

Oak Brook Park District

2017 Community Recreation and Parks Report



Presented by the Office of Recreation & Park Resources
University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign
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INTRODUCTION

The Oak Brook Park District (OBPD) is currently developing long range plans which has required two kinds of input. A comprehensive plan requires the ideas and investment of staff, which the park district obtained through the strategic planning process. A comprehensive plan also needs to determine the current needs and future interests of residents related to the programs and services offered by the Park District. To accomplish the second goal, the OBPD contracted with the Office of Recreation and Park Resources with the University of Illinois, Urbana-Champaign to conduct a community survey to gather this information.

A total of 483 residents responded to the survey request and provided their feedback on their levels of satisfaction with staff, facilities, parks, programs and overall offerings, as well as feedback regarding their future needs and desires. Employees from 27 companies located in the Village of Oak Brook were invited to complete a similar survey, which was administered online. This resulted in 88 responses from employees of at least ten different companies. These results were reported separately from the resident data and in this report are referred to as corporate respondents or corporate users.

The information compiled for this public report will help the Oak Brook Park District develop a comprehensive long-range plan. When coupled with the strategic plan this will enhance and sustain the community recreation opportunities available to the residents and users of the Oak Brook Park District.

Process

The survey questions were developed by the Office of Recreation and Park Resources, in partnership with Oak Brook Park District commissioners, staff and key stakeholders. The surveys were mailed to all Oak Brook Park District residents during October of 2016. Residents returned their completed surveys directly to the Office of Recreation and Park Resources where the survey data was tabulated, analyzed and compiled for recommendations.

Survey Results

The information collected from the survey has been divided into three sections for the report: participation results, facility usage results, and future interests and needs. A brief description of the results will be presented alongside key statistics and result charts.

Thank You

The Oak Brook Park District would like to thank all the residents that responded to the survey and provided their feedback. This information is very useful as the OBPD develops the initiatives and plans to meet the recreational needs and interests of their residents!

OAK BROOK PARK DISTRICT: ABOUT US

The Oak Brook Park District was incorporated in 1962. The Village of Oak Brook population was 7,883 as of 2010. Oak Brook is also home to a number of corporations and businesses whose employees use the park district's services.

Mission

To provide the very best in park and recreational opportunities, facilities and open lands for our community.

Key Statistics

- Number of Full-time Staff: 31
- Number of Seasonal/Part-time Staff: 210
- Number of Park Sites: 7
- Number of Acres: 150
- Natural Area Acres: 40
- Grants Received 2012-2017: \$426,000
- Annual Number of Program Participants: 12,635
- Annual Number of Special Event Attendees: 6,500

OBPD Facilities

- Family Recreation Center
- Fitness Center
- Family Aquatic Center
- Tennis Center
- Central Park
- Central Park West
- Chillem Park
- Forest Glen Park
- Saddle Brook Park
- Dean Nature Sanctuary
- Splash Island
- Evergreen Bank Group Athletic Field

OBPD Awards & Recognition:

- 2013 National Recreation & Park Association Gold Medal Finalist: Agencies are judged on their ability to address the needs of those they serve through the collective energies of citizens, staff and elected officials
- 2014 National Recreation & Park Association Gold Medal Finalist
- 2015 National Recreation & Park Association Grand Plaque Gold Medal Award

KEY FINDINGS

ODPD Satisfaction

- 75% of active users were very satisfied or satisfied overall with the Oak Brook Park District.
- 80% of active users were very satisfied or satisfied with the Family Recreation Center and the Fitness Center.
- 89% of active users were satisfied or very satisfied with walking paths and trails.
- Satisfaction rates for corporate users were even higher than those for residents. 84% of active corporate users were satisfied or very satisfied with the OBPB overall (compared to 75% for residents). 100% of active corporate users were satisfied or very satisfied with programs (vs. 73% for residents) and parks and amenities (vs. 77% for residents).

Current Participation Patterns

- 53% of active users have visited the OBPB facilities more than 25 times in the past year!
- 42% of active users have participated in an OBPB program more than 25 times in the last year.
- The summer concert series was listed as the top special event.
- Participation rates were considerably higher for residents than they were for corporate respondents. 47% of residents participated in an OBPB program in the last year compared to 18% of corporate respondents; 69% of residents visited an OBPB facility in the last year compared to 29% of corporate respondents; and 44% of residents participated in an OBPB special event in the last year compared to 24% of corporate respondents.

Facility Usage Patterns

- 59% of resident respondents visited or used Oak Brook Park District parks in the last year
- 80% of active users indicated being either very satisfied or satisfied overall with the Park District facilities

Marketing Preferences

- 87% of respondents use the Park District brochure to find out about programs, activities, and events.
- 25% of respondents use the Park District website for obtaining information.
- Approximately 14% receive information via Park District email

Perceived Effectiveness of OBPD

- Among those respondents who expressed an opinion, 68% indicated the Park District is very effective to effective at informing the community of programs and services.
- Respondents showed mixed feelings about the Park District working effectively with the Sports Core (36% very effective/effective, 31% neutral, 33% ineffective/very ineffective).
- 82% of those with an opinion feel the OBPD provides safe facilities.

Opportunities & Challenges

- 90% of respondents with an opinion believed the OBPD facilities are conveniently located.
- 51% of respondents with an opinion believed the Park District should not sell naming rights.
- 64% of respondents with an opinion feel the OBPD is a good value for their money.



PROGRAM PARTICIPATION

The Oak Brook Park District offers a wide variety of programs and special events. The District is known for quality (tennis, fitness, etc.) and innovative (fluid running) programming. 47% of survey respondents participated in OBPD programs over the last year, and of those active users, 42% participated more than 25 times during the year.

The largest number of respondents listed “none” as the program they would like to see developed or expanded. This fits well with an agency that has received high satisfaction rates for their current offerings and also offers a wide variety of programs. The second highest need selected to be developed or expanded was senior programming. This also may be expected in a community with a higher active aging population.

The respondents that rated their level of satisfaction appear to be generally satisfied with the organization of Oak Brook Park District programs:

- 73% of respondents that rated their satisfaction were either satisfied or very satisfied with the Park District programs overall.

Nearly half of respondents indicated they do not know or use Park District programs. Therefore, these individuals did not indicate their level satisfaction of the Park District programs.

The summer concert series appeared to be the most popular special event hosted by the OBPD (nearly 35% selected this as one of their top four choices). 27% of respondents listed “none” as their number one answer, which suggests that special events may have room for growth or the continued development of targeted events to various population segments may be of consideration.

Customer Service Quality

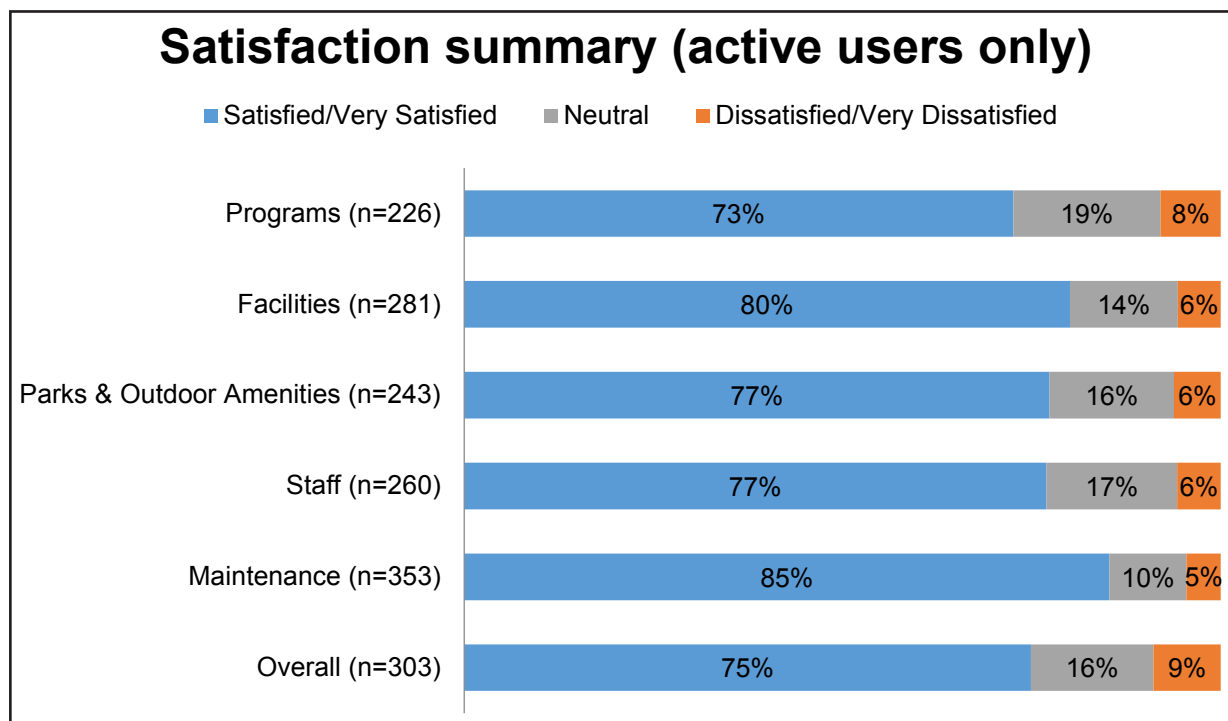
Overall, satisfied or very satisfied rating for staff customer service was 77%. Individual units received similarly high marks, such as Family Recreation Center front desk staff (79%), grounds crew and park staff (82%), custodial/maintenance staff (77%) and the group exercise instructors at the fitness center (76%). A few programs with smaller N sizes saw rates of dissatisfaction that were slightly higher than other areas. Exploring the challenges faced by reaching out to frequent users in these areas may be of value. Overall, a majority of OBPD staff received satisfaction ratings higher than the national average of 70%.

(See Chart 1 on page 9)

Marketing

Determining the medium for marketing programs, services and amenities can be difficult when considering the plethora of options available in the digital age. This can be particularly challenging for a public park and recreation agency with a limited budget and desire to provide the best services for their resident's dollar. OBPD residents responded in similar fashion to other Chicagoland communities in relation to how they learn about OBPD programs and services. Respondent use of the website has grown (25%), but a majority of them continue to use the hard copy program guide to find what they need (87%). While the web, social media and app use continues to grow, changing the distribution of the program guide as a marketing resource may not be the best choice in the near future.

Chart 1



Note: Percentages are based on the respondents who expressed an opinion ("Don't Use" responses have been omitted)



PARK & AMENITY USAGE

The Oak Brook Park District maintains seven park sites that offer a wide variety of competitive, active and passive recreation options. Most survey respondents use or visit the Oak Brook Park District parks each year.

- 59% of respondents utilize the OBPD parks
- Nearly 30% of those who use the parks visit them twice a month or more
- 77% of respondents indicated being very satisfied or satisfied with the Park District parks and amenities overall.

Respondents who are active users of walking paths (89%) and playgrounds (76%) rated these amenities with the highest satisfaction levels.

Maintenance received high satisfaction rankings across the board for the upkeep, cleanliness and service rendered at OBPD parks and facilities. Overall, 85% of active users were satisfied or very satisfied with park, facility, and open space maintenance. Maintenance satisfaction was highest for outside appearance of buildings/facilities and open space upkeep.

- 91% of active users were satisfied or very satisfied with the outside appearance of buildings/facilities
- 87% were satisfied/very satisfied with open space areas upkeep.
- Both of these areas also had very low percentages of dissatisfied/very dissatisfied users (2% and 3% respectively).





FUTURE RESIDENT NEEDS & INTERESTS

The Oak Brook Park District offers a wide variety of programs and services to their residents. It is not uncommon for survey responses to list trails and pathways as the number one desired amenity to develop, expand and care for, as was the case with this survey. It is also common for a survey to receive responses that indicate the agency is providing quality offerings and the park district's focus should be to maintain this high level of quality. This was also indicated in the findings. Several other suggestions may be considered for the agency's programs and facilities that could meet residents' recreational interests and needs in the future.

Facilities

The respondents indicated their interest for the Park District developing or expanding three types of facilities to meet their future recreational needs and interests. This response was indicated by the respondent's level of willingness to direct more of the current budget to these areas.

1. Walking and biking paths
2. No change
3. Renovate or improve indoor pools

(See Chart 2 on page 13)

The facilities most requested by corporate respondents were:

1. Walking and biking paths
2. No change
3. Develop additional ADA play areas and facilities

Programs

When asked what programs they wanted the Park District to develop or expand, the most frequently requested options fell into three categories: None (no changes needed), fitness/wellness, and group exercise.

1. None
2. Senior fitness/wellness
3. Adult fitness/wellness
4. Senior group exercise
5. Adult group exercise

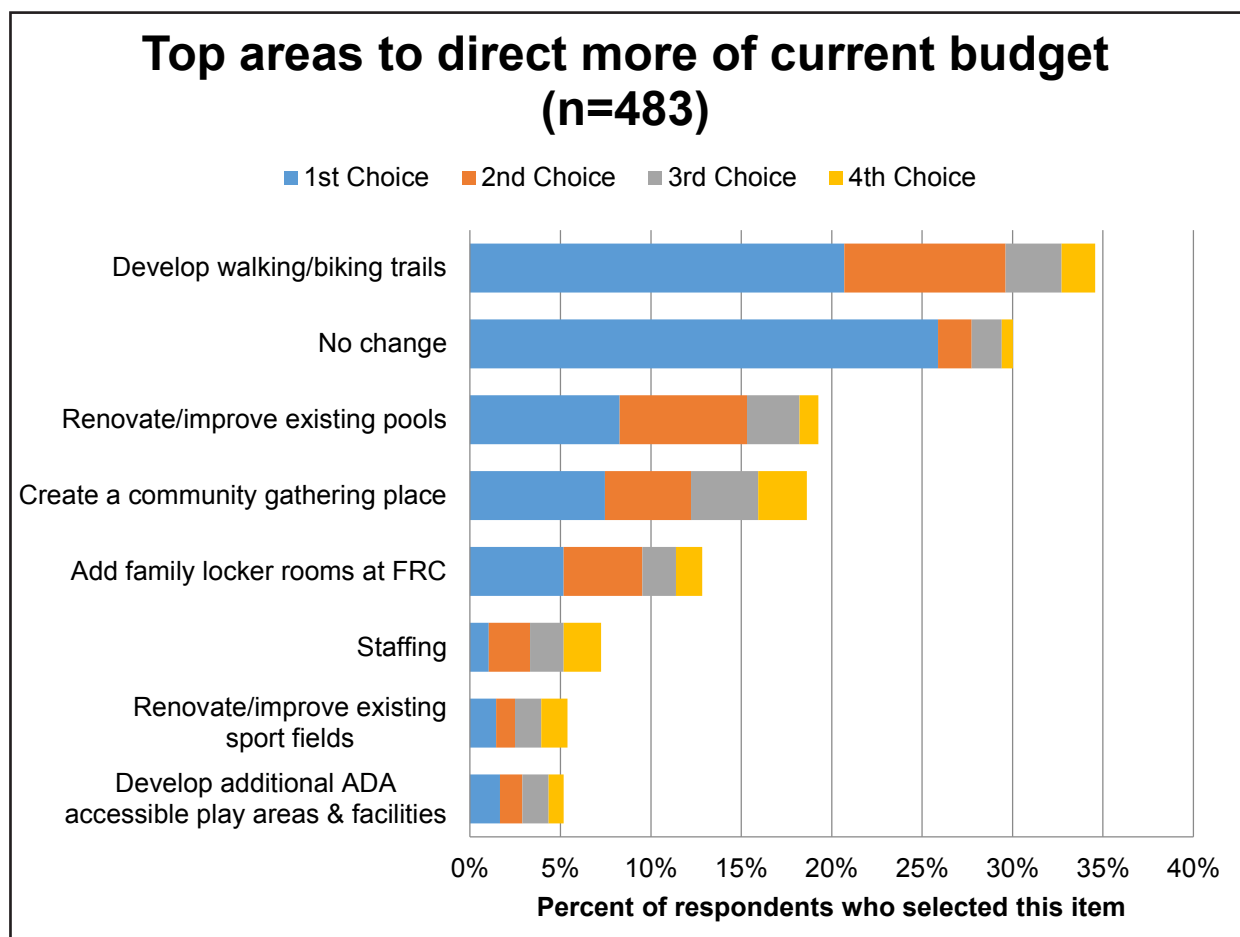
A representative sample of the active aging demographic was reached with this survey. Results indicate there is room for growth in this area. There were a number of responses that older adults “loved the park district, but their kids have left the home and they have no need for OBPD services anymore.” Finding the right mix of programs and offerings to engage the aging and baby boomer communities may be a challenge, but a worthwhile opportunity to improve the overall health of Oak Brook.

(See Chart 3 on page 14)

The programs most frequently requested by corporate residents were:

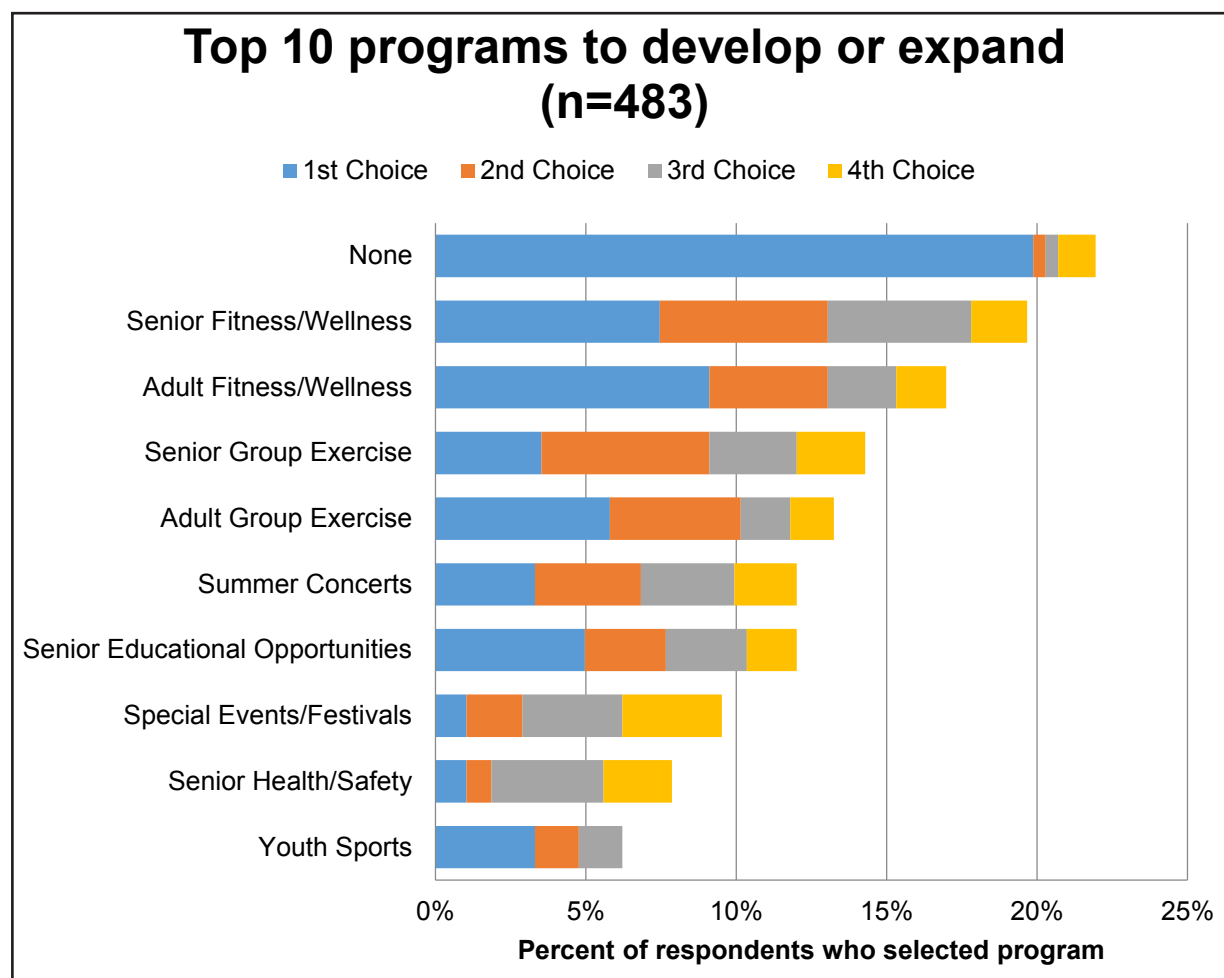
1. Adult fitness/wellness
2. Adult group exercise
3. Special events/festivals
4. Hockey/ice skating
5. Summer concerts

Chart 2



Note: Respondents could choose multiple items. Percentages are based on the total number of survey respondents.

Chart 3



Note: Respondents could choose multiple items. Percentages are based on the total number of survey respondents.



RECOMMENDATIONS

The information gathered from this survey provides several recommendations for the Oak Brook Park District to consider for the future.

1. ***Continue to invest in staff training and resources.*** Satisfaction ratings with staff were well above the national average of 70%, with a few exceptions. The message was conveyed that the Oak Brook Park District offers a high quantity of quality programs, services and amenities for a wide breadth of needs in the community. Continued investment in the staff will sustain the high standards the OBPD residents have come to know and appreciate.
2. ***“Take care of what we have.”*** The Oak Brook Park District is solid in many areas and continued vigilant effort needs to be focused on sustaining the high quality programs, amenities and culture that has been maintained by the current staff. Many residents chose “none” as a response to development or expansion of services or amenities. This speaks to the comprehensive offerings of the district as well as the interest of some residents in conservative government spending practices.
3. ***Focus groups with older adults.*** Generally the feedback about senior programs was positive (Pioneer Programs had the second highest percentage of satisfied users among the programs we asked about), but open ended comments suggest that respondents want more programming for seniors. Focus groups with current users could help identify the type of programs older adults want and when they want them. In addition, it seems that there may be a large number of older adults who are not using Park District programs: 56% of respondents over the age of 45 had not used Park District programs in the previous year. In a community with a large number of residents over the age of 45 (nearly 5,000 according to the 2010 census), this suggests a great opportunity for the Park District. Some of the open ended comments stated that respondents “used to use” the Park District and that they think it’s great, but that they no longer use it. Focus groups with older adults who are not currently Park District users could give some insight into their perceptions about the Park District, why they don’t use its programs, and whether they have unmet needs that the Park District could meet with new programs or better marketing of existing programs.
4. ***Marketing and Technology.*** While website use continues to increase, a majority of residents continue to receive information about their park district from program guides. This remains consistent across communities in the greater Chicago area. PEW Research Center recently found that 13% of U.S. residents do not have consistent access to online resources. This is something to consider when meeting the mission of the park district to provide for all residents of the community.

5. ***Continue efforts to partner with other branches of local government.*** When comparing the 2012 Oak Brook Sports Core community survey results with the Oak Brook Park District needs assessment results, resident opinion on the quality of the intergovernmental relationship and cooperation toward the community's park and recreation needs has diminished. The quality of the relationship between the various government staff appears to be amicable and beneficial. There may be signs of strain politically that has been evidenced by the public and has influenced their perceptions. Continued efforts to partner and share services, in particular, those services related to parks and recreation would be of benefit to the residents of the Village and the Park District.
6. ***Areas of Improvement:*** Typically, the OBPD ranked very highly in all areas; in most cases satisfied or extremely satisfied rankings were above the national average of 70% satisfied. In the few cases when dissatisfaction numbers reached over 20% it would be recommended the park district form temporary task forces to consider how the agency may meet these challenges.
7. ***Trails, Parks & Facilities:*** Trails and pathways continue to consistently lead as one of the top desired local park and recreation amenities. The OBPD study results were no different. Walking and biking trails when combined held the highest interest and need. Residents were also highly satisfied with the current maintenance of park district trails. It also appeared that the residents utilize this service by the park district most often. Central Park has much to offer related to trails and events which positions the space to possibly be a hub for the trail user. Wayfinding (signage), emergency services (tire pump / changing stations), comprehensive trail planning, user studies and trail connectivity could easily and inexpensively create a hub of activity and local business use. A conversation with a non-profit partner, such as Trails for Illinois could blossom into a number of interesting possibilities for Oak Brook.
8. ***Number of Parks.*** The OBPD is ahead of the national and local averages in almost every facility and parkland category with the exception of number of park sites. Investment in neighborhood, pocket parks, flower beds and playgrounds with branded signage may add to awareness of park district service and most importantly, to the overall quality of life of residents of the park district.
9. ***Maintain resident priorities, particularly at the Family Recreation Center.*** The largest core resident user group is at the fitness center. 53% of respondents used the fitness center more than 25 times per year. It appears that OBPD residents appreciate exclusive benefits as tax paying residents. Programs are in place to foster this interest, but continued efforts to help residents understand they are the number one priority may be advantageous.
10. ***Reach Out to Younger Population and Minority Groups.*** The results represent a census of the population. Therefore, populations who typically respond in lower numbers were not oversampled to receive a higher, more representative response rate. It would be our recommendation to conduct focus groups with these populations to gain a better sense of their needs and interests.

Recommendations (Corporate Resident Survey Results)

1. **Response rate not generalizable.** The response rate for this study will not allow the OBPD to generalize all information received to the corporate community. However, the OBPD may find the response useful to better understand corporate resident satisfaction and interests as they relate to their core users.
2. **Useful marketing tools.** After reviewing the written comments, a number of respondents did not know the OBPD offered discounts to the corporate community. Therefore, the survey may have also have been a useful marketing tool since 23% of respondents did not believe the OBPD to be effective in informing the corporate community on programs and services.
3. **Core fitness center group.** 68% of fitness center users (n-25), visit the fitness center more than 25 times per year. These users also spoke out about making future development in the fitness center a priority in a number of responses.
4. **High satisfaction rates.** Though n sizes were very small user satisfaction numbers were extremely high, even 100% in a number of cases.
5. **Age differences between corporate and resident surveys.** Unlike OBPD residents, the corporate response was younger in age and had a higher proportion of respondents who identified as married with children. This reflected a stronger desire for an expansion of adult centered programming and high quality youth offerings.
6. **Marketing.** Word of mouth was identified as the top way corporate residents found out about OBPD services and offerings. This matches well with the high satisfaction numbers with the understanding that if someone is satisfied with services they desire to share about that experience with friends. These results may also show that there is potential for the OBPD to increase use with minimal investments in marketing programs and services.





OBPD Survey Demographics

Gender of Respondents

(n=424)

MEN

33%



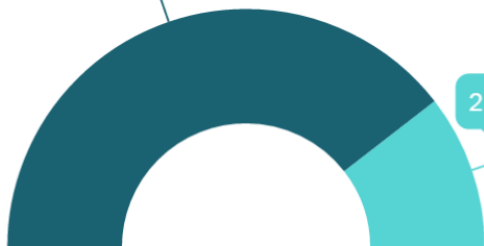
FEMALE

67%

Respondents Marital Status

(n=409)

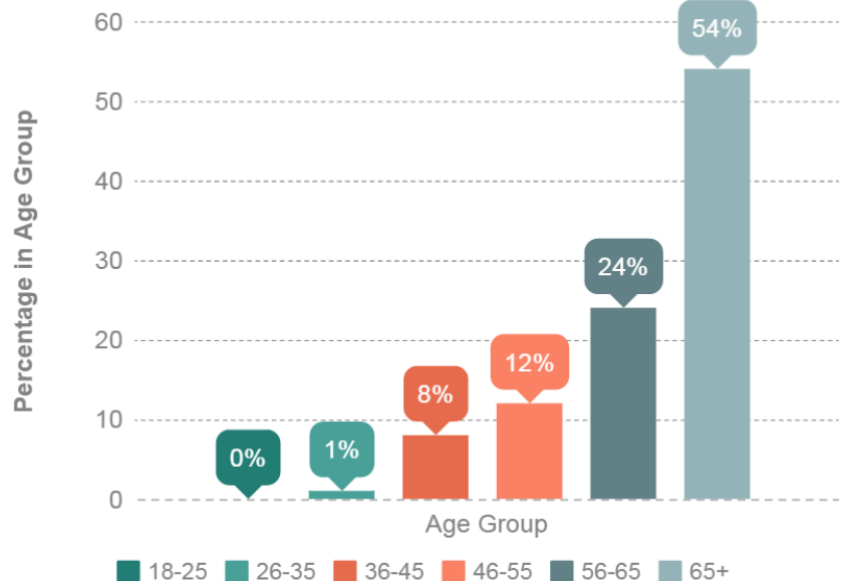
79%



■ Married (79%) ■ Single (21%)

Respondents Age by Group

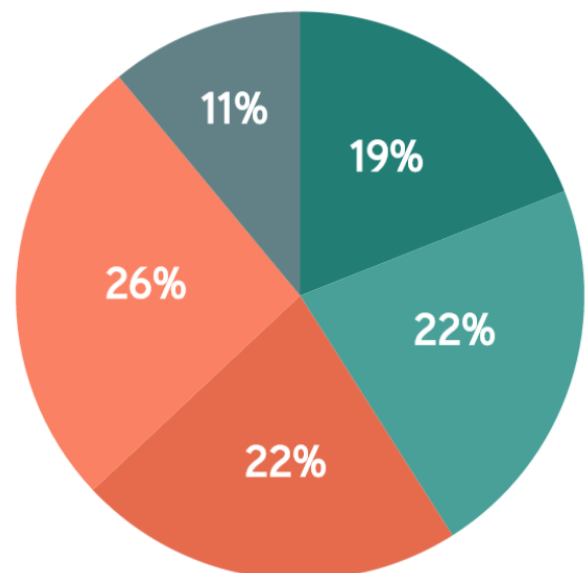
(n=424)



Length of Residence in OBPD (years)

(n=417)

■ 0-10
■ 10-19
■ 20-29
■ 30-39
■ 40+



75%
(n=335)

of respondents earn more than \$101,000 per year



