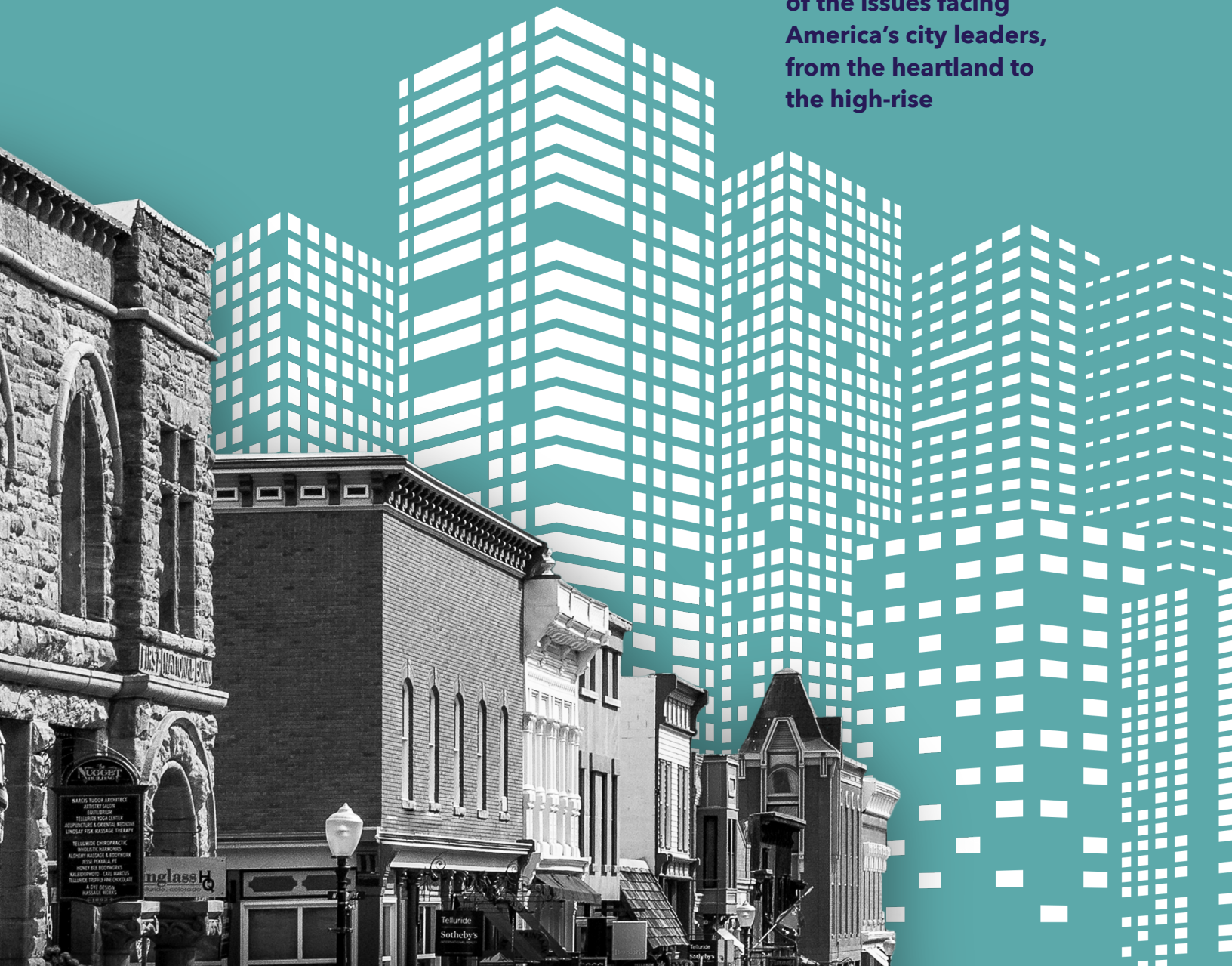


Bloomberg American Cities Initiative

2018 American Mayors Survey

An in-depth examination
of the issues facing
America's city leaders,
from the heartland to
the high-rise



Executive Summary

The Bloomberg Philanthropies' 2018 American Mayors Survey is the largest comprehensive public-opinion survey of mayors and city managers. It is the first multi-topic survey to include small cities (30,000-plus residents), alongside larger metropolises. The survey was conducted as part of Mike Bloomberg's American Cities Initiative, a program designed to empower city leaders to generate new ideas and advance policy that moves the nation forward. It reveals the issues and challenges that are top-of-mind for American leaders — from infrastructure to climate change — and the strategies underway to address them.

Cities are a nexus of innovative solutions for the nation. By reaching a wide array of mayors of various political leanings from cities of all sizes, the survey captures a snapshot of the issues that matter to our nation's heartland and its urban centers.

Mayors and city managers of 156 cities from all regions of the country participated. Among the findings:

Mayors are already taking action on climate change.

Eight in 10 mayors say addressing climate change is very or somewhat important for their cities. Among the solutions to climate change, all of the mayors encourage sustainable transportation, such as cycling, walking, or taking the bus. But few have experience adopting a broad array of necessary climate adaptation strategies.

The opioid crisis has hit some regions harder and more deeply than others. Mayors in the Midwest and Northeast are more likely than those in the South and West to call opioids one of the top challenges or the top challenge facing their cities. No mayors from the West name opioids as a top challenge. Every mayor surveyed in the Northeast describes opioids as a challenge on some level.

Infrastructure is a dominant concern from the heartland to the high-rise. Two-thirds of mayors raise infrastructure as one of the top problems they hear about from residents. Some believe it will be the biggest problem their cities or the nation faces in a decade.

"Cities are driving our progress as a nation – from taking on education reform and public health crises to spurring economic development and job growth to battling crime and climate change."

– Michael R. Bloomberg

Executive Summary

Constructive relationships with city and state

legislators are common. Nearly three-quarters of mayors say they have constructive relationships with their city councils and state legislatures. Fewer — about 4 in 10 — say their relationships with their state governors are constructive.

Federal and state government frequently obstruct local decision-making. More than two-thirds of mayors say federal or state officials — or both — have preempted their decisions and affected their ability to govern.

New ideas start at home. About half of mayors say they get new ideas from residents, city staff, and other mayors. But

very few mayors say they get new ideas from Washington. More than three-quarters of large cities and one-third of all cities have dedicated staff for citywide innovation. And half of mayors surveyed say their cities have funds outside of government to raise money for public programs.

The survey's findings will help inform future programming for Bloomberg Philanthropies' American Cities Initiative to promote bold leadership in America's cities, advance critical policies and legislation, and empower citizens to solve urban problems.



Michael R. Bloomberg

Bloomberg American Cities Initiative

How do we accelerate
cities' progress?

In June 2017, Michael R. Bloomberg, three-term Mayor of New York City and philanthropist, launched a \$200 million initiative to empower city leaders to generate new ideas and advance policy that moves the nation forward. The Bloomberg American Cities Initiative promotes the belief that cities are leading the way in coming up with new solutions to problems — places where leaders can be found in city hall, private businesses, forward-thinking organizations, and around the kitchen table. Cities drive our nation's progress. They are taking on traffic, affordable housing, and public health crises, spurring economic development and job growth, and battling crime and climate change.

Through grants, technical assistance and opportunities for city leaders to share insights and best practices, the Bloomberg American Cities Initiative focuses on three core areas:

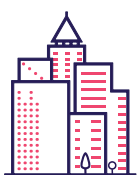
- Promoting bold leadership and effective problem-solving in city halls.
- Advancing critical policies and legislation in areas ranging from education to climate change to opioid abuse.
- Empowering citizens — including artists, volunteers, and entrepreneurs — to solve problems and strengthen communities.

Methodology

The Bloomberg American Cities Initiative surveyed mayors and city managers of cities with 30,000 or more residents. Researchers sent invitations via e-mail to leaders of 1,444 cities. The researchers then administered the anonymous survey, which included a mix of open-ended and multiple-choice questions, online from November 29, 2017, to January 21, 2018. Mayors in 156 cities from 42 states and the District of Columbia participated.

More than three-quarters of the nation's cities have populations of fewer than 100,000 people. By including these smaller cities alongside larger metropolises, our survey captured the voices of mayors — and the concerns of their residents — in our nation's heartland and its urban centers.

City & Mayoral Characteristics



Large Cities (500,000+)

NATIONAL
AVERAGE
2%

SURVEY
SAMPLE
6%



Medium Cities (100,000 - 499,999)

NATIONAL
AVERAGE
20%

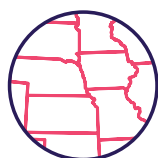
SURVEY
SAMPLE
26%



Small Cities (30,000 - 100,000)

NATIONAL
AVERAGE
78%

SURVEY
SAMPLE
68%



Midwest

NATIONAL
AVERAGE
23%

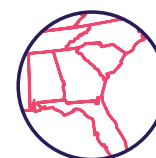
SURVEY
SAMPLE
22%



Northeast

NATIONAL
AVERAGE
20%

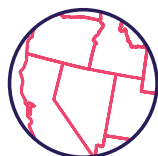
SURVEY
SAMPLE
15%



South

NATIONAL
AVERAGE
28%

SURVEY
SAMPLE
33%



West

NATIONAL
AVERAGE
29%

SURVEY
SAMPLE
29%



Female Mayors

NATIONAL
AVERAGE
21%

SURVEY
SAMPLE
24%



Nonwhite/Hispanic Mayors

NATIONAL
AVERAGE
15%

SURVEY
SAMPLE
16%



SECTION I

Policy Concerns

Mayors are focused on addressing global and national issues like climate change, opioids, and infrastructure.

Policy Concerns

Tackling Climate Change

The national political debate about climate change is highly polarized, but mayors are accepting the reality and the need to act. Eight in 10 mayors think it is important for their cities to address climate change.

Total: Very Important **46%** Somewhat Important **34%** Not Important **13%**



Democrats

VERY IMPORTANT **69%** SOMEWHAT IMPORTANT **22%** NOT IMPORTANT **3%**



Republicans

VERY IMPORTANT **19%** SOMEWHAT IMPORTANT **50%** NOT IMPORTANT **25%**



Midwest

VERY IMPORTANT **46%** SOMEWHAT IMPORTANT **34%** NOT IMPORTANT **17%**



Northeast

VERY IMPORTANT **63%** SOMEWHAT IMPORTANT **21%** NOT IMPORTANT **4%**



South

VERY IMPORTANT **40%** SOMEWHAT IMPORTANT **40%** NOT IMPORTANT **12%**



West

VERY IMPORTANT **42%** SOMEWHAT IMPORTANT **33%** NOT IMPORTANT **18%**



Large

VERY IMPORTANT **78%** SOMEWHAT IMPORTANT **11%** NOT IMPORTANT **0%**



Medium

VERY IMPORTANT **44%** SOMEWHAT IMPORTANT **37%** NOT IMPORTANT **12%**



Small

VERY IMPORTANT **43%** SOMEWHAT IMPORTANT **35%** NOT IMPORTANT **15%**

Significant Barriers

What are the key barriers to effective city action on climate change?

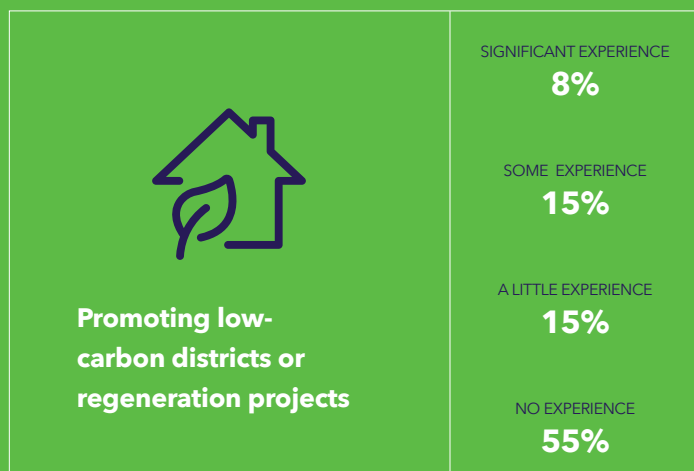
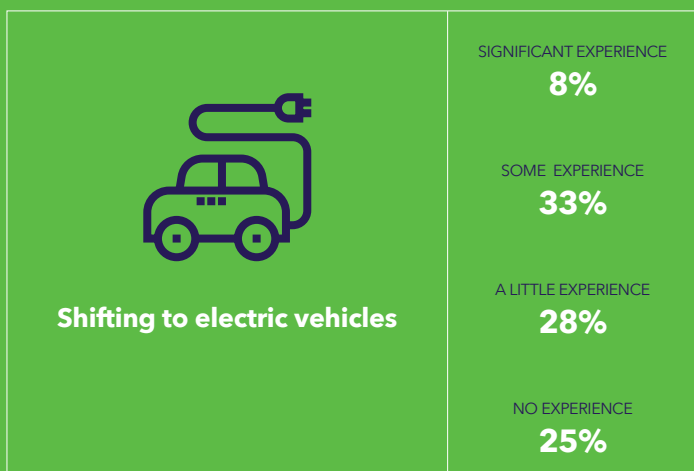
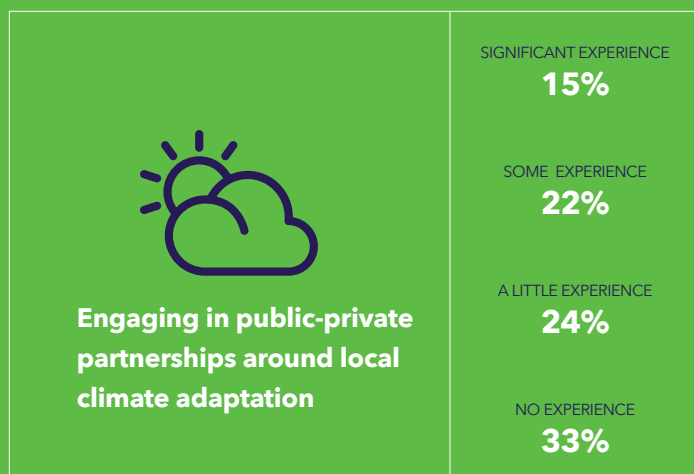
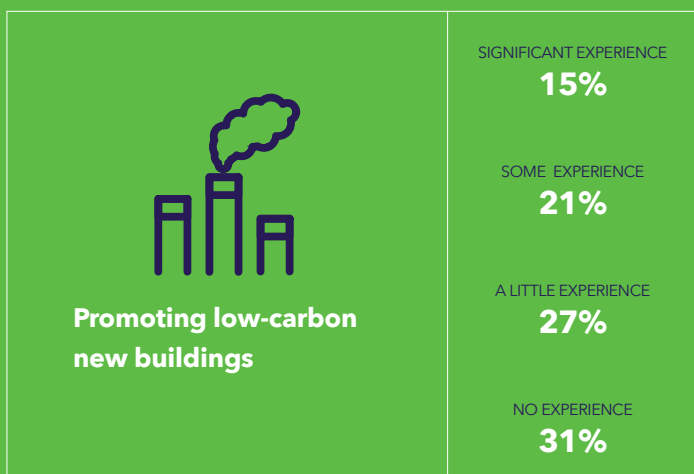
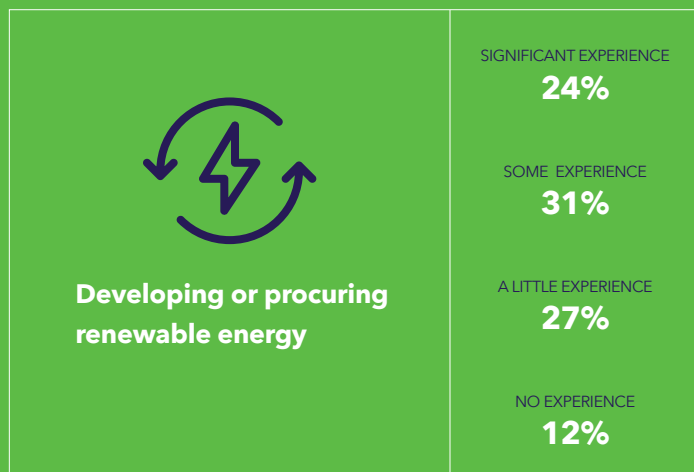
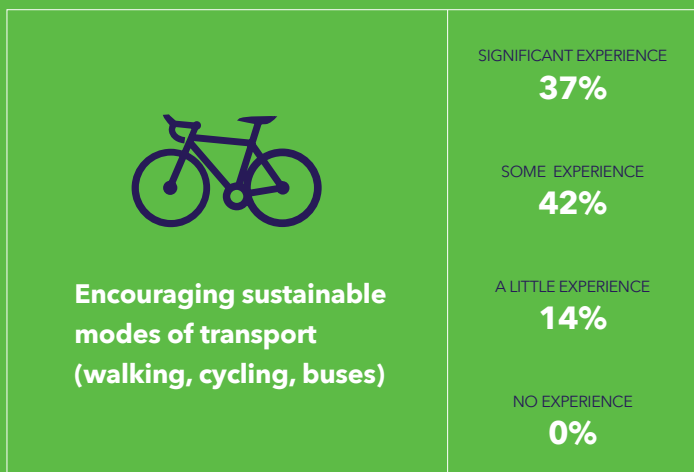
The biggest barrier to city action on climate change is financing, cited by nearly half of mayors. Financing is seen as more significant than policy barriers or public support.

	State policy barriers	Federal policy barriers	City hall capacity	Financing	Private sector engagement	Understanding project benefits	Public support
Total	17%	25%	28%	47%	2%	27%	23%
Midwest	20%	37%	34%	57%	3%	31%	29%
Northeast	8%	21%	25%	67%	0%	33%	13%
South	23%	25%	25%	35%	0%	29%	17%
West	13%	18%	29%	44%	4%	18%	31%
Large	33%	44%	33%	44%	0%	11%	0%
Medium	22%	22%	32%	46%	5%	20%	27%
Small	14%	25%	26%	48%	1%	31%	24%

Making an Impact

How city halls are tackling climate change:

As mayors address climate change locally, they are trying a variety of approaches. Every city encourages sustainable transportation. While mayors have the ambition and drive to address this issue, most lack experience with the kinds of climate adaptation strategies that are necessary.



Stemming the Opioid Crisis

The opioid crisis has hit Midwestern and Northeastern cities particularly hard. Mayors in these areas are creating new programs in response. Still, more emphasis is put on Narcan and similar immediate responses to overdoses than is put on prevention and treatment.

Steep Toll

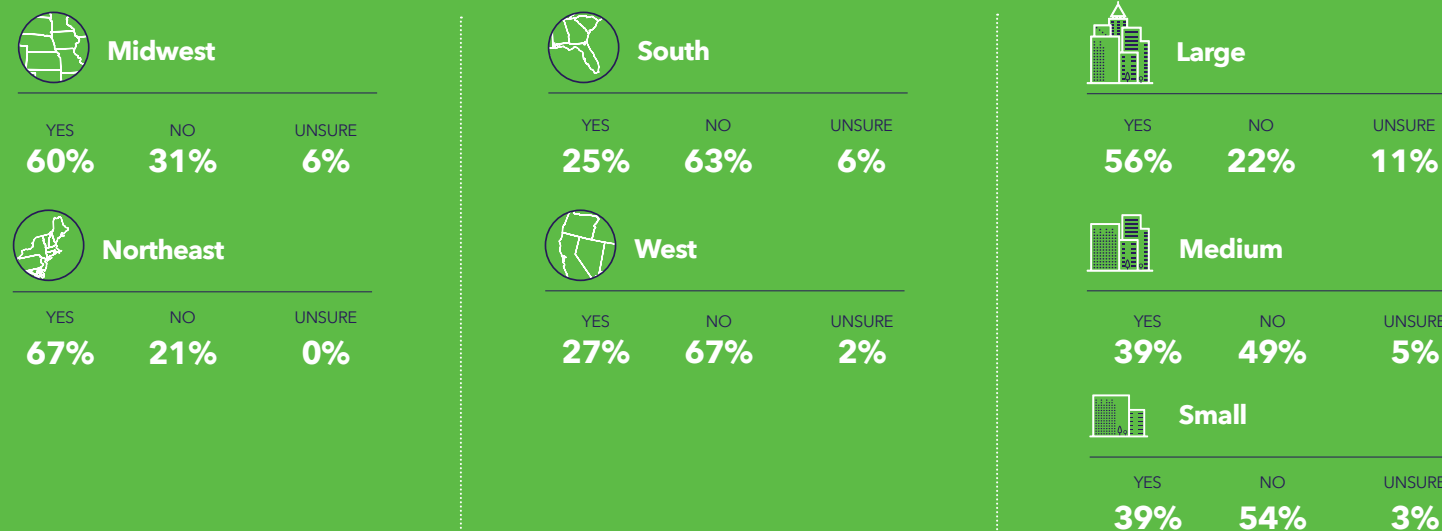
How important is the opioid crisis to your city?

	Top challenge facing the city	One of the top challenges facing the city	One of many challenges facing the city	Not a significant challenge facing the city
Total	4%	28%	42%	20%
Midwest	6%	43%	37%	11%
Northeast	13%	42%	33%	0%
South	4%	13%	52%	25%
West	0%	27%	38%	31%
Large	11%	33%	33%	11%
Medium	2%	29%	46%	15%
Small	5%	27%	41%	23%

Ongoing Response

Has your city created new programs within the last 12 months to address the opioid crisis?

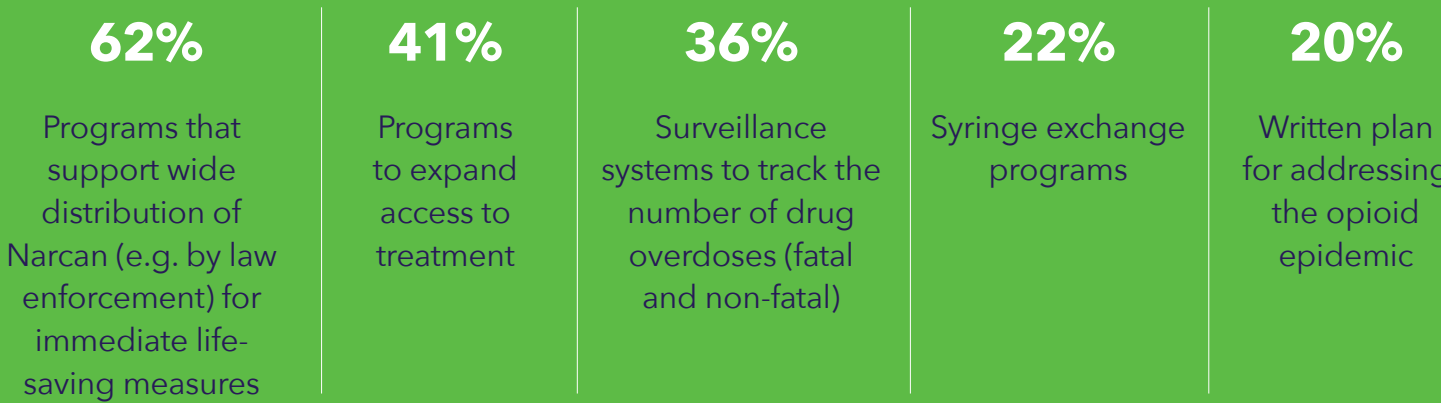
Total: Yes **40%** No **51%** Unsure **4%**



Policy Concerns

Programs in Place

City responses to opioid misuse



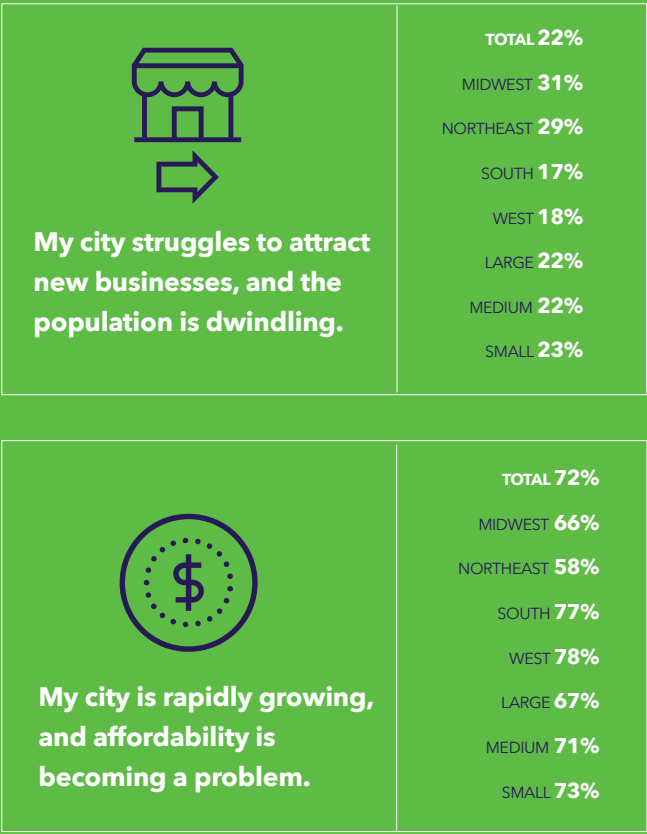
Managing Growth and Meeting Residents’ Needs

Boom or Bust
Which one do you most identify with?

Cities tend to confront one of two challenges: either they are “thriving,” with rapid growth, or “surviving,” with a dwindling population. Mayors of thriving cities — in the South and West — confront problems such as traffic congestion, affordable housing, and homelessness. And they hear about these “growing pains” challenges regularly from residents. In these communities, climate change is more top-of-mind than opioids.

Mayors of surviving cities — in the Midwest and Northeast — confront problems such as crime, job creation, and attracting young families. In these cities, concerns about drug use — particularly opioids — are at the forefront. While 40 percent of all cities in our survey have created new programs to address the opioid crisis during the past year, 54 percent of surviving cities have. And 57 percent of mayors in surviving cities regularly hear concerns about drug use from their residents, compared to 27 percent overall.

While challenges associated with the opioid epidemic were not cited widely in our survey, for those cities feeling its effects, drug addiction is part of a larger, community-wide struggle to provide stability, opportunity, and hope.



Policy Concerns

Resident Concerns

How often have residents mentioned to you over the past six months ... ?

The issues mayors have heard about most regularly over the past six months



Large

1. Affordable housing
2. Crime
3. Traffic



Medium

1. Traffic
2. Affordable housing
3. Crime



Small

1. Traffic
2. Affordable housing
3. Drug abuse



Affordable housing

Total:

Regularly **42%**
Sometimes **43%**
Never **8%**



Traffic congestion

Total:

Regularly **53%**
Sometimes **32%**
Never **9%**



Crime in the city

Total:

Regularly **28%**
Sometimes **46%**
Never **19%**



Climate change

Total:

Regularly **9%**
Sometimes **45%**
Never **40%**



Drug abuse

Total:

Regularly **27%**
Sometimes **51%**
Never **16%**

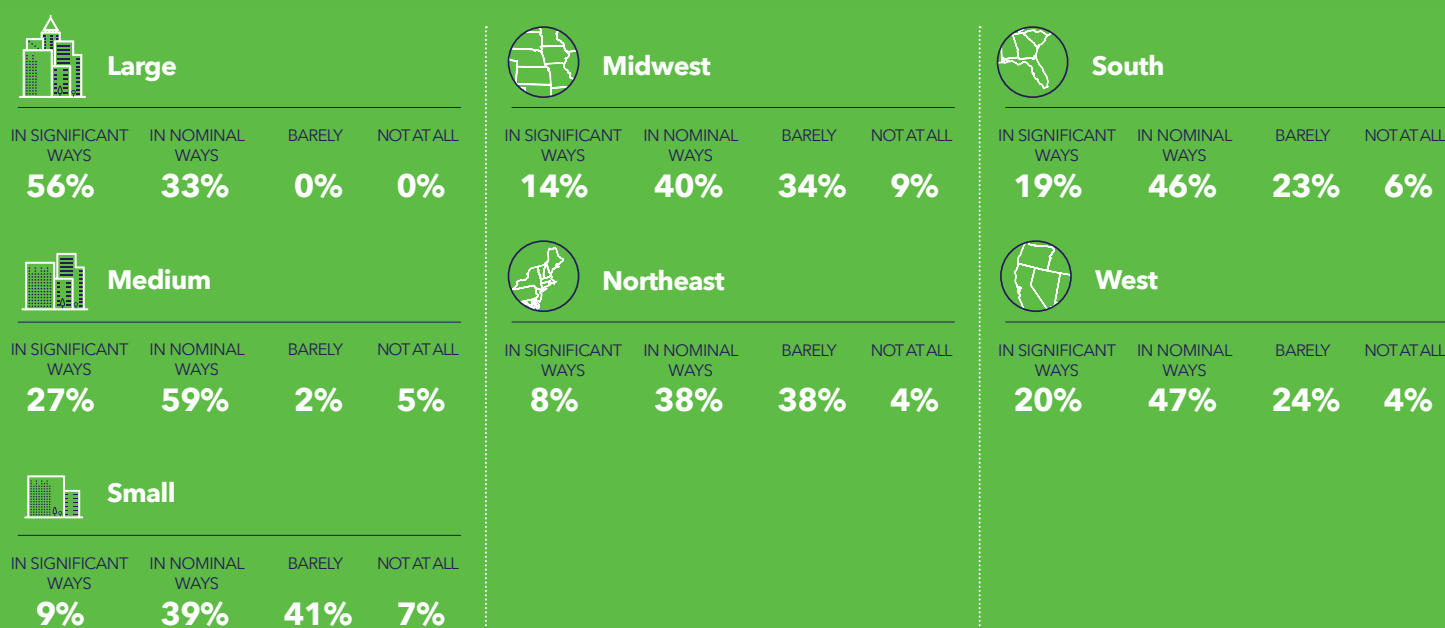
Policy Concerns

Sharing Economy

There is a wide range of opinions about the sharing economy. While it is significantly reshaping large cities, smaller ones feel fewer effects. Mayors in the South and West are more likely to view the sharing economy as a boon, while mayors in the Midwest think it is overrated. Crucially, few mayors think that the sharing economy is creating jobs or offering benefits to young people.

The sharing economy (e.g., Airbnb, Uber, Lyft) has impacted your city ...

Total: In significant ways **17%** In nominal ways **44%** Barely **28%** Not at all **6%**



I think the sharing economy (e.g., Airbnb, Uber, Lyft) is ...

	Beneficial to the community	Good for creating jobs	Positive for young people	Disruptive to the market	Overrated in helping the community
Total	51%	7%	5%	6%	23%
Midwest	16%	9%	6%	0%	37%
Northeast	33%	8%	8%	13%	25%
South	58%	6%	0%	8%	17%
West	56%	7%	9%	7%	18%
Large	56%	22%	0%	11%	0%
Medium	63%	7%	2%	5%	12%
Small	45%	6%	7%	7%	29%

Thinking Ahead | For the Nation

What do you think will be the biggest problem for the country 10 years from now?

Among mayors' top responses, by category:

Political
dysfunction

20%

"Lack of leadership and political gridlock that fails to find sustainable solutions to chronic issues."

Inequality

15%

"The widening rift between the haves and the have-nots."

Infrastructure

15%

"Addressing an aging infrastructure: streets, road, bridges, schools, airports, technology, etc."

National debt

11%

"Too much debt."



SECTION II

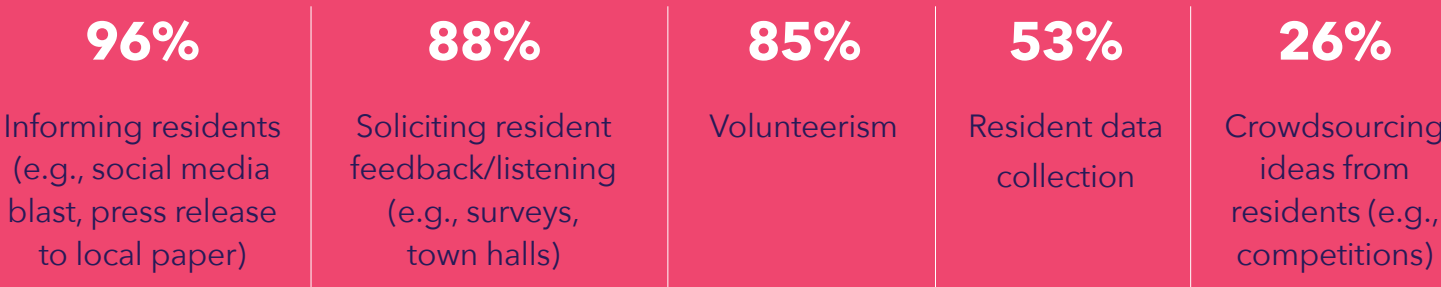
New Ideas Start Here

Cities face problems as wide-ranging as traffic congestion and climate change. And mayors use every avenue to generate new solutions for today's problems – and tomorrow's.

In This Together

Mayors are seeking new and more effective ways to connect with citizens to provide information, seek new ideas and address concerns. More than eight in 10 solicit citizen feedback and have volunteer programs in city hall. A more recent trend is to rely on citizen scientists to gather data — something more than half of mayors told us they were doing. And one-quarter use competitions and other approaches to crowdsource ideas and solutions.

Which activities does your city engage in with residents?
(Respondents checked all that applied)



Residents Shape Their Cities

Where do you most often source new ideas? (Respondents selected up to three)

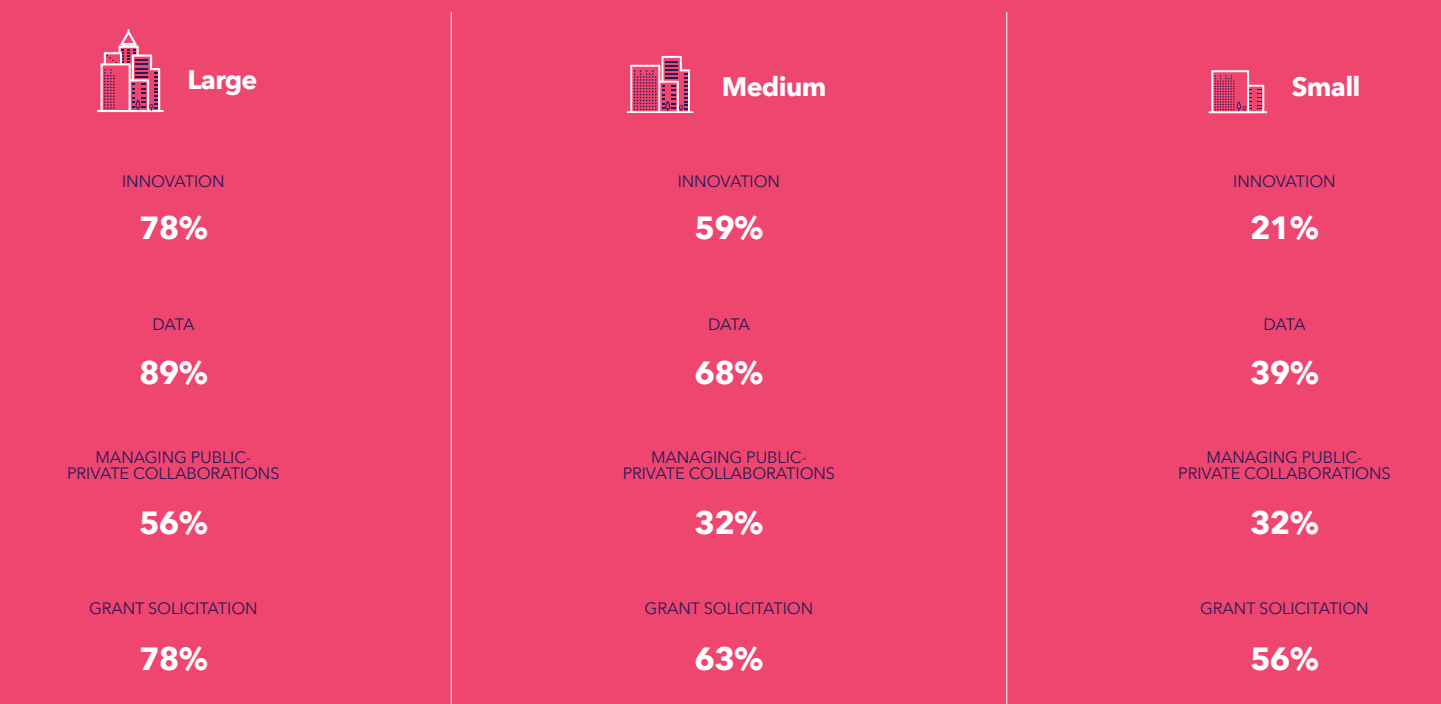
	Residents	City staff	Community groups	U.S. city leaders	Non-U.S. city leaders	Private sector	State lawmakers	D.C.	City associations	Philanthropies
Total	51%	56%	33%	53%	2%	42%	6%	1%	30%	11%
Midwest	40%	46%	26%	77%	3%	43%	6%	0%	37%	11%
Northeast	63%	58%	42%	33%	4%	17%	21%	0%	33%	0%
South	60%	58%	27%	46%	2%	42%	4%	2%	29%	13%
West	44%	60%	42%	53%	0%	53%	2%	2%	24%	13%
Large	22%	22%	56%	56%	0%	33%	11%	11%	33%	33%
Medium	34%	71%	32%	66%	0%	46%	0%	2%	24%	17%
Small	60%	53%	32%	48%	3%	41%	8%	0%	32%	7%

Dedicated to Change

Mayors across the country are changing the way city halls think about governing. One indicator of capacity for innovation is dedicated staff. Our survey found a lot of variation from city to city. Grant officers are increasingly common in city halls, as are data officers. Far fewer cities have dedicated staff to lead innovation or manage partnerships.

Does your city have dedicated staff for...?

Total: Innovation **34%** Data **49%** Managing Public-Private Collaborations **33%** Grant Solicitation **59%**



Private Support for Public Programs

Does your city have a fund or vehicle outside of government to raise money for public programs (dedicated nonprofit fund, fund held at a community foundation, or other fiscal conduit)?

50%
say yes



SECTION III

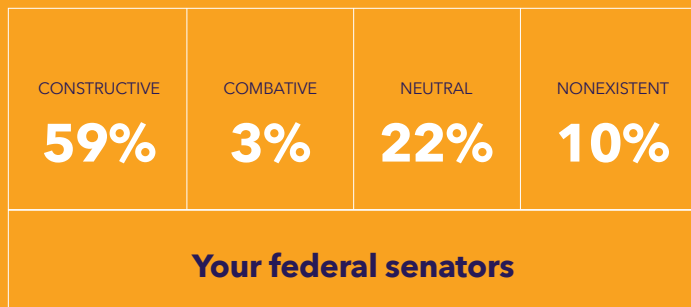
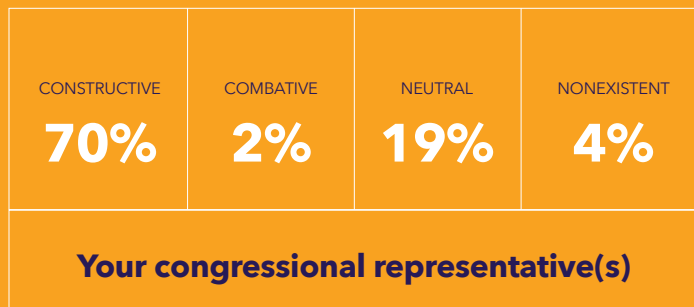
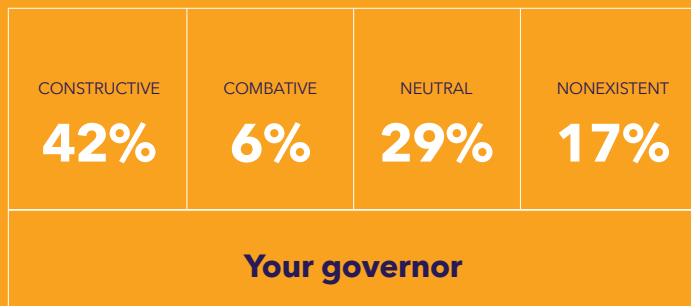
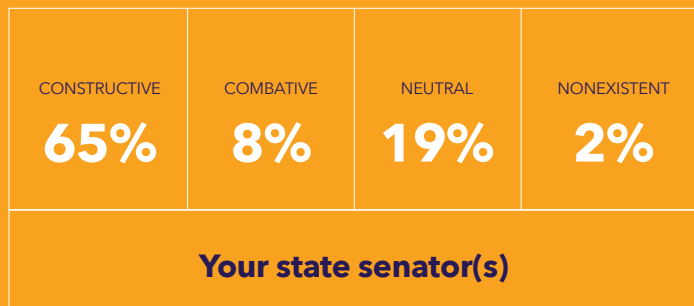
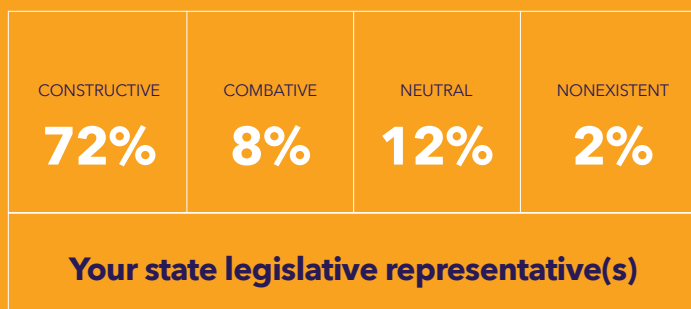
Navigating Politics

In contrast to Washington's palace intrigue, the nation's city halls display pragmatic problem-solving.

Building Relationships

America is politically divided — and mayors think the dysfunction may actually worsen. But despite the fraught current political climate, mayors remain role models for collaboration, continually forging working relationships even with unlikely allies. For example, nearly all mayors struggle with rising state preemption, yet at the same time, don't consider governors their enemies. In short, mayors are as pragmatic as ever.

Do you have a constructive, combative, neutral, or no relationship with ... ?



Hands Tied

Has your city experienced state or federal preemption impacting your ability to govern?

	State	Federal	Both	No, but we are concerned about it	No
Total	43%	3%	21%	16%	10%
Democratic trifecta state	38%	8%	26%	10%	10%
Republican trifecta state	53%	0%	21%	11%	8%
Divided state government	31%	4%	16%	29%	13%
Democratic mayors in Republican states	35%	0%	12%	4%	2%
Republican mayors in Democratic states	9%	1%	3%	1%	1%

For Better or For Worse

Has your city's relationship with the federal government changed over the past year?

Total: Yes, gotten better **19%** Yes, gotten worse **26%** Yes, neutral impact **12%** No, neutral/same **32%** Unknown **5%**

Large

YES, GOTTEN BETTER	YES, GOTTEN WORSE	YES, NEUTRAL IMPACT	NO, NEUTRAL/SAME	UNKNOWN
0%	67%	22%	0%	0%

Medium

YES, GOTTEN BETTER	YES, GOTTEN WORSE	YES, NEUTRAL IMPACT	NO, NEUTRAL/SAME	UNKNOWN
22%	39%	12%	15%	5%

Small

YES, GOTTEN BETTER	YES, GOTTEN WORSE	YES, NEUTRAL IMPACT	NO, NEUTRAL/SAME	UNKNOWN
20%	18%	10%	42%	6%

Democrats

YES, GOTTEN BETTER	YES, GOTTEN WORSE	YES, NEUTRAL IMPACT	NO, NEUTRAL/SAME	UNKNOWN
6%	44%	13%	27%	4%

Republicans

YES, GOTTEN BETTER	YES, GOTTEN WORSE	YES, NEUTRAL IMPACT	NO, NEUTRAL/SAME	UNKNOWN
33%	6%	10%	40%	6%



SECTION IV

More Demands. Less Support.

Mayors are rising to the challenge of new and complex problems, even as the resources of city halls shrink.

Hometown Pride

Mayors are local cheerleaders, celebrating the best that their cities have to offer. Throughout our survey, mayors told us stories of optimism, pride and hope deriving from their fellow residents and the local rhythms of life. When asked to name their favorite thing about their city, mayoral responses center on attachment to place and people.

What is your favorite thing about your city?

Among mayors' top responses, by category:



Room for Improvement

Name the top three local problems you hear about from residents.

While mayors celebrate their cities, they are not blind to the local challenges residents face. And they hear about traffic more than any other issue. Even in small towns, 45 percent of mayors say traffic is the top problem. This is part of a larger challenge: the upkeep and modernization of infrastructure.

In response to this open-ended question, two-thirds of mayors volunteer infrastructure as one of the top problems they hear about from residents, including roads in need of repair, traffic, parking and public transit. This trend is more pronounced in small towns where 73 percent of mayors cite an infrastructure problem.

Among mayors' top responses, by category:



Left Unspoken

Mayors struggle with a fundamental challenge: how to help residents deal with new and complex problems as the resources of city hall shrink. This question keeps them up at night and drives long-term concerns.

What is the issue no one’s talking about that keeps you up at night?

Among mayors’ top responses, by category:



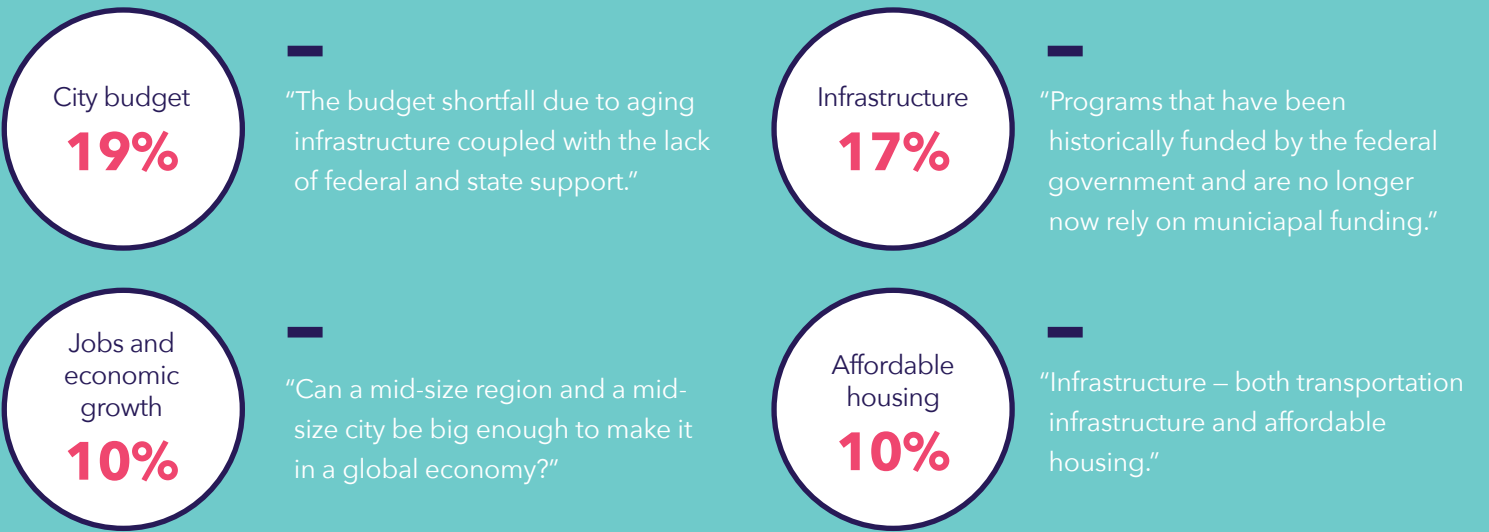
“How to keep smaller communities relevant in a changing economy.”

“I think we are not preparing average students for the jobs for tomorrow.”

Thinking Ahead | For Cities

What do you think will be the biggest problem for your city 10 years from now?

Among mayors’ top responses, by category:



**The Bloomberg American Cities Initiative
and the 2018 American Mayors Survey are
projects of Bloomberg Philanthropies.**

About Bloomberg Philanthropies

Bloomberg Philanthropies works in over 120 countries around the world to ensure better, longer lives for the greatest number of people. The organization focuses on five key areas for creating lasting change: Arts, Education, Environment, Government Innovation, and Public Health. Bloomberg Philanthropies encompasses all of Michael R. Bloomberg's charitable activities, including his foundation and his personal giving. In 2017, Bloomberg Philanthropies distributed \$702 million.

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