



CROWDSOURCED CONVERSATIONS 2023



TOPIC #3:



**BUILDING COMMUNITY WITH
RENTERS AND LANDLORDS
SURVEY DATA REPORT**



Learn more at futureheights.org/cc23-travelingaroundtown

Some topline stats

- There were a total of **189** responses:
 - **93.7% Cleveland Heights residents**; 3.2% University Heights; 3.2% former/elsewhere.
 - **75.7% homeowners**; 23.3% renters; 1% other.
 - **51.3% have lived in their homes +20 years**; 19.6% 1-5 years; 12.2% 5-10 years; 10% 10-20 years; 4.2% 0-1 years; 2.6% don't live in the Heights.
 - **69.1% identified as a woman**; 28.2% as a man; 11.6% as trans*/nonbinary/genderqueer; 1.1% preferred not to say.
 - **54.5% identified as under the age of 60**; 43% as over the age of 60; 2.1% preferred not to say.
 - **82% identified as White**; 9.5% as Black; 4.3% as multi-racial; 2.6% preferred not to say; 1.1% as Asian; 0.5% as Hispanic.

RESPONSES

FROM RENTERS

About the renter respondents:

- **Of our 189 respondents 44 (23.3%) reported that they are current renters; 13 (6.9%) have been renters within the last 5 years.**
- **92.8% live in Cleveland Heights; 4.8% live in University Heights; 2.4% are former Heights residents.**
- **88% are under the age of 60; 12% are over the age of 60.**
- **74% identify as a woman; 19% as a man; 7% as trans*/nonbinary/genderqueer.**
- **69% identify as White; 16.7% as Black; 7.1% as multi-racial; 4.8% prefer not to say; 2.4% as Asian.**
- **42% reported being a renter for 1-5 years; 36% over ten years; 20% 5-10 years; 2% 0-1 years.**
- **39.1% identify as an established Heights resident; 32.8% as a new Heights resident; 31.3% as a young professional; 21.9% have at least one child; 20.3% are seniors; 6.3% college students.**

Why the renters opt to rent:

- **48% are unsure where they want to live long-term.**
- 40% are saving up to buy a house.
- 36% prefer not to deal with the maintenance/upkeep that goes along with homeownership.
- 26% are new to the area; 26% also selected “other” as a reason for renting
- 16% simply prefer to rent.
- 6% are college students; 6% are “empty-nesters.”

Why the renters opt to rent in the Heights:

- **54.9% rent in the Heights because they feel this community aligns with their values.**
- 51% feel the Heights offers the amenities/assets they are looking for (city services, schools, restaurants, nightlife, local retail, greenspace, etc.).
- 47.1% feel renting in the Heights is convenient.
- 33.3% rent in the Heights because it's so affordable.
- 29.4% rent in the Heights because they moved here with friends/family who selected this community.
- 21.6% selected "other" as a reason for renting in the Heights.
- 17.6% reported renting in the Heights because they're considering buying a dwelling here; 17.6% also reported that they selected the Heights because they grew up here.
- 11.8% opted to rent in the Heights because of the proximity to their college or university.

Renter dwellings:

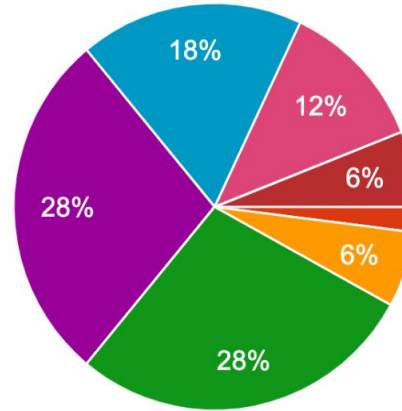
- **44.2% live in an apartment building with 4 or more units;** 38.5% live in a multi-family house; 15.4% live in a single-family house; 1.9% live in an in-law/carriage house apartment; 0 live in a condo/townhouse or a short term rental.
- **29.4% reported that their dwelling had undergone a city inspection within the last 3 years; 29.4% are unsure;** 21.6% reported no inspection; 19.6% haven't lived in their rental dwelling for 3 years yet.

Securing a rental:

- **On a scale of 1-5, 36% rated the ease of securing a Heights rental a 4;** 32% a 3; 22% a 5; 6% a 2; and 4% a 1.
- **66.1% used an online search engine to look for their rental;** 12.5% had a connection or a reference; 10.7% reported “other” as their method; 8.9% used a realtor; 1.8% used a city service or program.
- **84% signed a 1-year lease;** 10% signed a multiple-year lease; 6% signed an at-will lease.

Rental cost:

- 28% reported paying \$751-\$1,000/mo. for rent; 28% also reported paying \$1,001-\$1250/mo.
- 18% reported paying \$1,251-\$1,500/mo.
- 12% reported paying \$1,501-\$1,750/mo.
- 6% reported paying \$501-\$750/mo; 6% reported paying over \$2,000/mo.
- 0 reported paying less than \$250/mo. or \$1,751-\$2,000/mo.



48.9% pay less than $\frac{1}{3}$ of their gross monthly income towards their rent; 25% pays exactly $\frac{1}{3}$ or more than $\frac{1}{3}$.

Rent subsidies:

- 96% reported not using a rent subsidy; 2% reported using a rent subsidy currently; 2% reported having used a rent subsidy within the last 5 years.

Satisfaction with rental dwellings:

- On a scale of 1-5, **40.4%** rated their satisfaction with their rental dwelling a **4**; 19.2% rated it a 3; 19.2% rated it a 5; 11.5% rated it a 1; and 9.6% rated it a 2.
- **60.4%** perceive rental properties are not as well-kept as owner occupied; 34% can't tell the difference; 5.7% perceive that rental properties are better-kept than owner occupied.

Reasons for satisfaction ratings for rental dwelling:

- 75% Location; 75% Quality of the dwelling
- 69.2% Amount of space
- 63.5% Proximity to assets/amenities
- 53.8% Affordability
- 51.9% Onsite laundry; 51.9% Responsiveness of landlords
- 44.2% Proximity to work
- 32.7% Proximity to a grocery store
- 30.8% Proximity to public transportation
- 24.6% Availability of parking; 24.6% Ability to have a pet
- 31.1% Neighbors
- 17.3% Proximity to school
- 15.4% Selected "Other" as a reason for their rating

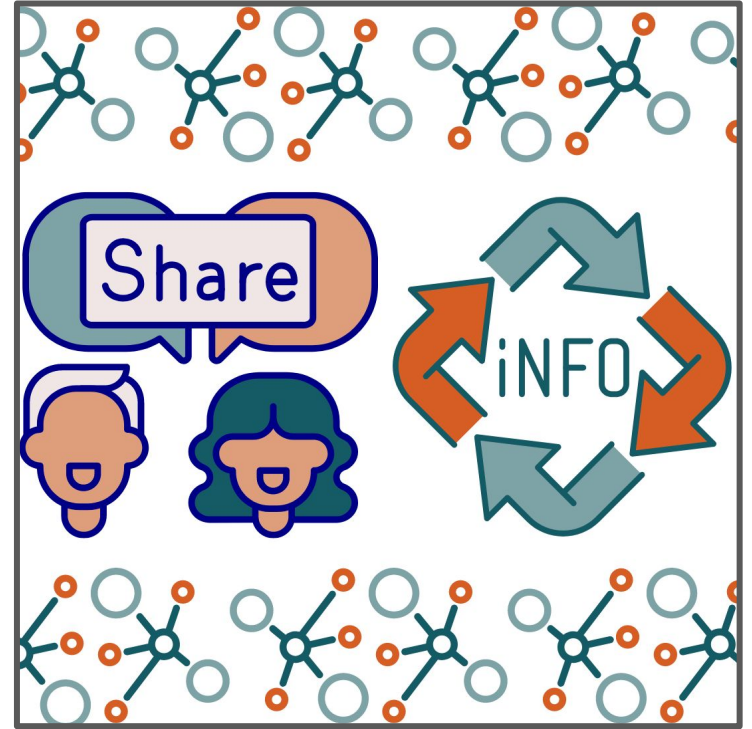
About the renters' landlords:

- **52.9% reported their landlord as an individual;** 41.2% a management company; 3.9% a family friend; 1.2% are unsure about who owns their rental dwelling.
- **28% are unsure if their landlords live in the Heights or elsewhere;** 26% report their landlords live in the Heights; 16% live outside Ohio; 15% live in Ohio but not the Heights; 0 reported their landlords living outside the US.
- **54% reported knowing their landlords at least a little;** 26% have never met their landlord; 20% reported they know each other well.
- **68% are unsure if their landlord has registered their rental dwelling with the city;** 30% know their landlord has registered the dwelling; 2% report their landlord has not registered the property.
- **On a scale of 1-5, 28% rated their landlords a 5 on responsiveness when they reach out with an issue or question;** 24% rated either a 3 or a 4; 14% rated a 2; 10% rated a 1.
 - Renters' top reported issue related to their responsiveness rating is that while a landlord is quick to respond, they are slow to handle the issue reported. Others reported that when their landlord was local, issues were handled more quickly but when building ownership changed, responsiveness also changed. Others, still, reported that their landlords were efficient with resolving issues.

Information from the landlord

Renters reported that they received the following from their landlords upon move-in:

- Policies about their unit (76%)
- Lead abatement info (46%)
- Info about city functions (trash day, etc.) (34%)
- Policies about building (32%)
- Renters' rights info (18%)
- My landlord did not provide me with any info (18%)
- Info about neighborhood groups (6%)
- Info about local amenities (6%)



Knowledge of the law:

- On a scale of 1-5, 44.4% reported their knowledge of Ohio Landlord-Tenant Law a 1; 24% reported a 3; 20% a 2; 7% a 1; and 4% a 4.
- On a scale of 1-5, 43.3% rated the effectiveness of Ohio Landlord-Tenant Law a 3; 36.4% a 2; 15.9% a 1; 4.5% a 4; and 0 rated it a 5.

Laws & policies that matter the most to renters

Respondents rated the following as **VERY IMPORTANT** to them:

- Protection from harassment by a landlord (65%)
- Fair Housing laws & regulations (53%)
- Lead abatement (47%) and Interior/Exterior City Inspections (47%)
- Eviction process/protection (43%)
- Access to parking passes (34%)
- Ability to own a pet (33%)
- Noise regulations (28%) - *tied with IMPORTANT*

Respondents rated the following as **IMPORTANT** to them:

- Protection from harassment by neighbors (42%)
- Opportunities that allow rent-to-own (39%)
- Noise regulations (28%) - *tied with VERY IMPORTANT*

There were no laws/policies that renters rated as neutral/NA, a little important, or not at all important.

Renters' Interest in Homeownership

- **48% intend to become a homeowner within the next 5 years;** 24% are unsure; 18% do not intend to become a homeowner within the next 5 years.
- **42.9% are unsure if they will look to buy in the Heights;** 33.3% intend to buy in Cleveland Heights; 23.8% intend to buy outside of the Heights; 0 reported an intention to buy in University Heights.

Factors for why renters said YES or MAYBE to buying in the Heights:

- Affordability (90.9%)
- Cost of property taxes (63.6%)
- Homeownership creates a stronger sense of housing stability than renting (48.5%)
- I understand the process for buying a home (42.4%)
- I feel equipped to handle other aspects of homeownership, like property upkeep/repairs, lawn care, etc. (42.4%)
- Being a homeowner would make me feel more valued in my community (27.3%)
- Our school district (24.2%)

Factors for why renters said NO to buying in the Heights:

- Affordability (52.4%)
- Cost of property taxes (42.9%)
- I do not want to handle other aspects of homeownership, like property upkeep/repairs, lawn care, etc. (33.3%)
- I am still determining where I want to live long-term (33.3%)
- I am not interested in becoming a homeowner (19%)
- Lack of grants or subsidies that would make homeownership affordable (14.3%)
- Our school district (9.5%)
- I know I'm temporary (4.8%)
- The process to buy a home is too complex (4.8%)

Where Renters Get Community News

- City of Cleveland Heights (57.1%)
- Flyers in the community (53.6%)
- Word of mouth (50%)
- *Heights Observer* (39.3%)
- Other social media (33.9%)
- Neighborhood groups (30.4%)
- Neighborhood Facebook Group (30.4%)
- CH-UH Library “Check Us Out” guide (30.4%)
- NextDoor (26.80%)
- Area nonprofits/organizations (25%)
- Heights businesses (19.6%)
- Flyers in my building (16.1%)
- Community-wide group (14.3%)
- Other media (12.5%)
- Postcards/mailings (7.1%)
- City of University Heights (5.4%)
- I don't hear about events (5.4%)
- Landlord/building management (3.6%)
- Local news (Ch. 19) (1.80%)

Renters' Sense of Belonging in the Community

- **36.2% reported they “sometimes” participate in community events;** 32.8% reported they do participate; 24.1% reported they were unaware of community events; 6.9% reported they do not participate.
- **On a scale of 1-5, 34.7% rated a 4 on their investment in the community;** 26.5% rated a 3; 22.4% rated a 5; 12.2% rated a 2; 4.1% rated a 1.
- **On a scale of 1-5, 41.7% rated their sense of belonging in the community a 4;** 20.8% rated a 5; 25% rated a 3; 8.3% rated a 2; and 4.2% rated a 1.

Top reasons renters rated a 3 or above:

- I care about my community (12)
- I feel connected to my neighbors (12)
- I have lived here a long time (7)
- I like supporting the local businesses (4)
- I both live and work here (3)
- I have shared social values with this community (2)
- Being a renter does not impact my sense of belonging (2)
- This community seems to care if you're a renter or a homeowner (2)
- I like the community's diversity (2)

Top reasons renters rated a 1 or a 2:

- I am planning to move elsewhere (1)
- I only live here because of my partner's work (1)
- I feel unsafe here (1)
- My apartment is on the expensive side (1)
- Renters don't get as much say (1)

Renter Comments

"I wish there were more affordable options for seniors. Maybe formal groups that would help each other."

"Landlords enjoy a power advantage despite legal protections and exploit that to extract maximum profit from renters. Tough to build community in that context."

"House inspections need more continuity. When our landlord bought the house, it passed the inspection. Then when they went to sell it, all these violations popped up. They had to do with wiring and things of that nature, not upkeep issues. So what I want to know is why did the previous seller get away with not having to address any of those things. Inspectors should follow the exact same criteria every time. This was a shock to our landlords who thought the house was good to go and had to scramble to get things done. It was supremely annoying to us as tenants to have to be home to let workers in and out and arrange for our dog to be elsewhere."

"While I love living in the neighborhood, I am frustrated with the state of renting in the area. It feels like there are lots of vacancies and many of the buildings are not the best condition, but rent continues getting higher. While I don't know for sure, I've heard through conversation high rent and disrepair also seems challenging for many of the small businesses in the neighborhood."

"As a whole, my experience renting from individual landlords has been much more positive than my experience renting from management companies."

Renter Comments (cont'd.)

“Over the three years I've rented this particular CH apartment, the building was sold from a local landlord to an out-of-state, outsourcing-to-a-property-management owner. The local owner knew about the local community and shared that information with us. The remote landlord and his management company have no personal contact with us. In this transition, we feel that we and the community have lost continuity, specificity, and rootedness. Because the landlord seems to milk dry the property for its economic value alone, we don't feel hopeful that the building will maintain its previous curb appeal, amongst other assets. Because the landlord seems to milk dry the property for its economic value alone, we feel nervous that who we are as renters (consciousness, careful) will have no weight in future lease negotiations. We feel anonymous and expendable. We do not know what resources we would turn to if we needed support in lease negotiations.”

"Affordable apartments with ample bicycle parking is needed here - I have multiple bikes!"

“I have been a renter in Cleveland Heights multiple times. My best experiences have been multi-family homes owned by local landlords. I also rented a unit in a building in the Cedar Lee area which was mostly a good experience. The landlord was not on site, but management was responsive when needed and the building was well maintained. The parking situation there was terrible. As a single mom with a young child I had to park in the public lot across the street where my car was often damaged by other cars (I even had parts stolen off of my car at night) and had no protection from the weather which made it very difficult when carrying a child or groceries.”

Renter Comments (cont'd.)

"There should be an incentive for local landlords to keep their houses. I really liked my original landlords and hated it when someone from California who had never set foot in the house purchased it. There should also be communications like this that go out to property management companies. I'm sure these remote landlords pay them buckets of money to do next to nothing, frustrate tenants, and let their houses fall into disrepair. I complained for three months about a hole in the siding. They did nothing about it and a bird got in the wall. They don't care because they get paid regardless. There was no line of communication with the landlord whatsoever. So how was I to tell them what was really going on?"

Responses

from Landlords

About the landlord respondents:

- **Of our 189 respondents 25 (13.2%) reported that they are current landlords; 2 (2.1%) have been landlords within the last 5 years.**
- **67% reported an interest in the Heights as a reason why they are a landlord in this community; 62.5% are landlords for the financial opportunity; 8.3% inherited their rental properties.**
- **50% live in one of their rental properties; 41.7% live in the Heights but not in one of their rental properties; 8.3% live in Ohio but not the Heights; 0 live outside of Ohio or outside of the US**
- **On a scale of 1-5, 76.9% rate their investment in the community a 5; 15.4% rate it a 4; 3.8% rate it a 1 or a 2; 0 rate it a 3.**

About their rental properties:

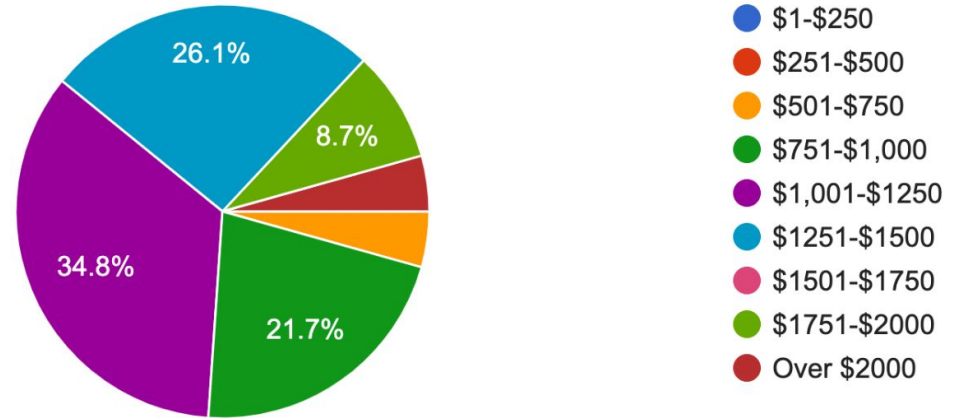
- **76.9% have a multi-family home;** 34.6% have a single family home; 11.5% have apartment buildings with 4 or more units; 3.8% have an in-law/carriage house apartment, a short-term rental, or a condo/townhouse.
- **100% reported their rental units as being registered with the city.**
- **72% have undergone a city inspection within the last 3 years;** 12% have not; 3.8% are unsure if they have undergone an inspection or have not owned their rental property for 3 years.
 - **72% have been cited for a violation;** 28% have not.
 - **89.5% of those with a code violation hired a 3rd party to make the necessary repairs;** 73.7% did the repairs themselves; 10.5% utilized a program run by another organization to handle the repairs; 10.5% challenged the citation; 5.3% utilized a city-offered program; 5.3% report the issue remains unresolved.
- **44% perceive that rental properties they see are not as well-kept as owner occupied;** 40% can't tell the difference; and 16% perceive rental properties are better-kept than owner occupied.

About their rental properties (cont'd):

39.1% visit their properties daily; 34.8% visit once a month; 21.7% visit once a week or visit a few times a week; 4.3% visit every two weeks; 0 visit once every 6 mo., once a year, or never.

The average rent responding landlords charge:

- **35% charge \$1,001-\$1,250**
- 26% charge \$1,251-\$1,500
- 22% charge \$751-\$1,000
- 9% charge \$1,751-\$2,000
- 4% charge \$501-\$750 or over \$2,000
- 0 charge less than \$500



83% report that none of their tenants utilize a rent subsidy; 9 report that 1-5 of their tenants utilize a subsidy; 4.3% report 10-25 utilize a subsidy; 4% report 5-10 utilize a subsidy.

About their tenants:

- **73.9% of tenants are young professionals;** 47.8% are established Heights residents; 43.5% have at least one child; 39.1% are college students; 34.8% are new Heights residents; 26.1% are seniors; 0 are only friends/family; 0 landlords reported not knowing who their tenants were at all.
- **50% reported knowing their tenants well;** 46% know their tenants a little; 5% have never met their tenants.
- **73.9% reported that their tenants tend to stay from 1-5 years;** 13% reported tenants staying 5-10 years; 4.3% reported their tenants staying temporarily only, one full lease term, or more than ten years; 0 reported their tenants staying less than one lease term.

Knowledge of the Law

- **32% rated their familiarity with the Ohio Landlord-Tenant Code as a 5 or a 4; 28% rated a 3; 4% rated a 1 or a 2.**
- **61.5% rated the efficacy of the Ohio Landlord-Tenant code a 3; 11.55% rated it a 5, 4, or 2; 3.8% rated it a 1.**

Laws/policies that matter the most to landlords

Laws/policies that landlords rated as **IMPORTANT** to them:

- Interior/exterior city inspections (64%)
- Eviction process/protection; Noise regulations; Ability to have a pet in your rental property (42%)
- Fair Housing Laws/Regulations; Protection from harassment by tenant (40%)
- Lead abatement (36%)

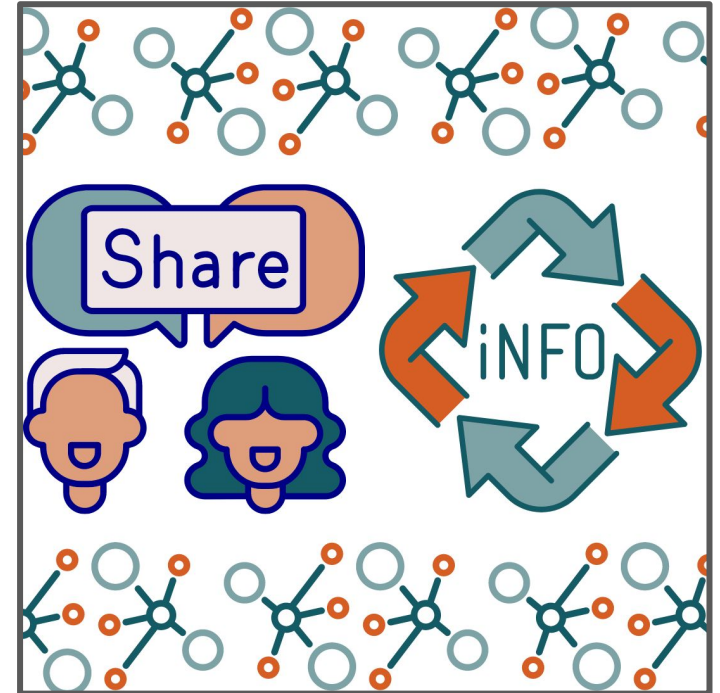
Laws/policies that landlords rated as **NEUTRAL/NOT APPLICABLE** to them:

- Opportunities that allow rent-to-own (42%)
- Access to parking passes (32%)

There are no laws/policies that landlords rated as very important, a little important, or not at all important.

Information landlords provide to their tenants at move-in:

- Policies about unit (100%)
- Info about city functions (trash day, etc.) (91%)
- Lead abatement info (74%)
- Policies about building (74%)
- Info about neighborhood groups (30%)
- Info about local amenities (35%)
- Renters' rights info (26%)
- I do not provide them with any info (0%)



Landlords look to these places for their information:

- City of Cleveland Heights resources (92.30%)
- City of Cleveland Heights personnel (42.30%)
- Word of mouth (35.80%)
- Another organization/nonprofit (34.60%)
- City of Cleveland Heights elected officials (30.80%)
- Their tenants (23.10%)
- Other landlords (23.10%)
- Neighbors (23.10%)
- City of University Heights personnel (7.70%)
- My own professional expertise (3.80%)
- City of University Heights elected officials (3.80%)
- City of University Heights resources (0%)



Landlord comments:

"It is becoming overly expensive to own and operate investment properties in the City of Cleveland Heights especially with an older building stock. The city should consider forms of assistance to landlords in good standing for property maintenance and beautification. The eviction process in the city needs to be faster and streamlined."

"We are very compliant with City ordinances. We'd like to see other landlords held accountable for violations."

"The Lead Abatement legislation is going to be challenging. 1. Insufficient number of testers for lead; 2. The cost for landlords with multiple properties and units for testing; 3. The cost of remediation born by the landlords who do not have subsidized tenants (who get up to \$9K to remediate if their tenants have subsidies); 4. Relocating tenants if remediation is necessary while the lead is being abated; 5. The cost for relocation cannot be the burden of the tenants; 6. No one in charge at the city to oversee the Lead Program. There is no program or organization to help and educate landlords and tenants since the Landlord/Tenant Organization closed several years ago. The city does not have ownership information about many of the multi-family and single-families that are investor-owned. These unidentified owners are not paying occupancy fees, out of county, out of state, out of country or vacancy fees. And, These properties are not being inspected. Over 40% of the residents in Cleveland Heights are renters!!"

"Cleveland Heights makes it very difficult to be a conscientious landlord and make money. Zoning parking requirements. Inspections are all troublesome."

Landlord comments:

"I think a lot of homeowners in the Heights have an aversion to landlords and we're commonly referred to negatively when in reality many of us have invested a significant amount of time, money and resources in this community and into buildings that require a ton of work."

"The sewer bill alone is enough to deter - the water bill was so high with tenants here that I rented at a loss and took a federal tax deduction."

"Some homeowners choose to keep and rent their personal residences when their employment requires a temporary or permanent move to another area. If you don't have a capable and willing friend or relative, it's pretty difficult to find a trustworthy and reliable Property Management company to handle applicants, interviews, tenants and maintenance in the landlord's absence. Some property management companies seem to choose the least viable tenants and gouge owner's with inflated repair costs. There is no incentive for third party property management companies to do a good job -- owners may feel less at risk managing their rental remotely."

"Hard to get a real person at city hall anymore. Unfortunate if you need to know soon."

Responses

from Homeowners

About the homeowner respondents:

- **Of our 189 respondents 131 (69.3%) reported being a Heights homeowner;** 7 (3.7%) reported being a Heights homeowner and a landlord; 3 (1.6%) reported being a homeowner outside of the Heights; 2 (1.1%) reported living with a homeowner.
- **94% report living in Cleveland Heights;** 2.5% live in University Heights; 1.4% work in the Heights; 1.4% used to live in the Heights; 0.7% never lived in the Heights.
- **86% identify as White;** 7% as Black; 3% as multi-racial; 2% prefer not to say; 1% as LatinX; 1% as Asian.
- **67% identify as a woman;** 31% as a man; 2% prefer not to say.
- **60% have lived in the Heights more than 20 years;** 13% 5-10 years; 12% 1-5 years; 11% 10-20 years; 3.3% don't live in the Heights; 0.7% 0-1 years.
- **61% identify as an established Heights resident;** 39% as a senior; 23.4% as having at least one child; 10.6% as new Heights residents; 6.4% as young professionals; 0 as a college student.
- **54% are over the age of 60;** 43% are under the age of 60.
- **47.9% reported having been a Heights renter at some point;** 33.1% have not been a Heights renter; 19% rented previously but not in the Heights.

Why the Heights?

Homeowner respondents bought a house in the Heights because:

- The community reflects my values (57%)
- Love for neighborhood/community (52.1%)
- Buying a home is a good investment (49.3%)
- Affordability (46.5%)
- Owning feels more stable than renting (45.8%)
- More space (31%)
- I had a good experience as a Heights renter which made me want to buy a home here (18.3%)
- I wanted to get a pet (17.6%)
- I found my dream home (13.4%)
- I accessed grants/subsidies (4.2%)
- I inherited my home (3.5%)
- I don't own in the Heights (2.1%)

Homeowners get their information from...

- City of Cleveland Heights (85.2%)
- Word of mouth (59%)
- Heights Observer - e-news (57%)
- Heights Observer - print (50%)
- Area nonprofits/orgs (45.1%)
- CH-UH Library Check Us Out guide (38%)
- Community-wide group (36.6%)
- NextDoor (34.5%)
- Flyers in the community (29.6%)
- Other social media (31%)
- Neighborhood FB Group (28.2%)
- Part of neighborhood group (28.2%)
- Door-to-door flyers (25%)
- Heights businesses (21%)
- Other media (12.7%)
- Postcards/mailings (12.7%)
- Local news (Ch 19) (12%)
- City of University Heights (9.9%)
- I don't hear about events (4.2%)

Homeowner Dwelling Data

- **87.3% live in a single-family dwelling;** 9.2% live in a multi-family dwelling; 3.5% live in a condominium.
- **74.8% used a realtor to find their dwelling;** 19.4% bought directly from the previous owner; 2.2% have either inherited their dwelling or lived there their entire lives; 0.7% either used a city-run program or had a rent-to-own agreement.
- **On a scale of 1-5, 28% rated the ease of their experience finding their dwelling a 4 or a 5;** 30% rated it a 3; 8% rated it a 2; 7% rated it a 1.
- **58% reported having been cited for a code violation;** 42% have not.
 - **For those who have been cited, 73.2% hired a 3rd party to do the repairs;** 48.8% did the repairs themselves; 48.8% utilized a program from another organization; 6.1% have the issue remaining unresolved; 4.9% utilized a city-offered program; 1.2% are challenging the citation.
- **52% report their dwelling's mortgage as paid-in-full;** 14% pay a monthly mortgage of \$751-\$1,000; 10% pay \$1,001-\$1,250; 6% pay \$501-\$750; 5% pay \$1,251-\$1,500; 5% pay over \$2,000; 4% pay \$1,501-\$1,750; 3% pay \$1,751-\$2,000; 1.4% pay less than \$500.
- **79.8% pay less than $\frac{1}{3}$ of their gross monthly income towards their mortgage;** 14% pays exactly $\frac{1}{3}$; 8% pays more than $\frac{1}{3}$.

Homeowner Recommendations

- On a scale of 1-5, 36.4% rate their recommendation to buy a house in the Heights a 5; 27.9% rate it a 4; 22.9% rate it a 3; 7.1% rate it a 2; 5.7% rate it a 1.
- Top reasons for the selected rating:
 - Taxes are high (34)
 - City services are subpar (13)
 - Housing stock is old and repairs can be expensive (11)
 - Great neighbors/community (10)
 - Love for Cleveland Heights (10)
 - Housing inspectors subpar (6)
 - Depends on the kind of community someone is looking for (5)
 - City government is ineffective (5)
 - Good, affordable houses (4)
 - The community is unsafe (4)
 - Homeownership isn't for everyone (3)
 - Housing inspectors aren't citing violations enough (3)
 - Poor school system (3)

Homeowner Sense of Belonging

- On a scale of 1-5, 45.4% rated their sense of belonging as 5; 30.5% rated as a 4; 14% as a 3; 6.4% as a 2; 3.5% as a 1.
- On a scale of 1-5, 56% rated their investment in the community as a 5; 29.1% rated a 4; 12.8% rated a 3; 2.1% rated a 2; 0 rated a 1.

Why the ratings of 3 or above:

- I am involved in our city (33)
- I know my neighbors (28)
- I have lived here a long time (18)
- I love our community (15)
- I attend community events (10)
- The community reflects my values (7)
- I was born & raised here (6)
- I am a homeowner (6)
- I stay up to date with news (6)
- I live and work here (5)
- I support the schools (5)
- The community is inclusive (5)
- My friends and family are here (5)
- I love my neighborhood (5)

Why the ratings of 1 or 2:

- I like my house (2)
- I am less connected to my neighborhood and more connected to the community as a whole (2)
- I feel "stuck" here (2)
- I only know a few neighbors (1)
- I'm new to the community (1)
- I've lived here my whole life (1)
- My house is paid for (1)
- I am a Conservative Republican and don't feel welcome (1)
- I'm ready to move out of the Heights (1)
- I moved here during the pandemic and it's been hard to find a way to get involved (1)
- The community is very transient which makes it hard to form relationships (1)

Homeowners on the nearby rental properties

71.6% reported single family rental properties in their neighborhood; 63.1% multiple-family homes; 27% apartment buildings with 4 or more units; 9.9% condos/townhouses; 9.2% are unsure; 5% in-law/carriage house apartments or there are no rental properties nearby.

66.4% perceive that rental properties are not as well-kept as owner occupied; 33% can't tell the difference; 0.7% perceive that rental properties are better-kept than owner occupied.

Homeowners perception on renter involvement

- **47.5% are unsure if renters are engaged in the community;** 27.3% believe renters are engaged in the community; 25.2% do not believe renters are engaged in the community.
- **Reasons homeowners believe renters do or do not participate in community events:**
 - I don't know what makes a renter participate/not participate (49.6%)
 - Renters are temporary/transient (31.6%)
 - Renters are not invested in the neighborhood/community (26.3%)
 - Renters don't know about neighborhood/community events (25.6%)
 - Renters are invested in the neighborhood/community (15.8%)
 - Renters initiate/help plan neighborhood/community events (6%)

Homeowners' own community involvement

- **65.5% are engaged in the community;** 27.5% sometimes are engaged in the community; 7% are not engaged in the community.
- **Homeowners do or do not participate in community events because:**
 - I am invested in the neighborhood/community (80%)
 - I have time to participate (46.4%)
 - I initiate/help plan neighborhood/community events (34.3%)
 - I don't know about neighborhood/community events (6.8%)
 - I am too busy to participate (8.6%)
 - I am avoiding crowds/group activities for health reasons (1.4%)
 - I am not invested in the neighborhood/community (0.7%)

Homeowner comments:

"I have left the city once, and am uncertain if I will be for good, due to the complete negligence, and lack of landlord accountability for the rental property behind my house. Tenants with excess animals, trash continually strewn around the property, loud music & high volume of 'visitors' have made neighbors miserable. I know it's a problem the city faces, but I for one, am tired of living next to it. Currently a new owner -- who lives in Seattle. Good tenants for the first time in 25 years show me of how things could be when rentals are treated as real investments and not throw away short term money makers. I think the city needs to come up with much more stringent laws to hold rental property owners accountable. I understand this is no easy task, but it goes hand in hand with the inspection and citation problem. "

"I'm looking forward to the changes happening in the Heights. We're a nice community, and having amenities like restaurants, shops, libraries, etc, make it a wonderful place to live."

"I really, really, really wish that residential landlords were being held accountable for the condition of their properties. So many of them do the absolute bare minimum - many less than that - and don't appear to care about the community or take pride in maintaining their properties. This brings down the property values of other homes in the area, and attracts less desirable tenants."

"Most renters in my neighborhood are CWRU students - transient."

Homeowner comments (cont'd.):

"I have heard negative comments about out-of-town landlords. It seems like landlords should be required to register and to have a local contact (maybe in the county) who is responsible for addressing complaints."

"Things are good on my street right now, but have had issues in the past. Unsupervised teenagers created havoc and many crimes in our neighborhood in the past. Unscrupulous landlords have been an issue at times."

"Lack of unity in values/behavior is happening all over the USA so let's just do the best we can to keep people informed and motivated! Smiles help."

"Both Landlords and Tenants need to abide by rules -- there are terrible landlords and there are terrible tenants. Both need to be held to standards."

"A close friend had to stay with me last winter because the boiler in her apartment building exploded. She was without heat for over 30 days. She paid her rent on escrow and took him to court. Her former landlord faced no fines or legal penalties."

"Many rental properties are drug homes and nothing is done."

"Neglected house next me to has been empty, overgrown and falling down for some years now."

Homeowner comments (cont'd.):

"Renters on my street don't care about the aesthetics of their rental home and the landlords don't either. They also don't care if they are rude or a nuisance to their neighbors."

"Landlords in general, some exceptions, are not maintaining properties."

"I believe Lakewood has a mandatory once a year landlord seminar. Cleveland Heights had a volunteer landlord seminar for fair housing updates and tips for landlords, but they no longer do this. I always went and was a presenter too and found these were helpful."

"Cleveland Heights will not attract wage earners, young professionals, or almost anyone with the rising crime rate and lack of security and attractiveness of our community, lack of city services and shopping availability, along with a decent, effective educational standards and ratings for reading and arithmetic, as well as subjects needed to survive & develop into adulthood, and a secure, safe school system. Too much of our tax dollars are going to support a school system that is consistently losing students (as population dwindles) and their test scores are dwindling as well, & not enough toward programs, and services that might make Cleveland Heights thrive."

"Some landlords have been AWFUL! When the needs of the tenants and the upkeep of the property are neglected the whole neighborhood suffers."

Homeowner comments (cont'd.):

"The empty houses on my street are a new (and not welcome) phenomenon. I have had many renters live next to me with no issues. I would much rather have these houses occupied than just sitting empty. If there is a way to encourage people to not leave houses empty, I would support it. [While I do not know for sure who currently owns these houses, I suspect it is not a local landlord as I NEVER see anyone there.]"

"We have had many problems with police having to be called. Landlords need to take more responsibility for their tenants and their behaviors. Unless the city does something to mitigate renters who continually create problems more families will move out of the Heights. For the first time in 30 years I have thought it might be time to leave. We are a community who values diversity and acceptance of others. But when we have to call the police because our neighbors who happen to rent with more people than should be in the home who cause trouble and litter constantly it gets really old. They have had gangs of women screaming, it's ridiculous. They shot off dangerous fireworks - no cops came even after I called. They could have set our house on fire. They have no respect and no desire to be part of a community. It's a shame. All of us black and white feel the same way. Landlords need to take responsibility for their tenants. Until this last year I have never called the police on a neighbor and we have had many renters in the street. But this year it's been terrible. Also we had the swat and fbi throwing flash bangs to get another renter out of the house because they had a warrant. It was a mess. The very next day two For Sale signs went up. Please do something to protect our neighborhood or else more people will leave."

Homeowner comments (cont'd.):

"I think these landlords are ruining our neighborhood with the lax care of their rental properties ...however, the city's housing department does not consistently enforce the rules that would help to turn the city around either. Garbage, litter, tall grass, and houses in disrepair continue to plague the neighborhood, especially north of mayfield and Monticello."

"JCU students are sometimes loud or disruptive, don't care for homes the way homeowners do, and some renters are transient, not invested."

"The foreclosure crisis 15 years ago doomed much of city to dysfunction, poverty, lower home values and transient residents via Section 8 and other welfare programs... also the city/county use Oxford Noble to DUMP poor families on benefits as well as immigrants groups (legal or illegal)....they consider us to be EAST CLEVELAND ADJACENT... beneath contempt."

"It's very loud here and I don't feel very safe. I hope to move in 3-5 years."

"Too many single family homes are becoming rental, which reduces the opportunity to have long-term invested residents."

Compare & Contrast

Respondent demographics - by comparison

All respondents

93% live in Cleveland Heights; 3.2% in University Heights.

82% identify as White; 9.5% as Black.

69.1% identify as a woman; 28.2% as a man

54.5% are under the age of 60.

51.3% have lived in the Heights more than 20 years.

- 19.6% 1-5 years
- 12.2% 5-10 years
- 10% 10-20 years
- 4.2% 0-1 years

Respondents who are renters:

92.8% live in Cleveland Heights; 4.8% in University Heights.

69% identify as White; 16.7% as Black.

74% identify as a woman; 19% as a man.

88% are under the age of 60.

45.4% have lived in the Heights 1-5 years

- 21% over 20 years
- 17% 0-1 years
- 9.5% 5-10 years
- 7% 10-20 years

Respondents who are homeowners:

94% live in Cleveland Heights; 2.5% in University Heights.

86% identify as White; 7% as Black.

67% identify as a woman; 31% as a man.

54% are over the age of 60.

60% have lived in the Heights more than 20 years.

- 13% 5-10 years
- 12% 1-5 years
- 11% 10-20 years
- 0.7% 0-1 years

Our renters and homeowners respondents - by comparison

Our renter respondents:

- **39.1% identify as an established Heights resident**
- 32.8% as a new Heights resident
- 31.3% as a young professional
- 21.9% have at least one child
- 20.3% are seniors
- 6.3% college students

Landlords report on their tenants:

- **73.9% of tenants are young professionals**
- 47.8% are established Heights residents
- 43.5% have at least one child
- 39.1% are college students
- 34.8% are new Heights residents; 26.1% are seniors
- 0% are only friends/family; 0% landlords reported not knowing who their tenants were at all

Our homeowner respondents:

- **61% identify as an established Heights resident**
- 39% as a senior
- 23.4% as having at least one child
- 10.6% as new Heights residents
- 6.4% as young professionals
- 0% as a college student



Why the Heights - by comparison

Why renters chose the Heights:

- **54.9% rent in the Heights because they feel this community aligns with their values.**
- 51% feel the Heights offers the amenities/assets they are looking for (city services, schools, restaurants, nightlife, local retail, greenspace, etc.).
- 47.1% feel renting in the Heights is convenient.
- 33.3% rent in the Heights because it's so affordable.
- 29.4% rent in the Heights because they moved here with friends/family who selected this community.
- 21.6% selected "other" as a reason for renting in the Heights.
- 17.6% reported renting in the Heights because they're considering buying a home here; 17.6% also reported that they selected the Heights because they grew up here.
- 11.8% opted to rent in the Heights because of the proximity to their college or university.

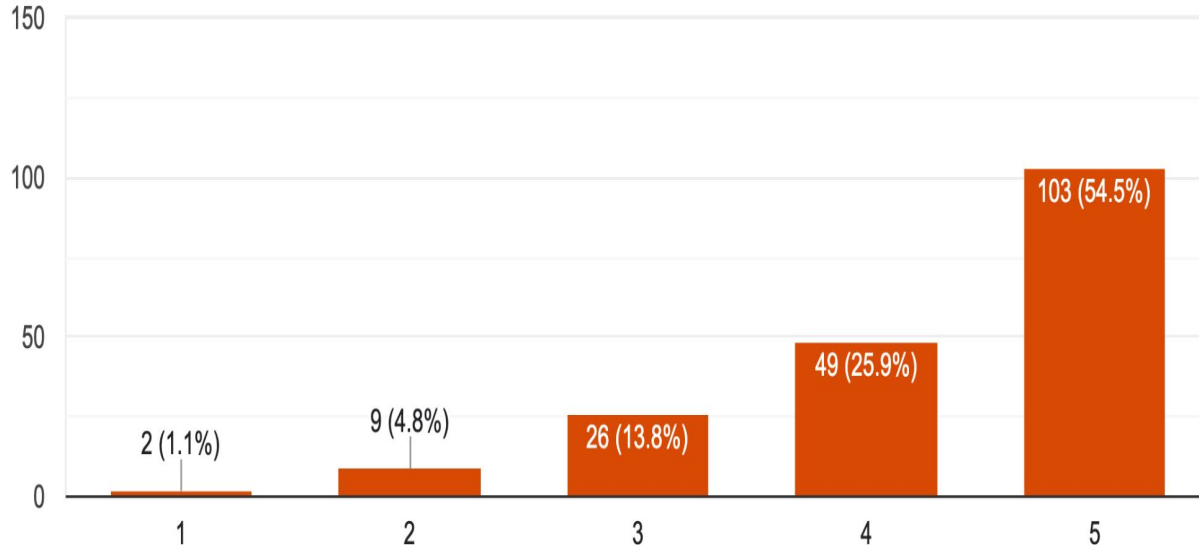
Why homeowners chose the Heights:

- **57% feel the community aligns with their values.**
- 52.1% report loving their neighborhood/community.
- 49.3% feel buying a home is a good investment.
- 46.5% feel the Heights is affordable.
- 45.8% report that owning feels more stable than renting.
- 31% wanted more space.
- 18.3% had a good experience as a Heights renter which made them want to buy a home here.
- 17.6% wanted to get a pet.
- 13.4% found my dream home.
- 4.2% accessed grants/subsidies.
- 3.5% inherited their home.

Investment in the Heights

Please rate your investment in the Heights community (1 being "not at all invested" to 5 being "very invested")

189 responses



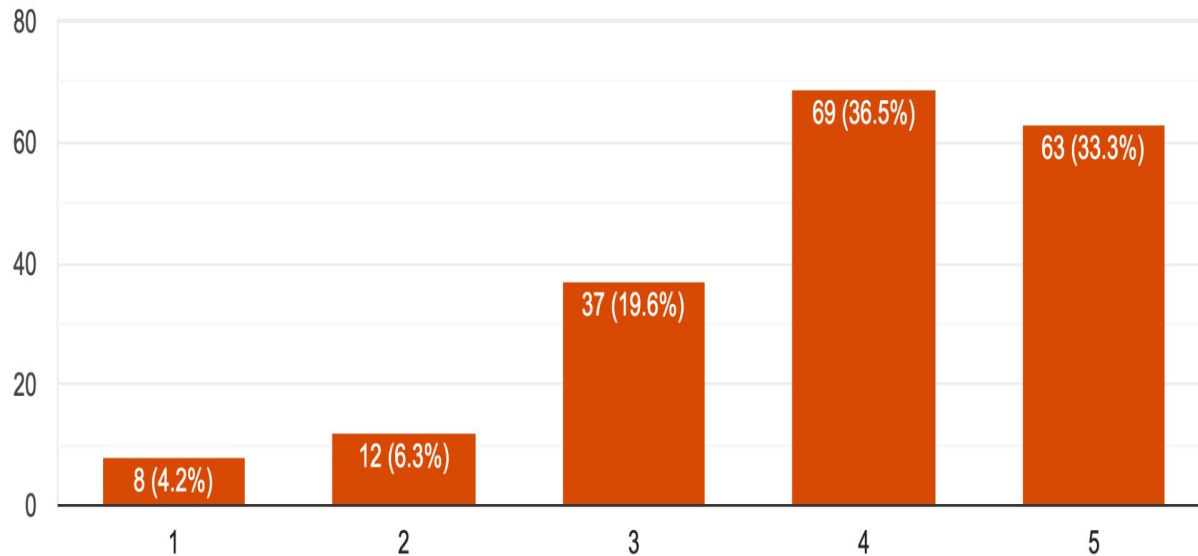
When all 189 survey participants responded, 54.5% rated their investment in the Heights a 5 on a scale of 1-5 (5 being "very invested"), the highest grossing response on the scale.

- When **only renters** answered the same question, the most popular response was a 4 (34.7%).
- When **only homeowners** answer the same question, the most popular response was a 5 (56%).
- When **only landlords** answered the same question, the most popular response was a 5 (76.9%).

Sense of Belonging in the Heights

Please rate your sense of belonging in the Heights community (1 being "very low" to 5 being "very high")

189 responses



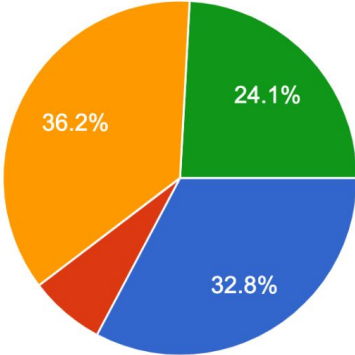
When all 189 survey participants responded, 36.5% rated their sense of belonging in the Heights a 4 on a scale of 1-5 (4 being "high"), the highest grossing response on the scale.

- When **only renters** answered the same question, the most popular response was a 4 (41.7%).
- When **only homeowners** answer the same question, the most popular response was a 5 (45.4%).
- **Landlords** were not surveyed on this question.

Community Involvement by comparison:

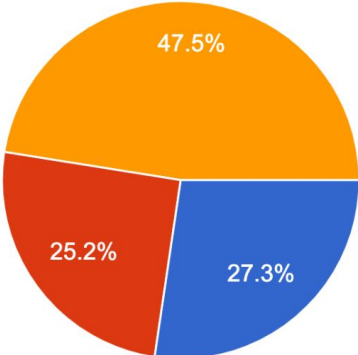
Renter participation:

- 36.2% sometimes participate in community events
- 32.8% do participate
- 24.1% aren't aware of community events
- 6.9% don't participate



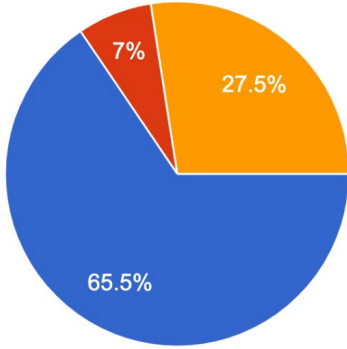
Homeowner perception of renter participation:

- 47.5% of homeowners don't know if renters participate in community events
- 27.3% believe renters do participate
- 25.2% believe renters don't participate



Homeowner participation

- 65.5% of homeowners participate in community events
- 27.5% sometimes participate
- 7% don't participate



Top 10 information sources by comparison:

Renter information sources:

- **City of Cleveland Heights (57.1%)**
- Flyers in the community (53.6%)
- Word of mouth (50%)
- Heights Observer (39.3%)
- Other social media (33.9%)
- Neighborhood groups (30.4%)
- Neighborhood Facebook Group (30.4%)
- CH-UH Library “Check Us Out” guide (30.4%)
- NextDoor (26.80%)
- Area nonprofits/orgs (25%)

Homeowner information sources:

- **City of Cleveland Heights (85.2%)**
- Word of mouth (59%)
- Heights Observer - e-news (57%)
- Heights Observer - print (50%)
- Area nonprofits/orgs (45.1%)
- CH-UH Library Check Us Out guide (38%)
- Community-wide group (36.6%)
- NextDoor (34.5%)
- Flyers in the community (29.6%)
- Other social media (31%)

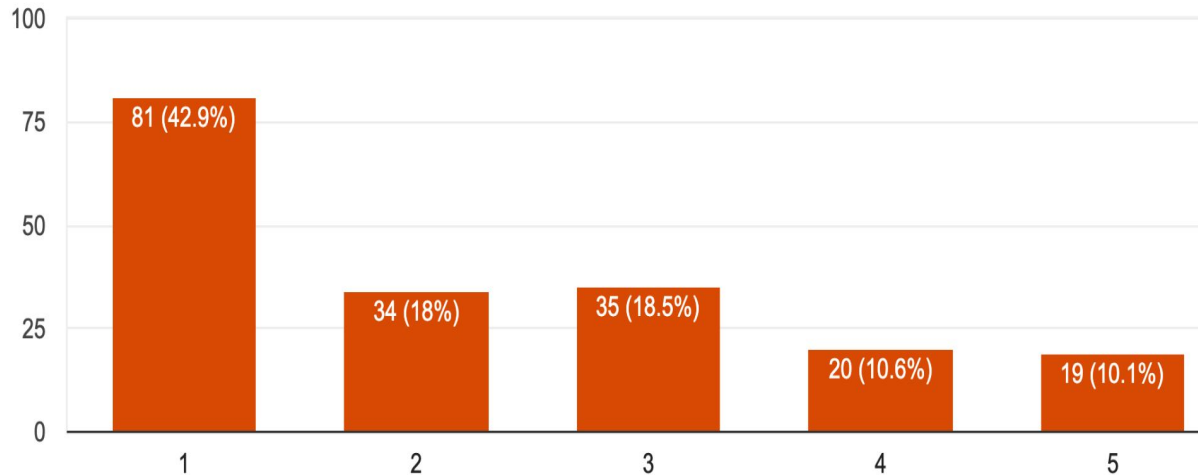
Landlords information sources:

- **City of Cleveland Heights resources (92.30%)**
- City of Cleveland Heights personnel (42.30%)
- Word of mouth (35.80%)
- Another organization or nonprofit (34.60%)
- City of Cleveland Heights elected officials (30.80%)
- Their tenants (23.10%)
- Other landlords (23.10%)
- Neighbors (23.10%)
- City of University Heights personnel (7.70%)
- City of University Heights elected officials (3.80%)

The Ohio Landlord-Tenant Law:

How familiar are you with the Ohio Landlord-Tenant law? (1 being "not at all familiar," 5 being "very familiar")

189 responses



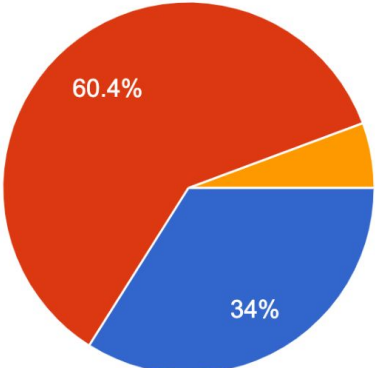
When all 189 survey participants responded, 42.9% rated their knowledge of the Ohio Landlord-Tenant Law a 1 on a scale of 1-5, the highest grossing response on the scale.

- When **only renters** answered the same question, the most popular response was a 1 (44.4%).
- When **only homeowners** answer the same question, the most popular response was a 1 (40.8%).
- When **only landlords** answered the same question, the most popular response was a 4 or a 5 (tied at 32%).

Property upkeep by comparison:

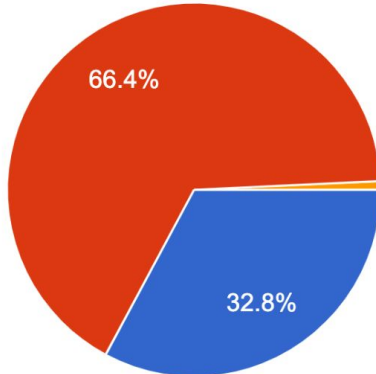
Renter perception:

- 60.4% report that the upkeep on the rental properties isn't as well maintained as the upkeep on owner-occupied
- 34% report the upkeep is about the same.
- 5.7% report that the upkeep on rental properties is better maintained than owner occupied



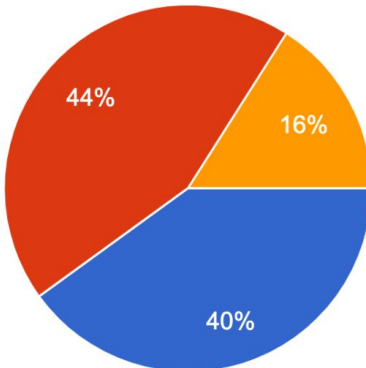
Homeowner perception

- 66.4% report that the upkeep on the rental properties isn't as well maintained as the upkeep on owner-occupied
- 32.8% report the upkeep is about the same.
- 0.7% report that the upkeep on rental properties is better maintained than owner occupied



Landlord perception

- 44% report that the upkeep on the rental properties isn't as well maintained as the upkeep on owner-occupied
- 40% report the upkeep is about the same.
- 16% report that the upkeep on rental properties is better maintained than owner



Some dollars & cents from our respondents:

Rent being paid:

- 28% reported paying \$751-\$1,000/mo. for rent
- 28% also reported paying \$1,001-\$1250/mo.
- 18% reported paying \$1,251-\$1,500/mo.
- 12% reported paying \$1,501-\$1,750/mo.
- 6% reported paying \$501-\$750/mo; 6% reported paying over \$2,000/mo.
- 0 reported paying less than \$250/mo. or \$1,751-\$2,000/mo.

48.9% pay less than $\frac{1}{3}$ of their gross monthly income towards their mortgage; 25% pays exactly $\frac{1}{3}$ or more than $\frac{1}{3}$

Mortgage being paid:

- 52% report their dwelling's mortgage as paid-in-full
- 14% pay a monthly mortgage of \$751-\$1,000
- 10% pay \$1,001-\$1,250
- 6% pay \$501-\$750
- 5% pay \$1,251-\$1,500
- 5% pay over \$2,000
- 4% pay \$1,501-\$1,750
- 3% pay \$1,751-\$2,000
- 1.4% pay less than \$500.

79.8% pay less than $\frac{1}{3}$ of their gross monthly income towards their mortgage; 14% pays exactly $\frac{1}{3}$; 8% pays more than $\frac{1}{3}$

Average rent being charged:

- 35% charge \$1,001-\$1,250
- 26% charge \$1,251-\$1,500
- 22% charge \$751-\$1,000
- 9% charge \$1,751-\$2,000
- 4% charge \$501-\$750 or over \$2,000
- 0 charge less than \$500



ACTION

Respondents are VERY interested in:

- Creating city ordinances that would favor more local landlords instead of out-of-state investors (56%)
- Creating a clear & equitable system for the upkeep of rental properties in disrepair (45%)
- Advocating for more support/protection to prevent unfair housing practices, like dramatic rent increases (40%)
- Establishing classes/workshops for landlords to be more aware of their rights & responsibilities (36%)
- Advocating for improved lead abatement programs/processes (35%)
- Bringing greater awareness to renter laws/ordinances (35%)
- Bringing greater awareness to landlord laws/ordinances (35%)
- Advocating for easier/more affordable paths to homeownership (31%)

Respondents are **INTERESTED** in advocating for:

- Creating better community cohesion that would lessen the divide between renters & homeowners (38%)
- Advocating to clarify legal processes as they relate to rental properties in the Heights (37%)
- Creating stronger supports for efficient and cost-effect repairs for residences with code violations (34%)
- Establishing a landlord-tenant coalition in the Heights for information and advocacy on rental property issues (32%)
- Establishing classes/workshops for renters to be more aware of their rights & responsibilities (30%)

Respondents are **NEUTRAL** about advocating for:

- Establishing a Tenants' Rights organization or group in the Heights (26%)

There were no topics respondents were a little or not interested in advocating for.

Wave and Say Hello!

On a scale of 1-5, **81.5%** of respondents rate their frequency of waving and saying hello to someone crossing their path as a 5; **33.9%** rate their frequency a 4; **16.1%** rate their frequency a 3; **2.2%** rate a their frequency a 2; and **1.1%** rate their frequency a 1.

81.9% of respondents believe something as simple as waving and saying hello to someone can increase a sense of belonging in the community; **15.4%** believe it only sometimes increases a sense of belonging; **2.7%** don't believe this creates a sense of belonging.

Assuming it was safe to do so, **85.7%** reported being willing to wave and say hello to help build a stronger sense of community and belonging; **12.1%** said they might be willing to do so; **2.2%** are not willing to do so.



Additional activities respondents would be willing to participate in to build community in their neighborhoods:

- Block parties (15)
- Saying hello/being neighborly (10)
- More neighborhood events (7)
- Bring back the Welcome Wagon (5)
- Focus less on renters vs homeowners and be good neighbors (2)
- Neighborhood cleanups (2)



TAKEAWAYS

Topline Takeaways:

- Renters in the Heights have chosen this community because it aligns with their values (54.9%), feel the Heights has a lot to offer (51%), and feel that renting in the Heights is convenient (47.1%) & affordable (33.3%), among other reasons. Homeowners in the Heights, meanwhile, have chosen this community because the community reflects their values (57%), love for their neighborhoods/the community as a whole (52.1%), buying a home is a good investment (49.3%) & affordability (46.5%), among other reasons. This indicates that Heights residents have chosen to live here for very similar reasons – especially when it comes to shared values.
- 48% of renter respondents indicated they were planning to buy a home within the next 5 years, but 42.9% if those renters were unsure if they wanted to buy in the Heights. Affordability was reported as both the biggest pro (90.9%) and the biggest con (52.4%).
- Landlords, homeowners, and renters all want more equitable housing inspections performed by the city. Inconsistency in how citations are (or are not) handed out came up with all three groups. Neglected properties, in general, make a neighborhood less desirable, regardless if the dwellings are rentals or owner-occupied.
- Local landlords are favorable over out-of-state landlords because of their knowledge of their tenants and their knowledge of the community.
- While homeowners reported a higher engagement with community activities (65.5% vs 32.8%), more renters reported participating in community events than homeowners perceived they did (32.8% vs 27.3%).
- Both homeowners and renters identify most as “established Heights residents” (61% homeowners; 39.1% renters) while landlords’ top identifier of their tenants was “young professionals” (73.9%).
- 85.7% of respondents reported being willing to do something as simple as waving and saying hello to neighbors as a means of building community.

What is noteworthy:

- 54.4% of respondents rated their investment in the Heights a 5 while only 33.3% rated their sense of belonging a 5 (with a 4 being the most popular response at 36.5%). This disparity indicates that stronger efforts to community-build, regardless if residents are renters or homeowners, would help to create a more cohesive Heights community.

FACTS ABOUT

Who what when where why how

OUR STATS

About this survey:

This survey was created and distributed as part of the [Crowdsourced Conversations 2023 Forum Series](#), being conducted in partnership with FutureHeights, Reaching Heights, Home Repair Resource Center, City of Cleveland Heights Racial Justice Task Force, Racial Inequity Repair Committee of Forest Hill Church, representatives of Cleveland Heights City Council, and more.

Survey data was collected from July 1 through July 31, 2023. Respondents completed an online-only Google Form that was distributed via email, on social media, through the media, via fliers, and through word of mouth.

This survey data analysis was completed by FutureHeights and shared with forum series partners, including elected officials, and is available for the community to review.

Any questions, please contact Sarah - swolf@futureheights.org.