



Quick Facts

Data Release No. 5 | Oct. 25, 2016

Biggest Divide | Leadership and Gov't Performance | Livability (Quality of Life): Present & Future

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.

BIGGEST DIVIDE

Biggest Divide in State

Racial/ethnic differences are seen as the biggest divide in the state making coalition-building difficult; identified by almost a quarter of Floridians (24%).

- Other responses include differences between elected officials and average citizens (16%), partisan differences (13%), income inequalities (12%) and generational differences (11%).
- Racial/ethnic differences are seen as a much larger problem than two years ago (+10%), while citation of partisan differences decreased (-15%).
- Racial/ethnic differences are most frequently cited by African-Americans and residents of the Naples area. The elected official/average citizen divide is seen as the biggest in the state by retirement-age Floridians and mid-income households. Partisan differences between Democrats and Republicans are identified as the biggest divide by males, working-age Floridians, affluent households, and college

graduates. Younger Floridians and those *with* a child at home see income inequalities between rich and poor as the biggest stumbling block to finding solutions in Florida. Generational differences are seen as the most serious by younger Floridians and low-income households. (See full data release for details.)

LEADERSHIP AND GOVERNMENT PERFORMANCE

Most Important Leadership Quality

A majority (56%) of Floridians identify integrity and honesty as the most important leadership qualities.

- Other responses (each cited by less than 10%) include: consensus-building/bipartisanship (9%), consistency (7%), good communication skills (7%), and intelligence (7%), compassion (6%), vision (5%), all equally (volunteered, 2%), and 1% do not provide a response.
- Older Floridians look for integrity and honesty in a good leader at a higher rates than younger Floridians. In turn, younger Floridians put more emphasis on a leader having consistency than their older counterparts.
- Integrity and honesty are the most important leadership qualities in Palm Beach and Naples. Consensus-building/bipartisanship is most important to mid-income households and those with higher formal educational attainment. Good communication skills are identified as the most integral to good leadership by low-income households and those with less formal educational attainment. There were no significant differences among those citing intelligence or compassion. (See full data release for details.)

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Overview of Citizen Trust in Leadership

Floridians give all levels of government poor trust ratings; local government leaders are the most trustworthy, federal government leaders are least trustworthy.

- An overwhelming majority (80%) give federal government leaders negative trust ratings: 20% “never” trust federal leaders, while 60% only trust them “some of the time” to do what is right for Floridians. Only 19% trust federal leaders either “most of the time” (16%) or “almost always” (3%).
- State government leaders also find little trust among Floridians, with nearly two-thirds (74%) trusting state leaders “never” (14%) or only “some of the time” (60%). A quarter of Floridians give state leaders positive ratings— 22% “most of the time,” and 3% “almost always.”
- Local government leaders receive better trust ratings from Floridians than their counterparts at the state and federal levels, although a majority are still negative. Fully 62% assign negative trust ratings to local government leaders, with 8% “never” trusting them and 54% trusting them only “some of the time.” Over a third (36%) trust their local government leaders “most of the time” (32%) or “almost always” (4%).
- Generally, females trust government leaders at all levels more than males. Hispanics trust the federal government more than other races. Low-income households trust federal officials more, but local leaders less than other households. (See full data release for details.)

GOVERNMENT PERFORMANCE

Increase Term Limits in Florida’s Legislature

Almost 90% of Floridians are opposed to increasing term limits for state legislators (from 8 to 12 years).

- A majority (65%) is “strongly” opposed to this change. Only 8% supports the longer term limits.
- Whites, retired Floridians, and mid-income households are the strongest opponents to increasing term limits. Support for increasing term limits comes from Hispanics, those out of the work force, and both low- and high-income households. (See full data release for details.)

Overview of Government Performance Ratings

All levels of government get more negative than positive performance ratings; local governments (counties, cities) get the most positive ratings, federal government gets the most “poor” ratings, state government is in the middle.

- Nearly three-quarters of Floridians (73%) rate the federal government’s overall performance negatively—either “poor” (37%) or fair (36%). Only 24% rate federal government performance positively.
- Almost seven-in-ten (69%) Floridians rate their state government’s performance as either “poor” (26%) or “fair” (43%). Only 29% assign positive ratings to state government performance.
- There is less disparity between the positive and negative ratings of local governments. County governments receive slightly more negative than positive ratings (55% vs. 43%). Municipal governments get a nearly equal proportion of negative and positive ratings (43% to 42%, respectively).

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Overview of Government Performance Ratings, *cont.*

- Overall, females assign more positive ratings to government than males. Older Floridians and mid-income households also assign more positive government performance ratings than their respective counterparts. Racial/ethnic minorities rate federal government performance higher than whites but rate local (county, city) government performance lower than whites. (See full data release for details.)

LIVABILITY OF THE STATE

State of Florida: Better or Worse than Five Years Ago?

Almost half of long-term residents think that Florida's livability is the "same" today as five years ago; more rate as "worse" than "better."

- Some good news is that retrospective ratings have recovered from their Recession-era lows: "worse" ratings (26%) are at their lowest in ten years, down (-19%) from 45% in 2011. "Better" ratings (23%) are near a ten-year high (only 2014 was higher, 25%). Since 2015, there has been a modest increase in "better" ratings (+2%) and decrease in "same" ratings (-3%)
- Most likely to believe that the quality of life in Florida has *improved* over the last five years are African-Americans, Hispanics, and those living in affluent households. The highest proportion of *worse* ratings come from older Floridians, low- and mid-income households, and those with some college education. Younger Floridians, whites, and college graduates are more prone to view the state's quality of life is the *same* as five years ago. (See full data release for details.)

Overview of Five Year Outlooks: State, County, Neighborhood

Floridians most optimistic about changes in their own county; most see no changes to their own neighborhood.

- More than four-in-ten (41%) Floridians believe that the quality of life in the state will not change over the next five years. Nearly a third (32%) are optimistic that the quality of life in the state will improve, while 20% believes that livability will deteriorate. Pessimistic outlooks for the state's future are near 10-year lows (only 2014 was lower, 19%).
- Floridians are slightly more optimistic about the future of their own county than the state at large: 36% believe that their county will become a better place to live over the next five years, compared to 32% for the state. A nearly equal proportion believes that life in their county will get worse compared to the state (19% vs. 20%) and that the quality of life in their county will stay the same (42% vs. 41%).
- Compared to the outlooks for the futures of the state and counties, most Floridians (60%) do not see quality of life in their own neighborhood changing much over the next five years—a pattern observed since 2010. Relatively few residents see the livability of their own neighborhood either getting better (27%) or worse (11%) over the next five years.
- Younger Floridians, African-Americans and mid-income households are most likely to believe quality of life will get better. Older Floridians, Hispanics and low-income households are most prone to seeing their quality of life getting worse. (See full data release for details.)

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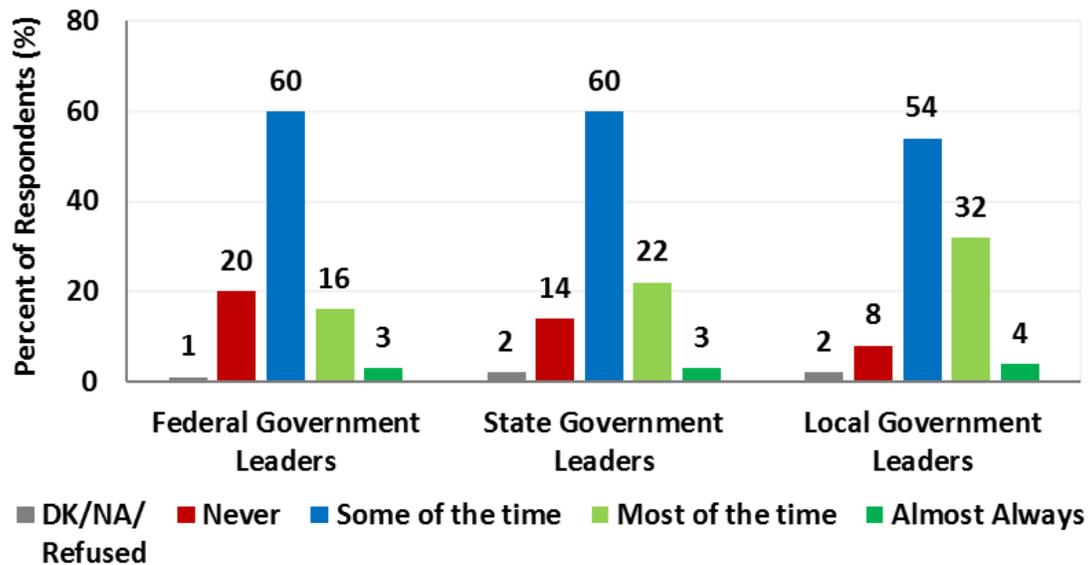
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High levels of distrust of government leaders at all levels; Floridians are most distrustful of federal leaders; local leaders are trusted the most

Question: How much of the time do you think you can trust _____ to do what is right for Floridians? Would you say almost always, most of the time, some of the time, or never?



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%.

2016 USF-NIELSEN SUNSHINE STATE SURVEY

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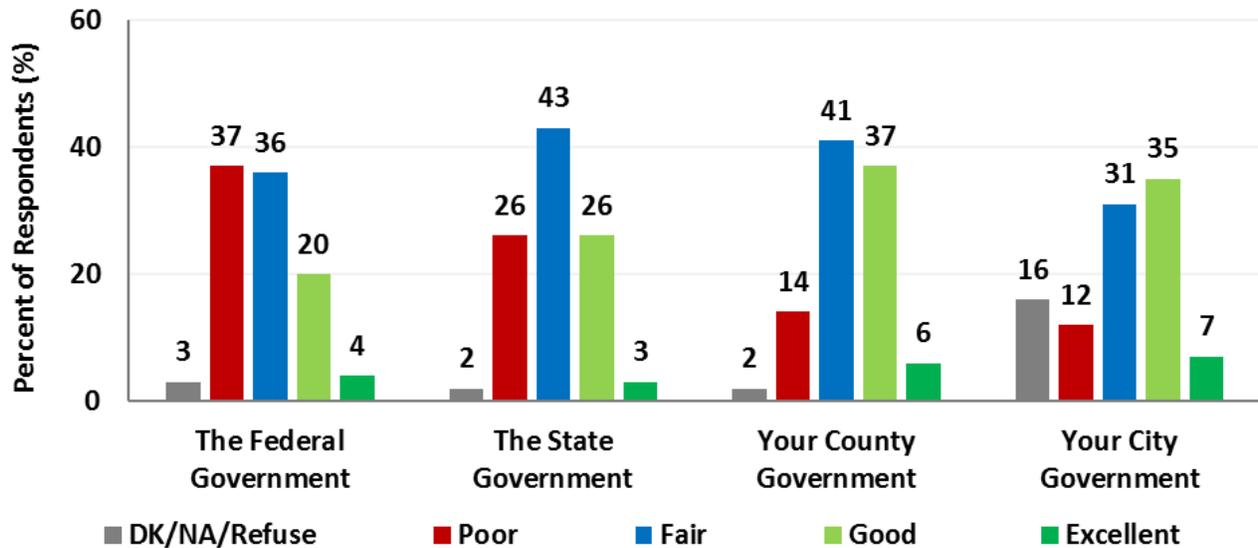
**SUNSHINE
STATE SURVEY**
COLLEGE OF ARTS & SCIENCES
UNIVERSITY OF SOUTH FLORIDA

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Question: How would you rate the overall performance of government? Would you say that _____ consistently does an excellent, good, fair, or poor job of serving the public?

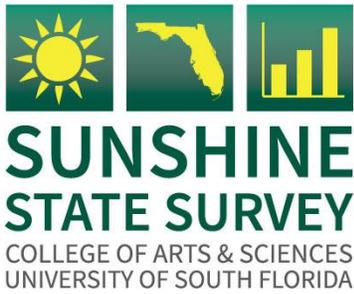


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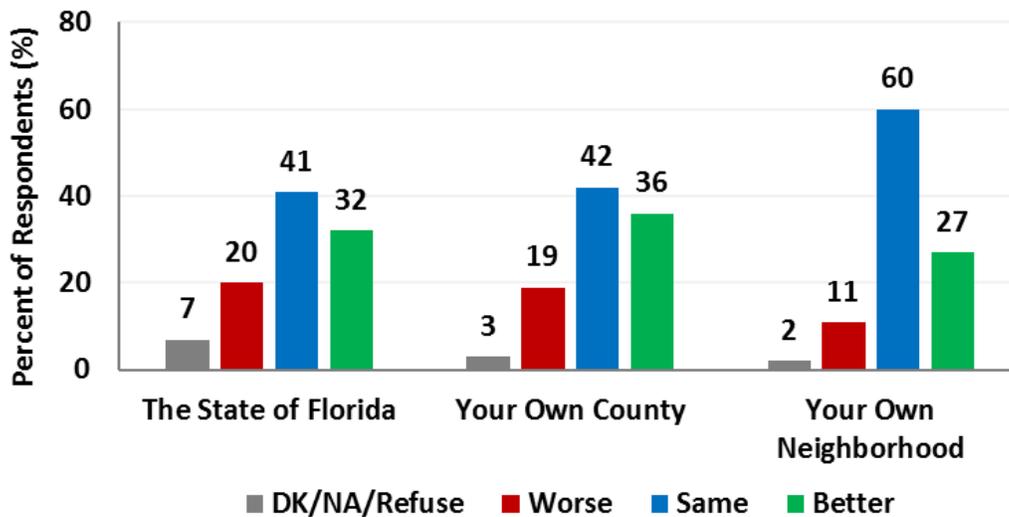
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More Floridians are optimistic about the quality of life in their own county than elsewhere; most expect no changes in their own neighborhood

Question: Looking ahead to the next five years, do you think that _____ will become a better or worse place to live, or do you think it will stay about the same?



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 Biggest Divide, Leadership and Government Performance, and Livability (Quality of Life): Present & Future

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Livability (Quality of Life): Present & Future

 State of Florida: Better or Worse than Five Years Ago?

 State of Florida: Better or Worse in Five Years?

 Own County: Better or Worse in Five Years?

 Own Neighborhood: Better or Worse in Five Years?

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