

Service needs and satisfaction levels of hi-rise residents

*A report to the Saint Paul
Public Housing Agency*

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December 2002

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Acknowledgments

Many people contributed to this report and deserve acknowledgement. From the Saint Paul Public Housing Agency, hi-rise principal manager Nina Semmelroth oversaw the project. Others who contributed to the project include Elaine Anderson, Al Hester, and the following building managers and housing service coordinators: Lynn Connolly, Judy Dahlberg, Patti Doncits, Tina Gohl, Cheryl Hawley, Margaret Hinrichs, Julia Hupperts, Jen Jackson, Kathi Kirchoff, Karen Libra, Paul LaBelle, Hlee Lee, Lou Ann Leski, Kirk Lyksett, Patty Minehan, Mary Mullen, Kim Nguyen, Donna Rose, and Sandy Runquist.

Wilder Research Center staff who contributed to the project include the following interviewers: Nubberd Gonzalez, Deirdre Hinz, Solange Huynh, Tou Lee, Joualery Moua, Wayne Ramsden, Karen Swenson, Mee Yang, Sia Yang, Christina R Adams, Anne Davis, Erin Englebert, Beth Hastings, Sandra McKee, Margaret Peterson, Kristin Ulstad, and Derek Wenz. Michael Burke and Bernardo Gonzalez supervised interviewers, and Uri Mendelberg and Karen Ulstad oversaw data collection operations. Lue Thao translated the instrument to Hmong. Sai Lee and Kari Danielson entered the data. Marilyn Conrad and Louann Graham edited the instruments, mailings, and report. Rick Chase and Phil Cooper helped to design the instrument, analysis, and reporting. Special thanks to Swati Deo who coordinated the data collection effort and April Lott who performed the data analysis.

Finally, thanks to the 1,462 hi-rise residents who took time to participate in the survey.

Summary

This survey of 1,462 Saint Paul Public Housing Agency hi-rise residents found high levels of satisfaction with everything from pest control and building maintenance to social services and the congregate dining programs available in most buildings. Although the service needs among hi-rise residents are largely met, the survey results do point to some opportunities for improving or expanding a number of on-site services for residents.

The Saint Paul Public Housing Agency (PHA) owns and operates 16 hi-rise apartments, catering mainly to lower-income single adults, including seniors, veterans, students, and disabled adults. Nearly 60 percent of all residents responded to the survey, which was developed by Wilder Research Center and the PHA to assess resident service needs and satisfaction with existing services and building conditions. The survey was translated into Hmong and Russian.

The vast majority of residents give high ratings to their building's maintenance, peace and quiet, safety and security, and the PHA staff. Only 9 percent of respondents are planning on moving out of PHA housing in the near future (but another 22% indicate that they "don't know" – they might move or they might not).

Most residents appear to be getting the help they need. About one-third of hi-rise residents rely on fellow residents for help with things like getting to a doctor, getting to a store, or in the case of an emergency. About one-third indicate they need some help with daily tasks like housework and shopping, and most were getting the help they need. Still, up to five percent say they are not receiving the help they need with daily tasks, and nearly one in 5 report that they were not able to go somewhere because of transportation in the month prior to filling out the survey.

Respondents generally are aware of the services available in their buildings, but a small number of those unaware of services indicate that they would like to use them. Indeed 14 percent of respondents indicate that they had experienced some problems accessing services in their buildings, and lack of knowledge is the most commonly-indicated barrier to accessing services.

The survey results also suggest that some services could be expanded. For example, many residents express interest in attending exercise classes and having access to computers. Some residents also express an interest in expanded access to on-site medical services, and there appears to be some interest in supportive living services among residents not currently enrolled in any of three programs currently available at select hi-rises (ALP, CHSP, ASI).

The survey suggests that the PHA is largely successful in its efforts to provide its hi-rise residents with a good living environment and high-quality services. We hope that the detailed results presented in the report will assist the PHA in its continual efforts to connect residents with the services they need, in some cases by targeting resident service awareness, and in others by maintaining or expanding service availability.

Background and methodology

In the summer of 2001 the Saint Paul Public Housing Agency (PHA) hired Wilder Research Center to perform a needs assessment survey of the residents of its 16 hi-rise apartment buildings. The hi-rise buildings, located in various neighborhoods throughout St. Paul, primarily serve single adults with low incomes. The income eligibility threshold is the Department of Housing and Urban Development's (HUD) "low-income" level, which is 80 percent of the area's median income (an income of \$38,100 or lower currently qualifies a single person household as "low-income"). For hi-rise housing, the St. Paul PHA gives first priority to apartment-seekers age 62 and older, disabled adults, and those eligible for its supported living services. Veterans and residents of St. Paul also receive priority. Students are admitted ahead of other non-elderly, non-disabled adults.

The survey was conducted primarily as a self-administered questionnaire. Wilder Research Center developed the survey instrument through a series of meetings with PHA staff. The instrument was translated into the two largest non-English languages represented among hi-rise residents: Hmong and Russian. A questionnaire was mailed to each hi-rise resident, along with a cover letter signed by St. Paul PHA Executive Director, Jon Gutzmann. Residents were assured confidentiality and offered "privacy envelopes" in which to seal their completed survey. Residents were instructed to return completed surveys to the marked "survey return boxes" in their building. To encourage participation, residents were given the option of entering into a drawing for one of two \$20 Target gift certificates given away at each building by writing their apartment number on their questionnaire. The initial mailings also included translations in Hmong and Russian instructing residents able to read those languages how to obtain a translated questionnaire.

The cover letters indicated times that Wilder Research Center interviewers would be available at the hi-rise buildings to assist residents with the questionnaire. When possible, bi-lingual interviewers fluent in Hmong or Spanish conducted the site visits. Interviewers made at least two site visits to each building and canvassed door-to-door in selected buildings with lower response levels. Wilder Research Center interviewers also called selected buildings to encourage residents to complete their questionnaires; these residents were also given the opportunity to complete the survey over the telephone.

The combined data collection efforts, which also included posted fliers, mailed reminder postcards, and encouragement from PHA staff, resulted in completed surveys from nearly 60 percent of all hi-rise residents, as shown in Figure 1.

1. Completed questionnaires by building

	Occupied units*	Completes	Percentage complete
Central	144	70	49%
Cleveland	144	76	53%
Dunedin	137	79	58%
Edgerton	209	128	61%
Exchange	188	97	52%
Front	147	94	64%
Hamline	180	122	68%
Iowa	145	96	66%
Montreal	182	119	65%
Mt. Airy	151	106	70%
Neill	100	68	68%
Ravoux	217	114	53%
Seal	144	76	53%
Valley	154	83	54%
Wabasha	69	42	61%
Wilson	182	92	51%
TOTAL	2,493	1,462	59%

* As of February, 2002

Source: St. Paul Public Housing Agency (occupied units)

The report that follows provides a narrative summary of the survey results. Readers are encouraged to consult the appendices for a summary of the open-ended responses written by survey respondents, and for a series of tables detailing the results of the survey, cross-tabulated by building and by several resident characteristics.¹ The survey results should assist the PHA in its continual efforts to provide high-quality, safe, and affordable living environments, and to connect residents with needed services.

¹ PHA staff were provided with a comprehensive listing of the open-ended responses given by residents of each building.

Survey results

Characteristics of survey respondents

Demographics

One reason for asking survey respondents about their demographic characteristics is to enable comparisons between the sample and the study population. As shown in Figure 2, the characteristics of residents who returned surveys are fairly similar to the characteristics of all residents according to the Saint Paul PHA. This suggests that the opinions, experiences, and needs indicated by the survey respondents are fairly representative of those of the entire hi-rise population. Younger residents and those identifying as African American were, however, somewhat underrepresented among those returning surveys.

2. Demographic comparison: all hi-rise residents versus survey respondents

	All hi-rise residents	Survey respondents
Age		
39 or younger	23%	15%
40 to 49	14%	13%
50 to 59	17%	18%
60 to 69	17%	21%
70 to 79	17%	19%
80 to 89	16%	11%
90 and older	3%	3%
Race and ethnicity*		
White	67%	66%
Black/African American	25%	17%
Asian/Pacific Islander	8%	8%
Hispanic/Latino	3%	3%
Native American	1%	1%
Other	-	5%

* Percentage for all hi-rise residents sums to more than 100% since PHA administrative data tracks Hispanic/Latino ethnicity separately from race.

Source: St. Paul Public Housing Agency, February 2002 (all hi-rise residents)

The survey also asked about several other demographic characteristics. In terms of gender, more respondents were women than men (63% compared to 37%). Twelve percent of respondents indicated they were receiving education or training – most likely at a college or university – including over three-fifths of those under age 30.

Most respondents were born in the United States (82%). Those born elsewhere come from a number of other countries, most commonly including Asian countries, such as Laos and Vietnam, and African countries, such as Somalia and Ethiopia. Nearly all Asian respondents were born outside of the U.S., as were almost half of Latinos, but only five percent of Whites. Around half of respondents living at the Central and Mt. Airy hi-rises were born outside the U.S.

Most respondents indicated that they could read English (91%). Of those who indicated that they could not read English, 31 percent speak Hmong as their main language, followed by 16 percent who speak Russian, 14 percent who speak Vietnamese, and 14 percent who speak Spanish. Fifty-three percent of those who could not read English indicated that they could read in their main language. Higher percentages of respondents age 60 and older could not read English.

Forty-seven percent of respondents indicated that they had a physical disability that prevents them from “working, driving or other daily functions,” and 32 percent reported that they had been diagnosed with an emotional or mental health problem at some time in their life.

Length of residence and reasons for moving into hi-rise housing

The residents who completed surveys had lived in PHA housing an average of 7 years. Thirteen percent had lived in PHA housing for less than 1 year. About two-fifths had lived there one to five years. Just over one-fifth had lived there 6 to 10 years or more, and nearly a quarter indicated longer than 10 years.

When asked to choose from a list of reasons for originally moving into their hi-rise apartment, 91 percent of respondents indicated they did so because of affordable rent. Just about three-fourths said the apartment quality was a reason they moved in. Other common reasons included: the layout of the apartment meeting their needs; that it was the first apartment to open up; there was good transportation nearby; and that the building was located in a safe and low crime neighborhood.

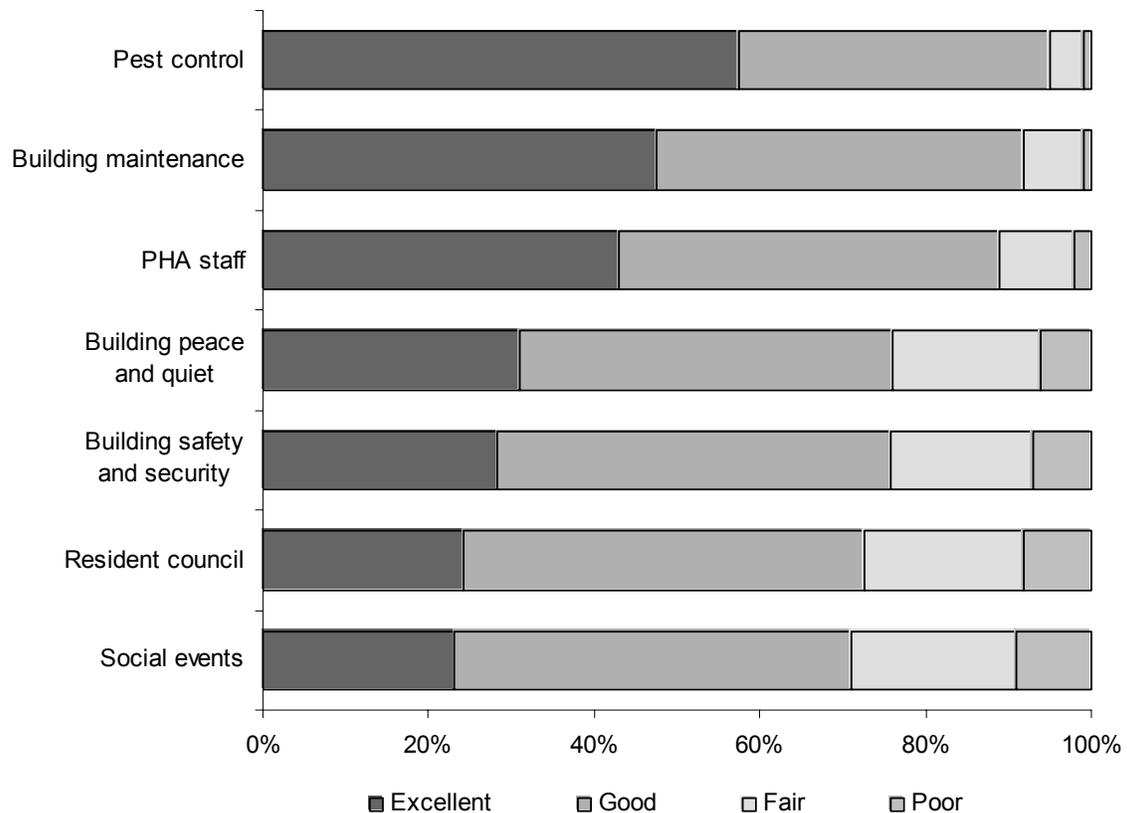
Resident satisfaction

Ratings of PHA hi-rise characteristics

Residents were asked to rate different aspects of their building and building services. As shown in Figure 3, the results were quite favorable: 96 percent of residents gave good or excellent ratings to pest control; 91 percent rated “building maintenance in general” good or excellent; and 89 percent of residents rated PHA staff good or excellent.

About three-fourths of all residents gave positive ratings to “building peace and quiet” and “building safety and security.” Social events planning received the lowest ratings, with 29 percent saying it was fair or poor. Similarly, 27 percent of respondents rated their resident council either fair or poor.

3. Resident ratings of building characteristics



Note: *N = approximately 1,440 for all questions except 1,377 for social events (some residents chose not to respond to certain items).*

Laundry room facilities

Ninety percent of respondents use their building's laundry room, and 82 percent of laundry room users give good or excellent ratings. Fifteen percent said the laundry room is fine the way it is, but among those with lower levels of satisfaction, some suggestions for improving laundry rooms included increased cleanliness and increasing the number of washers and dryers.

Twenty-three percent of respondents who do not use the laundry room said they would like to. Common reasons for not using the laundry room include not being able to do laundry, having someone else or a service doing their laundry, doing laundry at a family member's house, or not liking the laundry facilities for various reasons.

Plans to move

Most residents – 69 percent – intend to stay put. Nine percent of respondents are planning on moving out of PHA housing in the next three years. Another 22 percent don't know if they will be moving. Respondents most commonly listed various personal reasons for moving. Other common reasons include: wanting or finding other housing; a need for more space; and safety and security concerns.

More respondents living in Central and Exchange said they will be moving in the next three years than residents of other buildings. In general, the longer residents have lived in PHA housing, the less likely they are to move. Respondents age 29 or younger were the most likely to say they will be moving in the next three years.

Resident service needs

The primary purpose of the survey was to assess resident service needs. This was done through three series of questions. The first series assessed general service needs, such as the ability of residents to shop on their own or to prepare their own meals. The second series dealt with 10 services available at select hi-rise buildings. In this series we asked questions designed to help assess resident awareness of existing services, usage of services, and ratings of these services. This series was also used to measure demand for the services in buildings where the service was not available – and among residents who were not aware that the service was available in their building. The third series of service-related questions asked residents about their likelihood of using each of 10 potential services that could be offered in PHA hi-rise buildings.

General needs

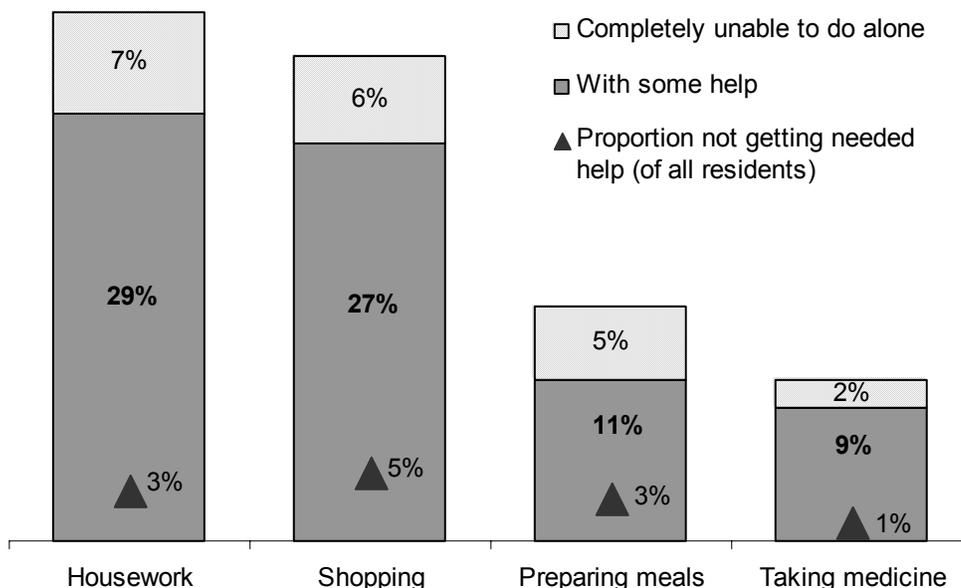
The first “general needs” question asked whether residents “have family, friends or neighbors who give you help when you need it, such as help going to the doctor, to the store, or in case of an emergency.” Seventy-two percent of residents reported that they did, and just over half of these residents indicated that they received help from another resident in their building (34% of all respondents).

Three-fourths of respondents with a physical disability that prevents them from working have someone to rely on for help, compared with two-thirds of those that do not have this type of disability. The opposite is true for those who said they had been diagnosed with an emotional or mental health problem at some time in their life; two-thirds indicated they had someone to rely on, compared with nearly three-fourths of those who had never received a mental health diagnosis.

We also asked whether respondents had problems going outside of their home alone or taking care of their own personal needs “because of a physical or mental health problem that has lasted for at least six months.” Eighteen percent of respondents indicated that they have problems going outside their home alone, and 10 percent have problems taking care of personal needs, due to these issues. Not surprisingly, respondents who indicated they either had a physical disability or had been diagnosed with a mental health problem were more likely to have problems leaving their home (26% compared with 5%) and taking care of personal needs (16% compared with 3%).

Other “general needs” questions concerned residents’ abilities to do their own housework, go shopping, prepare their own meals, and take medication. As shown in Figure 4, housework and shopping are the most common difficulties of the four tasks. Most of those who need some level of help indicated that they receive help, but small proportions do not receive the help they apparently need. These unmet needs do not appear to be concentrated in any buildings; instead, throughout the PHA buildings, only a few residents in each building indicated that they are not receiving the help they need.

4. Proportion of residents needing help with household tasks



Note: *N = approximately 1,440 (some residents chose not to respond to certain items).*

Transportation

Twenty-six percent of residents had their own car, and 12 percent occasionally drove a relative's or friend's car. Of these residents, almost 60 percent "hardly ever" had trouble finding a space in their building parking lot. One-quarter had trouble at least once per week, and 18 percent had trouble every day. The proportion of people who had trouble finding a space in their parking lot varied by building, with the highest proportions at Central and Wilson, where nearly 40 percent of those who drove indicated they had parking trouble every day.

Eighteen percent of respondents indicated they were not able to go somewhere in the last month because of problems with transportation. (Respondents were instructed not to include weather-related problems.) Transportation problems were more common among shorter-term PHA resident compared with longer-term residents. Similarly, younger residents tended to have more difficulties with transportation than older residents. Notably, respondents who indicated they have a physical disability (that prevents them from working, driving or other daily functioning) were twice as likely as others to indicate that they had transportation problems in the past month.

Services available at select buildings

As shown in Figure 5, the St. Paul PHA makes a variety of services available in its hi-rise buildings. To assess awareness of these services, residents were asked whether the service was available in their building. Respondents who were aware of services were asked how often they used the service (often, sometimes, or never) and how they would rate the service (excellent, good, fair, or poor). Those unaware of particular services and those living in buildings where the service was not available were asked how often they would use the service if it were available. Thus, we were able to gauge awareness, usage, quality, and unmet needs in relation to each service.

Awareness varied by type of service, but in all cases less than two-thirds of those who recognized that a given service was available in their building used that service. Residents were least aware of the supported living services available only to qualified residents, including the Congregate Housing Services Program, the Amherst Wilder Foundation's Assisted Living Program, and the program for those with traumatic brain injuries provided by Accessible Space, Incorporated. Only 30 percent of those who were aware of those three programs used them.

In general, those who used the services in their buildings gave them high ratings. Bookmobiles, social services, medical services, the "OK cards" program, and buses to shopping areas were all rated as either good or excellent by over 90 percent of respondents.

Medical professionals

Doctors or nurses make site visits to 10 hi-rises through public health outreach and "mini clinic" programs. In those buildings awareness ranged from a low of 49 percent (Exchange) to a high of 76 percent (Edgerton). In each of the 10 buildings these services were used by over half of those who were aware of them. Medical services are most widely-used in Cleveland and Ravoux, where over three-quarters of those aware of the service indicated using it. This service was rated as excellent by nearly half of those using it, and no service users rated it as poor.

Over 60 percent of those who indicated that medical health professionals do *not* come to their building indicated they would use the service at least sometimes if it were available. The *percentage* of residents indicating unmet needs for medical services was fairly similar by building, regardless of whether the service actually was available or not. However, the buildings with the largest *number* of residents indicating that they would use these services if available all lacked the service: Mt Airy (38 residents indicated they would use medical professionals at least sometimes), Iowa (31), and Central (29).

5. Service availability by building

	Medical services	Social services	Beauty/ barber shop	Shopping bus	Book-mobile	OK cards	ALP/ Wilder *	CHSP**	ASI ***	Senior/ cong. dining
Central		✓		✓						
Cleveland	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓				
Dunedin		✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓			✓
Edgerton	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓		✓
Exchange	✓	✓	✓	✓		✓				✓
Front	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓				✓
Hamline	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓			✓
Iowa		✓	✓	✓	✓	✓		✓		✓
Montreal	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓		✓	✓	✓
Mt. Airy		✓		✓		✓				
Neill	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓			✓	
Ravoux		✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓		✓
Seal	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓				✓
Valley	✓	✓		✓	✓	✓		✓	✓	✓
Wabasha		✓		✓		✓				
Wilson	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓					
Total	10	16	12	16	12	14	4	5	3	10

* Assisted Living Program (provided by the Amherst Wilder Foundation), ** Congregate Housing Services Program, *** Accessible Space, Inc.

Source: Saint Paul Public Housing Agency staff

Social services

Social services are available in all hi-rises, but awareness of these services varies substantially, from less than 55 percent in Mt. Airy and Central to 80 percent or more in Iowa and Cleveland. Over 90 percent of residents who make use of the social services in their building rate them either “excellent” (47%) or “good” (45%).

Over half of those who were unaware of the social services in their building indicated that they would like to use these services at least sometimes. Numerically, the largest service demand appears to be at Mt. Airy, where 31 respondents indicated that they would use social services at least sometimes if it were available. Since social services actually are available at Mt. Airy (and the other hi-rises), it appears that many of the demands for this type of service could be satisfied by raising resident awareness.

Beauty salon or barber shop

A beauty salon or barber shop is available in 12 of the 16 hi-rises. Over 80 percent of respondents from each of those buildings indicated awareness of the service, with the exception of Neill, where only 46 percent indicated that there was a hairdresser available in the building. Over half of those from Neill who were unaware of this service said that they would use it if it were available, which indicates a need to publicize this service.

Overall, most residents who make use of the beauty salon or barber shop in their building rated it as either excellent (42%) or good (46%), with the highest proportion of excellent ratings (66%) given by respondents from Hamline. However, responses to an open-ended question asking residents for suggestions to improve this service indicated that the hair care needs of at least some African American residents were not being met by the hairdressers at Neill, Seal, Exchange, Hamline, Wilson, Ravoux, and Edgerton (see the section on open-ended responses).

Roughly half of the respondents living in the four buildings without an on-site beauty salon or barber shop indicated that they would use the service at least sometimes if it were available, including 42 respondents from Mt. Airy, 31 at Central, 18 at Valley, and 16 at Wabasha.

Bus to shopping areas

A bus that takes residents to shopping areas is available at each of the 16 St. Paul PHA hi-rise buildings. Ninety percent of all survey respondents were aware of this service. The building with the lowest level of awareness is Wabasha, where only 60 percent

indicated that a bus to shopping areas was available at their building; awareness levels were at least 79 percent in all of the remaining buildings.

Just under half of the respondents who were aware of this service indicated they used it at least sometimes. At Wabash 39 percent who knew about the shopping bus indicated they used it “often” and another 35 percent indicated using it “sometimes.” In all buildings those who use the service rated it highly, with over half indicating that the service was “good,” and another 38 percent indicating “excellent.” Further, the ratings do not point to problems with the shopping bus at any particular buildings.

Bookmobile

A bookmobile from the St. Paul Public Library visits 12 of the hi-rise buildings, and most residents of these buildings are aware of it. Only two buildings have awareness levels below 80 percent: Iowa (43%) and Dunedin (64%). Usage is not as high as awareness. Overall, about three-fifths of those who were aware of the service indicated that they never use it. Of those who use the bookmobile, 95 percent rate it as either “good” or “excellent.”

At each of the four buildings which were *not* visited by a bookmobile – Central, Exchange, Mt. Airy, and Wabasha – roughly 55 percent indicated that they would use the service at least sometimes. By a small margin, the biggest demand for a bookmobile appears to be at Central, where 26 percent of residents responding to this question (12 residents) indicated that they would use the bookmobile “often” if it came to their building.

OK cards

The “OK cards” program is a resident-run program consisting of cards that residents place outside their doors each day so that others know they are safe. The program runs in all buildings except Central and Wilson. Most residents in the buildings where the program is running are aware of it, although the rates of awareness are notably lower in three buildings: Neill (only 50% indicated it was available), Wabasha (52%), and Cleveland (64%).

Roughly half of the survey respondents who were aware of the OK cards program used it, but usage varied substantially by building. Sixty-eight percent of those from Hamline reported participating in the program often, followed by Mt. Airy (57%), and Front (54%). On the other hand, only 13 percent of respondents from Neill indicated frequent participation in the OK cards program, and less than one-third of respondents from Cleveland, Edgerton, Exchange, Valley, and Wabasha indicated frequent participation.

The OK cards program was highly rated by those participating in it, although around 10 percent of respondents from Montreal (13%), Neill (11%), and Edgerton indicated that the program was “poor.” Despite the high ratings, several residents wrote in comments indicating a need to revive the program. (See the section on open-ended responses.)

Among those who were unaware of the OK cards program, the proportion of those indicating they would like to use it “often” was highest at Cleveland (11 residents, or 48% of those responding to that item). At the two buildings where the program is not operational, demand appears to be relatively high at Wilson, where 12 of 39 respondents indicated they would use it “often” if it were available, but relatively low at Central.

Assisted Living Program (ALP or “Wilder”)

The survey included the following description of the Assisted Living Program: “This program includes 3 meals a day, personal monitoring 24 hours a day, and help with housekeeping, laundry, personal care, and medication.” Interested residents must apply and pay a fee to participate in the program, which is available at Dunedin, Edgerton, Hamline, and Ravoux. Over 80 percent of residents in these buildings were aware that ALP is available in their building. Of those who know of the program, only 26 percent use it (37% at Ravoux). Nearly half of those who indicated they use the program rate it as “excellent” and another 37 percent rated it as “good.”

Responses to this question suggest there may be unmet needs in the area of assisted living: 152 residents from the buildings where ALP is not available, and another 10 from buildings that host ALP, indicated that they would be interested in using this service. More than 10 residents from each of the following buildings indicated interest in receiving ALP services: Central, Cleveland, Exchange, Front, Montreal, Mt. Airy, and Seal.

Congregate Housing Services Program (CHSP or “CHIPS”)

The survey included the following description of the Congregate Housing Services Program: “This assisted living program includes 2 meals a day, and help with housekeeping, laundry, and transportation.” Interested residents must apply and pay a fee to participate in the program, which is available at Edgerton, Iowa, Montreal, Ravoux, and Valley hi-rises. The majority of residents from each of these buildings are aware of the services (from a high of 88% at Iowa to a low of 68% at Valley). About a quarter of those who are aware of CHSP use the service (35% at Valley). Nearly half of CHSP users rated it as “excellent” (24% in Edgerton), and another 41 percent rated it as good.

Similar to the responses to the ALP question, responses to this question suggest there may be unmet needs in the area of assisted living: 156 residents from the buildings

where CHSP is not available, and another 24 from buildings that host CHSP, indicated an interest in accessing this service. More than 20 residents from each of the following buildings: Central, Mt. Airy and Wilson and more than 10 residents from each of the following buildings: Cleveland, Dunedin, Exchange, Front, Neill, and Seal indicated interest in receiving CHSP services.

Accessible Space Program (ASI)

The survey included the following description of the Accessible Space Program: “This assisted living program includes personal care assistance.” ASI serves adults with traumatic brain injuries. Interested residents must apply and pay a fee to participate in the program, which is available at Montreal, Neill, and Valley, where 61 percent, 63 percent, and 47 percent, respectively indicated awareness of the service in their building. Roughly 20 percent of those who were aware of the service use ASI services themselves, and 86 percent of service users rated ASI as either “excellent” or “good.”

Similar to the responses to the two previous questions, responses to this question suggest there may be unmet needs in the area of assisted living: 121 residents from the buildings where ASI is not available, and another 14 from buildings that host ASI, indicated that they would be interested in using this service. More than 10 residents from each of the following buildings: Central, Dunedin, Exchange, Mt. Airy, Ravoux, and Wilson indicated that they would use ASI if it were available in their building.

Senior or congregate dining

Senior or congregate dining is available at 10 hi-rise buildings, and the vast majority of residents in these buildings are aware that the service is available. In most buildings between 20 and 35 percent of those who know about congregate dining use it often, and roughly half indicated they never use it. Ravoux appears to have the highest rates of usage, with 45 percent indicating “often,” 17 percent indicating “sometimes,” and 38 percent indicating “never.”

Most of those who use congregate dining give it high ratings. The congregate dining services at Montreal received the highest ratings (47% indicating “excellent,” 44% good, 9% fair, and no one indicating “poor”), and even at the lowest-rated building 19 percent rated the dining as “excellent” and 59 percent rate it as “good.” Despite the high ratings, the meals were one of the most common targets of residents’ written criticism. (See the section on open-ended responses.)

Of the buildings where congregate dining is not currently available, the biggest demand for it appears to be at Mt. Airy and Cleveland, where over 30 residents indicated they

would use the service at least sometimes, including at least 10 at each building who would use it often.

Problems with service usage

Fourteen percent of respondents indicated they have problems trying to use the services available in their building. These respondents were most likely to say that they had problems accessing services because they didn't know enough about these services (59%) or that the services weren't available when needed (52%).

Of those having problems accessing services, respondents who have lived in PHA housing less than 1 year, who were age 29 or younger, who were immigrants, or who were Asian were more likely than others to say they lack information about the services. Younger respondents were more likely to say they have trouble because services aren't available when needed.

Potential in-building services

Residents were given a list of ten services and asked "If the following services were available in your building would you use them?" As shown in Figure 6, "exercise classes or groups" was the most popular potential service, followed by access to computers. Approximately one in five survey respondents indicated they would use financial counseling, assistance with employment, support groups for grief, mental health counseling, or support groups for family issues. Fewer respondents were interested in immigrant support groups or English-as-a-second-language classes, and only 8 percent indicated interest in drug or alcohol counseling.

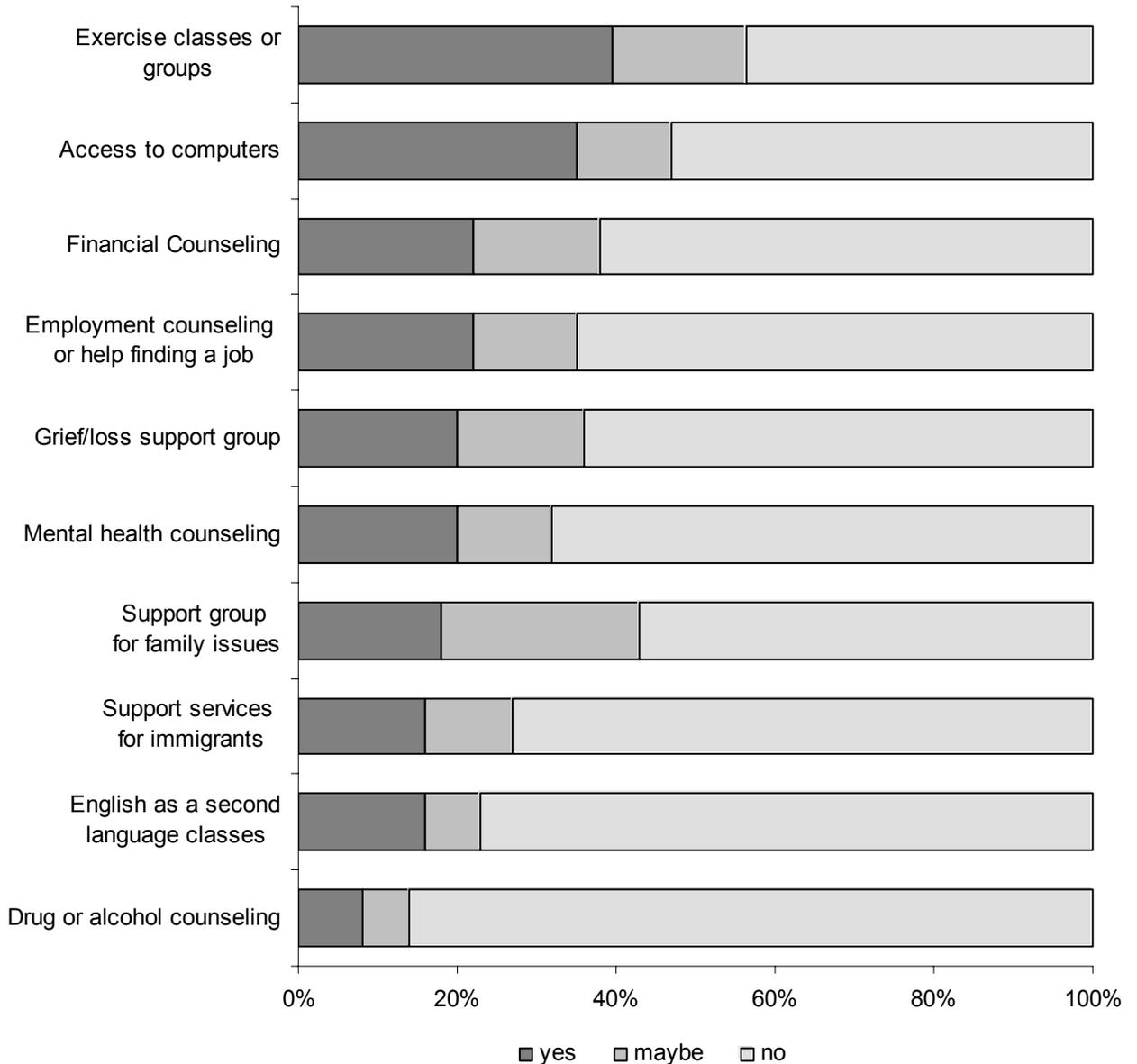
Interest in these potential in-building services varied by respondent characteristic. For example, approximately half of those who were not born in the U.S. indicated strong interest in English-as-a-second-language classes and immigrant support groups. Employment counseling was of greatest interest to respondents under 30 years of age, African Americans, and those without physical disabilities.

In comparison to other demographic groups, higher percentages of respondents under 50, who are African American, and who live in Central or Exchange say they would use computers.

Immigrants and African American respondents were more likely to say they would use exercise classes or groups in their buildings. In general, the likelihood of attending exercise classes tended to go down among older respondents.

The prospect of financial counseling services tended to be most attractive to respondents who have lived in PHA housing less than a year, are 29 or younger, and those who had received an emotional or mental health diagnosis at some time in their life.

6. Relative popularity of potential in-building services



Note: Actual question, "If the following services were available in your building would you use them?"
 N = approximately 1,300 (some residents chose not to respond to certain items).

Senior designated buildings

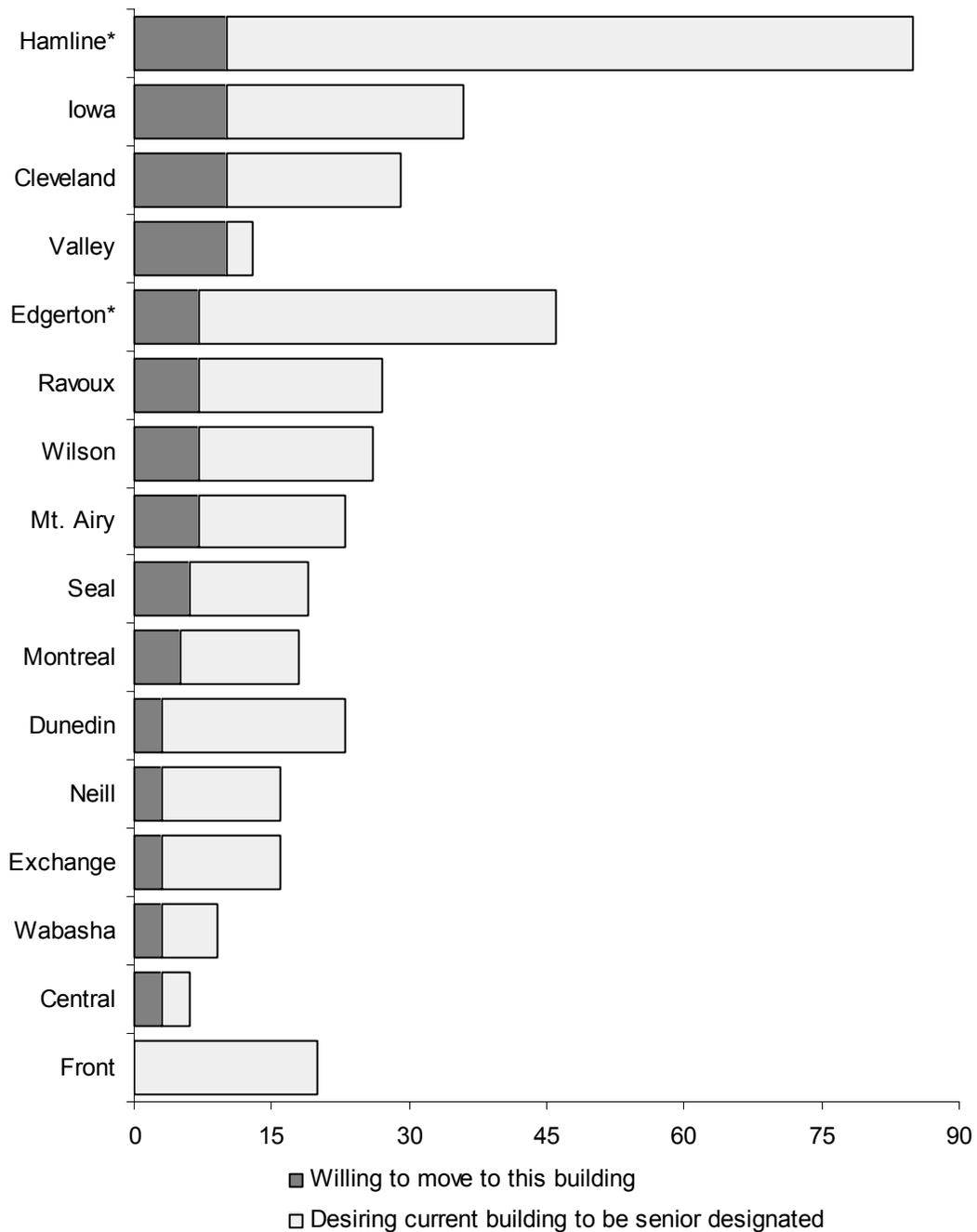
Respondents age 62 or older were asked if they would prefer to live in a senior designated building. Nearly half (48%) answered “no.” Forty-five percent said they would like to live in a senior designated building, but only if they could remain in their current building. Only 6 percent indicated that they would be willing to move to live in a senior designated building, including the 2 percent who indicated that they would like to live in a senior designated building whether they had to move or not.

Those who preferred senior-designated buildings were asked to indicate the particular building in which they would prefer to live. As shown in Figure 7, there was no overwhelming favorite for those willing to move; Hamline, Iowa, Cleveland, and Valley all tied with 10 respondents indicating a willingness to move there if they were senior-designated buildings.

In terms of residents wanting to live in senior designated housing, but desiring to stay in their current building, not surprisingly the two senior designated buildings at the time of the survey, Hamline and Edgerton, topped the list with 75 and 39 respondents, respectively.² Twenty-six residents from Iowa indicated that they would like their building to be a senior-designated, followed by Ravoux, Dunedin, and Front all with 20, and Cleveland and Wilson, each with 19.

² In September 2002 the Department of Housing and Urban Development revoked Edgerton’s senior housing designation.

7. Preferences for senior designated housing



* Senior-designated at the time of the survey.