protecting Environment
- NEW** State Government Performance – Managing Funds for Conservation Land Purchases
- NEW** State Government Performance – Promoting Alternative Energy Technologies

Public Finance—Budgets, Taxing and Spending

-  State Government Performance Ratings – Managing State’s Finances
-  Preferred State Government Budget Approach
-  State Taxes Relative to State Services
-  State Spending – Efficient or Wasteful?
-  Local Taxes Relative to Local Services
-  Local Spending – Efficient or Wasteful?
-  Right or Wrong Direction? – Start to Collect Tax on Internet Purchases