

COVID-19 has caused significant upheaval nationwide over the last several months, and nowhere has it made a bigger impact than in local government. As part of your COVID-19 recovery planning efforts, it will be important to understand and track local impacts to inform decisions and guide your community forward. An essential component of decision-making is ensuring that resident's needs and preferences are considered. To assist local governments in this large undertaking, Polco's research team (National Research Center, NRC) created The National Community Survey™ CARES (The NCS™ CARES), which offers local leaders essential resources for creating a robust and data-informed recovery plan. Our survey tools and online platform allow local leaders to directly engage residents and ensure accurate and actionable feedback.

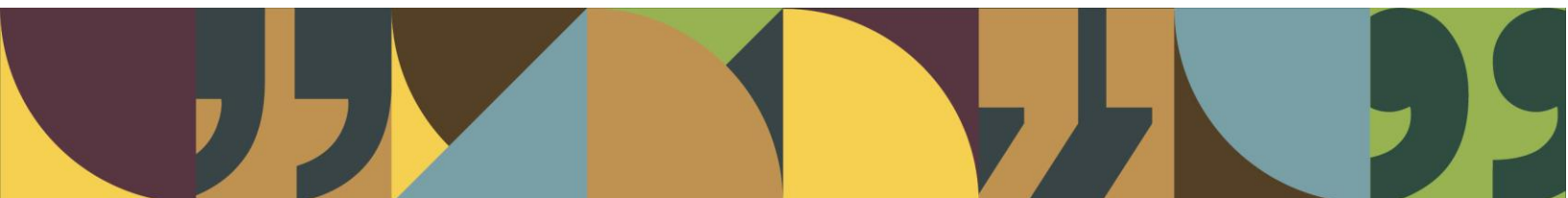
According to [Section 601 \(d\) of Coronavirus Aid, Relief, and Economic Security Act \(CARES\)](#), expenses associated with conducting a recovery planning project or operating a recovery coordination office are eligible for CARES funding. The NCS CARES will provide you with invaluable insight while complying with the eligibility requirements of the CARES Act.

The NCS CARES

COVID-19 may have created immense challenges for your community that require strategic planning and data-informed decisions to yield the best possible recovery outcomes. In addition to facing these specific COVID-19 challenges, you must continue to uphold your promise of providing services and acting in the best interest of your citizens. The NCS CARES is a perfect solution to guide you in effectively addressing issues pertaining to COVID-19 while simultaneously upholding ongoing commitments to your residents.

The National Community Survey (The NCS), for many years, has helped local governments get a representative picture of residents' needs and perspectives. NRC recently revamped The NCS to include questions that reflect the issues posed by COVID-19, thus providing you with The NCS CARES. Some of the benefits from The NCS CARES include:

- **Gathering input from residents now to help to inform tough decisions** that local governments will need to make in the next months. We can ensure you are asking the right questions so that the data feeds into recovery efforts, performance measurement tracking, and budgeting.
- **Many residents are actively seeking ways to engage** with their community and local government, not just to get information but also to share information. The survey is one way for them to share their thoughts and concerns.
- **We've created COVID-19 focused questions that you can include on the survey to help assess and understand local impacts.** We also have drafted new language for the survey invitations and cover letters, addressing COVID-19 and explaining why it remains important for their local government to survey residents about service delivery and performance.



- **The NCS CARES is eligible for CARES Act funds** since it can be used to measure and respond to COVID-19 recovery needs. When you conduct an impact assessment (such as The NCS CARES) to understand how to support COVID-19 recovery, those costs should be incorporated in your requests for CARES Act assistance. (Specific procedures for accessing CARES Act resources will vary from State to State.)

We acknowledge the difficult position that many local governments are in as a result of COVID-19 but are confident that The NCS CARES can alleviate some of those stressors in the recovery process.

Polco offers a suite of benchmarking surveys, developed by NRC to address older adult needs, policing, local government employee engagement, among other topics. If you feel that The NCS CARES does not fully cover your specific COVID-19 recovery needs, please contact cory@polco.us to learn more about our suite of benchmark surveys or custom research options.

Why Us?

Polco, with our NRC research team, are well-positioned to help local governments navigate COVID-19 recovery by providing critical survey, outreach, and administration services. Important insights about resident concerns, business needs, and the traction of various program efforts can be assessed iteratively through the end of 2020 and into 2021.

We offer the gold standard for resident, business, and public health surveys, having provided these services in over 500 communities for 25 years. At the outset of the COVID-19 pandemic, NRC partnered with the National League of Cities to conduct a national survey on COVID-19 impacts on local governments and has since worked with nearly 50 communities on local COVID-19 related research.

The NRC research team leverages Polco's powerful digital survey and resident panel management software. This allows timely administrations of surveys on key topics repeated as needed; providing sound results with real-time reporting and the possibility to track trends over time. Our extensive experience, in conjunction with our user-friendly platform, ensures that local governments can get essential resident input to use as you craft your crisis management and recovery strategies.

