

2019 Tenant Well-being Report

Contents

Introduction.....	2
What is well-being?.....	2
Why are we interested in well-being?	4
How did we measure well-being?	5
Summary of results	5
Next steps.....	9
Results in detail	11
Subjective well-being	11
Economic security	14
Time balance.....	15
Health status	15
Education and skills	16
Community vitality	16
Civic engagement.....	18
Relationships and trust.....	18
Safety and security.....	18
Leisure and culture.....	19
Environment	20
Resilience	20
Demographics.....	20
Key learnings	21
References	23

Introduction

Well-being is of increasing interest to organizations and governments alike as a way to measure how people are doing beyond economic measures like income. There is a growing trend towards using well-being as a policy objective and therefore used as a measure of social policy, including housing policy. Capital Region Housing is interested in learning more about our tenants and their well-being so that we can make policy and program decisions that support tenant well-being.

In 2017, we launched our first tenant well-being survey and found that most respondents had high levels of well-being. Most respondents liked their homes and communities and felt safe and secure. However, multiple stressors were also identified, particularly food insecurity. You can find out more about that report on our [website](#).¹

Our plan was to assess tenant well-being every two years from our initial survey in 2017. We conducted the second survey in 2019. This gives us an overview of how tenants are doing two years later. This report will provide an overview of the results from our 2019 survey.

What is well-being?

There are many definitions of well-being, but generally, well-being is understood as a positive focus on the dimensions and experiences that contribute to quality of life and human potential, including relationships, meaning and achievement in life and living standards.² Well-being can be understood both objectively, focusing on quantitative indicators like income and employment, and subjectively, focusing on individuals' experiences and perceptions.

We focus on subjective well-being in this survey. Subjective well-being is more than “happiness” and refers to a longer lasting experience and evaluation of our lives. Generally, subjective well-being is understood through three distinct aspects of subjectivity — life evaluation; affect; and eudaimonia. Life evaluation reflects an assessment of our lives or a specific component of our lives, such as life satisfaction. Affect measures feelings and emotions, such as happiness or anger. Eudaimonia is a more abstract concept but focuses on the idea of achieving goals or reaching potential. Subjective well-being is most commonly measured by life satisfaction on a ten-point scale.³

Well-being research also refers to “domains” or “dimensions” of well-being. These are areas of our lives that contribute to our overall life satisfaction. Commonly conceptualized domains include material conditions, social connections and health.⁴ Based on the Canadian Index of Well-being, the OECD guidelines and Statistics Canada analyses, we have looked at the following domains:

- *Economic security* is concerned with the economic well-being of individuals and households, particularly with the perceptions and experiences of income, financial

¹ Capital Region Housing (2018)

² See Helliwell and Barrington-Leigh (2010); OECD (2013); Canadian Index of Well-being (2016)

³ OECD (2013, p. 29-33)

⁴ OECD (2013, p. 168-170); Canadian Index of Well-being (2016)

- stress and economic security. Other measures of relative and absolute economic security, such as the ability to access to funds in an emergency and lower feelings of financial stress are also associated with higher ratings of subjective well-being.⁵
- *Time balance* is related to an individual's sense of control over their time and time stress. Time balance include work-life balance (for individuals who are employed) but also include other aspects of time, including time spent caring for others. Higher levels of time balance are associated with higher ratings of subjective well-being.⁶
 - *Health* is concerned with the physical and mental health of individuals, particularly with self-rated health and satisfaction with health-related factors such as sleep and nutrition. Individuals with health issues and disability can still have high subjective well-being; however, higher ratings of health (both mental and physical) are associated with higher ratings of subjective well-being.⁷ Particularly, acquiring a health condition or a disability are strongly associated with lower ratings of subjective well-being.⁸
 - *Education and skills* relate to both the educational achievement of an individual and their skills and capacities outside of formal education. Higher levels of education are associated with higher ratings of subjective well-being, particularly through their mediating affects with the other domains.⁹
 - *Community vitality* is closely linked to the social well-being of communities, especially feelings of belonging and experiences of harassment, and these experiences and feelings support or detract from well-being. Stronger social connections and feelings of belonging are associated with higher ratings of subjective well-being.¹⁰
 - *Civic engagement* explores individuals' participation in, and perception of, civic groups and institutions, such as voting in elections and volunteering. It also explores individuals' feelings of influence and involvement in decision making in their community. Higher ratings of engagement and influence are associated with higher ratings of subjective well-being.¹¹
 - *Relationships* focuses on personal relationships and feelings of trust. Higher satisfaction with personal relationships and higher feelings of trust are associated with higher ratings of subjective well-being.¹²

⁵ Gallup World Poll (2008)

⁶ Boarini et al. (2012); OECD (2013)

⁷ Dolan, Peasgood and White (2008)

⁸ Lucas (2007)

⁹ Boarini et al. (2012)

¹⁰ Helliwell (2008)

¹¹ Gallup World Poll (2008)

¹² Helliwell (2008); Helliwell and Wang (2011)

- *Safety and security* focus on personal safety and security and perceptions of safety. Higher feelings of safety and lower perceptions of crime are associated with higher ratings of subjective well-being.¹³
- *Leisure and culture* explore individuals' access to and participation in sports, recreation, arts and culture. Participation and access to leisure opportunities is associated with higher subjective well-being, again potentially through the mediating effects of supporting better health outcomes and supporting social connections.¹⁴
- *Environment* focuses on individuals' experiences of and satisfaction with their environment. Poor environmental quality is associated with lower ratings of life satisfaction,¹⁵ while access to green space is related to higher ratings of subjective well-being.¹⁶

In addition to measuring subjective well-being and its domains, it is important to measure personal characteristics such as age and gender and socioeconomic characteristics like income and education.¹⁷ Research has illustrated that younger and older people typically have higher life satisfaction ratings than middle-aged individuals.¹⁸ Additionally, women are also more likely to have higher life satisfaction ratings than men, while immigrants tend to have lower life satisfaction ratings than non-immigrants.¹⁹ Marital status is also associated with measures of well-being, with married people more likely to have higher life satisfaction ratings.²⁰ In our survey, we included questions on multiple characteristics related to well-being, including demographics and questions about resilience.

Why are we interested in well-being?

Stable, secure and affordable housing is a fundamental component of well-being. It contributes to well-being through improved health outcomes and increased stability and security. Housing stress, such as from living in unaffordable housing situations, overcrowding or poor-quality housing are all negatively associated with well-being.²¹ Consequently then, we would imagine that households who live in affordable housing and ideally do not have those issues of housing stress should have improved well-being. However, we also know that individuals in affordable housing still face barriers, including food insecurity and employment opportunities. We also know that individuals in affordable housing experience other successes beyond their housing.

As the largest provider of social and affordable housing in the Edmonton area, Capital Region Housing recognizes that a home is more than four walls and roof. Traditionally, success in affordable housing has been measured objectively in terms of move ins, move outs and length

¹³ OECD (2013)

¹⁴ Canadian Index of Well-being (2016)

¹⁵ OECD (2013)

¹⁶ Bell et al. (2014)

¹⁷ Boarini et al. (2012)

¹⁸ Branchflower and Oswald (2008); Lu et al. (2015)

¹⁹ Boarini et al. (2012); Lu et al. (2015)

²⁰ Lu et al. (2015)

²¹ Bratt (2004); OECD (2013); Rowley and Ong (2012)

of tenancy. Well-being is one way of more holistically assessing our tenants' quality of life and successful tenancies. Measuring our tenants' well-being and the contributors and barriers to well-being will help us to make policy and programming decisions to best support our tenants. It will also help us to better identify strategic partnerships to support our tenants and help us to advocate for tenants to all levels of government. Researching tenant well-being can also help to combat myths and stigma surrounding affordable housing and the tenants who call it home.

How did we measure well-being?

We developed the well-being survey based on best practice questions from the Organization of Economic Development, Statistics Canada's General Social Survey and the Canadian Index of Well-being where possible.²² This helps to ensure data comparability and that we are using valid and reliable measures. Where best practice questions did not exist, we developed new questions based on best practice survey design and research methods.

The survey was available both physically on paper and online through a secure, Canadian-based survey software. We sent the survey to all tenants in Community Housing, Near Market and Mixed Income Housing by mail or by email, to a total of approximately 4,800 households. In total, we received responses from 154 respondents, for a response rate of approximately 3%.

Participation in the survey was voluntary and had no impact on tenant's services with Capital Region Housing and informed consent was received from all respondents. All responses submitted by tenants were anonymous and kept confidential. Only the Policy and Research team had access to the survey responses and no information was connected to tenant files. Only aggregate responses have been included in this report. Direct quotes from the survey have only been included if tenants consented to having their quotes included in reports and with any identifying information removed. This research project was approved by the Community Research Ethics Board at the Centre for Community Based Research.

We have analyzed results both qualitatively and quantitatively. A note that proportions may not round to 100% because respondents could answer "prefer not to say". These answers have been included in the analysis for the purposes of determining proportions. While the sample size is small and the survey was voluntary, the feedback from respondents still provides insights into how some tenants are doing and valuable perspectives on how Capital Region Housing can continue to support tenant well-being.

Summary of results

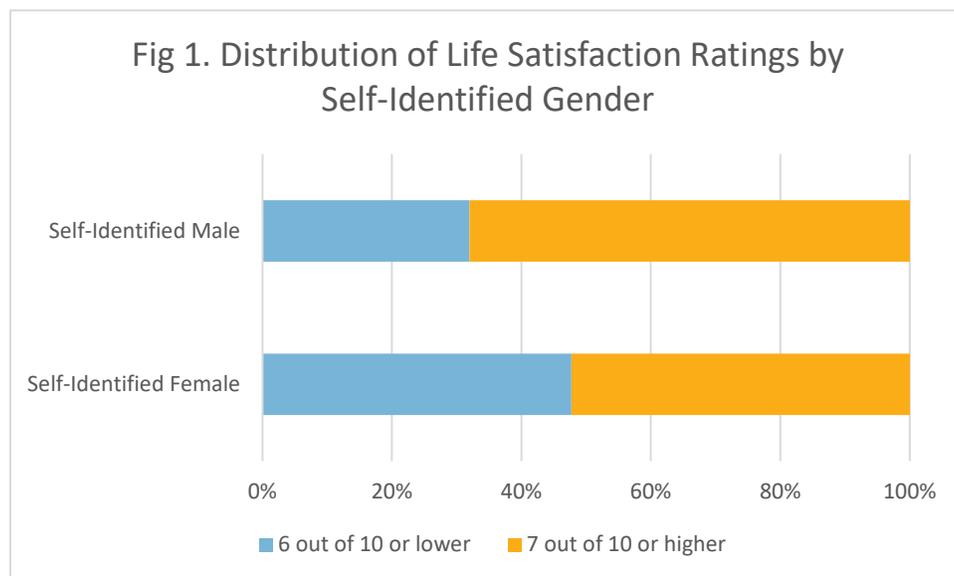
Overall, most respondents rated their subjective well-being highly. Respondents were asked to rank their life satisfaction on a scale of 0 to 10, with 0 being "Very Dissatisfied" and 10 being "Very Satisfied". Overall, respondents had an average rating of 6.8 out of 10. This rose to an average of 7.7 out of 10 when asked to rank their life satisfaction in five years. This indicates that most respondents had an optimistic view of the future.

²² See OECD (2013); Canadian Index of Well-being (2016); and Statistics Canada General Social Survey (2014) – Canadians at Work and at Home

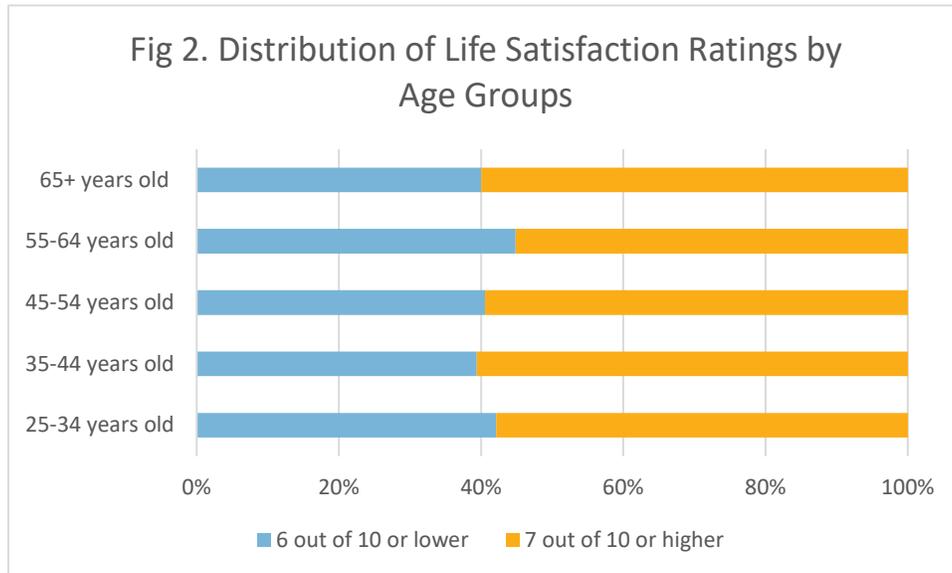
Amongst respondents who rated their life satisfaction 7 out of 10 or higher, they had more positive views for the future and were more satisfied with their financial situation. In contrast, amongst respondents who rated their life satisfaction 6 out of 10 or lower, they often described experiencing health issues or experiencing a financial event resulting in lower income.

Trends:

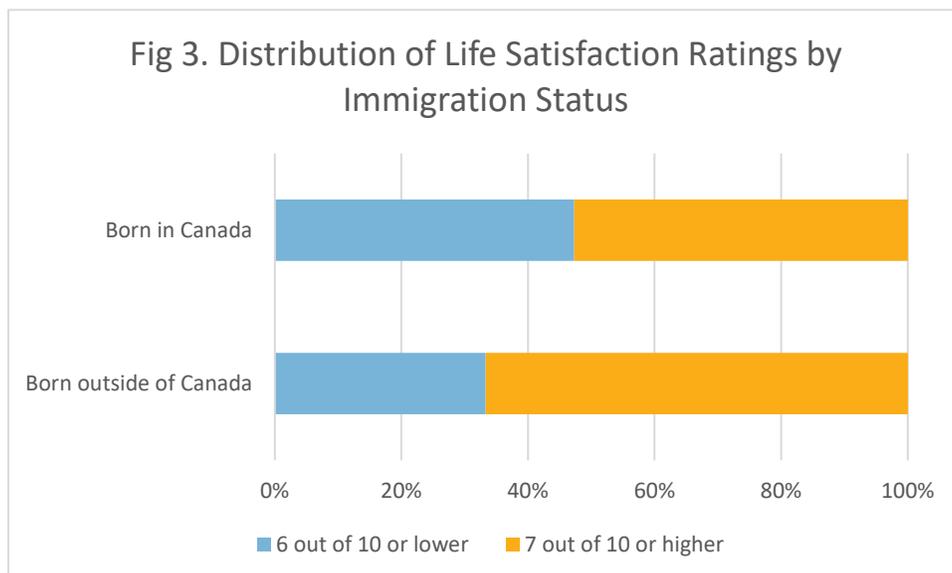
Looking at gender differences (Fig 1), more self-identified female respondents ranked their life satisfaction lower than self-identified male respondents.



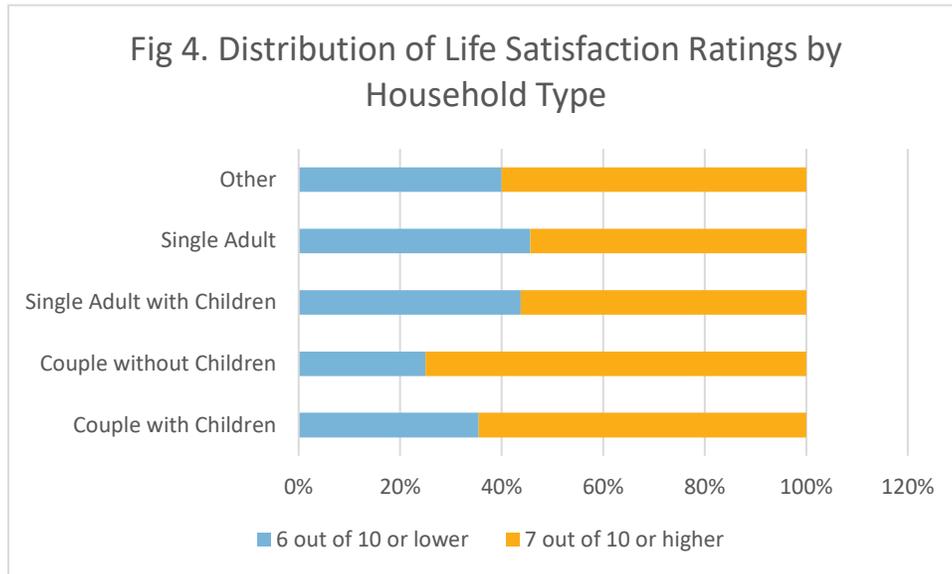
Differences in life satisfaction rankings by age were small (Fig.2), however, more 55 to 64 year old respondents ranked their life satisfaction lower, while more 35 to 44 year old respondents ranked their life satisfaction higher.



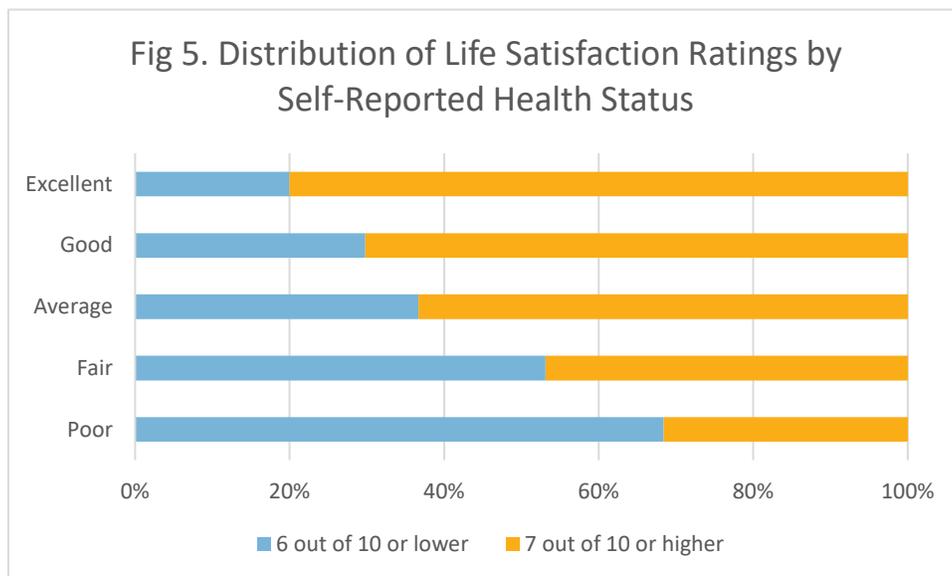
Looking at immigration difference (Fig. 3), more respondents born in Canada ranked their life satisfaction lower than respondents born outside of Canada.



Looking at household type (Fig.4), more single parents and single adults ranked their life satisfaction lower than other household types. More couples without children ranked their life satisfaction higher than other groups.



Looking at self-reported health status (Fig.5), there is a clear trend where respondents who self-rated their health the lowest also tended to rank their life satisfaction lower.



As an affordable housing provider, we also were interested in how living in affordable housing impacted tenants' well-being. The large majority of respondents agreed or strongly agreed (67%) that living in affordable housing had helped them or their household achieve their goals.

Of the domains of well-being, respondents were most satisfied with the quality of the natural environment in their neighbourhood (65% satisfied or very satisfied) and least satisfied with their health in general (49% satisfied or very satisfied).

Looking more closely at the drivers of well-being amongst respondents highlights a mix of positive and negative results.

Most respondents were satisfied or very satisfied (60%) with their standard of living. At the same time, many respondents were always or often (40%) stressed about their finances, which has a negative impact on subjective well-being. Further, nearly half of respondents (49%) struggled to pay their bills monthly; and almost one-third of respondents (30%) struggled with food insecurity at least monthly as a result. Financial security remains an issue for many respondents.

At the same time, respondents liked their homes and communities and had more positive things than negative to say about their communities. Particularly, respondents liked that their homes were close to schools, transit, amenities like grocery stores and public transit routes. Many respondents commented that their communities felt safe and quiet. More than half of respondents were satisfied or very satisfied (53%) with feeling part of their community. Half of respondents were satisfied or very satisfied (50%) with their feelings of personal safety from crime.

Overall, most respondents had high levels of resiliency. The majority of respondents always or often had a hopeful view of the future (57%), and always or often had something to look forward to in their life (62%). However, a high proportion of respondents (21%) said they rarely or never have people they can depend on when they really need it. This may reflect the relatively high number of respondents who are single people or single parents who both responded to the survey and who live in our housing.

Next steps

Overall, these results are encouraging and highlight how resilient tenants are. Most tenant respondents had high ratings for life satisfaction, were satisfied with what they were achieving in life and had optimistic views for their future. However, middle aged respondents, single adult households, self-identified female respondents and respondents with self-reported lower health were more likely to have lower ratings of life satisfaction. Additionally, households that had been more economically insecure had lower ratings of life satisfaction.

It is important to note that these results are also highly gendered. Unlike other well-being research,²³ respondents who self-identified as female had lower ratings of life satisfaction on average, compared to respondents who self-identified as male. This is likely being mediated by a number of other factors that impact well-being, such as that self-identified female respondents

²³ E.g., Boarini et al. (2012); Lu et al. (2015)

were more likely to be in a single adult household (with or without children), had higher ratings of financial stress and were less satisfied with their financial situation and were less satisfied with their time balance than self-identified male respondents. This reflects that women are more likely to have child-care responsibilities and costs -- especially for single parent households which makes up approximately one-third of respondents. This is also reflected in that respondents identified wanting increased access to activities for children and youth.

These results demonstrate the need and opportunities for partnerships and supports to continue to support tenant well-being, including around financial empowerment, community development and activities for children and youth. We will continue to investigate opportunities to support tenant well-being beyond safe and affordable housing.

Thank you again to all tenants who took the time to respond to the survey and share their experiences!

For more information, contact the Policy and Research Team at research@crhc.ca.

Results in detail

Subjective well-being

General subjective well-being is commonly measured using life satisfaction as a general indicator of how individuals are doing. Respondents were asked to rank their life satisfaction on a scale of 0 to 10, with 0 being “Very Dissatisfied” and 10 being “Very Satisfied”. Overall, respondents had an average rating of 6.8 out of 10. This rose to an average of 7.7 out of 10 when asked to rank their life satisfaction in five years. This indicates that most respondents had an optimistic view of the future.

Proportionally, 60% of respondents ranked their life satisfaction at 7 or higher out of 10, rising to 74% in five years. In both cases, the plurality of respondents ranked their life satisfaction 10 out of 10 (21% for current life satisfaction, rising to 29% in five years). This is higher than in 2017 when we conducted this survey.

On average, most people rated their life satisfaction the same or higher in five years: 44% of respondents rated it the same, while 42% rated it higher. The largest increase in rating was an increase of 7 (3.4% of respondents), while the largest decrease was a decrease of 5 (0.7% of respondents).

Comparatively, research from Statistics Canada²⁴ looking at life satisfaction scores between 2009 and 2013 across Canadian cities found that overall, Edmonton tended to be on the lower end of life satisfaction rankings. The average score for Edmonton was 7.87, the fifth lowest out of all 33 CMAs, and 15.5% ranked their life satisfaction 6 out of 10 or lower, the tenth lowest out of all CMAs.

We asked an open-ended question on why respondents chose their ranking. Looking at reasons why respondents ranked their current life satisfaction the way they did, there are some key relationships. Amongst respondents who rated their life satisfaction 7 out of 10 or higher, they had more positive views for the future and were more satisfied with their financial situation. This is demonstrated in the sample of responses in the text box below.

²⁴ Lu et al. (2015)

What are the main reasons why you chose your ranking – 7/10 or higher:

- For the first time in a long time I am finally settled and secured in my home which allows me to do what I have to for my family
- I am in safe affordable housing that is easily accessible for me (elevator). My apartment is just the right size for me and my youngest daughter to maintain. We are close to shopping, buses and the LRT...we have enough money left over after rent to eat and live comfortably...thanks to Capital Region Housing!
- My life is heading in a good direction. I have a good plan for where I'm going.
- I am financially secure. My health is good, I have all I need to survive. I live in a calm and safe neighbourhood.
- I've got a place to live, I can pay my bills, I can keep a clean apartment.
- Because I am paying rent according to my income I am getting more time for my study.
- The main reason I choose my ranking is because I am happy that I have a place that I can call my own and affordable. This makes me feel independent.

Amongst respondents who rated their life satisfaction 6 out of 10 or lower, they often described experiencing health issues or experiencing a financial event resulting in lower income. This is demonstrated in the sample of responses in the text box below.

What are the main reasons why you chose your ranking – 6/10 or lower:

- Our household income is low. Life is not very satisfactory for us.
- I have been out of job for 2 years now, my work insurance and WCB refused to compensate me, I have a shoulder injury and my financial status is not in good shape.
- I was laid off in May and have been unable to find suitable employment. Since being laid off I'm on EI and I am struggling to make ends meet from month to month. Finding it difficult to pay rent and daycare and everyday bills with my rent being so high.
- I have medical issues and live on limited income. I'm a single occupant and have to do all my shopping, cleaning and other stuff on my own. Healthwise, I have good and bad days.
- Health issues/pain issues. otherwise am satisfied with my life.

Looking at the distribution of life satisfaction scores amongst demographic variables highlights some trends. Demographically, a higher proportion of respondents who identified as male, respondents between 35 and 44 years old, respondents born outside of Canada, respondents in a couple household and respondents who self-rated their health as “average” or better ranked their life satisfaction 7 out of 10 or higher.

A higher proportion of respondents who identified as female, respondents between 55 and 64 years old, respondents born in Canada, single parents or single adults and respondents who self-rated their health as fair or poor ranked their life satisfaction 6 out of 10 or lower.

These demographic differences are summarized in Table 1.

Table 1: Summary of Life Satisfaction Ranking by Demographics		
Demographics	6 out of 10 or lower	7 out of 10 or higher
<i>Gender</i>		
Self-Identified Female	48%	52%
Self-Identified Male	32%	68%
<i>Age Groups</i>		
25-34 years old	42%	58%
35-44 years old	39%	61%
45-54 years old	41%	59%
55-64 years old	45%	55%
65+ years old	40%	60%
<i>Immigration Status</i>		
Born outside of Canada	33%	67%
Born in Canada	47%	53%
<i>Household Type</i>		
Couple with Children	35%	65%
Couple without Children	25%	75%
Single Adult with Children	44%	56%
Single Adult	46%	54%
Other	40%	60%
<i>Self-Reported Health</i>		
Poor	68%	32%
Fair	53%	47%
Average	37%	63%
Good	30%	70%
Excellent	20%	80%
Notes: based on the 2019 Tenant Well-being Survey.		

We measured eudemonic subjective well-being by asking how satisfied respondents were with what they were achieving in life. Most respondents were satisfied or very satisfied (64%) with what they were achieving in life.

As an affordable housing provider, we also were interested in how living in affordable housing impacted tenants' well-being. The large majority of respondents agreed or strongly agreed (67%) that living in affordable housing had helped them or their household achieve their goals.

Of the domains of well-being, respondents were most satisfied with the quality of the natural environment in their neighbourhood (65% satisfied or very satisfied) and least satisfied with their health in general (49% satisfied or very satisfied).

Economic security

This domain is concerned with the economic well-being of individuals and households, particularly with the perceptions and experiences of income, financial stress and economic security. Other measures of relative and absolute economic security, such as the ability to access funds in an emergency and lower feelings of financial stress are also associated with higher ratings of subjective well-being.²⁵

Most respondents were satisfied or very satisfied (60%) with their standard of living. At the same time, many respondents were always or often (37%) stressed about their finances. Most respondents (56%) could not access \$400 in an emergency situation, and of those who could, their strategies varied from eating less to borrowing money from credit cards or family and friends. Over a quarter of respondents (26%) struggled monthly to pay their bills; and another 18% struggled weekly.

There were both gender and immigration differences in respect to this domain. A higher proportion of respondents who self-identified as female and respondents who were born in Canada were dissatisfied or very dissatisfied with their standard of living. Comparatively, 25% of respondents who self-identified as female compared to 18% of respondents who self-identified as male were dissatisfied or very dissatisfied with their standard of living. Amongst respondents who were born in Canada, 29% were dissatisfied or very dissatisfied while amongst foreign-born respondents, 16% were dissatisfied or very dissatisfied with their standard of living.

Likewise, respondents who self-identified as female reported more financial stress (43% always or often stressed compared to 31% of self-identified male respondents). Respondents who were born in Canada also reported more financial stress (41% always or often compared to 33% of foreign-born respondents).

In the 2017 tenant well-being survey, we found that many tenants struggled with food insecurity. In the 2019 survey, we asked a specific question about food insecurity drawn from the Canadian Index of Well-being community survey.²⁶ We asked:

- During the past 12 months, how frequently did you find yourself eating less because there was not enough money for food?

We found that 19% of respondents ate less at least once a week and another 14% ate less at least once a month due to financial insecurity. In total, 33% of respondents struggled with food insecurity at least monthly.

Just over one-quarter of respondents reported a total annual household income between \$15,000 and \$19,999 (26%); this was the most common response amongst respondents.

27% of respondents reported that they were employed, working on average 23 hours per week. Approximately one-third of employed respondents worked full time hours. Of respondents that were employed, most were satisfied or very satisfied with their job (60%).

²⁵ Gallup World Poll (2008)

²⁶ <https://uwaterloo.ca/canadian-index-well-being/what-we-do/how-it-works/our-well-being-survey>

Time balance

This dimension is concerned with individual's sense of control over their time and time stress. Time balance includes work-life balance (for individuals who are employed) as well as other aspects of time, including time spent caring for others. Higher levels of time balance are associated with higher ratings of subjective well-being.²⁷

This concept is mainly measured by satisfaction with time balance. Overall, most respondents were satisfied or very satisfied with the amount of time they had to do the things they enjoyed (57%). However, this differed by gender — amongst respondents who self-identified as female, 18% were dissatisfied or very dissatisfied with the amount of time they had to do the things they enjoyed, compared to only 4% of respondents who self-identified as male.

Likewise, while most respondents rated their ability to handle day to day demands in their life as excellent or good (55%), this dropped to 49% of respondents who self-identified as female compared to 63% of respondents who self-identified as male. This likely partly reflects that women are more likely to have child-care responsibilities, especially for single parent households which makes up approximately one-third of respondents.

Health status

Health is a dimension of well-being concerned with the physical and mental health of individuals, particularly with self-rated health and satisfaction with health-related factors such as sleep and nutrition. Individuals with health issues and disability can still have high subjective well-being; however, higher ratings of health (both mental and physical) are associated with higher ratings of subjective well-being.²⁸ Particularly, acquiring a health condition or a disability are strongly associated with lower ratings of subjective well-being.²⁹

While most respondents rated their physical health as good or excellent (43%), a large proportion also rated their health as fair or poor (34%). This is partly reflective of the fact that households with health and disability concerns are also more likely to be in core housing need. This is also partly reflective of the relatively high proportion of seniors who responded to the survey and who live in Capital Region Housing homes.

Almost two-thirds of respondents rated their mental health excellent or good (63%).

Stress is also strongly linked to well-being, where higher ratings of stress are associated with lower well-being measures.³⁰ Slightly more respondents stated that most days in their life were not at all stressful (8%) compared to those who rated it extremely stressful (7%).

Self-identified female respondents had higher levels of stress. Amongst respondents who self-identified as male, 38% rated most days in their life as not at all or not very stressful compared to 24% of respondents who self-identified as female.

²⁷ Boarini et al. (2012); OECD (2013)

²⁸ Dolan, Peasgood and White (2008)

²⁹ Lucas (2007)

³⁰ Uppal and Barayandema (2018)

Some of the main sources of stress for respondents included financial stress, health stress and family and neighbour relations.

What are your main sources of stress?

- Not having enough to feed my family or enough money
- money, Health, Lack of social life because of money and health
- The lack of money, Rent too High, food, not able to Have money for Bus Pass, No Money to have a swimming pass. Food to Feed my dog!
- Finances and children's health and the security in my neighbourhood

Education and skills

This dimension relates to both the educational achievement of an individual but also their skills and capacities outside of formal education. Higher levels of education are associated with higher ratings of subjective well-being, particularly through their mediating affects with the other domains such as economic security.³¹

Approximately 19% of respondents were currently in school. Amongst respondents, 39% had completed some form of post-secondary education, with 16% having completed a college or university certificate or diploma. However, 22% of respondents had a high school diploma, and 37% had less than a high school diploma. Comparatively, more than half (54%) of Canadians aged 25-64 had some form of post-secondary education.³²

Recognizing that education and skills exist beyond post-secondary institutions, we asked respondents to describe any skills or trade knowledge that they had. Respondents described a variety of different skills, including cooking and baking, trades like welding and construction and care work such as health care aides and homecare.

Community vitality

This dimension is closely related to the social well-being of communities, especially feelings of belonging, experiences of harassment and how this supports individual and collective well-being. Stronger social connections and feelings of belonging are associated with higher ratings of subjective well-being.³³

Capital Region Housing homes are located in neighbourhoods throughout the city, but primarily located in neighbourhoods that developed between the 1960s and the 1990s due to funding availability. This means that most Capital Region Housing homes are located in mature, developed neighbourhoods with schools, transit routes and neighbourhood parks nearby.

Most respondents were satisfied or very satisfied (53%) with feeling part of their community. A much higher proportion of foreign-born respondents were satisfied or very satisfied (70%) compared to Canadian-born respondents (38%) with feeling part of their community.

³¹ Boarini et al. (2012)

³² Statistics Canada (2017)

³³ Helliwell (2008)

Focusing on belonging more specifically, 38% of respondents described their feelings of belonging as strong or very strong. The largest group described their feelings of belonging as neither weak nor strong, at 40%.

However, a much higher proportion of Canadian-born respondents described feeling a very weak sense of belonging (11%) compared to foreign-born respondents (1%). Likewise, a larger proportion of foreign-born respondents described feeling very strong sense of belonging (23%) compared to Canadian-born respondents (5%).

The large majority of respondents (62%) described never or rarely feeling out of place in their community because of their ethnicity, race, gender, age, sexual identity, language, or any other reason. Again, this varied by immigration status, with more than double Canadian-born respondents describing feeling always or often out of place (30%) compared to foreign-born respondents (13%).

When we asked respondents what they liked most about their communities, the most common responses centered around access to key services, such as kids' schools, grocery stores, recreation and transit routes. This is demonstrated in the sample of responses in the text box below.

What do you like most about your community where you live?

- Things like shopping and public transit are easily accessible to me and my family.
- I like that my children's school is within walking distance from our home.
- The schools and playgrounds in the area and able to walk to work.
- Nice neighbourhood, lots of green spaces.

Many respondents also commented that their communities felt safe and quiet, as shown in the sample of responses below.

What do you like most about your community where you live?

- Quiet neighbourhood, close to amenities, friendly manager and well cared for complex.
- Lots of privacy and quiet when at home.
- Neighbours are nice. Quiet place for people to live.
- It is safe area.
- It very safe for children to play outside close to school and playground very clean and safe.

We also asked respondents about what they disliked about their communities. Fewer respondents had comments about what they disliked than what they liked about their communities, but amongst those who did, the most common theme was around neighbour relations. This varied from respondents not knowing their neighbours, to noise and parking complaints, to feeling like they did not belong or feeling discriminated.

What do you like least about your community?

- I don't know my neighbours. I only see them.
- No one interacts. Neighbours are strangers.
- The problem of parking lot.
- Noisy neighbours.
- Face discrimination due to race and disability.
- My community make people like me in non-market housing especially but renters too UNWELCOME! [emphasis in original]

Civic engagement

This dimension explores individuals' participation in and perception of civic groups and institutions. It also explores individuals' feelings of influence and involvement in decision making in their community. Higher ratings of engagement and influence are associated with higher ratings of subjective well-being.³⁴

More respondents disagreed or strongly disagreed (31%) than agreed or strongly agreed (26%) that they felt that they had an influence on decisions made in their community.

Relationships and trust

This domain focuses on personal relationships and feelings of trust. Higher satisfaction with personal relationships and higher feelings of trust are associated with higher ratings of subjective well-being.³⁵

Amongst relationships with family, friends and neighbours, respondents were most satisfied with their relationship with their family (72% satisfied or very satisfied) and least satisfied with their relationship with their neighbours (54% satisfied or very satisfied).

We also asked a question about feelings of trust. Respondents felt the most trust for people in their family, with 63% of respondents indicating that they can be trusted a lot. Respondents felt the least trust for strangers, with 41% saying strangers cannot be trusted at all.

Safety and security

Safety is another key dimension of well-being. This domain focuses on personal safety and security and perceptions of safety. Higher feelings of safety and lower perceptions of crime are associated with higher ratings of subjective well-being.³⁶

We asked a series of questions about safety and security using questions from Statistics Canada.³⁷ Overall, most respondents were satisfied or very satisfied (50%) with their personal

³⁴ Gallup World Poll (2008)

³⁵ Helliwell (2008); Helliwell and Wang (2011)

³⁶ OECD (2013)

³⁷ From the General Social Survey on Canadians' Safety (Victimization)

safety from crime. This is lower than the most recent national data available from 2014, where more than 80% of respondents were satisfied or very satisfied with their safety from crime.³⁸

We also asked about perceptions of crime in respondent's neighbourhoods. Most respondents thought their neighbourhood had about the same amount of crime compared to other areas in Edmonton (33%) or lower than other neighbourhoods (33%). Likewise, most respondents thought that crime had stayed about the same in their neighbourhood over the past five years (36%). However, a higher proportion of respondents thought that crime had increased over the past five years (24%) than had decreased (11%).

We also asked questions about feelings of safety and worry in different situations. Most respondents were somewhat worried when using public transportation alone after dark (44%) and when alone in their home after dark (42%). However, in both cases, more people felt not at all worried than very worried (19% vs 12% for public transportation and 38% vs 7% for at home).

We also asked about how safe respondents felt when walking alone in their area after dark; one-third of respondents felt unsafe or very unsafe (36%) while fewer felt neither safe nor unsafe (30%) or safe or very safe (29%). Consistent with other data on perceptions of safety, women felt less safe than men, with 39% of respondents who self-identified as female feeling unsafe or very unsafe compared to 33% of respondents who self-identified as male.³⁹

According to research on safety, gender has been shown to be the biggest factor in perceptions of safety, with women (and non-binary individuals) reporting feeling less safe than men.⁴⁰ Approximately two-thirds of respondents to the survey identified as female, which is consistent with the proportion of female headed households amongst Capital Region Housing tenants. This may be contributing to the lower ratings of safety in this survey compared to national and provincial data.

We asked respondents what would help increase their feelings of safety in their communities. The main comments were increased security presence and police presence at night as well as increased exterior lighting.

Leisure and culture

This domain explores individuals' access to and participation in sports, recreation, arts and culture. Participation and access to leisure opportunities is associated with higher subjective well-being, again potentially through the mediating effects of supporting better health outcomes and supporting social connections.⁴¹

We focused on asking respondents about their access to services and amenities such as sports and recreation opportunities, libraries, childcare and community events. Respondents were

³⁸ Perrault (2017)

³⁹ See Perrault (2017)

⁴⁰ See Perrault (2017); Doan (2007)

⁴¹ Canadian Index of Well-being (2016)

most satisfied with their access to public transit (72% satisfied or very satisfied) and least satisfied with their access to arts and cultural opportunities (42% satisfied or very satisfied).

We also asked an open-ended question on services respondents would like access to. Some common services and activities requested included activities for children and youth, such as organized sports and after school activities. Some respondents also highlighted increased social programs and activities in their communities, including through the work of a support or social worker.

Environment

This dimension focuses on individuals' experiences of and satisfaction with their environment. Poor environmental quality is associated with lower ratings of life satisfaction,⁴² while access to green space is related to higher ratings of subjective well-being.⁴³

Most respondents were satisfied or very satisfied with the quality of the natural environment around them (65%) and with their access to green space (72%).

Resilience

We also asked about resiliency. Resilience is a concept that measures the ability to adapt to change or challenges in your life. Individuals who are more resilient are more likely to have a higher life satisfaction.⁴⁴ Resiliency, like well-being, is made up of a combination of factors including personal characteristics and access to social and physical resources. Resiliency is not a dimension of well-being but is closely related to well-being and life satisfaction. We measured resiliency using a series of Statistics Canada questions.

Overall, most respondents had high levels of resiliency. The majority of respondents always or often had a hopeful view of the future (57%), and always or often had something to look forward to in their life (62%). However, a high proportion of respondents (21%) said they rarely or never have people they can depend on when they really need it. This may reflect the relatively high number of respondents who are single people or single parents who both responded to the survey and who live in our housing.

Demographics

Subjective well-being is also associated with demographics, including age, gender and immigration status.⁴⁵ These demographic questions also help us identify how representative our sample of respondents amongst all tenants.

- 76% respondents were living in Community Housing. Community Housing is the largest proportion of our portfolio.
- 21% of respondents were living in the Southeast, where a large proportion of Capital Region Housing homes are located.

⁴² OECD (2013)

⁴³ Bell et al. (2014)

⁴⁴ See Uppal and Barayandema (2018)

⁴⁵ Boarini et al. (2012); OECD (2013); Uppal and Barayandema (2018)

- The average household size was 2.7 people. This is comparable to the average household size of current tenant households.
- The average number of bedrooms was 2. This is the most common unit size for Capital Region Housing.
- The average age of respondents was 49 years old. This is slightly older than the average age of all tenants.
- 64% of respondents identified as female. This is comparable to the proportion of female headed households across all tenants.
- 36% of respondents were separated, divorced or widowed, and another 35% were single.
- Most households were single adults (33%) or single parents with children (33%). These are comparable proportions to all tenant households.
- 48% of respondents were born outside of Canada. Respondents had immigrated between 1961 and 2018, with the most common year of immigration being 2014.
- English was the most common language spoken at home, followed by Arabic and Somali. Overall, 29 different languages were identified by respondents.

Throughout these results, there have been differences based on gender and immigration status. Focusing on these two characteristics in more detail:

- A higher proportion of immigrant households were in a couple household (45%) while a higher proportion of Canadian-born respondents were in single adult households (84%).
- A higher proportion of self-identified female respondents are Canadian-born (57%) and a higher proportion of self-identified male respondents are born outside of Canada (59%).

Key learnings

Overall, these results are encouraging and highlight how resilient tenants are. Overall, most tenants had high ratings for life satisfaction, were satisfied with what they were achieving in life and had optimistic views for their future. However, there are differences in life satisfaction. Middle aged respondents, single adult households, self-identified female respondents and respondents with self-reported lower health were more likely to have lower ratings of life satisfaction. Additionally, households that had were more economically insecure had lower ratings of life satisfaction.

It is important to note that these results are also highly gendered. Unlike other well-being research,⁴⁶ respondents who self-identified as female had lower ratings of life satisfaction on average, compared to respondents who self-identified as male. This is likely being mediated by a number of other factors that impact well-being, such as that self-identified female respondents were more likely to be in a single adult household (with or without children), had higher ratings of financial stress and were less satisfied with their financial situation and were less satisfied with their time balance than self-identified male respondents. This reflects that women are more

⁴⁶ E.g., Boarini et al. (2012); Lu et al. (2015)

likely to have child-care responsibilities and costs -- especially for single parent households which makes up approximately one-third of respondents. This is also reflected in that respondents identified wanting increased access to activities for children and youth.

These results demonstrate the need and opportunities for partnerships and supports to continue to support tenant well-being, including around financial empowerment and community development. We will continue to investigate opportunities to support tenant well-being beyond safe and affordable housing.

Thank you again to all tenants who took the time to respond to the survey and share their experiences!

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