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