Detroiters' Trust in and Priorities for Local Government

FOR FURTHER INFORMATION ON THIS REPORT:

Dr. Elisabeth Gerber, Gerald R. Ford School of Public Policy, Institute for Social Research, ergerber@umich.edu

Dr. Jeffrey Morenoff, Institute for Social Research, College of Literature, Science and the Arts, Department of Sociology, morenoff@umich.edu

Conan Smith, Gerald R. Ford School of Public Policy, conan@umich.edu

Detroiters' Trust in and Priorities for Government

Overview

Amidst breakneck changes in the population and economy of Detroit, most Detroiters would like to see improvements in the quality of public education and their sense of public safety. Furthermore, Detroiters want greater investments in child care, health insurance, and an increased minimum wage and are broadly distrustful of state government's ability to deliver on a range of issues.
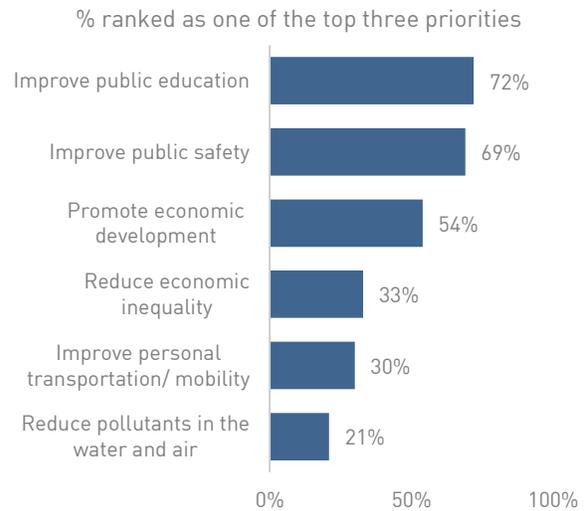
Improving education and public safety rank as top local priorities for Detroiters

More than 70 percent of Detroiters rank improving public education as one of their top three priorities (72%), the most commonly ranked issue of all asked. Close behind is improving public safety, with 69 percent listing the issue as a top priority. A majority of Detroiters also see promoting economic development as a top priority (54%). Issues ranked by fewer than half of Detroiters as priorities include reducing economic inequality (33%), improving transportation (30%), and reducing pollutants in the water and air (21%).

Public education ranks highly across all major population groups, including large majorities of men and women, and across all age and income groups.
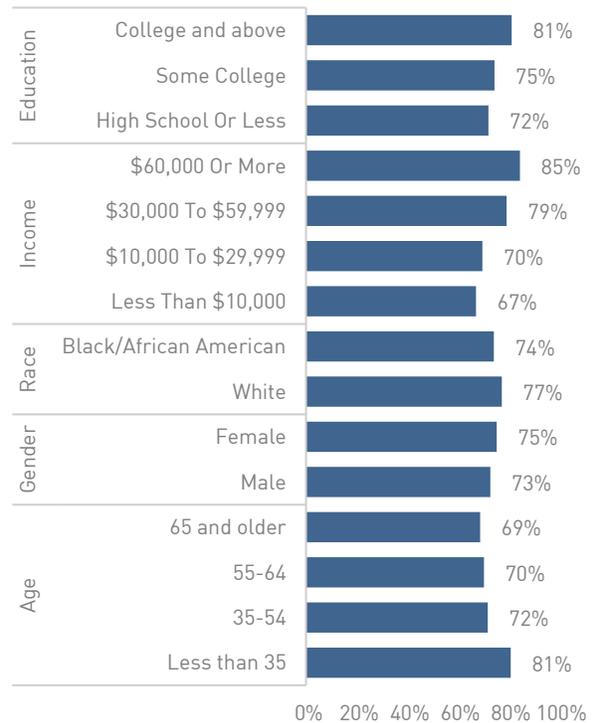
72% say improving public education should be a top priority

We would like to ask you about what kinds of changes you would like to see happen in the metro Detroit area. Please rank your three highest priorities for change from the following list:

% ranked as one of the top three priorities

Priority	%
Improve public education	72%
Improve public safety	69%
Promote economic development	54%
Reduce economic inequality	33%
Improve personal transportation/ mobility	30%
Reduce pollutants in the water and air	21%

Across groups, education a top priority

Percent ranking "improving public education" a top three priority

Category	Group	%
Education	College and above	81%
Education	Some College	75%
Education	High School Or Less	72%
Income	$60,000 Or More	85%
Income	$30,000 To $59,999	79%
Income	$10,000 To $29,999	70%
Income	Less Than $10,000	67%
Race	Black/African American	74%
Race	White	77%
Gender	Female	75%
Gender	Male	73%
Age	65 and older	69%
Age	55-64	70%
Age	35-54	72%
Age	Less than 35	81%

Detroiters see education as the top concern in need of urgent attention at the state level
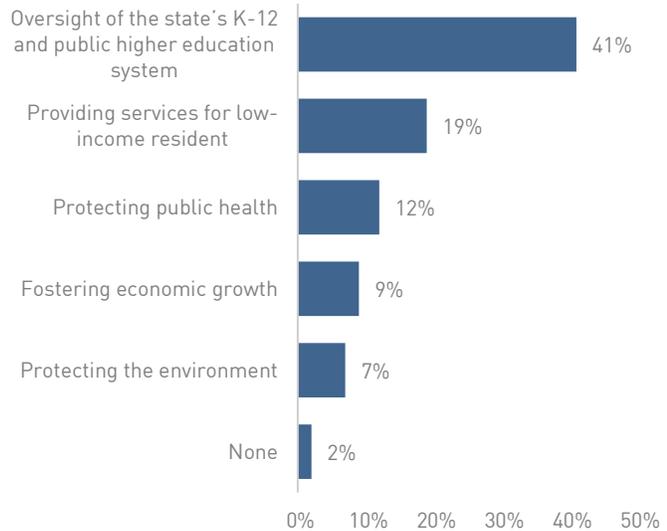
Public education (K-12 and higher education) also arose as the most important issue when Detroiters were asked which public service areas require the most attention in Michigan as a whole. Issues least ranked as in need of attention include fostering economic growth (9%) and protecting the environment (7%).

Low levels of trust in the state to deliver on a broad array of public services

When asked about the state government's ability to deliver public services, Detroiters express overwhelming distrust. More than 40 percent of Detroiters say they trust the government on none of the issue areas presented (44%). The issue with the greatest proportion of Detroiters expressing trust in the state is in providing services for low-income residents. However, less than 20 percent (17%) trust the state on that issue. Protecting the environment faces the lowest level of trust, with only 6 percent of Detroiters rating this as an area they trust the state on.
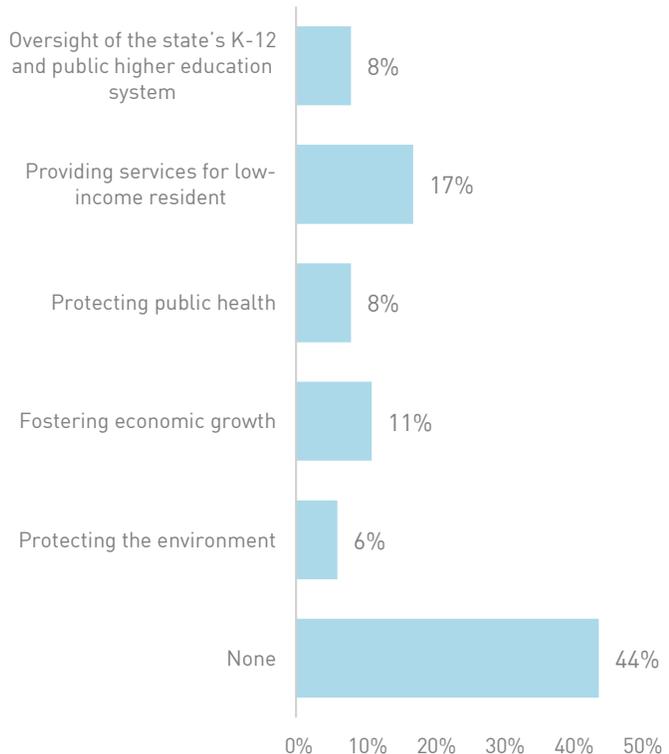
41% say oversight of public education is in need of urgent attention

Which of these public service areas is in need of most urgent attention in Michigan?

Oversight of the state's K-12 and public higher education system	41%
Providing services for low-income resident	19%
Protecting public health	12%
Fostering economic growth	9%
Protecting the environment	7%
None	2%

Nearly half do not trust the state to deliver in any of these priority areas

Which of these public service areas do you most trust state government to deliver?

Oversight of the state's K-12 and public higher education system	8%
Providing services for low-income resident	17%
Protecting public health	8%
Fostering economic growth	11%
Protecting the environment	6%
None	44%

Majority support raising the minimum wage

When asked about support for specific policy issues, Detroiters express overwhelming approval of policies that expand government's investments in childcare and health insurance alongside mandating increases in the minimum wage.
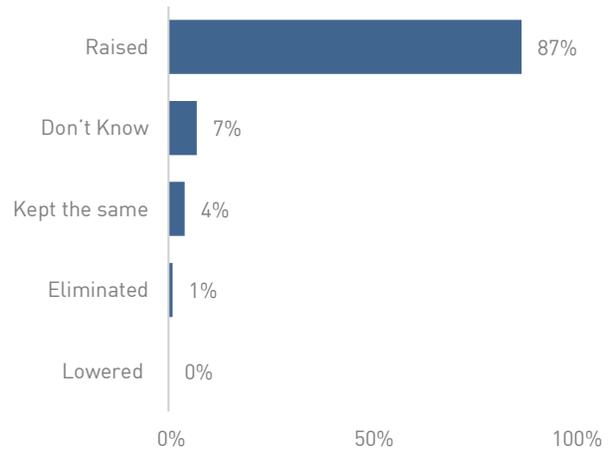
More than 8 out of 10 Detroiters support raising the minimum wage (87%). In contrast, few support lowering (1%) or eliminating (0%) the minimum wage.

Detroiters want government to invest more in childcare and health insurance

73 percent of Detroiters support an increase in government spending to help people pay for health insurance and childcare. More than 4 out of 10 support greater investment in helping people pay for health insurance (42%) while nearly that amount want investments in childcare to increase a great deal (37%). There is little support among Detroiters for decreasing investments in either childcare (3%) or health insurance (7%).
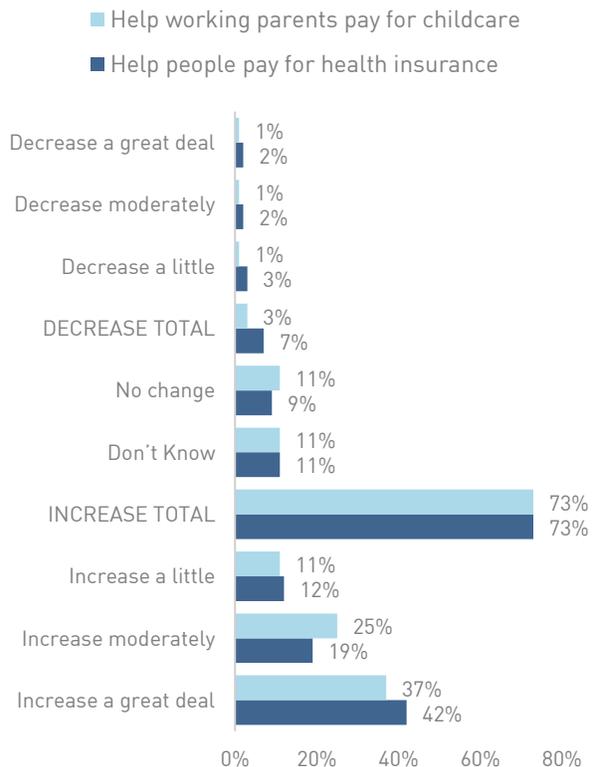
87% of Detroiters believe the minimum wage should be raised

Should the minimum wage be raised, kept the same, lowered but not eliminated, or eliminated altogether? Select one, please

Category	Value
Raised	87%
Don't Know	7%
Kept the same	4%
Eliminated	1%
Lowered	0%

73% want to see more government investment in childcare and health insurance

Do you favor an increase, decrease, or no change in government spending to_

Legend:
- Help working parents pay for childcare
- Help people pay for health insurance

Category	Help working parents pay for childcare	Help people pay for health insurance
Decrease a great deal	1%	2%
Decrease moderately	1%	2%
Decrease a little	1%	3%
DECREASE TOTAL	3%	7%
No change	11%	9%
Don't Know	11%	11%
INCREASE TOTAL	73%	73%
Increase a little	11%	12%
Increase moderately	25%	19%
Increase a great deal	37%	42%

Acknowledgements

About the Detroit Metropolitan Area Communities Study

The Detroit Metropolitan Area Communities Study (DMACS) is a University of Michigan initiative, designed to regularly survey a broad, representative group of Detroit area residents about their communities, including their experiences, perceptions, priorities, and aspirations. DMACS' mission is to create the knowledge infrastructure for evidence-based decision-making by diverse actors. This is accomplished through an innovative online survey and web platform that provides timely, accessible data and analysis, and integrates with other information about the people and places across the region.

Survey Methodology

N=714 Detroit residents. Interviews were administered online as well as using paper and pencil between October 2016 and January 2017. Respondents were recruited via mail, phone, and in-person from a representative address-based sample of the city. The margin of sampling error for a random sample survey of this size is 3.7 percentage points at the 95% confidence level. The data have been weighted using a raking procedure by age, education, sex, and race to match Census estimates for the City of Detroit.