



**THE NCS**<sup>TM</sup>  
The National Citizen Survey<sup>TM</sup>

# Albemarle County, VA

Comparisons by Geographic Subgroups

2017



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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 geographic subarea.

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 subarea 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 all respondents (382 completed surveys) is generally no greater than plus or minus five percentage points around any given percent. The margin of error for subgroups is less precise. For subgroups of approximately 100 respondents, the margin of error is plus or minus 10 percentage points.

Three geographic subareas were tracked for comparison and the number of completed surveys for each are in the figure below:

Figure 1: Geographic Areas

Area	Number of Completed Surveys
Urban Ring	96
Rural area	139
Other developed areas	147

Notable differences in the geographic subarea comparisons included the following:

- Overall, residents living in other developed areas of Albemarle County tended to give higher marks across Community Characteristics and Governance and were more likely to report higher levels of Participation.
- Where differences were significant, rural area residents tended to evaluate certain County provided services as less important compared to their counterparts particularly as it related to transportation and mobility (e.g., expansion of bus service and bike paths, sidewalks, etc.). Consequently, rural area respondents also were less likely to support paying a higher tax for the County to provide these services.
- While generally less engaged in the community, Urban Ring residents tended to favor in-person meetings and social media as ways to provide comments on local issues, more so than their peers in the rural and other developed areas.

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Table 1: Community Characteristics - General

Percent rating positively (e.g., excellent/good)	Area			Overall
	Urban Ring	Rural areas	Other developed areas	
The overall quality of life in Albemarle County	91%	89%	87%	89%
Overall image or reputation of Albemarle County	82%	79%	83%	81%
Albemarle County as a place to live	92%	89%	91%	91%
Your neighborhood as a place to live	90%	90%	89%	90%
Albemarle County as a place to raise children	92%	91%	96%	93%
Albemarle County as a place to retire	80%	77%	82%	80%
Overall appearance of Albemarle County	87%	86%	90%	88%

Table 2: Community Characteristics - Safety

Percent rating positively (e.g., excellent/good, very/somewhat safe)	Area			Overall
	Urban Ring	Rural areas	Other developed areas	
Overall feeling of safety in Albemarle County	86%	86%	93%	89%
In your neighborhood during the day	94%	98%	97%	97%

Table 3: Community Characteristics - Mobility

Percent rating positively (e.g., excellent/good, very/somewhat safe)	Area			Overall
	Urban Ring	Rural areas	Other developed areas	
Overall ease of getting to the places you usually have to visit	54%	59%	70%	62%
Traffic flow on major streets	41%	39%	49%	43%
Ease of public parking	40%	49%	38%	42%
Ease of travel by car in Albemarle County	52%	51%	66%	57%
Ease of travel by public transportation in Albemarle County	20%	20%	29%	24%
Ease of travel by bicycle in Albemarle County	24%	20%	34%	27%
Ease of walking in Albemarle County	24%	33%	44%	35%
Availability of paths and walking trails	56%	53%	68%	60%

Table 4: Community Characteristics - Natural Environment

Percent rating positively (e.g., excellent/good, very/somewhat safe)	Area			Overall
	Urban Ring	Rural areas	Other developed areas	
Quality of overall natural environment in Albemarle County	92%	85%	95%	91%
Air quality	87%	90%	92%	90%
Cleanliness of Albemarle County	84%	77%	87%	83%

Table 5: Community Characteristics - Built Environment

Percent rating positively (e.g., excellent/good, very/somewhat safe)	Area			Overall
	Urban Ring	Rural areas	Other developed areas	
Overall "built environment" of Albemarle County (including overall design, buildings, parks and transportation systems)	44%	54%	71%	58%
Public places where people want to spend time	73%	72%	80%	76%
Variety of housing options	38%	40%	51%	44%
Availability of affordable quality housing	22%	22%	33%	26%
Overall quality of new development in Albemarle County	56%	45%	60%	54%

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Table 6: Community Characteristics - Economy

Percent rating positively (e.g., excellent/good, very/somewhat safe)	Area			Overall
	Urban Ring	Rural areas	Other developed areas	
Overall economic health of Albemarle County	69%	74%	83%	76%
Albemarle County as a place to work	73%	69%	76%	73%
Albemarle County as a place to visit	91%	89%	87%	89%
Employment opportunities	59%	53%	51%	54%
Shopping opportunities	68%	76%	68%	71%
Cost of living in Albemarle County	15%	27%	33%	25%
Overall quality of business and service establishments in Albemarle County	70%	71%	79%	73%

Table 7: Community Characteristics - Recreation and Wellness

Percent rating positively (e.g., excellent/good, very/somewhat safe)	Area			Overall
	Urban Ring	Rural areas	Other developed areas	
Health and wellness opportunities in Albemarle County	77%	84%	92%	85%
Fitness opportunities (including exercise classes and paths or trails, etc.)	74%	74%	81%	77%
Recreational opportunities	73%	70%	84%	77%
Availability of affordable quality food	73%	68%	79%	74%
Availability of affordable quality health care	70%	69%	81%	74%
Availability of preventive health services	76%	71%	84%	78%
Availability of affordable quality mental health care	49%	47%	61%	53%

Table 8: Community Characteristics - Education and Enrichment

Percent rating positively (e.g., excellent/good, very/somewhat safe)	Area			Overall
	Urban Ring	Rural areas	Other developed areas	
Overall opportunities for education and enrichment	88%	86%	93%	89%
Availability of affordable quality child care/preschool	34%	36%	40%	38%
Adult educational opportunities	76%	80%	80%	79%
Opportunities to attend cultural/arts/music activities	91%	77%	86%	84%
Opportunities to participate in religious or spiritual events and activities	88%	86%	89%	88%

Table 9: Community Characteristics - Community Engagement

Percent rating positively (e.g., excellent/good, very/somewhat safe)	Area			Overall
	Urban Ring	Rural areas	Other developed areas	
Opportunities to participate in social events and activities	70%	66%	82%	74%
Opportunities to volunteer	77%	88%	86%	84%
Opportunities to participate in community matters	74%	76%	81%	77%
Openness and acceptance of the community toward people of diverse backgrounds	58%	61%	65%	62%
Neighborliness of residents in Albemarle County	52%	64%	73%	64%

Table 10: Governance - General

Percent rating positively (e.g., excellent/good)	Area			Overall
	Urban Ring	Rural areas	Other developed areas	
Albemarle County	83%	73%	83%	80%
The value of services for the taxes paid to Albemarle County	44%	55%	50%	50%
The overall direction that Albemarle County is taking	47%	39%	54%	48%

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Percent rating positively (e.g., excellent/good)	Area			Overall
	Urban Ring	Rural areas	Other developed areas	
The job Albemarle County government does at welcoming citizen involvement	57%	44%	53%	52%
Overall confidence in Albemarle County government	55%	39%	52%	49%
Generally acting in the best interest of the community	59%	41%	56%	52%
Being honest	55%	53%	55%	54%
Treating all residents fairly	57%	46%	54%	52%
Overall customer service by Albemarle County employees (police, receptionists, planners, etc.)	69%	73%	76%	73%
The Federal Government	41%	42%	45%	43%
State of Virginia	59%	48%	60%	56%

Table 11: Governance - Safety

Percent rating positively (e.g., excellent/good)	Area			Overall
	Urban Ring	Rural areas	Other developed areas	
Police services	88%	84%	92%	88%
Fire services	95%	89%	98%	94%
Ambulance or emergency medical services	94%	88%	96%	93%
Crime prevention	70%	75%	82%	76%
Fire prevention and education	82%	73%	86%	81%
Animal control	72%	69%	66%	69%
Emergency preparedness (services that prepare the community for natural disasters or other emergency situations)	68%	65%	78%	71%

Table 12: Governance - Mobility

Percent rating positively (e.g., excellent/good)	Area			Overall
	Urban Ring	Rural areas	Other developed areas	
Traffic enforcement	55%	50%	59%	55%
Street lighting	47%	56%	54%	53%
Bus or transit services	42%	27%	37%	37%

Table 13: Governance - Natural Environment

Percent rating positively (e.g., excellent/good)	Area			Overall
	Urban Ring	Rural areas	Other developed areas	
Garbage collection	88%	65%	82%	80%
Recycling	60%	61%	69%	64%
Drinking water	71%	76%	73%	73%
Preservation of natural areas such as open space, farmlands and greenbelts	56%	60%	70%	62%
Albemarle County open space	66%	61%	69%	66%

Table 14: Governance - Built Environment

Percent rating positively (e.g., excellent/good)	Area			Overall
	Urban Ring	Rural areas	Other developed areas	
Storm drainage	58%	48%	71%	61%
Sewer services	82%	71%	83%	81%
Utility billing	61%	69%	70%	67%
Land use, planning and zoning	34%	44%	44%	41%
Code enforcement (weeds, abandoned buildings, etc.)	46%	36%	45%	43%

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Table 15: Governance - Economy

Percent rating positively (e.g., excellent/good)	Area			Overall
	Urban Ring	Rural areas	Other developed areas	
Economic development	56%	43%	63%	54%

Table 16: Governance - Recreation and Wellness

Percent rating positively (e.g., excellent/good)	Area			Overall
	Urban Ring	Rural areas	Other developed areas	
County parks	85%	79%	94%	87%
Recreation programs or classes	87%	71%	78%	78%
Recreation centers or facilities	74%	78%	76%	76%
Health services	79%	75%	84%	79%

Table 17: Governance - Education and Enrichment

Percent rating positively (e.g., excellent/good)	Area			Overall
	Urban Ring	Rural areas	Other developed areas	
Public library services	92%	88%	94%	92%
County-sponsored special events	59%	57%	68%	63%

Table 18: Governance - Community Engagement

Percent rating positively (e.g., excellent/good)	Area			Overall
	Urban Ring	Rural areas	Other developed areas	
Public information services	75%	75%	75%	75%

Table 19: Participation General

Percent rating positively (e.g., always/sometimes, more than once a month, yes)	Area			Overall
	Urban Ring	Rural areas	Other developed areas	
Sense of community	56%	58%	73%	63%
Recommend living in Albemarle County to someone who asks	86%	86%	90%	87%
Remain in Albemarle County for the next five years	76%	90%	94%	87%
Contacted Albemarle County (in-person, phone, email or web) for help or information	32%	37%	41%	37%

Table 20: Participation - Safety

Percent rating positively (e.g., always/sometimes, more than once a month, yes)	Area			Overall
	Urban Ring	Rural areas	Other developed areas	
Was NOT the victim of a crime	99%	94%	93%	95%
Did NOT report a crime	92%	88%	85%	88%
Stocked supplies in preparation for an emergency	30%	37%	39%	35%

Table 21: Participation - Mobility

Percent rating positively (e.g., always/sometimes, more than once a month, yes)	Area			Overall
	Urban Ring	Rural areas	Other developed areas	
Walked or biked instead of driving	56%	17%	50%	42%
Carpooled with other adults or children instead of driving alone	46%	30%	45%	41%
Used bus, rail, subway or other public transportation instead of driving	26%	6%	15%	16%

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Table 22: Participation - Natural Environment

Percent rating positively (e.g., always/sometimes, more than once a month, yes)	Area			Overall
	Urban Ring	Rural areas	Other developed areas	
Recycle at home	70%	76%	80%	76%
Made efforts to make your home more energy efficient	62%	69%	72%	68%
Made efforts to conserve water	82%	79%	83%	81%

Table 23: Participation - Built Environment

Percent rating positively (e.g., always/sometimes, more than once a month, yes)	Area			Overall
	Urban Ring	Rural areas	Other developed areas	
NOT under housing cost stress	70%	74%	75%	73%
Did NOT observe a code violation	65%	61%	55%	60%

Table 24: Participation - Economy

Percent rating positively (e.g., always/sometimes, more than once a month, yes)	Area			Overall
	Urban Ring	Rural areas	Other developed areas	
Purchase goods or services from a business located in Albemarle County	93%	98%	99%	97%
Economy will have positive impact on income	22%	31%	25%	26%
Work in Albemarle County	59%	53%	63%	59%

Table 25: Participation - Recreation and Wellness

Percent rating positively (e.g., always/sometimes, more than once a month, yes)	Area			Overall
	Urban Ring	Rural areas	Other developed areas	
Used Albemarle County recreation centers or their services	57%	46%	71%	59%
Visited a neighborhood park or County park	82%	78%	88%	83%
Eat at least 5 portions of fruits and vegetables a day	84%	92%	95%	91%
Participate in moderate or vigorous physical activity	87%	86%	91%	88%
Reported being in "very good" or "excellent" health	77%	75%	72%	74%

Table 26: Participation - Education and Enrichment

Percent rating positively (e.g., always/sometimes, more than once a month, yes)	Area			Overall
	Urban Ring	Rural areas	Other developed areas	
Used Albemarle County public libraries or their services	56%	62%	82%	68%
Participated in religious or spiritual activities in Albemarle County	45%	39%	56%	47%
Attended a County-sponsored event	39%	29%	54%	41%

Table 27: Participation - Community Engagement

Percent rating positively (e.g., always/sometimes, more than once a month, yes)	Area			Overall
	Urban Ring	Rural areas	Other developed areas	
Campaigned or advocated for an issue, cause or candidate	23%	37%	37%	33%
Contacted Albemarle County elected officials (in-person, phone, email or web) to express your opinion	11%	18%	25%	18%
Volunteered your time to some group/activity in Albemarle County	44%	47%	53%	48%
Participated in a club	21%	36%	35%	31%
Talked to or visited with your immediate neighbors	87%	95%	96%	93%
Done a favor for a neighbor	67%	85%	89%	81%
Attended a local public meeting	21%	16%	20%	19%
Watched (online or on television) a local public meeting	30%	27%	25%	28%

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Percent rating positively (e.g., always/sometimes, more than once a month, yes)	Area			Overall
	Urban Ring	Rural areas	Other developed areas	
Read or watch local news (via television, paper, computer, etc.)	81%	87%	85%	84%
Vote in local elections	74%	99%	87%	87%

Table 28: Community Focus Areas

Percent rating positively (e.g., essential/very important)	Area			Overall
	Urban Ring	Rural areas	Other developed areas	
Overall feeling of safety in Albemarle County	79%	78%	88%	82%
Overall ease of getting to the places you usually have to visit	86%	86%	82%	85%
Quality of overall natural environment in Albemarle County	85%	77%	83%	82%
Overall "built environment" of Albemarle County (including overall design, buildings, parks and transportation systems)	79%	72%	77%	76%
Health and wellness opportunities in Albemarle County	81%	62%	90%	79%
Overall opportunities for education and enrichment	78%	65%	83%	76%
Overall economic health of Albemarle County	85%	89%	94%	89%
Sense of community	70%	63%	80%	71%

Table 29: Volunteered at a Public School

(Percent rating as more than once a month)	Area			Overall
	Urban Ring	Rural areas	Other developed areas	
Volunteered at a public school	13%	16%	30%	20%

Table 30: Quality of Public Schools

(Percent rating as "excellent" or "good")	Area			Overall
	Urban Ring	Rural areas	Other developed areas	
Public schools	86%	68%	86%	79%

Table 31: Importance of Recycling Services

(Percent ratings as "essential" or "very important")	Area			Overall
	Urban Ring	Rural areas	Other developed areas	
How important a service, if at all, do you consider recycling to be for County residents?	84%	71%	77%	77%

Table 32: Likelihood of Recycling

(Percent rating as "very" or "somewhat likely")	Area			Overall
	Urban Ring	Rural areas	Other developed areas	
The McIntire Recycling Center currently provides a "do it yourself" separation of recyclables by type (aluminum, cardboard, glass, etc.). If another "do it yourself" source separation recycling center was conveniently located, how likely would you be to bring your recyclables to the center?	68%	62%	58%	62%

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Table 33: Preferred Recycling Center Location

If such a center were to be built, to what extent, if at all, would you prefer it be located in the following spots? (Percent rating as "strongly" or "somewhat prefer").	Area			Overall
	Urban Ring	Rural areas	Other developed areas	
Crozet area	8%	34%	60%	37%
29 North – Hydraulic/Rio area	54%	30%	22%	35%
29 North – Hollymead area	37%	34%	27%	32%
Pantops area	29%	32%	26%	29%
Scottsville area	9%	22%	22%	18%

Table 34: Importance of Services Provided by the County

How important, if at all, are the following services for Albemarle County to provide? (Percent rating as "essential" or "very important").	Area			Overall
	Urban Ring	Rural areas	Other developed areas	
Expansion and improvement of trails	49%	48%	58%	52%
New sidewalks	73%	43%	67%	62%
Sidewalk/curb maintenance (e.g., snow removal, weeding)	70%	48%	70%	63%
Increased roadway landscaping (e.g., flowerbeds, increased frequency of mowing)	40%	35%	44%	40%
Expansion of the bus service	61%	46%	43%	49%
Preservation of the rural area	76%	79%	82%	79%
Expansion of bicycle paths	64%	48%	63%	58%
Preschool funding	74%	57%	68%	66%
Curbside recycling	60%	42%	59%	54%
Composting	38%	31%	34%	34%

Table 35: Support for Higher Taxes

Please indicate to what extent you would support or oppose paying higher taxes for the following services: (Percent rating as "essential" or "very important").	Area			Overall
	Urban Ring	Rural areas	Other developed areas	
Expansion and improvement of trails	71%	60%	63%	64%
New sidewalks	75%	50%	74%	67%
Sidewalk/curb maintenance (e.g., snow removal, weeding)	72%	54%	73%	67%
Increased roadway landscaping (e.g., flowerbeds, increased frequency of mowing)	49%	44%	59%	51%
Expansion of the bus service	62%	51%	57%	57%
Preservation of the rural area	75%	70%	75%	73%
Expansion of bicycle paths	72%	55%	69%	65%
Preschool funding	70%	60%	75%	69%
Curbside recycling	63%	45%	66%	58%
Composting	47%	35%	47%	43%

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Table 36: Potential Preventions of Attending an In-person Meeting

If you were interested in learning more about or making public comment on an issue, to what extent might each of the following prevent you from attending an in-person meeting? (Percent rating as "definitely would" or "might prevent").	Area			Overall
	Urban Ring	Rural areas	Other developed areas	
Time of day (evening meetings not convenient)	75%	64%	72%	70%
Meeting location (too far)	76%	68%	79%	75%
Lack of transportation to meeting	28%	13%	20%	20%
Duration of meetings (too long)	67%	59%	68%	65%
Format of meetings does not meet my needs	66%	56%	57%	60%
Child/adult care responsibilities	31%	39%	52%	41%

Table 37: Preferences for Providing Comments on Local Issues

To what extent would you prefer, if at all, to provide comments on local issues in each of the following ways: (Percent rating as "strongly" or "somewhat prefer").	Area			Overall
	Urban Ring	Rural areas	Other developed areas	
In-person at a Board of Supervisors meeting/hearing	50%	33%	35%	39%
In-person at a community meeting	61%	38%	40%	46%
Online comment form posted by Albemarle County	72%	72%	75%	73%
Email communication with the Board of Supervisors and/or staff	67%	74%	76%	73%
Mail communication to Board of Supervisors and/or staff	44%	41%	38%	41%
Social media (Facebook, Twitter)	41%	17%	30%	29%
Local news online comment boxes	44%	33%	38%	39%

Table 38: Preferred Format for Providing Online Feedback

If you were to participate in an online feedback system, to what extent, if at all, would you prefer each of the following formats? (Percent rating as "strongly" or "somewhat prefer").	Area			Overall
	Urban Ring	Rural areas	Other developed areas	
Respond to questions using an online survey	77%	74%	80%	77%
Direct email to staff and/or the Board of Supervisors	54%	62%	61%	59%
Online public discussion forum (log-in required)	33%	17%	31%	27%

Table 39: Sources of Information

Please indicate how much of a source, if at all, you consider each of the following to be for obtaining information about the City government and its activities, events and services: (Percent rating as "major" or "minor source").	Area			Overall
	Urban Ring	Rural areas	Other developed areas	
Daily Progress	60%	77%	67%	68%
C-ville weekly	63%	71%	67%	67%
Other local media outlets (radio, local television stations)	91%	89%	80%	86%
Charlottesville Tomorrow	37%	25%	39%	34%
Social media (Facebook, Twitter)	54%	35%	60%	51%
County "A-mail" (e-newsletter)	34%	24%	40%	33%
Public postings at local businesses/library/County offices	58%	32%	50%	47%
Word-of-mouth	66%	78%	80%	75%

Table 40: Frequency of Website Use

(Percent rating as "frequently" or "sometimes")	Area			Overall
	Urban Ring	Rural areas	Other developed areas	
How often, if ever, in the last 12 months have you used the County's website (www.albemarle.org)?	34%	36%	34%	35%

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Table 41: Uses of County Website

How often, if ever, in the last 12 months, have you used www.albemarle.org for the following? (Percent rating as "sometimes" or "frequently").	Area			Overall
	Urban Ring	Rural areas	Other developed areas	
Pay a bill	41%	25%	15%	26%
Watch a Board meeting	1%	8%	7%	5%
Access public meeting materials (agendas, minutes)	13%	9%	12%	11%
Book a park shelter	7%	7%	6%	7%
Sign up for a Parks & Recreation class	6%	7%	14%	9%
Find information about a property in the County	38%	36%	36%	37%
Download a form	17%	21%	27%	22%
Access building, licensing & permit applications	2%	18%	19%	14%
Apply for energy, medical, food and/or other resource assistance	0%	1%	2%	1%
Contact information for a department/staff person	21%	16%	21%	19%
Learn more about an issue facing the community	19%	13%	18%	17%
Learn more about a department within the County	12%	25%	22%	20%
County job opportunities	19%	19%	25%	21%
Access County public meeting calendar	8%	7%	4%	6%