

THE NESTM

The National Employee SurveyTM

Madison, WI

Workplace Report

2018



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The NES is presented by NRC in collaboration with ICMA.

NRC is a charter member of the AAPOR Transparency Initiative, providing clear disclosure of our sound and ethical survey research practices.

About

This report of The National Employee Survey™ (The NES™) for the City of Madison provides the opinions of employees regarding their satisfaction on the job and other key characteristics of a quality work environment: communication, organizational ethics, employee fit, wages and benefits, the physical work space, supervisory relationships, the job feedback system, professional development and self-reported performance. A periodic sounding of employee opinion on these critical work climate issues offers management, staff and elected officials an opportunity to identify challenges, plan for and evaluate improvements and sustain organizational effectiveness for long-term success.

The National Employee Survey™ (The NES) report is about the work environment of the City of Madison. A quality work environment is a workplace that is not simply acceptable, but that is desirable. It is not only where people do work, but where they want to work.

Great workplaces are partnerships of employees, management and the residents they serve. The NES captures employees' opinions within the six aspects of organizational climate: Job Satisfaction, Supervisor and Work Group, Executive Leadership, Workplace, External Customers and Support Services.

A total of 2,112 completed surveys were obtained, providing an overall response rate of 68%. Because the survey was intended to be taken by all employees and no statistical weighting was performed, no traditional margin of error was calculated. However, because not all employees responded, NRC recommends using plus or minus five percentage points as the "range of uncertainty" around any given percent reported for the organization as a whole. The full description of methods used to garner these opinions can be found in the *Technical Appendices* provided under separate cover.

Highlights

Madison employees are satisfied with their jobs and plan to stay

Most of those who work for the City of Madison are satisfied. About 9 in 10 employees felt Madison is a good employer, felt positive about working for the City and gained satisfaction from their current job. About three-fourths felt their job is important, were asked to do what they do best every day and that their workloads were manageable. Further, employees gave positive ratings about their friendships, work groups and felt as though their values match with the organization. These aspects are critical for employee engagement and likely explain a great deal of why 94% of employees planned to work for the City a year from now.

Employee development and performance evaluation opportunities could be enhanced

While the City of Madison received ratings similar or above par for opportunities for promotion and develop a career path, a number of the aspects related to Employee Development fell below national averages. The areas where ratings lagged behind the nation related to skill building: support for continual learning and development, opportunities to develop knowledge and skills and coaching or mentoring. Related, a number of organizational aspects scoring below other local governments clustered around performance evaluation especially in relation to communication (providing specific, constructive feedback; working with employees to set goals, someone talking to them about progress, employee appreciation). Investing greater resources in employee development and communication is an opportunity to not only increase job satisfaction but also the quality of work produced by the City.

Bolstering communication efforts between leadership and employees could increase confidence

Communication is always a challenge in organizations, especially when it comes to sharing and explaining the decisions made by executive leadership. The three aspects of leadership receiving below par ratings related to the response to important issues or change; clarity of strategic direction, goals and objectives; and the process for making important decisions. Confidence in local government and the City acting in the best interest of Madison also received ratings lower than the benchmark. Employee-management relationships may be strengthened by increased or different modes of information sharing.

Overall Employee Satisfaction

Knowing where to focus resources to improve employees' satisfaction with the workplace requires information that targets job features that are most important to employees. Employees were asked to rate more than 100 different aspects of the organization, which have been grouped into the larger job features shown in the figure below (the individual items making up each job feature can be found under separate cover in the *Technical Appendices*). The color of each indicates the comparison of its rating (the average across ratings given to each aspect included in that specific job feature) to NRC's national employee benchmark database.

In addition to a benchmark comparison for each job feature, the image below includes one or more stars to indicate which job features were the most influential on ratings of employee job satisfaction. Key features found to be most strongly correlated with job satisfaction in the City of Madison were:

- Employee contribution and fit
- Employee development

To impact employee job satisfaction, an organization typically will want to consider improvements to any key features that are not at least similar to the benchmark. In the case of Madison, no key drivers were below the benchmark. In terms of Madison's culture as a whole, only Wages and Compensation were below the benchmark while all other indices were similar to the other local governments throughout the nation.

Legend

- Higher than benchmark
- Similar to benchmark
- Lower than benchmark
- ★ Most influential on overall job satisfaction



Job Satisfaction

An organization of satisfied employees is an organization where employees feel motivated to do their best possible work and where they hope to continue working in years to come. In the City of Madison, 85% of employees strongly or somewhat agreed that they were satisfied with their job, which was similar to ratings in other organizations across the nation.

Delving deeper into Job Satisfaction, employees evaluated specific aspects of their work experience including the size of their workload and the quality of work committed by co-workers. Overall, Madison employees gave positive ratings to their jobs with at least 8 in 10 agreeing with all statements related to job satisfaction. All of these ratings were similar to the benchmark. The lowest rated questions related to performance evaluations: receiving recognition and receiving feedback about progress. The proportion of employees reporting that someone had talked with them about their progress was lower than found in other organizations. About 1 in 3 employees felt they could take on a heavier workload.

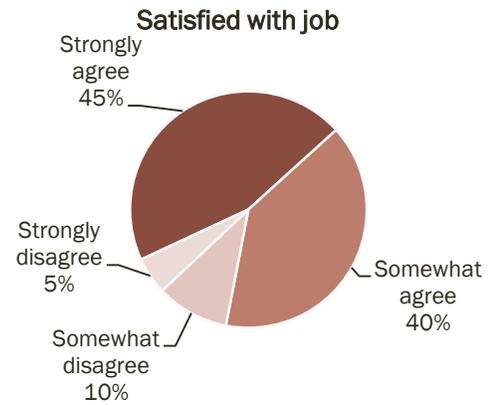


Figure 1: Aspects of Job with City

Percent positive (e.g., excellent or good, strongly or somewhat agree)

Comparison to benchmark

- Higher
- Similar
- Lower



Supervisor and Work Group

Employees' relationships with their supervisor and work group are the primary colors that paint their everyday experience in the workplace. From communicating clear expectations to providing constructive feedback, the quality of these interactions directly affects staff morale and motivation.

When asked to rate various aspects of the employee-supervisor relationship, a majority of City of Madison employees gave positive ratings for each aspect. Only in two areas was Madison below the benchmark: providing specific, constructive feedback and working together with employees to set goals.

In addition, survey respondents provided feedback on the quality of work group performance. Characteristics of the work group performance were rated positively by two-thirds of employees or more with the quality of the work by work group receiving the highest scores (86% excellent or good). All of these characteristics were similar to the national benchmark.

Figure 2: Aspects of Supervisor and Work Group Relationships

Percent positive (e.g., excellent or good, strongly or somewhat agree)

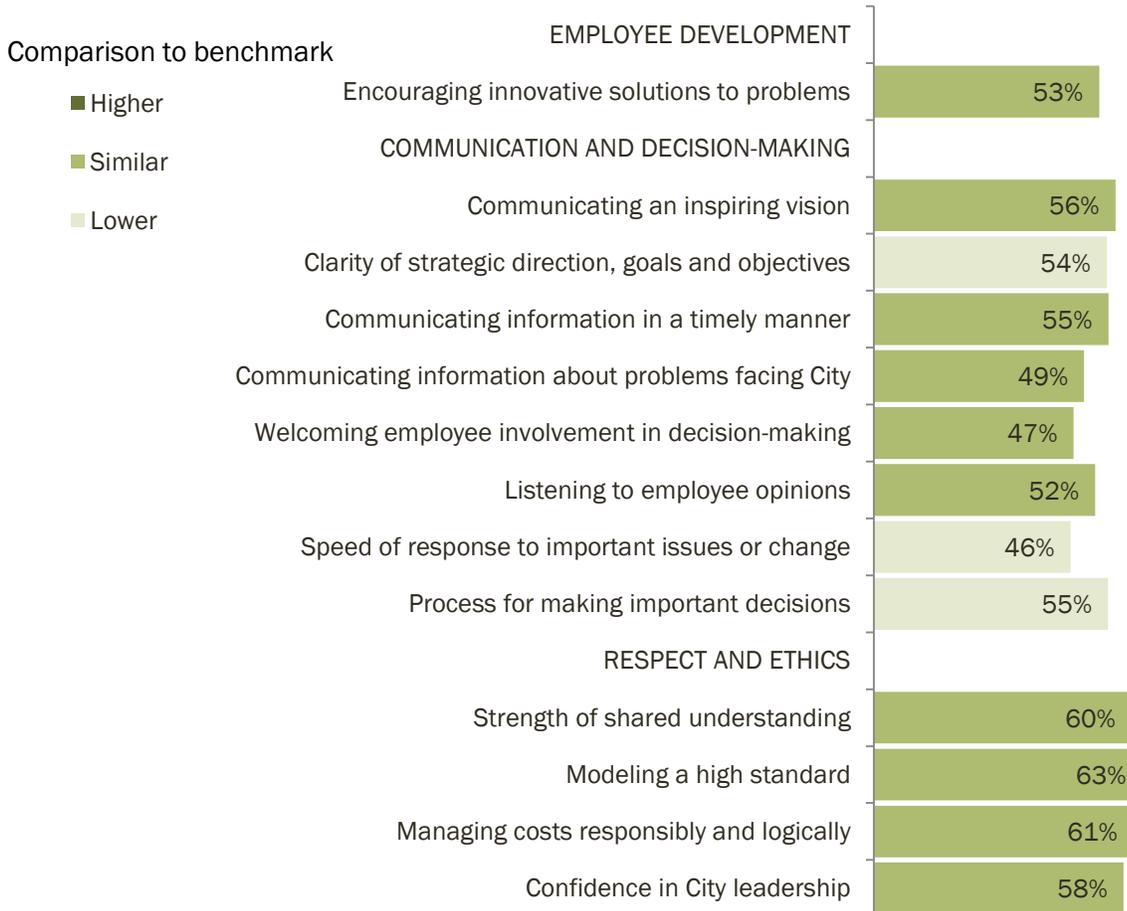


Executive Leadership

A City's executive leadership plays a pivotal role in shaping organizational culture and steering the community in a positive direction. Madison employees provided feedback regarding the City leadership's performance along the dimensions of Employee Development, Communication and Decision-making and Respect and Ethics. The highest rated aspects of leadership related to the areas of Respect and Ethics with about six in ten giving positive ratings. These ratings were on par with the nation. About half of employees rated leadership positively in the areas of Communication and Decision-making and Employee Development. Ten of 13 leadership characteristics were rated similar to the national benchmark. The three areas trailing included speed of response to important issues or change; clarity of strategic direction, goals and objectives; and the process for making important decisions.

Figure 3: Aspects of City's Executive Leadership

Percent positive (e.g., excellent or good, strongly or somewhat agree)



Workplace

City employees weighed in on the quality of their workplace. Of those surveyed, nearly 90% would be very or somewhat likely to recommend working for City. The portion of employees that would recommend working for the City was similar to other municipalities across the nation.

Survey respondents also offered their views of the work environment, exploring such areas as Employee Contribution and Fit, Employee Performance Evaluation and the Physical Work Environment. Aspects of the work environment related to Respect and Ethics received the highest ratings in the City of Madison with multiple items receiving scores higher than the national norm (a respectful atmosphere, communicating standards of ethical behavior and modeling standards of ethical behavior). Opportunities to develop a career path also were higher than in other local governments across the nation. Areas where Madison scored below the benchmark tended to fall in the areas of Wages and Benefits, Employee Development and the Physical Work Environment.

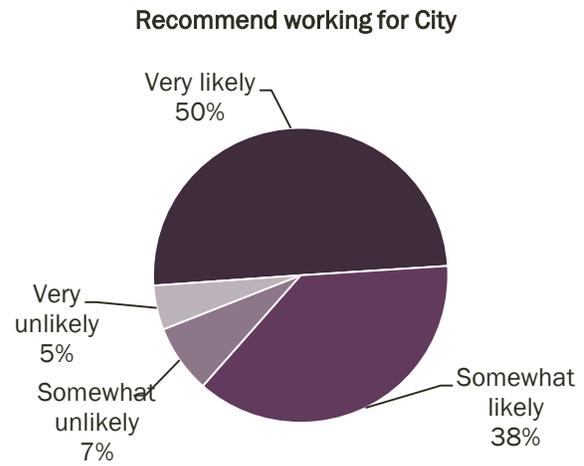
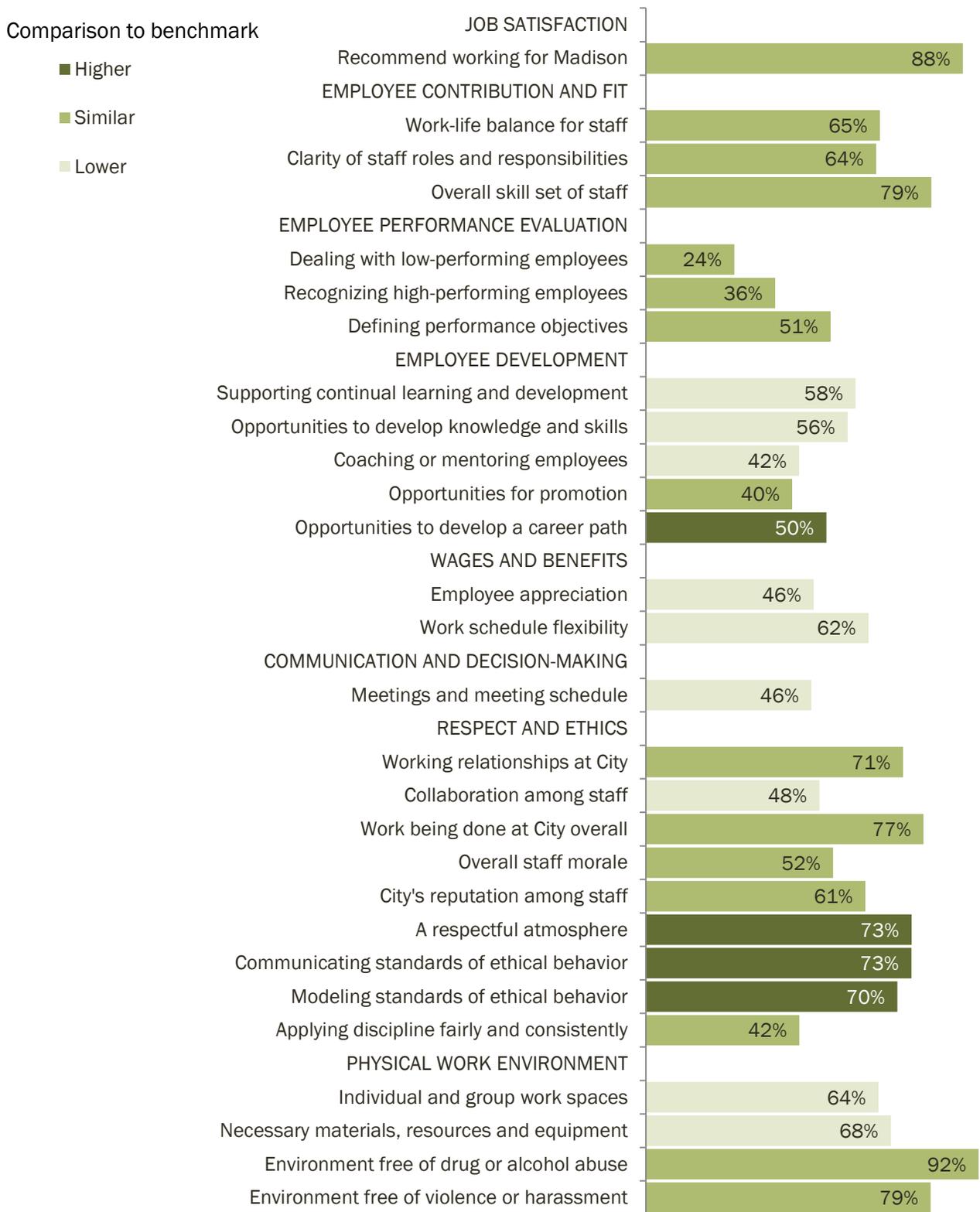


Figure 4: Aspects of City Workplace

Percent positive (e.g., excellent or good, strongly or somewhat agree)



External Customers

More than other types of organizations, employees of local governments have intimate knowledge of the communities they serve. City employee perspectives may be important to take into account when leveraging resources and planning for the future. Employees of the City of Madison gave their opinions on which areas were most important for the Madison community to focus on in the next two years. While all of the facets of community were rated essential or very important by at least two-thirds of employees, the areas of safety and economy received the highest ratings of priority.

In addition to rating the importance of these areas, respondents offered their views of the quality of various aspects of the Madison community including Madison as a place to live and work. About 8 in 10 employees rated Madison as an excellent or good place to live and work and more than 85% gave positive ratings to the quality of life in the community. Community characteristics receiving the most positive ratings were health and wellness, education and enrichment, the economy and overall image of Madison. These ratings also were higher than the national benchmarks. The natural environment also received high ratings but was on par with the nation. The lowest rated community characteristics were the overall feeling of safety and sense of community. These scores were below the national benchmarks.

In terms of governance, City of Madison Employees rated five of eight aspects similar to their counterparts in other local governments. Areas where Madison fell short included treating all residents fairly, confidence in the city government, and acting in the best interest of Madison.

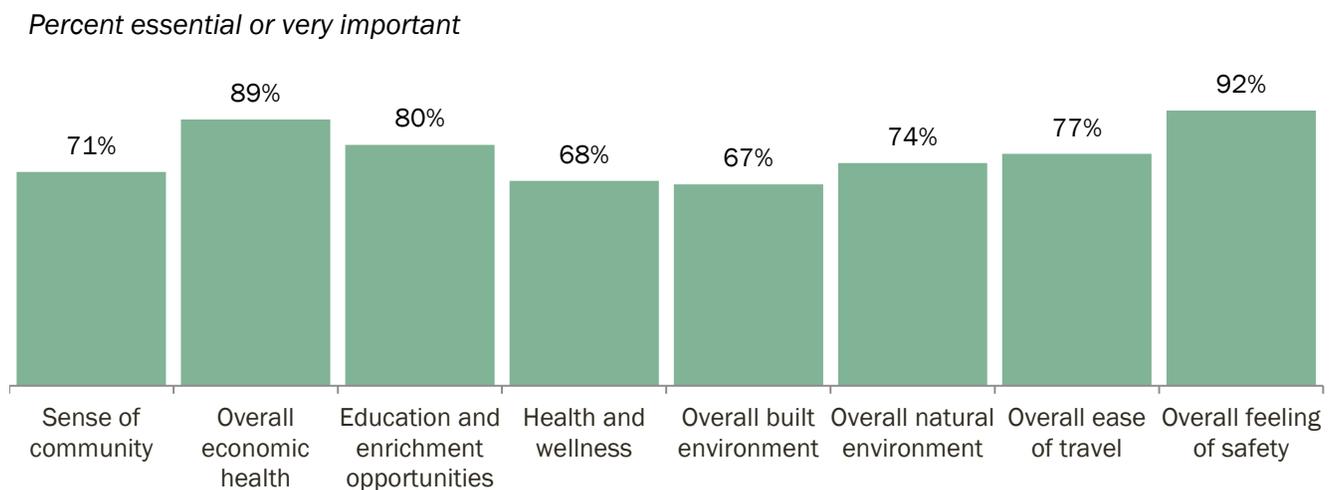
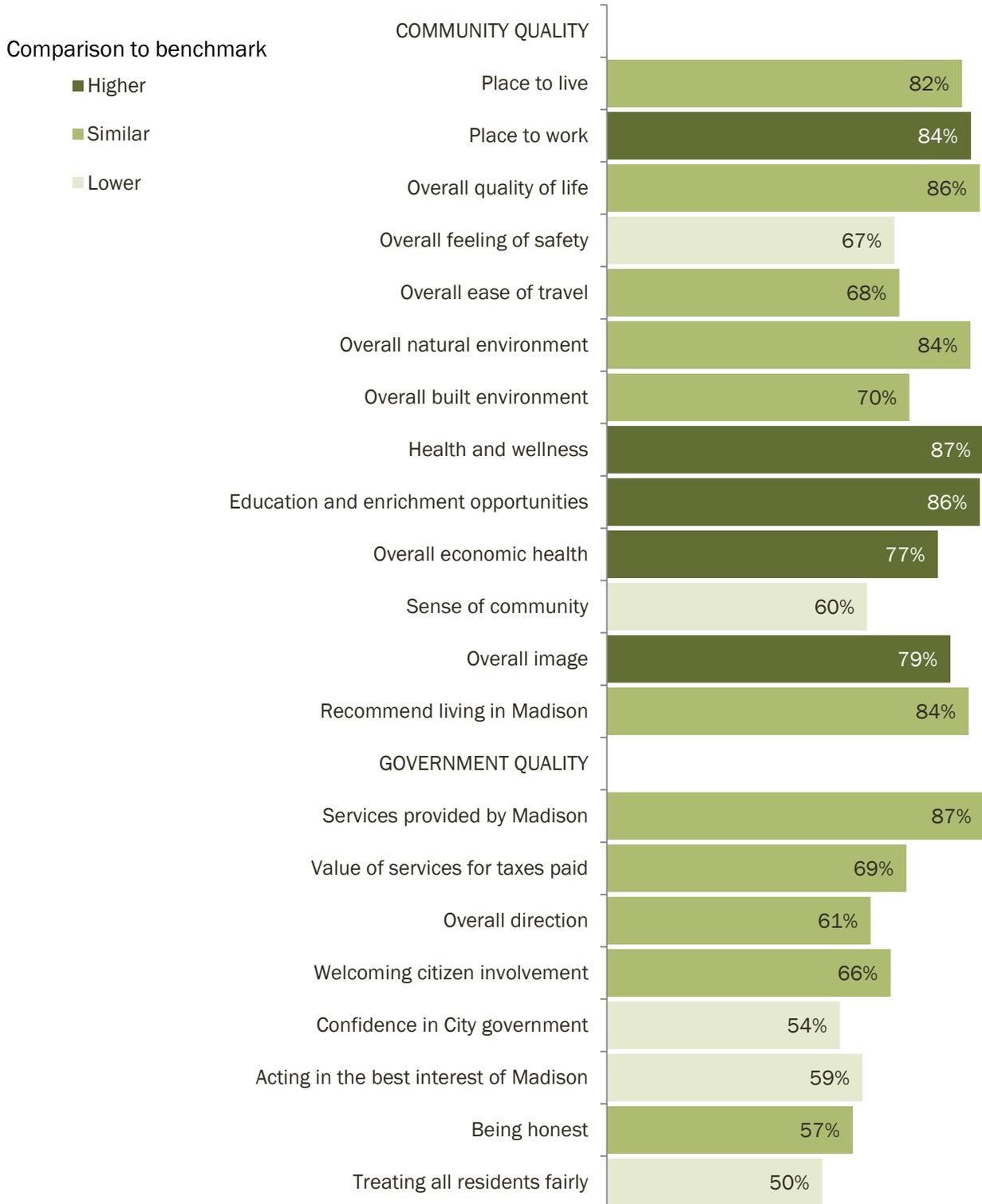


Figure 5: Aspects of City for Residents

Percent positive (e.g., excellent or good, strongly or somewhat agree)



Support Services

While residents are familiar with many of the services provided by local government, there are many other essential services that most residents never hear about. The “visible” services could not be performed without the support of internal groups that create the infrastructure to make external services possible. Since the consumers of support services mostly are coworkers in other departments, an employee survey provides a natural opportunity to learn and provide feedback about how customers of internal services perceive service delivery from those support groups. The results of these evaluations – assessing the quality of work provided – should prove extremely helpful to regular improvement of support services.

All of the support services were rated positively by about two-thirds of employees or more. Most received favorable ratings by three-fourths of their peers. General information technology (IT) services was the only one to score below the national average.

Figure 6: Aspects of City's Support Services

Percent positive (e.g., excellent or good,

Comparison to benchmark

- Higher
- Similar
- Lower

