

PUBLIC OPINION ANALYSIS

Voters' Overview of City Services

The survey was conducted December 16-21, 2024, and based on a representative sample of completed interviews with **600 voters in the City of New Orleans**. Interviews were conducted via live telephone interviews; 82% were conducted via cell phones; and 18% on landlines. The margin of error for the full sample is +/- 3.99%. Fifty-four percent of the survey sample was composed **of African Americans, 37% of Whites, and 9% of other races, which reflects the city's current voter registration**. Comparisons with previous polling are made when possible.

Survey's Key Findings

Perceptions of quality of life in New Orleans

- A **strong majority** of New Orleans voters (65%) believe the city is off on the wrong track, while 28% believe it's moving in the right direction. **Substantial majorities** of Blacks, Whites, men, women, younger and older residents agree that it's off on the wrong track.
- Quality of life in New Orleans is rated **negatively** by 69% of city voters, and 30% rate it positively. Looking at demographics: 70% of Blacks, 65% of Whites, 75% of residents 18-44, and 65% of residents 45 and **older rate quality of life negatively**.
- Over the next five years, 53% of voters say they expect to stay in New Orleans; another **11% expect to move out of New Orleans but stay in Louisiana**; and another **29% expect to move out of Louisiana**. Looking at demographics: 61% of Whites, 49% of Blacks, 43% of 18-44-year-olds, and 61% of those 45 and older expect to stay in New Orleans.
- Only 19% say the local quality of life has improved over the past several years; 43% say it's stayed the same; and 37% say it's gotten worse. Only 18% of Blacks and 19% of Whites say it's improved.

Survey's Key Findings

Perceptions of quality of life in New Orleans (Continued)

- Among voters, 12% expect the quality of life to be much better over the next several years, 41% say it will be a little better and 32% say it will be the same. Only 15% of Blacks and 8% of Whites say it'll get much better.
- **Only 23% rate the city positively as a “safe place to live”** (24% among Blacks, 21% among Whites). The 23% is up 10 points since May 2023.
- Only 16% of 18-44-year-olds rate the city positively as a “place to raise a young family” (11% among Blacks, 23% among Whites).
- Only 20% of 18-44-year-olds rate the city positively as a “place to find good jobs and career advancement” (20% among Blacks, 18% among Whites). The 20% among all voters is down 2 points since May 2023.
- Among those 45-years-old and older, 30% rate the city positively as a “place to open and operate a new business” (35% among Blacks, 23% among Whites).
- Among those 45-years-old and older, 32% rate the city positively as a “place to retire” (33% among Blacks, 32% among Whites).

Survey's Key Findings

Rating city government, management

- A solid majority of New Orleans voters (65%) have an **unfavorable** view of city government, and fewer than three in ten have a favorable view (29%). Majorities of all major demographic groups rate city government **unfavorably**.
- Only 9% rate management of city government positively, and an overwhelming 88% rate it **negatively**. (That's virtually unchanged since May 2023, when it was 8%/90%.) Only 15% of Blacks and 5% of Whites rate city government management positively.

Major changes needed

- **67% of voters say the basic structure of city government needs “major changes”**; that's up 4 points since May 2023. More Blacks (69%) than Whites (65%) say so. In addition, 26% say “minor changes” are needed, and only 3% say “no change” is needed.

Survey's Key Findings

Handling of issues

- More than 90% of New Orleans voters **negatively rate** city government's handling of the following issues: Maintenance of sidewalks • Drainage and water systems • Homelessness • Street repair and maintenance • Stopping political corruption • Removing blight and abandoned buildings.
- Between 70% and 89% of New Orleans voters **negatively rate** city government's handling of the following issues: Crime and public safety • Creation of new jobs and economic opportunity • Issuance of city permits and licenses • Affordable housing for low-income residents • Providing convenient housing for people who work in the city.
- Only “managing events such as the Super Bowl and major concerts” rated more positive (72%) than negative (28%).

Transparency of city work

- An **overwhelming 94%** say city government should have a public website that shows all the work being done to fix specific problems dealing with streets, drainage, parks, playgrounds, and trash collection so that work being done is transparent and citizens can track progress being made.

Survey's Key Findings

Cooperation and coordination

- When it comes to working together to reduce crime, **only 10% of voters say the New Orleans Police Department, the District Attorney's office, Orleans Parish Prison, Juvenile Services and Criminal Courts are doing a good job coordinating efforts**; another 54% say they're doing a fair job; 34% say they're doing a poor job.
- When it comes to planning, coordinating, and managing public works projects—such as drainage, streets, and other infrastructure—**only 2% say city departments are now doing a good job coordinating efforts**.

Money's worth for taxes paid

- Only 15% of voters say they're getting their money's worth in exchange for the tax dollars they pay in New Orleans, and an **overwhelming 83%** say they're not getting their money's worth. **Big majorities of all demographic groups** believe they're not getting their money's worth.

Survey's Key Findings

Property tax base: Who should pay?

- 66% of voters say nonprofit colleges, universities, hospitals, and religious organizations that own property in Orleans Parish should pay property taxes just as homeowners and commercial property owners do; 28% disagree.

Next mayor's focus: Improving basic services

- **61% of voters would like the next mayor to focus on improving the delivery of basic services**, while 20% favor the next mayor focusing on expanding social services; 15% volunteer the next mayor should do both. Majorities of Blacks and Whites prefer a focus on basic services.

Reforming civil service

- **55% of voters support changing the civil service system to give city department heads more authority and flexibility in the management of their own agencies**; majorities of Blacks and Whites support the change.

Survey's Key Findings

Chief Administrative Officer

- Among city voters, **71% support requiring higher standards of experience and qualifications for all future Chief Administrative Officers (CAOs)** of New Orleans city government even if it means paying the person who has the job more money. Majorities of Blacks and Whites support doing this.
- An even larger majority (78%) support having the City Council appoint all future CAOs; only 15% want the Mayor to do so.
- A still larger **80% think the Mayor and also the City Council should be able to fire the CAO**; only 11% think that only the Mayor should have the power to fire the CAO.

City Attorney

- Only 8% want the City Attorney to work primarily for the mayor; 84% want the City Attorney to be independent and to work for the entire city government.

Survey's Key Findings

Sewerage & Water Board

- **80% of voters say the basic structure of the Sewerage & Water Board needs “major” changes.** Big majorities of Blacks (81%) and Whites (78%) agree on this question. In addition, 15% say “minor” changes are needed, and only 2% say “no change” is needed.
- **52% of voters say the Sewerage & Water Board should be “abolished and replaced”** with a new entity; 35% say it shouldn't be. Nearly identical majorities of Blacks (53%) and Whites (52%) say the S&WB should be abolished and replaced.
- 48% of voters say city water rates should be set by the Louisiana Public Service Commission, 24% by the City Council; 18% by the Sewerage & Water Board itself. Looking at demographics, 50% of Blacks and 45% of Whites want the PSC to regulate the rates.
- On governance, 31% say the Sewerage & Water Board should be an agency of city government; 12% say it should be an agency of state government; and 48% say it should be an agency of both city and state government.
- **A majority of 57% support taking the Sewerage & Water Board out of civil service** and 30% oppose doing so.

Survey's Key Findings

Sewerage & Water Board (Continued)

- An overwhelming **88% support regionalizing water purification**, and only 9% are opposed. Support was contingent on saving money and safeguarding water quality.
- To modernize the drainage system, 38% favor a new stormwater management fee, and 55% oppose it. Of those who oppose the fee, 48% would consider supporting it if the Sewerage & Water Board fixes its billing, management, and customer service problems. Of those who support the fee, 79% would consider opposing it if the fee would increase residential water bills by \$30 per month.

Key department ratings

- The **NOPD's** favorable rating is 54%, up a substantial 15 points since May 2023. The police department is now 61% favorable among Blacks and 45% favorable among Whites. (Note: This latest poll was conducted before the Bourbon Street terror attack.)
- The **Sewerage & Water Board's** favorable rating is 19%, down 1 point since May 2023. Its **unfavorable rating is now 78%**. The Sewerage & Water Board is now 20% favorable among Blacks and 15% favorable among Whites.
- The city department that handles **street repairs** has a favorable rating of 12% and an unfavorable rating of 85%.