The LawnStarter.com 2020 New Homebuyer Happiness Index — Methodology and Questions
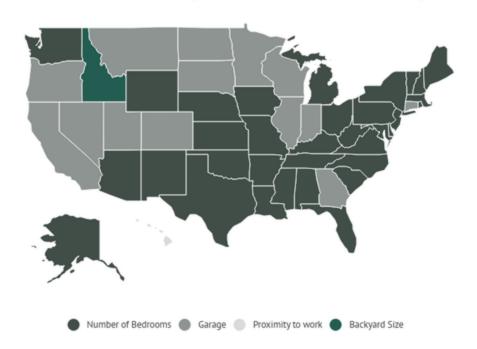
The LawnStarter.com [2020 New Homebuyer Happiness Index](#) is a large-scale survey that measures how happy recent homeowners are with their purchase and measures the factors that go into that happiness.

The survey aims to help home buyers, real estate professionals and those who provide services to homebuyers to discover what goes into making a purchase and what success looks like in homebuying transactions.
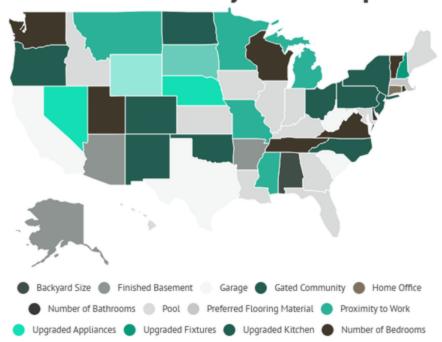
The national average score on the Happiness Index was 81; here's how the states compare.

Rank	Home State	Happiness Index
1	Iowa	86.67
2	Wisconsin	86.37
3	Nebraska	86.31
4	Alabama	86.17
5	North Dakota	85.67
6	South Dakota	85.10
7	Hawaii	83.91
8	North Carolina	83.91
9	Virginia	83.42
10	New Hampshire	83.15
11	Nevada	82.78
12	Missouri	82.77
13	Maryland	82.66
14	Tennessee	82.35
15	Kansas	82.25
16	Kentucky	82.19
17	Rhode Island	82.15
18	Ohio	82.14
19	Georgia	81.87
20	Mississippi	81.78
21	Vermont	81.67
22	Florida	81.64
23	Connecticut	81.56
24	Maine	81.52
25	Louisiana	81.34
26	Utah	81.31
27	New Jersey	81.28
28	Michigan	81.10
29	Illinois	80.95
30	Idaho	80.94
31	Pennsylvania	80.83
32	Arkansas	80.65
33	Massachusetts	80.53
34	Texas	80.49
35	Minnesota	80.42
36	Oregon	80.42
37	New York	80.41
38	Colorado	80.12
39	South Carolina	79.84
40	Arizona	79.58
41	Washington	79.35
42	Delaware	78.70

Items Homebuyers Refused to Give Up

● Number of Bedrooms   ● Garage   ● Proximity to work   ● Backyard Size

Items Homebuyers Gave Up

● Backyard Size   ● Finished Basement   ● Garage   ● Gated Community   ● Home Office
● Number of Bathrooms   ● Pool   ● Preferred Flooring Material   ● Proximity to Work
● Upgraded Appliances   ● Upgraded Fixtures   ● Upgraded Kitchen   ● Number of Bedrooms

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Methodology

From Dec. 22, 2019, through Jan. 22, 2020, LawnStarter surveyed respondents who said they had purchased homes in 2019.

We asked 35 questions that were used to create this story. Questions 1-15 collect standard demographic data, without asking personally identifiable information. Questions 16 and 17 were qualifying questions. The remaining questions as about various aspects of the homebuying experience.

This study employed an online survey using a convenience sampling methodology via the Survey Monkey platform.

To verify the answers as valid, outlier data were identified and screened against known norms. Also screened out were those respondents who did not purchase a house in 2019, failed to pass a "Captcha" test or failed to complete the survey. In the end, 5,672 responses were validated.

The "Happiness Index" was created using six core questions (Questions 28 and 31-35 below). Questions were weighted equally and converted to a 100-point scale for ease of understanding. Subsequent data analysis compared various demographic and geographic groups against the index number to see what factors corresponded with happier and less happy homebuyers.

Survey questions used in this story:

1. What is your gender?
    a. Female
    b. Male
    c. Non-binary / third gender
    d. Prefer to self-describe
    e. Prefer not to say
2. What is your race or origin?
    a. White (Caucasian)
    b. Hispanic, Latino, or Spanish
    c. Black or African American
    d. Asian or Pacific Islander
    e. Native American or American Indian

      f.   Other
3. What is your age?
4. What is the highest level of formal education you have completed?
   a. Did not complete high school
   b. High school diploma
   c. Technical or vocational certificate
   d. Associate's degree
   e. Bachelor's degree
   f. Master's Degree
   g. Doctoral degree
5. In general, how would you describe your own political viewpoint?
   a. Liberal
   b. Moderate
   c. Conservative
   d. Prefer not to answer
6. Generally speaking, do you think of yourself as a …?
   a. Democrat
   b. Republican
   c. Independent
   d. Other
   e. Prefer not to answer
7. Are you currently serving or have you ever served on active duty in the U.S. Armed Forces, Military Reserves, or National Guard?
   a. Yes, I am an active duty member of the U.S. Armed Forces
   b. Yes, I currently serve in the Military Reserves or the National Guard
   c. Yes, I previously served on active duty in the Us Armed Forces, Military Reserves or National Guard
   d. No, I have never served on active duty in the U.S. Armed Forces, Military Reserves or National Guard
8. What is your current relationship status?
   a. Single
   b. In a relationship but not married
   c. Married
   d. Divorced
   e. Widowed
   f. Engaged
9. What industry do you currently work in?
   a. Management Occupations
   b. Business and Financial Operations Occupations

    c.   Computer and Mathematical Occupations
    d.   Architecture and Engineering Occupations
    e.   Life, Physical, and Social Science Occupations
    f.   Community and Social Service Occupations
    g.   Legal Occupations
    h.   Educational Instruction and Library Occupations
    i.   Arts, Design, Entertainment, Sports, and Media Occupations
    j.   Healthcare Practitioners and Technical Occupations
    k.   Healthcare Support Occupations
    l.   Protective Service Occupations
    m.   Food Preparation and Serving Related Occupations
    n.   Building and Grounds Cleaning and Maintenance Occupations
    o.   Personal Care and Service Occupations
    p.   Sales and Related Occupations
    q.   Office and Administrative Support Occupations
    r.   Farming, Fishing, and Forestry Occupations
    s.   Construction and Extraction Occupations
    t.   Installation, Maintenance, and Repair Occupations
    u.   Production Occupations
    v.   Transportation and Material Moving Occupations
    w.   Specific Occupations

10. What is your sexual orientation?
    a.   Hetrosexual
    b.   LGBTQ+

11. What is the number of adults in the current household?

12. What is the number of children in the current household?

13. What State do you reside in?
    a.   Alabama
    b.   Alaska
    c.   Arizona
    d.   Arkansas
    e.   California
    f.   Colorado
    g.   Connecticut
    h.   Delaware
    i.   District of Columbia
    j.   Florida
    k.   Georgia
    l.   Hawaii

m. Idaho
n. Illinois
o. Indiana
p. Iowa
q. Kansas
r. Kentucky
s. Louisiana
t. Maine
u. Maryland
v. Massachusetts
w. Michigan
x. Minnesota
y. Mississippi
z. Missouri
aa. Montana
bb. Nebraska
cc. Nevada
dd. New Hampshire
ee. New Jersey
ff. New Mexico
gg. New York
hh. North Carolina
ii. North Dakota
jj. Ohio
kk. Oklahoma
ll. Oregon
mm. Pennsylvania
nn. Rhode Island
oo. South Carolina
pp. South Dakota
qq. Tennessee
rr. Texas
ss. Utah
tt. Vermont
uu. Virginia
vv. Washington
ww. West Virginia
xx. Wisconsin
yy. Wyoming

14. What county do you live in?
15. What city do you live in?
16. Did you buy a house in 2019?
    a. Yes
    b. No
17. Did you sell a house in 2019?
    a. Yes
    b. No
18.

Does your home have a …
Garage?
    1. Yes
    2. No

Pool?
    1. Yes
    2. No

Front Yard?
    1. Yes
    2. No

Backyard?
    1. Yes
    2. No

19.

Why style is your home?
    1. Modern
    2. Victorian
    3. Cape Cod
    4. Greek Revival
    5. Ranch
    6. Craftsman
    7. English Cottage
    8. Pueblo Revival
    9. Spanish
    10. Tudor

11. Other

20. What did you give up when looking for a home in 2019? (You may select more than one)

        a. Pool
        b. Garage
        c. Upgraded Kitchen
        d. Basement/finished basement
        e. Upgraded appliances
        f. Preferred flooring
        g. Upgraded fixtures
        h. Number of bedrooms
        i. Number of bathrooms
        j. Backyard size
        k. Front yard size
        l. Gated community
        m. Proximity to work
        n. School ratings
        o. Home office
        p. Other

21. What did you refuse to give up when looking for a new home in 2019? (You may select more than one)

1. Pool
2. Garage
3. Upgraded Kitchen
4. Basement/finished basement
5. Upgraded appliances
6. Preferred flooring
7. Upgraded fixtures
8. Number of bedrooms
9. Number of bathrooms
10. Backyard size
11. Front yard size
12. Gated community
13. Proximity to work
14. School ratings
15. Home office

16. Other

22. When saving up to buy your home did you have to change your lifestyle in any way?
    Yes
    No

23. When saving up to buy your home did you:
    Stop going out to eat to afford the purchase of your home in 2019?
        1. Yes, I totally stopped going out to eat.
        2. Yes, I went out to eat less often.
        3. No, nothing changed
    Get a second job to afford the purchase of your home in 2019?
        1. Yes, a part-time job.
        2. Yes, a full-time job.
        3. No

24. Did you sell items in your home to afford the purchase of your home in 2019?
        Yes (list items)
        No
25. Please rank the reasons on why you chose the house you chose. (1 being the most important reason)
        a. Size
        b. Price
        c. Pool
        d. Yard size
        e. Landscaping
        f. Kitchen
        g. Bathrooms
        h. Location
        i. Other (please fill in)

26. How did you perceive the efficacy of the public school system around the home you purchased in 2019?
        1. Very good
        2. good
        3. Neutral
        4. poor
        5. Very poor

27. How would you rank your homebuying experience? (10 being the best).

28. If you knew what you know now, would you buy the same home?
      a. Yes
      b. No

29. How knowledgeable were you on the homebuying process before you bought your home in 2019?
      a. Very knowledgeable
      b. Knowledgeable
      c. Somewhat knowledgeable
      f. Little knowledge
      g. No knowledge

30. Home much more did you spend on your home you purchased in 2019 than the original budget you set?

31. On a scale of 1-10, how satisfied are you with the friendliness of your neighbors? (10 being the most friendly)

32. On a scale of 1-10, how safe do you feel in your new home? (10 being the safest)

33. On a scale of 1-10, how good do you think the job market is in your new city? (10 being the best)

34. On a scale of 1-10, how do you feel the city where you bought your home is a good place to raise children? (10 being the best)

35. Do you regret your purchase?
      a. Yes
      b. No

Link to full methodology