

# East Oakland Report Youth-Led Participatory Action Research

Summer 2016

## Youth Researchers

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## ABSTRACT

In the summer of 2016, Communities in Collaboration | Comunidades en colaboración<sup>1</sup> trained 16 graduating seniors from Castlemont High School and Golden State Preparatory High School to become social agents of change in their community by conducting a youth-led participatory action research project. The youth were employed through the summer employment program administered by Youth UpRising<sup>2</sup>. The summer research team completed the following activities: created a survey to understand the rates of homeownership within the Castlemont Community (Census tract #4097) and the challenges presented by displacement for community members, conducted a large community survey, and used Google Forms to record data.

There were a total of 202 surveys completed. The data they collected will help inform the overall anti-displacement strategies developed by the Castlemont Renaissance.

## SUMMER EMPLOYMENT PROGRAM

The summer employment program is funded through WIOA - City of Oakland Workforce Development Funds. There are two components to the program and the structure; 1) the first component is youth complete a research project focusing on a pressing issue in their community and 2) the second component is that youth receive an industry recognized certification in excel. The transferable skills the youth gain from conducting a research project are:

- Public speaking
- Outreach
- Writing
- Critical analysis
- And critical thinking around the social determinant of health in their community

The excel training also prepares them to undertake coursework in college and beyond.

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<sup>1</sup> A women- minority owned consulting firm focusing on community engagement, participatory evaluation, and community-based research with a specialty in YPAR.

<sup>2</sup> YU is a community transformation organization focused on fostering the leadership skills of young people.

## INTRODUCTION

In order to understand the of why people in East Oakland are not interested in owning a home, and the problem of home displacement the youth researchers surveyed the Castlemont Census Tract collecting surveys and asking people their thoughts about their community. Participants were also asked for contact information if they were interested in owning a home.

## RESEARCH PLAN

The research plan was developed by the youth researchers in collaboration with the facilitator. This was the first step prior to the youth researchers developing the research tool.

### Project Background:

The purpose of this project is to target people of color specifically in the Castlemont area to increase their knowledge on home ownership. We are aiming to lower the percentage of people being displaced from their homes.

### In East Oakland:

“Residents spend \$338 million outside of East Oakland each year. The lack of local retailers diminishes the community’s ability to support neighborhood jobs and commercial growth, and perpetuates about the community’s purchasing power.” - Castlemont Advantage

### Research Question:

In what ways can the community develop anti-displacement and home ownership strategies that will prevent people from losing their homes and keep current residents within the community?

### Defining Terms:

Home Owner – anyone who has paid at least 1/3 of their total mortgage (appx. 10 years of residence).

Displacement – the changes in policies which cause families to be moved out of their homes and communities

### Research Goals:

1. Have data collected evidence to educate about homeownership and build community awareness
2. Learn prevention strategies of displacement with homeowners
3. Discover strategies to lower property rates and lower percentage of poverty
4. Figure out strategies homeowners can share with people who are buying homes to have more community members purchase homes within the census tract

5. Determine how many people in the census tract own their houses and how many people have lost their houses

Methodology:

Surveys

Sample:

100-150 residents per group

Target Population:

Home owners

Landlords

Renters

People at risk of losing their homes

Schedule:

Monday-Thursday

1-6pm

Data Collection Tools:

Surveys with census tract residence

## **DATA COLLECTION TOOLS**

The community surveys were created by the youth researchers. This was done through various team discussions. The complete survey is attached to this report.

## **PROCESS**

The project was five weeks long. The first week, the youth researchers followed the following schedule:

Week 1

Training on the principles of community research, YPAR, developed the research project, & developed research tool.

Week 2 - Week 3

Fieldwork

Week 4

The youth researchers did all the data entry, analysis, and created the final report.

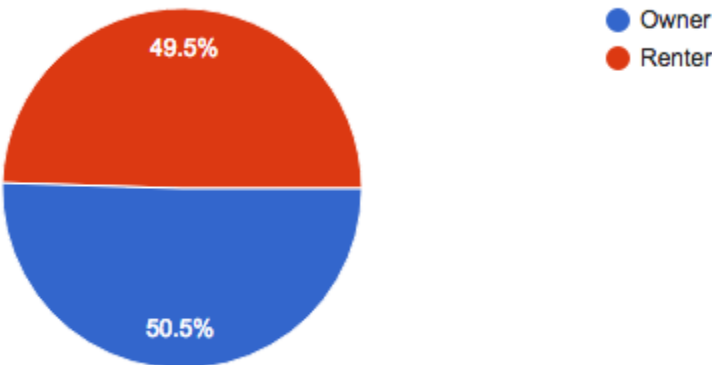
Week 5

The youth researchers completed a college-level excel certification.

## RESULTS

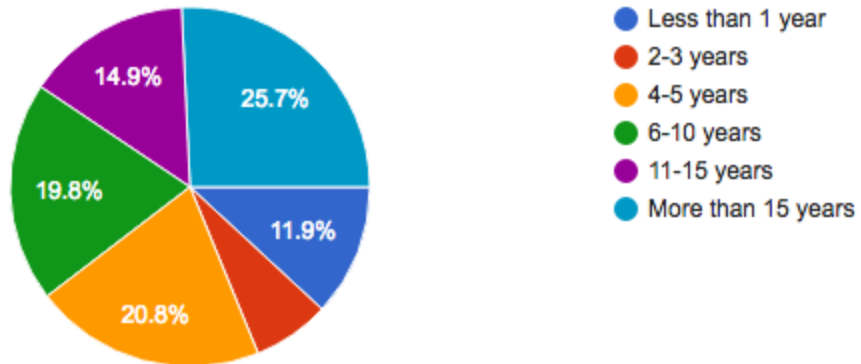
There were a total of 202 surveys completed in the Castlemont census track. Below are the graphs depicting the data collected. A few graphs have youth observations/

### Owners vs. Renters



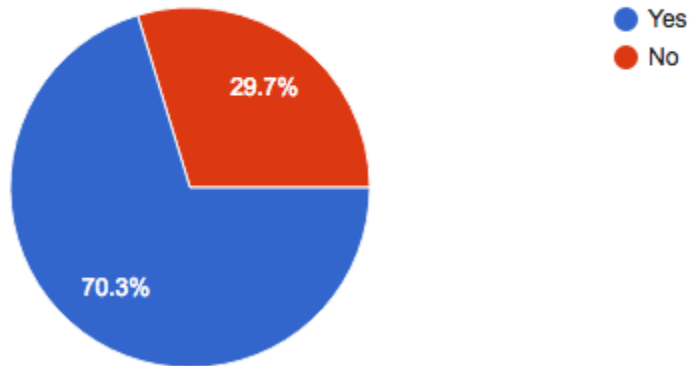
Youth observation: This data shows us that of the 202 residents surveyed, the amount of homeowners and renters are very close with only a 1% difference.

### How many years have you owned this home? (101 responses)



Youth observation: From the collected data, we found out that about 60% of surveyed homeowners within the census tract have owned their homes for more than 5 years.

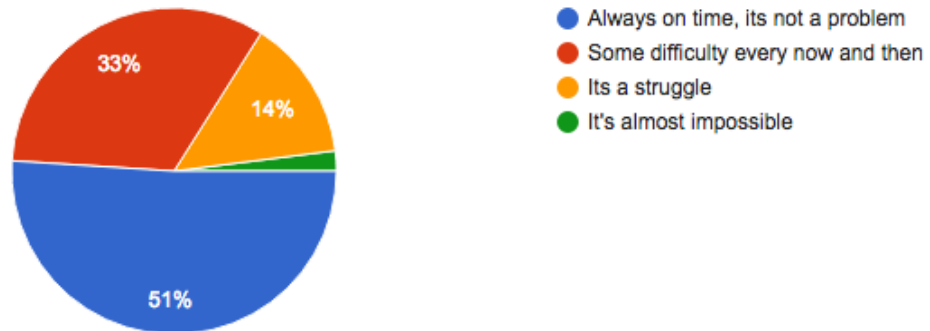
### Is this the only property you own? (101 responses)



Youth observation: 70% of the surveyed homeowners only owned the property at which they reside.

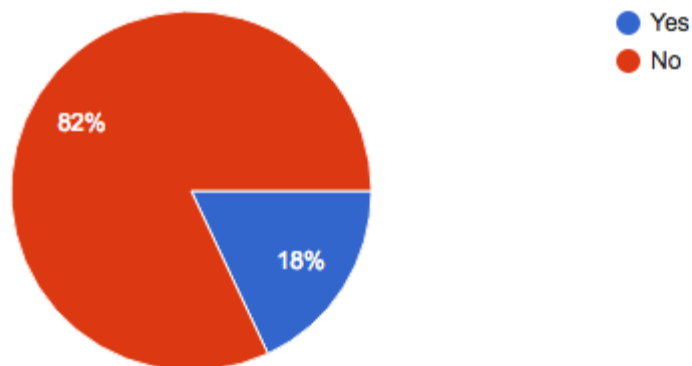
## How do you feel about paying your mortgage payment every month?

(100 responses)



Youth observation: 49% of the surveyed homeowners have some occasional or persistent difficulty paying their mortgage. While 2% feel it is almost impossible to keep up with mortgage payments.

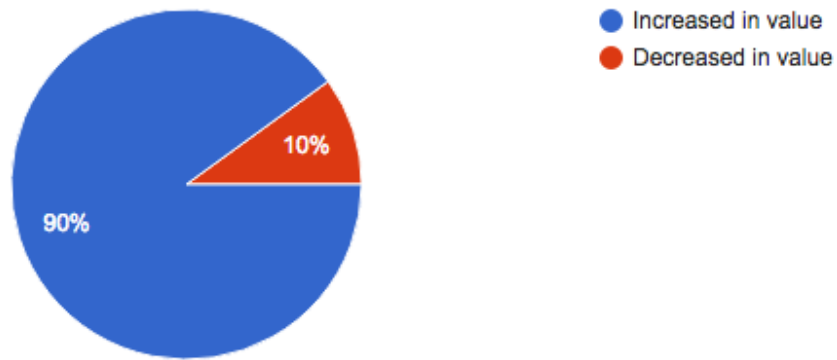
## Would you be interested in selling your house? (100 responses)





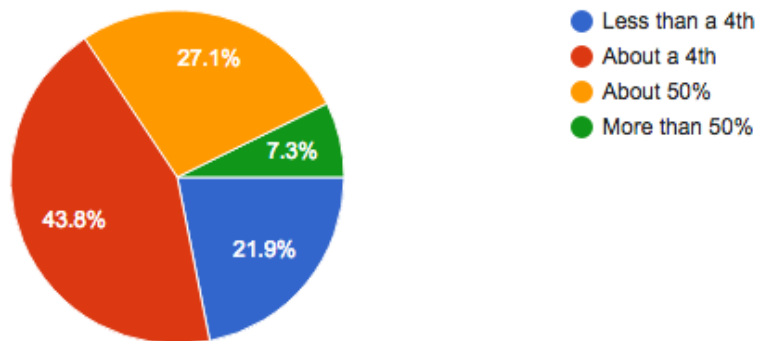
Youth observation: Now, the majority of the surveyed homeowners were not interested in selling their homes: the majority of that 82% had been living in their homes for 5 or more years.

### Do you think your house has: (100 responses)



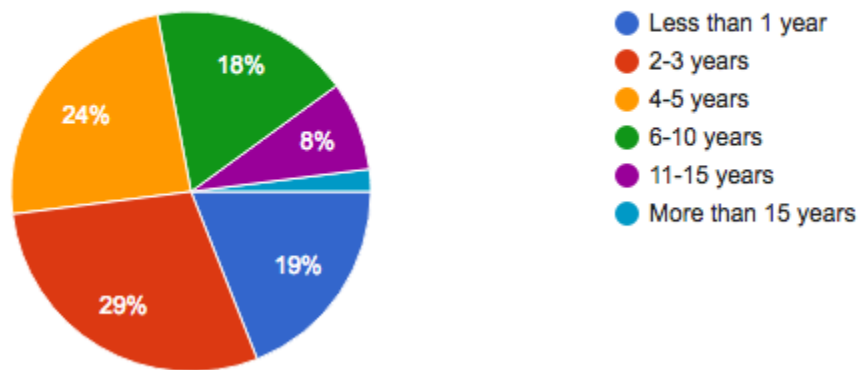
Youth observation: Of the 100 homeowner responses, 90% were led to believe that their property had increased in value.

### About what percentage of your monthly income goes to your mortgage? (96 responses)

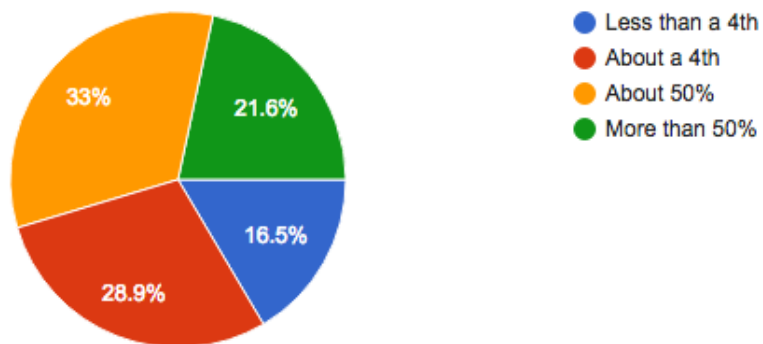


Youth observation: Fortunately of those homeowners, over 60% said that about a 4th or less of their monthly income goes towards their mortgage, leaving them with enough to live off of. However, we cannot view this information as a glass half empty or half full. This still leaves about 34% of homeowners spending the majority of their check towards keeping a roof over their head, leaving them without the option to spend their money with great leisure.

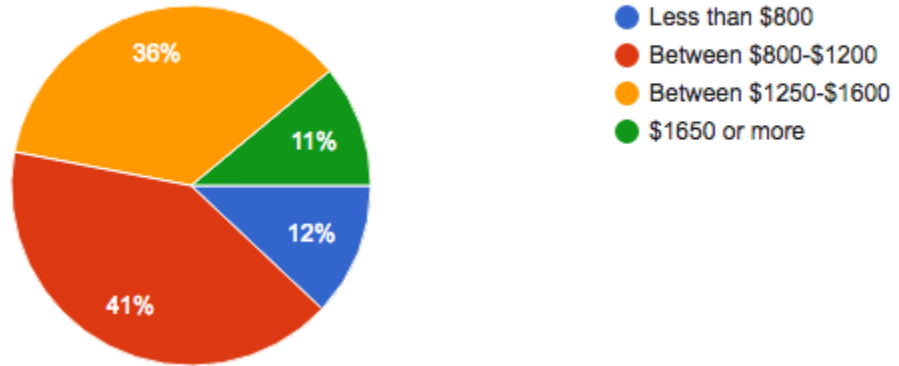
### How many years have you been renting here? (100 responses)



### About what percentage of your monthly income goes to rent? (97 responses)

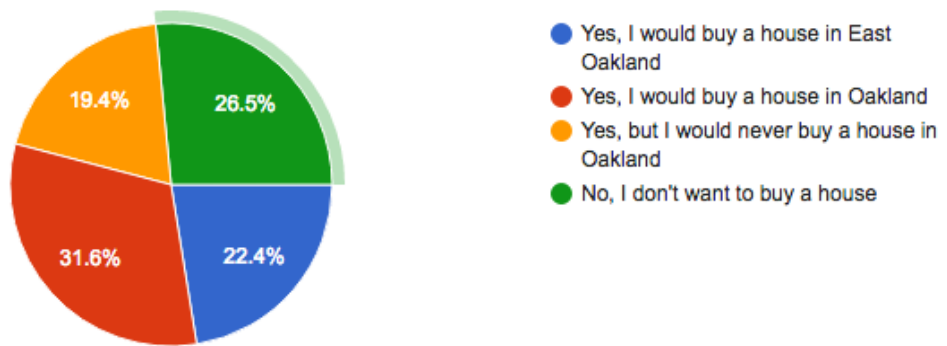


### How much do you pay for rent? (100 responses)

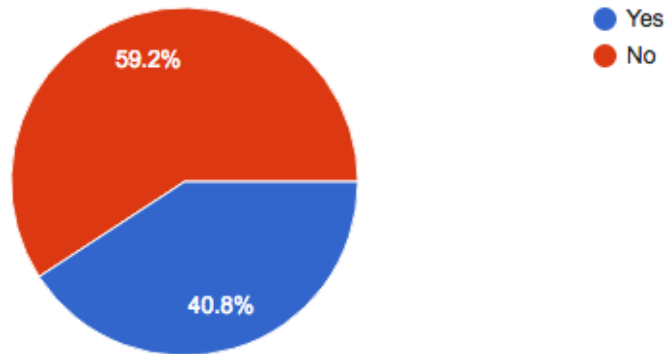


Youth observation: We found out that 41% of people pay between \$800-\$1200 for rent and 36% of people pay between \$1250-\$1600 for rent. The rest are the lower percentages of 11% who pay between \$1650 or more and 12% pay between less than \$800.

### Would you be interested in buying a house? (98 responses)

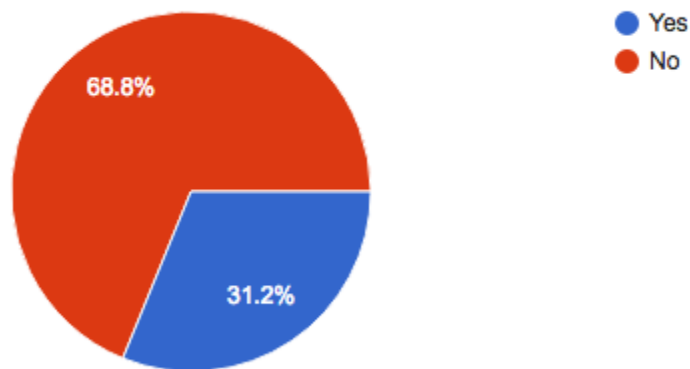


### Would you be interested in getting help to buy a house? (98 responses)



Youth observation: From this pie chart we found out that 59.2% people say that their not interested into buying house. And the 40.8% say that they would be interested of buying a house.

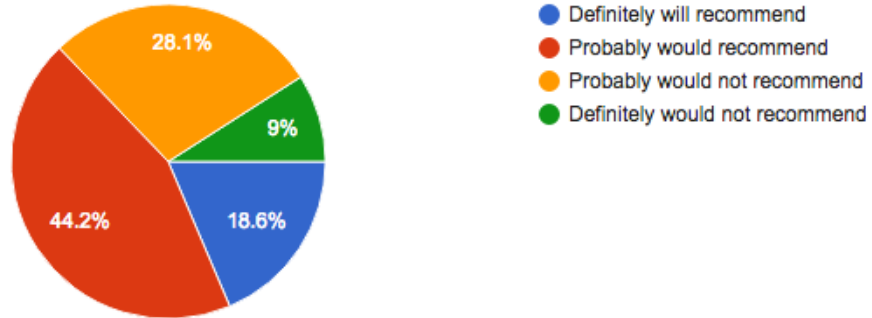
### Do you receive Section 8? (93 responses)



Youth observation: 68.8% said that they don't receive section 8 and the majority of 31.2% say that they do receive section 8 for the people who are renters.

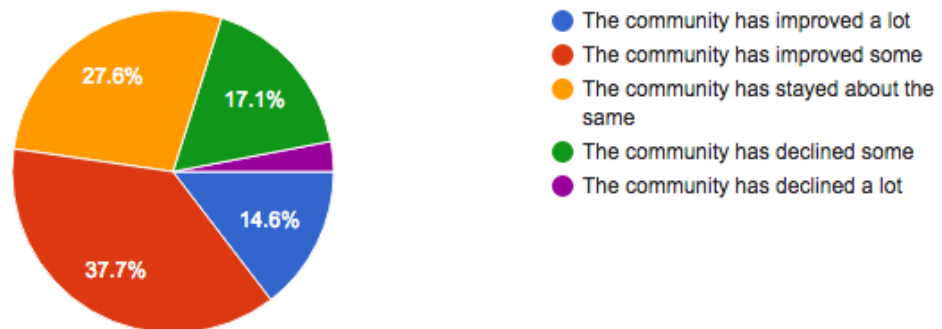
## Right now, How likely are you to recommend this community to someone else as a good place to live?

(199 responses)

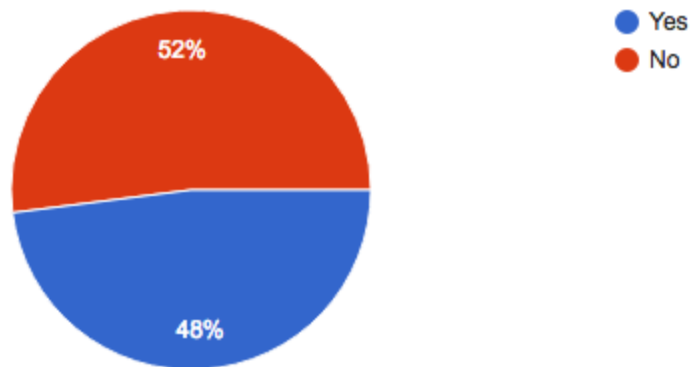


## Compared to three years ago, how would you say your community has changed overall?

(199 responses)

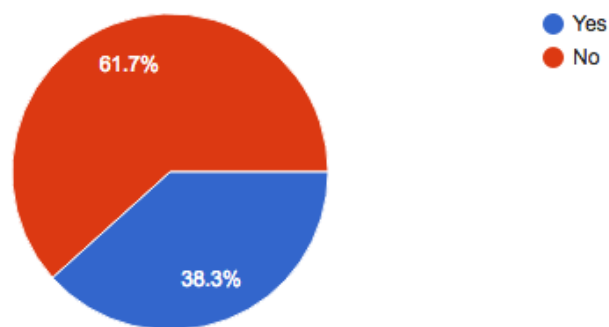


If you had the chance to relocate, would you? (198 responses)

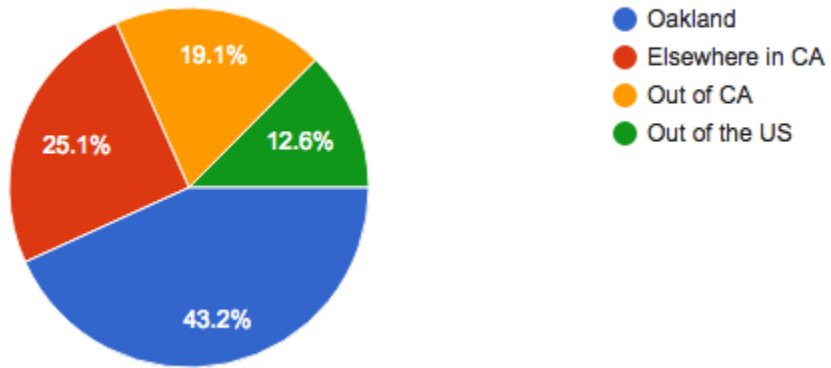


Do you know anyone who has been forced to leave and move away from the community because they could no longer afford to live here?

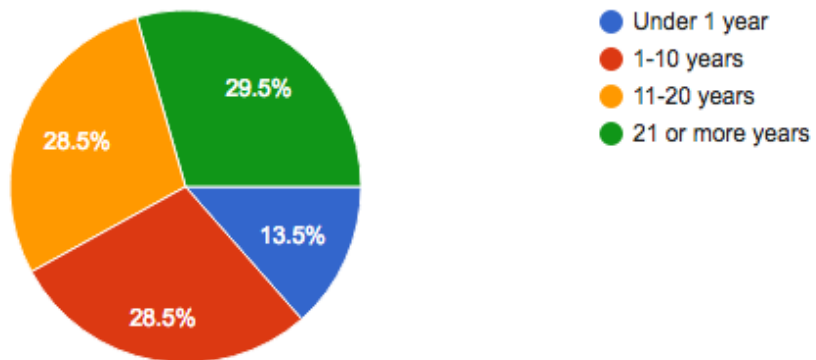
(193 responses)



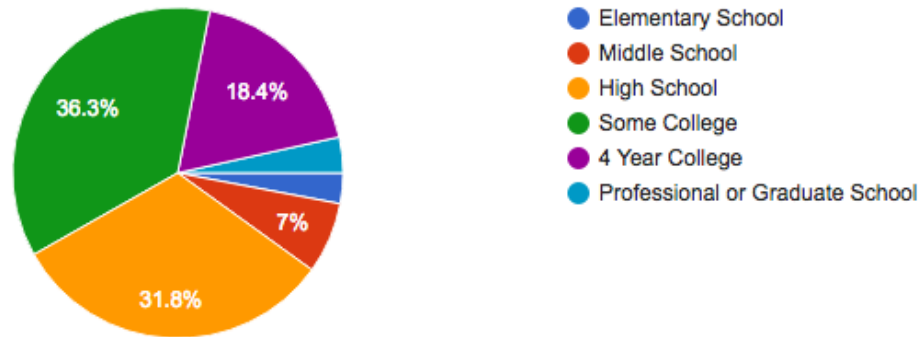
### Where are you from? (199 responses)



### How long have you lived in Oakland? (200 responses)

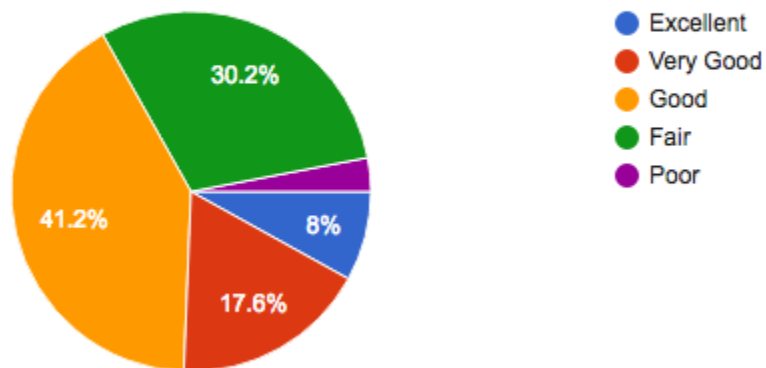


### What is the highest level of education you've completed? (201 responses)



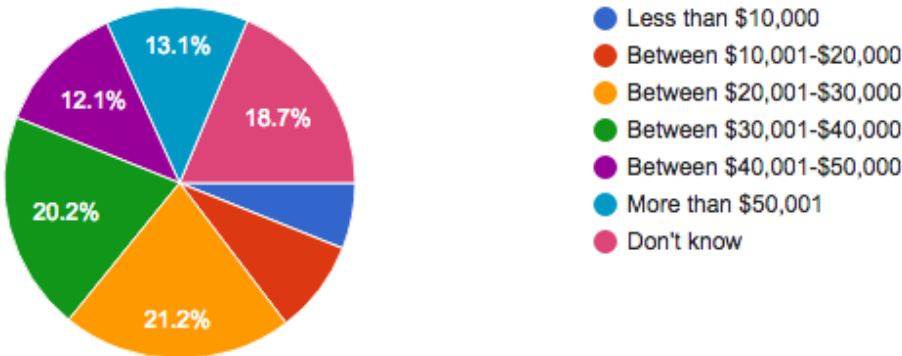
Youth observation: Another data that we collected was the question What is the highest level of education you've completed, we came to a conclusion that people who earned the highest level of education usually aim to owning their house than renting because they probably can properly afford it than people who are renting.

### How about the health of people who live here? (199 responses)

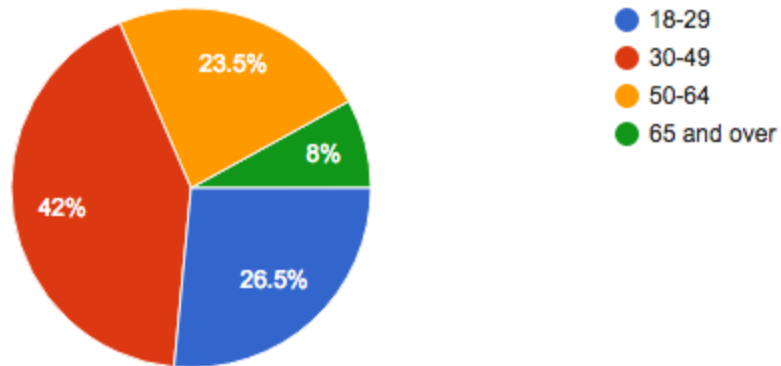




What's your approximate annual income? (198 responses)



## How old are you? (200 responses)



Youth observation: Lastly, we asked the general question, How old are you we came to an understanding that people at the age of 30-49 were more likely to own their house than rent and people of the age of 18-29 were more likely to rent because they have less experience about owning a house.

## CONCLUSION

In conclusion, the residents of East Oakland wish to stay and live in East Oakland. If they own their homes they want to keep their property. A good number of these residents have been in the community for over 10 years. And even though, there is a strong desire to stay people are struggling due to the increase and price of housing.

## REFLECTIONS

*“During this entire process, I have learned a lot of new interesting things about my community. This topic is not something that usually comes up in casual conversation, so these surveys gave me a bit of insight on some of the problems people in my community were actually dealing with. In addition to all of this, my people and communication skills also improved not to mention I also met a lot of really intelligent youth researchers. Overall I believe this project was a success and I hope it can bring about some real change.”*

*“What I have learned from doing this project is about my community and how it a struggle for people to buy a house or even own one. It made me realized on hearing about what it takes to have house from when we went to do our surveys and hearing the stories of how people who lived in Oakland don't want to leave or relocate and it amazing that they rather stay in a city that they live for a long time is incredible. Also that doing this project help me with my communication skills and to be more talkative which will really help me out of when I go to school in the fall. I think us as youth researchers doing this project will change a lot and people will see that us doing this research will make a change in the community for the better. And to work with amazing researchers has been a fun experience and I'm happy was able to be apart of this research project.”*

Survey

Participant ID #:

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Date:

Check which one applies:

1 Owner

2 Renter

### PART A: ONLY FOR OWNERS

1. How many years have you owned this home?

1 Less than 1 year

2 2-3 years

3 4-5 years

4 6-10 years

5 11-15 years

6 More than 15 years

2. Is this the only property you own?

1 Yes

2 No

3. How do you feel about paying your mortgage payment every month?

1 Always on time, is not a problem

2 Some difficulty every now and then

3 It's a struggle

4 It's almost impossible

4. About what percentage of your monthly income goes to your mortgage?

1 Less than a 4th

2 About a 4th

3 About 50%

3 More than 50%

5. How many people live with you?

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# people

# Adults (Write exact number)

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# Children

--	--

6. Would you be interested in selling your house?

1 No, why?

2 Yes, why?

7. Do you think your house has:

1 Increased in value

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2 Decreased in value

## **PART B: ONLY FOR RENTERS**

1. How many years have you been renting here?

1 Less than 1 year

2 2-3 years

3 4-5 years

4 6-10 years

5 11-15 years

6 More than 15 years

2. About what percentage of your monthly income goes to your rent?

1 Less than a 4th

2 About a 4th

3 About 50%

3 More than 50%

How much do you pay for rent?

1 Less than \$800

2 Between \$850 and \$1,200

3 Between \$1,250 and 1,600

4 Between \$1,650 or more

3. How many people live with you?

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# people

# Adults (Write exact number)

--	--

# Children

--	--



4. Would you be interested in buying a house?

1 Yes, I would buy a house in East Oakland

2 Yes, I would buy a house in Oakland

3 Yes, but I would never buy a house in Oakland

4 No, I don't want to buy a house

5. Would you be interested in getting help to buy a house?

1 Yes (Do you mind if I take your contact information so someone call follow-up?)

2 No, I don't want to buy a house

6. Do you receive section 8?

1 Yes

2 No

## **FOR ALL**

Now, I would like to ask you some questions about your community.

Overall, considering everything, how satisfied would you say you are living in this community?

1 Very satisfied

2 Somewhat satisfied

3 Somewhat dissatisfied

4 Very dissatisfied

Right now, how likely are you to recommend this community to someone else as a good place to live?

1 Definitely would recommend

2 Probably would recommend

3 Probably would not recommend

4 Definitely would not recommend

For the following question, please compare your community now to how it was three years ago. If you have lived in the community for less than three years, please compare it to how it was when you first moved in.

Compared to three years ago, how would you say your community has changed overall?

1 The community has improved a lot

2 The community has improved some

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3 The community has stayed about the same

4 The community has declined some

5 The community has declined a lot

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If you had the chance to relocate would you?

1 Yes → Where? Why?

2 No → Why?

One of the things that is happening in Oakland is gentrification, gentrification means that new people move into poor neighborhoods and drive up the cost of rents and houses. I'd like to ask you a few questions about this.

Do you know anyone who has been forced to leave and move away from the community because they could no longer afford to live here?

1 Yes

2 No

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And finally, I have some questions about you?

Where are you from?

1 Oakland

2 Elsewhere in CA

3 Out of CA

4 Out of the US

How long have you lived in Oakland?

1 Under 1 year

2 1-10 years

3 11-20 years

4 21 or more years

What is the highest level of education you have completed?

1 Elementary school

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2 Middle school

3 High school

4 Some college (Junior/community college, Associate's degree, vocational/trade school)

5 4 year-college (Bachelor's degree)

6 Professional or graduate school

How about the health of people who live here? Excellent, Very good, good, fair or poor?

1 Excellent

2 Very good

3 Good

4 Fair

5 Poor

What is your approximate annual income?

- 1 Less than \$10,000
- 2 Between \$10,001 and \$20,000
- 3 Between \$20,001 and \$30,000
- 4 Between \$30,001 and \$40,000
- 5 Between \$40,001 and \$50,000
- 6 More than \$50,000
- 7 Don't know
- 

How old are you?

- 1 18-29 years
- 2 30-49 years
- 3 50-64 years

—

4 | 65 and over

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Thank you for doing the survey.