

# New York Opinion Index



# Empire State Poll 2013

## Report 3: State of New York Over Time

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### Introduction

This report summarizes the findings of the 2013 Empire State Poll (ESP), conducted by the Survey Research Institute at Cornell University. The 2013 ESP queried New York State residents' opinions regarding the most important issues facing New York State, economic perceptions, and institutional trust. Results of other findings can be found at <http://sri.cornell.edu/sri/esp.reports.cfm>.

### Methodology

- In total, 800 telephone interviews were conducted between February 2, 2013 and March 28, 2013, equally divided by upstate/downstate, and then weighted to reflect the actual population distribution within the state.
- For regional comparisons, "downstate" is defined as New York, Rockland, Kings, Richmond, Westchester, Suffolk, Queens, Nassau, and Bronx counties, with the remaining counties of the state defined as "upstate."
- The ESP utilizes a dual-frame random digit dial (RDD) sample of NYS households - covering landline and cell phone numbers. Eligible respondents must be residents of NYS and at least 18 years old.
- The cooperation rate was 66.2% using American Association for Public Opinion Research (AAPOR) standards.
- The margin of error (MOE) for questions with two response options among 800 respondents is 3.5% and is 4.9% for comparisons based on 400 respondents. The MOE may be smaller for some questions depending on the number of response options.

See Report 1: Introduction & Methodology for a full description at <http://sri.cornell.edu/sri/esp.reports.cfm>.

### Issues of Concern to New Yorkers

The ESP queried New York residents about issues facing the state since 2003. The question states: *In your opinion, what do you think is the single most important problem facing people in New York State today?* Responses were summarized into the following categories: *crime, economic growth, education,*

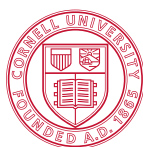
*employment, environment, health care, housing, immigration, land development, NYS government, NYS budget, people leaving NYS, security/threat of terrorism, taxes, and other.*

**Table 1** Most Important Issue in New York State

Year	Percent of respondents citing... as most important issue				
	Economic Growth	Taxes	Employment	Education	Health-care
2013	22	14	23	8	5
- downstate	24	9	22	9	6
- upstate	20	19	25	6	5
2012	24	10	25	10	5
2011	17	10	23	10	3
2010	19	10	22	4	6
2009	31	9	24	4	5
2008	18	17	15	8	8
2007	9	14	16	5	10
2006	10	15	21	8	11
2005	8	17	25	8	7
2004	13	11	25	8	6
2003	13	18	24	12	17

Other responses mentioned by fewer than 7% of respondents include: *crime, environment, housing, immigration, land development, state government, state budget, people leaving NYS, and terrorism.*

- In 2013, about one out of four (23%) residents cited employment as the most important issue facing New York State, a 1% decrease from 2012. The second most widely cited issue was economic growth (22%), a 1% decrease from 2012.
- The number of residents reporting education as the most important issue decreased 1% in 2013 (8%) compared with 2012 (9%).
- In 2013, upstate residents were more than twice as likely (19% vs. 9%) to cite taxes as the most important issue facing NYS than downstate residents a difference that narrowed from 2012 (19% vs. 5%).
- Upstate respondents were more likely to cite employment as the most important issue facing NYS than downstate respondents (25% vs. 22%). Conversely, in 2012, downstate respondents were more likely to cite employment as the most important issue facing NYS than upstate respondents (27% vs. 23%).



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- In 2013, downstate residents were more likely to cite economic growth as the most important issue (24% vs. 20%). This regional split reversed from 2012 where downstate residents were less likely to cite economic growth as the most important issue (23% vs. 27%).
- Downstate respondents were also more likely to cite Education as the most important issue (9% vs. 6%), a regional difference that reduced since 2012, when there was an 6% split (11% of downstate residence vs. 5% of upstate residence).

## Evaluations of Personal Finance

Following the precedent set over the past ten years, New York State residents were asked two questions concerning their recent and anticipated change in personal finances. The first question states: *We are interested in how people are getting along financially these days. Would you say that you (and your household) are better off, worse off, or just about the same financially as you were a year ago?* The second question states: *Now looking ahead, do you think that a year from now you (and your household) will be better off financially, worse off, or just about the same as now?*

**Table 2** Reported Personal Economic Conditions in NYS

Year	Percent of all respondents		
	Worse	Same	Better
<b>Perceptions of Past Year</b>			
2013	34	51	15
- downstate	33	50	17
- upstate	34	52	14
2012	31	53	16
2011	31	51	18
2010	38	46	16
2009	47	44	9
2008	32	46	22
2007	22	55	23
2006	22	55	23
2005	22	53	25
2004	22	54	24
2003	31	50	19
<b>Perceptions of Forthcoming Year</b>			
2013	20	49	31
- downstate	18	43	39
- upstate	22	56	23
2012	21	45	34
2011	17	48	35
2010	15	46	39
2009	26	41	33

2008	20	47	33
2007	12	47	41
2006	15	51	34
2005	14	51	35
2004	9	48	43
2003	15	53	32

Note: Due to rounding, distributions may not add up to 100.

### Past Year

- Between 2004 and 2007, reporting of personal financial situations were remarkably consistent with just over half (54%) reporting that their financial situation remained the same, nearly one-quarter (22%) reporting that it had worsened, and almost another quarter (24%) reporting that it had improved.
- In 2008, 10% more respondents (compared to 2007) reported that their financial situations had worsened in the past year.
- 2009 was the worst in the 10 years surveyed. Nearly half (47%) of all respondents reported that they were worse off financially than they were in the previous year.
- Between 2008 and 2012, there was a gradual increase in the number reporting that their personal financial situation has either stayed the same or improved (going from 53% in 2009 to 62% in 2010, 69% in 2011 and 69% in 2012).
- In 2013, the number reporting that their personal or financial situation has either stayed the same or improved went down from 2012 (66% vs. 69%).
- Despite 34% of respondents from 2012 anticipating a better year for 2013, only 15% of them actually reported better personal finances in 2013. While only 21% of respondents anticipated being financially worse in 2012, 34% of them reported worse personal finances in 2012.

### Forthcoming Year

- Personal economic steadiness for the forthcoming year has increased slightly. The percentage of New York State residents who believe their financial situation will stay the same over the coming year increased by 4% (49% in 2013 vs. 45% in 2012). The percentage of those projecting a decline in their financial situation decreased by 1% (20% in 2013 vs. 21% in 2012) and the percentage of those projecting an increase in their personal financial situation also decreased by 3% (31% in 2013 vs. 34% in 2012).
- Envisioning the year to come, downstate residents were much more optimistic that their personal financial conditions would improve compared to



upstate residents (39% vs. 23%, respectively). This regional disparity has increased by 5% since 2012.

## Evaluations of State Economic Performance

Similar to the questions concerning personal finance, New York State residents were asked to give their opinion on the past and anticipated performance of the NYS economy. The first question states: Thinking about the economy in New York State as a whole, would you say that over the past year the state's economy has gotten better, stayed about the same, or gotten worse? The second question states: What about the next twelve months? Do you expect the economy in New York State as a whole to get better, stay about the same, or get worse?

**Table 3** Evaluations of Economic Conditions in NYS - Residents

Year	Percent of all respondents		
	Worse	Same	Better
<b>Perceptions of Past Year</b>			
2013	47	31	22
- downstate	41	32	27
- upstate	52	30	18
2012	49	29	22
2011	59	25	16
2010	74	17	8
2009	92	6	2
2008	68	26	6
2007	43	37	20
2006	36	48	16
2005	50	34	16
2004	54	29	17
2003	79	18	3
<b>Perceptions of Forthcoming Year</b>			
2013	32	31	38
- downstate	24	29	48
- upstate	40	32	28
2012	27	34	39
2011	31	33	36
2010	31	33	36
2009	50	23	27
2008	45	33	22
2007	28	38	34
2006	25	52	23
2005	30	45	25
2004	27	39	34
2003	38	38	24

Note: Due to rounding, distributions may not add up to 100.

### Past Year

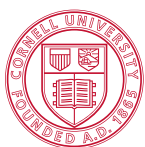
- Over the past five years, the number of residents who characterized the state economy as having worsened has been decreasing consistently, from 92% in 2009 to 74% in 2010 to 59% in 2011 to 49% in 2012 and now, in 2013, 47%. Accordingly, the number of respondents who reported that the economy remained the same increased steadily from 6% in 2009 to 31% in 2013.
- For the first time since 2008, the number of respondents who reported that the economy improved did not increase (2% in 2009, 8% in 2010, 16% in 2011, 22% in 2012, and 22% in 2013).
- Similar to the past three years, when compared with downstate residents, 11% more upstate residents reported that the economic situation had worsened over the past year (52% vs. 41%), and 9% more downstate residents reported that the economic conditions were better (27% vs. 18%).

### Forthcoming Year

- Compared to 2012, NYS residents were more pessimistic for the forthcoming year. The percentage of New York State residents who believe the state economy will improve over the coming year decreased by 1% (from 39% in 2012 to 38% in 2013), and the percentage of New York State residents who believe the state economy will get worse over the coming year increased by 5% (from 27% in 2012 to 32% in 2013).
- Downstate residents were more likely to expect the state's economy to improve in the forthcoming year (48% vs. 28% of upstate residents). This regional disparity has increased by 7% since 2012. Accordingly, upstate residents were more likely to expect the state's economy to worsen in the forthcoming year (40% vs. 24%). This regional disparity has increased by 6% since 2012.

## Trust in Institutions in NYS

Since 2003, the ESP also measured NYS residents' trust toward eight different institutions including large corporations, local businesses, state government, local government, labor unions, news media, other people, and the internet. Trust was measured by asking respondents on a scale of 1 to 10, where 1 is untrustworthy and 10 is trustworthy, how they would rate the trustworthiness of each group. The mean of respondent trust levels are provided in Table 4 below.



**Table 4** Trust in Institutions in NYS

Year	Mean trustworthiness rating (1 is untrustworthy, 10 is trustworthy)			
	Large corporations	Local businesses	State government	Local government
2013	4.14	6.91	4.68	5.32
- downstate	4.22	6.64	5.05	5.25
- upstate	4.06	7.19	4.31	5.38
2012	3.91	6.51	4.51	5.04
2011	3.86	6.34	4.06	4.85
2010	4.18	6.50	3.85	5.14
2009	4.07	6.59	4.49	5.36
2008	4.50	6.77	4.56	5.42
2007	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A
2006	4.24	6.54	4.73	5.13
2005	4.46	6.50	4.60	5.41
2004	3.80	6.33	4.48	5.11
2003	3.91	6.42	4.74	5.30
Year	Mean trustworthiness rating			
	Labor Unions	News Media	Other People	Internet
2013	5.16	4.64	5.88	4.86
- downstate	5.39	4.90	5.81	5.06
- upstate	4.93	4.38	5.94	4.66
2012	5.02	4.57	5.80	5.04
2011	4.83	4.67	5.89	4.89
2010	4.87	4.95	6.42	5.23
2009	4.80	4.75	6.42	N/A
2008	5.49	5.1	4.89	N/A
2007	N/A	N/A	3.22*	N/A
2006	5.13	4.93	6.32	N/A
2005	5.00	5.09	6.33	N/A
2004	5.02	4.53	6.12	N/A
2003	4.97	4.54	N/A	N/A

Note: In 2007, trust in other people was measured on a 1 to 5 scale.

- In 2013, the top institutions that have attained a high level of trust, as measured by the highest mean ratings, were local businesses (6.91) and other people (5.88), followed by local government (5.32), and labor unions (5.16).
- Institutions with the lowest trust levels were large corporations (4.14), news media (4.64), state government (4.68), and the internet (4.86).
- A general increase in trustworthiness ratings was reported by respondents toward most of the institutions from 2012 to 2013. Ratings of local business’s trustworthiness increased by two-fifth of a

unit (from 6.51 in 2012 to 6.91 in 2013). Ratings of local government’s trustworthiness increased by more than a quarter of a unit (from 5.04 in 2012 to 5.32 in 2013). On the other hand, the level of trust in the internet decreased by 0.18.

- Downstate residents, compared to upstate residents were more likely to trust NYS government (5.05 vs. 4.31), large corporation (4.22 vs. 4.06 respectively), labor unions (5.39 vs. 4.93 respectively), news media (4.90 vs. 4.38 respectively), and the internet (5.06 vs. 4.66 respectively). On the other hand, upstate residents were more likely to trust local business (7.19 vs. 6.64 for downstate residents) and other people (5.94 vs. 5.81 for downstate residents, respectively).

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