

# Council Business Meeting

August 6, 2019

<b>Agenda Item</b>	National Citizens' Survey Add-Ons and Custom Questions	
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## **SUMMARY**

The Council is being asked to decide on which add-on options and custom questions they would like to include in the National Citizens' Survey (NCS), scheduled to take place Fall 2019.

The NCS is a survey that the City has used approximately every two years since 2011. The survey has a sample size of around 1,700 households. The survey compares results to the national benchmark on questions about quality of life, community characteristics, governance, and participation. The survey also allows for one to three custom questions that the Council will decide upon. Of these custom questions, there is an option for one question to be open-ended for an additional cost.

## **POLICIES, PLANS & GOALS SUPPORTED**

Enhance and Improve Transparency and Communication

## **PREVIOUS COUNCIL ACTION**

The National Citizens' Survey has been conducted for Ashland in 2011, 2012, 2014, and 2016 all including custom questions decided upon by the City Council.

During the City Council meeting on July 16, 2019 the City Council directed the City Administrator to come back to the next Business Meeting with sample questions for the NCS survey.

## **BACKGROUND AND ADDITIONAL INFORMATION**

The previous surveys have included the main Community Livability Report, which compares Ashland to national benchmarks for cities of similar size, trends over time comparing current and previous Ashland results, dashboard summary of findings, add-on for open ended responses, supplemental online survey results, add-on for comparisons by demographics subgroups, and technical appendices.

During the last Council meeting, the Council reviewed some question ideas and directed the City Administrator to draft several questions to choose from. After communicating with NCS, they would like to know the information the City hopes to acquire with the add-on questions and they will fine tune the questions. With that in mind, I have drafted several questions attempting to get at the issues the Council would like answers to, however the actual question language may change as the survey is finalized by NCS.

- Do you support video camera use to protect areas, such as the Plaza, skate park, public art installations?
- What sources do residents use for information about City government and its activities, events, and services?
- Any additional information that residents would like to tell the Mayor and Council?
- Rank the following services for City spending:
  - Public Safety (police and fire)
  - Maintenance and repair of infrastructure such as the water and sewer system and roads
  - Parks and recreation funding
  - Affordable housing

- Economic development
- Social services
- Would you Support or oppose paying additional taxes to repair/replace:
  - the Community Center
  - Pioneer Hall
  - City Hall
- Would you support or oppose a tax or fee increase to pay for:
  - Maintaining the existing Police Department staffing levels
  - Adding two Police Officers, with one assigned to our schools
  - Maintaining Fire Department personnel
  - A climate change resiliency program
  - Maintaining the grants, the City provides to social service agencies (Maslow Project, etc.)
  - Maintaining the grants, the City provides for economic development (Film Festival, etc.)
  - Maintaining the funding to affordable housing programs

**FISCAL IMPACTS**

The survey cost has been budgeted in fiscal year 2020 at \$18,000. The most common survey option (the hard copy survey) costs \$15,690 (at a return customer discount) for a sample size of 1,700 households including both mailed and online surveys. There are add-ons that cost additional money including an additional \$2,135 for one open-ended question and an additional \$910 for the demographic subgroup comparison report, both of which have been added on for the previous surveys. Refer to Attachment 1 for pricing information on all add-ons as well as other survey options.

**STAFF RECOMMENDATION**

Staff recommends that Council chose the hard copy survey option with either the one open-ended question add-on or the demographic subgroup comparison add-on based on what has been done in the past and what is currently budgeted.

**ACTIONS, OPTIONS & POTENTIAL MOTIONS**

I move to approve the selection of the hard copy survey sent by mail with the following add-ons \_\_\_\_\_ and with the following custom questions \_\_\_\_\_.

**REFERENCES & ATTACHMENTS**

Attachment 1: 2019 Pricing for the National Citizen Survey

[2016 Ashland NCS Report](#)

[2014 Ashland NCS Report](#)


[2012 Ashland NCS Report](#)

[2011 Ashland NCS Report](#)


# 2019 Pricing for The National Community Survey

Join hundreds of other local governments and get a representative picture of residents' needs and perspectives with The National Community Survey™ (The NCS™).


## The NCS Basic Service Includes:


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[License to use the survey template.](#)




Full report of results, plus multiple layers of reporting to meet the needs of different stakeholders





Responses weighted to reflect characteristics of your entire community
- 

Benchmarking against more than 500 other community survey results




Tracking of results and response rates by geographic area




Opt-in web survey included in addition to the scientific, random-sampled survey
- 

Space reserved for custom questions specific to your jurisdiction, crafted with guidance from your NRC project manager



\*Exclusive access to the [NRC Playbook of Strategies](#)



\*Exclusive access to the [NRC Resource Group](#)

\*Contact your Project Manager for access to the NRC Playbook of Strategies and NRC Resource Group.

WEB DATA COLLECTION	HARD COPY SURVEYS SENT BY MAIL <small>most common choice</small>	OPEN PARTICIPATION WEB DATA COLLECTION <small>all residents are eligible</small>
<div style="font-size: 2em; font-weight: bold; margin: 0;">\$14,120</div> <div style="font-size: 0.8em; margin: 0;">\$12,705 DISCOUNTED PRICE*</div>	<div style="font-size: 2em; font-weight: bold; margin: 0;">\$17,435</div> <div style="font-size: 0.8em; margin: 0;">\$15,690 DISCOUNTED PRICE*</div>	<div style="font-size: 2em; font-weight: bold; margin: 0;">\$10,190</div> <div style="font-size: 0.8em; margin: 0;">\$9,170 DISCOUNTED PRICE*</div>
Sample size of 1,800 households included	Sample size of 1,700 households included	You promote participation
Households contacted via mailed invitations using a random sample from a USPS address list	Mailed survey also available online at no added cost	No random sampling
		No mailings

## Add-On Options

	Full Price	Discounted Price*	Notes
Larger Sample Size	Varies	Varies	See below for example sample sizes
Reminder Postcard (4th Mailing)	Varies	Varies	See below for example sample sizes
Demographic Subgroup Comparison Report	\$1,015	\$910	Compare results by population demographics (age, sex, race/ethnicity, housing tenure and housing unit type)
Geographic Subgroup Comparison Report	\$1,015	\$910	Compare results by geographic area
Spanish	\$1015	\$910	Respondents can complete the survey online in Spanish
Custom Benchmark Comparisons	\$1,210	\$1,085	Benchmark results against communities meeting specific criteria
One Open-ended Question	\$2,375	\$2,135	Includes one open-ended question added to survey. Responses will be categorized and reported in a table under separate cover, accompanied by a complete list of verbatim responses.
In-person Presentation	\$3,890	\$3,500	Assumes location within 50 miles of int'l airport
Next Steps Workshop	\$6,070	\$5,460	Assumes location within 50 miles of int'l airport
Compare Prior Results	\$2,260	\$2,030	Compare current results to those of a previous survey (not The NCS)

## Example Sample Sizes

	Regular mailing (3 contacts)		Reminder postcard (4th contact)	
	Full Price	Discounted Price	Full Price	Discounted Price
+0 (1,700 total)	-	-	\$1,075	\$965
+400 (2,100 total)	\$1,880	\$1,690	\$1,275	\$1,145
+800 (2,500 total)	\$3,310	\$2,975	\$1,470	\$1,320
+1,200 (2,900 total)	\$4,735	\$4,260	\$1,670	\$1,500
+1,600 (3,300 total)	\$6,165	\$5,545	\$1,865	\$1,675

\*Please note all prices are subject to change. Pricing assumes up to four geographic subareas; let us know if you need a custom quote for more subareas.

### \*Discount Eligibility\*

You are eligible for a 10% discount on The NCS, The NES, The NBS or CASOA if you:

- ✓ Have conducted any of these surveys in the past
- ✓ Are an ICMA member
- ✓ Are an NLC member
- ✓ Are an Association of Government Accountants member

Not sure if you're eligible?

[Contact Us](#)

### CANCELLATION POLICY

We will withhold an administrative fee of \$700 from any refund for a cancellation before hours/costs are expended; once the project work has begun and money has been spent (hours or hard costs), we're unable to make a refund.