

2016 Survey of Jackson



The City of Jackson is the capital city for the State of Mississippi. It serves as the state's major hub in the areas of government, finance, education, transportation, and medical facilities. It is home to more than 173,000 people. After seeing its population peak around 202,000 residents in the early 1980s, the City of Jackson's population has seen a steady decline while its surrounding suburbs have grown significantly.ⁱ Jackson has lost approximately 82,000 White residents between 1970 and the year 2010; while gaining approximately 76,000 Black residents during this same period.ⁱⁱ As suggested by these opposing migration patterns, there seems to be a difference in viewpoints regarding the desirability of living in Jackson. The goal for undertaking this survey project was to gather statistically valid evidence that could help analyze socio-economic changes occurring in the City of Jackson. By collecting, analyzing, and reporting this study's findings, the Mississippi Urban Research Center at Jackson State University seeks to fulfill its mission of using basic and applied research to help solve problems facing Mississippi's urban areas. One of the first steps in solving these problems is to be able to separate perceptions-from-reality, facts-from-myths. This first step was taken with the 2016 survey of the City of Jackson. The survey of 578 persons has a margin of error of +/- 4.67 with a 95% confidence level (www.surveysystem.com/sscalc.htm).

From the perspective of local policymakers, it is often difficult to separate perceptions, myths, and facts when developing and implementing public policy initiatives. Therefore, research briefs emerging from the survey are designed to help accurately gauge, analyze, and interpret citizens' perceptions in terms of their public policy implications.

Approximately 37.0% ($n = 201$) of the respondents were male and 63.0% were female ($n = 342$). Gender was missing for 35 respondents. Fifteen point nine percent ($n = 92$) were 15 to 24 years old, 12.8% ($n = 74$) were 25 to 34 years old, 15.2% ($n = 88$) were 35 to 44 years old, 16.1% ($n = 93$) were 45 to 54 years old, 19.6% ($n = 113$) were 55 to 64 years old, and 13.8% ($n = 80$) were 65 years old or older. Regarding race, 74.5% ($n = 404$) of the respondents were African Americans, 19.9% ($n = 108$), were White and those remaining were other race. Relative to total household income, 8.6% reported less than \$10,000; 5.1% reported \$10,000 to \$14,999; 9.7% indicated between \$15,000 to \$24,999; 11.3% received between \$25,000 and \$34,999, 17.3% reported between \$35,000 to \$49,999, 25.7% indicated between \$50,000 and \$74,999, 7.8% reported 75,000 to 99,999, 8.2% indicated between \$100,000 and \$149,999, 2.3% stated between \$150,000 and \$199,99, and 4.1% received \$200,000 or more into their household. Thus, household income is very diverse with 42.7% of the respondents indicating that their household income is \$50,000 or greater. Thus, as described in a previous MURC publication (*MURC Digest*, 2012), while the City of Jackson's population has become "blacker," it is not necessarily poorer relatively speaking.

The first brief provides an overview of citizens' feedback regarding their perceived quality of life and standard-of-living, and the second brief includes respondents' trust in police officers, the police department, and the judicial system including courts, and their perception of safety. Future research briefs will discuss survey findings related to such areas as "the direction the city is moving", and "solutions recommended by local citizens."

Findings were very positive for quality of life, standard-of-living, safety, and trust in police officers, the police department, and the judicial system including courts. Approximately 91% of the respondents reported a good to very good quality of life (See Table 1). However, a smaller percentage (67%) reported an improved standard of living. Although this percentage is smaller, it is noteworthy that over three fourth of the respondents expressed that their standard of living improved. Further analysis documented a significant relationship between respondents' perceived quality of life and their standard of living, $r = .369$, $p = .0001$. Thus, as the respondents' perceived standard of living increased, their perceived quality of life also increased.

Table 1. Response Percentage for Select Variables

Variables	Count	Percent
Good to Very Good Quality of Life	399	90.9
Improved Standard of Living	294	67.0

The greater perception of safety was associated with Wards 5 and 7 (See Table 2), and the lowest perception of safety emerged for Ward 3 ($M = 15.03$). However, a statistically significant difference between the Wards did not emerge, $p = .243$. A rank ordering of the Wards regarding their perception of safety produced the following: Ward 5 (higher perceived safety), Ward 7, Ward 4, Ward 2, Ward 6, Ward 1, and Ward 3 (lowest perceived safety).

Table 2. Perception of Safety

Ward	Mean^a	Standard Deviation
1	15.15	2.52
2	15.40	2.17
3	15.02	2.78
4	15.53	2.26
5	16.10	1.99
6	15.23	2.49
7	16.03	2.32

^aSafety ranged from 8 to 20 with a higher score representing a perception of feeling safer.

Comparing Jackson respondents to a national sample surveyed by the Institute of Government, Jackson State University (See Table 3), Jackson residents clearly displayed more trust in police officers, police departments, and the judicial system including courts than the national combined sample. However, they experienced less trust in the judicial system including courts than African Americans from the national sample. Thus, respondents have a higher level of trust in Jackson police officers, the police department, and the judicial system including courts when compared to a national sample, but a lower level of trust in the judicial system when compared to an African American national sample. Notwithstanding, only 49% of the respondents indicated that they know a police officer, and 53.3% affirmed a non-law enforcement interaction with a police officer.

Table 3. Comparative Statistics for Trust in Police Officers and the Judicial System

Variable	Means			Standard Deviations		
	City	Nat-AA^a	Nat-Total^b	City	Nat-AA^a	Nat-Total^b
Trust in police officers	6.60	5.40	4.33	2.36	2.93	2.70
Trust in police department	6.59	5.39	4.38	2.38	2.93	2.64
Trust in the judicial system including courts	5.42	5.66	5.04	2.47	2.84	2.59

^aNat-AA = National sample of African Americans

^bNat-Total = National Sample

ⁱU.S. Census Bureau Decennial Population Data --- 1970, 1980, 1990, 2000, 2010.

ⁱⁱ Blacker and Poorer? An Examination of White Flight from the City of Jackson. Amechi Bowser and Sam Mozee, Jr. The MURC Digest. Volume 7, Issue 1. March, 2012.