



FOR YOUTH DEVELOPMENT®
FOR HEALTHY LIVING
FOR SOCIAL RESPONSIBILITY

Y Community Snapshot – National Key Findings

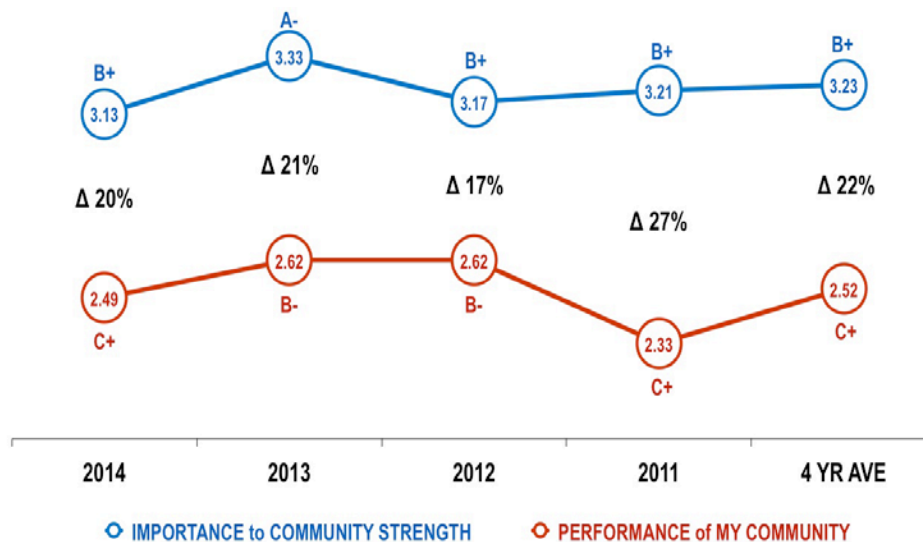
May 2014

Background: As a leading nonprofit dedicated to strengthening community through youth development, healthy living and social responsibility, YMCA of the USA (Y-USA) conducted a national online consumer survey, *Y Community Snapshot*, to take a pulse of how Americans view the quality of life in their communities nationwide. Participants were asked about 30 different Community Strength Drivers – qualities, issues, commitments and concerns – that contribute to building and sustaining a “strong community.” The survey is based on factors such as community member involvement, and the quality of a community’s services ranging from education to promoting healthy lifestyles. This is the fifth year for conducting the survey; therefore, we now have comparative data from 2010 through 2014.

Among the key findings:

Americans give a C+ grade for their community’s overall strength – with large gaps between expectations and performance.

- Citizens give their communities an overall C+ grade, down from a B-, on their Community Strength Report Card.
- *Y Community Snapshot* participants **reported an overall 20 percent gap** between what they rank as important community strength drivers and how well their own communities performed in those areas.



- Perceived community performance has declined across all four areas of Community Strength – *Community Involvement; Healthy, Active Lifestyles; Education, Youth, Family Life; Basic/Core Qualities, Services, Resources.*

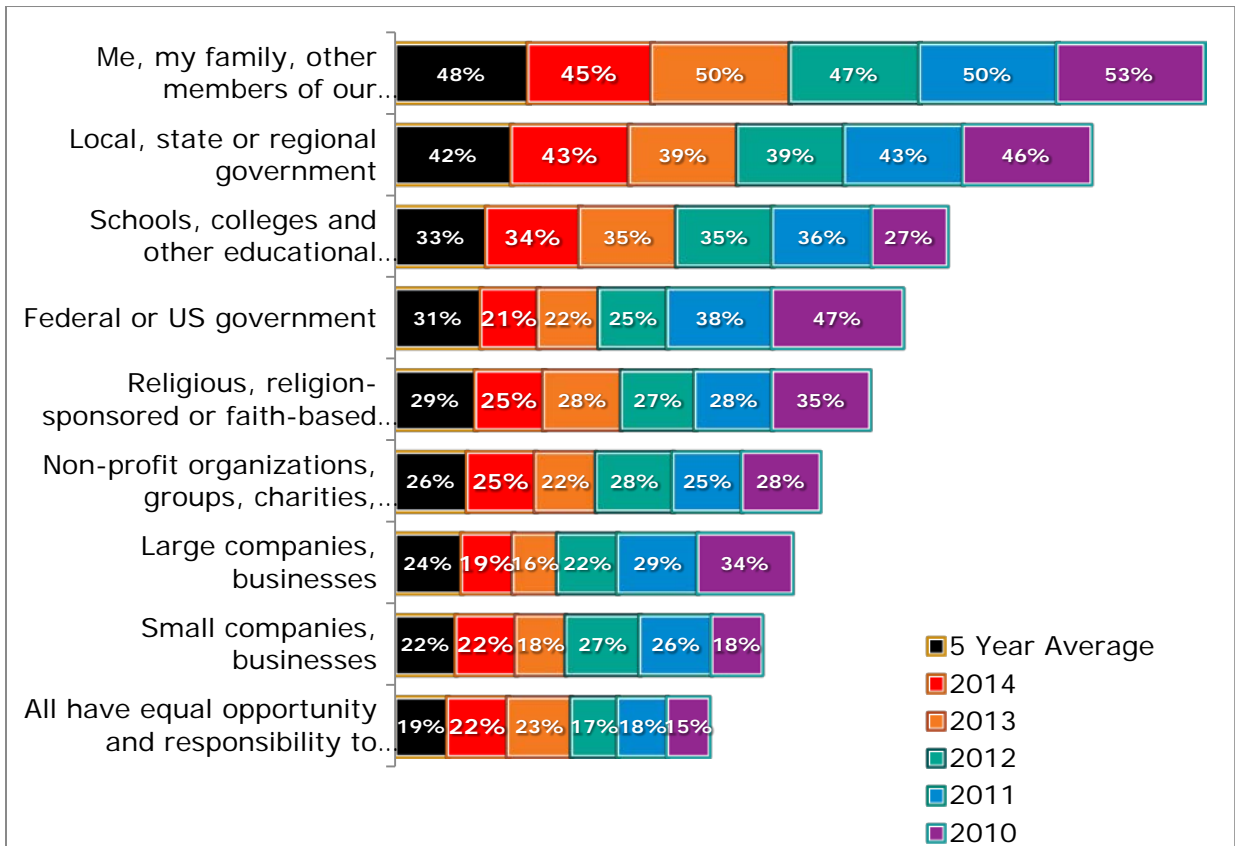
The 2014 *Community Snapshot* shows signs of “Engagement Fatigue” in American communities, meaning that the 2014 survey results are lower than 2013 and often 2012 and 2011 and occasionally the baseline year, 2010. This engagement fatigue in the numbers reflects the attitudes and behaviors of Americans themselves.

For example, consider the Community Strength Report Card from the “fatigue” perspective.

- The overall importance of all 30 Community Success Drivers has sunk to its lowest level in four years
- Every one of the 10 forms of community engagement tracked, activities such as volunteering, contributions to organizations etc., dropped in 2014 capping a 10.8% decrease since 2010
- Citizens report double-digit declines in key “calls to engagement,” including:
 - ✓ -18% In-kind contributions
 - ✓ -16% Volunteering
 - ✓ -15% Participation in events
 - ✓ -14% Financial contributions

Because of growing engagement “fatigue”, there’s increasing recognition that improving community strength requires a balance of efforts from a variety of entities. While people realize their role in improving the community, they can no longer do it alone and want other entities to pull their own weight.

Who has the best OPPORTUNITY and RESPONSIBILITY to make a positive difference on the quality of life in my community?



While the fatigue factor is dragging down engagement, the most important factors in community strength remained consistent during the last four years—people want a safe and healthy place to raise their families.

2014-2011 Top 10 Average Most Important to Community Strength	4-Yr Ave	2014	2013	2012	2011
	Rank	Rank	Rank	Rank	Rank
Safe environment for children	1	1	1	1	1
Health care, including emergency services	2*	2*	3	3	2*
A safe, healthy physical environment in general	2*	2*	4	2	2*
Local school system (from kindergarten through high school)	4	5	2	4	4
Availability of fresh foods (at grocery stores, supermarkets, farmers markets, etc.)	5	6	5	5	5
A place to start a family, raise children, build a future	6	7	6	6	6
Employment opportunities, job training for teens and young adults	7	8	7	10	7
Employment opportunities for experienced, displaced, out-of-work or underemployed people	8	10	8	9	8
Affordable, well-maintained housing (privately owned, rental, public housing)	9	9	9	7	9
Youth activities, programs and resources outside of or in addition to school activities	10	12	11	11	11

*Denotes tie in rankings

Methodology:

The YMCA's *Community Snapshot* was conducted online by Toluna (www.toluna-group.com), from their 2 million plus US opt-in online panel, between March 5 and March 11, 2014, and is an opinion survey of 1,500 online interviews with U.S. adults aged 18+ conforming to U.S. Census parameters for age, gender, and region of residence. The 2014 survey results have a ±2.50% to 2.75% Margin of Error at 95% confidence at the "All Respondent" level, and a ±3.0% to 3.50% Margin of Error at 95% confidence for demographic, behavioral and attitudinal subgroups and cohorts.

FOR REPORTERS ONLY: For media inquiries regarding the *Y-USA Community Snapshot*, e-mail us at media@ymca.net.