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A Special Siena College Poll: New Yorkers' Life Satisfaction Only 27% of NY'ers More Satisfied with Life than a Year Ago; Down from 44% in 2018

Over 70% Satisfied with Family & Friends, Spiritual Life, Where They Live, Their Community and Their Health

Highest Levels of Dissatisfaction: Direction of the World and Their Finances; Overall Satisfaction Score Down from 2018

Loudonville, NY. Today, 27% of New Yorkers are more satisfied with their life than they were a year ago while 33% are less satisfied and 39% are as satisfied today as they were a year ago according to a new Siena College (SCRI) poll of New Yorkers. When SCRI last conducted this survey in 2018, 44% reported being more satisfied with their life while only 17% reported being less satisfied. Of eleven aspects of life, New Yorkers were most satisfied with relationships with their family, 83% somewhat or completely satisfied, and their friends, 83% at least somewhat satisfied, followed by their satisfaction with where they live (79%), their spiritual life (77%), their sense of belonging in their community (74%) and their health (72%).

Only 12%, down from 18% in 2018 of New Yorkers are completely satisfied with their financial condition and 46%, up from 34% are either not very or not at all satisfied. A large majority, 75%, up from 70% four years ago, are either not very or not at all satisfied with the world as a whole including political, economic, social and environmental issues and trends, and the direction the world is going. Twenty-four percent, down from 33%, of residents are completely satisfied with their work, that is, the job, vocation or tasks in which they engage on a daily basis, and 26 %, virtually unchanged, are completely satisfied with what they do for recreation including physical activities, travel or other activities.

“In 2018 we noted a decline in New Yorkers life satisfaction from 2008 when we first asked these questions, but after Covid, political turmoil and now inflation, we see a significant drop among state residents in every category of life satisfaction,” said Siena College Research Institute Director, Don Levy. “It has been a trying time for many New Yorkers. When considering all residents we see the largest drops in satisfaction with family relationships, where they live, their finances, what they do for work and their health.”

“While every area of life satisfaction is down across New Yorkers, the highest levels of satisfaction, those areas that give us comfort remain our relationships with others and our religious or spiritual life,” Levy said.

In order to compare satisfaction across the eleven areas over time and today between various groups we compute scores based on whether a respondent said they were completely, somewhat, not very or not at all satisfied. A score of 100 would result from every person saying they were completely satisfied and a score of zero would result if every person said that they were not at all satisfied. The ‘Total Overall Score’ is the average of the possible scores across all eleven areas.

Life Satisfaction Scores, 2008, 2018 and 2022 with change over time

	2008	2018	Diff	2022	2018 Diff	2008 Diff
Financial condition	57.5	54.9	-2.6	49.5	-5.41	-7.97
Residence/location	80.7	76.0	-4.7	68.9	-7.05	-11.77
Work	71.5	69.4	-2.1	63.9	-5.41	-7.53
Current health and vitality	72.0	68.1	-3.9	63.1	-5.02	-8.96
Recreation	65.1	61.1	-4.0	57.8	-3.23	-7.23
Family relationships	82.9	81.2	-1.7	74.0	-7.20	-8.92
Life partner relationship	77.3	77.3	0.0	72.8	-4.48	-4.47
Friends and acquaintances	79.6	76.3	-3.3	71.7	-4.60	-7.92
Community	70.1	69.4	-0.7	65.0	-4.47	-5.17
World direction	32.1	33.5	1.3	29.7	-3.74	-2.40
Religion/spiritual life	78.0	78.2	0.2	74.1	-4.17	-3.96
Total Overall Score	69.7%	67.8%	-2.0%	62.8%	-4.98%	-6.94%

“While overall satisfaction has fallen for both men and women in New York, today women are less satisfied with their lives than are men – a change from 2018. Since 2018, men’s satisfaction with recreational activities rose significantly and their satisfaction with friends and acquaintances rose slightly. Among women no area measured increased satisfaction over the four years with the largest decline in family relationships perhaps due to Covid keeping people apart. Women also expressed less satisfaction than men with their financial condition, their work, their health, their relationship with a life partner and the direction of the world.

“Life satisfaction increases with age as those age 18-34 have the lowest overall satisfaction with each successive age group expressing greater overall satisfaction. And it does seem that money makes you more satisfied as those earning \$100K or more are more satisfied than those earning less than \$50K in not only the financial condition category but in every other category as well.

“The racial satisfaction gap is striking. Overall satisfaction among Blacks at 59 percent is the lowest of any racial or ethnic group. Interestingly, while overall satisfaction among Blacks is unchanged and lower than that of whites or Latinos, satisfaction among Blacks did increase on the condition of the world from 21% in 2018 to 32% today and Blacks expressed increasing satisfaction towards their finances, recreation, community and their health,” Levy said.

This Siena College Poll was conducted June 14-27, 2022 by random telephone calls to 402 New York adults via landline and cell phones and 400 responses drawn from a proprietary online panel of New Yorkers. Respondent sampling via phone was initiated by asking for the youngest person in the household. The overall results has an overall margin of error of ± 3.7 percentage points including the design effects resulting from weighting. Telephone sampling was conducted via a stratified dual frame probability sample of landline (from ASDE Survey Sampler) and cell phone (from Dynata) telephone numbers from within New York State weighted to reflect known population patterns. Data from the telephone and web samples were blended and statistically adjusted by age, race/ethnicity, gender and party to ensure representativeness. The Siena College Research Institute, directed by Donald Levy, Ph.D., conducts political, economic, social and cultural research primarily in NYS. SCRI, an independent, non-partisan research institute, subscribes to the American Association of Public Opinion Research Code of Professional Ethics and Practices. For more information or comments, please call Don Levy at 518-783-2901. Survey cross-tabulations and satisfaction scores can be found at www.siena.edu/scri

Appendices

[“Final Life Satisfaction Scores for 2008, 2018 and 2022” Excel Tables](#)

Life Satisfaction in New York State (Score)			
	2008	2018	2022
Highest Income, \$100K+	72.3	71.4	69.8
Ages 65+	73.1	72.9	67.5
Republicans	72.8	73.6	65.3
Men	69.3	66.3	64.9
White	71.0	70.4	64.6
Democrats	68.2	67.8	64.5
Suburbs	70.6	69.1	63.2
Upstate NY	71.7	69.1	63.0
New York State	69.7	67.8	62.8
NYC	67.6	66.0	62.4
Ages 35-49	68.3	68.8	61.5
Higher Income, \$50K	69.4	69.1	61.4
Ages 50-64	69.2	66.5	61.1
Women	70.1	69.1	61.0
Ages 18-34	69.6	64.9	58.8
Black	64.1	58.5	58.5
Latino	64.7	64.7	58.4
Lower Income, less than \$50K	67.1	62.0	55.8

Life Satisfaction	New York State	NYC	Suburbs	Upstate NY
2008	69.7	67.6	70.6	71.7
2018	67.8	66.0	69.1	69.1
2022	62.8	62.4	63.2	63.0

Life Satisfaction - Overall			
	2008	2018	2022
Financial Condition	57.5	54.9	49.5
Residence/Location	80.7	76.0	68.9
Work	71.5	69.4	63.9
Current health and vitality	72.0	68.1	63.1
Recreation	65.1	61.1	57.8
Family relationships	82.9	81.2	74.0
Life partner relationship	77.3	77.3	72.8
Friends and acquaintances	79.6	76.3	71.7
Community	70.1	69.4	65.0
World direction	32.1	33.5	29.7
Religion/spiritual life	78.0	78.2	74.1
Total Scores	69.7	67.8	62.8