Portland Insights Survey

Portland State UNIVERSITY
Regional Research Institute

Executive Summary

The 2024 Portland Insights survey was an effort by the Portland City Budget Office, in partnership with the Regional Research Institute for Human Services (RRI) at Portland State University (PSU), to assess community perceptions and needs. The three primary goals were to (1) develop a better understanding of Portlanders' perception of city government and its services through members from a wide range of communities and neighborhoods, with special attention given to ensure representation of traditionally underrepresented populations, including Black, Indigenous, and People of Color (BIPOC); (2) understand community needs and provide the City of Portland with outcome data to assess the impact of their programs and services; and (3) obtain results that will help inform the city's budget development, policy making, and performance management processes.

Survey development was facilitated through an iterative process involving representatives from the City and members of the PSU team to review the research objectives of a diverse range of stakeholders. This six-month development process resulted in a six-page survey. The finalized English survey was translated into five additional languages (Simplified and Traditional Chinese, Russian, Spanish, Ukrainian, and Vietnamese). In an effort to diversify participation options, the survey was available in both paper and online versions, and could be completed by phone.

A random household, three-part mail survey was distributed to a sample of 20,000 single and multifamily homes. In order to supplement the random household survey with oversampling for specific communities that are commonly underrepresented in surveys, the City Budget Office partnered with community-based organizations, neighborhood/district associations, and City of Portland affinity groups, to help support survey distribution. Individuals who were 16 years of age or older and either currently live in Portland or moved out of Portland within the last five years were invited to complete the survey.

At the conclusion of data collection, 4,286 completed surveys (2,845 web and 1,441 paper surveys) were received and a random household survey response rate of 17.1% was achieved. The calculated sampling error (i.e., margin of error) of ±1.49% indicates that the survey results are generalizable to the City of Portland. Both quantitative (i.e., numeric responses) and qualitative (i.e., text responses) were analyzed to establish a rich set of feedback from residents of Portland.

While more detailed information about the methodology and findings (both citywide and broken down by selected demographic characteristics) can be found in the body of the report, the following citywide key takeaways were generated across four areas of focus.

General City of Portland Topics

- On a 5-point scale from Not at all satisfied (1) to Extremely satisfied (5), Portland residents expressed the highest degree of satisfaction regarding the City's **outdoor and natural areas** (*M*[1]=4.18), **amenities** (*M*=4.04), and **arts and culture** (*M*=3.84).
- On a 4-point scale from Poor (1) to Excellent (4) **quality of City services**, survey participants endorsed **the highest level of satisfaction** with Portland's **parks and natural areas** (*M*=3.35), **garbage, recycling, and composting services** (*M*=3.14), and **water service** (*M*=2.94).

[1] *M* stands for mean or average rating, which is more fully explained in the methodology section of this report.

- **Affordable housing and homeless services** (72.4%), **city streets, sidewalks, and transportation** (66.7%), and **safety services (police, fire, 9-1-1, violence prevention)** (62.3%) were rated as the most important services provided by the City.
- **Homelessness** (85.4%) was most frequently selected as the greatest challenge facing Portland, followed by **cost of living** (73.3%) and **community safety** (59.7%).

Public Safety

- The overall mean rating for feeling safe walking in their neighborhood during the day fell just above ***Moderately agree*** (*M*=4.02), with (73.6%) of respondents either ***Moderately*** or ***Extremely agreeing***.
- Respondents located in **District 1** expressed more fear than other respondents in other districts that they would be the victim of a violent or property crime in their everyday life.
- People who identify as **Asian**, **Native Hawaiian or Pacific Islander**, or **Hispanic or Latino/a/x/e** expressed more fear of being the victim of either type of crime than other racial/ethnic groups.

Affordability

- The overall mean rating of satisfaction with Portland's cost of living fell slightly above ***Slightly satisfied*** (*M*=2.15), with the majority of respondents saying they were either ***Not at all satisfied*** (36.6%) or ***Slightly satisfied*** (26.5%).
- Across the City financial assistance programs, respondents reported the greatest need for the ***Water, sewer, and stormwater bill payment assistance program*** (21.7%).
- A trend appeared that respondents in **District 1** had the lowest affordability ratings across all services except for childcare and reported the highest need across all of the programs.

Communication and Engagement

- Citywide **awareness of Portland's 311 non-emergency phone numbe**r had increased since the 2022 implementation of the Portland Insights survey, rising from 47.8% in 2022 to 58.6% in 2024.
- Respondents were, on average, between ***Somewhat satisfied*** and only ***Slightly satisfied*** (*M*=2.42) with how the City informs residents of issues facing the community. **Email** (57.4%), **Mail** (46.6%), and **City website** (45.8%) were identified as the top preferences for receiving information from the City of Portland government.
- Respondents endorsed that it was between ***Somewhat easy*** and ***Slightly easy*** to contact the City government on issues important to them, with **Online reporting** (67.0%) and **Individual contact with City employees** (51.1%) constituting the most frequently selected contact modalities.