Knight Foundation
2026 Survey on Community Well-Being

Partner Dissemination Toolkit

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Survey Overview

Knight Foundation is launching a new research initiative focused on measuring community well-being. As part of this effort, Knight and NORC at the University of Chicago (NORC) are conducting a survey in selected communities to understand residents' experiences and perspectives across a range of topics. Results will be shared with partners like you to help you in your work. Knight and NORC will also use the results to inform next steps for research and to expand on this work in your community and other Knight communities in the coming years.

To learn more about the project, please visit https://knightfoundation.org/articles/research/knight-foundation-community-survey/.

Outreach Guidance

As a trusted leader in your community, you play an important role in helping residents learn about the survey and encouraging participation.

What we are asking you to do

We invite partners like you to help raise awareness of the survey by **sharing approved survey dissemination materials** with community members and encouraging residents to complete the survey. This may include posting information about the survey through your existing communication channels, such as newsletters, websites and social media. We recognize that organizations are balancing many priorities and are grateful for any support you can provide.

What we are NOT asking you to do

We would like to hear directly from community residents with a variety of backgrounds, interests and experiences. To protect their privacy and the integrity of the research, **please do not**:

- Coach participants on how to answer survey questions
- Collect completed surveys on behalf of residents
- Request access to individual survey responses
- Modify approved outreach language provided in this packet

Contents of this Packet

This packet includes a set of approved, ready-to-use materials that can be used to spread the word about the survey:

1. Social media post (long version)
2. Social media post (short version)
3. Email invitation
4. Email reminder
5. Newsletter announcement
6. Flyer

We have also included a FAQ document with talking points should you have, or receive, any questions about the survey or how data collected during the survey will be used. For questions about the survey logistics, please contact the research team at CommunityWellbeing@norc.org. For questions about the overall research initiative, please contact Kyla Elhelo at elhelo@kf.org.

Timeline and Next Steps

The survey will officially go live on August 19. In advance of then:

1. Please review the materials in this packet as you think about which forms of outreach are best suited to your networks and your community. You do not need to use all of these materials, and can use the materials for whichever communication channels you have.

2. Update the materials in this toolkit to reflect your organization.

    a. You will notice some areas in the materials that should be customized to you and your community. These are marked with [Insert…]. For example, you will be asked to add your signature, title and the name of your organization to some forms of communication. Please fill in the placeholders throughout this packet as you see fit.

    b. We are grateful for your collaboration and welcome including your organization's branding in these materials. Please include your organization's logos throughout this packet as you see fit.

    c. Please do not modify approved outreach language, besides just adding logos and updating the placeholders in this packet.

3. Finally, please distribute the relevant messages to residents through your various networks. This may include online communications or printing a flyer to post in public spaces where residents frequent – whichever methods you think will reach the most people. We want to hear from as many voices as possible, and we trust your expertise!

    a. **Please begin distributing materials once the survey opens on August 19**. The survey will close by October 14 or earlier if we receive a sufficient number of responses.

    b. We suggest sending reminders through social media and email throughout the duration of the survey, both of which are included in this packet. Reminders can be sent at a cadence of your choosing. We suggest a reminder every couple of weeks per channel. We will send you reminders throughout the survey period, if helpful.

Thank you for your time and support of this important work!

FAQ

Why is this survey being conducted?

- Knight Foundation has been investing in and supporting initiatives in your community for many years. As part of this ongoing investment and commitment, they are launching a new research effort focused on measuring community well-being. The initiative has two goals: to give residents, community organizations and local leaders useful information to help set priorities and accelerate solutions to local issues, and to build knowledge around the drivers of community well-being nationwide. As part of this effort, Knight and NORC are conducting a survey in selected communities to understand what's working, what needs more attention and what matters most to residents.

Who is conducting the survey?

- **Knight Foundation** — we are social investors who support a more effective democracy by funding free expression and journalism, arts and culture in community, research in areas of media and democracy, and the success of American communities where the Knight brothers once published newspapers.
- The survey is being conducted by **NORC at the University of Chicago** in partnership with Knight Foundation. NORC is a nonpartisan, nonprofit research organization with more than 80 years of experience conducting high-quality surveys for government, nonprofit and social service organizations. NORC is headquartered in Chicago, with staff nationwide. NORC will not try to sell you anything and is not affiliated with any political interests. Knight Foundation chose NORC to conduct the survey based on its expertise and commitment to objective, credible research.

Tell me more about this initial phase of research.

- The survey this year is what we consider the initial pilot phase of research, and its purpose is to test strategies and methods for understanding and measuring community well-being in a way that's useful to residents, community organizations and local leaders. This initial phase is part of a larger research initiative that we plan to continue over the coming years. We have selected eight of Knight Foundation's communities to take part in this initial research. The full list of cities included in this phase are listed as an answer to a question below. We will use the learnings from this survey effort to inform the best approach to roll the survey out to all 26 Knight Foundation communities. The goal is to provide updated insights on a regular basis and track changes over time.
- While the goal of this survey is to test strategies and methods for a larger rollout in the future, it is our commitment to ensure that the results from this survey are as reliable, accurate and representative as possible. Results from this survey will be made publicly available for residents and local leaders to use.

What topics are included in the survey?

- Social connections
- Arts and culture
- Safety and public spaces
- Education
- Civic participation
- Local news and information
- Health and health care

What are the communities that have been selected to participate in this initial research phase?

- Aberdeen, SD (specifically residents of Brown County)
- Boulder County, CO
- City of Charlotte, NC
- Columbia, SC (specifically residents of Richland County)
- City of Gary, IN
- Miami-Dade County, FL
- City of San Jose, CA
- City of St. Paul, MN

Who can participate in the survey?

- All adult residents who are 18 and older and who live within the designated zip codes for the selected communities are invited to participate.

Why should residents participate in the survey?

- It may help to emphasize the following messages:
    - Residents, local organizations and civic leaders need to hear what is most important to residents to inform priorities and decision-making.
    - The survey is part of a larger, multi-year initiative and not a one-time effort. Unlike traditional surveys, this study is intended to be updated regularly, providing residents and local leaders with a consistent pulse on the community and the ability to track changes over time.
    - Results will be shared publicly, so that residents are equipped with local insights to participate in shaping the future of your community.
    - This effort builds on Knight Foundation's long-term commitment and investment in your community and in the 26 cities where Knight makes place-based investments. Knight is committed to making the survey findings publicly available for residents and local organizations to use, and to share how the research shapes efforts of Knight Foundation where possible.

Will residents be offered an incentive for completing the survey?

- No, residents will not be offered a monetary incentive for this initial phase of research.

Will partners be paid to help disseminate the survey?

- For this initial research phase, we do not have plans to pay partners. This initial phase will inform our research planned for the coming years, at which point we may consider paid opportunities. We will use the learnings from our outreach this year to inform our strategy in the future.
- We are committed to sharing the insights from this survey with you, and greatly appreciate your time and support of this effort.

How can residents take the survey?

- We have provided a link and QR code to the survey directly within the outreach materials contained in this packet.

I received a postcard or text message about this survey. Is this part of the survey?

- Yes, NORC will also be contacting a randomly selected sample of residents through postcards and text message. If you or other residents receive a postcard or text from NORC referencing this survey, please note that this is planned outreach as part of this study.

How long does the survey take?

- The survey takes approximately 15 minutes to complete.

In what languages is the survey available?

- The survey for this initial phase of research is available in English and Spanish.

Is participation voluntary?

- Yes. Participation is completely voluntary. Participants may skip questions or stop participating at any time.

Will people's responses be kept confidential?

- Yes, your responses are confidential. NORC takes steps to protect participant privacy, and no identifying information will be shared with anyone outside of the NORC research team. We will only report the survey results in summary form, aggregated with responses from other residents, and reports will not contain names or other information that identifies you. Aggregate results will be shared with Knight and local leaders.
- Information will not be shared with marketing companies or political campaigns.

What steps are being taken to protect data quality?

- This survey uses three methods of outreach: an open survey link (used throughout this packet), postcards and text messages.

- With an open survey link, we have measures in place to help ensure that only human residents complete the survey, including technology designed to detect and prevent fraudulent responses from bots and other automated sources.
- For respondents contacted through our random sample, we also have safeguards to help ensure that surveys are completed by the intended recipients, including unique survey links and a landing page where participants enter their assigned PIN.

How will the survey results be used?

- Results will be publicly available and shared with residents, community leaders and local partners to help inform and accelerate local solutions.
- Knight and NORC will also use the results to inform next steps for research and to expand on the foundation's work in your community and others in the coming years. We are committed to listening, sharing what we learn and, where possible, how it informs projects that support a vibrant community.

How and when will results be shared?

- We will incorporate the findings from the survey into community-facing products, such as fact sheets and/or reports, and results will be available in early 2027. We will be sure that the results are shared directly with you or posted publicly.

Who should I contact with questions?

- For questions about the research initiative, please contact Kyla Elhelo (elhelo@kf.org) at Knight Foundation.
- For questions about the survey, please contact the research team at CommunityWellbeing@norc.org

Social Media Post to Residents – For Facebook, WhatsApp, LinkedIn or similar channels (Long Version)

[Insert Community Organization's Logo here]

[Insert Community] Residents: Share Your Voice to Inform Local Decisions

You know [Insert Community] better than anyone – what's working, and what needs to improve? Tell us in a 15-minute survey that will help community organizations and local decision-makers invest where it matters most.

📝 **Take the survey here:**
🔗 CommunityWellbeingSurvey.norc.org

📊 **Why participate?** Communities rarely get direct input from residents about their experiences, making it difficult to know where investment is most needed. Your input will help residents, community organizations and local leaders understand what makes [Insert Community] a great place to live and what challenges need more attention.

🤝 **Our commitment to [Insert Community]:** For decades, Knight Foundation has invested in [Insert Community]. As part of this ongoing effort, we are proud to partner with Knight Foundation to ensure that resident voices help shape the future of our community.

⏳ **Act now.** This study may close early once we have received the maximum number of responses, so please respond today!

✅ **The survey is legitimate.** The survey is being conducted by NORC at the University of Chicago. NORC is a nonpartisan, nonprofit research organization with decades of experience conducting high-quality surveys. Your responses are anonymous and confidential.

Learn more about the study:

🔗 https://knightfoundation.org/articles/research/knight-foundation-community-survey/

Questions? Contact us at CommunityWellbeing@norc.org

[Insert Personalized Signature, Community Organization Contact]

Kyla Elhelo
Director, Knight Foundation

Social Media Post to Residents – For Facebook, WhatsApp, LinkedIn or similar channels (Short Version)

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[Insert Community Organization's Logo here]

[Insert Community] Residents: Share Your Voice

You know [Insert Community] better than anyone – what's working, and what needs to improve? Tell us in a 15-minute survey that will help community organizations and local decision-makers invest where it matters most:

🔗 CommunityWellbeingSurvey.norc.org

📊 **Why participate?** Your input will help residents, community organizations and local leaders understand what makes [Insert Community] a great place to live and what challenges need more attention.

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Learn more about the study: https://knightfoundation.org/articles/research/knight-foundation-community-survey/

[Insert Personalized Signature, Community Organization Contact]

Kyla Elhelo
Director, Knight Foundation

Email Invitation to Residents

Subject Line: You are invited to provide input – Share your voice to inform local decisions

Dear [Insert Community] Resident,

You know [Insert Community] better than anyone – what's working, and what needs to improve? Share your perspective in a survey that will help community organizations and local decision-makers invest where it matters most.

Your voice matters. Communities rarely get direct input from residents about their experiences, making it difficult to know where investment is most needed. [Insert Community Organization] is partnering with Knight Foundation to ensure that leaders take resident input into account so they can make informed decisions about the future of [Insert Community]. Your input will help residents, community organizations and local leaders understand what makes [Insert Community] a great place to live and what challenges need more attention.

The survey should take about 15 minutes and is available in English and Spanish. To ensure the study reflects the full range of community experiences, it's important that we hear from everyone. Your responses are anonymous and will not be shared with anyone outside of the research team.

The survey may close once enough responses are received, so please respond soon to ensure your views are represented. To take the survey, simply copy and paste the URL into your browser to begin: CommunityWellbeingSurvey.norc.org

You can trust that the survey is legitimate. The survey is being conducted by NORC at the University of Chicago, a nonpartisan, nonprofit research institution. You can learn more about them here.

If you have questions, please email CommunityWellbeing@norc.org or visit https://knightfoundation.org/articles/research/knight-foundation-community-survey/. To learn more about Knight Foundation and their work in [Insert Community], visit https://knightfoundation.org/our-communities/.

Thank you for taking part in this important study. We really appreciate your time and input.

Sincerely,

[Insert Personalized Signature, Community Organization Contact]

Kyla Elhelo
Director, Knight Foundation

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[Insert Community Organization's Logo here]

Email Reminder to Residents

Subject Line: Time is running out! Inform local decisions in [Insert Community]

You know [Insert Community] better than anyone – what's working, and what needs to improve? Share your perspective in a survey that will help community organizations and local decision-makers invest where it matters most.

Your voice matters. [Insert Community Organization] is partnering with Knight Foundation to ensure that leaders take resident input into account so they can make informed decisions about the future of [Insert Community].

The survey should take about 15 minutes and is available in English and Spanish. Your responses are anonymous.

The survey may close once enough responses are received, so please respond soon to ensure your views are represented. To take the survey, simply copy and paste the URL into your browser to begin: CommunityWellbeingSurvey.norc.org

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If you have questions, please email CommunityWellbeing@norc.org or visit https://knightfoundation.org/articles/research/knight-foundation-community-survey/. To learn more about Knight Foundation and their work in [Insert Community], visit https://knightfoundation.org/our-communities/.

Thank you for taking part in this important study. We really appreciate your time and input.

Sincerely,

[Insert Personalized Signature, Community Organization Contact]

Kyla Elhelo
Director, Knight Foundation

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[Insert Community Organization's Logo here]

Newsletter Announcement to Residents

Share Your Voice to Inform Local Decisions

You know [Insert Community] better than anyone. What's working, and what needs to improve? Share your perspective in a survey that will help community organizations and local decision-makers invest where it matters most.

Your voice matters. Communities rarely get direct input from residents about their experiences, making it difficult to know where investment is most needed. [Insert Community Organization] is partnering with Knight Foundation to ensure that leaders take resident input into account so they can make informed decisions about the future of [Insert Community]. Your input will help residents, community organizations and local leaders understand what makes [Insert Community] a great place to live and what challenges need more attention.

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👉 **Take the survey:** CommunityWellbeingSurvey.norc.org

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Questions? Email **CommunityWellbeing@norc.org** or visit:
https://knightfoundation.org/articles/research/knight-foundation-community-survey/

Flyer to Residents

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[Insert Community Organization's Logo here]

Share Your Voice to Inform Local Decisions

You know [Insert Community] better than anyone – what's working, and what needs to improve?

Tell us in a 15-minute survey that will help community organizations and local decision-makers invest where it matters most:

The survey is available in English and Spanish.

Act now. This study may close early once we have received the maximum number of responses, so please respond today!

[Insert Community Organization] is partnering with Knight Foundation to hear from residents.

Questions? CommunityWellbeing@norc.org
Learn more: https://knightfoundation.org/articles/research/knight-foundation-community-survey/