

Jackson Teton County Affordable Housing Department

2017 Affordable Housing Department Survey

Executive Summary

Purpose

During the 2016 Teton County Commission and Jackson Town Council elections, workforce housing continued to be a heated issue at the forefront of community concerns. While voters are not all like-minded regarding solutions, the lack of available and affordable housing for local workers is well-documented. As part of their work to address the issue, the Teton County Commissioners and the Jackson Town Council voted to restructure the local government housing department, making it a joint town and county department renamed the Jackson/Teton County Affordable Housing Department. As the new department began its work, leadership sought community and housing client comments regarding satisfaction with current services, to set a benchmark and to guide its efforts to strategically address the housing issue.

Limitations

Survey participants were predominantly town of Jackson residents and workers, with the largest household income group over \$100,000 a year. While the survey provides useful information, low-income and non-English speaking residents are not represented consistently with community demographics.

Results

This survey is a customer service survey. It was designed to capture comments from both community members in general and the comments of our clients, defined as past and current affordable/attainable homeowners and/or renters. Contrasting these two groups provides an interesting perspective regarding Jackson/Teton County Housing Department customer service and recommendations for the future. Because of this, community and client responses are reflected in two distinct sections of this report. In all cases, client responses are a subset of community responses.

When we ask current or past affordable housing clients, 78% are very satisfied or satisfied with affordable housing services. However, general community responses indicate that the department needs work. Predominantly, both groups indicate a preference for building and developing housing. After this agreement, the groups diverge, consistent with their relationship to affordable housing. General community responses indicate an interest in increased access to the application process, whereas clients' responses favored increasing the amount of time spent managing existing properties. 1% of participants clearly believe that the department, and government in general, should not be involved in this issue at all.

Executive Summary (continued)

Recommendations

The department can't solve the housing crisis alone and should do what it can to avoid being represented in that light. This issue is too big and too contentious to be solved by one agency, and perhaps to be solved at all. Given the nature of this issue, it is critical that the new department team set specific goals and avoid distraction from other aspects of the issue. A specific and clear plan, action, and message are necessary for the department to succeed.

Survey responses would indicate that that plan should focus on three primary activities; building and developing affordable housing, refining the application process and increasing management services for existing affordable units.

Survey Methodology

Both community and client comment was collected through a multiple-choice survey. The survey had three parts: general community questions, business partner questions, and current/past affordable homeowner questions. This survey used "skip logic", meaning that participants were only presented with questions that were relevant to them given their relationship to affordable housing. The survey received 438 qualified* community responses, of which 98 were current or past client responses, and 92 were business partners. This report focuses on community and client responses, which are reflected in two distinct sections of this report.

The survey was distributed both online and in hard copy. A special web page at jhaffordablehousing.com hosted links to this survey to ensure convenient access, including mobile device access. The survey was available in English and in Spanish. The survey accepted responses from 5/1/2017 to 6/2/2017.

The survey format had functions that are important to note as the reader considers the information in this report. First, responses and participants are not the same things. A participant is one person. That person may make more than one response to a question. Additionally, participants were allowed to skip questions. Given these variations, it is important to notice if the following charts and comments are referencing responses or participants. These variances in the survey format were used to promote a robust survey response.

****Qualified Responses***

Due to the community confusion regarding the three housing agencies in our area, the first question asked participants if they understand that the survey questions pertain to the Jackson/Teton County Housing Department, formerly the Housing Authority. To avoid the inclusion of responses regarding other agencies, only surveys that were qualified with a positive response to question #1 are included in survey reporting.

Language

95% of survey participants responded to this survey in English.

Survey Participants

Participants

The survey secured responses from 446 participants, of which 438 were “qualified participants.”

Rent or Own

57% of participants own their own home and 40% rent. The other 3% have alternative arrangements, such as caretaking.

Live and Work

Most participants live and/or work in the town of Jackson. 56% live in Jackson, 37% live in Teton County, Wyoming outside of Jackson, 7% live in Teton County Idaho, Star Valley, Wyoming, or Pinedale. When asked where they work, 75% told us they work in Jackson, 24% work in Teton County, Wyoming outside of Jackson and less than 1% work in Teton County Idaho, Star Valley, Wyoming, or Pinedale. Note that participants were able to indicate more than one employment location.

Methodology

Survey Participants (continued)

Household Income

The majority of participants have a household income between \$50,000 and \$150,000, with \$100,000-\$149,000 being the most represented income level. Note that 50 participants chose to skip this question.

What's your household income? Please include everyone living in your home.		
Answer Options	Response Percent	Response Count
under \$10,000	0%	0
\$10,000-\$24,999	1%	5
\$25,000-\$34,999	6%	22
\$35,000-\$49,999	11%	43
\$50,000-\$74,999	23%	88
\$75,000-\$99,999	18%	71
\$100,000-\$149,999	27%	104
\$150,000-\$200,000	8%	32
over \$200,000	6%	23
Total Participants Answered Question and Responses		388
Skipped Question		50

Community Responses

The following questions were presented to all 438 qualified participants. The purpose of this section is to collect comments from the community at large.

Departmental Focus

After being reminded of the three strategies identified in the 2015 Workforce Housing Action Plan (see below), 68%, or 275 of 404 participants and 57% of responses to the question below indicated that the department should focus on building and/or developing housing. (Does not include the response "all of them".)

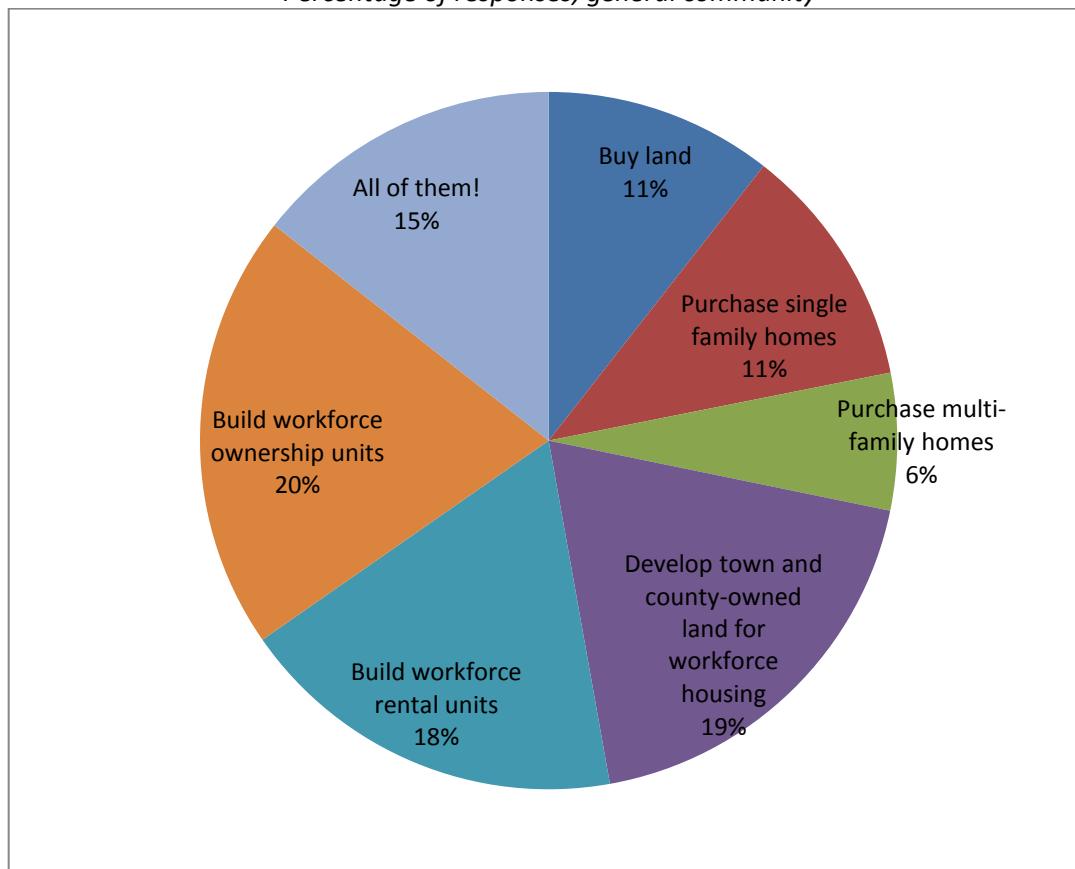
The 2015 Workforce Housing Action Plan is predicated on three fundamental strategies that guide the department's efforts to create more housing supply.

Three Guiding Strategies:

1. Purchase land in complete neighborhoods
2. Partner with the private sector to construct workforce housing on that land
3. Preserve existing workforce housing stock

With this in mind, on which activities should the department focus?

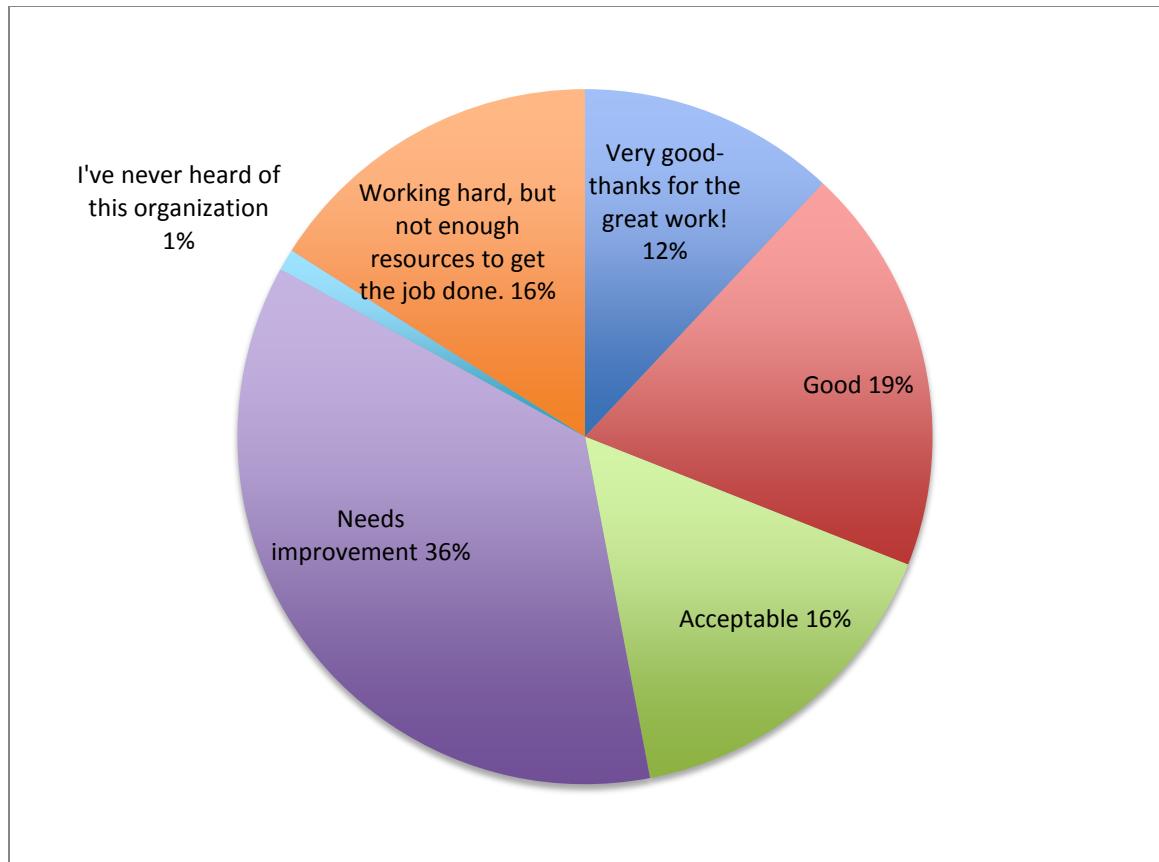
Percentage of responses, general community



Community Impression Regarding Department

One hundred and fifty-eight, or 39%, of community responses indicate that the department needs improvement. The next highest response reflects that the community's impression of the department is good, at 82 or 20% of responses. This contradiction in responses is the partially the result of the client subgroup reporting a more positive impression of the department. When we filter out the client responses, the option "needs improvement" increases to 44% and "working hard, but not enough resources" and "good" tie for second most popular responses at 18% each.

What is your general impression of the Jackson Teton County Affordable Housing Department, formerly the Teton County Housing Authority?
Percentage of responses, general community



What is your general impression of the Jackson Teton County Affordable Housing Department, formerly the Teton County Housing Authority?

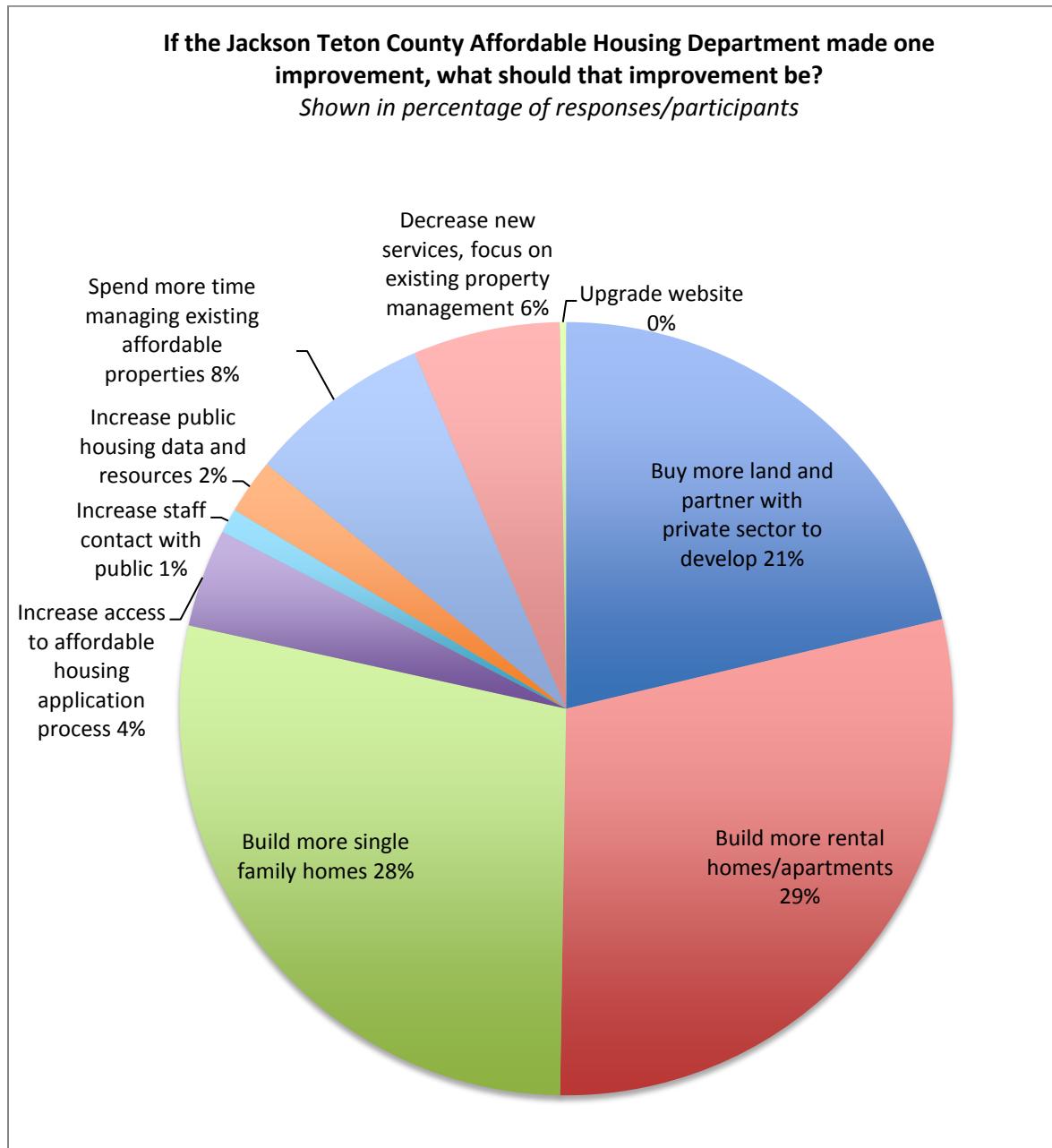
Answer Options	Response Percent	Response Count
Very good-thanks for the great work!	12%	53
Good	19%	82
Acceptable	16%	73
Needs improvement	36%	158
I've never heard of this organization	>1%	6
Working hard, but not enough resources to get the job done.	16%	71
Total Responses	443	
Total Participants Answered Question	408	
Skipped question	30	

Community's Feedback: Department Strengths and Weaknesses

Community members were asked to rate the quality of the department's work in this question. "Friendly staff" and "accessibility" received the most favorable responses, and "trust" and "fair and equitable process" received the most unfavorable responses. The highest response overall was "I don't know". The majority of these "I don't know" responses were for the "long-term homeowner or renter support" option.

Departmental Improvement

When participants were asked to identify just one thing the department could do to improve, the creation of more affordable housing was clearly favored with 306 of the 390 responses, or 78%, favoring the three build/buy options available. Three hundred and ninety participants answered this question, 48 participants skipped the question. The percentages shown reflect both responses and participants, as people were only allowed one answer to this question.



Departmental Improvement

When we compare client and community response to this question, we see both similarities and differences. Remember, clients are a subgroup of the general community and participants were forced to choose only one improvement option.

Similarities: Both groups clearly indicate a preference for build and develop choices.

Differences: Only general community members indicate an interest in increased access to the application process, where only clients indicate an interest in an increased amount of time spent managing existing properties.

If the Jackson Teton County Affordable Housing Department made one improvement, what should that improvement be?

Improvement	General Community (Includes Clients)	Clients Only
Buy more land and partner with private sector to develop	113	22
Build more rental homes/apartments	110	20
Build more single family homes	83	30
Increase access to affordable housing application process	30	0
Increase staff contact with public	24	4
Increase public housing data and resources	16	2
Spend more time managing existing affordable properties	9	9
Decrease new services, focus on existing property management	4	1
Upgrade website	1	0
Total Responses	390	88

Client Responses

Participant Experience with Affordable or Attainable Homes

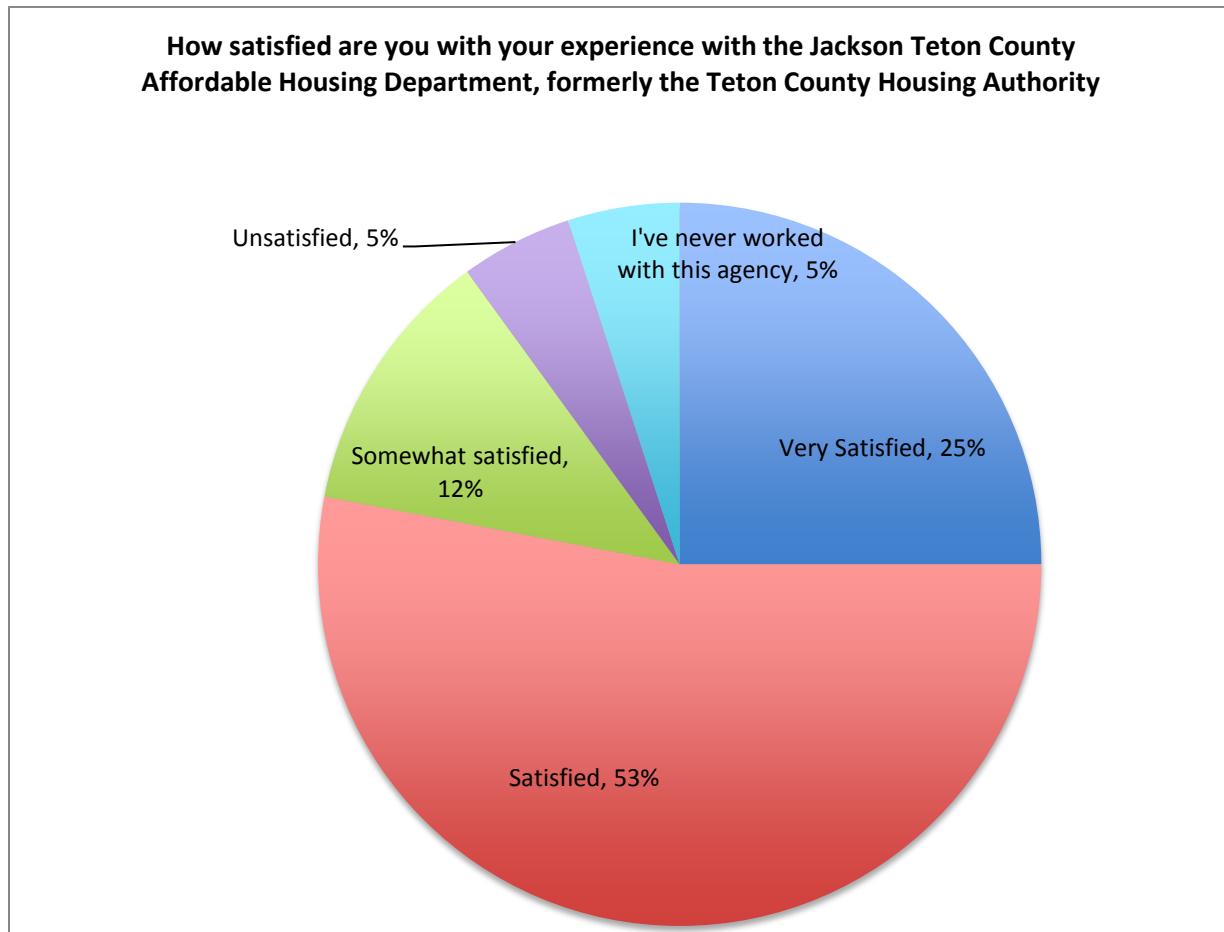
The following table reflects the different levels of experience survey participants had with the Teton County Housing Authority. Note that some participants have more than one relationship with the department and the table below shows 546 responses from 426 participants.

As we move into the “client” section of this report it is important to understand that the remaining survey information pertains to participants who responded that they are past or current owners or renters of affordable/attainable homes, or 98 participants.

What is your experience with affordable or attainable homes in Teton County, Wyoming? <i>Qualified responses only.</i>		
Answer Options	Response Percent	Response Count
No direct experience	14%	79
I applied for affordable housing	27%	149
I would like to apply for affordable housing	11%	58
I am a developer	2%	13
I am a current affordable/attainable renter	2%	12
I am a current affordable/attainable owner	13%	70
I am a past affordable/attainable renter	1%	6
I am a past affordable/attainable owner	2%	10
I am a land owner	8%	42
I am an employer	7%	37
Other (please specify)	13%	70
Total Responses		546
Total Participants Answered Question		426
Skipped question		12

Customer Satisfaction

While the general community impression of the department is that it needs improvement, when affordable housing clients are asked if they are satisfied, 78% of participants who graded their experience indicate that they are very satisfied or satisfied. Sixty participants were willing to grade their experience and an additional 10 participants chose to tell use about their experience instead, totaling 70 participants who answered this question.



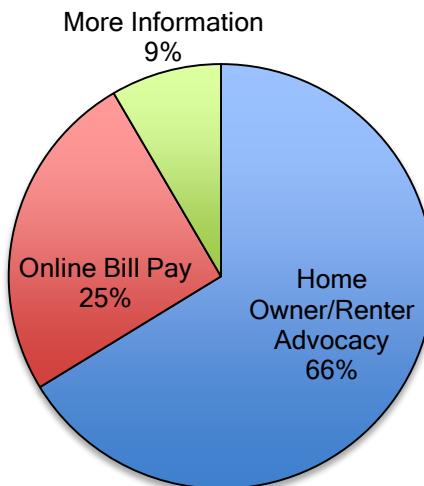
How satisfied are you with your experience with the Jackson Teton County Affordable Housing Department, formerly the Teton County Housing Authority.		
Answer Options	Response Percent	Response Count
Very Satisfied	25%	15
Satisfied	53%	32
Somewhat satisfied	12%	7
Unsatisfied	5%	3
I've never worked with this agency	5%	3
Please tell us about your experience:		10
Total Responses		60
Total Participants Answered Question		70

Other Services Desired

What other services would you like to see the Jackson Teton County Affordable Housing Department provide? Please check all that apply.

When we asked our clients what else we could do for them, 64% responded that they would like to see owner/renter advocacy.

What other services would you like to see the Jackson Teton County Affordable Housing Department provide? Please check all that apply.



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Answer Options	Response Percent	Response Count
Home Owner/Renter Advocacy	66%	34
Online Bill Pay	25%	13
More Information	9%	5
Comments	6 (below)	
<i>Total Participants Answered Question and Total Responses</i>		52

Comments:

I would rather see the department advocate home ownership, not rentals.

I think our affordable housing community should provide renewable energy to residents.

Soon solar will be easy to fit and retrofit. Our town needs to step up with green actions, like solar and better recycling.

Questions are deflected and go unanswered. Customer service is sub par.

Education to the naysayers. how the hell can everybody be up in arms about affordable housing and then not vote for SPET measures!?!?

Communication about plans or ongoing issues still seems to have room for improvement.

I would like to see a program that helps the children that were raised in this community (K-12 then they have to leave) have some option to stay here. We continually loose great assets to the cost of living.