

National Benchmarking

Since 1998, Leisure Vision (a division of ETC Institute) has conducted household surveys for needs assessments, feasibility studies, customer satisfaction, fees and charges comparisons, and other parks and recreation issues in more than 200 communities in over 35 states across the country.

The results of these surveys has provided an unparalleled data base of information to compare responses from household residents in client communities to "National Averages" and therefore provide a unique tool to "assist organizations in better decision making."

Communities within the data base include a full-range of municipal and county governments from 20,000 in population through over 1 million in population. They include communities in warm weather climates and cold weather climates, mature communities and some of the fastest growing cities and counties in the country.

Communities within the following states are included within the National Benchmarking data base.

- Arizona
- Arkansas
- California
- Colorado
- Connecticut
- Florida
- Georgia
- Kansas
- Kentucky
- Idaho
- Illinois
- Indiana
- Iowa
- Maine
- Massachusetts
- Michigan
- Minnesota
- Mississippi
- Missouri
- Montana
- Nevada
- New Hampshire
- New Jersey
- North Carolina
- Ohio
- Oklahoma
- Oregon
- Pennsylvania
- Rhode Island
- South Carolina
- Texas
- Utah
- Vermont
- Virginia
- Washington
- Wyoming

Appendix C

“National Averages” have been developed for numerous strategically important parks and recreation planning and management issues including: customer satisfaction and usage of parks and programs; methods for receiving marketing information; reasons that prevent members of households from using parks and recreation facilities more often; priority recreation programs, parks, facilities and trails to improve or develop; priority programming spaces to have in planned community centers and aquatic facilities; potential attendance for planned indoor community centers and outdoor aquatic centers; etc.

Results from household responses for the Middletown Department of Parks, Recreation and Cultural Affairs were compared to National Benchmarks to gain further strategic information. A summary of all tabular comparisons are shown on the following pages:

Parks and Recreation Benchmarking for Needs Assessment Surveys

	National Average	Middletown
Have you or members of your household visited any City/County/ Park District <u>parks</u> over the past year?		
Yes	72%	82%
No	28%	18%
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How would you rate the quality of all the <u>parks</u> you've used?		
Excellent	30%	26%
Good	54%	59%
Fair	12%	9%
Poor	2%	4%
Don't know	2%	2%
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Have you or members of your household participated in City/County/Park District recreation <u>programs</u> during the past year?		
Yes	30%	36%
No	70%	64%
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How would you rate the quality of all the <u>recreation programs</u> you've used?		
Excellent	33%	31%
Good	54%	59%
Fair	10%	8%
Poor	2%	1%
Don't Know	1%	1%

Parks and Recreation Benchmarking for Needs Assessment Surveys

	National Average	Middletown
Where respondents learn about recreation programs		
Fliers	34%	66%
Newspaper	39%	52%
Word of mouth	41%	37%
Website (www.middletownnj.org)	10%	18%
Cable television	8%	12%
Visited/called Parks and Rec. office	17%	11%
Middletown Government	NA	10%
Radio	9%	2%
Organizations used for parks and recreation programs and facilities		
Middletown Parks and Recreation	49%	48%
County Parks	38%	47%
State or National Parks	NA	37%
Churches	32%	23%
School District	27%	23%
College/University Facilities (Brookdale Community College)	20%	21%
Volunteer youth sports leagues	19%	20%
Golf courses	15%	19%
Private clubs (tennis, health, and fitness)	23%	18%
Neighborhood towns	22%	18%
Private schools	10%	10%
YMCA	19%	9%
Homeowner assoc./apt. complex	13%	5%

Parks and Recreation Benchmarking for Needs Assessment Surveys

	National Average	Middletown
Reasons preventing the use of parks and recreation facilities and programs more often		
We are too busy	35%	34%
I do not know what is being offered	21%	25%
Program times are not convenient	14%	17%
I do not know locations of facilities	13%	10%
Program not offered	13%	10%
Too far from our residence	15%	10%
We are not interested	13%	10%
Facilities are not well maintained	6%	9%
Waiting list/program full	6%	8%
Use facilities/programs of other agencies	15%	8%
Fees are too high	11%	8%
Lack of quality programs	7%	8%
Parks are not well maintained	4%	7%
Security is insufficient	7%	6%
Facilities operating hours not convenient	6%	6%
Registration for programs is difficult	3%	6%
Facilities do not have the right equipment	7%	5%
Availability of parking	5%	4%
Poor customer service by staff	3%	4%
We cannot safely access a park	NA	1%

Parks and Recreation Benchmarking for Needs Assessment Surveys

	National Average	Middletown
Parks and recreation facilities that respondent households have a need for		
Large community/County parks	55%	59%
Small neighborhood parks	60%	59%
Paved walking and biking trails	68%	58%
Natural areas/nature parks	48%	54%
Non-paved walking and biking trails	47%	47%
Playgrounds	42%	43%
Picnic shelters/areas	54%	41%
Indoor fitness and exercise facilities	47%	37%
Indoor multi-purpose community centers	42%	32%
Fishing access areas	29%	31%
Outdoor stage or amphitheater	33%	30%
Indoor swimming pools/water parks	45%	29%
Youth baseball and softball fields	21%	28%
Indoor ice rink	24%	27%
Outdoor swimming pools/aquatic centers	42%	26%
Tennis courts	25%	26%
Off-leash dog parks	25%	24%
Soccer fields	22%	23%
Outdoor basketball courts	25%	22%
Indoor basketball/game courts	26%	19%
Skateboarding area	14%	17%
Mountain bike trails or BMX track	22%	16%
Youth football fields	14%	14%
Adult softball fields	16%	13%
Facilities for Special Needs children	NA	12%
Inline hockey rink	13%	11%
Lacrosse Fields	NA	6%

Parks and Recreation Benchmarking for Needs Assessment Surveys

	National Average	Middletown
Most important parks and recreation facilities (sum of importance percentages)		
Paved walking and biking trails	41%	29%
Small neighborhood parks	30%	22%
Large community/County parks	20%	22%
Non-paved walking and biking trails	19%	19%
Natural areas/nature parks	15%	17%
Playgrounds	21%	17%
Youth baseball and softball fields	7%	10%
Off-leash dog parks	11%	10%
Fishing access areas	11%	9%
Indoor swimming pools/water parks	17%	9%
Indoor fitness and exercise facilities	19%	9%
Picnic shelters/areas	19%	9%
Outdoor swimming pools/aquatic centers	17%	8%
Soccer fields	8%	7%
Outdoor stage or amphitheater	8%	7%
Indoor multi-purpose community centers	13%	7%
Indoor ice rink	6%	6%
Facilities for Special Needs children	NA	6%
Indoor basketball/game courts	7%	5%
Youth football fields	3%	4%
Tennis courts	7%	3%
Skateboarding area	3%	3%
Mountain bike trails or BMX track	6%	3%
Adult softball fields	5%	3%
Inline hockey rink	4%	2%
Outdoor basketball courts	6%	2%
Lacrosse Fields	NA	1%

