

Executive Summary

CHA conducted a resident survey from March through July of 2017. The survey was designed to provide CHA with detailed input on residents' concerns and priorities. CHA surveyed residents on key areas including, but not limited to, satisfaction with management, maintenance and resident services. The survey also provided residents with an opportunity to provide other types of comments and feedback. CHA contracted with an independent consulting firm to conduct the survey.

Survey Methodology

The methodology outlined below was used to conduct the 2017 Cambridge Housing Authority Resident Survey:

- A focus group meeting was held to solicit input from CHA housing residents regarding the survey instrument and administration process. The focus group meeting included a presentation about the survey process and an opportunity for residents to answer the survey questions and provide opinions/input.
- CHA developed draft and final versions of the survey. Areas of inquiry included:
 - Satisfaction with unit;
 - Satisfaction with maintenance or repairs;
 - Experience with the Property Manager and CHA Central Office;
 - Educational attainment;
 - Knowledge of CHA policies and programs; and,
 - Household financial health and concerns.
- Survey questions regarding finances were developed in cooperation with a doctoral student at Kennedy School of Government at Harvard University.
- The survey was prepared in English, Spanish, Portuguese, Haitian Creole, and Amharic.
- Prior to launching the survey, a memo was sent to CHA Housing Managers informing them of the survey process.
- A notice was sent to residents informing them of the survey process. The notice included Spanish, Portuguese, Haitian Creole and Amharic translation.
- A postcard was mailed to residents to remind them to complete the survey and informational posters were displayed at CHA's housing sites. CHA conducted outreach to local organizations regarding the survey process.
- Residents were given the option of completing the survey online or via paper copy. Independent surveyors administered the survey over the phone to residents who were unable to complete the survey online or via paper copy and who contacted the independent consulting firm via telephone.
- To ensure confidentiality, residents were given a password to use in completing the survey.
- There was a limit of one completed survey per household.
- Residents that completed the survey were eligible to win a prize. A total of six (6) cash prizes were awarded. Five (5) prizes of \$50 each were awarded to households that completed the survey. A \$25 cash prize was

awarded among households that responded to the survey during the door-to-door effort. All were selected through randomized drawings.

- In addition to online survey administration, in an effort to increase survey participation at elderly sites, on-site survey administration was conducted during coffee hours held at LBJ Apartments, Manning Apartments, and Miller’s River. Residents were notified in advance that on-site survey administration would be conducted.
- To increase response rates at family sites, a door-to-door effort took place at Corcoran Park, Jefferson Park, Jackson Garden and Lincoln Way. Residents were notified in advance that door-to-door surveys would be conducted.

Survey Participation

A total of 462 residents, representing 19% of CHA’s occupied units at the time, completed the survey. The table below provides data on the number and percentage of surveys completed for each CHA Team.

2017 Surveys Completed by CHA Team

Team	Number of Occupied Units	# of Completed Surveys	Survey Completion %
Aggregate	2,441	462	19%
116 Norfolk Street	52	6	12%
Affiliates	176	11	6%
Burns	279	55	20%
Corcoran Park	154	57	37%
Jefferson Park	272	92	34%
John F. Kennedy	43	8	19%
LBJ	186	38	20%
Manning	165	50	30%
Millers River	252	48	19%
Newtowne Court	378	33	9%
Putnam Gardens	185	26	14%

Team	Number of Occupied Units	# of Completed Surveys	Survey Completion %
Roosevelt Towers	208	25	12%
Truman	91	13	14%

Survey Results

Highlights of the aggregate survey results are outlined below.

Demographics

- Primary Language: The primary language spoken in the home is a language other than English for 30% of respondents. The primary languages other than English that are spoken most frequently are Haitian Creole (10%) and Spanish (6%). 27% of respondents indicated that there is a language barrier that prevents them from interacting with neighbors.
- Level of Education: 14% of respondents indicated that they have less than a high school diploma; 52% have a high school diploma, GED or some level of post high-school education absent a college degree; and 34% have a 2-year or 4-year college degree or post graduate degree.

CHA Policies

- 28% of respondents indicated that they are unaware of CHA's reasonable accommodation policy and 45% indicated that they are unaware of CHA's hardship policy.

Satisfaction Rates

- Quality of Current Unit: 75% of respondents indicated that they are either very satisfied or somewhat satisfied with the quality of their current unit.
- Experience Requesting Maintenance or Repairs:
 - 93% of respondents indicated that they are either very satisfied or somewhat satisfied with the way they were treated by the person doing the repairs; and,
 - 87% of respondents indicated that they are either very satisfied or somewhat satisfied with the process of requesting repairs, the quality of the repair work, and the amount of time it took to complete the repairs.
- Experience with Property Manager:
 - 85% of respondents indicated that they are either very satisfied or somewhat satisfied with how accommodating the staff was in providing the requested information and the way they were treated by the office staff;
 - 80% of respondents indicated that they are either very satisfied or somewhat satisfied with how easy it was to meet with the manager;
 - 79% of respondents indicated that they are either very satisfied or somewhat satisfied with the service provided by the Property Manager;

- 78% of respondents indicated that they are either very satisfied or somewhat satisfied with the Property Manager's communication skills; and,
- 76% of respondents indicated that they are either very satisfied or somewhat satisfied with how responsive management was to safety issues.
- Communication with CHA's Central Office: Eighty percent (80%) of respondents who contacted the CHA Central Office during the past year indicated that it took 5 work days or less for someone to get back to them, including 32% who indicated that someone got back to them the same day and 22% who indicated that someone got back to them the next day. Twenty percent (20%) of respondents who contacted the CHA Central Office during the past year indicated that it took more than 5 work days for someone to get back to them, including 11 respondents (10%) that indicated that they never heard back from the Central Office.

Safety and Concerns

- In the Unit: 93% of respondents indicated that they feel very safe or safe in their unit.
- In the Building Hallway and Lobby: 78% of respondents indicated that they feel very safe or safe in the hallway and lobby of their building; however, 12% indicated that they feel unsafe or very unsafe.
- On the Outside Grounds of the Development: 83% of respondents indicated that they feel very safe or safe on the outside grounds of their development; however, 14% indicated that they feel unsafe or very unsafe.
- Areas of Concern: Of those respondents who identified an area of concern, the most common concerns are rodents and/or insects (53%), strangers lingering on the grounds (41%), and noise issues (37%).

Services

- After-School Programming: 56% of respondents would like to see more academic programming, 47% would like to see more athletic programming and 39% would like to see more art programming.
- Programs for Children, Teen and Adults: 38% of respondents indicated that they are unaware that CHA offers programs for children, teens and adults, such as The Work Force and This Way Ahead.
- Service Coordinators: 29% of elderly/disabled respondents are unaware that there are Service Coordinators available to help residents gain access to available resources such as medical and social services and 39% have not met with their Service Coordinator during the past year. Of those respondents receiving services or information from a Service Coordinator, 90% indicated that they were very satisfied or somewhat satisfied with the services or information they received during the past year from their Service Coordinator.
- CHA Website: 80% of respondents do not use the CHA website and 46% indicated that they would use a secure CHA website to log in and check their CHA account.
- Building Wi-Fi: 56% of respondents who live in buildings without free Wi-Fi indicated that they would use free Wi-Fi if it were made available.

Financial Considerations

- Internet Cost: The cost of monthly internet cost is over \$15 for 89% of respondents who pay for internet in their home.
- 46% of respondents indicated that the statement "I am just getting by financially" describes their situation completely or very well, while 42% of respondents indicated that the statement "I am concerned that the money I have or will save won't last" describes their situation completely or very well.
- 54% of respondents indicated that they rarely or never have money left over at the end of the month while 42% indicated that their finances always or often control their life.

- Savings: 78% of respondents indicated that they have not added to their savings in the past year. Household bills (83%), paying off debt (39%) and medical bills (35%) were the most frequently identified reasons that have made saving difficult.
- Financial Goals: The most frequently identified financial goals were having savings for emergency use (50%) and no debt-pay off all loans (30%).

Recommendations

Based on the survey results, CHA has identified and will take the following actions as part of our commitment to improve level of service to our residents.

Communication

1. **PROVIDE BETTER INTERNET ACCESS.** We recognize the need to have internet access does not necessarily translate into being able to afford internet access. Survey results indicate that only 11% of respondents pay for the affordable \$15/month internet option available to Cambridge residents. We are also aware that there are eligibility restrictions for this option and that the service itself is slow. Even so, providing a \$15/month slow internet service to every household would be cost-prohibitive at an added cost of \$500,000 per year to our operating costs. We believe a reasonable approach is to establish at least 2 computer workspaces with good internet speed and printer access for resident use at our housing sites.
2. **IMPROVE WEBSITE FUNCTIONALITY.** Our website is underutilized by residents. The website can be a valuable communication tool that allows residents to communicate with CHA and access critical information. CHA has prioritized diversifying information on our website to better engage residents.
3. **IMPROVE NEWSLETTERS AND INCREASE EMAIL NOTIFICATIONS.** CHA will make a concerted effort to gather email addresses from residents and prepare email notifications and news to residents. CHA will continue to produce newsletters and look for ways to improve newsletter content to better engage and meet the needs of residents.

Maintenance and Management

1. **ALL WORK ORDERS WILL BE ADDRESSED BY NEXT BUSINESS DAY.** To improve the responsiveness of CHA's Central Office to resident calls, CHA will invest in ensuring that each site team responds to work order requests within 24 hours of the next business day. Understanding that the scope of some orders may take more time than others and that each order will be prioritized accordingly, residents should expect a CHA staff person to confirm that their work orders have been submitted within 24 hours.
2. **IMMEDIATE CONFIRMATION OF WORK COMPLETED.** We are working to build a work order system that provides immediate confirmation when work is completed to the affected household. We recognize that communication between staff and residents has been inconsistent across sites and implementing an additional step, such as immediate paper confirmation of work, can alleviate both residents' concerns and the administration of work orders.
3. **ROTATION OF PEST MANAGEMENT ACROSS ALL SITES.** To ensure that all sites receive equal treatment in pest management, CHA will implement a rotation schedule of pest management services across all sites. Additional treatments may be requested.

4. LOCATE TRASH RECEPTACLES AWAY FROM BUILDINGS. Another source of increased rodents is the presence of trash. As part of the RAD conversion and Section 18 Disposition process, CHA is moving trash compactors and trash processing in spaces outside and away from the main building. Although this does not remove the presence of rodents, it is a positive step towards better managing rodents. CHA will implement additional rodent management measures where and when possible.
5. IMPROVED MAINTENANCE OF COMMON SPACE. CHA will invest in ensuring that site teams improve the maintenance of common space. Staff will be trained, as necessary.

Services

1. SERVICE FAIRS WILL BE HELD AT EACH ELDERLY SITE. CHA will work with service coordinators and local partners to hold an annual service fair at every elderly site to increase awareness of services available to our elderly and disabled residents.
2. IMPROVE ENGAGEMENT WITH CAMBRIDGE POLICE. CHA's safety and security administrator, upon request, will assist residents in initiating meetings with Neighborhood Sergeants so that residents can speak directly with officers based in their neighborhood. Cambridge Police maintains community policing program that includes Sector Lieutenants and Neighborhood Sergeants teams that cover neighborhoods across Cambridge.