

Summary

In March 2015, East-West Gateway Council of Governments (EWG) administered a survey to gain feedback on how the publication, *Where We Stand: The Strategic Assessment of the St. Louis Region (WWS)*, can be of most use to current and potential users of the document. The survey was open from March 11th through April 2nd. Eighty-five responses were received. Results from the survey are informing the 7th Edition of WWS as well as future WWS publications.

Although the responses received cannot be interpreted as representative of the residents of the EWG region, there are key themes and specific suggestions that will help guide EWG staff in compiling WWS publications, including:

- Most respondents indicated they use the data and information from Where We Stand for a variety of purposes including presentations, research reports and strategic planning. They also reported using a variety of data points, including data on population, demographics, education, transportation, racial disparity, the economy, crime, environment, and health. This information can help EWG determine which data points are important to retain for future editions and in what format to provide the data. Additionally, the general positive feedback from respondents indicates that the document remains a useful tool for people working in a range of fields.
- Eighteen respondents provided data suggestions. Based on suggestions and review of available data, EWG is adding nine data points to the 7th Edition that were not in previous editions. Additionally, EWG will refer to the suggestions and the type of data respondents use to determine topics to cover in future Where We Stand Update publications.
- There is substantial interest in EWG providing the WWS data in an interactive web format. EWG will use these responses to determine how to provide data online in the future.

This document provides background information on the survey (Page 2), a summary of each section of the survey – Familiarity with WWS (Page 3), Evaluation of Where We Stand (Page 4), Data Suggestions (Page 6) and WWS Web Presence (Page 7), – and the survey questionnaire is available as Appendix A (Page 10).

Introduction and Background

East-West Gateway (EWG) staff was interested in obtaining feedback from local experts and other users of WWS publications to aid in making decisions on how future WWS publications can be revised to better serve the purposes of users.

The purpose of the survey was to answer three main questions:

- How do people use the Where We Stand document and the data?
- What data do people think should be included in the 7th Edition?
- How can the data be presented to be most useful for users of Where We Stand?

Distribution: The survey was distributed to a wide range of audiences including the WWS email list (about 400 people), EWG Local Government Briefings Newsletter, EWG Facebook and Twitter, St. Louis Metropolitan Research Exchange, American Planning Association – St. Louis Metro chapter, Community Builder’s Network, EWG standing committees, and local government professional organizations.

Background: Where We Stand is a series of publications produced by EWG that provide objective, reliable and verifiable data on the St. Louis region and comparable metropolitan areas. WWS addresses topics important to the region including variables on demographics, equity, quality of life, environment, housing, transportation, land use, education, government and the economy. WWS 7th Edition will update data tracked in previous editions as well as introduce new data. EWG produced the 1st Edition of WWS in 1992 and has published a new edition about every four years (1996, 1999, 2002, 2006, and 2011). In between the larger publications EWG distributes “WWS Updates” that provide more detail on a specific topic (e.g. transportation, racial disparity, and manufacturing sector.)

Results

EWG received 85 responses to the survey. Most respondents did not answer all of the questions but all provided a response to at least one question. Respondents work in a variety of fields including non-profit organizations, municipal and county government, the private sector and academia. Most of the respondents live in the city of St. Louis or St. Louis County but at least one response was received from a resident of most of the other counties in the EWG 8-county region as well.

Although the responses received cannot be interpreted as representative of the residents of the EWG region, there are key themes and specific suggestions that will help guide EWG staff in compiling WWS publications, including:

- Most respondents indicated they use the data and information from Where We Stand for a variety of purposes including presentations, research reports and strategic planning. They also reported using a variety of data points, including data on population, demographics, education, transportation, racial disparity, the economy, crime, environment, and health. This information can help EWG determine which data points are important to retain for future editions and in what format to provide the data.

Additionally, the general positive feedback from respondents indicates that the document remains a useful tool for people working in a range of fields.

- Eighteen respondents provided data suggestions. Based on suggestions and review of available data, EWG is adding nine data points to the 7th Edition that were not in previous editions. Additionally, EWG will refer to the suggestions and the type of data respondents use to determine topics to cover in future Where We Stand Update publications.
- There is substantial interest in EWG providing the WWS data in an interactive web format. EWG will use these responses to determine how to provide data online in the future.

The results of the survey provided some general themes in response to each of these questions as well as some specific suggestions. A summary of each section of the survey –Familiarity with WWS (Page 3), Evaluation of Where We Stand (Page 4), Data Suggestions (Page 6) and WWS Web Presence (Page 7), – and the survey questionnaire is available as Appendix A (Page 10).

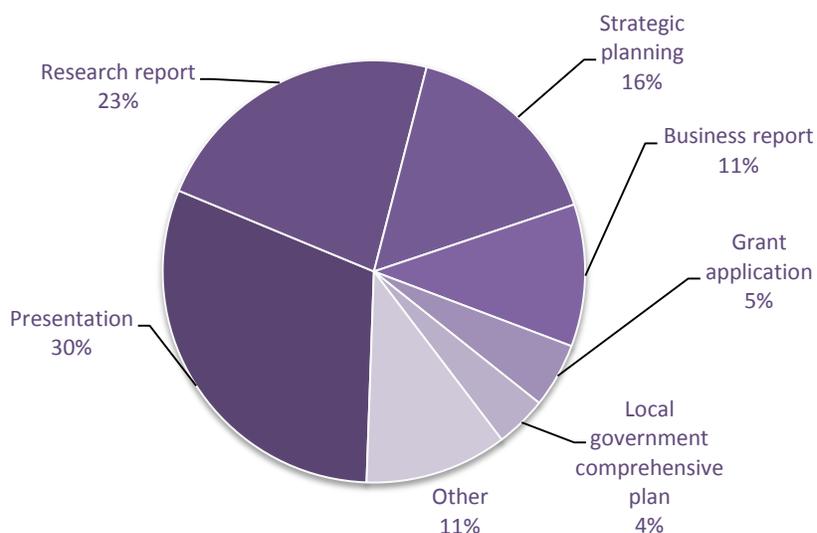
Familiarity with Where We Stand

The survey asked five questions to gauge how familiar respondents are with Where We Stand and how people use the document or its contents.

A majority of the people who completed the survey are familiar with one or more of the WWS documents. Twelve people did not answer the question and four responded in some way that they were unaware of the documents or had not seen them. Of the 73 people who are familiar with one or more of the documents, 80.8 percent (59) are familiar with the 6th Edition. The choice that received the second highest number of responses is “Where We Stand: Updates” with 53.4 percent (39) affirmative responses. The number of people familiar with the 1st through 6th Editions was consistently fewer the older the publication.

About one-quarter of people who completed the survey are currently on the Where We Stand email list with another 20 percent unsure if they are on the list.

Chart 1: How Have You Used WWS Tables or Data?
(46 responses)



Most of the respondents (46.4 percent, 39) indicated they have referenced one of the WWS documents at least once and 12 (14.3 percent) indicated they refer to the documents regularly. One quarter of respondents indicated they have seen the document but have not used the data.

When asked “How have you used Where We Stand tables or data? (check all that apply),” 46 people indicated they have used the data in at least one of the ways mentioned and 29 people chose two or more options. Chart 1 (Page 3) provides the breakdown of responses, showing that the most common use of WWS data is in presentations, second is research reports and third is strategic planning. Eight people indicated they use the data for other purposes, including scholarly article, basic understanding of the region, classroom assignments, research and for general knowledge, transportation plan, personal reference and discussion about the region with friends.

In an effort to ensure that EWG is not removing tables or topics that people refer to, the survey asked what data, data points or tables people use. Table 1 (Page 4) provides a summary of the responses received. The two most frequently mentioned broad topics were the economy/economic data and racial segregation disparity. Responses to the question were grouped based on key words.

Table 1: What data, data points or WWS tables did you use? (27 responses)

Specific Topics or Tables	
Demographics (5)	Great Recession
Population (4)	Racial segregation/disparity (6)
Population growth (2)	Governmental Units (2)
Migration	Housing
Population density	Transportation (2)
Adults with disabilities	Transit ridership
Disabilities	Transportation Choice
Aging	Congestion (2)
Birth rates	Alternative Transportation utilization
Educational attainment (3)	Environmental
Economy (7)	Land use (3)
Employment (3)	Metro Area Physical Growth
Income (2)	Crime
Unemployment	Poverty
Economic inequality	Health
General Topics	
Comparative purposes (4)	
Satisfaction ratings	
Data overtime/multiple issues	
<p>Note: Responses to this question were grouped. The number indicates if multiple people mentioned the same topic or table. Respondents' exact words were used when possible but were reworded at times for grouping purposes.</p>	

The second question in the evaluation section asked for suggestions on how EWG can improve the usability of the WWS publications. Table 3 (Page 6) provides the most common types of responses received based on key words or interpretation of the intended meaning of the response. The most common type or response was in regards to having more of an online presence and in a way that allows users to interact with the data and find the data that is of most use to them. Specific suggestions included: a machine readable (non-PDF) format and make maps and tables dynamic (see BLS as a reference¹.) Several responses referred to wanting to see more local (county and municipal) level data. Two responses encouraged EWG to market the publication more to bring more awareness to the report, particularly “beyond the typical audiences,” and more to “Joan/John Q. Citizen.” Two respondents suggested specific data points: “data regarding land consumption due to urban sprawl and corresponding abandonment of other areas in the region” and “number and percentage of people with disabilities living alone.”

Table 3: How can we improve the usability of Where We Stand and Where We Stand Updates? (31 responses)	
Interactive web presence	8
Good as is	5
Local (county and municipal) data	3
More data/comparisons	3
Market the publication	2
More uniformity overtime	2
<i>Note: Survey responses were categorized by common responses and based on key words in the survey responses.</i>	

Data Suggestions

The survey introduction indicated that the survey asks “What data do you think should be included in the 7th Edition?” Specifically, the survey asked “Is there any comparative data for metropolitan regions (MSA) that you think could be included, that was not included in the 6th Edition?” For each suggestion, the survey asked respondents to provide a variable/data, data source and an explanation of why that data is important to include.

Table 4 (Page 7) provides the suggestions provided by 18 respondents along with comment about the suggestion from EWG staff. The most common comment to the suggestions are: “add variable to WWS 7th Edition” (9) for data that will be added to the next publication, “similar variable included” or “similar variable added” (14) for suggestions where there is already a variable included in the publication or there is a variable being added that measures the same or similar topic, and “data not available” (6) for suggestions where data is not available for metropolitan region comparisons.

¹ The following link was provided: http://beta.bls.gov/maps/cew/US?period=2014-Q2&industry=10&pos_color=blue&neg_color=orange&Update=Update&chartData=7&ownerType=0&distribution=Quantiles#tab1

Table 4: Is there any comparative data for metropolitan regions (MSA) that you think could be included, that was not included in the 6th Edition?	
Variable/Data Suggestion (as entered in the survey)	EWG Comment
Housing Cost Burden	Add variable to WWS 7th Edition.
Voter registration and percent voting by municipality?	Similar variable included - Voter Participation. Voter registration not used due to unreliable data.
Asthma, heart disease rates	Add variable to WWS 7th Edition - Asthma Prevalence. Similar variables included - Asthma Risk, Air Quality, Toxic Chemical Releases, Prevalence of Heart Attacks (revised).
Comparative data based on the absolute advantage of areas within the Metro area.	Local data is included to supplement WWS tables when possible.
Small Business Ownership Rate	Add variable to WWS 7th Edition.
Comparison of variables over time	Log suggestion in "website presence section" of the Survey Results report. Also, some discussion of trends is included in WWS Updates and the write-up portion of WWS.
% of transit riders	Similar variable added - Commute by Transit.
Transportation options for people age 50+	Data not available for MSA comparison. Potential subject for future research.
Information on sources of taxes and funding, such as cigarette taxes and highway taxes	Data not available for MSA comparison. Similar variables included - Reliance on Property Tax and Reliance on Sales Tax.
Rents, rental unit availability, eviction risk, etc.	Add variables to WWS 7th Edition - Median Rent and Housing Cost Burdened Renters.
Match local university based research with absolute advantage of specific areas	Data not available for MSA comparison.
Unbanked and Underbanked Population	Add variable to WWS 7th Edition.
Size of transit system	Similar variable added - Commute by Transit. Similar variable included - Transit Utility.
Low Birth Weight	Add variable to WWS 7th Edition.
Income Inequality (Gini Coefficient)	Add variable to WWS 7th Edition.
Demographics of transit riders	Data not available for MSA comparison.
Incarceration rates?	Data not available for MSA comparison (State only.)
Employment sectors with strongest competitive advantage (highest location quotient)	Similar variables added - Employment by Industry (percent of employment within key sectors).
Include data regarding land consumption due to urban sprawl and corresponding abandonment of other areas in the region.	Similar variables added - Developed Land per Capita, Change in Developed Land per Capita and Vacancy Rates.
The only table I would like to see added is one that is number and percentage of people with disabilities living alone.	Data not readily available for MSA comparison. Potential subject for future research.

Where We Stand Web Presence

EWG is considering how to make data from Where We Stand available on the agency's website and asked one question to gauge people's interest.

Chart 2 (Page 8) provides the results to the question "Would you use any of the following digital formats to access Where We Stand data if they were made available?" Respondents were allowed to check all options that apply. Thirty-nine individuals answered the question with only two indicating they would not find any of the three suggested formats useful.

Eighteen people indicated they would use all three of the digital format options. The format with the highest number of responses was “graphic files of individual tables” (30). This is not surprising since the most common answer to how people use the data is for presentations and these types of graphic files are useful for incorporating into visual presentations. Two specific comments that should be considered

as EWG moves forward are: (1) “By online searchable database, do you mean that I could export in json or similar, because that would be nice. Excel file should be .csv if possible and not an Excel file w/ complicated formatting.” (2) “Really like the PDF files--don't delete them please!!!!”

Additionally, in the “data suggestion” section of the survey, one respondent commented, “show trends--it would be useful to me just to print on a single page the variable from the 99, 02, 06, and 11 editions alongside the new.” This is an additional suggestion that should be taken into consideration of how to provide WWS data online.

Survey Respondents

The survey asked respondents to tell EWG a little about themselves to help EWG understand who is using Where We Stand. Most people who completed the survey (and answered the contact information section questions) reside in the city of St. Louis and St. Louis County.

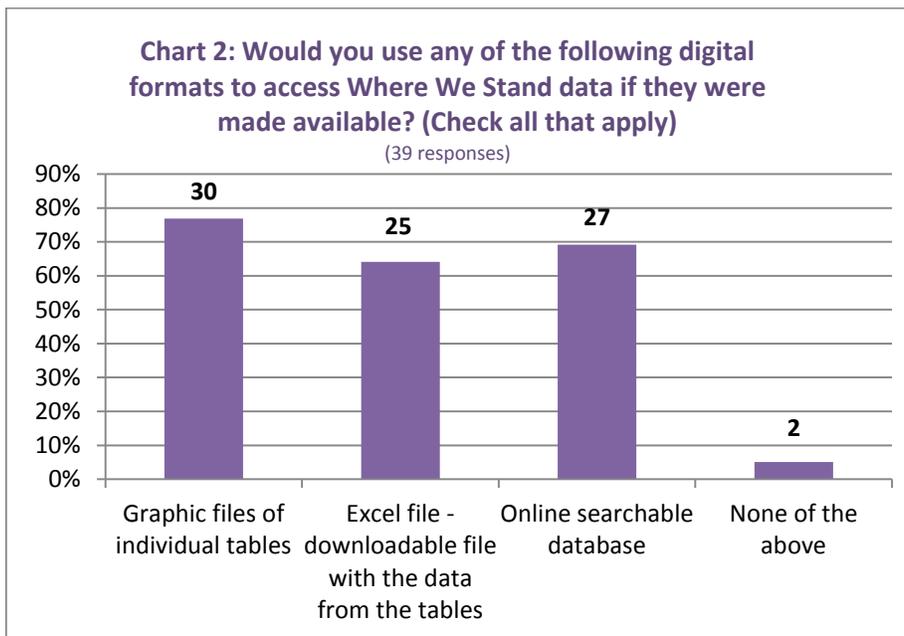


Table 5: Home county of survey respondents based on zip code.
 (36 responses)

County	State	Number
City of St. Louis	MO	14
St. Louis	MO	11
St. Charles	MO	4
Franklin	MO	2
Madison	IL	2
Clinton	IL	1
Jefferson	MO	1
St. Clair	IL	1
<i>Total</i>		<i>36</i>

Note: Respondents provided their home zip code. There may be some cases where a zip code is in more than one county and therefore may be categorized incorrectly in this table.

There was at least one response received from the other counties in the EWG 8-county region with the exception of Monroe County. See Table 5 (Page 8) for the number of survey respondents by county.

Chart 3 (Page 9) provides the field of work for survey respondents. The most common response was “non-profit organization” with almost half of the 34 respondents indicating this is their field of work. Other sectors represented are municipal government (16 percent), private sector (10 percent), county government (8 percent) and academia (8 percent). Those that marked “other” indicated they work in the following fields: retired, community planning agency, state government and MPO employee.

Chart 3: Field of Work for Survey Respondents, March 2015 (34 responses)

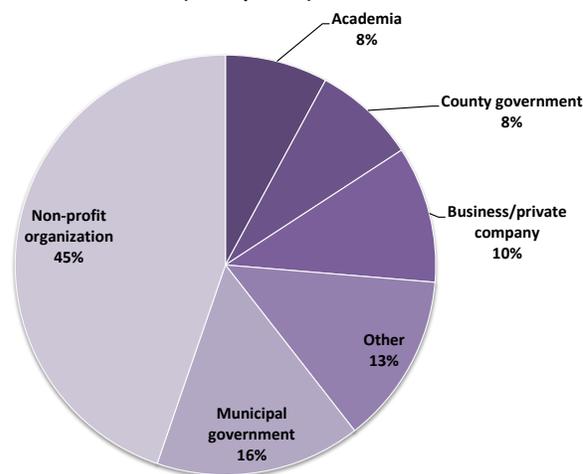


Table 6 (Page 9) provides respondents’ answers to the question “How familiar are you with East-West Gateway?” All 36 respondents who answered the question were familiar with EWG in one way or another with most people choosing more than one of the options provided.

Thirty people provided email addresses for follow-up purposes. A copy of this report was emailed to them in April 2015 with the option of providing additional feedback via email.

Twenty-three people indicated they would like to be added to the Where We Stand email list to receive updates when new WWS publications are released. Nine of these individuals were already on this list and the remaining 15 were added to the email distribution list.

Table 6: How familiar are you with East-West Gateway (EWG)? (Check all that apply.) (36 responses)

Answer Options	Response Percent	Response Count
I have been to an EWG sponsored meeting or event.	77.8%	28
I have heard about EWG on the news.	52.8%	19
My jurisdiction/agency has received funding from EWG.	22.2%	8
I have completed an EWG survey (prior to this one).	44.4%	16
I have participated in an EWG project.	47.2%	17
I have received information from EWG.	52.8%	19
I work with EWG as part of my job.	47.2%	17
I have never heard of or worked with EWG.	0.0%	0
Other (please specify)		5
Total Responses		36

Appendix A: Survey

Where We Stand: 7th Edition

Introduction

East-West Gateway Council of Governments (EWG) is compiling data for the 7th Edition of "Where We Stand: The Strategic Assessment of the St. Louis Region" (WWS) and wants your help in determining how the publication can be of most use to you and other users of the document.

We want to know:

- (a) How do you use the Where We Stand document and the data?
- (b) What data do you think should be included in the 7th Edition?
- (c) How can the data be presented to be most useful for you?

This survey will close March 31, 2015.

Past editions of Where We Stand as well as Where We Stand Updates are available at www.ewgateway.org/wws.

Background: Where We Stand is a series of publications produced by EWG that provide objective, reliable and verifiable data on the St. Louis region and comparable metropolitan areas. WWS addresses topics important to the region including variables on demographics, equity, quality of life, environment, housing, transportation, land use, education, government and the economy. WWS 7th Edition will update data tracked in previous editions as well as introduce new data. EWG produced the 1st Edition of WWS in 1992 and has published a new edition about every four years (1996, 1999, 2002, 2006, and 2011). In between the larger publications EWG distributes "WWS Updates" that provide more detail on a specific topic (e.g. transportation, racial disparity, and manufacturing sector.)

Note: When possible, EWG will incorporate data suggestions and feedback received through this survey. In some cases the appropriate data may not be available. Feedback from this survey will also be used to determine future tools and products that will be produced as part of the Where We Stand series.

If you have questions, contact the "Where We Stand" staff at 314-421-4220, 618-274-2750, or wsw@ewgateway.org.

Familiarity with Where We Stand

In this section we seek to understand how familiar you are with Where We Stand and how you use the document or its contents.

To view Where We Stand documents visit www.ewgateway.org/wws.

Where We Stand: 7th Edition

1. With which of the following Where We Stand publications are you familiar? Check as many as are applicable. To view the Where We Stand documents visit

www.ewgateway.org/wws.

- Where We Stand: 1st Edition (1992)
- Where We Stand: 2nd Edition (1996)
- Where We Stand: 3rd Edition (1999)
- Where We Stand: 4th Edition (2002)
- Where We Stand: 5th Edition (2006)
- Where We Stand: 6th Edition (2011)
- Where We Stand: Updates (Check if you are familiar with any of the Where We Stand: Update publications.)

Other (please specify)

2. Are you a subscriber to the Where We Stand email list? The email list receives email notifications when a new "Where We Stand: Update" publication is issued (about quarterly.)

- Yes
- No
- Not sure

3. Have you used the Where We Stand tables or data?

- I refer to the documents regularly.
- I have referenced one of the Where We Stand documents at least once.
- I have seen the document but have not used the data or tables for anything.
- I have never seen any of the Where We Stand publications.

Other (please specify)

Where We Stand: 7th Edition

4. How have you used Where We Stand tables or data? (Check all that apply)

- Grant application
- In a presentation
- In a local government comprehensive plan
- Reference for a research report
- Reference for a business report
- Strategic planning

Other (please specify)

5. What data, data points or WWS tables did you use?

Evaluation of Where We Stand

In this section we would like to know how useful you find the document and how we can improve the document to be a better tool for you.

To view Where We Stand documents visit www.ewgateway.org/wws.

6. What do you find to be most useful about the Where We Stand publications?

7. How can we improve the usability of Where We Stand and Where We Stand Updates?

Data Suggestions

What data do you think should be included in the 7th Edition?

To answer this question it may be helpful to review what data is included in the 6th Edition for a topic(s) that is of particular interest to you. The following are the chapters from Where We Stand 6th Edition along with the page numbers of the chapter. The document can be accessed at www.ewgateway.org/pdf/files/library/wws/wws2011.pdf.

Demographics (Page 17)
Household Income and Wealth (Page 29)
Educational Performance (Page 33)
Economic Vitality (Page 39)
Individual and Family Well-Being (Page 49)
Racial Disparity (Page 61)

Where We Stand: 7th Edition

Regional Safety and Security (Page 65)
Urban Form and Physical Environment (Page 71)
Leadership, Governance and Public Service (Page 81)

8. Is there any comparative data for metropolitan regions (MSA) that you think could be included, that was not included in the 6th Edition? If so, please fill in as much as possible for each suggestion.

Data Suggestion

Variable/data

Data source

Why is this important to include?

9. Data Suggestion

Variable/data

Data source

Why is this important to include?

10. Data Suggestion

Variable/data

Data source

Why is this important to include?

11. Data Suggestion

Variable/data

Data source

Why is this important to include?

12. Data Suggestion

Variable/data

Data source

Why is this important to include?

13. Do you have an additional data suggestion?

- Yes
- No

Where We Stand: 7th Edition

14. Data Suggestion

Variable/data

Data source

Why is this important to include?

15. Data Suggestion

Variable/data

Data source

Why is this important to include?

16. Data Suggestion

Variable/data

Data source

Why is this important to include?

17. Data Suggestion

Variable/data

Data source

Why is this important to include?

18. Data Suggestion

Variable/data

Data source

Why is this important to include?

19. Data Suggestion

Variable/data

Data source

Why is this important to include?

Where We Stand Web Presence

We are considering how to make data from Where We Stand available on our website.

Where We Stand: 7th Edition

20. Would you use any of the following digital formats to access Where We Stand data if they were made available? (Check all that apply)

- Graphic files of individual tables
- Excel file - downloadable file with the data from the tables
- Online searchable database
- None of the above

Other (please specify)

Contact Information

Please tell us a little about yourself. This information will only be used to help us understand who is using Where We Stand.

21. What is your home zip code?

22. Which of the following best describes the field in which you work?

- Academia
- Business/private company
- Non-profit organization
- Municipal government
- County government

Other (please specify)

Where We Stand: 7th Edition

23. How familiar are you with East-West Gateway (EWG)? (Check all that apply.)

- I have been to an EWG sponsored meeting or event.
- I have heard about EWG on the news.
- My jurisdiction/agency has received funding from EWG.
- I have completed an EWG survey (prior to this one).
- I have participated in an EWG project.
- I have received information from EWG.
- I work with EWG as part of my job.
- I have never heard of or worked with EWG.

Other (please specify)

24. Please provide your contact information so we can follow up with you if we have questions about your responses.

Name

Email Address

25. Would you like to be added to the Where We Stand email list to receive updates when new Where We Stand publications are released?

- Yes. Please verify your email address in the box below.
- No

Please verify your email address