

# BUILDING A THRIVING TULSA

## 2018 GALLUP-TULSA CITIVOICE INDEX

### OVERVIEW

Good governance requires good data. Without understanding residents' basic needs, opinions and ideas, city leaders cannot make quality policy decisions or address important issues within their city. Unfortunately, traditional approaches to listening to residents, such as elections or community meetings, are infrequent or only allow some residents to have a voice. Data-driven approaches often rely too heavily on traditional economic indicators, such as unemployment rates or housing costs, and ignore the lived experiences of residents, leaving potential blind spots about how residents are doing in different parts of the city.

Recognizing the need to develop a new way to regularly assess how residents fare on key dimensions, the City of Tulsa partnered with Gallup in 2018 to develop and conduct a first-of-its-kind citywide survey of its residents. This representative study, which uses address-based sampling, will be conducted on a yearly basis to track the city's progress in improving quality of life and civic engagement among its residents. Created in partnership with a local working group, the survey identifies strengths and areas for improvement, not only in Tulsa overall but also within specific areas of the city.

**Nearly 4,500 Tulsans from all walks of life responded to the 2018 survey, which focused on three primary themes:**

#### Access

Do Tulsans have access to basic needs and services required to lead healthy, productive and fulfilling lives?

#### Opportunity and Growth

Do residents view Tulsa as a destination to live and work?

#### Civic Support

How do local institutions, organizations and Tulsans themselves contribute to improving their local community?

Survey results are provided for Tulsa as a whole, as well as broken down by geography and key demographics. These results will inform policymakers, local nonprofit organizations and researchers about how to improve the quality of life in Tulsa and capitalize on areas of strength. Furthermore, as the first year of the Gallup-Tulsa CitiVoice Index, these results will provide strategic baseline information for understanding progress made by the City of Tulsa and local partners.

## KEY FINDINGS

- 1) **Tulsans are optimistic that the city is improving as a place to live.** Nearly twice as many residents believe the city of Tulsa is getting better (**47%**) than getting worse (**24%**) as a place to live.
- 2) **Residents see numerous economic opportunities in Tulsa with room for the economy to grow and attract more residents.**
  - a. Over half (**52%**) of residents who expressed an opinion strongly agree or agree that now is a good time to find a job in Tulsa, while only **19%** disagree or strongly disagree.
  - b. Fifty-eight percent of residents who expressed an opinion strongly agree or agree that Tulsa is a good place to start a business, compared to **16%** who disagree or strongly disagree. Notably, **64%** of self-employed residents say Tulsa is a good place to start a business, indicating the city has a robust entrepreneurial environment.
  - c. However, **16%** percent of Tulsans plan to move away from the city in the next five years and many of these residents (**42%**) cite better jobs or business opportunities elsewhere as a major reason for leaving.
- 3) **Half of Tulsans are thriving in their well-being, but the city lags on key benchmarks.** Overall, **50%** of Tulsans are classified as thriving, **46%** are struggling and **4%** are suffering on Gallup's life evaluation rating. However, fewer residents in Tulsa are thriving compared to all peer cities, as well as state and national totals.
- 4) **Access to basic needs remains a primary challenge in Tulsa.**
  - a. Roughly one-third of residents say there have been times in the past twelve months when they did not have enough money to buy food (**31%**). This is nearly double the percentage of residents nationally in 2017 who did not have enough money to buy food at some point in the year (**16%**).
  - b. Over a third of Tulsans (**36%**) have experienced a time in the past twelve months when they did not have enough money to pay for healthcare/ medicine for themselves or their families. Fourteen percent report times in the past twelve months when they were unable to provide adequate shelter or housing for themselves and their family.
  - c. Nearly half of black residents (**46%**) say finding stores or markets with fresh fruits and vegetables in the area where they live is difficult or very difficult.
- 5) **Local organizations and closely-knit neighborhoods can play a vital role in helping residents thrive.** Residents with less than \$50,000 in household income are much more likely to be thriving when:
  - a. They strongly agree that there is a local organization they know that they can turn to if they needed help getting healthcare, housing or food.
  - b. They strongly agree that there is someone who lives near them, other than people in their household, who they could turn to for help if they were facing a personal crisis.

*Almost eight in 10 residents would recommend Tulsa to a friend or associate as a place to visit (78%) and live (77%).*