

NEBRASKA RURAL POLL

## A Research Report

## Optimism in Nonmetropolitan Nebraska:

Perceptions of Well-Being

2015 Nebraska Rural Poll Results
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Nebraska Rural Poll Research Report 15-1, July 2015.
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Funding for this project was provided by the Cooperative Extension Division of the Institute for Agriculture and Natural Resources, the Agricultural Research Division of the Institute for Agriculture and Natural Resources, and the Department of Agricultural Economics. Additionally, considerable in-kind support and contributions were provided by a number of individuals and organizations associated with the Partnership for Rural Nebraska and the University of Nebraska Rural Futures Institute.

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## Executive Summary

Nebraska farm income decreased nearly 35 percent from 2014 to 2013. This resulted in Nebraska being the only state in the country to experience a drop in per capita personal income last year. However, hourly earnings in manufacturing have increased in 2015 compared to last year. Given the challenges and uncertainties of recent years, how do rural Nebraskans believe they are doing and how do they view their future? How satisfied are they with various items that influence their well-being? Have these views changed over the past twenty years? This paper provides a detailed analysis of these questions.

This report details 1,991 responses to the 2015 Nebraska Rural Poll, the twentieth annual effort to understand rural Nebraskans' perceptions. Respondents were asked a series of questions about their wellbeing. Trends for some of the questions are examined by comparing data from the nineteen previous polls to this year's results. In addition, comparisons are made among different respondent subgroups, that is, comparisons by age, occupation, region, etc. Based on these analyses, some key findings emerged:

- This year, rural Nebraskans are the most positive about their current situation as they've been in all $\mathbf{2 0}$ years of this study. Just over one-half (53\%) of rural Nebraskans believe they are better off than they were five years ago (the highest proportion in all 20 years of this study, tied in 2008). This is up slightly from 50 percent last year. The proportion of rural Nebraskans who believe they are worse off than they were five years ago decreased from 17 percent last year to 15 percent this year.
- Rural Nebraskans' outlook on their future is the most optimistic in all 20 years of this study. Almost one-half of rural Nebraskans (48\%) believe they will be better off ten years from now (the highest of all 20 years). This is up slightly from 44 percent last year. The proportion of respondents stating they will be worse off ten years from now declined from 22 percent last year to 17 percent this year.
- This year, rural Nebraskans are less likely to agree that people are powerless to control their own lives than they were last year. The proportion of rural Nebraskans that either strongly agree or agree with the statement has remained fairly consistent each year, averaging around 32 percent. That proportion increased from 25 percent in 2012 to 32 percent last year, before declining to 26 percent this year.
- Following trends in previous years, rural Nebraskans are most satisfied with their marriage, family, friends, religion/spirituality and the outdoors. They continue to be less satisfied with job opportunities, current income level and financial security during retirement. Three items had increases in the level of satisfaction this year as compared to last year: your transportation, your spare time and your ability to afford your residence. As an example, 70 percent of rural Nebraskans are satisfied with their ability to afford their residence this year, compared to 65 percent last year. Two items saw declines in satisfaction compared to last year, clean air and clean water. The percent satisfied with clean air declined from 85 percent last year, to 80 percent this year. And, those satisfied with clean water declined from 80 percent last year to 76 percent this year.
- Younger persons are more likely than older persons to believe they are better off compared to five years ago, are better off compared to their parents when they were their age and will be better off ten years from now. Just over three-quarters ( $76 \%$ ) of persons age 19 to 29 believe they are much better off or better off than they were five years ago. However, just over three in ten persons age 65 and older (32\%) share this opinion. Similarly, over eight in ten persons age 19 to 29 ( $82 \%$ ) believe they will be much better off or better off ten years from now, compared to only 16 percent of persons age 65 and older.
- Persons living in or near the largest communities are more likely than persons living in or near smaller communities to be optimistic about the future. Over one-half (53\%) of persons living in or near communities with populations of 10,000 or more believe they will be better off or much better off ten years from now, compared to approximately 42 percent of persons living in or near communities with less than 1,000 people.
- Persons with the highest household incomes are more likely than persons with lower incomes to feel they are better off compared to five years ago, are better off compared to their parents when they were their age, and will be better off ten years from now. For example, 68 percent of respondents with household incomes of $\$ 60,000$ or more think they are much better off or better off than they were five years ago. However, only 26 percent of persons with household incomes under $\$ 20,000$ share this optimism. And, 60 percent of persons with household incomes over $\$ 60,000$ think they will be much better off or better off ten years from now, compared to 25 percent of persons with household incomes under \$20,000.
- Persons with lower education levels are more likely than persons with more education to believe that people are powerless to control their own lives. Thirty-seven percent of persons with a high school diploma or less education agree that people are powerless to control their own lives. However, only 19 percent of persons with at least a four-year college degree share this opinion.
- Persons with lower household incomes are more likely than persons with higher household incomes to report being dissatisfied with their job opportunities. Over one-half (52\%) of persons with household incomes under $\$ 20,000$ are dissatisfied with their job opportunities, compared to 28 percent of persons with household incomes of $\$ 60,000$ or more.


## Introduction

Nebraska farm income decreased nearly 35 percent from 2014 to 2013. This resulted in Nebraska being the only state in the country to experience a drop in per capita personal income last year. However, hourly earnings in manufacturing have increased in 2015 compared to last year. Given the challenges and uncertainties of recent years, how do rural Nebraskans believe they are doing and how do they view their future? How satisfied are they with various items that influence their well-being? Have these views changed over the past twenty years? This paper provides a detailed analysis of these questions.

This report details 1,991 responses to the 2015 Nebraska Rural Poll, the twentieth annual effort to understand rural Nebraskans' perceptions. Respondents were asked a series of questions about their well-being.

## Methodology and Respondent Profile

This study is based on 1,991 responses from Nebraskans living in 86 counties in the state. ${ }^{1}$ A self-administered questionnaire was mailed in April to 6,228 randomly selected households. Metropolitan counties not included in the sample were Cass, Douglas, Lancaster, Sarpy, Saunders, Seward and Washington. The 14-page questionnaire included questions pertaining to well-being, community, climate and energy, community involvement, and

1 In the spring of 2013, the Grand Island area (Hall, Hamilton, Howard and Merrick Counties) was designated a metropolitan area. To facilitate comparisons from previous years, these four counties are still included in our sample. In addition, the Sioux City area metropolitan counties of Dixon and Dakota were added this year because of a joint Metro Poll being conducted by the University of Nebraska at Omaha that ensures all counties in the state were sampled. Although classified as metro, Dixon County is rural in nature. Dakota County is similar in many respects to other "micropolitan" counties the Rural Poll surveys.
education. This paper reports only results from the wellbeing section.

A 32\% response rate was achieved using the total design method (Dillman, 1978). The sequence of steps used follow:

1. A pre-notification letter was sent requesting participation in the study.
2. The questionnaire was mailed with an informal letter signed by the project director approximately seven days later.
3. A reminder postcard was sent to the entire sample approximately seven days after the questionnaire had been sent.
4. Those who had not yet responded within approximately 14 days of the original mailing were sent a replacement questionnaire.

Appendix Table 1 shows demographic data from this year's study and previous rural polls, as well as similar data based on the entire nonmetropolitan population of Nebraska (using the latest available data from the 2010 U.S. Census and the 2009-2013 American Community Survey). As can be seen from the table, there are some marked differences between some of the demographic variables in our sample compared to the Census data. Thus, we suggest the reader use caution in generalizing our data to all rural Nebraska. However, given the random sampling frame used for this survey, the acceptable percentage of responses, and the large number of respondents, we feel the data provide useful insights into opinions of rural Nebraskans on the various issues presented in this report. The margin of error for this study is plus or minus two percent.

Since younger residents have typically been under-represented by survey respondents and older residents have been over-represented, weights were used to adjust the sample to match the age distribution in the nonmetropolitan counties in Nebraska (using U.S. Census figures from 2010).

The average age of respondents is 51 years. Sixty-eight percent are married (Appendix Table 1) and 72 percent live within the city limits of a town or village. On average, respondents have lived in Nebraska 43 years and have lived in their current community 27 years. Fifty-five percent are living in or near towns or villages with populations less than 5,000. Ninety-seven percent have attained at least a high school diploma.

Thirty percent of the respondents report their 2014 approximate household income from all sources, before taxes, as below \$40,000. Fifty-eight percent report incomes over \$50,000.

Seventy-six percent were employed in 2014 on a full-time, part-time, or seasonal basis. Seventeen percent are retired. Thirty-five percent of those employed reported working in a management, professional, or education occupation. Fourteen percent indicated they were employed in agriculture.

## Trends in Well-Being (19962015)

Comparisons are made between the well-being data collected this year to the nineteen previous studies. These comparisons show a clearer picture of the trends in the well-being of rural Nebraskans.

## General Well-Being

To examine perceptions of general well-being, respondents were asked four questions.

1. "All things considered, do you think you are better or worse off than you were five years ago?" (Answer categories were worse off, about the same, or better off).
2. "All things considered, do you think you are better or worse off than your parents when they were your age?"
3. "All things considered, do you think you will be better or worse off ten years from now than you are today?"
4. "Do you agree or disagree with the following statement? Life has changed so much in our modern world that most people are powerless to control their own lives."

The responses to the first three questions were expanded in 2009 to a five-point scale, where responses included much worse off, worse off, about the same, better off, and much better off. To compare the data to prior years, the much worse off and worse off categories are combined as well as the better off and much better off categories.

When examining the trends over the past twenty years, rural Nebraskans have generally given positive reviews about their current situation (Figure 1). Each year the proportion of rural Nebraskans that say they are better off than they were five years ago has been greater than the proportion saying they are worse off

Figure 1. Well-Being Compared to Five Years
Ago: 1996-2015

than they were five years ago.
This year, rural Nebraskans are the most positive about their current situation as they've been in all 20 years of this study. Just over one-half ( $53 \%$ ) of rural Nebraskans believe they are better off than they were five years ago (the highest proportion in all 20 years of this study, tied in 2008). This is up slightly from 50 percent last year. The proportion of rural Nebraskans who believe they are worse off than they were five years ago decreased from 17 percent last year to 15 percent this year.

When asked to compare themselves to their parents when they were their age, the responses have been very stable over time (Figure 2). The proportion stating they are better off has averaged approximately 58 percent over the twenty year period. Similarly, the proportion feeling they are worse off than their parents has remained steady at approximately 17 percent during this period.

Figure 2. Well-Being Compared to Parents: 1996


When looking to the future, respondents' views have also been generally positive (Figure 3). The proportion saying they will be better off ten years from now has always been greater than the proportion saying they will be worse off ten years from now.

Rural Nebraskans' outlook on their future is the most optimistic in all 20 years of this study.
Almost one-half of rural Nebraskans (48\%) believe they will be better off ten years from now (the highest of all 20 years). This is up from 44 percent last year. The proportion of respondents stating they will be worse off ten years from now declined from 22 percent last year to 17 percent this year.

The proportion stating they will be about the same ten years from now had remained fairly steady around 40 percent over the first 12 years of the study, declined to 33 percent in 2008, and has remained around 35 percent the past seven years.

Figure 3. Well-Being Ten Years from Now: 1996


In addition to asking about general well-being, rural Nebraskans were asked about the amount of control they feel they have over their lives. To measure this, respondents were asked the extent to which they agreed or disagreed with the following statement:
"Life has changed so much in our modern world that most people are powerless to control their own lives."

Each year, more rural Nebraskans disagree that people are powerless to control their own lives than agree with that statement (Figure 4). This year, rural Nebraskans are less likely to agree with that statement than they were last year. The proportion of rural Nebraskans that either strongly agree or agree with the statement has remained fairly consistent each year, averaging around 32 percent. That proportion increased from 25 percent in 2012 to 32 percent last year, before declining to 26 percent this year. The

Figure 4. "...People are Powerless to Control Their Own Lives": 1996-2015

proportion that either strongly disagree or disagree with the statement generally declined between 2002 and 2010, from 58 percent to 43 percent (the lowest in the 20 year period). However, the proportion then increased to 56 percent in 2012 before declining to 50 percent last year. But, it increased to 55 percent this year. The proportion of those who were undecided each year first increased over time, from 10 percent in 1996 to 22 percent in 2010. It then declined to 17 percent last year before increasing slightly to 20 percent this year.

## Satisfaction with Specific Aspects of Life

Each year, respondents were also given a list of items that can affect their well-being and were asked to indicate how satisfied they were with each using a five-point scale ( 1 = very dissatisfied, $5=$ very satisfied). They were also given the option of checking a box to denote "does not apply."

The rank ordering of the items has remained relatively stable over the years (Table 1). In addition, the proportion of respondents stating they were very or somewhat satisfied with each item also has been fairly consistent over the years.

Items generally fall into three levels of satisfaction ratings. Family, friends, the outdoors, spirituality, and education continue to be items given high satisfaction ratings by respondents. Items in the middle category include job satisfaction, job security, their health, their spare time and their community. On the other hand, respondents continue to be less satisfied with job opportunities, their current income level, and financial security during retirement.

Three items had increases in the level of satisfaction this year as compared to last year: your transportation, your spare time and your ability to afford your residence. As an example, 70 percent of rural Nebraskans are satisfied

Table 1. Proportions of Respondents Very or Somewhat Satisfied with Each Factor, 1996-2015.*

| Item | $\begin{aligned} & \stackrel{\rightharpoonup}{0} \\ & \stackrel{\circ}{6} \end{aligned}$ | 苞 | $\begin{aligned} & \hline \stackrel{\rightharpoonup}{\circ} \\ & \infty \\ & \hline \end{aligned}$ | $\begin{aligned} & \hline \stackrel{\rightharpoonup}{\circ} \\ & \hline \end{aligned}$ | No | N | No | No | N | N | No | No | No | No | $\begin{aligned} & \text { NO} \\ & \text { O} \end{aligned}$ | $\stackrel{\underset{\ominus}{\circ}}{\stackrel{\circ}{\circ}}$ | $\begin{aligned} & \text { No } \\ & \underset{\sim}{*} \end{aligned}$ | $\underset{\underset{U}{\mathrm{O}}}{\mathrm{~N}}$ | $$ | $\begin{aligned} & \text { N } \\ & \text { Un } \end{aligned}$ |
| :---: | :---: | :---: | :---: | :---: | :---: | :---: | :---: | :---: | :---: | :---: | :---: | :---: | :---: | :---: | :---: | :---: | :---: | :---: | :---: | :---: |
| Your marriage | NA | NA | 91 | 92 | 93 | 92 | 93 | 92 | 94 | 92 | 94 | 90 | 92 | 92 | 90 | 90 | 90 | 91 | 91 | 93 |
| Your day to day personal safety | NA | NA | NA | NA | NA | NA | NA | NA | NA | NA | NA | NA | NA | NA | NA | NA | NA | NA | 87 | 88 |
| Your family | 90 | 93 | 92 | 89 | 93 | 89 | 90 | 90 | 90 | 89 | 91 | 88 | 91 | 85 | 89 | 89 | 87 | 86 | 87 | 87 |
| Your transportation | NA | NA | NA | NA | NA | NA | NA | NA | NA | NA | NA | NA | NA | NA | NA | NA | NA | NA | 82 | 85 |
| Your general quality of life | NA | NA | NA | NA | NA | NA | NA | NA | NA | NA | NA | NA | NA | 82 | 84 | 86 | 81 | 83 | 83 | 83 |
| Greenery and open space | NA | NA | 90 | 87 | 86 | 86 | 87 | 82 | 80 | 83 | 85 | 80 | 82 | 80 | 81 | 82 | 84 | 74 | 82 | 82 |
| Clean air | NA | NA | NA | NA | 80 | 81 | 82 | 79 | 78 | 79 | 80 | 74 | 80 | 75 | 79 | 82 | 79 | 76 | 85 | 80 |
| Your general standard of living | NA | NA | NA | NA | NA | NA | NA | NA | NA | NA | NA | NA | NA | 77 | 79 | 83 | 79 | 79 | 80 | 80 |
| Your friends | 84 | 85 | 87 | 84 | 87 | 86 | 85 | 85 | 86 | 83 | 84 | 82 | 85 | 82 | 84 | 84 | 81 | 80 | 79 | 80 |
| Your education | 73 | 73 | 74 | 74 | 76 | 72 | 74 | 74 | 72 | 71 | 74 | 74 | 77 | 67 | 74 | 77 | 74 | 73 | 77 | 77 |
| Your housing | NA | 75 | 81 | 80 | 80 | 78 | 78 | 79 | 77 | 78 | 76 | 73 | 77 | 73 | 76 | 77 | 74 | 74 | 76 | 77 |
| Your religion/ spirituality | 79 | 79 | 81 | 78 | 83 | 79 | 79 | 78 | 78 | 75 | 75 | 78 | 79 | 75 | 77 | 76 | 78 | 76 | 75 | 77 |
| Clean water | NA | NA | NA | NA | 73 | 75 | 76 | 75 | 73 | 73 | 74 | 68 | 76 | 72 | 77 | 78 | 76 | 77 | 80 | 76 |
| Your job satisfaction | 68 | 69 | 69 | 66 | 70 | 69 | 70 | 68 | 72 | 72 | 69 | 68 | 76 | 71 | 70 | 72 | 71 | 72 | 73 | 74 |
| Your health | 78 | 81 | 78 | 75 | 77 | 74 | 74 | 75 | 73 | 71 | 73 | 74 | 77 | 66 | 73 | 75 | 70 | 71 | 72 | 73 |
| Your job security | 63 | 64 | 63 | 59 | 68 | 66 | 65 | 62 | 66 | 65 | 66 | 64 | 73 | 59 | 66 | 67 | 67 | 65 | 73 | 72 |
| Your spare time** | 54 | NA | 71 | 65 | 71 | 66 | 67 | 67 | 66 | 65 | 68 | 68 | 71 | 66 | 67 | 72 | 70 | 66 | 66 | 70 |
| Your ability to afford your residence | NA | NA | NA | NA | NA | NA | NA | NA | NA | NA | NA | NA | NA | NA | NA | NA | NA | NA | 65 | 70 |
| Your community | 65 | 64 | 70 | 68 | 70 | 67 | 63 | 62 | 64 | 66 | 62 | 62 | 66 | 63 | 64 | 65 | 59 | 58 | 64 | 64 |
| Your current income level | 54 | 58 | 53 | 46 | 51 | 48 | 48 | 47 | 49 | 48 | 50 | 50 | 53 | 47 | 50 | 55 | 53 | 53 | 55 | 56 |
| Your ability to build assets/ wealth | NA | NA | NA | NA | NA | NA | NA | NA | NA | NA | NA | NA | NA | NA | NA | NA | NA | NA | 51 | 51 |
| Job opportunities | 39 | 41 | 38 | 37 | 36 | 38 | 37 | 35 | 34 | 39 | 43 | 40 | 48 | 32 | 42 | 38 | 46 | 44 | 44 | 46 |
| Financial security during retirement | 43 | 47 | 43 | 38 | 43 | 37 | 38 | 30 | 34 | 38 | 39 | 39 | 38 | 24 | 32 | 38 | 35 | 35 | 39 | 41 |

Note: The list of items was not identical in each study. "NA" means that item was not asked that particular year.

* The proportions were calculated out of those answering the question. The respondents checking "does not apply" were not included in the calculations.
** Worded as "time to relax during the week" in 1996 study.
with their ability to afford their residence this year, compared to 65 percent last year. Two items saw declines in satisfaction compared to last year, clean air and clean water. The percent
satisfied with clean air declined from 85 percent last year, to 80 percent this year. And, those satisfied with clean water declined from 80 percent last year to 76 percent this year.


## General Well-Being by Subgroups

In this section, the 2015 data on the four general measures of well-being are analyzed and reported for the region in which the respondent lives, by the size of their community, and for various individual characteristics (Appendix Table 2).

Younger persons are more likely than older persons to believe they are better off compared to five years ago, are better off compared to their parents when they were their age and will be better off ten years from now. Just over three-quarters (76\%) of persons age 19 to 29 believe they are much better off or better off than they were five years ago. However, just over three in ten persons age 65 and older (32\%) share this opinion. Similarly, over eight in ten persons age 19 to 29 ( $82 \%$ ) believe they will be much better off or better off ten years from now, compared to only 16 percent of persons age 65 and older (Figure 5).

Persons with the highest household incomes are more likely than persons with lower

Figure 5. Expected Well-Being Ten Years from Now by Age

incomes to feel they are better off compared to five years ago, are better off compared to their parents when they were their age, and will be better off ten years from now. For example, 68 percent of respondents with household incomes of $\$ 60,000$ or more think they are much better off or better off than they were five years ago. However, only 26 percent of persons with household incomes under \$20,000 share this optimism. And, 60 percent of persons with household incomes over \$60,000 think they will be much better off or better off ten years from now, compared to 25 percent of persons with household incomes under \$20,000.

Persons with higher educational levels are more likely than persons with less education to think they are better off compared to five years ago, are better off compared to their parents when they were their age and will be better off ten years from now. Approximately two-thirds of persons with at least a four-year college degree (67\%) believe they are much better off or better off than they were five years ago. Only 36 percent of persons with a high school diploma or less education think they are better off than they were five years ago. And, almost six in ten persons with the highest education levels (59\%) believe they will be much better off or better off ten years from now. Only 35 percent of persons with a high school diploma or less education share this optimism.

Persons living in or near the largest communities are more likely than persons living in or near smaller communities to be optimistic about the future. Over one-half (53\%) of persons living in or near communities with populations of 10,000 or more believe they will be better off or much better off ten years from now, compared to approximately 42 percent of persons living in or near communities with less than 1,000 people (Figure 6).

Figure 6. Expected Well-Being Ten Years from Now by Community Size


Respondents living in the Northeast region are more likely than persons living in other regions of the state to believe they are better off compared to their parents when they were their age. Sixty-four percent of Northeast region residents believe they are better off than their parents when they were their age, compared to 54 percent of Panhandle residents.

When comparing the marital groups, married persons are the group most likely to believe they are better off than they were five years ago and are better off compared to their parents when they were their age. Sixty percent of married persons believe they are better off than they were five years ago. Only 26 percent of widowed persons share this opinion. However, the persons who have never married are the group most likely to believe they will be better off ten years from now. Over one-half (58\%) of persons who have never married think they will be better off ten years from now, compared to only 17 percent of widowed persons.

Persons with healthcare support or public safety occupations are the occupation group most likely to believe they are better off compared to five years ago. Seventy percent of persons with these types of occupations believe they are better off compared to five years ago. In comparison, only 33 percent of persons with food service or personal care occupations share the same opinion. Persons with management, professional or education occupations are the group most likely to believe they are better off compared to their parents when they were their age and will be better off ten years from now. Approximately two-thirds (67\%) of persons with these types of occupations believe they will be better off ten years from now. Only 25 percent of persons with occupations classified as other share this optimism.

The respondents were also asked if they believe people are powerless to control their own lives. When analyzing the responses by region, community size, and various individual attributes, many differences emerge (Appendix Table 3). Persons with lower educational levels are more likely than persons with more education to believe that people are powerless to control their own lives. Thirty-seven percent of persons with a high school diploma or less education agree that people are powerless to control their own lives (Figure 7). However, only 19 percent of persons with at least a four-year college degree share this opinion.

Persons with food service or personal care occupations are more likely than persons with different occupations to agree that people are powerless to control their own lives. Almost one-half ( $45 \%$ ) of persons with these types of occupations agree with that statement, compared to 15 percent of persons with healthcare support or public safety occupations.

Figure 7. Belief that People are Powerless to Control Their Own Lives by Education Level


Older persons are more likely than younger persons to agree that people are powerless to control their own lives. Thirty-four percent of persons age 65 and older agree with the statement, compared to 16 percent of persons under the age of 30 .

The other groups most likely to believe people are powerless to control their own lives include persons with lower household incomes and widowed persons.

## Specific Aspects of Well-Being by Subgroups

The respondents were given a list of items that may influence their well-being and were asked to rate their satisfaction with each. The complete ratings for each item are listed in Appendix Table 4. At least four in ten respondents are very satisfied with their family (54\%), their marriage (53\%), greenery and open space (43\%), their religion/spirituality (42\%), their day to day personal safety (41\%), their friends (41\%), and their transportation (40\%).

Items receiving the highest proportion of very dissatisfied responses include: financial security during retirement (17\%), current income level (10\%), and their job opportunities (10\%).

The top five items people are dissatisfied with (determined by the largest proportions of "very dissatisfied" and "dissatisfied" responses) will now be examined in more detail by looking at how the different demographic subgroups view each item. These comparisons are shown in Appendix Table 5.

Respondents' satisfaction level with their financial security during retirement differs by all of the individual characteristics examined. Persons with lower household incomes are more likely than persons with higher incomes to be dissatisfied with their financial security during retirement. Sixty-seven percent of persons with household incomes under \$20,000 report being dissatisfied with their financial security during retirement, compared to 34 percent of persons with household incomes of $\$ 60,000$ or more.

Persons between the ages of 40 and 49 are the age group most likely to be dissatisfied with their financial security during retirement. Just over one-half (51\%) of persons age 40 to 49 are dissatisfied with their financial security during retirement, compared to 30 percent of persons age 65 and older.

Other groups most likely to be dissatisfied with their financial security during retirement include: females, persons with lower education levels, divorced or separated respondents, and persons with food service or personal care occupations.

Persons with lower household incomes are more likely than persons with higher household incomes to be dissatisfied with their current
income level. Almost six in ten persons with household incomes under \$20,000 (59\%) report being dissatisfied with their current income level, compared to 19 percent of persons with household incomes of $\$ 60,000$ or more.

Persons with food service or personal care occupations are more likely than persons with different occupations to express dissatisfaction with their current income level. Fifty-eight percent of persons with these types of occupations are dissatisfied with their current income level, compared to 20 percent of persons with agriculture occupations.

Other groups most likely to report being dissatisfied with their current income level include: persons living in or near the largest communities, persons age 40 to 64, females, persons with lower education levels, and persons who are divorced or separated.

Persons with lower household incomes are more likely than persons with higher household incomes to report being dissatisfied with their job opportunities (Figure 8). Over one-half (52\%) of persons with household incomes under $\$ 20,000$ are dissatisfied with their job opportunities, compared to 28 percent of persons with household incomes of $\$ 60,000$ or more.

Persons with food service or personal care occupations are more likely than persons with different occupations to express dissatisfaction with their job opportunities. Sixty percent of persons with these types of occupations are dissatisfied with their job opportunities, compared to 17 percent of persons with occupations in agriculture.

Other groups most likely to say they are dissatisfied with their job opportunities include:

Figure 8. Satisfaction with Job Opportunities by Household Income

persons between the ages of 30 and 64, females, persons with the lowest education levels, persons who have never married and persons who are divorced or separated.

Persons with lower household incomes are more likely than persons with higher household incomes to express dissatisfaction with their ability to build assets/wealth. Over one-half (54\%) of persons with household incomes under $\$ 20,000$ are dissatisfied with their ability to build assets/wealth. In comparison, only 20 percent of persons with household incomes of $\$ 60,000$ or more share this dissatisfaction.

Other groups most likely to express dissatisfaction with their ability to build assets/wealth include: persons age 40 to 64, persons with the lowest education levels, divorced or separated respondents, and persons with food service or personal care occupations.

Persons with lower household incomes are more likely than persons with higher incomes to express dissatisfaction with their community.

Just over three in ten persons with household incomes under \$20,000 (31\%) are dissatisfied with their community, compared to approximately 14 percent of persons with household incomes of $\$ 40,000$ or more.

Other groups most likely to be dissatisfied with their community include: persons age 40 to 49, persons with the lowest education levels, persons who are divorced or separated and persons with food service or personal care occupations.

## Conclusion

This year, rural Nebraskans are the most positive about their current situation as they've been in all 20 years of this study. Just over one-half (53\%) of rural Nebraskans believe they are better off than they were five years ago (the highest proportion in all 20 years of this study, tied in 2008). This is up slightly from 50 percent last year. And, rural Nebraskans' outlook on their future is the most optimistic in all 20 years of this study. Almost one-half of rural Nebraskans (48\%) believe they will be better off ten years from now (the highest of all 20 years). This is up slightly from 44 percent last year. In addition, rural Nebraskans are less likely to agree that people are powerless to control their own lives than they were last year.

Certain groups remain pessimistic about their situation. Persons with lower household incomes, older persons, and persons with lower educational levels are the groups most likely to be pessimistic about the present and the future. Persons living in or near the largest communities are more likely than persons living in or near smaller communities to be optimistic about the future.

Following trends in previous years, rural Nebraskans are most satisfied with their marriage, family, friends, religion/spirituality and the outdoors. They continue to be less satisfied with job opportunities, current income level and financial security during retirement. Three items had increases in the level of satisfaction this year as compared to last year: your transportation, your spare time and your ability to afford your residence. Two items saw declines in satisfaction compared to last year, clean air and clean water.

## Appendix Figure 1. Regions of Nebraska

Nebraska Metropolitan and Nonmetropolitan Counties (2013 Definitions)


Source: 2013 Metropolitan and Micropolitan Definitions, Office of Management and Budget, released 2-28-13
Prepared by: David Drozd, Center for Public Affairs Research, University of Nebraska at Omaha - August 11, 2014

|  | $\begin{gathered} \hline 2015 \\ \text { Poll } \end{gathered}$ | $\begin{gathered} 2014 \\ \text { Poll } \end{gathered}$ | $\begin{gathered} 2013 \\ \text { Poll } \end{gathered}$ | $\begin{gathered} 2012 \\ \text { Poll } \end{gathered}$ | $\begin{gathered} 2011 \\ \text { Poll } \end{gathered}$ | $\begin{gathered} \hline 2010 \\ \text { Poll } \end{gathered}$ | $\begin{gathered} 2009-2013 \\ \text { ACS } \end{gathered}$ |
| :---: | :---: | :---: | :---: | :---: | :---: | :---: | :---: |
| Age : ${ }^{2}$ |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |
| 20-39 | 31\% | 32\% | 31\% | 31\% | 31\% | 32\% | 31\% |
| 40-64 | 45\% | 46\% | 44\% | 44\% | 44\% | 44\% | 45\% |
| 65 and over | 24\% | 23\% | 24\% | 24\% | 24\% | 24\% | 24\% |
| Gender: ${ }^{3}$ |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |
| Female | 58\% | 57\% | 51\% | 61\% | 60\% | 59\% | 51\% |
| Male | 42\% | 43\% | 49\% | 39\% | 40\% | 41\% | 49\% |
| Education: ${ }^{4}$ |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |
| Less than $9^{\text {th }}$ grade | 1\% | 1\% | 1\% | 1\% | 1\% | 1\% | 5\% |
| $9^{\text {th }}$ to $12^{\text {th }}$ grade (no diploma) | 2\% | 3\% | 3\% | 3\% | 3\% | 3\% | 7\% |
| High school diploma (or equiv.) | 22\% | 18\% | 23\% | 22\% | 26\% | 25\% | 34\% |
| Some college, no degree | 23\% | 23\% | 25\% | 25\% | 23\% | 25\% | 26\% |
| Associate degree | 15\% | 16\% | 15\% | 15\% | 16\% | 14\% | 10\% |
| Bachelors degree | 24\% | 24\% | 22\% | 24\% | 19\% | 20\% | 13\% |
| Graduate or professional degree | 13\% | 16\% | 12\% | 11\% | 12\% | 11\% | 5\% |
| Household Income: ${ }^{5}$ |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |
| Less than \$10,000 | 5\% | 5\% | 5\% | 6\% | 6\% | 6\% | 6\% |
| \$10,000-\$19,999 | 7\% | 7\% | 7\% | 10\% | 10\% | 10\% | 12\% |
| \$20,000-\$29,999 | 9\% | 8\% | 13\% | 11\% | 13\% | 13\% | 12\% |
| \$30,000-\$39,999 | 9\% | 14\% | 10\% | 10\% | 14\% | 12\% | 12\% |
| \$40,000-\$49,999 | 12\% | 12\% | 15\% | 12\% | 11\% | 13\% | 11\% |
| \$50,000-\$59,999 | 11\% | 13\% | 10\% | 13\% | 12\% | 11\% | 10\% |
| \$60,000-\$74,999 | 15\% | 13\% | 11\% | 14\% | 12\% | 13\% | 11\% |
| \$75,000 or more | 32\% | 29\% | 29\% | 25\% | 22\% | 23\% | 26\% |
| Marital Status: ${ }^{6}$ |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |
| Married | 68\% | 68\% | 70\% | 70\% | 66\% | 71\% | 62\% |
| Never married | 13\% | 12\% | 12\% | 10\% | 14\% | 9\% | 17\% |
| Divorced/separated | 10\% | 12\% | 9\% | 11\% | 11\% | 11\% | 12\% |
| Widowed/widower | 8\% | 8\% | 9\% | 10\% | 10\% | 9\% | 8\% |

[^0]
## Compared to Five Years Ago

|  | Much Worse Off | Worse Off | About the Same | Better Off | Much <br> Better Off | Chi-square (sig.) |
| :---: | :---: | :---: | :---: | :---: | :---: | :---: |
|  | Percentages |  |  |  |  |  |
| Total | 3 | 12 | 31 | 42 | 12 |  |
| Community Size | $(\mathrm{n}=1857)$ |  |  |  |  |  |
| Less than 500 | 4 | 10 | 31 | 43 | 12 |  |
| 500-999 | 3 | 11 | 39 | 42 | 6 |  |
| 1,000-4,999 | 2 | 11 | 31 | 45 | 11 |  |
| 5,000-9,999 | 2 | 14 | 32 | 38 | 14 | $\chi^{2}=24.83$ |
| 10,000 and up | 4 | 12 | 29 | 42 | 14 | (.073) |
| Region | $(\mathrm{n}=1894)$ |  |  |  |  |  |
| Panhandle | 3 | 17 | 27 | 42 | 11 |  |
| North Central | 3 | 11 | 34 | 40 | 12 |  |
| South Central | 3 | 11 | 30 | 43 | 13 |  |
| Northeast | 4 | 9 | 34 | 43 | 10 | $\chi^{2}=23.51$ |
| Southeast | 2 | 16 | 32 | 39 | 11 | (.101) |
| Income Level | $(\mathrm{n}=1735)$ |  |  |  |  |  |
| Under \$20,000 | 10 | 25 | 39 | 22 | 4 |  |
| \$20,000-\$39,999 | 3 | 16 | 43 | 31 | 7 |  |
| \$40,000-\$59,999 | 3 | 11 | 33 | 44 | 10 | $\chi^{2}=196.86 *$ |
| \$60,000 and over | 2 | 8 | 23 | 51 | 17 | (.000) |
| Age | ( $\mathrm{n}=1902$ ) |  |  |  |  |  |
| 19-29 | 1 | 4 | 19 | 58 | 18 |  |
| 30-39 | 4 | 4 | 22 | 47 | 23 |  |
| 40-49 | 3 | 13 | 24 | 50 | 11 |  |
| 50-64 | 4 | 16 | 35 | 36 | 9 | $\chi^{2}=233.19^{*}$ |
| 65 and older | 4 | 17 | 47 | 28 | 4 | (.000) |
| Gender | ( $\mathrm{n}=1867$ ) |  |  |  |  |  |
| Male | 3 | 13 | 31 | 43 | 11 | $\chi^{2}=2.80$ |
| Female | 4 | 11 | 32 | 42 | 12 | (.592) |
| Marital Status | $(\mathrm{n}=1854)$ |  |  |  |  |  |
| Married | 3 | 10 | 28 | 47 | 13 |  |
| Never married | 5 | 11 | 33 | 40 | 11 |  |
| Divorced/separated | 3 | 21 | 39 | 31 | 7 | $\chi^{2}=98.76^{*}$ |
| Widowed | 7 | 19 | 49 | 21 | 5 | (.000) |
| Education | $(\mathrm{n}=1867) \quad$ |  |  |  |  |  |
| H.S. diploma or less | 4 | 17 | 42 | 28 | 8 |  |
| Some college | 4 | 11 | 33 | 44 | 9 | $\chi^{2}=118.66^{*}$ |
| Bachelors degree | 2 | 8 | 23 | 50 | 17 | (.000) |
| Occupation | ( $\mathrm{n}=1368$ ) |  |  |  |  |  |
| Mgt , prof or education | 2 | 5 | 25 | 47 | 20 |  |
| Sales or office support | 4 | 11 | 29 | 47 | 10 |  |
| Constrn, inst or maint | 2 | 12 | 36 | 43 | 7 |  |
| Prodn/trans/warehsing | 3 | 15 | 34 | 36 | 12 |  |
| Agriculture | 3 | 12 | 23 | 51 | 11 |  |
| Food serv/pers. care | 6 | 34 | 28 | 27 | 6 |  |
| Hlthcare supp/safety | 4 | 4 | 23 | 58 | 12 | $\chi^{2}=131.36^{*}$ |
| Other | 9 | 21 | 25 | 34 | 11 | (.000) |

[^1]Compared to Parents When They Were Your Age

|  | Much Worse Off | Worse Off | About the Same | Better Off | Much Better Off | Chi-square (sig.) |
| :---: | :---: | :---: | :---: | :---: | :---: | :---: |
|  | Percentages |  |  |  |  |  |
| Total | 3 | 13 | 25 | 43 | 16 |  |
| Community Size | $(\mathrm{n}=1860)$ |  |  |  |  |  |
| Less than 500 | 2 | 12 | 28 | 45 | 13 |  |
| 500-999 | 3 | 10 | 25 | 50 | 12 |  |
| 1,000-4,999 | 3 | 15 | 27 | 40 | 15 |  |
| 5,000-9,999 | 2 | 11 | 22 | 51 | 15 | $\chi^{2}=33.37^{*}$ |
| 10,000 and up | 4 | 13 | 24 | 39 | 21 | (.007) |
| Region | $(\mathrm{n}=1902)$ |  |  |  |  |  |
| Panhandle | 1 | 16 | 29 | 43 | 11 |  |
| North Central | 1 | 11 | 30 | 45 | 13 |  |
| South Central | 3 | 13 | 27 | 38 | 19 |  |
| Northeast | 4 | 13 | 20 | 45 | 19 | $\chi^{2}=38.51 *$ |
| Southeast | 3 | 13 | 25 | 48 | 11 | (.001) |
| Income Level | ( $\mathrm{n}=1740$ ) |  |  |  |  |  |
| Under \$20,000 | 5 | 25 | 31 | 35 | 5 |  |
| \$20,000-\$39,999 | 4 | 17 | 31 | 40 | 9 |  |
| \$40,000-\$59,999 | 3 | 14 | 26 | 44 | 13 | $\chi^{2}=118.52^{*}$ |
| \$60,000 and over | 2 | 9 | 21 | 45 | 23 | (.000) |
| Age | ( $\mathrm{n}=1907$ ) |  |  |  |  |  |
| 19-29 | 1 | 4 | 26 | 51 | 18 |  |
| 30-39 | 4 | 10 | 19 | 43 | 24 |  |
| 40-49 | 2 | 18 | 28 | 40 | 13 |  |
| 50-64 | 4 | 20 | 29 | 35 | 13 | $\chi^{2}=103.29^{*}$ |
| 65 and older | 1 | 11 | 24 | 49 | 15 | (.000) |
| Gender | $(\mathrm{n}=1871) \quad$ |  |  |  |  |  |
| Male | 3 | 13 | 23 | 44 | 17 | $\chi^{2}=3.06$ |
| Female | 3 | 13 | 27 | 42 | 16 | (.548) |
| Marital Status | $(\mathrm{n}=1861)$ |  |  |  |  |  |
| Married | 2 | 11 | 24 | 46 | 18 |  |
| Never married | 4 | 16 | 32 | 37 | 12 |  |
| Divorced/separated | 6 | 25 | 29 | 33 | 8 | $\chi^{2}=64.72^{*}$ |
| Widowed | 2 | 14 | 26 | 44 | 15 | (.000) |
| Education | $(\mathrm{n}=1872)$ |  |  |  |  |  |
| H.S. diploma or less | 3 | 18 | 29 | 37 | 13 |  |
| Some college | 4 | 14 | 27 | 43 | 13 | $\chi^{2}=51.43 *$ |
| Bachelors degree | 2 | 9 | 22 | 47 | 21 | (.000) |
| Occupation | ( $\mathrm{n}=1374$ ) |  |  |  |  |  |
| Mgt, prof or education | 3 | 9 | 23 | 42 | 23 |  |
| Sales or office support | 4 | 11 | 32 | 39 | 14 |  |
| Constrn, inst or maint | 2 | 18 | 23 | 46 | 11 |  |
| Prodn/trans/warehsing | 4 | 13 | 26 | 42 | 16 |  |
| Agriculture | 3 | 12 | 23 | 45 | 18 |  |
| Food serv/pers. care | 5 | 33 | 29 | 31 | 2 |  |
| Hlthcare supp/safety | 3 | 11 | 22 | 50 | 14 | $\chi^{2}=88.11 *$ |
| Other | 9 | 20 | 29 | 27 | 16 | (.000) |

[^2]|  | Ten Years From Now |  |  |  |  |  |
| :---: | :---: | :---: | :---: | :---: | :---: | :---: |
|  | Much Worse Off | Worse Off | About the Same | Better Off | Much <br> Better Off | Chi-square (sig.) |
|  | Percentages |  |  |  |  |  |
| Total | 3 | 14 | 35 | 37 | 11 |  |
| Community Size | $(\mathrm{n}=1842)$ |  |  |  |  |  |
| Less than 500 | 2 | 14 | 39 | 40 | 4 |  |
| 500-999 | 2 | 17 | 39 | 28 | 14 |  |
| 1,000-4,999 | 2 | 14 | 36 | 39 | 10 |  |
| 5,000-9,999 | 4 | 15 | 34 | 40 | 7 | $\chi^{2}=47.42 *$ |
| 10,000 and up | 2 | 13 | 32 | 38 | 15 | (.000) |
| Region | $(\mathrm{n}=1882)$ |  |  |  |  |  |
| Panhandle | 5 | 13 | 37 | 37 | 8 |  |
| North Central | 2 | 15 | 35 | 37 | 11 |  |
| South Central | 2 | 13 | 32 | 39 | 14 |  |
| Northeast | 2 | 13 | 38 | 35 | 12 | $\chi^{2}=23.87$ |
| Southeast | 2 | 17 | 38 | 37 | 7 | (.092) |
| Income Level | $(\mathrm{n}=1729) \quad{ }^{\text {a }}$ |  |  |  |  |  |
| Under \$20,000 | 8 | 18 | 50 | 20 | 5 |  |
| \$20,000-\$39,999 | 5 | 23 | 36 | 29 | 7 |  |
| \$40,000-\$59,999 | 2 | 14 | 36 | 42 | 7 | $\chi^{2}=153.52^{*}$ |
| \$60,000 and over | 1 | 9 | 30 | 44 | 16 | (.000) |
| Age | $(\mathrm{n}=1887)$ |  |  |  |  |  |
| 19-29 | 0 | 3 | 16 | 54 | 28 |  |
| 30-39 | 1 | 4 | 22 | 53 | 20 |  |
| 40-49 | 2 | 5 | 35 | 49 | 11 |  |
| 50-64 | 3 | 22 | 41 | 30 | 4 | $\chi^{2}=531.53 *$ |
| 65 and older | 5 | 27 | 53 | 14 | 2 | (.000) |
| Gender |  |  |  |  |  |  |
| Male | 3 | 16 | 37 | 36 | 9 | $\chi^{2}=8.98$ |
| Female | 2 | 13 | 35 | 38 | 12 | (.062) |
| Marital Status | $(\mathrm{n}=1842)$ |  |  |  |  |  |
| Married | 2 | 13 | 34 | 40 | 12 |  |
| Never married | 2 | 10 | 31 | 46 | 12 |  |
| Divorced/separated | 2 | 17 | 43 | 29 | 9 | $\chi^{2}=85.45 *$ |
| Widowed | 6 | 27 | 49 | 15 | 2 | (.000) |
| Education | $(\mathrm{n}=1855) \quad{ }^{\text {a }}$ |  |  |  |  |  |
| H.S. diploma or less | 4 | 20 | 41 | 29 | 6 |  |
| Some college | 3 | 14 | 37 | 36 | 10 | $\chi^{2}=77.95^{*}$ |
| Bachelors degree | 1 | 10 | 29 | 45 | 14 | (.000) |
| Occupation | ( $\mathrm{n}=1367$ ) |  |  |  |  |  |
| Mgt, prof or education | 1 | 7 | 25 | 51 | 16 |  |
| Sales or office support | 1 | 18 | 32 | 39 | 10 |  |
| Constrn, inst or maint | 4 | 22 | 34 | 32 | 8 |  |
| Prodn/trans/warehsing | 1 | 14 | 37 | 38 | 10 |  |
| Agriculture | 2 | 14 | 37 | 40 | 7 |  |
| Food serv/pers. care | 4 | 19 | 35 | 39 | 4 |  |
| Hlthcare supp/safety | 1 | 8 | 33 | 38 | 21 | $\chi^{2}=118.16^{*}$ |
| Other | 9 | 21 | 46 | 14 | 11 | (.000) |

[^3]Appendix Table 3. Life Has Changed So Much in Our Modern World that Most People Are Powerless to Control Their Own Lives.


[^4]Appendix Table 4. Satisfaction with Items Affecting Well-Being, 2015

|  | Does Not <br> Apply | Very <br> Dissatisfied | Somewhat <br> Dissatisfied | No <br> Opinion | Somewhat <br> Satisfied | Very <br> Satisfied |
| :--- | :---: | :---: | :---: | :---: | :---: | :---: |
| Your family | $1 \%$ | $1 \%$ | $3 \%$ | $9 \%$ | $33 \%$ | $54 \%$ |
| Your marriage | 23 | $0^{*}$ | 1 | 4 | 19 | 53 |
| Greenery and open space | 1 | 2 | 5 | 12 | 39 | 43 |
| Your religion/spirituality | 1 | 1 | 3 | 18 | 34 | 42 |
| Your day to day personal safety | $0^{*}$ | 1 | 3 | 8 | 47 | 41 |
| Your friends | $0^{*}$ | 2 | 4 | 14 | 38 | 41 |
| Your transportation | $0^{*}$ | 2 | 5 | 8 | 44 | 40 |
| Clean air | 1 | 3 | 6 | 11 | 41 | 39 |
| Clean water | 1 | 5 | 10 | 10 | 37 | 38 |
| Your general quality of life | $0^{*}$ | 1 | 6 | 10 | 49 | 34 |
| Your education | 1 | 2 | 7 | 15 | 43 | 33 |
| Your housing | 1 | 3 | 9 | 11 | 45 | 32 |
| Your general standard of living | 1 | 2 | 7 | 11 | 48 | 32 |
| Your ability to afford your residence | 1 | 5 | 11 | 14 | 40 | 29 |
| Your spare time | 2 | 3 | 13 | 15 | 41 | 28 |
| Your job security | 15 | 4 | 7 | 13 | 35 | 27 |
| Your health | $0^{*}$ | 4 | 11 | 12 | 48 | 25 |
| Your job satisfaction | 14 | 3 | 8 | 12 | 39 | 24 |
| Your community | $0^{*}$ | 4 | 13 | 20 | 46 | 17 |
| Your ability to build assets/wealth | 2 | 8 | 21 | 19 | 34 | 16 |
| Your job opportunities | 12 | 10 | 18 | 21 | 24 | 15 |
| Current income level | 2 | 10 | 20 | 13 | 43 | 12 |
| Financial security during retirement | 3 | 17 | 25 | 17 | 30 | 9 |

[^5]|  | Financi <br> Dissatisfied | al security retirement No opinion | during <br> Satisfied | Significance | Your cur <br> Dissatisfied | ent incom <br> No opinion | level <br> Satisfied | Significance |
| :---: | :---: | :---: | :---: | :---: | :---: | :---: | :---: | :---: |
|  | Percentages |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |
| Total | 43 | 17 | 41 |  | 31 | 13 | 56 |  |
| Community Size | $(\mathrm{n}=1756)$ |  |  | ( $\mathrm{n}=1793$ ) |  |  |  |  |
| Less than 500 | 42 | 21 | 36 |  | 25 | 17 | 59 |  |
| 500-999 | 46 | 15 | 39 |  | 32 | 12 | 56 |  |
| 1,000-4,999 | 42 | 18 | 41 |  | 29 | 15 | 56 |  |
| 5,000-9,999 | 45 | 14 | 42 | $\chi^{2}=11.05$ | 27 | 13 | 60 | $\chi^{2}=18.08^{*}$ |
| 10,000 and up | 40 | 16 | 44 | (.199) | 34 | 10 | 55 | (.021) |
| Region | ( $\mathrm{n}=1791$ ) |  |  | ( $\mathrm{n}=1826$ ) |  |  |  |  |
| Panhandle | 45 | 21 | 34 |  | 29 | 17 | 55 |  |
| North Central | 44 | 14 | 43 |  | 23 | 15 | 62 |  |
| South Central | 40 | 16 | 43 |  | 33 | 12 | 56 |  |
| Northeast | 44 | 16 | 41 | $\chi^{2}=12.99$ | 33 | 13 | 55 | $\chi^{2}=12.96$ |
| Southeast | 42 | 21 | 37 | (.112) | 31 | 15 | 54 | (.113) |
| Individual Attributes: |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |
| Household Income Level | ( $\mathrm{n}=1643$ ) |  |  | ( $\mathrm{n}=1686$ ) |  |  |  |  |
| Under \$20,000 | 67 | 16 | 18 |  | 59 | 25 | 16 |  |
| \$20,000-\$39,999 | 54 | 20 | 26 |  | 44 | 19 | 37 |  |
| \$40,000-\$59,999 | 45 | 18 | 37 | $\chi^{2}=126.97 *$ | 35 | 13 | 52 | $\chi^{2}=273.66^{*}$ |
| \$60,000 and over | 34 |  | 54 | (.000) | 19 | 7 | 75 | (.000) |
| Age | $(\mathrm{n}=1796)$ |  |  | ( $\mathrm{n}=1832$ ) |  |  |  |  |
| 19-29 | 43 | 24 | 33 |  | 30 | 13 | 57 |  |
| 30-39 | 45 | 16 | 39 |  | 31 | 6 | 63 |  |
| 40-49 | 51 | 14 | 36 |  | 33 | 10 | 58 |  |
| 50-64 | 46 | 17 | 37 | $\chi^{2}=58.39^{*}$ | 34 | 15 | 51 | $\chi^{2}=46.17 *$ |
| 65 and older | 30 |  | 54 | (.000) | 24 | 21 | 56 | (.000) |
| Gender | $(\mathrm{n}=1764)$ |  |  | ( $\mathrm{n}=1799$ ) |  |  |  |  |
| Male | 38 | 17 | 44 | $\chi^{2}=8.78 *$ | 27 | 16 | 57 | $\chi^{2}=13.19^{*}$ |
| Female | 45 |  | 38 | (.012) | 33 | 11 | 56 | (.001) |
| Education | ( $\mathrm{n}=1764)$ |  |  | $(\mathrm{n}=1799)$ |  |  |  |  |
| High school diploma or less | 48 | 21 | 31 |  | 37 | 20 | 44 |  |
| Some college | 47 | 17 | 36 | $\chi^{2}=60.25^{*}$ | 34 | 16 | 51 | $\chi^{2}=97.26^{*}$ |
| Bachelors or grad degree | 34 |  | 52 | (.000) | 23 | 7 | 70 | (.000) |
| Marital Status | ( $\mathrm{n}=1755)$ |  |  | ( $\mathrm{n}=1789$ ) |  |  |  |  |
| Married | 39 | 16 | 45 |  | 25 | 11 | 64 |  |
| Never married | 54 | 19 | 27 |  | 43 | 17 | 39 |  |
| Divorced/separated | 58 | 20 | 23 | $\chi^{2}=55.15^{*}$ | 48 | 17 | 36 | $\chi^{2}=99.29^{*}$ |
| Widowed | 37 |  | 47 | (.000) | 33 | 23 | 44 | (.000) |
| Occupation | $(\mathrm{n}=1300)$ |  |  | ( $\mathrm{n}=1359)$ |  |  |  |  |
| Mgt, prof or education | 35 | 15 | 50 |  | 24 | 5 | 71 |  |
| Sales or office support | 62 | 9 | 29 |  | 42 | 8 | 50 |  |
| Constrn, inst or maint | 56 | 20 | 25 |  | 39 | 20 | 41 |  |
| Prodn/trans/warehsing | 53 | 15 | 32 |  | 26 | 17 | 57 |  |
| Agriculture | 35 | 22 | 43 |  | 20 | 19 | 61 |  |
| Food serv/pers. care | 68 | 20 | 12 | $\chi^{2}=96.40^{*}$ | 58 | 19 | 23 |  |
| Hlthcare supp/safety | 43 | 23 | 35 |  | 30 | 8 | 62 | $\chi^{2}=129.28^{*}$ |
| Other | 37 | 14 | 49 |  | 29 | 17 | 55 | (.000) |

* Chi-square values are statistically significant at the .05 level.
** Only the five items with the highest combined proportion of very and somewhat dissatisfied responses are included.

|  | Your job opportunitiesNo |  |  | Your ability to build assets/wealthNo |  |  |  |  |
| :---: | :---: | :---: | :---: | :---: | :---: | :---: | :---: | :---: |
|  |  |  |  | Significance | Dissatisfied | No opinion |  | Significance |
|  | Percentages |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |
| Total | 31 | 24 | 46 |  | 30 | 20 | 51 |  |
| Community Size |  | ( $\mathrm{n}=1495$ ) |  |  |  | 1757) |  |  |
| Less than 500 | 25 | 26 | 49 |  | 27 | 26 | 47 |  |
| 500-999 | 34 | 23 | 43 |  | 27 | 20 | 53 |  |
| 1,000-4,999 | 33 | 25 | 42 |  | 30 | 19 | 51 |  |
| 5,000-9,999 | 30 | 19 | 50 | $\chi^{2}=8.95$ | 28 | 19 | 53 | $\chi^{2}=12.64$ |
| 10,000 and up | 32 | 22 | 46 | (.346) | 30 | 17 | 53 | (.125) |
| Region |  | ( $\mathrm{n}=1519$ ) |  |  |  | = 1795) |  |  |
| Panhandle | 33 | 24 | 43 |  | 25 | 25 | 50 |  |
| North Central | 38 | 21 | 41 |  | 32 | 16 | 52 |  |
| South Central | 28 | 24 | 48 |  | 31 | 18 | 50 |  |
| Northeast | 29 | 22 | 49 | $\chi^{2}=12.00$ | 29 | 20 | 51 | $\chi^{2}=8.62$ |
| Southeast | 33 | 27 | 40 | (.151) | 29 | 20 | 52 | (.376) |
| Individual Attributes: |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |
| Household Income Level |  | ( $\mathrm{n}=1412$ ) |  |  |  | 1654) |  |  |
| Under \$20,000 | 52 | 22 | 26 |  | 54 | 28 | 18 |  |
| \$20,000-\$39,999 | 37 | 30 | 32 |  | 47 | 26 | 28 |  |
| \$40,000-\$59,999 | 29 | 25 | 46 | $\chi^{2}=60.99 *$ | 28 | 23 | 49 | $\chi^{2}=226.09 *$ |
| \$60,000 and over | 28 | 19 | 53 | (.000) | 20 | 13 | 67 | (.000) |
| Age |  | ( $\mathrm{n}=1523$ ) |  |  |  | 1800) |  |  |
| 19-29 | 25 | 18 | 57 |  | 21 | 22 | 57 |  |
| 30-39 | 35 | 13 | 52 |  | 30 | 12 | 58 |  |
| 40-49 | 33 | 20 | 46 |  | 34 | 13 | 54 |  |
| $50-64$ | 34 | 28 | 38 | $\chi^{2}=90.43 *$ | 35 | 21 | 44 | $\chi^{2}=63.32 *$ |
| 65 and older | 20 | $47$ | 34 | $(.000)$ | 25 | 29 | 47 | (.000) |
| Gender |  | ( $\mathrm{n}=1498$ ) |  |  |  | = 1767) |  |  |
| Male | 27 | 25 | 48 | $\chi^{2}=9.22 *$ | 28 | 21 | 51 | $\chi^{2}=2.64$ |
| Female | 34 | 22 | 43 | (.010) | 30 | 19 | 51 | (.268) |
| Education |  | ( $\mathrm{n}=1500$ ) |  |  |  | = 1768) |  |  |
| High school diploma or less | 33 | 30 | 38 |  | 36 | 27 | 36 |  |
| Some college | 32 | 24 | 44 | $\chi^{2}=19.55 *$ | 32 | 20 | 48 | $\chi^{2}=81.55^{*}$ |
| Bachelors or grad degree | 29 | 20 | 52 | (.001) | 22 | 14 | 63 | (.000) |
| Marital Status |  | ( $\mathrm{n}=1488$ ) |  |  |  | 1758) |  |  |
| Married | 29 | 23 | 48 |  | 24 | 18 | 59 |  |
| Never married | 37 | 22 | 41 |  | 38 | 22 | 40 |  |
| Divorced/separated | 37 | 28 | 35 | $\chi^{2}=19.64 *$ | 53 | 23 | 24 | $\chi^{2}=114.89^{*}$ |
| Widowed | 35 | 35 | 29 | (.003) | 33 | 32 | 35 | (.000) |
| Occupation |  | ( $\mathrm{n}=1293$ ) |  |  |  | $=1348)$ |  |  |
| Mgt, prof or education | 28 | 20 | 52 |  | 22 | 14 | 64 |  |
| Sales or office support | 29 | 26 | 45 |  | 35 | 17 | 48 |  |
| Constrn, inst or maint | 25 | 19 | 57 |  | 33 | 22 | 44 |  |
| Prodn/trans/warehsing | 37 | 30 | 33 |  | 38 | 22 | 40 |  |
| Agriculture | 17 | 31 | 51 |  | 28 | 20 | 52 |  |
| Food serv/pers. care | 60 | 23 | 17 |  | 53 | 14 | 33 |  |
| Hlthcare supp/safety | 33 | 16 | 51 | $\chi^{2}=82.64 *$ | 24 | 21 | 56 | $\chi^{2}=70.23 *$ |
| Other | 35 | 38 | 28 | (.000) | 41 | 26 | 33 | (.000) |

[^6]|  | Your community |  |  | Significance |
| :---: | :---: | :---: | :---: | :---: |
|  | Dissatisfied | opinion | Satisfied |  |
|  | Percentages |  |  |  |
| Total | 17 | 20 | 64 |  |
| Community Size | $(\mathrm{n}=1826)$ |  |  |  |
| Less than 500 | 13 | 22 | 65 |  |
| 500-999 | 16 | 17 | 67 |  |
| 1,000-4,999 | 16 | 22 | 62 |  |
| 5,000-9,999 | 21 | 21 | 58 | $\chi^{2}=13.24$ |
| 10,000 and up | 18 | 17 | 65 | (.104) |
| Region | ( $\mathrm{n}=1864$ ) |  |  |  |
| Panhandle | 24 | 23 | 53 |  |
| North Central | 17 | 18 | 65 |  |
| South Central | 15 | 19 | 67 |  |
| Northeast | 16 | 21 | 63 | $\chi^{2}=14.67$ |
| Southeast | 16 | 20 | 64 | (.066) |
| Individual Attributes: |  |  |  |  |
| Household Income Level | ( $\mathrm{n}=1714$ ) |  |  |  |
| Under \$20,000 | 31 | 23 | 47 |  |
| \$20,000-\$39,999 | 18 | 24 | 59 |  |
| \$40,000-\$59,999 | 14 | 17 | 68 | $\chi^{2}=44.82 *$ |
| \$60,000 and over | 15 | 18 | 68 | (.000) |
| Age | $(\mathrm{n}=1871)$ |  |  |  |
| 19-29 | 12 | 19 | 69 |  |
| 30-39 | 15 | 16 | 69 |  |
| 40-49 | 22 | 16 | 62 |  |
| 50-64 | 19 | 25 | 56 | $\chi^{2}=36.72 *$ |
| 65 and older | 13 | 20 | 67 | (.000) |
| Gender | ( $\mathrm{n}=1836$ ) |  |  |  |
| Male | 17 | 22 | 61 | $\chi^{2}=4.62$ |
| Female | 17 | 18 | 65 | (.099) |
| Education | $(\mathrm{n}=1836)$ |  |  |  |
| High school diploma or less | 20 | 27 | 53 |  |
| Some college | 18 | 20 | 62 | $\chi^{2}=44.86 *$ |
| Bachelors or grad degree | 13 | 15 | 72 | (.000) |
| Marital Status | ( $\mathrm{n}=1827$ ) |  |  |  |
| Married | 15 | 18 | 67 |  |
| Never married | 22 | 23 | 56 |  |
| Divorced/separated | 25 | 25 | 50 | $\chi^{2}=32.63 *$ |
| Widowed | 13 | 23 | 64 | (.000) |
| Occupation | ( $\mathrm{n}=1358$ ) |  |  |  |
| Mgt , prof or education | 16 | 15 | 70 |  |
| Sales or office support | 21 | 13 | 66 |  |
| Constrn, inst or maint | 17 | 20 | 62 |  |
| Prodn/trans/warehsing | 26 | 36 | 39 |  |
| Agriculture | 10 | 22 | 68 |  |
| Food serv/pers. care | 28 | 22 | 50 |  |
| Hithcare supp/safety | 11 | 20 | 69 | $\chi^{2}=64.24 *$ |
| Other | 23 | 21 | 57 | (.000) |

[^7]CARI Research Report 15-1, July 2015
It is the policy of the University of Nebraska-Lincoln not to discriminate on the basis of sex, age, disability, race, color, religion, marital status, veteran's status, national or ethnic origin, or sexual orientation.


[^0]:    ${ }^{1}$ Data from the Rural Polls have been weighted by age.
    ${ }^{2}$ 2009-2013 American Community Survey universe is non-metro population 20 years of age and over.
    3 2009-2013 American Community Survey universe is non-metro population 20 years of age and over.
    4 2009-2013 American Community Survey universe is non-metro population 18 years of age and over.
    5 2009-2013 American Community Survey universe is all non-metro households.
    ${ }^{6}$ 2009-2013 American Community Survey universe is non-metro population 20 years of age and over.
    *Comparison numbers are estimates taken from the American Community Survey five-year sample and may reflect significant margins of error for areas with relatively small populations.

[^1]:    * Chi-square values are statistically significant at the .05 level.

[^2]:    * Chi-square values are statistically significant at the .05 level.

[^3]:    * Chi-square values are statistically significant at the .05 level.

[^4]:    * Chi-square values are statistically significant at the .05 level.

[^5]:    $0^{*}=$ Less than 1 percent.

[^6]:    * Chi-square values are statistically significant at the .05 level.
    ** Only the five items with the highest combined proportion of very and somewhat dissatisfied responses are included.

[^7]:    * Chi-square values are statistically significant at the .05 level.
    ** Only the five items with the highest combined proportion of very and somewhat dissatisfied responses are included

