





# FOUNDATION COMMUNITIES HOUSING STABILITY AND USE OF SERVICES: COMMUNITY-LED SURVEY RESULTS

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#### **ABOUT MEASURE**

MEASURE has a mission to mobilize communities that are furthest from opportunity to fight against systematic disparities in health, economics, criminalization, and education through the MEASURE CARE Model and our other antiracist evaluation tools. The organization's vision is for Powerful Black, Brown, and Indigenous communities to access information that will support them in self-advocate toward an antiracist and equitable future.

#### **ABOUT FOUNDATION COMMUNITIES**

Foundation Communities (FC) is an affordable housing nonprofit that currently services seven communities in Austin, TX, for single adults. FC services include two main functions:

- Property management
- Providing services to residents to improve their quality of life

Foundation Communities was founded in the early 1980s by student housing cooperative members using a stipend from the University of Texas at Austin. Between the late 90's and 2020, FC expanded its footprint to 7 communities, including Garden Terrace, Austin's first supportive housing for homeless & very low-income single adults, and Capital Studios, the first affordable housing in downtown Austin in over 40 years.

In 2015, Foundation Communities implemented a blended management model between Property Management and Resident Services. This prompted an expansion of overall services provided to residents. In 2019, FC intentionally focused on increasing resident input in decisionmaking. As a result, a resident needs assessment took place, involving 200 interviews to collect data on services provided.

#### BACKGROUND

As Foundation Communities continues to grow and understand the needs of its residents, the organization engaged MEASURE to co-design a resident survey to understand the correlation between housing stability and the use of services. FC would especially like to view this through an equity lens, assessing whether current practices have a disparate impact on Black and Brown residents.

Part of the Foundation Communities' strategic plan is to increase opportunities for resident participation in the community, leadership, and self-advocacy. The survey was designed with this in mind.

### **HISTORICAL TIMELINE**

The purpose of this historical timeline is to look at the key events that have contributed to disparate rates of unhoused people and people needing affordable housing in Austin, TX.

Link to for full-view of the timeline: History of Disparate Rates of Homelessness in Austin



Historical timeline link: https://www.canva.com/design/DAFKpW4G5uc/FfNDyU2y0NqipBE4OlgRkw/view? utm\_content=DAFKpW4G5uc&utm\_campaign=designshare&utm\_medium=link&utm\_source=view er

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#### DATA COLLECTION METHODOLOGY

#### **Survey Design**

To ensure survey questions addressed the community's concerns, a focus group was conducted before launching the survey. The focus group included a resident who has lived at Garden Terrace for 18 years and a resident who has lived at Arbor Terrace for over a year. These two residents were asked whether they feel they belong to their community, have a voice to be heard in how the community is run, experience with staff, residents, and visitors, and which services are most helpful. Feedback from the focus group informed both the survey questions and distribution strategy.

The MEASURE team partnered with the Foundation Communities Director of Resident Services, Operations Manager, and Resident Services Data Coordinator to utilize this lived experience feedback and craft the survey questions. The Foundation Communities team provided logistical context to how properties are run, the background of their residents, and the general topics to cover in the survey: Belonging, Connection, Staff & Services, and Safety.

Survey questions varied in format, including multiple-choice, rating scale, multi-select, and open-ended responses. Open-ended responses were later categorized to quantify this qualitative data and determine themes (See Appendix for survey instrument).

#### **Survey Distribution**

Ensuring equitable access to survey participants was critical to ensure a more representative sample and that all people have an equal opportunity to voice their opinions and be heard. The survey was printed and distributed to residents through tabling at the Foundation Communities properties. Program managers also collected names for gift cards to ensure no resident filled out the survey more than once while maintaining anonymity. Residents were first asked to fill the survey out via SurveyMonkey. If they were unable to do so, a paper survey was given. If they were unable to write or were uncomfortable writing, a staff member would ask the resident if the staff member could read the question and write down the resident's response word for word. An online option via Survey Monkey was also created with the same survey questions and distributed to residents.

Raw survey responses from Survey Monkey were loaded into Excel for manipulation and aggregation to import into Power BI as the data source for visualizations and further insights.

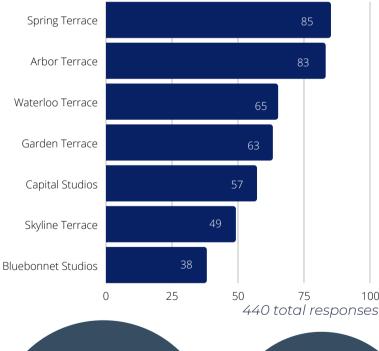
The goal for this survey was for 30% of residents to complete the survey. Each resident that completed the survey (paper or via SurveyMonkey) was given a \$10 gift card to incentivize completion. There was also a collective reward; if 30% of residents at a property completed the survey, the property provided a community reward (e.g. pizza party).

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# SURVEY PARTICIPANTS

The survey was open from June 24th to July 22nd 2022. There were 440 survey responses, which represents 51.2% of the total Foundation Communities population (859 residents at time of survey distribution). With a 95% confidence level, this equates to a 3% margin of error, meaning the data points captured by the survey are within 3% over or under actual sentiment. 17 surveys were completed directly in SurveyMonkey and 423 paper surveys were completed and later entered into SurveyMonkey.

#### What property do you live at?

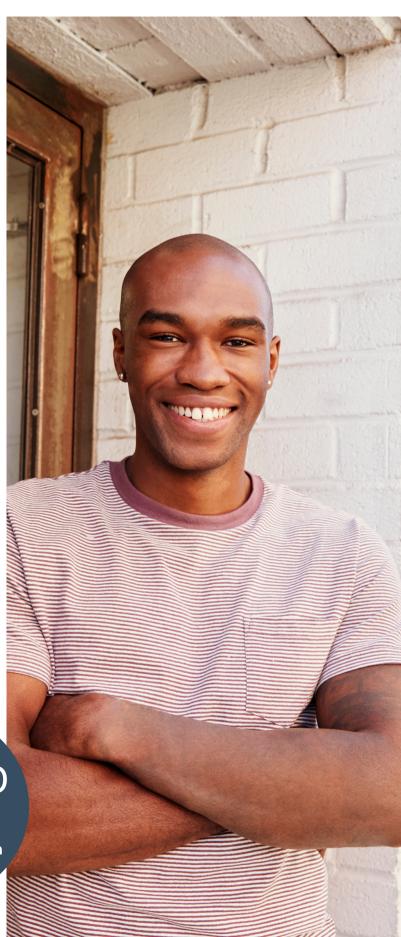


66% of residents' income comes from SS. SSI and/or SSDI



100

someone with a disability.

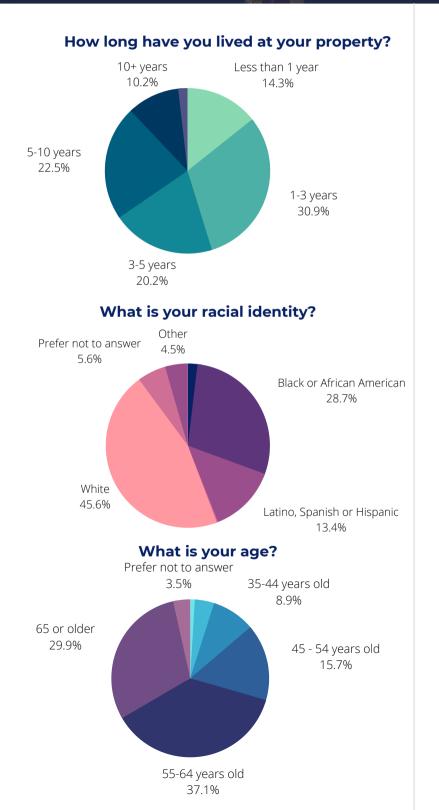


# PARTICIPANT DEMOGRAPHICS

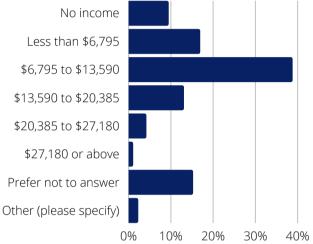
440 total survey

respondents

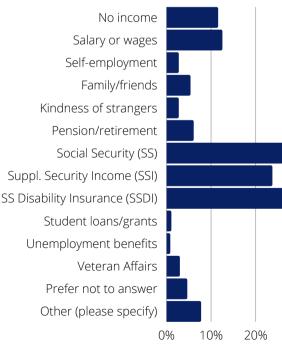
- 17.4% identified as veterans.
- 9.1% identified as LGBTQ.
- 65% identified as male.



# What is your total yearly income?



#### What type of income do you receive?



30%



# RESULTS

# **High level summary**

Residents generally like the property they live in, find the services that Foundation Communities provides useful, and feel connected to others at their property.

### **General Sentiment**

Residents provided free response answers to what they like about their apartment, and what they would change. 11% of residents responded they appreciate the size and furnishings of their apartment. Residents also like the cost, that the apartment provides for their needs, is quiet, provides a sense of ownership, is easy to manage, has a good view, is comfortable, safety, security and location.

# What do you like about your apartment?

Security Provides-for-needs Generally-good Quiet Cleanliness Easy-to-manage Everything Location Community Clean Cost Stability Safety/Security Services View Size Safety Amenities Staff-&-Services Functions Neighbors Ownership Belonging Staff Cost, Ownership Staff-&-Services Privacy Maintenance Furnishings Comfort

> Word size indicates relative frequency of responses 435 total responses

I like the food service and the staff doesn't work by the book. They work by the heart.



- Spring Terrace resident

#### What would you change about your apartment?

When prompted to share what they would change, **26% of residents would not change anything about their apartment.** Other respondents said they would change the size (16% of residents), appliances (10% of residents), or furnishings.



409 total responses

# "I believe there needs to be security at night"

- Female resident

"The conflict of interests between residents" - Resident at Garden Terrace

> "Possibly a little more space for my wheelchair" - Resident at Garden Terrace

# "Change my door locks, mailbox locks too. For safety and convenience."

- Black or African American resident

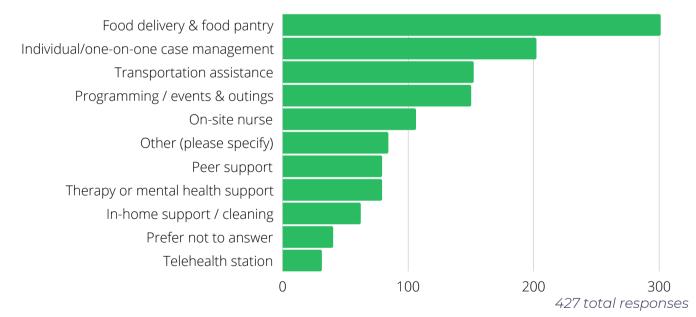
### **Staff and Services**

Respondents were asked to rate experiences with Resident Services, Property Management, and Front Desk clerks and saw over 95% of responses neutral or positive.

LGBTQ+ residents have a more negative experience with front desk clerks and property management, specifically at Arbor Terrace, Capital Studios, and Garden Terrace. Overall, **11% of residents that identify LGBTQ+ indicated overall negative experiences with property management and desk clerks**, versus 4% of the non-LGBTQ+ community. of residents that identify LGBTQ+ indicated **overall negative experiences** with property management and desk clerks

Food delivery & pantry was described as most useful to residents, followed by one-on-one case management. In general, services found useful are consistent across properties. **In general, services are most useful for LGBTQ+ and female residents.** 

#### What services do you find most useful?



Most Useful

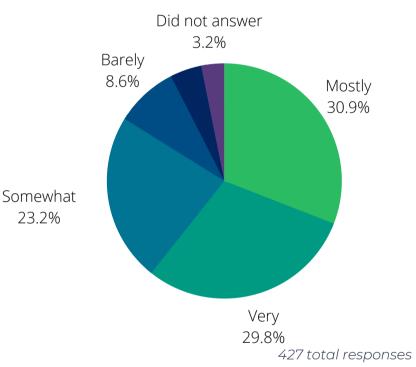
- **70%** find food delivery & pantry useful.
- **47%** find individual/one on one case
- management useful



### Belonging

The majority of residents feel mostly or very connected at their property. Only 13% of residents feel "barely" or "not at all" connected, and 62% feel "very" or "mostly" connected. This trend is consistent across properties. The least connected demographics are residents aged 25-34 and residents with a disability. **15% of residents with a disability feel "barely" or "not at all" connected to their property.** 

# How much do you feel like you belong at your property?



#### **Areas of Connection**

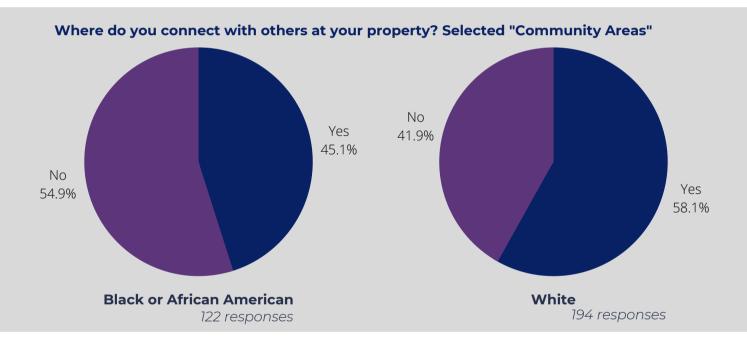
Monthly calendar was the most common response to how residents like to hear about events, followed by flyers and bulletin boards. This differed slightly across properties, but is overall consistent. Most residents connect at community events (54% of residents) followed by community areas such as the kitchen or smoking areas (51% of residents). When prompted to share what "other" avenues for connection are experienced, most common responses were "outside," "nowhere," or "anywhere."

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# Areas of Connection (cont.)

Areas of connection differ by property. Community events were selected by a higher percentage at Skyline Terrace than other communities (71% of residents vs 54% average). Community areas were selected at a much lower percentage at Waterloo Terrace than average (25% at Waterloo vs 49% average). Areas of connection are generally consistent across racial identity and LGBTQ+ status.

A majority of White residents find Community Areas at their property an area for connection; conversely, a majority of Black or African-American residents <u>do not</u> find their property's community areas a place of connection.



Focus group attendees shared that both community help and training/teaching residents to be independent were important factors in fostering a sense of belonging to the community. When asked what would help residents feel more connected at the property, the most common theme in the open-ended survey responses were related to outings/events (type and/or frequency).

HAVE A RESIDENT REPRESENTATIVE - A RESIDENT WHO WOULD WORK WITH STAFF AS A VOICE OF THE RESIDENTS. ALSO A PERSON NEW RESIDENTS COULD GO TO FOR BASIC QUESTIONS. ALSO COULD GUIDE THEM WITH WHO TO GO TO FOR SPECIFIC NEEDS I.E. RESIDENT SERVICES, ALL, ETC.



- Resident response to what would help residents feel more connected to the community at their property

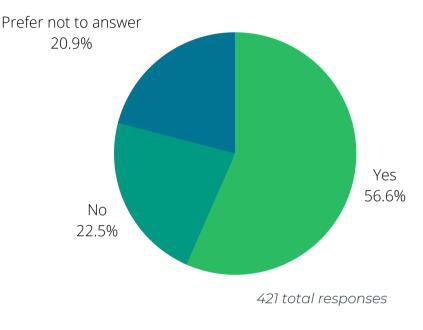
#### Voice

Having a VOICE

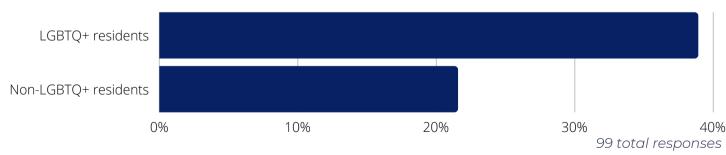
Most residents feel they have a way for their voice to be heard in the way the property is run, but **22.5% of residents responded "No," indicating they do not feel they have a voice.** 

Residents were also asked to explain their response, and staff approachability was the most common indicator in whether residents feel they are heard. For those who feel they have a voice, other indicators include the fact that staff listens, and the fact that there are frequent opportunities to share feedback, such as the survey conducted. **Residents who do not feel they have a voice didn't see change when feedback was provided, or didn't feel that staff listened to their concerns.** 

# Do you feel you have a way for your voice to be heard in the way the property is run?

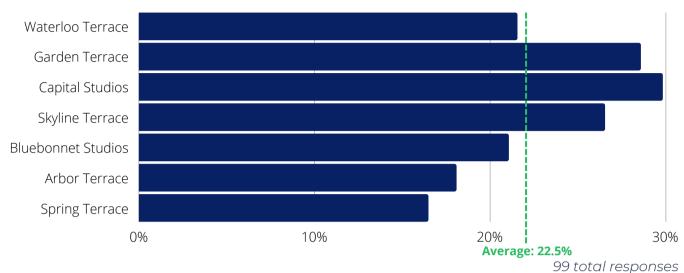


A higher percentage of LGBTQ+ residents do not feel they have a way for their voice to be heard over non-LGBTQ+ residents. 22% of Non-LGBTQ+ residents do not feel they have a voice in the way the property is run. **39% of LGBTQ+ residents feel they do not have a voice in the way the property is run.** 



#### Marked "No" when asked if they feel they have a voice in the way the property is run

39% of LGBTQ+ residents (v. 22% of non-LGBTQ+) and 29% of veteran residents feel they do not have a voice in the way the property is run.

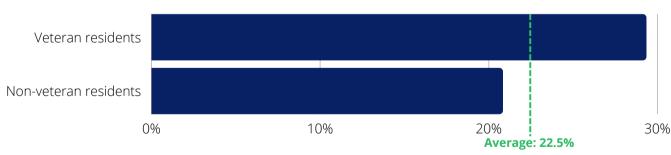


#### Marked "No" when asked if they feel they have a voice in the way the property is run

Residents at Capital Studios, Garden Terrace, and Skyline Terrace have higher than average percentages of residents that do not feel they have a voice.

# ALMOST 30% OF RESIDENTS AT CAPITAL STUDIOS DO NOT FEEL THEY HAVE A VOICE IN THE WAY THE PROPERTY IS RUN.

A higher percentage of veteran residents do not feel they have a way for their voice to be heard over those who are not a veteran (29% of veterans do not feel they have a voice vs 21% of non-veterans).

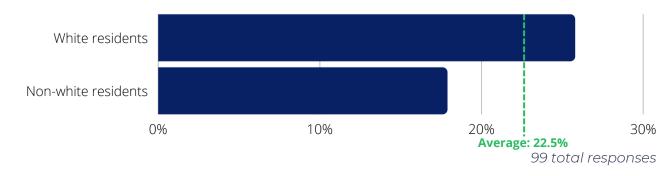


#### Marked "No" when asked if they feel they have a voice in the way the property is run

99 total responses

A higher percentage of white residents do not feel they have a way for their voice to be heard over those who are non-white (18% non-white residents do not feel they have a voice vs 26% white residents).





### Safety

While the majority (73%) of residents feel very or somewhat safe at their property, 17% of residents feel very or somewhat unsafe at their property. Additionally, **safety concerns were reported at higher levels for LGBTQ+ and women residents.** 

14% of non-LGBTQ+ feel very or somewhat unsafe in their property, while **33% of LGBTQ+ feel very or somewhat unsafe in their property.** 12% of males feel very or somewhat unsafe in their property, while **33% of females feel very or somewhat unsafe in their property.** 

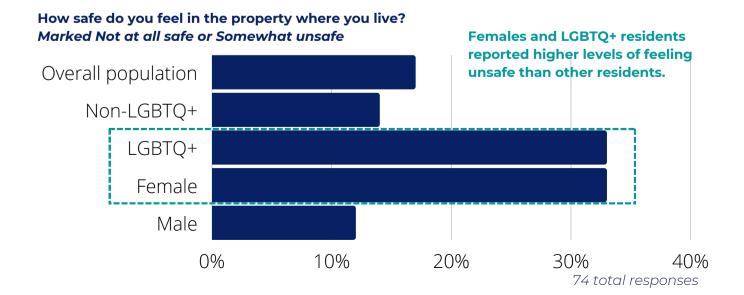
Safety concerns include building provisions lacking safety, unwanted visitors at the property, resident behavior, drugs, violence, loitering, and theft.



Spring Terrace respondents indicated the highest levels of safety across all residents. Waterloo Terrace respondents indicated the lowest level of safety across all residents. 26% reported feeling "somewhat" or "not at all" safe.

Specific properties see safety concerns for particular racial identities:

- Arbor Terrace: 16% of Latino, Spanish or Hispanic residents reported feeling "unsafe" vs 11% of all residents at this property
- Garden Terrace: 29% of Black or African American residents reported feeling "unsafe" vs 14% of all residents at this property and 10% of White residents at this property
- Skyline Terrace: 33% of Latino, Spanish or Hispanic residents reported feeling "unsafe" vs 20% of all residents at this property



### DISCUSSION

Safety concerns at Foundation Communities disproportionately affect women, LBGTQ+ residents, and minorities at particular properties. Safety concerns across properties include:

- Lack of security at night
- Drugs and alcohol
- Violence
- Resident and visitor behavior

While many of the safety concerns felt by residents are out of the Foundation Communities' control (e.g., drugs), added security through more cameras or other improvements to building provisions will improve safety overall and reinforce feelings of safety within their property, even if behavior of specific residents or visitors cannot be controlled.

"Lots of drugs at night... I feel unsafe" - Female resident who identifies LGBTQ+ "Get a better security system + get off duty police to walk the halls as well as better night shift personnel" - Female resident, 65+ in age

"Certified counselor/nurse on the desk at night. It's when it is needed most." - LGBTQ+ resident "We need a security officer/police to walk in building at different times in the evenings and weekends. This would give residents a feel of security." - LGBTQ+ resident

In addition to safety concerns, connection and belonging is unbalanced for particular minority groups. LGBTQ+ residents disproportionately feel they do not have a voice and have more negative experiences with front desk clerks and property management.



There is a correlation between the use of services and connection. Residents that feel connected to their property in general indicated use of more services than residents that do not feel connected to their property. Peer support and therapy are particularly useful, as indicated by residents that feel connected. Females and LGBTQ+ residents utilize services by the property more than male and non-LGBTQ+ residents.

Foundation Communities should continue investing in services for these groups and ensuring community spaces are inclusive for all residents.

In the focus group, residents shared the sentiment that engagement with staff is essential. If residents want to be heard or taken seriously, they need to see that managers are doing something about their concerns. This feedback is consistent with the qualitative feedback from the survey. In addition, knowing LGBTQ+ residents have more negative experiences with staff, ensuring staff treats all residents equitably is vital to fostering a sense of belonging for this group.

One suggestion made by residents is to implement a "resident representative" or committee to "work with staff as a voice of the residents." MEASURE suggests enacting a committee of residents committed to open and transparent methods of relaying community feedback. This ensures that not only one person acts as the "voice for the community." MEASURE also suggests ensuring this body of residents is compensated with some benefit, providing training on diversity, equity, inclusion, and belonging, and providing a clear scope of how their feedback will be heard.

"I'M NEVER ASKED MY OPINION ON THIS DECISION OR THE OTHER, I'M JUST TOLD 'THIS IS THE WAY IT'S GOING TO BE.' PERIOD" -LGBTQ+ RESIDENT Our Experience Must Inform Change



#### CONCLUSION

The resident survey in Summer 2022 reveals that Foundation Communities management is aligned directionally with the resident sentiment. Engaging Black and African-American residents was a particular focus for Foundation Communities, and survey results prove the success of these efforts. For example, a higher percentage of Non-White residents (26%) feel they have a voice to be heard than White residents (18%). In addition, Black or African American residents feel more connected to *their property* than White residents. More work will need to be done to address the lack connection for a majority of Black or African American in the property's *community areas*.

Overall, residents feel connected and safe at their property and have positive experiences with staff. However, certain community groups feel they need to be more represented for community-led activities and resources.

As Foundation Communities invests in more properties and pursues new partnerships and initiatives, understanding and addressing the needs of LGBTQ+ women and residents with a disability through services and equitable treatment by staff will improve the overall sense of belonging and safety at properties.

Integral to Foundation Communities' goals are systematically incorporating the resident perspective into service delivery and decision making and increasing opportunities for client participation, client leadership, and self-advocacy.



# APPENDIX (SURVEY INSTRUMENT)

#### Introduction Questions

Please answer the following questions about your background.

#### Which property do you live in?

- Arbor Terrace
- Bluebonnet Studios
- Capital Studios
- Garden Terrace
- Skyline Terrace
- Spring Terrace
- Waterloo Terrace

#### How long have you lived at your property?

- Less than 1 year
- 1 year to 3 years
- 3 years to 5 years
- 5 years to 10 years
- 10 or more years

#### **Staff & Services**

#### How are your experiences with property management staff members?

- Mostly Negative
- Somewhat Negative
- Neutral
- Somewhat Positive
- Mostly Positive

#### How are your experiences with resident services staff members?

- Mostly Negative
- Somewhat Negative
- Neutral
- Somewhat Positive
- Mostly Positive

#### How are your experiences with front desk clerks?

- Mostly Negative
- Somewhat Negative
- Neutral
- Somewhat Positive
- Mostly Positive

#### What do you like about your apartment, and what would you change? (Open-Ended)

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### APPENDIX (SURVEY INSTRUMENT)

#### Staff & Services cont.

# What services does your property provide that you find most useful? Please check all that apply.

- Individual/one on one case management
- Transportation assistance
- Peer support
- Therapy or mental health support
- On-site nurse
- In-home support / cleaning
- Food delivery & food pantry
- Telehealth station
- Programming / events & outings
- Other (please specify) \_\_\_\_\_
- -refer not to answer

### What services would you like to see at your property that are not provided? (Open-Ended)

#### **Resident Involvement & Communication**

# How do you like to hear about events (activities, property updates) happening at the property?

#### Please check all that apply.

- Neighbors
- Property staff
- Flyers
- Monthly calendar
- Whiteboard/bulletin board
- Trumpia / Texting service
- Other (please specify) \_\_\_\_\_\_
- Prefer not to answer

#### Do you feel you have a way for your voice to be heard in the way the property is run?

- Yes
- No
- Prefer not to answer

#### Why or why not? (Open-Ended, Optional)

### APPENDIX (SURVEY INSTRUMENT)

#### <u>Safety</u>

#### How safe do you feel in the property where you live?

- Not at all safe
- Somewhat unsafe
- Neither safe or unsafe
- Somewhat safe
- Very safe

#### What safety concerns, if any, do you have at your property? (Open-Ended)

#### Belonging

#### How much do you feel like you belong at your property?

- Not at all connected
- Barely connected
- Somewhat connected
- Mostly connected
- Very connected

# What would help residents feel more connected to the community at your property? (Open-Ended)

# Where do you connect with other residents? Please check all that apply.

- Community events (e.g. Supper club, coffee hour, game/movie nights, etc.)
- Community areas (e.g. kitchen, smoking area, laundry)
- Nextdoor/hallway neighbors
- Other (please specify) \_
- Prefer not to answer

### APPENDIX (SURVEY INSTRUMENT)

#### **Background**

# What is your racial or ethnic identity?

- American Indian or Alaskan Native
- Asian
- Black or African-American
- Latino, Spanish, or Hispanic
- Native Hawaiian or other Pacific Islander
- White
- Other
- Prefer not to answer

#### What is your gender identity?

- Male
- Female
- Non-binary
- Transgender woman
- Transgender man
- Prefer not to answer
- Prefer to self-identify
- If self-identify, please specify

#### What is your age?

- 18-24
- 25-34
- 35-44
- 45-54
- 55-64
- 65 or older
- Prefer not to answer

#### Do you identify as a person with a disability?

- Yes
- No
- Prefer not to answer

#### Do you identify as LGBTQ+?

- Yes
- No
- Prefer not to answer

#### Are you a veteran?

- Yes
- No
- Prefer not to answer

#### What kind of income do you receive? Check all that apply.

- No Income
- Salary or wages from an employer
- Self-employment
- Family/Friends
- Kindness of strangers
- Pension/Retirement
- Social Security (SS)
- Supplemental Security Income (SSI)
- Social Security Disability Insurance (SSDI)
- Student grants/loans
- Unemployment benefits
- Veteran Affairs
- Other (please specify):
- Prefer not to answer

#### What is your total yearly income?

- Less than \$6,795 (Less than \$566 per month)
- \$6,795 to \$13,590 (Between \$566 and \$1,132 per month)
- \$13,590 to \$20,385 (Between \$1,132 and \$1,699 per month)
- \$20,385 to \$27,180 (Between \$1,699 and \$2,265 per month)
- \$27,180 or above (\$2,265 per month or above)
- No income
- Other (please specify)
- Prefer not to answer

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# ABOUT OUR DATA-ACTIVISTS

#### **TONI BILLS**



I have lived in Austin for 4.5 years with my beautiful children. I take pride in my first and most important role of motherhood. It has been my biggest teacher and the ambition I express for my children to seek after individually comes deep from within me. I have taken the most recent leap this year with taking on a new executive position with my company while starting my life coaching business. I discuss self advocacy and effective ways to restructure life to heal childhood/relationship traumas. I believe in empowering others and have been a witness to the impact a life can make with a little bit of encouragement and healing. I look forward to growing in the Austin community and gaining new friendships and networking opportunities.

#### HANNA CHUN



My name is Hanna Chun and I am an Architect at Credera focused on technology management and delivery. I have agile project management experience for products across platforms including consumer facing websites, data integration systems and mobile applications. I hold a B.A in Management Information Systems from the University of Texas at Austin. In my free time, I enjoy reading, fitness, and exploring food and drink across Austin.